

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

A NOBLE SPEECH IN THE SPANISH CORTES.

A speech has lately been delivered in the Spanish Cortes by Senor Castelar which has created a sensation not only in Spain but throughout Europe. It was upon that part of the proposed constitution which guarantees religious freedom, and was in reply to a speech of the Rev. Father Manterola, canon of Vittoria, and one of the most learned and eloquent members of the Cortes. He is the leader of the Catholic party, and he was expected to present such arguments as would carry the Cortes entirely with his doctrines. His speech was the strongest that could be made on that side of the question. He contended that the introduction of other religions than the Catholic into Spain would lead to anarchy and bloodshed; and that if she should cast herself into the arms of "free worship," abandoned by God, she would utterly perish her name would disappear from the lists of civilized nations, and she would fall into a deep grave, over which might be written this epitaph:—"Here lies an apostate who renounced eternal for temporal riches, and who has passed away from the latter after having lost the former." It was this harangue that called forth the noble and magnificent reply of Senor Castelar, which is equalled by few orations ever delivered upon the great subject of religious liberty. We are told that it was quite *impromptu*, and that much of its original force and beauty is lost in the English version, but even in our language it shows the speaker to be a remarkably gifted man.

Signor CASTELAR, who rose immediately after Senor Manterola, addressed the Chamber as follows:—Senores Diputados—Immense is the misfortune for me, but greater for the Cortes, to find myself forced, by the duties of my position and by duties of courtesy, to occupy almost every afternoon against my will, the attention of this Chamber. I hope the Cortes will pardon me, and not attribute such long and continuous discourses to my intemperance of speech, I solemnly promise not to speak again for some time, and especially on the debate on the totality of the constitution! The illustrious Senor Rios Rosas said, with the authority which his speech, talent, eloquence and character give him, that he doubted if he had any right to give me counsel. Not only has he the right, but he has the duty to counsel a beginner, to counsel a youth. When Senor Rios Rosas counseled me that I should not treat the church with such acerbity, a great doubt filled my soul. I doubted if I had been just. I doubted if I had been prudent. But then I attacked no belief; I attacked no worship. I only said that the church, organized as a power of the State, could not fail to bring about grand perturbations, for in its anxiety to subject the civil authority to its criterion of absolute and heavenly revealed authority, it would constantly menace all rights. Gentlemen, if I had any doubts, if I had any remorse, they have vanished before the words of Senor Manterola. The reverend deputy, with the authority which his knowledge, his virtues, his high representation in the church, his higher representation in this Chamber give him, has revealed to us what is the criterion of the clergy upon modern rights, upon the national sovereignty, upon religious toleration, and upon the future of the nation. If I had not found all I said, if I had not seen that they reprove our conscience, that they reprove civil rights, and that they reprove our policy, I confess that in my first speech I should have deceived myself, and with all my heart I would have repented. But Senor Manterola has employed all this afternoon in affirming and confirming my words. He has said to us that he combats the national sovereignty, for he does not find in it the formula of the sovereignty or the church. Have we not seen that after so many cataclysms, after the conclusion of the religious wars, after the advent

of so many laical States, after so many Concordats, in which the church has had to accept the civil existence of many religions, even though she agreed to them, she has not been able to lose her ancient criterion—the criterion of Gregory VII, and Innocent III—but still believes that all civil powers are a usurpation of her sovereign power! Gentlemen, none more than I have applauded the presence of Senor Manterola in this place, the presence of the illustrious Bishop of Jaen, and the presence of the illustrious Cardinal of Santiago! I believe that this Chamber would not be the genuine expression of the country if there had not come to it those who guard the sacred deposit of our ancient belief, and who direct the morals of our families. I look on them with much respect, and with great veneration for their talents, their age and the exalted ministry they represent. Consecrated from an early age to the worship of abstract and pure ideas, in the midst of a society delivered in reality very much to the worship of materialism, very attached to the bank-note, in that species of indifference in which the spirit has fallen, my idea admits that there must be something of the infinite, something of the divine.—But, gentlemen, I say more. I make a greater concession to the gentlemen who sit on these benches, (nods of approval from the Bishops.) I make a concession which I ought to make, for it is true. When liberty comes the material bonds are loosened; when the material bonds are loosened the moral bonds are tightened! Thus it is necessary for a society to live freely; it is absolutely indispensable that it should have grand moral bonds, grand bonds of ideas, rights and duties—duties imposed not by civil authority nor by armies, but by its own reason and by its own conscience!—For this, gentlemen, I have not seen when I have been to enslaved peoples, I have never seen the festival of Sunday kept!—I have never seen it kept in Spain! I have never seen it kept in France! The Sabbath among an enslaved people is saturnalia. On the other hand, I have seen the Sunday celebrated with an extraordinary severity, with a severity of customs which astonishes, among the only two free peoples which I have visited in my extensive peregrinations throughout Europe—in Switzerland and in England. And how is this? I know how it is. It is because there are bonds of custom and intelligence which do not exist where religion is imposed by force, by means of artificial and mechanical laws, upon the will and the conscience!

We regret that our space compels us to omit a portion of this famous speech. The following is the latter part of Senor Castelar's speech:—

Descending now from the general to the particular principles of the speech of Senor Manterola—he asked me in what time the Church had badly treated the Jews? He asked me this, invoking, too, the title which most honors my life, that of Professor of History in the Central University! Very well. I have here some of the records of history, and in them I find the writings of the foundation of the Monastery of San Cosme and San Damian in 978. Do you know how they inventoried the goods of the monks? The inventory is in this order:—"Fifty yaguas, (mares,) thirty Moros, (Moors, male;) twenty Moras, (Moors, female)." So that for those priests of liberty, equality, and fraternity, their servants and slaves were reckoned with their beasts of burden! The same, exactly the same, as the ancient Greeks and Romans! (Loud applause.) It is vulgarly said that our Spain is an intolerant country—a country that has ever preserved religious enmity. I deny it; absolutely deny it! Have there been, for example, in the world such illustrious times as those of Ferdinand III the Holy, and of Alonzo X, the Wise? The one conquered Seville—the other Murcia! Let us glory in those great examples, and say that for Spain we must write with Mme. de Staël: "The ancient here is liberty—the modern is despotism!" In the Neo Catholic school they have the boldness to make of religion what the ancient Romans said,

"Religio id est metus." And to these Neo Catholics we might apply those words of the Bible: "Cognovit bos possessorem suum et asinas praesepe domini sui, et Israel non cognovit et populus meus non intellexit."—The ox knoweth its owner's and the ass its master's crib, but the Neo Catholic party knoweth not its Lord! Religious intolerance commenced in the middle of the fourteenth century and in all the fifteenth.—Then it was that San Vincente Ferrer preached that sermon which produced that terrible massacre of Jews! Senor Manterola said he condemned all religious persecutions! Then His Reverence ought to condemn lively and energetically many pages in the history of the Church! "We did not kill the persecuted ones," said Senor Manterola, "the civil power killed them." Mirthful defence! As if the assassin should say it was not he who killed his victim—it was his dagger! The Inquisition, gentlemen, the Inquisition was the dagger of the Church! The truth of the persecutions may be known by opening any page of ecclesiastical history! Does Senor Manterola wish me to cite Encyclica in which Innocent III condemned the Jews to eternal slavery? Does he wish me to bring the letter in which the Holy Pius V. charged Philip II. to seek an assassin to kill Isabella of England? Senor Manterola said I had not been in Rome! But I have. I have visited its ruins! I have contemplated its 300 domes! I have witnessed the ceremonies of the Holy Week! I have admired the gigantic sybils of Michael Angelo which appear to launch eternal maledictions! I have seen the sun penetrate into the Basilica of St Peter's! I have sought in those ashes an atom of religious faith. I have only found deceit and doubt! Yes, I have seen in the Royal Sala painted by Bessari, a fresco of the emmissaries of the King of France sending to the Pope the head of Coligny! I have seen an apotheosis of the ecclesiastical executioners, the assassins of St. Bartholomew! Senor Manterola has asked what I have to say of the Church when she has created great universities? I am just.—The Church was once the centre of unity and the ideal of life, for it was the only intellectual element in the chaos of barbarism! Then were born the universities under the favor of the Church. But compare the universities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the most illustrious of ours—Salamanca for example.—What illustrious foreign universities has Senor Manterola cited? We have retrograded not because we are inferior in intelligence and in talent to the Germans or the English, but because they acquired before us the great moral treasure of liberty of thought!—because they have not remained, as we did, so long without light in the conscience, buried in the depths of the Inquisition! After all, as there is something in the life we cannot hide, Senor Manterola, always eloquent, has been most eloquent when he spoke of the republican institutions of the Basque Provinces, which are his country. He moved me as he moved the Chamber when he spoke of the tree of Guernica! We saluted it as Rousseau did from Geneva. He spoke of the inviolability and the sacredness of the home. We ask the same—the inviolability of the homes wherein our God dwells, the inviolability of the human conscience! For this we reprove the expulsions of the Moors and Jews in our history. But Senor Manterola consoled himself by saying that the Jews only knew how to make slippers, and asked me to cite what illustrious names this race presented after their expulsion!—Copinosa the first of modern philosophers! We may dissent from his ideas, but we cannot deny his genius. Without our Inquisition he might have been born here. Illustrious men indeed of modern times belong to the race of the Jews and of Spanish extraction. Disraeli, my political enemy, the Tory, Conservative, Reactionary, (if you wish), but he is a great novelist a great orator, a great litterateur, a great statesman, the chief of the aristocracy of Britain. He is a glory, which, but for our intolerance, might have belonged to us.—Daniel Manin, too, of Italy, I might name.

He was a descendant of Jews, and of Spanish Jews, too. The hon. deputy here enlarged on the history and political principles of Daniel Manin, whom he thought a greater man than any other Italian, including even Garibaldi, and then resumed as follows: Gentlemen, Senor Manterola said he would renounce all the ideas, if the Jews returned again to join together and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem! But what! Does Senor Manterola believe the terrible dogma that the children are responsible for the sins of their fathers?—Does Senor Manterola believe that the Jews of to day are the same as those who crucified Christ? I do not believe it! I am more of a Christian to do so. Great is God in Sinai! The thunder precedes Him! The lightning accompanies Him! The light envelopes Him! The earth trembles! The mountains are torn in pieces. But there is a God greater and grander! Not the majestic God of Sinai, but the humble God of Calvary. The God nailed to a cross, wounded, transfixed, crowned with thorns, gall on his lips, and yet saying: "Father, forgive them; forgive my murderers, forgive my persecutors, for they know not what they do." Great is the religion of Power, but greater is the religion of Love! Great is the religion of implacable Justice but greater is the religion of pardoning Mercy. And I, in the name of that religion—I, in the name of the Gospel, come here to ask that you will inscribe on the front of your fundamental code "Religious liberty!"—that is to say, "Liberty, fraternity and equality among all mankind!"

"It is impossible, says a Madrid correspondent, to describe the effect of this oration and the scene which occurred as the gifted orator sat down. The applause was immense, electrical, and repeated again and again. As he flung himself, almost exhausted, into his seat, he was instantly surrounded by dozens of his Republican friends, some grasping his hands, others embracing him, and others even kissing him. Tears were even seen running down many a cheek. Not only among the deputies, but in the diplomatic and press tribunes above. Impelled as it were by one common impulse the members of the majority, including Figuerola and others of the Ministry, left their seats and rushing over to Castelar, were quite as demonstrative in their approval as the Republicans. They in turn shook his hands, embraced him, kissed him. The excitement extended itself to the President of the Chamber, Rivero. Hastily ringing his bell he declared the session over, and the moment descending from his tribune, I saw him embrace Senor Castelar and kiss him on both cheeks.

"The speech has been the universal topic of conversation ever since. In the streets, in the clubs, and in the press it has been justly lauded as the death blow to religious intolerance, and to the power of the clergy in Spain. Even the newspapers which may be said to be the most anti-republican, and which have hitherto always adversely criticised the speeches and ideas of Castelar, are full of commendation of this last effort, and boast of him as a 'national glory!'"

THE LONDON BAPTIST ANNIVERSARIES.

The Baptist denomination must not be measured by the attendance on our anniversary services and meetings in London. Unlike Wesleyans and Presbyterians, we refuse allegiance to any Conference or Assembly. Our ministers and deacons can perfect their projects and do their work without the least reference to a central committee or the Union. And the result is, that many seldom, if ever, come up to the anniversaries. Increasing interest, however, is taken in these annual gatherings. Baptists prize fellowship with one another, and are beginning to learn that there is strength in unity. Hence, they meet more frequently than was their wont, and this year's meetings testify to the growing desire for mutual consultation on matters pertaining to the Kingdom of Christ. In the hope of yet further promoting this tendency to closer confederation, we proceed to