

The Jesuits

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"There is nothing generically new or peculiar in the Reformation; it was a return to Truth and Reality in opposition to Falsehood and Semblance." Thomas Carlyle "The Hero as Priest" in "Heroes and Hero Worship."

"The Jesuits now hold the view that, in many instances, a good intention can justify even the choice of less good means." René Fülöp-Miller. "The Power and Secret of the Jesuits" p.151.

III—THEIR FAITH AND FAILURE

THERE can be little doubt in any impartial mind that the Jesuit system of morality is vicious and destructive to faith, to morals, to the higher interests of the Church, and to individuals. The founder, Ignatius Loyola, was not an immoral man. But he and his followers, living in an age of abounding licentiousness and impiety, conceived the idea that God's Laws were too strict for frail human nature, and that it was necessary, in order to save souls and keep them within the Church, to relax God's commandments and to make excuses for sin. As Macaulay wrote: "The first object was to drive no person out of the pale of the Church. Since there were bad people, it was better that they should be bad Catholics than bad Protestants." While old, blunt, honest Thomas Carlyle wrote: "Men had served the devil, and men had very imperfectly served God, but to think that God could be served more perfectly by taking the devil into partnership, this was the novelty of St. Ignatius." Their methods and policy are exposed through their own writings by the Roman Catholic "Father" E. L. Taunton in his: "History of the Jesuits in England." The thirteenth Proposition of "The Spiritual Exercises" of Saint Ignatius Loyola is certainly open to the gravest criticism. (Edition, Wiseman, 1847 p. 180). "That we may in all things attain the truth, that we may not err in anything, we ought ever to hold it as a fixed principle that what I see white I believe to be black if the Hierarchical Church so define it so to be."

PROBABILISM

But the worst and later side of their teaching gathers around their theory of Probabilism "by which directors were trained to transform all deadly sins, even murder, adultery, and theft, into venial offences, and their casuistry became a method for the entire guidance of souls." (Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. 2, p.611).

What is this doctrine of Probabilism? Suppose a man wishes to do an act but is in doubt regarding its lawfulness. He finds that there are two opinions on the point; the one probably true, that the act is lawful; the other more probably true, that the act is unlawful. He is at liberty to follow the probable opinion. An opinion is probable if a single Jesuit writer has pronounced in its favour though a score of others may have condemned it or even if a man can imagine in his own

mind something like a tolerable reason for doing the act. Pascal in his "Provincial Letters" shewed that almost any crime might be condoned if some sort of excuse were found for it. Jesuit Casuists have gone a step further, however. They have released men from the easy condition of imagining some good end for the wickedness they wish to perpetrate and have left them free to sin without the trouble of finding an excuse or assigning to themselves any end at all. This they have accomplished by an ethical science unknown to those ages which were not privileged to bask in the illuminating rays of the Society! They argue that it is the soul which does the act, so far as it is moral or immoral. As regards the body's share in it, neither virtue nor vice can be predicated of it. If, therefore, while the hand is shedding blood, or the tongue bearing false witness or uttering a lie, the soul can so abstract itself from what the body is doing as to occupy itself meanwhile with some holy theme, or fix its meditation on some benefit likely to arise from the deed which the body is committing, the soul contracts no guilt. A priest who buys a benefice must, by a powerful act of abstraction turn his mind from the thought of sinning to some lawful purpose, such as that of acquiring an ample subsistence, or of doing good by instructing the ignorant.

CONDEMNED IN FRANCE

In 1792, the King of France ordered his Parliament to examine the works of the Jesuits and report the result. A Commission was appointed consisting of five Princes, four Peers, seven Presidents of the Courts, thirteen Councillors of the Grand Chamber and fourteen other functionaries. They were all professed Roman Catholics. They examined the works of one hundred and forty-seven Jesuit writers and gave quotations from them all, each extract being verified. In their report they assert that the Jesuits "are guilty of authorising theft, lying, perjury, impiety, all evil passions and crimes, teaching homicide, parricide and regicide, subverting religion and in its place substituting superstitions favouring magic, blasphemy, irreligion and idolatry." Their expulsion followed, and their works were ordered to be burnt by the common executioner.

EXPULLED IN EUROPE

Up to 1860 the Order was expelled no fewer than 70 times from countries in which it had existed and applied its principles. It has been banished from every R.C. country in Europe. In 1773 Pope Clement XIV suppressed and abolished the order. He refers in his Bull to the dangerous seditious, tumults, discords and scandals arising from the teaching of the Jesuits; to the countries from which they had been banished, and to at least ten Popes who had censured the Order. He charges the Society with adopting "certain idolatrous ceremonies in contempt of those justly approved by the Catholic Church," and with inciting the hearts of the faithful to party spirit, hatred and enmity." The Bull concludes "We, therefore, abolish and do away with FOR EVER their statutes, habits and customs, degrees and constitutions so that from henceforth the Society of Jesus no longer exists." "The present ordinance shall remain in full force and operation from henceforth and for ever."

Father Taunton observes "It required the calm determination of so firm a Pontiff as Clement XIV to do the deed. He saw that . . . the Jesuits were in no way necessary to the Divine Mission of the Church, under whose name they only sought their own ends. So after a long enquiry, over which he would not be hurried by the clamour of the Bourbon Courts, after scrupulously weighing the whole case, he issued, on July 21st, 1775, his famous Bull '*Dominus ac Redemptor Noster*' and suppressed the Jesuits." On laying down his pen after signing the Bull, Clement said that he had signed his death warrant. He was then in full vigour and health. In April of the following year he began to decline without any apparent cause, and no medicine availed. To the physician who was baffled by his complaint he said: "You will find it described in the 91st Psalm as the pestilence that walketh in the darkness." "Several days before his death," says Carracioli, "his bones were exfoliated and withered like a tree which, attacked at its root, withers away and throws off its bark. The scientific men who were called in to embalm the body found the features livid, the lips black, the abdomen inflated, the limbs emaciated and covered with violet spots. The size of the heart was diminished and all the muscles were shrunk up, and the spine was decomposed." Embalment was, of course, out of the question, and it became necessary to hasten to place the body quickly into a coffin before the limbs became entirely separated; and the Roman people had for this time to go without the spectacle of the exhibition of a Papal corpse in full Pontifical Robes. Griesinger remarks, "It may then be admitted that Clement XIV died from poison, but the question was, who had poisoned him? The people of Rome quickly furnished an answer and exclaimed with one voice, "This the Jesuits have done."

It has been truly said, "If Popes are not liable to err, they are liable to sudden death."

THEIR CRIMES

It would be impossible to narrate all the crimes for which the Jesuit Order has been held responsible. In 1584, for example, the Prince of Orange was murdered by one Gerard, who had been kept in the Jesuit College and encouraged and even consecrated by them for the deed! In December, 1595, an attempt was made on the life of Henry IV. of France by Chatel, who stated that he had come from the College of the Jesuits, and that he bitterly cursed them. Five Jesuits were banished as accessories to the crime, and Father Guiguard was hung as a copy of a book of his was found in Chatel's rooms in which he approved of the assassination of Henry III. by Clement, another Jesuit, and advocated the same measures against Henry IV. The conspiracies and massacres that took place in Portugal during 200 years of that country's history; the murder of Coligny and the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day in France; the attempted assassination of Queen Elizabeth; the infamous Gunpowder Plot; the Spanish Armada; the French Revolution—these dark events in history have all been traced to the Jesuits. No wonder that the French Abbe Arnould, himself once an admirer of the order, said of them, "If you wish to excite troubles, to provoke revolution, to produce the total ruin of your country—call in the Jesuits."

In England we remember that the Jesuit Fathers Oldcorne and

Garnet were put to death for their share in the Gunpowder Plot. It is a matter of history that the Pope raised the Jesuit Father Oldcorne to the ranks of Venerable together with two others, Nicholas Owen and Ralph Ashley, lay brothers of the Jesuit order who were concerned in this plot and who will ultimately be canonized as saints. Father Garnet's cause was "deferred for further investigation." The late Cardinal Manning said of the authors of this plot: "While on earth they wore the garb of felons, in heaven they stand arrayed in white and crowned. Here they were arraigned in a dock as malefactors, there they sit by the throne of the Son of God."

The suppression of the Order by Pope Clement was eternal, but the "for ever" of the Bull lasted only in actual deed during the brief interval that elapsed between 1773 and 1814. That short period was filled up with the awful tempest of the French Revolution. Diderot, Helvetius, Robespierre, D'Alembert and Voltaire its leaders, were all pupils of the Jesuits. As Father Taunton says, "The Jesuits had had the education of Catholic Europe practically in their own hands in the 17th century. What brought about the suppression of the Society brought also the Revolution."

During the period of their suspension the Jesuits had assumed various names and characters, such as the "Adorers of Jesus," "Brothers of the Congregation of the Holy Virgin," "Fathers of the Faithful," and "Redemptorists." These last were founded by Lignori, the author of the idolatrous "Glories of Mary" who throughout all his writings quotes the works of the Jesuits. When the infallible Pius VII. revoked and annulled the Bull of his no less infallible predecessor, the brotherhood once more stalked forth in their black birettas.

JESUITS IN ENGLAND

A word must here be added about the English Jesuits. The first formal mission to this country did not occur till Queen Elizabeth had been seated upon the throne for more than twenty years. The three most famous English members of the Society were, curiously enough, contemporaries, and joined it in the reign of Elizabeth. These priests were Edmund Campion the preacher and dogmatic writer; Robert Southwell the poet, and Robert Persons or Parsons, who was famous as a politician. Of this trio, Parsons alone died in his bed; the other pair were hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. Campion's halter was buried in the grave of Father Parsons. Parsons was exceedingly clever. On one occasion, entering a village inn, he saw posted up a rude portrait of himself with a notice of a reward offered for his capture. He immediately pulled the placard to pieces, saying to the host, "How dare you keep the portrait of such a villain in the house." On one occasion Queen Elizabeth, who had expressed a desire to see the famous Jesuit, is reported to have observed a well dressed man, walking proudly among the crowd of persons near her. Enquiries failed to elicit who he was, but later on it was found that he was no less a person than the Father Parsons, S. J. Once, the Jesuit hid himself under a heap of hay while his pursuers searched for him and almost fell over him. Another time he himself joined in the hue and cry shouting out "There goes Parsons!" The invasion of England by the Spanish Armada was planned by him. Had the Armada been victorious he confessed that

he would have advocated the establishment of the Inquisition in London. He wrote innumerable controversial pamphlets. His impudent tract on the succession to the English Crown had an immense circulation. He resorted to equivocation and openly advocated it in his writings. On the death of Elizabeth he tried to get Spain to send an army to depose James I.

After the death of Robert Parsons the Jesuit best known in English history is Edward Petre, whose unhappy accession to political power under James II. was one of the chief causes of the ruin of the Stuart kings.

The Papal Bull restoring the Jesuits was received with keen regret by the majority of Romanists in England. Sidney in "Modern Rome in Modern England" contends that the restoration of the Society in England was invalid as the Pope only intended that his Bull should apply in countries whose rulers were not opposed to the Jesuits. Had the British Government behaved firmly in the matter, the Jesuit Province in England could again have been crushed. All that was done officially was to insert certain clauses in the Emancipation Act declaring the presence of Jesuits in Great Britain illegal. No official attempt has ever been made to carry these restrictions into operation. Consequently in no European country have the Jesuits since led a more peaceable existence than in England and Wales, as their prosperous establishments at Old Windsor (Beaumont), St. Bruno's (N. Wales), Preston, Bournemouth, Chesterfield, London, Stonyhurst and Roehampton tend to prove. The Jesuits exercise great power on the London press. Their literary staff in London keeps itself in touch with all that goes on in the world of letters, and any author who writes unfavourably of the Society is bound to be attacked. Notwithstanding this the verdict of history is dead against the Society and, to their discomfiture, this has been clearly established by several Roman Catholic writers, such as Charles Dodd, Canon Tierney, Joseph Berington, Sir John Throckmorton, Charles Butler, E. L. Taunton and Dr. Law.

In spite, however, of all the opposition which the Order has encountered; in spite of all the blows that have been dealt it by its foes and its friends, it still retains its power. The Jesuit Order still dominates the Papacy and shapes its policy. There is a shadow standing behind the Papal Throne—a black Pope standing behind the White Pope.

In conclusion, the present head of the Jesuit Order in Rome is Father Vladimir Ledochowski. He is General of the Society of Jesus and at the time of his election to this post in 1915 he was forty-eight years of age. He was born in a part of Poland which was, at that time, under Austrian rule. His uncle, Cardinal Ledochowski, was imprisoned by Bismarck as a Catholic and Polish patriot. One of his sisters, Mother Ursula, now dead, was head of a religious teaching order, known as the Ursulines. A move is on hand at present for her canonisation. Another sister, Mother Maria, still living, is head of the Polish Carmelites, an enclosed order. It is unusual for three members of one family to be heads of religious orders.

During the twenty-six years Father Ledochowski has been head of the Jesuit Order its membership has increased from 17,000 to 26,000.