

## CHAP. VII.

*Of the Spiritual Administration.*

OF little avail would have been the valour and constancy with which Legaspi and his worthy companions overcame the natives of these islands, if the apostolic zeal of the missionaries had not seconded their exertions, and aided to consolidate the enterprise. The latter were the real conquerors; they who, without any other arms than their virtues, gained over the good will of the islanders, caused the Spanish name to be beloved, and gave to the king, as it were by a miracle, two millions more of submissive and Christian subjects. These were the legislators of the barbarous hordes who inhabited the islands of this immense Archipelago, realizing, by their mild persuasion, the allegorical prodigies of Amphion and Orpheus\*.

---

\* Whatever may have been the defects of the Jesuits, in other respects, much is due to their zeal and labours in the civilization of South America, more particularly in Paraguay and other countries situated between Buenos Ayres and Peru. With heroic courage, they formed the plan of settling among the most distant and secluded Indians, as the only means of

As the means the missionaries called in to their aid, in order to reduce and civilize the Indians,

---

effecting their purpose, and about the middle of the 17th century carried their scheme into execution. The missionaries went forth among men who were then living dispersed in the wilds, at war with each other, devouring their prisoners, and exercising acts of the most horrid vengeance. The first thing they taught them was to check their wandering and unsettled habits, by bringing them into society. They were then instructed to build dwellings with some order and symmetry; they became more tractable, and their numbers increased. At first, they were surprised and alarmed at the novelty of the doctrines laid before them; but, by persuasion and example, gradually lost their fierceness, and learnt how to live in peace. Enabled to make a contrast between their new state and the brutish life they had been accustomed to lead, the effect was favourable. They were induced to lay up provision of necessaries, and felt the advantages of being no longer dependent on precarious supplies. Thus was the foundation of agriculture laid among them, and besides being made acquainted with other serviceable grains, roots, &c. before unknown to them, they were also taught to appropriate those they previously possessed to other uses. In their illness, they were attended and relieved, and by degrees a feeling of gratitude succeeded to confidence. After numerous hardships and dangers, the greatest part of the interior country, above alluded to, was converted and civilized, without any other instruments than missionaries, as may be more particularly seen in Muratori's "*Relation of the Missions of Paraguay*," and this has been the plan uniformly adopted by Spain in the whole of her transmarine dominions, and it has always been found more efficient than the presence of large armies. The extraordinary success

were preaching and other spiritual labours, and, although scattered about and acting separately, they were still subject to the authority of their prelates, who, like so many chiefs, directed the grand work of conversion, the government primitively established in these colonies must necessarily have partaken greatly of the theocratical order, and beyond doubt it continued to be so, till, by the lapse of time, the number of colonists increased, as well as the effective strength of the royal authority, so as to render the governing system uniform with that established in the other ultramarine dominions of Spain.

This is also deduced from the fragments still remaining of the first constitution, or mode of government introduced in the Batanes Islands and missions of Cagayan, administered by the Dominican friars, in a spiritual and temporal manner; as well as from what may frequently be observed in the other provinces, by any one who bestows the smallest attention. Although the civil magistracies have since been regulated, and their respective attributes determined with

---

which attended the efforts of St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies, would exceed belief, if they were not authentically recorded, and the happy effects acknowledged by our own voyagers at the present day.—T. A.

due precision, it has not hitherto been possible, notwithstanding the pains taken to make the contrary appear, to do without the personal authority and influence the parish curates possess over their flocks. The government has, in fact, constantly been obligated to avail themselves of this aid, as the most powerful instrument to insure respect and a due subordination, in such manner that, although the parish curates are not at present equally authorized to interfere in the civil administration, in point of fact, they are themselves the real administrators.

✓ It happens that, as the parish curate is the consoler of the afflicted, the peacemaker of families, the promoter of useful ideas, the preacher and example of every thing good; as in him liberality is seen to shine, and the Indians behold him alone in the midst of them, without relatives, without traffic, and always busied in their care and improvement, they become accustomed to live satisfied and contented under his paternal direction, and deliver up to him the whole of their confidence. In this way rendered the master of their wishes, nothing is done without the advice, or rather consent, of the curate. The subaltern governor, on receiving an order from the superior magistrate, before he takes any step, goes to the minister to obtain his sanction, and it is he in fact who tacitly gives

the mandate for execution, or prevents its being carried into effect. As the father of his flock, he arranges, or directs, the lawsuits of his parishioners; it is he who draws out their writings; goes to the capital to plead for the Indians; opposes his prayers, and sometimes his threats, to the violent acts of the provincial magistrates, and manages every thing in the most fit and quiet manner. In a word, it is not possible for any human institution to be more simple, and at the same time more firmly established, or from which so many advantages might be derived in favour of the state, as the one so justly admired in the spiritual ministry of these islands. It may therefore be considered a strange fatality, when the secret and true art of governing a colony, so different from any other as is that of the Philippines, consists in the wise use of so powerful an instrument as the one just described, that the superior government, within the last few years, should have been so much deluded as to seek the destruction of a work which, on the contrary, it is, above all others, advisable to sustain.

In this, as well as many other cases, we see how difficult, or rather how absurd it is, to expect to organize a system of government, indistinctly adapted to the genius and disposition of all nations, however great the discordance pre-

vailing in their physical and moral constitutions. Hence it follows that, by wishing to assimilate the administrative plan of these provinces to the one adopted in the sections of America, inconveniences are unceasingly met with, evidently arising out of this erroneous principle. Whatever may be asserted to the contrary, there is no medium. It is necessary to insure obedience either through dread and force, or respect must be excited by means of love and confidence. In order to be convinced that the first is not practicable, it will only be necessary to weigh well the following circumstances and reflections.

The number of the whites compared to that of the natives is so small, that it can scarcely be estimated in the proportion of 15 to 25,000. These provinces, infinitely more populous than those of America, are entirely delivered up to the charge of provincial magistrates, who carry with them to the seats of their respective governments, no other troops than the title of military commandants, and their royal commission on parchment. Besides the friars, it sometimes happens that no other white person is to be found in an entire province, but the presiding magistrate. It is the duty of the latter to collect in the king's revenue; to pursue robbers; appease tumults; raise men for the regiments in garrison at Manilla and Cavite; regulate and

head his people in case of an external invasion, and, in short, it is he who is to do every thing in the character of magistrate and in the name of the king. Considering, therefore, the effective power required for the due performance of so great a variety of duties, and the want of that species of support experienced by him who is charged with them, can it be denied that it would be risking the security of these dominions too much, to attempt forcibly to control them with means so insufficient? If the inhabitants become tumultuous and rise up, on whom will the magistrate call for aid to repress and punish them? In such a predicament, is any other alternative left him than to fly or die in the struggle? If among civilized nations, it is deemed indispensable that authority should always appear accompanied with force, how can it be expected, among Indians, that the laws will otherwise be respected, when left naked and unsupported?

Evidently, it is necessary to appeal to aid of another kind, and to employ means, which, although indirect ones, are, beyond all dispute, the best adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the country, means which, by influencing the mind, excite veneration, subdue the rude understanding of the inhabitants, and incline them to bear our dominion without repugnance. It is well

understood what these means are, how much they are at hand, and how greatly also they have always been envied by other European nations, who have sought to extend and consolidate their conquests in both the Indies. Let us listen to La Perouse, if we wish to know and admire the army with which our missionaries subdued the natives of both Californias; let us read, dispassionately, the wonderful deeds of the Jesuits in other parts of America, and above all, let us visit the Philippine Islands and, with astonishment, shall we there behold extended ranges, studded with temples and spacious convents; the Divine worship celebrated with pomp and splendour; regularity in the streets, and even luxury in the houses and dress; schools of the first rudiments in all the towns, and the inhabitants well versed in the art of writing. We shall there see causeways raised, bridges of a good architecture built, and, in short, all the measures of good government and police, in the greatest part of the country, carried into effect, yet the whole is due to the exertions, apostolic labours and pure patriotism of the ministers of religion. Let us travel over the provinces, and we shall there see towns of 5, 10, and 20,000 Indians, peacefully governed by one weak old man, who, with his doors open at all hours, sleeps quiet and secure in his dwelling, without any other magic, or any



other guards, than the love and respect with which he has known how to inspire his flock. And, when this is contemplated, can it be deemed possible, through foolish jealousy and a vain wish for those persons only pointed out by the general laws in ordinary cases, to intervene in the government of the natives, that the fruits of so much time and constancy are not only to be lost, but also by hereafter disregarding and rejecting a co-operation, as efficient as it is economical, that attempts should purposely be made to destroy the main-spring of the whole of this political machine?

Such, nevertheless, are the mistaken ideas which, within the last few years, have unhappily led to the adoption of measures, diametrically opposed to the public interest, under the pretext of curtailing the excessive authority of the parish-curates. The superior government, not satisfied with having deprived the ministers of the faculty of personally prescribing certain correctional punishments, which, although of little moment, when applied with discretion, greatly contributed to fortify their ascendancy, and consequently, that of the sovereign; but, in order to exclude and divest them of all intervention in the civil administration, a direct attempt has also been made to lower the esteem in which they are held, by awakening the distrust of the Indian, and, as

much as possible, removing him to a greater distance from them. In proof of this, and in order that what has been said may not be deemed an exaggeration, it will suffice to quote the substance of two regulations; remarkable for their obvious tendency to weaken the influence and credit of the spiritual administrators.

By one of these, it is enacted that, in order to prevent the abuses and notorious malversation of the funds of the sanctuary, specially applicable to the expences of the festivities and worship of each parish, and arising out of the rial and half for this purpose contributed by each tributary person, and collected and privately administered by the curate, the same shall hereafter be kept in a chest with three keys, and lodged in the head-town of each province. The keys are to be left, one in possession of the chief magistrate, another in the hands of the governor of the respective town, and the remaining one with the parish-curate.—By the other measure it is declared, as a standing rule, that no Indian, who may lately have been employed in the domestic service of the curate, shall in his own town be considered eligible to any office belonging to the judicial department\*.

---

\* Misunderstandings between the constituted authorities and the persons to whom the spiritual care of the natives was

On measures of this kind, comments are unnecessary; their meaning and effect cannot be mistaken. I shall, therefore, merely observe, that no untimely means could have been devised more injurious to the state, to the propagation of religion, and even to the natives themselves.

---

intrusted, have not been unfrequent in the several governments of Spanish America. In my possession is a curious remonstrance, addressed to Viceroy Gil de Lemos, by the Bishop of Cusco, dated the 10th August, 1791, respecting the parochial fees payable by the Indians to their curates, which had been suspended in Peru, in cases of baptism, marriage and burials. The bishop undertakes to prove the impolicy of the measure, and describes the painful effects it had produced in the provinces, where the clergy were thereby deprived of the chief resources of their subsistence, and reduced to the utmost want. It would seem that a regulation to this effect was attempted by the Duke de la Palata, whilst Viceroy of Peru, in 1684, as a relief to the Indians, but it was subsequently withdrawn, and the wish to revive it, commenced in 1790. The bishop goes into a long review of all the decrees of the government, respecting this contested question, quotes the authority of various Councils in support of the practice, and concludes that it must be continued, or the government make provision for men whose only care and occupation was the superintendance of their flocks, to whose labours the country was so much indebted, and who would otherwise be compelled to abandon their posts. At length it was determined, that the Indians should continue to pay fees, when they availed themselves of the spiritual ministry of their pastors; but this dispute had nearly produced very serious consequences.—Tn.

It is, in fact, a most strange affair, that such endeavours should have been made to impeach the purity, by at the same time degrading the respectable character of the parish-curates, more particularly at a period when, owing to mortality and the scarcity of religious men, it would have seemed more natural to uphold, and by new inducements encourage the zeal and authority of the remaining few. This step appears the more singular, I repeat, at a moment when, neither by suspending the sending out of missionaries to China, and the almost entire abandonment of the spiritual conquest of the Igorrots and other infidel tribes, inhabiting the interior of these islands, have the above Spanish labourers been able to carry on the ordinary administration, nor prevent entire provinces from being transferred, as is now the case, into the hands of Indian and Mestizo clergymen of the Sangley race, who, through their great ignorance, corrupt morals, and total want of decorum, universally incur the contempt of the flocks committed to their care, and in consequence of their tyrannical conduct, cause the people to sigh for the mild yoke of their ancient pastors.

If, therefore, it is the wish of government to retain the subjection of this colony, and raise it to the high degree of prosperity of which it is susceptible, the first thing, in my opinion, that

ought to be attended to is, the good organization of its spiritual administration. On this subject we must not deceive ourselves. I again repeat, that as long as the local government, in consequence of the want of military forces, and owing to the scarcity of Europeans, does not in itself possess the means of insuring obedience, no other alternative remains. It is necessary to call in to its aid the powerful influence of religion, and to obtain from the Peninsula fresh supplies of missionaries. As in their nature the latter are essentially different from other public functionaries, it is well known they neither seek nor aspire to any remuneration for their labours, their only hope being to obtain, in the opinion of the community at large, that degree of respect to which they justly consider themselves entitled. Let, therefore, their pre-eminences be retained to them; let them be treated with decorum; the care and direction of the Indians confided to their charge, and they will always be found united in support of justice and the legitimate authority.

Nothing is more unjust, and of nothing have the spiritual directors of the provinces so much reason to complain, than the little discernment with which they have sometimes been judged and condemned, by causing the misconduct of some of their individual members to affect the whole body. Hence is it that no one can read without

shame and indignation, the insidious suggestions and allusions, derogatory to their character, contained in the Regulations of Government, framed at Manilla, in the year 1768, and which, although modified by orders of the king, are at the present moment still in force, owing to the want of others, and found in a printed form in the hands of every one. Granting that in some particular instances, real causes of complaint might have existed, yet in the end what does it matter if here and there a religious character has abused the confidence reposed in him, as long as the spirit by which the generality of them are actuated, corresponds to the sanctity of their state, and is besides conformable to the views of government? Why should we be eternally running after an ideal perfection, which can never be met with? nor indeed is this necessary in the present construction of society.

If, however, any weight is to be attached to impostures with which, from personal motives, attempts have been made to obscure the truth, and prejudice the public mind against the regular clergy; or, if the just defence on which I have entered, should be attributed to partiality or visionary impressions, let the Archives of the Colonial Department be opened, and we shall there find the report drawn up by order of the king on the 25th of November, 1804, by the

Governor of the Philippine Islands, Don Rafael Maria de Aguilar, with a view to convey information regarding the enquiries at that time instituted respecting the reduction of the inhabitants of the Island of Mindoro; a report extremely honourable to the regular clergy, and dictated by the experience that General had acquired during a period of more than twelve years he had governed. Therein also will be seen the answer to the consultation addressed to his successor in the command, Don Mariano Fernandez de Folgueras, under date of 25th April, 1809, in which he most earnestly beseeches the king to endeavour, by every possible means, to send out religious missionaries; deploring the decline and want of order he had observed with his own eyes in the towns administered by Indian clergymen, and pointing out the urgent necessity of intrusting the spiritual government of these provinces to the dexterous management of the former. Testimonies of such weight are more than sufficient at once to refute the calumnies and contrary opinions put forth on this subject, and at the same time serve as irrefragable proofs of the scrupulous impartiality with which I have endeavoured to discuss so delicate a matter.

Having, in a general point of view, alluded to the erroneous system, within the last few years,

pursued by government with regard to the parish-curates employed in the interior, and also sufficiently pointed out the advantages reasonably to be expected, if the government, acting on a different policy, or rather guided by other motives of state, and instead of following the literal text of our Indian legislation, should come to the firm determination of indirectly divesting themselves of a small portion of their authority in favour of the religious labourers who are acting on the spot. Having said thus much, I shall proceed to such further details as are more immediately connected with the present chapter.

The ecclesiastical jurisdiction is exercised by the metropolitan archbishop of Manilla; aided by the three suffragans of New Segovia, New Caceres, and Zebu.

The archbishopric of Manilla comprehends the provinces of Tondo, Bolacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Cavite, Laguna de Bay, Zambales, Batangas, and the Island of Mindoro.

The bishopric of New Segovia comprehends the province of Pangasinan, the missions of Ituy and Paniqui, the provinces of Ilocos, Cagayan, and the missions of the Batanes islands.

That of New Caceres comprehends the provinces of Tayabas, New Ecija, Camarines and Albay.



That of Zebu comprehends the islands of Zebu and Bohol, Iloilo, Capi and Antique, in the Island of Panay, the Islands of La Paragua, Negros and Samar, Misamis, Caraga and Zamboanga in that of Mindanao and the Marianas Islands.

The archbishop has a salary of 5000 dollars, and the bishops 4000 each. The curacies exceed 500, and although all of them primitively were in charge of persons belonging to the religious orders, owing to the expulsion of the Jesuits and the excessive scarcity of regular clergy, so many Indian priests have gradually been introduced among them, that, at present, nearly half the towns are under their direction. The rest are administered by the religious orders of St. Augustine, St. Dominic and St. Francis, in the following manner.

The Augustins	- -	88 towns.
The barefooted do.	-	52 do.
The Dominicans	-	57 do.
The Franciscans	-	96 do.

---

Total 293 towns.

---

It ought, however, to be observed, that since the detailed statement contained in Table, N°. XI. was made out, and from which the above extract has been taken, so many members of the

religious orders have died, that it has been necessary to replace them in many towns with Indian clergymen, as a temporary expedient, and till new missionaries shall arrive from Spain.

The monastic curates are immediately subject to their provincial superior, in the character of friars, but depend on the diocesan bishop in their quality of parish priests; and in like manner obey their own provincial vicars, as well as those of the bishop. They are alternately eligible to the dignities of their own order, and generally promoted, or relieved from their ministry, at the discretion of the provincial chapter, or according to the final determination of the vice-patron or bishop, affixed to the triple list presented to him. Besides the ordinary obligations attached to the care of souls, they are enjoined to assist at the elections of governors and other officers of justice, in their respective towns, in order to inform the chief magistrate respecting the aptitude of the persons proposed for election on the triple lists, and to point out the legal defects attributable to any of them. On this account, they are not, however, allowed to interfere in the smallest degree with any of these proceedings; and much less make a formal proposal, as most assuredly would be advisable if permitted so to do, in favour of any particular person or persons, in their opinion fit for the dis-

charge of the abovementioned duties. It is their obligation to ascertain the correctness of the tribute lists, presented to them for their examination and signature, by the chiefs of clans, by carefully comparing them with the registers kept in their own department; and also to certify the general returns, without which requisite the statements, transmitted by the chief magistrates to the accountant-general's office, are not admitted. Above all, they are bound to affix their signatures to the effective payments made by the magistrate to their parishioners on account of daily labour, and the value of materials employed in public works. Besides the above, they are continually called upon, to draw up circumstantial reports, or declarations, required by the superior tribunals; they receive frequent injunctions to co-operate in the increase of the king's revenue and the encouragement of agriculture and industry; in a word, there is scarcely a thing to which their attention is not called, and to which it is not expected they should contribute by their influence, directly or indirectly.

The royal treasury pays them an annual allowance equal to 180 dollars, in kind and money, for each 500 tributes under their care, and this, added to the emoluments of the church, renders the total proceeds of a curacy generally equivalent to about from 6 to 8 rials for each en-

ture tribute; but from this allowance are to be deducted the expences of coadjutors, subsistence, servants, horses, and all the other charges arising out of the administration of such wearisome duties; nor are the parishioners under any other obligation than to provide the churches with assistants, or sacristans and singers, and the curates with provisions at tariff prices.

Finally, as from what has been above stated it would appear, that as many as 500 religious persons are necessary for the spiritual administration of the interior towns and districts, besides the number requisite to do the duty and fill the dignities of the respective orders and convents in the capital, independent of which there ought to be a proportionate surplus, applicable to the progressive reduction of the infidel tribes inhabiting the uplands, as well as the preaching of the gospel in China and Cochinchina, most assuredly, it would be expedient to assemble and keep together a body of no less than 700 persons, if it is the wish of the government, on a tolerable scale, to provide for the wants of these remote missions. At the present moment, the number does not exceed 300, including superannuated, exempt from service, and lay-brothers, whilst the Indian clergymen in effective possession of curacies, and including substitutes, coadjutors and weekly preachers, exceed 1000.

And as the latter, in general unworthy of the priesthood, are rather injurious than really serviceable to the state, it could not be deemed unjust if they were altogether deprived of the dignity of parish curates, and only allowed to exercise their functions in necessary cases, or by attaching them to the curacies in the quality of coadjutors. By this plan, at the same time that the towns would be provided with suitable and adequate ministers, the Indian clergymen would be distributed in a proper manner, and, placed near the religious persons charged to officiate, would acquire the necessary knowledge and decorum, and in the course of time might obtain character and respect among their countrymen.

To many, a measure of this kind may, in some respects, appear harsh and arbitrary; but persons, practically acquainted with the subject and country, will deem it indispensable, and the only means that can be resorted to, in order to stop the rapid decline remarkable in this interesting department of public administration. Fortunately, no grounded objections can be alleged against it; nor is there any danger of serious consequences resulting from the plan being carried into due effect. In vain would it be to argue that, if the reform is to take place, a large number of priests would be reduced to

beggary, owing to the want of occupation ; because, as things now stand, many of the religious curates employ three or four coadjutors, and no doubt, they would then gladly undertake to make provision for the remainder of those who may be thrown out of employment. On the other hand, with equal truth it may be observed, that the inhabitants of the interior, far from regretting, or taking part on behalf of the Indian clergy, would celebrate, as a day of gladness and rejoicing, the removal of the latter, and the return of their beloved Castilian Fathers.

In case the ideas above suggested should be adopted in all their parts, it may be proper to add, that an injunction ought to be laid on the reverend bishops in future to confer holy orders with more scrupulosity, and economy, than, unfortunately, heretofore has been the case ; by representing to them that, if, at certain periods the Popes have been influenced by powerful reasons, not to insist on ordinations taking place in Europe, as was formerly the case, very weighty motives now equally urge the government to decline, in the Philippine Islands, paying so much regard to religious vocation, and to relax in the policy of raising the natives to the dignity of the priesthood.