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ART. I.—OUR HISTORICAL POSITION AS INDICATED  
BY NATURE AND PHILOSOPHY.\*

ALL the progressive stages of creation were but preparatory to its last and crowning act, the *creation of man*. To make ready his habitation for him, and adapt it to his physical, his intellectual, and his moral development, God patiently labored through countless ages in the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms—in the sea and on the land; and has left, written on the pages of the great “stone-book” of nature, the hieroglyphic records of the magnitude of his labors. All the phenomena of matter, as well as the higher wonders of life, have their only significance as they contribute to *man's* advancement, and are subservient to his immortal destiny. On him all nature waits; for him the winds blow and the sun shines; for him the rain falls, and the grass grows, the flowers bloom, and the birds sing. It is but natural, then, to suppose that in the laws which guide the movements of these subordinate forms of creation, we might look for indications of the uniform course and higher tendencies of humanity, that the grand choral harmony of the spheres should be attuned in unison with the grander and more harmonious movement of human progress.

Science is rapidly confirming these suggestions of intuition, and conclusively demonstrating the complete harmony between

\* It will be seen by several allusions it contains that the present article was written while the late rebellion was in full vigor. The lamented young author did not live to witness how well his predictions of the result would be verified.—Ed.

inquiring, "What must we do to be saved?" Already the paralyzed and deadened national heart begins to show signs of life; and the first effort of its returning vitality is to throw off this virus of slavery, and bring itself into sympathy with the great living heart of humanity. Already we have learned that devotion to the principles of truth and justice is worth more than "all the wealth that sinews bought and sold have ever earned," and as we begin to fall in with the grand, ever-flowing current of God's providence, cheering signs of promise are given to us;

"While down the happy Future runs a flood  
Of prophesying light:  
It shows an Earth no longer stain'd with blood;  
Blossom and fruit where now we see the bud  
Of Brotherhood and Right."

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#### ART. II.—BOSSUET AS A PERSECUTOR.

AMONG the eminent men who have graced the pulpit of Roman Catholic France, there is none whose name is better known, outside of his own Church, as well as within it, than Jaques Bénigne Bossuet. This rare distinction is not the result of accident. The acute intellect, which revealed its great capacities to the instructors of his youth, and induced the Jesuit fathers of Dijon to make strenuous but unsuccessful efforts to gain him for their order, was allied to oratorical powers of the very first rank. As a boy, he was distinguished for his assiduity and proficiency; and in the college of Navarre, where he pursued his studies for the priesthood, he was recognized as the most promising scholar of his day. Undoubtedly the influence of the ancient and respectable Burgundian family from which he sprang, had something to do with his early advancement; but it was the beauty of his style that delighted the literary men of his times; it was the grace of his delivery that rendered him a favorite with the despotic monarch of France and his courtiers; it was the elegance and force of his address that entranced the multitudes who followed him around from church

to church in the metropolis. Thus everything conspired to promote his elevation. Within the space of a few years, from being a simple canon of the cathedral of Metz, we find him appointed to preach lenten sermons before Louis the Fourteenth, next nominated to the bishopric of Condom, then selected to be preceptor to the dauphin, and finally settled in the episcopal see of Meaux, in the immediate vicinity of Paris, to be called frequently to assist the king by his counsels.

Whatever may be thought at the present day of the merits of his *Universal History*, it will be conceded by all that he was peculiarly adapted to the part which he so frequently assumed as a controversialist. From his dispute with Fénélon he came off with the appearance of victory; and among all the champions of the Roman Catholic side there was no one but Bossuet who could make even a respectable opposition to the surpassing eloquence of the great Claude. No one knew how to present an argument in a more specious guise; and his printed works bear as unmistakable testimony to this, as the traditions of his skillful evasions in oral controversies. His "*History of the Variations of the Protestants*" is even now a favorite weapon in the hands of the advocates of the Roman Church, and more than one really critical mind, to say nothing of the multitudes who are ever easy dupes of ingenious fallacies, has been attracted by it, for a time at least, to the pretended Mother Church as that in which alone true unity can be found. By no writer have the inconsistencies of doctrine of the representative men of the various Protestant Churches, and their contests with one another, and deplorable want of charity for the supposed errors of brethren with whom they nevertheless agree in the essential points of the Christian faith, been employed more effectively to exhibit the perils attending individual and independent inquiry, in contrast with the safety of the adherents of ecclesiastical tradition.

But it is neither with Bossuet as the debater and writer on points of theological controversy, nor yet with Bossuet as representative of the Gallican Church and defender of its liberties against the usurpations of the papal see, in the famous declaration of the French clergy in 1682, that we have here to do. It is rather Bossuet in his diocese, Bossuet as Bishop of Meaux, in his relations to the poor Huguenots, whom we propose to

consider in the light which history has recently thrown upon his course from the time of his enthronization to within a year or two of his death.

The period which comprises the active career of Bossuet is one of the most remarkable in French history; and, as it has since appeared, one of the most disastrous in its consequences. The latter half of the sixteenth century had witnessed a series of civil wars, with intermissions that could be viewed as little better than truces, (since they were mainly spent by both parties in the recuperation of their wasted strength,) which had carried devastation and ruin into every province of the kingdom. The century had closed after the proclamation of an edict of toleration, on the basis of which, had it been adopted forty years earlier, all the commotions and bloodshed of the intervening period might easily have been precluded. The Edict of Nantes, intended by the sagacious Henry IV. as a perpetual and fundamental law, secured to Protestantism in France, not equality in the enjoyment of the rights of the profession of their faith and of worship with Roman Catholics, but a toleration sufficiently broad to prevent the repetition of those horrid butcheries which disgraced the French name in the age of the Reformation, and the liberty to perform their solemnities in those places in the neighborhood of which they constituted an important element of the population. But the seventeenth century presents us the familiar story of the gradual infringement upon privileges, whose direct abrogation is avoided for the time as impracticable, and is delayed until everything is ripe for the long-anticipated catastrophe. Slowly but surely the Protestants are deprived of their rights as French citizens. Their worship is restricted to a smaller number of places. They are excluded from places of trust and emolument; they are looked upon by the government with an unfriendly eye; they can hope for no preferment in the civil or military service of the monarch, even after renewed demonstrations of their loyalty have been afforded. Every facility is furnished to those who would enter their midst to seduce them from their devotion to the Church of their fathers. Upon the slightest pretexts their children are torn away from their firesides, and they themselves subjected to the penalties of apostasy. It was a course of gradual disenfranchisement, which was not complete

until within fifteen years of the close of the century. Meanwhile the law could scarcely keep pace with the successive steps of this ingenious persecution. Edict rapidly followed edict, the whole constituting a voluminous and cumbrous legislation—a hundred-headed monster that should at every point confront the adherents of the “*religion prétendue réformée*,” as it was contemptuously styled, and weary out their constancy of purpose. The device of enforcing conversion by quartering a rude and insolent soldiery upon a peaceable portion of the population, and conniving at its most flagrant crimes, proved successful in many cases where the inducements held out to tempt ambition and the love of wealth had been found ineffectual. The results were magnified by the cunning projectors of these enterprises, while the means employed were as much as possible screened from view; until at length the French king was brought to believe that the plans of his advisers had been crowned with such entire success, that the conversion of the Huguenots, which had been too difficult a problem for his predecessors, had actually been accomplished, constituting the most glorious achievement of his reign. The very preamble of the edict of revocation, which consigned to expatriation the most industrious part of the French nation, numbering, according to one account, eight hundred thousand souls, bases this action upon the uselessness of retaining the Edict of Nantes in force, the royal exertions having accomplished what they had proposed, and “the *greater part* of our subjects of the said pretended Reformed religion having embraced the Catholic religion!”

It was while the Protestants of France were thus being stripped of one right after another, and about four years previous to the final blow, that Bossuet was, in 1681, installed as bishop of Meaux. He was, therefore, of necessity, involved to some extent in relation to the work which the court had undertaken. The city of Meaux was one of the capital points of the reformation in France. It was among the wool-carders of Meaux that the Gospel achieved its first victories under the temporary protection of Briçonnet, the vacillating prelate. At Meaux Jean Leclerc was the first to suffer the perforation of his tongue with hot iron and branding on the forehead, for the boldness with which he tore down a papal bull, and sub-

stituted an answer of his own; and it was the same fearless citizen of Meaux who, a few months later, was destined to be the French protomartyr in behalf of evangelical truth. Passing over an interval of more than twenty years, the history of Huguenot sufferings is illustrated by the intrepid deaths of the famous "Fourteen of Meaux." And the Church, cemented with the blood of these and other brave defenders of the truth, had not fallen into ruins when Bossuet entered the episcopal palace.\*

How did Bossuet discharge his office, and what, in particular, was his conduct toward the members of the Reformed Church in his diocese?

The Cardinal de Bausset, the biographer of Bossuet, gives the following answer to this question:

It may well be supposed that we have felt extreme interest in investigating whether Bossuet had been consulted with respect to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. If any bishop of France must have been, it was certainly Bossuet, and yet everything persuades us that he was not. We have found nothing in his papers, nor in those of Abbé Ledieu, that can even give us a glimpse of his having been called to deliberate on this great measure; and it is impossible to suppose that if he had taken the slightest part in it, he would not have let some mark escape to meet the eyes of the Abbé Ledieu, who is so attentive in gathering up his words, so exact in relating them to us. . . . Without daring to presume to conjecture what would have been Bossuet's advice, had Louis XIV. asked him for it, it can only be asserted with confidence, that all the difficulties which arose immediately after the revocation prove evidently that Bossuet was not consulted. . . . We sincerely think that Bossuet has just claims to the esteem of Protestants. He combated their doctrines, he deplored their errors, he *alleviated their sufferings, he protested against the laws that oppressed them, he never persecuted a single one of them*, he was the stay, the consolation and the benefactor of all that invoked his name, his genius, and his virtues. There does not exist a particle of evidence to show that Bossuet took part in what immediately preceded or followed the Revocation. *He never asked of the king a single act of rigor against a single Protestant.*

So also the Abbé Guettée remarks:

It must be said to the glory of Bossuet that, while approving in principle the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, far from being

\* So signal has been the failure of persecution to effect the destruction of Protestantism here, that, in 1861, (according to the *Annuaire Protestant Statistique et Historique*,) the Consistorial Church of Meaux comprised six parishes with seven dependencies, seven pastors, and thirteen churches and chapels.

accessory to the cruelties, he was not even an abettor of certain acts of violence which other bishops regarded as necessary.\*

We shall presently see whether this language is borne out by official documents still preserved. Meanwhile let us notice that the terms in which Bossuet eulogizes the revocation in his funeral oration in honor of Chancellor Le Tellier are strangely inconsistent with this view. He calls upon the annalist of the Church to place Louis with Constantine and Theodosius. He exalts an act which had brought back heretics, until the churches were too strait to receive them, while their false teachers had abandoned them, and sought safety in flight. He styles it "*the most beautiful exercise of authority.*" He apostrophizes "this new Constantine, this new Theodosius, this new Marcian, this new Charlemagne" in these words: "You have confirmed the faith, you have exterminated the heretics; this is *the worthy labor of your reign*, it is its proper character!" And the Jesuit De La Rue, addressing Bossuet, attributes the honor of the act to the bishop himself: "In God's name, who gave you, my lord, the strength to *commence this holy revolution*, employ all the light, the ardor, and the credit you possess, to see with your own eyes the end and perfection of *your work.*"

Even during the lifetime of the bishop of Meaux, there were not wanting those who accused him of being an active participant in the persecution of the Huguenots. In particular, one Pierre Frotté, a former canon of the abbey of St. Geneviève, and curate of the parish of Souilly, in the diocese of Meaux, became a Protestant, and flying for safety to Holland, published a narrative of his conversion, which gave a very different view of Bossuet's course from that which the prelate himself sought to circulate, and which his friends have insisted upon as correct, and have apparently endeavored to perpetuate by the suppression or destruction of papers in conflict with it. We shall have a few words more to say respecting the testimony of this priest, who seems to have enjoyed the best means of information, in consequence of his intimate association with his bishop; and who asserts that, with the exception of a single woman of bad character, who perhaps abjured voluntarily, all the rest of

\* "Il ne fut jamais partisan non-seulement des cruautés, mais de certaines violences que d'autres évêques regardaient comme nécessaires."

the Protestants of the diocese of Meaux that joined the Roman Catholic Church, did it only through fear of the soldiery whom Bossuet caused to pass and repass through their midst, during the time of his missions, and in consequence of threats which he uttered even in his sermons against the contumacious.

The French Protestant Historical Society, among the many important documents which it has published within the fourteen years of its existence, has inserted in its bulletin a number of ministerial dispatches and other papers relating to Bossuet, hitherto buried in the archives of the French empire. Although much that would have thrown additional light upon the subject, and especially Bossuet's own letters, appears to have been carefully eliminated, the following facts appear.

*First.* Bossuet is seen in the light of an informer against Protestants suspected of being engaged in making preparations to leave the kingdom. It is well known that the greatest precautions were adopted to prevent the emigration of members of the Reformed Church, or of the "New Catholics" (*Nouveaux Catholiques*), as, by a legal fiction, they were styled. The frontiers were guarded with vigilance, and those who were detected in the act of escaping from the kingdom were punished with hard labor in the galleys, if men, and with confiscation and imprisonment, if women.\* It was only by the employment of practiced guides at exorbitant prices, and in disguise, that most of the refugees succeeded in reaching a country where freedom of conscience was guaranteed. Not only were the goods of the emigrants declared to be confiscated to the crown, but all conveyances of property made by them within a year previous to their departure were null and void. The part of a Christian bishop, under such circumstances, would seem to be to alleviate, rather than aggravate, the hardships to which enactments like these exposed the Huguenots. But in the year 1688 we find Bossuet engaged in denouncing to the government the intentions of some of the

\* Mrs. Maury, in her translation of the Edict of Revocation, given in the appendix to her interesting "*Memoirs of a Huguenot Family*, translated and compiled from the original autobiography of Rev. James Fontaine," (New York, 1853, page 510,) has accidentally omitted from the tenth article its most essential clause, the prohibition to leave the kingdom. In the original this article reads: "*Faisons très expresses et itératives défenses à tous nos sujets de ladite R. P. R. de sortir: eux, leurs femmes et enfans de notredit Royaume, Païs et Terres de notre obéissance,*" etc.

Reformed. "Sir," writes the minister on the 14th of April, to M. de Mesnars, Intendant of the Generality of Paris, under whose government the city of Meaux was placed, "the Bishop of Meaux having written to me that there is some movement among the New Catholics of his diocese, who are selling their furniture and seem to be preparing to leave the kingdom, letting it even be understood that they are taking away their children with them, I reported it to the king, who commanded me to notify you of it, in order that you may examine whether this rumor has any foundation, and may give such orders as you deem necessary, according to the circumstances."\*

*Secondly.* Perhaps the most oppressive article in the edict of revocation, was that which prescribed that the children of Protestants should be baptized by the curates of the parish in which they resided, and be brought up in the "Apostolic and Roman Catholic religion."† In the recently discovered documents, Bossuet figures in the unenviable light of an informer against the parents who refused or neglected to send their children to be instructed in what they considered abominable error. "After having given an account to the king," writes the minister to Bossuet, April 30th, 1686, "of what you wrote to me on the subject of the children of the newly-converted of your diocese, whom the parents neglect to send to the schools and to the instructions that are given in the parishes, his majesty has resolved to write on this subject to the intendants, to direct them to oblige the parents to send them thither, and you may act in concert with M. de Mesnars in reference to everything which there may be to be done in this respect in your diocese."‡

*Thirdly.* We find Bossuet still more frequently either the advocate of the summary arrest of Protestants, with a view to compelling them to abjure their faith, or accessory to it. On the 2d of April, 1686, a ministerial command is sent to M. de Mesnars revoking an order for the arrest of a father and his son who had been converted; and the reason assigned for the revocation is "because the order was issued only on account of their religion, *at the prayer of the Bishop of Meaux.*"§ *Thir-*

\* Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français, IV, 118.

† Article VIII. ‡ Bulletin de la Soc. de l'Hist. du Prot. Français, IV, 117.

§ *Ib.* ubi supra; "à la prière de M. l'évêque de Meaux."

teen years later, (July 5th, 1699,) Friar Leonard, of St. Catharine of Sienna, jots down the following incident :

Two heads of families of the city of Meaux, in very moderate circumstances, wrote to their bishop a few days ago that they still had many doubts on some doctrinal points, and principally on that of purgatory. That prelate sent for them, and tried to prove the doctrine to them by the best reasons he could allege. But as they did not appear satisfied by them, and would not promise their bishop to change their sentiments, he sent and *had them arrested* two days after by an order from the king, and they were taken to the prison of the Conciergerie of this city, where they are being instructed. This has obliged the prelate to compose a book to prove that there is a purgatory, and, as he is very learned, no doubt is entertained that this book, on which he is laboring at the present moment, will be well written.\*

Again, on the 7th of July, 1703, about nine months before his death, Bossuet received this note from the government :

I have sent the order *which you ask for*, to have the man named Baudouin and his wife, bad Catholics of Fublaines, imprisoned in the hospital. M. Phelypeaux writes to me that this order had been granted to you a month since by the king, but I had heard nothing of it. Apparently you had given no memorandum of it to his majesty.†

These instances, selected from a number, will sufficiently exhibit Bossuet's participation in the arrests of those who either refused to abjure, or, after their conversion to the Roman Catholic Church, betrayed by their remissness in attending upon its ordinances, the insincerity of their profession.

*Fourthly.* We find Bossuet, within one week after the promulgation of the edict of revocation, begging and obtaining (October 29th, 1685) the demolition of the Protestant churches of Nanteuil and Morcerf, for the erection of hospitals at Meaux. A few days later the adjoining houses are also granted him at his request. Encouraged by these largesses of the crown, in 1699 he asks that the property of a Protestant absentee be given him to be applied to the expenses incurred for the instruction of the New Catholics ; but the request is refused, on the ground that no civil judgment had been pronounced in the case.‡

*Fifthly.* Bossuet is now discovered to have been privy to, and undoubtedly the instigator of the persecution of two young

\* MS. in the Imperial Archives. vol. M., 1802, reprinted in Bulletin IV, 221.

† Ib. IV, 222.

‡ Ib. IV, 116, 220, 221.

Protestant orphans born within the limits of his diocese, of which we already possessed accounts in Benoit's History of the Edict of Nantes, and, in greater detail, in a rare printed volume of contemporary date.\* The three letters which establish this point are accompanied by the official *procès-verbal* of the examination of the girls, a document fully corroborating all the incidents of this atrocious proceeding, and affixing new marks of infamy to all that were directly or remotely connected with it. The story is briefly this. In the village of La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre there lived an honest man, in comfortable circumstances, named Pierre Mirat, who, some twenty years before the publication of the edict of revocation, had been converted from the Roman Catholic to the Reformed Church. At his death his children were confided to the care of their mother, who, although a well-meaning woman, through her absorption in worldly cares allowed them to remain in such ignorance, that when she died her two youngest daughters could neither read nor write. Both their Romanist and their Protestant relatives were desirous of securing to the young girls a guardian of their own creed. Happily the choice fell on a Protestant uncle, under whose roof they remained for three months undisturbed. Meanwhile the Roman Catholic relatives determined, if possible, to break up this arrangement, and finally induced the king's attorney at Meaux, who hoped to make some money by the affair, as we are told, to give an order that the children should be delivered to him, to be placed in the Ursuline convent a few leagues distant from Meaux. When it was found that there was no resource to avoid compliance, the guardian and his Protestant friends employed the brief interval allowed them in endeavoring to instruct the girls and fortify their courage for the rough trial that awaited them. But although they gave the strongest assurances of their constancy, yet, from their ignorance and child-like timidity, little hope resulted. The project of the Romanist relatives was, however, delayed by the jealousy of the bailiff of the village of La-Ferté, who, disputing the jurisdiction of the attorney of Meaux, removed the children from their guardian's hands, and placed them in other custody. After the archers

\* *Réflexions sur la cruelle persécution que souffre l'Eglise Réformée le France, etc., 1686.* In Bulletin, tome X, pp. 50-66.

sent from Meaux had taken vengeance upon the innocent Protestant relatives, and pending a decision of the Parisian court of parliament upon the question of jurisdiction, a formal examination of the children was held before the king's attorney and lieutenant-general of Meaux, with the view of learning their choice of religion.\* The official record recently brought to light confirms the previously known statements of their remarkable constancy. Mary Mirat, only eleven years of age, answered to the interrogatories, "that she wished to belong to the religion in which her father and mother departed this life, and that she would not change, even if she must be put to death for it," "without being able to tell us," adds the record, "whether she thought or if she knew that there was any other religion than hers, saying, on the contrary, that she did not care whether there was any other, and being unable to tell us in any other way what her religion was." Magdalen, two years younger, when asked if she knew the reason for which she was summoned, said "that it was to ask her whether she would go to mass, which she would not do, because she wished to die in the religion in which her father and mother had died, and that she would never change." Equally sagacious with her sister, Magdalen declined to define her religion, thus avoiding a theological controversy above her years, in which her examiners would gladly have entangled her; nor would she admit that her answers were prompted by any of her relatives; "c'estoit le bon Dieu qui lui avoit dit.†

Foiled in this attempt to entrap the little girls, the first president of the Parisian parliament was induced by the Roman Catholic relatives, before the rendering of a judicial decision, to give them an order to take charge of the children. This was executed with promptness. The children, hurried into a carriage, flung themselves against the doors and cut their arms with the glass in their frantic attempts to escape. The compassionate abbess of a convent to which they were first taken, refused to receive them when she saw their grief. One of their

\* An edict of the king, framed in order to facilitate conversions to the popular religion, permitted the children of Protestants, at the age of seven years, to choose to become Roman Catholics, independently of the wish of their parents and other relatives.

† See the interesting document in the Bulletin of the French Protestant Historical Society for 1860, tom. IX, pp. 65, seq.

relatives then carried them bound on a cart to his own house, where for several months they were subjected to the most annoying persecution, and plied by all the arts of priests, monks, and nuns. A Benedictine monk even read them a forged letter from their Protestant aunts, in which they announced their own conversion to the mother Church; but the sensible children, instead of distressing themselves about the truth of the story, replied "that their aunts might, if they pleased, go to perdition, but that as for themselves, they had a soul to save, and that nothing in the world would turn them aside from the way in which they were, being persuaded that in it they would infallibly find their salvation." At length they managed to escape from the house, and betook themselves to the house of their guardian, a distance of nine or ten miles. To avoid difficulty they were brought before the first president of the parliament, where again they witnessed a good profession, by their constancy saving a poor Protestant who heard them from carrying into execution the purpose he had formed to abjure his faith. The president now proposed to place the children in a convent for a few days, in order to test the truth of the accusation made against the Protestant relatives, that *they* deterred the girls from professing Catholicism. The guardian consented; but the president did not keep his promise to restore them in two weeks if they remained firm, and to guarantee them mild treatment. In their new place of confinement they were again assailed by promises and threats, and, when neither would shake their determination, severer measures were resorted to. Embracing a favorable opportunity the children once more planned an escape, and, scaling a high garden-wall, fled to Paris. There they remained concealed for nearly a year, until they were enabled to pass into Holland, where they at length found a safe refuge.

This is but one of a thousand similar cases that occurred in connection with the persecuting ordinances of Louis the Fourteenth. Benoit, with his accustomed conscientiousness, abstains from uttering even a suspicion that the Bishop of Meaux was concerned in it. Yet such, it can now be proved, was the fact. Three letters relating to the case of the Mirat children have come to light, signed by the same king's attorney to whom reference has been made, and dated within a few days of each

other, in the month of April, 1683, and in each reference is made to the Bishop of Meaux as a principal actor. In the first, which incloses the memorandum of the examination of the children, M. Margudet-Delanoue, king's attorney, says, "*My lord the Bishop of Meaux has intrusted me with a note to hand to you upon this subject.*"\* In the second he tells the minister, "I will not fail to continue, if it be agreeable to you, and as my lord the Bishop of Meaux commands me."† And in the third, written after the girls had been placed in the hands of their Roman Catholic relations, he adds: "My lord the Bishop of Meaux has charged me with the herewith inclosed letter, and has *commanded me to append the documents which I send you.*"‡ Could any evidence demonstrate more conclusively that the king's attorney, from the beginning to the end, was acting simply at the direction of Bossuet, whom, as bishop of the place, and all-powerful at court, the civil magistrate consulted on every point with the most obsequious deference?

We have said enough to show that Bossuet, far from opposing the sanguinary persecution which culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was zealous in its enforcement, both before and after 1685. If in 1686, in his pastoral letter of March 24th, he boasted that none of the Protestants that had been converted "had suffered any violence, either in their person or in their goods," "that they came back peaceably," and calls upon them to testify to it, we have found the assertion to be baseless and false. And this has been proved without the assistance of the numerous cases of individuals subjected to severe persecution related by the Abbé Frotté, whose narrative might appear less credible if unsupported by documentary evidence.§

\* Monseigneur l'évesque de Meaux m'a chargé d'une note pour vous faire tenir sur ce sujet. Letter in Bulletin de la Soc., etc., IX, 65.

† Ainsi que Monseigneur l'évesque de Meaux me l'ordonne. Ibid. IX, 70.

‡ Monseigneur l'évesque de Meaux m'a chargé de la lettre cy-incluse, et m'a ordonné d'y, joindre les pièces que je vous envoie. Ib. IX, 71.

§ Among the instances mentioned by Frotté, upon which the official documents have shed new light, is that of an aged and dying man named Cochard, whom the bishop finally succeeded in persuading to abjure Protestantism, among other violent threats telling him, "that as soon as he was dead he would be thrown into the sewer like a dog!" See Frotté's Letter, Bulletin de la Soc., etc., for April, 1864, 97-112.

Whence comes, then, the strange inconsistency between the tolerant expressions of opinion and conduct of Bossuet's earlier life and the cruel conduct of its last two decades? The Abbé Frotté sufficiently explains the phenomenon :

While I am engaged in making my confessions to you, I will acknowledge that what has still further contributed to my conversion, has been, that it appears that your entire zeal for the Romish religion is simple policy, and a great passion to please the court, where you have great obligations and great hopes. When the court bade you to sustain the infallibility of the pope, you would have anathematized all who disputed that imaginary privilege; when it commanded you to dispute it, you at once stripped him of it; and we see you quite ready to re-invest him with it, at the first order you receive. But this is common to you with others; I prefer to speak of what is peculiarly your own. Before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Bishop of Meaux was not so vigorous a preacher against the Reformed; but since the court has explained that it will tolerate in France only the Romish religion, and since the persecution of the Protestants has become fashionable, the Bishop of Meaux appears at the head of furious converters and the most cruel persecutors. Yet on God's side, you always have the same obligations to labor for the salvation of the people of your diocese; but you give this care to your vicars when it is only God that commands you, and you work yourself only when obedience to an earthly king and his favor are in question. Then only you make it a point of honor to succeed promptly. For what would be said at court, if the Bishop of Meaux, who has such excellent talents for persuading, did not hasten the conversion of the Reformed more than did the rest?

It was a difficult task for a French bishop in the seventeenth century, and especially for a prelate so fond of human applause and of the short-lived favor of courts as was Jaques Bénigne Bossuet, to set up his own opinion in opposition to that of the self-willed monarch, and attempt to stay, at least in his own diocese, the persecution inaugurated under the auspices of the Pères La Chaise and the Maintenons. Bossuet made no attempt to gain, by any such resistance, the credit of singularity. But a yet more terrible alternative confronted the ecclesiastical dignitary who attempted to carry out the royal plan. The primitive Church used the utmost circumspection in admitting new converts to its sacred ordinances. It insisted on a period of probation, and barred its doors to those suspected of complicity with paganism or heresy. Not so the modern bishop. "On the contrary," says a writer of the times,

“with arms in hand, he forces those whom he must believe, according to his own principles, to be heretics, schismatics and profane, not only to enter his church, but even to eat what he asserts to be the veritable body and blood of Jesus Christ. According to his own doctrine, he gives to dogs the most sacred and holy thing upon the face of the earth. As Pilate delivered Jesus Christ to the Jews through fear of Cæsar, Monsieur de Meaux delivers Jesus Christ to his enemies through complaisance for his prince. When these heretics, I say, have in their profane mouths the Saviour of the world, they will be able to insult him with the words of that same Pilate and to say, ‘I have power over thee; thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me.’” “In truth, sir,” adds the same writer, “this conduct, approved by almost all the bishops, your associates, ought at once to put an end to all religious disputes. It is an epitome of controversy very easy of comprehension by all who possess even a small share of good sense and reflection.”

The bitter irony of the Abbé Frotté was but too well deserved. It was not long before the clergy of France, awaking from the delirium of joy which their first apparent success had produced, began to appreciate the depth of the abyss into which they had unwittingly plunged. They were filling their churches with heretics, with Crypto-Protestants, with enemies in disguise. A candid and serious parish priest confessed to Jaques Fontaine that he trembled for the future of his country, and feared lest the Almighty would send upon it, in consequence of the impious course pursued, war, famine, and pestilence; and the Huguenot confessor saw within his own days the fulfillment of the dire prophecy.\* A subsequent age has beheld a result more dreadful and enduring, the growth of infidelity, restless and unprincipled, sapping the foundations of morals, unsettling the social fabric, making instability the rule and a firmly established constitution the exception. For this result Bossuet and his fellow-bishops, who enforced hypocrisy at the point of the sword, are in no small degree accountable. And they failed to crush Protestantism in France. After passing through a century more of cruel persecution, its adherents are scarcely less numerous to-day than before the French prelates undertook

\* *Memoirs of a Huguenot Family*, p. 103.

their impracticable task; while the multitudes that succeeded in escaping, in spite of their severe edicts, strengthened the hands of the Protestants of Germany and the Low Countries, gave a new impulse to the growing manufactures of Protestant England, and contributed to secure the predominance of Protestantism on this western continent.

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### ART. III.—HERMENEUTICS AND HOMILETICS;

OR, THE STUDY OF THE ORIGINAL SCRIPTURES AND PREACHING.

[ARTICLE FIRST.]

#### § 1. INTRODUCTION.

OUR young men, candidates for the ministry, who are to be the future pastors and teachers of the Church, should covet earnestly a knowledge of the original Scriptures. Very few would object to this statement as a general truth, and yet when we come to make an individual application of it, many will begin to excuse themselves, and will point out some very eminent and very useful ministers who have never known the first words of the original Scriptures. Perhaps they will say, also, that some who have acquired a tolerable facility in reading the original Scriptures, do not use it, and that many go from our colleges and divinity schools, and if they do not actually *sell* their Hebrew Bibles and Greek Testaments, they let them stand upon the shelves of their libraries to gather the dust of weeks and even months, if not of years. But all this proves nothing more than that laziness and depravity may still inhere in a man whose office, advantages, piety, and love for Christ and for souls, should stimulate him to do better. A minister who neglects the opportunity of becoming well versed in the original Scripture, fails to secure one of the highest attainments for usefulness in his vocation. Indeed, we claim for this attainment the first place in importance, as a human qualification, for the work of the Gospel. It is only secondary to the divine gift of the Holy Spirit.

FOURTH SERIES, VOL. XVIII.—3