

THE CATHOLIC POSITION AND MISSIONS OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCHES.

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"THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL."—REV. XIV, 6.

(Continued).

The Continent of Europe caught from John Huss the impulse of reforms, which he learned from Wiclif; but with Huss perished the grand principle of Catholic Reformation on the Continent. In England, thank God, not so. Guided, let us trust, by the Holy Ghost, and not by any wisdom of their own, the Anglican reformers sacrificed nothing Catholic. They preserved the historic continuity of the National Church; detached her from the schism of Nicholas I. and his fraudulent Decretals; restored her Nicene character; and rescued the Catholicity of Western Christendom from the havoc that was soon made of it in the Council of Trent. The late Council of the Vatican has demonstrated how absolute was the slavery which Trent inflicted on the Western Churches and how thoroughly it has neutralized their Episcopate. Our own, (thanks to the Reformation), remains unimpaired; the only Canonical Episcopacy of Western Christendom. Thus God has distinguished this ancient Church:

"Founded in Truth; by blood of Martyrdom Cemented; by the hands of Wisdom reared. In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp Decent and unproved."

"Oh! never may the bright succession fail Of her pure altars worthy; ministers Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain Superior, insusceptible of pride; Men whose delight is where their duty leads Or fixes them; and be her priesthood, still, For her defence replenished with a band Of strenuous champions to support the Faith For their dear countrymen and all mankind."

Yes, "for all mankind." Give her to the wide world. This is her real character, her genuine mission. When I visit her old cathedrals so lovingly restored even in this practical and money-loving age; when I walk the cloisters of her colleges, in those great Christian universities, which, so long as they remain Christian, must command the homage of all men; when I see over her spreading fields those myriad parish-spires from which the music of their sweet bells is only a feeble symbol of the sound they send forth into all the earth; when I behold England's true glory in these sources of all that makes England great and free, my heart is lifted up; I admire, I do not envy, I feel thankful that my mother isle is so richly blest; I glorify God on her behalf. But, after all, it is here and across the St. Lawrence, in my own dear native land, and wherever I have visited the Colonial Churches of her empire, that I recognize the magnificent proportions and the real mission of this Anglican Communion. Yes, here in Canada, where God has tried and afflicted her children and is now exalting her in due time—here, as in

my own country, where I see her missions spreading over a continent and scattering the seeds of evangelization from the Atlantic to the Pacific: yes, here and everywhere, when I see how instinctively the true Christian loves her worship and adapts, or even adopts, her prayers and praises, and how the strongest and noblest minds find repose in the creeds she has preserved for the human race—in all this I recognize her real glory and forecast her future in diffusing the Everlasting Gospel. Such were my thoughts when the gates of St. Paul's, in London, were flung open to receive her missionary bishops, who had come from all parts of the earth to the Lambeth Conference, and who were about to separate and return each to his appointed work—beneath the Arctic Pole or under the Southern Cross; in China, in Africa, or here in your own vast Dominion. Then, it seemed to me, the spirits of her ancient worthies looked down with thanksgiving and looked up to the Throne with new songs. The holy Andrewes and the saintly Ken seemed near us, and a noble army besides, from Hooker to Henry Martyn and Heber and Selwyn. A day it was uncalendered in the world's affairs; but its moral influence will be felt forever. How it quickens one's love to such a mother to recall a day like that! "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

But it is part of the essential Catholicity of this Church that in the only Christian sense of the word she is truly broad. By this I do not mean latitudinarian. I do mean that no Christian who accepts the creeds and delights in her liturgy can be a latitudinarian in any sense that should exclude him from her communion. On the other hand, she has never refused communion to such men as Sir Thomas More; and for many years, till forbidden by Rome, the adherents of the Papacy in England worshipped at her altars and received from her hands the cup of salvation. Like the blessed apostles, who suffered Jewish Christians to practice Jewish rites and to worship in the Temple at Jerusalem, she has ever been tolerant of tolerable infirmities.

Her charity, indeed, is made her reproach; but she follows apostolic example in this, as in other things. She dictates the creeds, she prescribes a Scriptural liturgy. These she must preserve, for they have come down to her as an inheritance from the purest ages of the Gospel; but she refuses to make more narrow the old Catholic way of salvation. She dares to say, and none but a Catholic Church can say so much: "Let us therefore, as many of us as be perfect, be thus minded, and, if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you; nevertheless, wherein we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Thank God, this was the spirit of her Reformation. In a scholastic age she was reproached by the Calvinists, on one side, and the Romanists, on the other, because she utterly refused to erect a Code of Belief as they