

Fidelity to Principles in Politics

THE sphere of politics is connected most intimately with the government of any country; and the government of a country usually is established by the people. They are living in one great community; they have common interests; and they have given powers to certain bodies of men to look after those interests for the common good of all. Hence, it becomes anyone desiring to enter politics to show that he has the interest of the people at heart, and that he is ready to do what is fair and honest under all circumstances. And, when he has attained to a seat in Parliament, he should steadily aim to advance the good of those who have placed him there, and not only that, but the welfare of the nation in general. He is there in trust, and must answer to his constituents, as well as to his country.

Now, above all, and before all things else, a politician, especially if he be a Catholic, should adhere firmly to the principles of his faith. He ought never to sacrifice the interests of the Church to the interests of the State. Why so? Because the Church is superior to the State. The Church is universal; at least the Catholic Church is, and, moreover, this institution is the one government established directly by God. And it is doing His work on earth. While, on the other hand, a purely human government is merely the creation and servant of the people of its own particular state. It is for this reason, therefore, that a conscientious politician must not make the State superior to the Church. If a Catholic does so, he is no Catholic at all; and he can never be one until he rectifies his mistake. Moreover, one who is not guided by the principles of religion is seldom restrained by any principles whatever. In politics he is likely to become corrupt, and even dangerous to the country. This has often been exemplified in the French Parliament, where unprincipled scoundrels have repeatedly looted and burned the property and destroyed the lives of the very citizens whom they ought to have protected. Another example, exhibiting the direct opposite of the evils just mentioned, was the action of Mr. Devlin in 1896, if I remember rightly, when that most honorable gentleman stood firm for his religion, and withdrew himself from his party over the Manitoba School Bill. He is famous now, if only for that one act alone. So, there only remains for a gentleman, and a man of noble character, to espouse true religious principles in politics, and to follow them unswervingly. He will then always be found