

## IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH A POLITICAL PARTY?

The religious persecution of Catholics in Georgia has called forth from the Bishop of Savannah a Lenten Pastoral in which the current calumnies against the Church and her children are convincingly refuted (states *America*). While those who credit or repeat such falsehoods may often be excused on the score of ignorance, "for they know not what they do," yet the fact remains that such a condition is both a disgrace and a calamity for any State in which it may exist. The Roman populace shouted its execration upon the earliest brethren of our faith when Christian blood was poured forth freely on the sands of the arena. "The desire to crush the Church," says Bishop Keiley, "is as strong now as then, and in place of murder the present-day enemies of the Church resort to misrepresentation." In answer to the charge that Catholics form a political party he bases his remarks upon the statistics of 1906 and says:—"According to the report, Catholics exceed all other denominations combined in the following States—Arizona, Connecticut, Colorado; they are nearly equal to all others combined in Illinois, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Nevada, Michigan, Wisconsin, Wyoming; they have an overwhelming majority in Massachusetts, Maine, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont. Yet if we mistake not, only one of these States has a Catholic governor. According to the same report, the Catholic population exceeds that of any other one denomination in thirty States, is second in six States, third in seven States, and fourth in two States. Some of the States in which the Catholic church-membership is equal to or surpasses the combined Protestant church-membership, are always in the Democratic column, some in the Republican column: all of which goes to show that Catholics vote the same as other people, and never vote together, even when one of their own Church members is running for the highest office in the State. . . . Did you ever hear of Catholic societies organised for the purpose of preventing Protestants from obtaining positions? I have never heard of such societies."

Catholic citizens have the same right as any others to aspire to political office, while Catholic voters are to select the fittest man. There is only one righteous complaint that non-Catholics may urge against the members of the Catholic Church in this regard. It is that Catholics give too slight consideration to the unfitness for office of men who have been palpably unjust to the Church, since injustice to any American institution, and particularly to one whose high mission is the teaching of patriotism as a Divinely imposed obligation, is proof absolute that the official who thus conducts himself cannot be trusted to deal fairly with any other American institution when selfish motives intervene. Ignorance is no excuse. It is his duty to acquaint himself with the loyalty of Catholics from

sources other than those offered him by their professed and bitter enemies.

## LORD BRYCE AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Lord Bryce is a gentleman whose character, attainments, and career entitle him to respect. With many of his acts of policy, we have found ourselves in sympathy, and, generally, it can be said that his public utterances have given no ground for offence except to the enemies of the country (states the *Catholic Times*). We are therefore at a loss to understand why he should at the present time have touched on a subject of religious controversy in words calculated, it seems to us, to create an erroneous impression. He is reported by the *English Churchman* to have said at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Union of South America, which was held in the Queen's Hall: "They knew that the Roman Catholic Church sank to a much lower level in Spain and Portugal than in any other country. Spanish and Portuguese America were even a great deal lower. The average level of the clergy had sunk very low indeed." We do not know whence Lord Bryce derived the information upon which he based these statements, but at the beginning of his speech he modestly disclaimed any title to give an account of mission work in the South American field; saying that the journey he took there was too hasty to enable him to visit the spots where most of the mission work was being done. We think his remarks to his audience were also too hasty. We miss in them such a careful, thoughtful treatment of the subject as we should expect from Lord Bryce.

Trust the past to the mercy of God, the present to His love, and the future to His providence.—St. Augustine.

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