

it embraced in its plenitude the whole British empire, that is to say, besides Ireland, Scotland, and Great Britain, those islands, those peninsulas, and those continents to which England before extended with her domination the intolerance of her laws. Behold, then, a hundred millions of men, behold shores washed by twenty seas, and the seas themselves delivered from spiritual bondage. The ships of England sail henceforth under the flag of liberty of conscience, and the innumerable nations which they touch with their prow can no longer separate in their thought power, civilization, and the liberty of the soul—those three things born of Christ and left as his terrestrial heritage to the nations which embrace the emancipating mystery of his cross. What consequences, gentlemen, from one single act! What a boundless horizon opened to the hopes of the Church! Need I say more that you may not regret the boldness with which I pronounced the name of O'Connell after the names of Moses, Cyrus, Judas Maccabæus, Constantine, Charlemagne, and Gregory VII, all acting with the force of regular sovereignty, whilst O'Connell had but the force of a citizen and the sovereignty of genius?

And yet I have not said all. There is a peril to which modern society is exposed—and it is the greatest of all—I mean the alliance of spiritual servitude with civil liberty. Circumstances, which it would require too much time to demonstrate to you, impel the destinies of more than one nation upon that fatal incline; and England was there to encourage them by her example, possessing on the one hand liberal institutions, which she guards with supreme jealousy, and on the other overwhelming a portion of her subjects under the sceptre of an autocratic and intolerant fanaticism. O'Connell has undone that terrible teaching given by Eng-

land to the European continent. Nations yet young in civil liberty will no longer see their elder brother urging them into the road of religious servitude by the spectacle of an adulterous contradiction. Henceforth all liberties are sisters; they will enter or depart at the same time and together, a family indeed inseparable and sacred, of which no member can die without the death of all.

In fine, consider this: the principle of liberty of conscience, upon which depends the future of truth in the world, was already supported in Europe by the power of opinion and by the power of Catholicity; for wherever opinion could speak it demanded liberty of conscience, and in most of the great Catholic States it is already established in fact and of right. Protestantism alone had not yet given its adhesion to that solemn treaty of souls; notwithstanding its principle—in appearance liberal—it practised the native intolerance of heresy. Thanks to O'Connell, opinion, Catholicity, and Protestantism, that is to say all the intellectual and religious forces of Europe, are agreed to base the work of the future upon the equitable transaction of liberty of conscience.

And when its results are produced in the world, when not ourselves but our descendants shall see all religious errors vanquished by the peaceful spread of Christianity; when Islamism, already dying, shall be finally extinguished; when Brahminism and Buddhism, already warned, shall have accomplished their transitory cycle; when in presence of each other nothing but the total affirmation of truth and the total nothingness of error shall remain, and the combat of minds shall thus touch this supreme moment of its consummation, then posterity will know O'Connell fully; it will judge what was the mission and what the life of the man who was able to emancipate in the sanctuary of conscience all

the kingdoms of England, her colonies, her fleets, her power; and throughout the world, directly or indirectly, place them to the service of the cause of God, his Christ, and his Church. It will judge whether he has not merited in the Christian and universal sense that title of Liberator which we give to him from this hour.

But he was a liberator also in another manner which it remains for me to show you.

Not alone is the Church persecuted here below, mankind is also persecuted. Mankind, like the Church, is turn by turn persecuted and delivered, and for the same reason. The Church is persecuted because she possesses rights and imposes duties; mankind is persecuted because it has rights and duties also in its domain. Justice weighs upon us, no matter upon what head it dwell, and we seek to escape from it, not only to the detriment of God, but to the detriment of man. We deny the rights of man as we deny the rights of God; and it is a great error to believe that there is but one combat here below, and that were the Church to sacrifice her eternal interests, there would not remain other interests for which it would be necessary to draw the sword. No, gentlemen, let us not deceive ourselves, the rights of God and the rights of mankind are conjoined; the duties toward God and duties toward mankind were combined in the evangelical law as well as in the law of Sinai; all that is done for or against God is done for or against man; as God is persecuted we are persecuted also; as God is delivered we are alike delivered. The history of the world as well as the history of the Church has its persecutors and its liberators; I could name them to you; but time presses upon us; let us leave the past and return to that dear and glorious O'Connell, to see him as a son of man after having seen him as a son of God.

He was fifty-four years old when Catholic emancipation was gained. Fifty-four, gentlemen, is a terrible age, not because it approaches old age but because it possesses force enough to be ambitious with sufficient lassitude to be contented with the past and to dream of the repose of glory. There are few men who, having by thirty years of labor obtained a marked, and above all an august triumph like that of a Catholic emancipation, have the courage to begin a second career and expose their fame to the shock of fortune when they might enjoy happy and honored repose in their old age.

O'Connell, gentlemen, knew how to avoid each of these shoals; he remained young and unmindful of his years until the close of his life. I see young men in this auditory. O'Connell, gentlemen, was of your age until he disappeared from among us; he lived, he died in the sincerity of unchangeable youth. Hardly had he given himself time to see his triumph, hardly had he forced open the doors of Parliament by a second election before he quitted his seat, and to the astonishment of all England he hastened to Ireland. What goes he to seek there? He goes to tell his beloved Erin that it is not enough to have emancipated conscience, that God and man are inseparable, and that after having served the country of heaven, if something still remains to do for the country of earth, the first commandment alone is kept and not the second; and as the two form but one, not to have kept the second is not even to have kept the first. He declares to her that, although aged and covered with glory, it is his intention to recommence his life and not to rest a single day until he has obtained equality of rights between England and Ireland. For such, in regard to human right, was the state of the two countries that the one hardly appeared to be a

satellite to the other. England had diminished the property, the commerce, the enterprise, all the rights of Ireland, in order to increase her own; and that odious policy placed Ireland in a state of inferiority which reached even to the impossibility of existence. Such is despotism, gentlemen; and we are all guilty of it in some degree; all of us more or less diminish the rights of others in order to increase our own, and the man who is exempt from that stubborn stain of our species may believe that he has attained the very highest point of the perfection of human nature.

O'Connell kept his word; he did not cease for a single day to claim equality of rights between England and Ireland; and in that second work he spent the seventeen last years of his life. He obtained from the government the introduction of several bills in the sense of equality of rights; the Parliament constantly rejected them. The Liberator was not discouraged; he had the gratification of seeing the municipal corporations of Ireland, composed exclusively of Protestants, fall under his attacks; and, the first Catholic for two centuries, he himself wore the insignia of lord mayor of Dublin.

"The claiming of rights" was for O'Connell the principle of force against tyranny. In fact, there is in right, as in all that is true, a real, an eternal, and an indestructible power, which can only disappear when right is no longer even named. Tyranny would be invincible were it to succeed in destroying with its name the idea of right, in creating silence in the world in regard to right. It endeavors at least to approach that absolute term, and to lessen, by all the means of violence and corruption, the expression of justice. As long as a just soul remains, with boldness of speech, despotism is restless, troubled, fearing that eternity is conspiring against

it. The rest is indifferent, or at least alarms it but little. Do you appeal to arms against it? It is but a battle. To a riot? It is but a matter of police. Violence is of time, right is heaven-born. What dignity, what force, there is in the right which speaks with calmness, with candor, with sincerity, from the heart of a good man! Its nature is contagious; as soon as it is heard, the soul recognizes and embraces it; a moment sometimes suffices for a whole people to proclaim it and bend before it. It is said, no doubt, that the claiming of right is not always possible, and that there are times and places when oppression has become so inveterate that the language of right is as chimerical as its reality. It may be so; but this was not the position of O'Connell and of his country. O'Connell and Ireland could speak, write, petition, associate, elect magistrates and representatives. The rights of Ireland were despised, but not disarmed; and in this condition the doctrine of O'Connell was that of Christianity and reason. Liberty is a work of virtue, a holy work, and consequently an intellectual work.

But "rights must be claimed with perseverance." The emancipation of a people is not the work of a day; it infallibly encounters in the ideas, the passions, the interests, and the ever-intricate interweaving of human things, a thousand obstacles accumulated by time and which time alone is able to remove, provided that its course be aided by a parallel and an interrupted action. We must not, said O'Connell, simply speak to-day and to-morrow; write, petition, assemble to-day and to-morrow; we must continue to speak, write, petition, assemble, until the object is attained and right is satisfied. We must exhaust the patience of injustice and force the hand of Providence. You hear, gen-

tlemen; this is not the school of desires vain and without virtue; it is the school of souls tempered for good, who know its price and do not wonder that it is great. O'Connell, indeed, has given to his lessons the sanction of his example; what he said, he did, and no life has ever been, even to its last moment, more indefatigable and better filled than his own. He labored before the future with the certainty which inspires the present; he was never surprised or discontented at not obtaining his end; he knew that he should not attain it during his life—he doubted it at least—and by the ardor of his actions it might have been supposed that he had but another step and another day before him. Who will count the number of assemblies in which he spoke and over which he presided, the petitions dictated by him, his journeys, his plans, his popular triumphs, and that inexpressible arsenal of ideas and facts which compose the fabulous tissue of his seventy-two years? He was the Hercules of liberty.

To perseverance in claiming rights he joined a condition which always appeared to him to be of sovereign importance, it was that of being an "irreproachable organ of this work"; and to explain this maxim by his conduct we see from the first that, as he understood it, every servant of liberty must claim it equally and efficaciously for all, not only for his party, but for the adverse party; not only for his religion, but for all; not only for his country, but for the whole world. Mankind is one, and its rights are everywhere the same, even when the exercise of them differs according to the state of morals and minds. Whoever excepts a single man in his claim for right, whoever consents to the servitude of a single man, black or white, were it even but for a hair of his head unjustly bound, he is

not a sincere man, and he does not merit to combat for the sacred cause of the human race. The public conscience will always reject the man who demands exclusive liberty, or even who is indifferent about the rights of others; for exclusive liberty is but a privilege, and the liberty which is indifferent about others is but a treason. We remark a nation, having arrived at a certain development of its social institutions, stopping short or even retrograding. Do not ask the reason. You may be sure that in the heart of that people there has been some secret sacrifice of right, and that the seeming defenders of its liberty, incapable of desiring liberty for others than themselves, have lost the prestige which conquers and saves, preserves and extends it. Degenerate sons of holy combats, their enervated language rolls in a vicious circle; to listen is already to have replied to them!

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