



Marie Eugénie – Intimate Notes N.152

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This is a long text dated 29 March 1836. It undoubtedly was composed or corrected on the following day or days. MME looks back over her intellectual and spiritual development. We can see the influence of the conferences of Lacordaire in 1836. "The Doctrine of the Church: its nature and sources."

« In seeking the foundations of my faith, it seems to me that I can reduce them to their most basic expression. I am Christian because outside the Christian, and even the Catholic religion, I do not have any good reason to distinguish between good and evil. Nor do I see any strong authority or holy rule to draw the lines of demarcation... The God of the Deist is a being of reason, chimerical and inactive, who has never done anything for the morals of the world. As for the atheist, I don't know where he finds reason to do good or avoid evil, or even distinguish one from the other. Yet the most simple good sense tells us that society, humankind, could not subsist without this distinction. We would have to impose silence on our conscience, on our reason, even on our senses which would revolt before the excess of crime to dare pretend that all is indifferent in this world and that it is the same to assassinate one's mother or to feed her. However depraved institutions and morals, never has a society admitted such a principle that would be for it an immediate death sentence. And if some solitary man has dared rise up to proclaim this nihilist doctrine, I do not believe that there has ever been one who has not recoiled before this last consequences, and who, however thick the darkness, has not felt his heart beat with fear before light or with admiration before virtue.

In the moral teachings of Christianity we find an important proof of its divinity. When, for the first time, a person hears proclaimed the beatitudes of poverty, humility and suffering, he is astonished; he feels in his heart both dread and attraction. This word surprises him, he cannot fully understand it, he feels that it contradicts his very nature. He feels, however, that it also elevates him; that this doctrine is not just natural; that it would never have come to birth in his own spirit, nor in the mind of any person like himself; and, at the same time, he feels that this doctrine of lowliness and abasement, far from being beneath his heart, is above it, is somehow sublime though incomprehensible for him. However, that which does not belong to human nature, nor is beneath it, bears a divine character and is evidently above it. The moral ideal of Christianity consists then in divine ideas that the Word Incarnate alone could reveal to humankind.

Moreover, in the measure that a person imbibes Christian ideals, he learns how true these words spoken on the Mountain are and how contrary they are to natural ideas.

Go to the Christians and the Saints; who then can reveal a truth, create a sentiment, who is capable of showing eternal moral truth to men, if not God?

« something that my intelligence cannot grasp troubles me, even if it is beneath it. I hold to my faith as something that I have discovered, and if I had to renounce certain reasonings, certain ideas that led me to faith, I do not know if I would remain a Catholic. Many things scandalize and sadden me; for me, Christians are often not Christian enough; the least things in their religious habits hurts me: an image that is too material, a word which sounds false to me, stops me. Is it because I am more ardent in my [newly] conquered faith, and that for me it has all the headiness of the battle and all the power of victory? or is it that there is something Protestant in my faith, and it gives in to the evidence of my reason more than to the authority and the customs of the Church? If neither of us has the true conditions of the faith, what are they then?

"I am asked how I have passed from doubt to faith, and, let it be said in passing, from a doubt that resembled more by my actions and my ideas the Christians that surrounded me than I resemble them since I have faith. But the more I think about it, the more the chain of succession escapes me. If I wanted to sum it up, however, it seems to me that these are the questions my mind asked...

I believe that, if God had given my brother, the men around me, many sinners and incredulous persons half the graces He has accorded me...sending me the most eloquent of his servants to convert me, the most charitable to lead me, I think that with half of these graces, and I have received many more besides that I cannot name... they would be saints. Why did He give them to me, to me who always resist Him, and for those who desire to know Him, why does He wrap Himself behind a jealous veil?

Conversion: Anne Eugénie is almost 20.