

CORRESPONDENCE.

(COMMUNICATED.)

Last Sunday the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, at 11 a.m., Bishop Moran pontificated, assisted by Rev. J. O'Connor, Deacon; Rev. T. Crowley, Sub-deacon; and Rev. J. Lenihan, Master of Ceremonies. His Lordship read the Gospel and Epistle appointed for the Sunday, and proceeded to give a most lucid explanation of the Epistle, which was taken from 1 Peter ii., 11-19, dwelling particularly on that portion in which the great apostle defines the duty of subjects to temporal powers. He confuted in the most able manner the doctrine of revolutionists—that power comes from the people; and proved from the words of the Apostle, and other passages of Holy Scripture, that all power and authority came from God; and as no man had power to confer authority on himself, neither has any number of individuals the power of conferring it upon another. A society or State, on its formation, may select or accept a certain form of government, but having selected it, the authority comes from God, and the people have no right to overturn such government except in the case where it shall outrageously exceed the limits of justice and forbearance, and even then it would be extremely perilous to attempt it, as men is never a good judge in his own case; therefore, even in such extreme cases, reason and religion suggest that before seeking to alter the established order of things, people should consult a superior and infallible authority, and that Christ has established in the person of the Sovereign Pontiff. Here his Lordship referred to the conduct of the early Christians, who, though suffering for three centuries under the most violent persecution on the part of the temporal power, never dreamed of rising in rebellion against it even in those parts of the empire where their numbers and their influence in the army afforded them every prospect of success. On the contrary, they were always the most obedient subjects of the State, and their patience and long suffering merited that our holy religion should at length triumph in the conversion of Constantine, and become the great teacher and civiliser of mankind. His Lordship next refuted the oft-repeated calumny that the Popes have unjustly absolved subjects from their allegiance, and have been the encouragers of revolution and sedition, proving so as to defy contradiction that the Holy See has ever been the most zealous defender of legitimate authority and the watchful guardian of the interests of society.

The explanation of these points having occupied more than an hour, his Lordship concluded by announcing that he would reserve for a future occasion the commentaries he intended making on the remainder of the Epistle and on the Gospel.

The Bishop preached again after Vespers, taking for his subject, Devotion to the great Patriarch, St. Joseph. After reminding his audience that St. Joseph, as Patron of the Church and Diocese, has a special claim on their devotion and gratitude, his Lordship proceeded to explain the Catholic dogma of the Invocation of Saints, showing in a manner analogous to that in which he treated the subject of Devotion to the B. V. Mary on the previous Sunday, that it, too, results from the great mystery of the Incarnation; for we honor and invoke the Saints as the special friends and servants of God, and the most faithful imitators of the life which our Divine Redeemer, the God-Man, led upon earth. Dr. Moran then pointed out the special manner in which St. Joseph was connected with the Great Mystery. He was chosen to be the spouse and guardian of the Virgin-Mother; to be the earthly representative of the Eternal Father; the protector of the Divine Redeemer during His infancy; to watch over Him in His flight into Egypt; in His return to Nazareth; to be, as it were, the economic or faithful steward of His Household; nay more, to exercise over Him the authority of father. Hence, on finding our Divine Redeemer in the Temple after the three days' loss, we hear the B. V. Mary say to Him, "My son, why hast thou done so to us, thy father and I have sought the sorrowing." And the Holy Scriptures adds, "He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to them"—that is, to Joseph as well as to Mary, thus showing that our Divine Redeemer fully recognised the position that He himself had conferred on St. Joseph, and that He rendered him the submission of a most dutiful and loving son. How sublime must have been the holiness of Him with whom the Incarnate Word was pleased to hold such intimate relations! How great must not be the power of His intercession before the throne of God! His Lordship then urged his flock to have great confidence in St. Joseph, and to prove their devotion to him by a faithful imitation of those virtues which adorned his life, especially his purity, humility, and conformity to the life of God.

The service concluded, as usual on Sunday, with Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament.

[FROM ANOTHER CORRESPONDENT.]

Sunday last, at the 11 o'clock Mass, Bishop Moran preached on the Epistle of the day, which began at the 11th and ended at the 18th verses of the 2nd chapter of St. Peter's 1st Epistle. Anyone who examines it will at once perceive that it has special reference to questions at the present day much discussed and little understood. Next to the mischievous license and extravagance which prevail in religious belief, there is nothing in this age so calculated to excite alarm for the future state of society as the difficulty which governments almost everywhere find in conciliating the respect and commanding the obedience of their subjects. As men broke away from religious authority at the time of the Reformation, so did they break away from civil authority at the time of the French Revolution. The whole period that intervened went to prepare, and to provide from the French nation, fitting actors in that fearful drama; and from the nations round about, applauders and imitators. It was impossible that it could be otherwise. It was impossible that civil authority should stand or be respected when that of God had been overthrown. The one being founded upon the other, both must stand or fall together. Every crime has its peculiar punishment, and time is ever sure to stamp its ineffaceable mark upon the events of history;

but we have no record of a condemnation so just, or of a chastisement so fitting and so dreadful, as the Reformation received when the French Revolution amazed the world by its madness and guilt. Nothing is so hard to correct as man when he once goes astray; nothing so hard to destroy as the spirit of error when it is once let loose. Were it not for this, the Revolutionists of Europe would have been taught wisdom by such a lesson. But they read in it, not the condemnation, but the triumph of their principles. The evil spirit which had sprung from extreme license of thought, and been recommended as much by novelty and excitement as by anything else, was now confirmed by success. Men were so lost to the instinct of moral feeling as to excuse the greatest crimes for the sake of a few benefits, and so blinded in their judgments as to glory that society was freed from certain evils by means which endangered its very existence. Since then, society in Europe has been disturbed, and Governments insecure. The convulsion which destroyed so many was powerful, and lasting enough in its effects to leave them in almost constant danger, even to the present day. Men are still so fascinated with a time when Government was so lowered and so stripped of its sacred character as to be made a mere subject of experiment, that they think they are now paying it high honor if they treat it as a matter of expediency. Things must thus remain, as long as it is believed that every one, despite his ignorance or inexperience, has a divine right to think for himself on the most difficult and solemn subject; as long as men look to the poor honor or pleasure of being their own instructors rather than to the attainment of truth; in a word, as long as they refuse to recognise the evidence of a teacher appointed by God to direct them on those most important matters, of which the greater number are not qualified to judge, and are guilty of rashness and presumption in doing so. It was when the voice of this authority was contradicted, and not listened to that the dangers to modern society began. When men refused to acknowledge the divine authority of the Church, they could not be expected to believe long in the divine origin of Government, which was far more difficult to be discovered, and rested chiefly for its acceptance upon the Church's teaching. The moment they were called upon, and had determined to use the right of private opinion on religion, the highest of all subjects, they soon extended it of their own accord to everything else. The result may be easily imagined. People who assume such a right as this are exposed, especially in times of trouble and excitement, to every bad influence and delusion, and so it was not strange that Government which men, at the best, have ever a tendency to dislike, should fare badly in the opinions, and at the hands of their subjects.

The Catholic doctrine which Dr Moran stated and explained on Sunday is the only one that can be supported by conclusive arguments, as it is certainly the one best calculated to inspire men with that reverence for established authority which is so requisite for the security of government and for the prosperity and peace of society. He began by saying how necessary it was, especially at present, to have clear ideas upon this subject, about which mistakes were so frequent, and often so pernicious. He then pointed out the sense in which the common assertion that all civil power proceeds from the people ought to be understood. It had two meanings which were widely different. If it meant that the people possessed this power of their own, to bestow and to take away according to their pleasure or caprice, the statement was false, and opposed to the teaching of the Church. The Apostle declares that all power is from God. The Book of Proverbs says, "By me kings reign and princes rule." Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar in the 2nd chapter of his prophecy that God had given him a Kingdom, and again in the 4th chapter he says that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He wills. But if it meant that men after having formed themselves into society for which by nature they are destined had received from God the powers necessary for its management and preservation, and that they were to transfer that power to whatever form of government they should select, the proposition was in perfect accordance with reason and revelation. The people could do nothing more, therefore, than choose the form or the person; they were only the instruments, as it were, to convey the authority which God alone possesses and confers. It was for this reason St. Paul declared "that he who resisteth the powers resisteth the Ordinance of God. For the same reason St. Peter calls upon his brethren to be subject for God's sake to every human creature; by which is meant, as is clear from the context, that they should obey as the commands of God himself, the commands of the rulers who were set over them by Him. This doctrine therefore is the only one sanctioned in Scripture. It is also the only one established by reason. Against every other theory that can be framed to prove the right of rulers to govern, and the obligation of subjects to obey, there are fatal objections. Yet unless this right is clearly defined and firmly established, the peace of society is imperilled. In such a delicate matter a small mistake may be the cause of fatal results. The scheme of the social contract, for instance, which Rousseau imagined, and to which he ascribed the whole force of the obligations which exist between governors and the governed was certainly fitted if it was not directly intended to produce the worst of consequences. When men were virtually told that their obedience ended as soon as this compact, which was supposed to be entered into between themselves and their rulers, was violated, it only required at the utmost a more than ordinary mistake or ordinary act of injustice in government to shake the whole fabric of society. A question at once arose not only difficult to decide, but even perilous to discuss; and still it was in such cases which must occur so often in a world where error and injustice are abound, that the excitable people, who ought to be at best but litigants, were made the sole arbiters and judges. Such a scheme was nothing better than an insidious plan to infuse into the minds of subjects the notion that they were wholly irresponsible. To make them judges in their own case came to the same thing, in effect, as to declare them incapable of either mistake or injustice. But Dr Moran proved the idea of such a contract to be contrary to reason and as unsupported by fact as it was dangerous to the best interests of society. He showed, in the first place, that there