

minant, can in no way impeach the authority of ecclesiastical law. For it is a fixed principle, that custom cannot derogate from law without the consent at least presupposed of the lawgiver; and it is not by any means probable that the Church would sanction a custom which is only founded upon the contempt in which heretics hold her commands and their revolt from her authority. This reflection conducts us naturally to the decision of the second part of this question, and we must thence conclude that the intention of the Church is never to exempt heretics from those laws which she has made to ensure the universal good of the Church."—*Deux Conférences D'Angers*, tom. ii. sur les Loix, p. 15.

Then Antoine (this is another of the standards) asks, chapter third, in his *Tractatus de Virtutibus*, "Can unbelievers be compelled to return to the faith? It is certain,"—this, you will recollect, is much the same as Dens,—“it is certain that baptized infidels, whether heretics or apostates, can be compelled to return to the faith, and keep the ecclesiastical law, whether baptized in their infancy, or baptized from compulsion and fear in their adult ages;” so that if a man were by compulsion, by force, obliged to be baptized, that brings him under the authority of the Church, and the Church can compel him to return. Collet, another of their standards, has the very same sentiment, and in it you are interested. “You will ask whether a heretic is punishable by the Church, though he has been baptized has never received the true faith? So if an infidel in London”—here he are at home—“becomes a Christian, and is infected with the errors of the English, what is to be his fate? We answer, Most certainly he is punishable by the Church”—take care of yourselves!—“and his appears from the constant practice of the Church, who teaches that all those who have been baptized—all those who entertain errors contrary to this faith, whether they have held them from the beginning or not, are bound under excommunication and the other punishments that she declares against them.” These punishments he details in the next page as follows, *ibid.* v. p. 396:—

“Punishments against heretics are of two sorts—one temporal, viz., the confiscation of their goods, infamy and incapacity for honours, and all offices proceeding from that; the punishment of exile, imprisonment, and death itself, about which consult the *De Hereticis*, in civil and ecclesiastical law.” Here, observe, the standard of Maynooth refers with confidence to the canon law as authorizing the principles he teaches on the subject. These are the sentiments of Collet in his *Treatise on the Decalogue*.

We now come to Thomas Aquinas; and the Professor of Ethics in the College of Maynooth says, at the *Treatise* of Thomas Aquinas is the best system of ethics to be found. Well, what is his sentiment as to heretics? The question is (quest. xi. art. 1) whether heretics are to be tolerated. On this he says, “About heretics two things are to be considered, one thing on the part of themselves, the other on the part of the Church. On the part of themselves is the sin by which they deserve not only to be separated from the Church, but even to be shut out of the world by death; for it is much more grievous to corrupt the faith by which the life of the soul is saved, than to forge money by which temporal life is supported; wherefore as the forgers of money and other malefactors, are immediately delivered by secular princes to death, much more heretics from the time they are convicted of their heresy, can not only be excommunicated but justly slain.” There is the sentiment of the best master of ethics that is to be found in the College of Maynooth! “On the part of the Church, there is pity for the conversion of those

that are in error”—mark the pity of the Church of Rome—“and therefore she does not immediately condemn, but after the first or second admonition”—you have had warning enough—“and lastly, if the heretic be still found pertinacious, the Church no longer hoping for his conversion, proceeds, for the safety of the others, to separate him from the Church by a sentence of excommunication, and then leaves him to the secular tribunal, to be exterminated from the world by death.”

(To be continued.)

TESTIMONY FOR THE OFFICE OF RULING ELDER, FROM THE ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CHURCH.

It is impossible fully to understand either the spirit, the facts, or the nomenclature of the new Testament, without going back to the Old. The Christian religion is founded upon that of the Jews; or rather is the completion of it. The latter was the infancy and adolescence of that body of which the former is the manhood. And it is remarkable, that no class of theologians more strenuously contend for the connexion between the Jewish and Christian economies, and the impracticability of taking intelligent views of the one, without some previous knowledge of the other, than most of those who deny the apostolic origin of the class of officers now under consideration. With all such persons, then, we join issue.—And, as a very large part of the titles and functions of ecclesiastical officers, were, evidently, transmitted from the ceremonial to the spiritual economy, it is indispensably necessary, in order fully to understand their character, to go back to their source.

The term *Elder*, corresponding with *Zakán*, in Hebrew, and *Presbyteros*, in Greek, literally signifies an aged person. Among the Jews and the eastern nations generally, persons advanced in life were commonly selected to fill stations of dignity and authority, because they were supposed to possess most wisdom, gravity, prudence and experience. From this circumstance, the term *Elder*, became, in process of time, and by a natural association of ideas, an established title of office. Accordingly, the Jews gave this title to most of their officers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, long before Synagogues were established.—From the time of Moses they had *Elders* over the nation, as well as over every city, and smaller community. These are repeatedly represented as inspectors, and rulers of the people; as “officers set over them;” and, indeed, throughout their history, there is reason to believe that the body of the people never, themselves, exercised governmental acts; but chose their *Elders*, to whom all the details of judicial and executive authority, under their divine Legislator and Sovereign, were constantly committed.

* Essay on the warrant, nature, and duties of the office of the Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church; by Samuel Miller, D. D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J.