

The Catholic.

Quod semper; quod ubique; quod ab omnibus.

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ORIGINAL.

AGAINST RELIGIOUS ANTIPATHIES.

TANTÆNE ANIMIS CÆLESTIBUS IRÆ?—*Virg.*
In heav'nly minds, can such fierce passions dwell?

To hate a person for his persuasion, when he happens to differ from us in opinion upon any subject, is as absurd as it is unchristian: absurd, because, if we think, or know him to be mistaken; his error may indeed excite our pity, or regret; but it is against common sense to hate him for what we deem his misfortune: unchristian; because on no account whatever are we allowed, as followers of Christ, to hate our fellow creatures. Yet nothing is so common, particularly in this country, as such antipathy conceived against all, whose religious creed is not the same as ours. A difference in our worship, makes a difference in our social intercourse: and we can hardly ever bring ourselves to love cordially the members of any sect, whose forms and doctrines we disrelish. I have generally remarked in other countries, a distinction made between the persuasion and the person holding it: and indeed, except in the British Dominions, they are seldom seen identified in the estimation of any one. The person is equally beloved and cherished, however much one may dislike his persuasion; which can never challenge our esteem, but in as far as we conceive it right and rational. In Spain, for instance, where the Protestant Creed is universally considered heresy; was ever any one of Lord Wellington's army slighted, shunned, or unkindly treated, for holding it? Did it prevent himself from being named to the chief command of the Spanish Forces? Or was it ever urged as a disqualifying circumstance by the Spanish General Ballesteros; who pleaded every thing else, and pleaded too in vain, with his own Catholic government, against the nomination of a foreign officer to so high and confidential an appointment: and this too, at the time, when the first Peer of the British Empire could not, because a Catholic, obtain from our Protestant Government, so much as the command of a single regiment?

Such a spirit of dislike to our fellow creatures, on account of their religious opinions, is least of all becoming in those, who laid down at first, as the original and fundamental principle of their Reformation; and still proclaim, as the *Magna Charta*, and distinguishing privilege of all Protestants, the liberty granted to every one of judging for himself in matters of religion; and of believing or disbelieving whatever he pleases. How can they consistently hate and persecute others for acting up to that principle of liberty, which they took them-

selves, and profess to grant: or blame any one for dissenting from their particular sect, which originated in dissenting from the great universal Christian Church; the Church of all nations and ages, since her founder the Saviour? Would they, who reject the instructive authority of such a Church; and of all other sects and believers on earth; oblige all others to bend to their particular sectarian, or national parliamentary dictation, on subjects not of human invention, but of divine revelation?

What a singular spectacle do not Protestants present to the eye of the unprejudiced and reflecting observer! They have snatched the books of the Divine Law from the hands of those, to whose trust and keeping they were first consigned, with the fullest power to explain their meaning, and enforce their precepts: and now every one, as if they had been written for his exclusive use, expounds them as he lists; and turns the sacred code to his own particular purpose. And, what is worst of all in our Parliamentary Sect, would force us, under pain of forfeiting our birth-rights, to swear, right or wrong our implicit faith in the infallibility of their acknowledged fallible interpretation!

Here we have a melancholy instance of the wondrous length in the ways of wickedness and folly, to which the ignorant and headlong multitude, may be led by their selfish, interested, and crafty deceivers.

These saw the wealth of the Catholic Church, which her clergy possessed by every rightful title human and divine; and used for the becoming splendour of God's worship; the support of the poor; and the instruction, improvement and general good of the public. They saw, and coveted the golden temptation. And, like Judas, begrudging the precious ointment wasted on the Saviour; and on the poor, his members; they in the very words of that traitor and thief, hypocritically exclaim: *why all this waste.*

This, indeed, is the original and only cause of all the hate-engendering conflicts, still existing amongst us. The treasure in question seemed well worth the contending for: and the plea for seizing and retaining it, was the alleged corruptions in the doctrines and worship of its rightful owners on the one hand; and the preferable purity and perfection, not indeed of their lives and conduct, but of their new proffered systems of belief on the other.

As may be well supposed, the rivalry was great among the new pretenders to the *Loaves and Fishes*. Each preached up his exclusive right to them; and not one but proved to you from the same written authority, that his newly invented system of belief, was the sole inspired and true one.

In one point, however, they have all along agreed, in vilifying and misrepresenting the Church from which they separated.

Their main purpose was to put down and keep down the common object of their dread and envy; that imperishable Church, which the Saviour founded. For her they always reserved the bitterest of their railings; holding out to their credulous, unenquiring and worldly-minded dupes, her worship as gross idolatry; her ceremonies as mere *mummery*; herself, as the *scarlet whore* of the Apocalypse; her chief pastor as *the man of sin*, or *Anti-Christ*; her ministers as impostors; and her other members as idiots: till they wrought up at last the uninformed bulk of their hearers to abhor and persecute, as noxious monsters, the unoffending followers of the only revealed religion: the religion that brought the light of Faith into every Pagan nation: that subdued to the yoke of Christ all the mighty rulers of the earth: taught them to bow their haughty heads at the simple mention of his sacred name; and made them glory in being accounted his servants, and followers.

But we have lived to see that Church vindicated from all their calumnious aspersions; and her cause triumphantly advocated on a theatre the most public in the world, and the most open of any to the inspection of mankind; and that too not by her own natural, and, as might be thought, partial defenders; her pastors and members; whose voice is not suffered to be raised in that Assembly: but by the very Representatives of those, who for three hundred years have continued to misrepresent, vilify, and abuse her—in the British Parliament, where the atrocious conduct of her remorseless, cruel, and unrelenting persecutors has been exposed: and she herself, (the dark veil of prejudice being at length removed,) is brought forth to our admiring gaze in all her unfading beauty, and native innocence.

It was well for her in that legislating house, that the temporal claims of her children were so long resisted. Every new rejection of their just demands, brought on a new trial of the merits of their cause, and made it be considered in all its bearing; till the public prejudice at length was worn off: the general sympathy awakened in their behalf; and the whole world, made acquainted with their wrongs, espoused their righteous cause against their oppressors. The Church of Christ, so long arraigned by her mortal foes, was allowed at last the common privilege of being tried in open court, though with none for her judges but her sworn enemies and accusers; nor did her Divine Spouse permit her children to recover their civil rights; till in the eyes of