

the other, seeing that the component members are constantly changing and surrounded by changing currents and modes of thought it is in the natural order of things that their loyalties to one ideal or the other should vary and fluctuate and predominate: sometimes warm in support, at others cold, grudging the time, labour and effort given. This is important to remember in connection with the results of the mission in Persia, and will explain partially its future difficulties, lack of the success and fruits at first expected and so promising, and its final disappearance from the field. For, just as there was the great cleavage of ideals and loyalties at Almodovar, and again in Rome in 1601-4, so throughout the missionary history of the Order there have been spells of enthusiasm, or at least whole-hearted support for the missions in infidel countries, other periods of indifference and almost opposition. Exigencies of situations in Rome, Italy or Europe, internal needs and atmosphere of the Order, financial embarrassments, political situations in times of war and trial in Europe (the French Revolution, for instance) might take up the attention of the Curia, apart from personal inclinations to the one mode of life or the other in individual members of the Definitory, or in whole chapters.

While Fr. John of S. Elisaeus on his part continued fervently in prayer for the blessing of God on his plans "and all that Lent kept rigorously to a fast of bread and water alone", the Commissary General laid the perplexities of the Congregation before Pope Clement, who told him that Palestine did not lack missionary activity as much as they seemed to think, since the Franciscan Friars Minor were already at work there, and in the Lebanon there were the Maronites, excellent Catholics. On the other hand (by a long chain of developments, to be narrated separately hereafter) there synchronized in the mind of the Sovereign Pontiff a need to send ambassadors to the Shah of Persia, and for certain reasons Religious, as being more suitable than lay envoys: and he suggested that alternative field to Fr. Peter of the Mother of God. Mindful on his side of all the controversy among the Carmelites on the subject of missions, the Commissary General hesitated the more: for of the two projects Mount Carmel at any rate had the attraction and lure of being the cradle of their Order. The Pope bade him charge one of the most learned and sensible of the congregation to study the problem in the light of the spirit of Saint Teresa, and her views as they had been left in her writings and sayings, and then to produce a report in writing.

The Religious to whom the task was entrusted, Fr. John of Jesus Mary—he was in later times termed by the great French orator-bishop, Bossuet, a "most distinguished theologian and mystic"—duly completed it: the conclusion of the treatise, which he produced,¹ was to the effect that they had the sole alternatives of either approving the spirit of their Mother Teresa and venerating her as their founder, or of disapproving her spirit and not recognizing her: and in the latter case it would be both temerity and ingratitude. That being the position, it was quite certain to him, from the evidence he had examined and recapitulated, that all the steps and actions of S. Teresa, her petitions and the prayers of her nuns (since they themselves as women were debarred from undertaking the work) had been for the conversion of the nations through preaching and teaching of the Gospel.

He made short work of the three main objections argued against the Congregation taking up missionary work among the infidels: that such occupation was unfitting for an Order, whose chief aim was contemplation, solitude and retreat: that their numbers were insufficient even to keep up the two convents then founded in Italy: that their Religious were unworthy to propagate the Faith from lack of the talents, learning and virtues requisite. The first he countered by pointing to great saints like Saint Bernard, who often left his cloisters to found churches and save souls: neither S. Dominic nor S. Francis hid themselves in their convents. Like Dominicans and Franciscans, the Carmelites were mendicants by their Rule, and had therefore to pay in preaching the tribute to the Church due from mendicants. The reigning Pontiff had assigned them the whole world except Spain to found convents: if they founded in Italy, why not in Germany, Poland, Armenia and Persia, for instance, as well? Their journeys in Italy did not prevent them from devoting their days to prayer and communion with God, nor prevent S. Paul either: so why should journeys in Persia do so? Besides, their

¹ Called *Tractatus quo asseruntur Missiones et rationes adversae refelluntur*, O.C.D. 332 g.