

Jesus said to his disciples. Whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answering, said to him. Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona. because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my father who is in heaven. AND I SAY TO THEE. THAT THOU ART PETER; AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.

AND I SHALL GIVE TO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. S. Matthew xvi. 15-19.



“Was anything concealed from Peter, who was styled the Rock on which the Church was built, who received the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the power of loosing and binding in Heaven and on earth?”

—TERTULLIAN Prescrip xxii.
“There is one God, and one Church, and one Chair founded by the voice of the Lord upon Peter. That any other Altar be erected, or a new Priesthood established, besides that one Altar, and one Priesthood, is impossible. Whosoever gathers elsewhere, scatters. Whatever is devised by human frenzy, in violation of the Divine Ordinance, is adulterous, impious, sacrilegious.”—St. Cyprian Ep. 43 ad plebem.

“All of them remaining silent, for the doctrine was beyond the reach of man, Peter the Prince of the Apostles and the supreme herald of the Church, not following his own inventions, nor persuaded by human reasoning, but enlightened by the Father, says to him: Thou art Christ, and not this alone, but the Son of the living God.—St. Cyril of Jerusal. Cat. xi. 1.

Calendar.

JUNE 3—Sunday—Trinity Sunday I after Pentecost 2nd class.

4—Monday—St Francis Caracciolo C. doub.

5—Tuesday—St Ferdinand King C. doub.

6—Wednesday—St Norbert B. C. doub.

7—Thursday—Corpus Christi 1st class Holiday of Obligation.

8—Friday—Of the Octave.

8—Saturday—Of the Octave cont. of SS Primas &c MM.

JOSEPH DE MAISTRE.

From the time of Bossuet till the restoration of the Bourbons, no primordial champion of Catholicism arose in France. During the reign of Louis XV., the French priesthood was either torpid from the long and tranquil possession of power and emolument, or afraid to grapple with the wit, so much more fatal than argument, of triumphant infidelity, or, itself sceptical, partaking of a spirit and of opinions which had become all but universal among enlightened men. The reign of Louis XVI. was the battle-field of things far more substantial than creeds, and too much was menaced and overthrown to permit any theory of infallibility, either for king or pope, to be strenuously advocated. In the presence of the conflicts, and splendours, and European fulminations of the Republic and the Empire, any attempt to rehabilitate Catholicism in France would have seemed the pettiest, as well as the most preposterous, of pedantries. All that was possible, till the Revolution had spent its force, was to do as Chateaubriand did,—to throw the effulgence of a romantic imagination round and imaginary Christianity, to picture Catholicism, not in its historical aspects or in its popular influence, but in its poetic possibilities, and to inspire men to dream of an ideal Church as a compensation for that which recent catastrophes had stripped of its glory.

At the Restoration the Catholic Church in France not merely burst from the bloody eclipse of five-and-twenty years, but assumed a strength, a supremacy, and a life which it was far from possessing immediately before the Revolution. Indeed the Church alone largely profited from the Restoration, which accomplished little for the aristocracy, and far less than is usually supposed for the monarchy. To the aristocracy it gave the glitter and the pomp of its former position; but its grandeur as an institution, and its ramified tenacity as a faith in the popular heart, could not be renewed. To the monarchy it offered, almost unasked, the magnificent symbols of authority, but the royal importance, unity and attitude, the royal awfulness which made monarchy the idol at once dreaded and beloved of millions, it was unable to bestow. To the Church, however, it was the weightiest and most welcome event which had been encountered from the period of the grand Lutheran disaster. What it was only in name to the Bourbons, it was in reality to the Church—a restoration. Various influences combined thirty years ago to strengthen the position of Romanism in France. The middle-age mania, then prevalent, among its other effects, good and bad, prodigiously augmented the number and the force of conservative tendencies; and the Catholic Church became the chief of conservative attachment, as best representing the picturesque splendour of a period which it was the fashion to idealise. Romanticism in literature, one of the most notable results of the enthusiasm for the middle ages, necessarily spurned at Protestantism and the simpler religious forms and beliefs as

utilitarian, meagre, and prosaic. After a century also of negation and scepticism, a return, if not to faith, yet to a faith in faith, was inevitable. Our age is not more distinguished than the ages that have immediately preceded it, for belief, but it possesses far more than they of the belief in the value of belief as an element of action. Now true faith always turns to the future, is fertile, and creates the future; faith in faith is sterile, timid, and turns for ever to the past. In addition to the operation of this circumstance, France felt the necessity of restoring its historical unity in order to revive the lustre of its historical position. And the most potent bond of its historical unity, even at its most rampart season of infidelity has been Catholicism. France, besides, has always eminently had the vocation of Propagandism; not so much from the depth of its convictions as from the fervour of its impulses. That vanity, or ambition, or philanthropy has much to do with creating and fostering the Propagandist spirit in France, we emphatically question. France has that sort of animal spirit as a nation which is characteristic of certain individuals. It is ridiculous to see in French propagandism any profounder schemes or remoter objects than the outbursts of that Gallic effervescence which has no law and no purpose but itself. The carnage at Waterloo put an end for a time to the military Propagandism of France. Germany, flooding every corner of Europe with its philosophy, poetry, its legends, and its dreams, became the grand literary Propagandist that France had been half a century before, the only commanding form, therefore, which French Propagandism could take was the Rehabilitation of the Catholic Church. To the fickleness of the French character there was a pleasant variety in this, and the pungency of the pleasure was augmented by an element of revenge, since the nation that had mainly helped to subdue and humiliate France, was the chief representative and champion of Protestantism throughout the world.

With this race of pedants, at once prosy and pretentious, Lamennais and Joseph de Maistre must never be classed. There was the sacred fire of genius, there the earnestness that needed no foreign agency to give it perpetuity and strength. Lamennais cannot be called an original thinker, his philosophy is of a commonplace kind, and owes its occasional sublimity not to the grandeur of his ideas, but to the elevation of his sentiments. As a writer, however, he has the highest merits, though not without the fault from which few French authors are free—that of being too rhetorical. Both as a writer and as a thinker, however, he stands considerably below De Maistre. Lamennais has more finish, is more uniformly eloquent, is more an artist. De Maistre is unequal, does not always arrange his materials well, is sometimes unskilful in the harmonising of parts, is chargeable with bad taste, with puerile conceits, and not unfrequently with heaviness of style. But if he is often inferior to Lamennais, he is just as often superior. There are pages of De Maistre which, from combining every variety of excellence, are not equalled by anything that has appeared since the death of Rousseau. Lamennais is a more comprehensive thinker than De Maistre, but not nearly so energetically individual. De Maistre's thoughts have boldness without breadth, sublimity without defect; they are interesting from their excessive one-sidedness. It is not in what he saw of the universe, but the manner of seeing it, that his value as a thinker consists.

His theories in favour of absolute monarchy have nothing new or striking; indeed his philosophy is more commonplace than that of Lamennais; but the ideas and illustrations which he pours out in the statement and defence of his theories, establish his claim to be a great writer. Nor is de Maistre peculiar in this. The grand primordial thinkers, the men destined to work a revolution in the whole world of thought, have seldom employed anything but commonplaces in advocacy of their innovations, while it is among those whose leading principles were commonplaces that the most ingenious thinkers and the best authors have been found. To the creators of the cathedrals, those noble poems of the middle ages, minute or profuse interior decorations must have seemed a matter of very subordinate attention. And to him who has filled a picture gallery with the choicest productions of genius, it must seem indifferent whether the exterior of the building containing them resemble a factory or a temple.

The name of Lamennais is a familiar one every where. De Maistre's is scarcely so well known as it ought to be in France, and deserves to be better known than it is in England.

The Count Joseph de Maistre was born at Chambéry in Savoy, the 1st of April, 1753. His family was noble, and had that higher nobility which arises from illustrious services. His father was president in the senate of Savoy, and his mother was the daughter of the senator Joseph de Meiz, a learned and accomplished gentleman, who superintended the education and cultivated the talents of his two grandchildren, Joseph de Maistre and his younger brother, Xavier de Maistre. Xavier became a general in the Russian service, and is the author of some works of fiction, which have obtained great celebrity in France. Joseph was, from his youth, a hard student, gifted with a prodigious memory, he made the most rapid progress in all the branches of learning to which he devoted himself, and his works prove that he possessed an extraordinary erudition. At twenty he has completed his studies at the University of Turin. His principal pursuits at this time were jurisprudence, mathematics, ancient and modern languages, and fifteen hours of every day were spent in laborious thought and the acquisition of knowledge. At a rather later period he began the habit, which he never seems afterward to have abandoned, of copying striking extracts from all the books he read, and of noting down those suggestions which offered themselves to his meditations, and to which at the moment he could not give a matured and finished shape. The life of Joseph de Maistre was a peaceful and happy one,—a life of conscientious industry in the most varied fields of learning, and the honourable occupation in the service of his country,—when the storm of the French Revolution burst upon him, tore him away from the things he loved so well, and rendered his existence then-cessant, if not tragical, at least painful and uncertain. In 1788 the King of Sardinia made him a senator. This was official position, when, on the 22d September, 1792, the French army passed the Alps. The day after the King of Sardinia flying, Joseph de Maistre followed him. In January 1793 he ventured to return to Chambéry for the purpose of observing the course and tendency of events. Discovering how little he and those who wished the old order of things could do to oppose the power of the French, he left Savoy and fixed his residence at Lausanne. After various minor productions, he published, in 1796, a work of solid merits, entitled *Considerations sur la France*. It had immense success,

partly owing to the genius it displayed, but in no small measure also to the excitement of circumstances. It has been warmly praised for its eloquence, its sagacity, and the elevation of its style and ideas. But with all our admiration for de Maistre, we frankly confess that he was not the man to judge with justice, with breadth of view, with depth of penetration, an event so complicated in its causes, so rapid in its progress, as the French Revolution. The value of this, as of all his other works, must be sought not in its philosophical accuracy and political acuteness, but in the vigor, boldness, and thoroughness with which his strong and very peculiar impressions are given. The *Considerations* first enabled de Maistre to take that high rank which his subsequent productions so amply justified. The work had the double honour of being prohibited by the French Government, and of being praised by Louis XVIII. in a letter which he sent to the author.

De Maistre quitted Lausanne for Piedmont in 1797, called away by political circumstances. At Lausanne he is said to have known Necker and his celebrated daughter, Madame de Staël. Towards the close of 1796, the young Charles Emmanuel IV., who had recently come to the throne, was forced by the French to leave Turin and all his continental provinces, and to seek elsewhere a refuge from a power that appeared irresistible. De Maistre remained a few days only after his master, and then set out for Venice. Here remaining, his existence was in many respects desolate enough. The late turn of affairs had stripped him of all he possessed, and he and his family had now to face whatever Poverty has bitterest for the nobly born. But De Maistre's character was too heroic, his religious sentiments too profound, his faith in the retributive justice of the Divine Government too much the main principle of his philosophy, to permit him to be crushed by even heavier calamities than these. His position also was prevented from becoming desperate by the friends whom his strong Absolutist opinions and his celebrity as a writer procured for him. Besides, if the trial was severe, it was not destined to be long. The expulsion of the French from Italy in 1799 by the combined operations of the Austrians and Russians, enabled him once more to return from exile. In the September of this year he was appointed to one of the highest offices in the Kingdom of Sardinia, to which were soon added others of equal importance, the functions of which he assumed on his arrival at Cagliari January 1800. After a residence of nearly two years at Cagliari, he was appointed, in September 1802, ambassador from the King of Sardinia to the court of St. Petersburg. A Catholic of the strictest kind, he must have considered it something more than a mere form that he was presented to the Pope at Rome before leaving Italy. Passing through Germany, he arrived at St. Petersburg on the 13th of May, 1803. Here he remained fourteen years; and though his official occupations do not seem to have been either numerous or difficult, there is testimony that they were well and wisely fulfilled; and that whatever influence he had with the emperor he generally employed to forward the interests of those who were struggling, and had nothing but their merits to recommend them. At the Russian capital some of his best works were written. In 1817 he was recalled. Immediately on his coming to Turin, the King of Sardinia conferred on him some of the highest dignities and title in his gift, at the same time acknowledging and lauding his devotedness and ability. But, from excessive industry, much