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THE SPIRITUAL ORDER SUPREME.

(From Brownson's Review, for July.)

There is always, even in the most Catholic times and in the most Catholic states, a party, more or less numerous, who have no conception of religion as law, or of the Church as a kingdom, with a constitution, laws, and chiefs of her own, set up on the earth with plenary authority, under God, over states and individuals,—a party who never think of the Church as a divinely constituted government, even in spirituals, and count for nothing her external organization, her mission, or her discipline. The Creed, the Sacraments, and the Ritual comprise, for them, the whole of religion, and they never can or never will understand why these may not be just as salutary when held out of unity as when held in it. If a bishop has really received the episcopal character, and if he holds the substance of the Christian doctrine, and observes the approved ritual, they see no reason why his ministrations are not of the same value, when he receives his mission, his jurisdiction, or investiture from the state, as when he receives it from the successor of Peter. The authority, the mission, external unity of the Church, or her unity and jurisdiction as a government, never strike them as essential elements of her constitution, or as necessary to be believed and maintained in order to believe and maintain the Catholic religion. Here was the difficulty in France during the Revolution. The great body of the faithful knew the Church as the revelation of God, as the sacraments, and as worship; but owing to the innate jealousy of the temporal power, and to the perhaps necessary prudence of doing or saying as little as possible to irritate this jealousy, or to give offence to Cæsar, no small portion of them had remained comparatively ignorant of her as the kingdom of God set up on the earth for the government of all men and nations, states and individuals. They recognised in her authority to teach the Symbol and to administer the Sacraments, at least in a restricted sense; but when there was question of government, and the word *kingdom* was mentioned, they thought only of the state, and were ready to exclaim, in their simplicity, with the Jews who demanded of Pilate the crucifixion of our Lord, "We have no king but Cæsar!" This is what gave to the Jansenists, Protestants, philosophers in the National Assembly, and out of it, their fearful power over a portion of the French people, and what took away from the faithful pastors their legitimate influence over their flocks.

In these revolutionary times the great point to be specially insisted on, it seems to us, is, that the Church is a government, a kingdom, the Kingdom of kingdoms and Principality of principalities. What is most important is, to understand that she is a power, an organised power, divinely constituted, assisted and protected, representing the Divine authority on earth, and as such universal and supreme. How the state is organised, or by whom administered, is a matter of comparative indifference. The state may be monarchical or republican, aristocratic or democratic if it only be understood and conceded that over it, as over every individual, there is a spiritual kingdom, a spiritual authority, commissioned by God himself, to interpret and apply his law to every department of human life, individual or social, public or private; for if such authority be recognised and submitted to, no interest, temporal or spiritual, can fail to be protected and promoted. Undoubtedly, the assertion of this authority is a delicate matter, owing to the utter confusion which obtains in men's minds respecting it; but we pray such of our readers as have some little candor and good-will to bear in mind that to assert this authority is by no means to merge the state in the Church, or to claim for the Church direct temporal authority, although even to claim for her direct temporal authority is not, to say the least, forbidden to the Catholic. What we here assert is, that the spiritual authority, in the nature of the case, and by the express appointment of God, extends beyond what are ordinarily called spirituals,—to all matters which do or can interest conscience, or concerning which there can arise any question of right or wrong, true or false. The Church, we grant, may maintain, is spiritual, and governs in reference, and only in reference, to a spiritual end; but as the temporal subsists only by and for the spiritual, she, though not it any more than God is the world, nor the temporal authority itself, has, as the God whose representative on earth she is, supreme authority over it, and the full right, under God, to prescribe to it the law it is bound in all things and at all times to consult and obey.

We do not, indeed, claim for the Church in relation to the temporal authority the right to make the law, for God Himself, and He only, makes the law; but we do claim for her the right to declare and apply his law to kings and princes, states and empires, as well as to individuals, in public as well as in private matters. The Church, of course, has no right

to depose a legitimate prince, that is, a prince who has the right to reign, or to absolve his subjects from their allegiance, for she has no right to do wrong or to violate the law of God, and we are not at liberty to suppose that she ever does, ever will, or ever can, for she is holy and infallible by virtue of the indwelling and assistance of the Holy Ghost; but she has the right to judge who has or has not, according to the law of God, the right to reign,—whether the prince has by his infidelity, his misdeeds, his tyranny and oppression, forfeited his trust, and lost his right to the allegiance of his subjects, and therefore, whether they are still held to their allegiance or are released from it by the law of God. If she have the right to judge, she has the right to pronounce judgment, and order its execution; therefore, to pronounce sentence of deposition upon the prince who has forfeited his right to reign, and to declare his subjects absolved from their allegiance to him, and free to elect themselves a new sovereign.

She has the right, we say, to pronounce sentence, but whether the sentence shall be carried into effect or not in the temporal order depends, in point of fact, on that order itself; not because she has no authority over the temporal power, but because she has no temporal arms with which to enforce the execution of her sentence. She bears indeed the temporal sword, but it was not the will of her Spouse that she should wield it with her own hands. She ordinarily exercises it only by the hands of the laity, and she has only spiritual means by which to compel them to exercise it according to her orders. So, however extensive her authority, or full her right over the temporal power, she depends solely on the faith and conscience of her children for its practical assertion beyond the sphere of the spiritual order.—It is this fact, we apprehend, that has led so many to misconceive and to misstate her authority in regard to temporal sovereigns, and it is the misapprehension of this fact that usually so alarms Cæsar and his ministers. God respects in all men the free will of man, and forces no man into the Church or into heaven against his free will. There is no one who cannot, if he chooses, resist Divine grace, disobey the law of God, and lose his soul. God will have none but a free-will offering, none but a voluntary service, although those who reject his offers, refuse to serve him, and disobey his commands, do so at their own peril, and must suffer the consequences.—So he has not willed that his Church should wield the temporal sword, and has left the nations, not the right, but the ability, to resist her judgments, and to refuse to execute her decrees.—If their faith and conscience will not lead them to execute her sentence, when that sentence requires the exercise of physical force, she can herself do no more, and the responsibility rests with them. Her practical power over temporal affairs is therefore restricted to that which is yielded her by the faith and piety of the faithful, although her right, her authority, is supreme and universal. If her children are uninstructed as to this right, if they grow up with the persuasion that she has no authority over temporals, and that her power is restricted to teaching the Catechism and administering the Sacraments, she will be able to exert little or no power over temporal governments, and her children, as in the French Revolution, will too often be found siding with the state against her, and rushing headlong into heresy and schism, to the ruin of the state and the perdition of their own souls. Nevertheless, her authority, her right maintains; and not unfrequently her heavenly Spouse in a mysterious manner intervenes to vindicate it, and to carry her sentence into effect, as we saw surprisingly manifested in the case of the Emperor Napoleon the First. Schismatic Russia, heretical England and Prussia, and even infidel Turkey, were made in the providence of God instruments for the execution of her decrees, and inflicted merited chastisement on the persecutor of her Sovereign Pontiff. Napoleon laughed at the idea of an excommunication of a sovereign by the Pope in the nineteenth century, and asked, sneeringly, if the old man expected that the thunders of the Church would cause the muskets to fall from the hands of his soldiers. He had his answer on his retreat from Moscow, when the muskets did literally drop from their hands.

The spirit of the age, while it declaims against monarchy, and makes war on kings and emperors, claims absolute independence for the civil power. It reasserts for the people, or for the demagogues as leaders of the people, the independence and supremacy which the German lawyers in the time of Frederick Barbarossa asserted for the Emperor, and which James the First and the Anglo-Protestant ministers under the princes of his family asserted for kings and all sovereign princes. It substitutes for monarchial despotism. To hear the men of our age talk, you would suppose the people were the Church, nay, God

himself, the Most High, whose will is in all cases law, and supreme law. They bind kings, princes, and pontiffs, and assert the independence of the people, and tell us, that whoso dares disobey the people sins against God. Now people-god is no more to our taste than king-god, and it is no less idolatry to render supreme homage to the people than it is to render it to Cæsar. The people are as much bound in their collective, as in their individual, capacity to obey the law of God. We have been able, therefore, to refute the error of our age, and to oppose despotism on the one hand and anarchy on the other, only by asserting the supremacy of the spiritual order, and defending the right of the Church to judge the political power, however constituted, and by whomsoever administered; that is, her right to subject rulers as well as ruled to her discipline, which right were a vain word, or a mere abstract right incapable of being practically asserted, without the papal constitution of the Church, and the plenary authority, as Vicar of God, of the Sovereign Pontiff. The controversies of the day have forced us to go thus far, and therefore, what we always do with extreme reluctance, to take part in disputes among Catholics themselves. We have been obliged to fall back on the strong Papal doctrines asserted by the Gregories, the Innocents, the Alexanders, the Bonifaces, and the Piuses, in opposition to the Gallicanism so rife in all the courts of Europe in the last century and the beginning of the present, and which in this country, England, and Ireland has been carried to a dangerous extreme for the purpose of conciliating power, which in all these states is inveterately hostile to Catholicity.

That what we have said on the delicate topics we have treated will be perverted, and made the occasion of saying hard things against our Church, we have no doubt, for we are well aware that it is precisely because the Church claims, and, when occasion offers, exercises, the power we have asserted for her, that the powers of this world hate her, and persecute her faithful children. But we cannot help it. The more moderate doctrines embodied in the Four Articles of the Gallican clergy have never saved Catholics from persecution, or reconciled Jansenistic, Protestant, or infidel governments to the Church. It was tried by the English Catholics under Elizabeth and the Stuarts, and it did not save them from fines and imprisonment, or from being hung, drawn, and quartered, as traitors. It did not save the non-juring bishops and clergy in France during the old revolution from being maltreated, imprisoned, massacred, or exiled. It never will save any of us, if we adhere to the Church at all, because the most ultra Gallican, if he means to remain in the communion of the Church, must, when hard pressed, fall back on the Ultramontane doctrine, and say, "It is necessary to obey God rather than men." There is a point beyond which submission to the temporal authority, whether monarchical or republican, aristocratic or democratic, is apostasy, and can in no sense whatever be tolerated. We must all say this, and our enemies know it; and they know that the great body of the faithful will place that point where it is declared to be by the Sovereign Pontiff.

The truth is, this world hates the Church because she condemns it, and do what we will, as long as she exists in the world, she must be the Church Militant. This world is given up to Cæsar, and Cæsar will tolerate no rival, much less a superior; for Cæsar expresses the pride of the human heart. He will always regard her presence as did Aman Mardocheus sitting in the king's gate, and erect his gallows fifty cubits high, on which to hang her. He will always oppose her in the name of this world, and declare her incompatible with civil government. She is incompatible with all unjust civil government, with all civil government that would govern by arbitrary will, irrespective of the law of God, and we cannot deny it, although she is well known to be the friend and firm supporter of every civil government that seeks to govern wisely and justly, for the common good of its subjects. Yet men with liberty and equality on their lips will still blaspheme her as the enemy of the state, now the enemy of power, and now the enemy of liberty. We cannot help it. Is it in the nature of the men of this world to do so. We who have the happiness to know her doctrine and spirit, know how false and unjust all this is, but it is a part of our penance to submit to it. Nothing that we or any one else can say will commend her to those who hate her, and will not have her Spouse to reign over them. To us she is all beautiful, but for the men of this world she has no beauty or comeliness, that they should desire her. To us she is the wisdom of God and the power of God, but to them she is foolishness or a stumbling-block. No explanation, no softening of her features, no apologies, can make them love her, or cease to fear her. We must then consult first of all the good of the faithful, and, while we are

careful to offer no gratuitous offence to Cæsar or his minions, we must study a wise boldness, and take care that the doctrines which will best succor the faithful in the hour of danger, and best enable them to detect and foil the designs of the enemy, be earnestly and specially insisted upon, and that they are never caught, as were so many in the French Revolution, doubting whether they are to side with the state or with the Church.

PROTESTANT CONVERTS.

(From the Crusader.)

It has been often observed that Protestantism is nothing more than opposition to Catholicity. Its creed is a denial of all possible revelation. Its unity is hatred of an authority that remains for ever to condemn the errors, and of virtues that are an eternal reproach to the licentiousness of unbelievers. So true is this that when we find any Protestant willing to examine dispassionately the doctrines of the Church we can say almost with absolute certainty, 'that man will, by the grace of God, renounce his errors and die in the communion of the Catholic Church.' The same motives seem to have influenced the adversaries of truth in every age. 'Let us therefore lie in wait for the just, because he is not for our turn, and he is contrary to our doings, and upbraided us with transgressions of the law; and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. He boasteth that he has the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the son of God. He is become a censorer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us, even to behold, for his life is not like other men's, and his ways are very different.' This is particularly true of those who apostatize from the Church. While they profess to have embraced Protestantism as the pure gospel, instead of manifesting any desire of bringing others to a knowledge of that pure Protestant gospel, they are distinguished only for the violence of their language and their filthy abuse of everything Catholic. Stories which they know well are utterly untrue, and which have their origin in the malice of corrupted hearts, are repeated with as much unblushing effrontery as we might suppose the father of lies capable of assuming, were he to turn preacher. The wretched apostate knows and feels that he has lost the grace of God. Shame, pride, and the temptation of the devil prevent him from retracting his steps, and so he abandons himself to his wickedness, and like Lucifer after his fall, he finds a malicious pleasure in the ruin of immortal souls. The evidences of a living faith are 'grievous unto him, even to behold.' When he tells us therefore that he is perfectly sincere in his hatred of the Church, we believe him, and do not feel in the least surprised that the mention of anything pertaining to sanctity is sufficient to make him rage and foam like a furious beast. No one, however, except a fool or a very ignorant man, can for a moment suppose that those who leave the Catholic Church are sincere when they talk of new lights which have beamed on their hitherto benighted minds. They may tell their credulous hearers how the reading of the Bible opened their eyes to the horrors of Popery, and enable them to view evangelical truth in all its purity. This may do for the old women who are glad to receive statements that go to confirm ideas about the awful nature of Popery; but the whole world knows that this is not the process which leads men to abandon the Catholic Church. The light of truth is not apt to shine from the eyes of an Anne Boylen; neither do religious convictions originate in the indulgence of beastly passions. If any one will take the trouble to investigate the matter, he will find that those who have deserted the Church have without exception been influenced by motives of worldly gain, or were driven out on account of their flagrant immoralities. Some of the best arguments ever offered in favor of Protestantism are contained in the following enactments of a free and enlightened Protestant Parliament:—

"The eldest son, conforming, immediately acquiesces, and in the life time of his father the permanent part, what our law calls the revision and inheritance of the state, and annuls every sort of voluntary settlement made by the father ever so long before his conversion! This he may sell or dispose of immediately, and alienate it from the family for ever."

"From the first of Michaelmas-Term, 1708, no papist shall serve or be returned to serve on any grand jury in the Queen's Bench, or before Justices of Assize, Oyer and Terminer, or gaol delivery, or Quarter Sessions, unless it appear to the court that a sufficient number of Protestants cannot then be had for the service, and in all trials of issues, on any presentment, indictment, or information, or action on statute, for any offence committed by Papists, in breach of such laws. The plaintiff or prosecutor