

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

RELIGIOUS persecution is a contradiction in terms. Persecution cannot be religious; or, conversely, religion cannot sanction persecution on the ground of sincere resistance to true belief. The spiritual writers have taught that it is sinful to use compulsion in the case of persons who are sincere in their unbelief; St. Francis Xavier writing, that a person would commit a sin who should even embrace what was true against his conscience.

The principle and the fact of persecution need not necessarily have anything in common; since the fact may be an accident of bad temper, while the principle can have no real existence. Take the two kinds of religious persecution, so called: that which is said to have been Catholic, and that which is said to have been Protestant. Perhaps the three best instances on the Catholic side—the instances which are most popularly believed in—are those of the Spanish Inquisition; the (purely imaginary) persecution of Galileo; and the (unquestionably true) Massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day. It may be well—so as to get at the distinction between the principle and the fact of persecution—that we briefly glance at the particulars of these scandals.

And first, as to the Spanish Inquisition. There was no "religious" persecution, nor, indeed, any persecution at all, in the principles and the objects of that tribunal. Probably, throughout the centuries, there has been no one fragment of historic fact more misconceived, more misrepresented, than the Inquisition. "Beaucoup en ont parlé," said Voltaire, "mais peu l'ont bien connue." It has been the same with the tradition about "monkish cruelty" as with most of the traditions so dear to Protestants. The modern English, of whom Gibbon said that they were "the most credulous and fanatic of any nation in Europe," have trusted to their imagination for their facts, and to their prejudice for their travesty of Catholic principles. "La nation la plus aisée a tromper, la plus difficile a détromper, et la plus puissante pour tromper les autres," as a distinguished French writer has said of England, has treated of everything Catholic in the spirit of a romancer whose sole object is to thrill his readers with sensation. "I verily believe," said Cobbett, "that there are more lies in English books than in all other books in the world put together." And certainly, as to the Inquisition in Spain, fiction and mendacity have con-

tended in equal proportion in producing a fearful picture of what *was not*.

Now, first, as to the object of the Inquisition. It was founded by a Spanish king to resist two evils in particular : (1) the treason of Judaism and Islamism, and (2) the immoralities of the Manicheans or Albigenses. Fearful dangers call, necessarily, for severe remedies ; and while, on the one hand, both Judaism and Islamism combined to destroy the social order of the Spanish nation, so, on the other hand, did the Albigenses or Manicheans try their utmost to corrupt the morals of the masses by doctrines and by practices which were infamous. These sectaries taught that there were two Christs, and that it was the bad Christ who suffered on the cross ; they denied the resurrection, condemned marriage, and called the begetting of children a crime. They hated the clergy, and murdered them when they could ; destroyed monasteries and convents and churches. Even Mosheim said : " Their shocking violation of decency was a consequence of their pernicious system : they looked upon decency and modesty as marks of inward corruption." The Council of Lateran, 1179, affirmed : " They respect neither the churches nor the monasteries ; they spare neither orphans, age, nor sex." And since it has been objected that this Council " authoritatively sanctioned persecution," let it be answered that most of the sovereigns of Europe sent their ambassadors or delegates to the Council, with a view to trying to obliterate the sect—not for its " heresy," but on the ground that it was " inimical to human nature." The canon of the Council, which certainly favored suppressive measures (though some critics have had their doubts about its genuineness) was directed against a particular evil, at a particular time, and was, therefore, disciplinary, not doctrinal. It most certainly was never binding as *de fide*, but was regarded only as a measure for public safety. All Europe combined, for the time being, to institute some such effectually coercive measures as should save society from becoming utterly demoralized, and should protect religion from professing blasphemers. The canon, therefore, of the Council could not justly be construed into " the sanctioning of a Catholic persecution," since the persecution was directed against those persons only who utterly repudiated *all* religion.

But to return to the Inquisition in Spain : are we justified in the contention that it did not, in any sense, sanction religious persecution ? And first, the Inquisition was *not* primarily ecclesiastical ; while secondly, it never condemned men for their opinions. It was essentially royal, not ecclesiastical ; only two religious being associated with thirteen laymen ; and the two religious taking always the side of mercy. It is most important to remember, as

a starting principle, that "the Catholic Church abhors blood"; that its spirit is mercy, not judgment; that no layman can be admitted to priest's orders who has ever participated in a sentence of death; and that there was no instance in Rome itself—under the sovereignty of the pontiffs—of any man being put to death by an Inquisition, or of a Jew or heretic being persecuted for his religion. Rome was always called "the Paradise of the Jews"; indeed it is the only city in Europe where Jews have been neither humbled nor ill-treated.

But our grand plea is that the Inquisition was primarily political, and only incidentally ecclesiastical. As M. Guizot has remarked, "L'Inquisition fut, d'abord, plus politique que religieuse; et destiné a maintenir l'ordre, plutot qu'a defendre la foi." Accordingly the Inquisition only punished those relapsed Jews who persisted in trying to corrupt Christians; nor did it punish them at all, if they would repent; it even allowed them to leave Spain, though it did not suffer them to remain in Spain except on the assurance that they would be harmless. What other tribunal in the world ever dealt so leniently with rebels? What other tribunal ever said to a law-breaker? "You can do penance if you will, you can frequent the sacraments, you can hear Mass; and if you do so, you shall be allowed to go scot free; but should you persist in your intention of breaking the law you shall either be banished or imprisoned." The Count de Maistre said that he considered the Inquisition "the most lenient tribunal in Europe." And the Count de Montalembert said that "its compassion and forgiveness were always pushed to the furthest possible point."

We should insist, then, that neither in object nor in process, neither in spirit nor in act, neither in its beginning nor in its ultimate development, did the Inquisition—so far as Catholic authority was concerned—sanction "religious persecution." And towards the end of its history, when the Popes ascertained that there was danger of its original purpose being abused, they requested that it should cease altogether.

(2) And now to glance for a moment at the "massacre on St. Bartholomew's day," another of the most "highly-colored" historic facts. The popular idea is that on the morning of the 24th of August, 1572, the wicked Papists in Paris arose at the sound of a bell, and put to death—and this too by preconcerted action—about four thousand most amiable non-Catholics; persons of a singularly peaceful disposition, and in every way excellent members of society; and that the Papists did this at the instigation of Catherine de Medicis, and with the approval of the reigning Catholic sovereign. Hence the verdict, "religious persecution." Now in this case there was unquestionably "persecution," but

almost the only element that was absent was the "religious." Readers of history—not of history "made up" for sectarian purposes, and perverted so as to prove a foregone conclusion, but of the whole surrounding facts of a period, in their social as well as their religious bearings—know that the hundred and fifty years of French decadence, from (about) 1560 to 1710, were the most savage and atrocious years of Christian history; politically distraught, and morally degraded, and religiously without almost any religion at all. Knowing this, we are quite prepared for enormities, not only on the side of professing Protestants, but also on the side of professing Catholics. And the massacre of St. Bartholomew was but one instance out of many in which the fiends seem to have possessed the population. There was "not much to choose" between Catholics and Protestants; all society, in public sense, being so demoralized. At the time of the massacre the Huguenots were desperately bent upon securing a Protestant succession to the throne, while the Catholics were as eagerly bent upon securing a Catholic succession; so that Catherine de Medicis found pliable instruments to hand for carrying out a purely political massacre. That the Huguenots, so called, were a dangerous menace to the State, no one who is familiar with contemporary history can entertain the smallest particle of doubt. They were also, "religiously," most exasperating. They seized upon every opportunity for insulting Catholics; even fixing a piece of ribald writing on the King's palace in contempt for the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. Churches and abbeys were demolished or desecrated; convents and colleges were despoiled, and thousands of priests and monks were wantonly butchered in cold blood, some even being purposely buried alive. In the province of Dauphiny alone the Huguenots slaughtered two hundred and fifty-six priests, and more than one hundred religious. And this prevailing outrage—indeed it was universal—naturally led to the long "wars of religion"; wars of which religion was the pretext, but of which the impulse was half political, half fiendish.

When the Massacre of St. Bartholomew had been accomplished, the king astutely informed the Sovereign Pontiff that he had won a victory over conspirators against religion, no less than against the State and society; and so the Pope was misled into authorizing a *Te Deum*, believing in the simple honesty of the king. No sooner did the Pope learn the whole truth (in those days a long, conflicting process), than he shed tears, and censured the king's cruelty in permitting so vast a public crime. In this case, therefore, as in the preceding case, we see that the *principle* of persecution was wholly absent from the mind of Catholic authority. Indeed, in the year 1580, toleration had been conceded to the profession

of non-catholic novelties, while persecution had been strictly forbidden. Doubtless, the Protestant innovators were greatly disliked, and were treated very shyly, if not roughly; for that the belief of Christendom for fifteen centuries should be assailed, and the mysteries of the faith laughed to scorn, was enough to excite the population to reprisals which should be equally active and indignant. Yet the point to be impressed is that the persecution was not religious, on the side either of the Catholics or the Huguenots; the cause at heart was political; the period was demoralized, and the weapons used were those of the world and of the devil.

(3) A few words must suffice for the "Galileo controversy"—another of the misapprehended historical fragments. Galileo was *not* condemned for teaching the Copernican theory, but for treating the Scriptures irreverently, and for insolently disobeying authority. It is to Rome that we are chiefly indebted for what is called the Copernican theory. Copernicus himself delivered lectures in Rome by command of Pope Leo X.; he held there a professional chair; he published a treatise on the heliocentric hypothesis by command of and with the aid of Pope Paul III., and his work was printed and was sent forth to the world bearing the written sanction of the Pope. In the days of Galileo, the Copernican theory was taught in the Pope's own university. But now comes the *cause* of the "persecution." Galileo would persist in scandalizing the "common people" by irreverent remarks about the Scriptures. He was warned in a friendly way not to do so. He promised to desist, but broke his promise, and that, too, in a most insolent manner. Meanwhile, even Galileo, though behaving so unthankfully, received a pension for his scientific labors, and was placed in honorable position as a professor.

No judgment was given by any pontiff in regard to the Copernican theory, but only a condemnation of Galileo's private attitude in regard to the interpretation of Scripture. Protestants, who profess to honor the Scriptures, ought to be the first to honor the Popes for this reverence. But the enmity against "Popery" takes precedence of such reverence, as well as of critical care for historic facts.

Nor was Galileo "imprisoned" in the sense popularly accepted by the Protestants. He was simply sent to reside for four months in the palace of his own particular friend, who happened to be the Tuscan ambassador. "I have for a prison," he wrote, in a letter still extant, "the delightful palace of Trinità di Monte." And a little later he wrote: "Afterwards they sent me to my best friend, the Archbishop of Vienna, and I have always enjoyed the utmost tranquility."

The myth therefore of the imprisonment vanishes; while three

facts come out as clear as day: (1) The science of Galileo was approved by the pontiffs—approved, that is, in the sense of being permissible—for of course, no Pope could decree its truth or its error, no Pope being infallible upon astronomy. (2) Galileo was censured, and was sent into retreat, for his persistence in bringing the Scriptures into contempt, and not for his astronomical theories. (3) Galileo was not “persecuted” by any Pope any more than any penitent would be said to be “persecuted” who should be ordered to give his mind to contemplation, after causing grievous scandal by his impiety. Thus “religious persecution,” in the case of Galileo, resolves itself into the profoundest reverence for the Scriptures, and the tenderest treatment of the offender who had made light of them.

II.

And now to turn to the other side—to the persecution of Catholics by Protestants—we have to admit at once that the persecutions, for the most part, were originated by princes, not by people. It would be unjust to say that the subjects of Henry VIII. were responsible for his wholesale murder of faithful Catholics; as it would be unjust to say that the subjects of Queen Elizabeth were responsible for the carrying out of her Penal Laws. So again, in the persecution of Nonconformists—by Queen Elizabeth’s High Commission or by Test Acts—it would be unjust to accuse Anglicans of a malevolent disposition, which might be individual but which was not general. The sole ground of the persecution by Henry VIII. was his irritation in regard to the pontiff’s attitude; just as the sole ground of Queen Elizabeth’s Penal Laws was her determination to prefer the throne before the Faith. The subjects of those two sovereigns were, in both cases, the sovereign’s victims; and as to all the bitterness which ensued, it was a natural result of party feeling; of desire of gain on the part of courtiers and placemen, and of worldly servility on the part of dependants and subordinates. Thus the *fact* of persecution, and the *principle* of persecution, must not be regarded as being identical. Horrible as were the forty years of Elizabeth’s reign, in regard to the persecution of Catholics, as well as the persecution of Nonconformists, it would be unjust to say that “the Protestants” were the persecutors; it was the ruling powers which compelled the Protestants to persecute, and in those days the “ruling powers” were absolute. We must remember that until within the last century, what we now call “popular liberties”—allied with, and secured by a free press—were hardly known in the national English career. Autocracy, in more or less modified form, was the fact and the spirit of government. So that we must not blame “the people”

for being misgoverned or misled—for being compelled to do what their consciences detested.

A word here as to the persecutions by Queen Mary. In the last three years of her reign, there were hideous persecutions—though in the early part there was exceptional lenity. Can any one defend these persecutions? No; the most that can be hazarded is that provocation was at its height, and Christian endurance was at its depth. There was not much *religious* principle in these persecutions, there was the principle of expediency or self-interest. True, the Pontiff had nothing to do with the persecutions—no more than the Pontiff had to do with the plots which led to the massacre of St. Bartholomew—but a few Catholic ecclesiastics in England advised Queen Mary to make her throne secure by persecuting the enemies who would dethrone her. We must remember—and this is seldom remembered—that the Protestant faction in Queen Mary's reign was most violent; striving to dethrone the Queen; making attempts upon her life; publicly praying for her death; and publishing infamous libels upon her character. We must remember too, that the persecutors, Gardiner and Bonner, had themselves been cruelly persecuted in the previous reign; that Archbishop Cranmer and his fellow prelates were executed by those very laws which they themselves had enacted in the previous reign, and had put in practice against Anabaptists and other "heretics;" indeed, Cranmer, whom some people account a martyr, had consented in Edward's reign to the burning of six "heretics," and had actually burnt one Englishman "for heresy;" he had also burnt Joan Bocher for teaching that Christ was not incarnate of the Blessed Virgin, while as a Lutheran he had burnt Lambert and Askew for the very belief for which *he* afterwards suffered. No one, therefore, can feel pity for *him*. But all this provocation hardly excuses Queen Mary's counsellors for putting heretical rebels to death. As to Mary herself, she was not a persecutor. Sedition and apostasy drove her counsellors to severe measures, which *she* always deprecated and even abhorred. The effort of her whole life was to give back to a Catholic country the Catholic unity of which her father had robbed it. Her persecutions were forced on her—were not spontaneous. And at this point we may briefly touch on the delicate subject of "judicial equity," in regard to the persecution of any "heretic."

III.

There are necessarily two aspects of the question. The one is purely civil or political, the other, as it may *seem* to be, ecclesiastical. Let us take the political aspect first.

A sovereign—say, of a wholly Catholic country—becomes as-

sured that a "religious sect," so called, is working the disturbance of the social order, as well as the disturbance of the faith. This was the case with those sovereigns who, in the time of the Albigenses, realized the national two-fold disturbance. Provided that the new sect had been perfectly quiet, had neither sought revolution nor proselytism, a sovereign would not have been justified in "persecuting"; he would only have been justified in "converting." But, in the case of the Albigenses, all the sovereigns of Europe were agreed as to the destructiveness of their impiety. It was a duty, therefore, to pass laws for the sect's restraint. It was all the more a duty, because, being Catholic sovereigns, they ruled over united Catholic peoples. To *them* "the faith" was not what it is with Protestants, opinionative, variable, quasi-natural, but the one divine truth of God, his divine will, and, therefore, of Catholic obligation. Shall we affirm, then, that Catholic sovereigns were not justified in making laws for the protection of their Catholic subjects? This would, indeed, be a wild assertion. We can imagine every Catholic priest to cry out, "If a man burn my church because I am a Catholic priest, or sacrilegiously profane the tabernacle on that church's altar, I call upon the civil power to protect my church, to punish the desecrators of holy places, to guard my parishioners and my congregation against gross and quite unprovoked insult." Can any one deny that this is "equity?" If so, there is an end of all government responsibility in regard to all true religious liberty.

But mark, also, that, in the case of Catholic kingdoms, all Catholic subjects are "in possession." For twelve centuries had Europe been Catholic, before the Albigenses were heard of. Were the Albigenses to claim the rights of twelve centuries? Or, to bring the case nearer home, to Great Britain, *which* party, let it be asked, were "in possession" at the time of the so-called Reformation? Were Catholics in possession or were Protestants? And since Catholics were indisputably the true heirs, was it "persecution" on their part to resist robbery? With what face could Protestants assert, in the reigns of Edward VI. or Queen Elizabeth, "*We* are in possession of the ancient faith. Catholics are intruders, usurpers. *We* claim the inheritance of fifteen centuries, the right of persecuting Catholics as rebels." Who does not see that equity is on the Catholic side, revolt and usurpation on the Protestant side? Even putting Christian charity out of the question—if it were possible to do this—the Catholics could say in England, as in France, as in any country which was disturbed by the new apostasy, "*We* are the true heirs; we built the cathedrals, churches, monasteries; our faith is the inheritance of all Christian time, the rightful possession of ourselves as of our forefathers." Equity, therefore, was

wholly on the side of the Catholics. Appropriation was the "civil" crime of the Protestants, as much as it was a crime against religion.

But equity may take a larger grip or compass. While asserting that "religious persecution" is not, and never was, a Catholic principle, we must assert that the protection of Catholic peoples, equally against religious and civil wrong, is, and always was, a Catholic principle. In other words, to make laws for the protection of Catholic subjects is quite as much a duty of a Catholic sovereign as is the *not* persecuting any man for his opinions. If a king of Spain saw that by arresting the first offenders the original perpetrators of great crimes—not for their opinions but for their criminality—he could put a stop to immeasurable mischief in the future, was he not justified in arresting them? As a matter of fact, such wide policy was justified by the experiences of the after-generations. Spain enjoyed civil and religious peace, while England, France and Holland were full of outrage. The Inquisition frightened away from Spain that wicked "philosophy" which half ruined France, England and other countries. And the Spaniards at this day are less fickle, less superstitious, less the sport of every breeze of idle doctrine, than, perhaps, any other people in Europe. The Inquisition quenched enormity in its beginning; while so-called Protestantism has nurtured every error. Indeed, as several writers have remarked, even the French Revolution might have never reached such depths had an Inquisition stopped its "principles" in their beginning. England would certainly have been the better for the Inquisition in the place of the barbarous cruelties of Henry VIII. and the equally tyrannical rule of Elizabeth. The Inquisition was at once just and merciful. The tyrants of the Reformation were neither just nor merciful, and they have bequeathed infinite evils to men's souls.

Equity, therefore, can stand its trial without fear when apostasy accuses it of severity—a severity which apostasy has always practiced.

IV.

We have still to inquire, What was the essential difference in the character of persecutions by Catholics and by Protestants in what we may call their "ecclesiastical aspect?" We have conceded that Queen Mary persecuted, or rather that her counsellors did so, and we have only sought to find excuse for her on the ground that her enemies made her throne and her life insecure. But several points arise for our consideration if we would take a just view of the whole subject. Affirming, to begin with, that "religious persecution" is not, and never was, a Catholic principle—though there have been

Catholics who have retaliated, who have avenged themselves, under a provocation which was almost unbearable—we have still to be able to answer the following questions before we can form a just estimate: (1) Were crimes against religion justly regarded in Catholic ages as crimes against the state, against society? (2) Was the severity with which such crimes were ordinarily visited in excess of the ordinary punishments of great crimes? (3) Had Catholic governments a greater moral right to punish heresy than any non-Catholic government could possess? (4) Did the high *non-Catholic* authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, advocate the principle of persecution? (5) Did *non-Catholic* governments and *non-Catholic* ecclesiastics persecute more rigorously than did Catholics, the conditions being equal or nearly so; the provocations being of much the same kind?

Briefly: (1) Crimes against religion in Catholic countries might reasonably, we think, be regarded as more heinous than the same crimes in non-Catholic countries, because the Catholic religion postulates infallibility in all matters appertaining to faith; whereas, every Protestant sect repudiates infallibility and subjects all Christian doctrine to opinion. Now that one opinion should persecute another opinion is, on the face of it, ridiculous, but that divine authority should persecute dangerous opinions would be logical even though it were cruel. Add to this obvious truism the fact which has been before mentioned, that the Catholic religion is "in possession" in Catholic countries, and may therefore claim the precedence of numerous centuries in justification of its heirship of true authority, and we must admit that if Catholic governments have persecuted, they have had both logic and inheritance on their side.

(2) The severity with which heresy, apostasy, witchcraft, profanation, and such like great crimes against religion have sometimes been punished by Catholic governments has not been greater than, but only equal to, the ordinary severity exercised against "notorious criminals." In the Middle Ages severity was the rule with most governments, though it was never the rule with ecclesiastics. At one time, in France, a man who robbed on the high road was broken alive upon the rack. But then there was no necessity to rob on the high road. In the same way, if a relapsed Jew or an abandoned Manichæan chose to try to corrupt the faith of Catholics, to destroy churches, murder priests, or commit sacrilege, he chose to do what the law did not allow him to do, and had himself only to blame for the consequences. As to "severity," it was a question only of policy—and in our own day we hear it approved by learned judges; while as to "heresy"—not in opinion but in conduct; in the sense, that is, of seeking to corrupt others, and of

making war upon the religion which was "in possession"—if Catholic governments believed the Catholic faith to be divine they were excusable in seeking to enforce the divine law.

(3) And this last remark, in great measure, answers our third inquiry. Had Catholic governments a greater moral right to punish heresy than any non-Catholic government can possess? Obviously they had a much greater. A Catholic government could have nothing whatever to do with deciding what was truth, what was error. Such decision belonged only to the teaching Church, but it had everything to do with preventing wicked men from making war on the (accepted) divine truth. Do we blame Moses and Aaron for being "too severe" on Korah, Nathan, and Abiram; or do we blame Elias for ordering that the priests of Baal should be taken down to the brook Cison and slain there? *À fortiori*, under the Christian covenant—which is the substance of the Jewish shadow—we cannot blame Catholic governments for decreeing that noisy apostates should be subjected to the civil or criminal law. Such men are the declared enemies of society, much more than are thieves or calumniators.

(4) And this principle of punishing noisy apostates has been approved by almost all Protestant authorities. Regardless of the absurd inconsistency of "private opinion persecuting private opinion," Luther advocated persecution with all his might. Zwinglius taught: "Evangelium vult sanguinem." Even the gentle Melancthon defended cruelty. Cranmer positively revelled in blood-shedding. So did Latimer and Ridley, who experienced it. Sandys, Bishop of London, wrote a book to justify religious persecution. Archbishop Abbot told the king that "to tolerate Catholics would be to draw down upon himself God's wrath and indignation." Archbishop Usher taught: "To give any toleration to Papists is a grievous sin." And the Parliament of King James I. urged the king to persecution as "necessary to advance the glory of God." In Scotland, John Knox called persecution "a holy and sacred duty," and he taught: "The people are bound to put to death the queen, along with all her priests." The Scotch Parliament, in 1560, decreed death to all Catholics. And yet all these "authorities" believed in *their* own infallibility—on which ground alone they persecuted Catholics. Were such folly not vicious it would be comic. Well might Rousseau say: "Of all the sects of Christianity, Protestantism is the most intolerant and inconsistent, uniting in itself all the objections which it urges against the Church of Rome."

(5) And so we come to the last point. Did non-Catholic governments and ecclesiastics persecute *more* rigorously than did

Catholics? A big book would not suffice for the answer. The record of Protestantism is the record of persecution. Omitting Henry VIII. from the catalogue of persecutors—on the ground that he was more of an excommunicated madman than a sovereign who had any principle whatever—Edward VI.'s reign was a fitting brief prelude to the sanguinary forty years of Elizabeth. In regard to the Elizabethan era, let these questions be asked, by the way of determining the *greater* rigor of persecution. (1) Was it ever enacted in any Catholic country that every one who refused to attend the Catholic Mass should be fined; if persistent, should be banished the country; and, if returning, should be hanged? (2) Was it ever enacted in any Catholic country that no Protestant should hold any office, civil or military; that no Protestant should be allowed to wander more than five miles from his home on pain of forfeiture of lands or inheritance; that no Protestant should keep a horse worth more than five pounds, and if he did so, Catholics might take it from him? (3) Was it ever enacted in any Catholic country that if a man kept a Protestant schoolmaster for his children he should be fined forty shillings a day for the offence; if he sent his son abroad to be educated as a Protestant he should be fined a hundred pounds for the still greater offence; and that no Protestant children could inherit lands until they conformed to the Catholic faith? Was it ever enacted in any Catholic country that a Protestant should be racked ten times for his Protestantism—a punishment which was inflicted upon Father Southwell; or that a Protestant woman should be pressed to death between stones for harboring a Protestant clergyman—a punishment which was inflicted on Margaret Clitheroe? Or was it ever enacted in any Catholic country that five thousand Protestants should be sold as slaves, to be sent out to Jamaica or the West Indies—a punishment which was inflicted on Irish Catholics? But enough of this. Every one *now* knows the reality of these horrors, though for three centuries they have been omitted from Protestant histories.

V.

Let us sum up the case on both sides, in regard both to principle and to fact. We are so apt to forget in this nineteenth century that it was the custom—it was the law—for a long period to put people to dreadful deaths for irreligion. We need not argue the *principle* at this moment; it suffices that we establish the *fact*; because many persons, in these days, speak of “religious persecution” as if it were “an invention of modern Papists.” Yet the English statute book should dissipate that delusion. We find that it was not until the time of George II. that the statute for burning persons for witchcraft, conjuration, enchantment, sorcery,

was repealed; and we may be quite sure that the repeal would have been much earlier, had the national sentiment sought or demanded it. A statute of James I. decreed death to "heretics," and we all know what heretics meant in his day.

Until the time of Charles II. we find it in the statute book that heretical persons should be burned. In the time of William III. if any person denied the Trinity, he was to suffer the same penalties as those indicted for apostasy. Throughout England it was the law for a long period—though happily there were instances of mercy—to burn people for sacrilege, parricide, and for arson. And in regard to this ferocity, we find only one exception, since the time of the Protestant Reformation—that is, one exception only in the British empire—and this was in Catholic Ireland. During the whole period when Catholicism was dominant in Ireland there was no penal code against Protestantism. Irish Catholics never persecuted English Protestants. But Englishmen and Scotchmen have been always conspicuous in their severity against every one whom they were pleased to account heretical.

The *fact* of severity against irreligion—or against what was accounted irreligion, on the part of many governments through many centuries, must be remembered when judging particular cases of what is called "religious persecution." The principle may be disputed as we like, but the fact admits of no dispute whatever. Queen Elizabeth's High Commission—to take this one instance only—surpassed in its severity and malignity anything that is even fabled of the Inquisition. Hume, the essayist, was of this opinion; so were de Maistre and de Montalembert. Indeed, we may go so far as to say that the "religious persecution," during the whole of the reign of "good Queen Bess," would have done credit to the inventiveness and brutality of the most typical tyrants of Turkey or Algiers. Hume relates, as showing the spirit of Elizabeth's time, that "rewards were given to any wretch who would come forward and accuse Catholics." But we need not linger on so revolting a subject. Suffice it for our purpose that "religious persecution," as a fact, though we can hardly say as a principle, has been shown to be the dominant note of English Protestantism; and it has only quite recently fallen in abeyance, in consequence of Protestantism falling to pieces.

The *principle*, however, of persecution, or say of punishing the irreligious, must be argued on broad grounds of policy. Governments may inflict temporal penalties, "on the ground of policy," just as the spiritual power may inflict spiritual penalties "on the ground of piety"—on the ground of justice both to God and man. The Catholic Church has never approved of torture for irreligion; she has approved only of penance or reparation. Governments may

do what they think best, in estimating the social value of religion, or in estimating the social harm done by irreligion; and they may attach what penalties they please to breaking their laws, which are designed for the national security and peace. This is "policy." But the Catholic Church (we need not say anything about Protestants, because they are so painfully inconsistent in their principles; believing in the necessity of *some* religion, but repudiating the living authority which can define it), thinks only of mercy towards the penitent, and of edification towards all classes of society. She abhors all religious persecution. Her Catholic kings or Catholic governments must please themselves; but if they choose to send an apostate to the stake, *she* will send a priest with him to console him, to give him Absolution and Holy Communion. The Catholic Church cannot be made responsible for such forms of judicial penalty as may seem good to Catholic sovereigns or governments. She may approve of the principle of reparation, but she is innocent of the details of retribution. Her mission is mercy and forgiveness. But if a sovereign's subjects will persist in breaking her laws, she cannot be held responsible for the consequences.

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