

Written for this Paper.

## INFALLIBILITY, WHAT OF IT?

It is many years ago since we listened abroad to a setting forth of the doctrine of "infallibility" as vested in the pope. Probably many of the details of the argument are not remembered, but the gist thereof was that he was "the representative of the oldest, the most noble, the most glorious dynasty the world had ever seen;" that besides this he was the representative of divine rule and authority, the head of the church, the vicegerent of God. It was further understood that his dictation in matters of faith and morals to the "universal church," was marked by the attribute of infallibility, he being the personification of Jesus Christ who was the first "head of all things unto the Church." It was also shown that the true Catholic was not at liberty to disregard the words of the pope when he spoke upon matters of politics, for the reason that not infrequently political matters held a very intimate connection with things pertaining to "faith and morals." So that as a corollary, if the pope was infallible whenever he taught the universal church in matters of faith and morals, wherever politics touched either and he taught the church as pope, he was infallible in this also. Thus broadly stated, all good Catholics, it was claimed, would be agreed; but the liberal ones, who said that the pope had no right to meddle with politics, "said more than their prayers," and those who further said that "the pope could make mistakes in politics," and that therefore they were at liberty to choose for themselves, whatever he might say on such matters, were not considered fit to be members of minor organizations in the church, much less of the church itself.

Now this was in conservative England, and probably would be unpalatable to the American, judging from a thousand manifestations, and a certain antipathy to ecclesiastical control, even where an influence may be used or based on vastly more logical grounds, for most unbelievers would admit the intimacy between morality and faith, the church and religion being as much the guardian of one as of the other. There is, however, another phase of thought and argument which occupies but little attention, and that is, that obedience is required in all departments of life, although it may not be asked for or expected on the assumption of any claim as to infallibility—simple as to the Catholic believer, or perverted and misrepresented as that principle may be by the entire Protestant world. The exactions of obedience are everywhere predicated on authority, whether in the home, the school or the church. Obedience in the first is never urged because fathers and mothers are deemed to be "infallible"—there must be order, discipline, restraint and obedience; parental control must be unquestioned; there must be respect to the voice of authority. And as it is in the home, so it must be in the school, in business, and in the church. Hydra-headed rule would be as monstrous and as mythical as the fancied serpent of a barbarous age, for the teacher is not honored and obeyed because he is infallible any more than

the Bishop, and the scholar—the pupil—listens to this voice, or chaos would come again.

So the good, devout Catholic recognizes the voice of authority. The pope to him is the supreme voice; and while local authority may be the medium between the pontiff and the people in all general matters, yet the lesser authority is also entitled to respect, honor and obedience, as the representative of the higher; and to obey is necessary, logical, praiseworthy and as near absolute as things can be. Yet men do not obey their Bishop because they deem him infallible, but because he is in his sphere superior, he is appointed, and if the first authority is divine so also is the second. If the first authority is from God, so is the latter. It is his to command and it is for the people to obey, and insubordination would be as fatal in the church as in the home or school.

That this is true in the church as a church, is also true in the state. Laws are made to be honored and executed, and no secular government bases its authority on the plea of "infallibility." Laws may be arbitrary and unjust, may amount to oppression, may even invade the domain of religion, of faith and morals, as the people of these valleys have found at a serious cost. But there has been obedience, not because courts were deemed "infallible"—God forbid—not even because of diplomacy or of force; but there was as much of an evolution of principle in obeying an unjust and tyrannical law until that was repealed or became obsolete, as in carrying out another principle, which was known to be right and true, and deemed irrefragable and lawful until an adverse decision was reached in the courts, and probably even now this opinion may remain unchanged.

It is true no such protest may have emanated from the "Mormon Church" as would have doubtless come from the Catholic church, under similar invasion of "matters of faith and morals," nor has the former Church, whatever its claims, as yet ventured to protest against acts of tyrannical procedure in the home or foreign governments, as the pope did, when on behalf of his religious subjects in Poland years ago, he stood alone amid the civilized powers as the personification of right, liberty and honor, against the Colossus of the north. The argument used in this land has been that the Catholic was disloyal; that he held a divided allegiance; and know-nothingism was based on this, as was that organization called the "Amorinet." But is the Catholic religionist less patriotic than the Protestant religionist, or can either say that the "Mormon" religionist is less so than they because he accepts Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff or any other man as the Prophet of the living God, and the pontiff of his Church? Nay, does he not hold as a matter of conscience the right to value the opinion of respected leaders on politics as affecting "faith and morals" as does the Catholic, the Episcopalian, the Methodist, or the humblest who in alliance with any church, respects the opinion and counsel of his pastor as equal at least to that of the demagogue, the ward heeler, or the partisan of decided type, whether you call him

Democrat, Republican, Populist or Mugwump? The question is pertinent even now, is not the man who accepts his religious faith as from God, who gives allegiance to the voice of authority, who seeks to square himself by the principles of rectitude and justice, and who would transfuse into official life the abiding sense of responsibility to God as well as man, more likely to be incorruptible than the one who only seeks a position for what it is worth, and works for the suffrages of his fellows that he may have a comfortable berth at the public crib, without a loftier aim?

It would be a grand thing in this Territory, in the new State, in other states, in the general government, if scrupulous, conscientious, incorruptible men held the reins of power, and if these could counsel with their religious leaders, men of great experience in control. Would not this insure if possible, to the general good? The pope sways the mentality, the spirituality, the "faith and morals" of many millions; he is familiar with power, he knows of human nature, his experience is comparatively infinite; organization, adaptation, success is written in a universal language on the forehead of the Catholic church, and the same can be said in a less degree of the "Mormon" Church. Brigham Young was "no slouch"—he was a king among men, he was a statesman and probably more of a practical executive than his illustrious predecessor, Joseph Smith. But both could have given points to any ephemeral President of the United States, whose term usually expires ere he learns to hold the reins of power. A life-long experience is that of these great and prominent churchmen, and it would be folly to deny that they were not raised to their notable eminence by the Divine hand, and that they recognized this fact themselves—indeed, that they sought and received in varied degree, perchance, those keys of power which are no more essential in sacred than in so-called secular things—keys which politicians usually ignore; and so this bases their rule on the shifting sands of expediency, when they might base all national progress and greatness on the rock of an undisputed "infallibility!"

## TETON ITEMS.

TETON, Idaho, June 4, 1895.

It might not be amiss to drop a few lines to give you an idea of how we are moving in this part of the world. We have been located here for about eleven years, and believed that we always had very good times in our public gatherings. Monday, June 3rd, our young ladies and our Primary agreed to have a celebration conjointly, and at this season everybody being busy there was not a great many expected. But it was a beautiful day, and everybody turned out, dressed in their Sunday suits. The entertainment consisted of songs, recitations and dialogue, interspersed with music from the harmonica band, of which we have the best one, I believe, in this region. Our large meeting house was filled to overflowing and only about four-fifths could get inside. It was one of the grandest occasions ever held in Teton. We had a great many strangers visiting with us,