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PENTECOST.

The feast of Pentecost, or Whit-Sunday, which will occur on Sunday next, the 13th inst., is always celebrated on the tenth day after Ascension Thursday, or seven weeks after Easter.

In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles it is recorded that during the forty days while our Blessed Lord remained on earth with His twelve Apostles, "He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father which you have heard (saith He) by my mouth."

When He was asked, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He answered, "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth."

After He had said these things, and while they looked, He was raised up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Here was, at a most solemn moment, a renewal of the promise which our Lord had previously made to His Apostles, that He would send to them another Paraclete or Comforter to abide with them forever and teach them all truth, so to enable them to fulfil the duty He imposed on them, to teach all nations whatsoever He had commanded and revealed to them. Thus we find in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of St. John's Gospel that when the time was at hand when He should consummate the great mystery of our Redemption, and after He had instituted the Most Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood, He made a most affectionate and instructive discourse to His Apostles, in the course of which He told them:

"But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you;" and "when the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me; and you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning."

In the same discourse our Divine Redeemer tells the Apostles that it was expedient for them that He should go from this earth to His Heavenly Father in order that the Holy Ghost might come: "For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth." Elsewhere He promised that when they were to be subject to persecution, and would be brought before the synagogues and magistrates and powers to answer to the false charges which should be brought against them, the Holy Ghost would be their instructor, teaching them what they should say.

It was on the feast of Pentecost that all these promises were fulfilled, and thus in the history of the Church this festival is of the greatest importance, it being regarded as the festival of the institution of the Church because it was on this day that the Apostles first preached in public the Gospel of Christ and received many converts to the faith.

The manner of the coming of the Holy Ghost is described in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. They were gathered together in one place, which from the chapter preceding seems to have been the house which they had made their residence in Jerusalem, along with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and the holy women who had served in preparing the body of Jesus for burial, and other disciples.

Suddenly there was heard a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind, which filled the whole house, and parted tongues of fire appeared and sat upon them, and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak."

It is possible, indeed, that God may have given the Apostles the power of speaking in many tongues, even though they had not understood what they were themselves saying; but St. Thomas says that it is more probable that they were also made able to understand the tongues they spoke, and to answer the difficulties proposed by the men of various nations who assembled together to witness the extraordinary event which was taking place, that each one should hear the Apostles speaking in his own tongue. This view is strengthened by the fact which St. Paul states in his Epistle I to the Corinthians: (xiv: 13, 18:)

"I thank my God, I speak with all your tongues. But in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I may instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue, where He evidently seems to signify that his speaking to them was not in a way which he did not understand, but in language which God enabled him to understand and explain, while giving him the power to speak it. It can hardly be doubted that on Pentecost the same miracle was wrought in favor of all the Apostles.

We are then told that the assembled crowd, composed of men of every nation who were then visiting Jerusalem, understood the teaching of the Apostles, and wondered saying: "Behold are not all these that speak, Galileans? And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born."

We learn further from the account given by the Evangelist that they who witnessed this great miracle had widely different views regarding it. All were astonished; but some recognized the hand of God and wondered at this manifestation of the divine power; but others falsely accused the apostles of being intoxicated with new wine because they thus made known for the first time to the public the mysteries of truth which Christ had commanded them to teach the world. St. Peter, in the name of his brethren, announced that the suspicion was unjust, for it was then "but the third hour of the day."

It was, he said, the fulfilment of the prophecy made by the prophet Joel, "in the last days I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And upon my servants, indeed, and upon my handmaids will I pour out in those days, of my spirit, and they shall prophecy."

St. Peter's sermon was concluded with an exhortation to those present to do penance and receive baptism for the remission of their sins, that they also might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was conferred upon the Apostles, not for their private benefit but for the good of all; "for the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call."

Three thousand persons from among those present thereupon declared their desire to become Christians and were baptized and admitted as members of the Church.

It is to be noted that until the Apostles thus received the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, they were timid and fearful lest they should suffer the same persecution to which their Divine Master had been subjected. But the prophet Isaiah names as the characteristics of the Holy Ghost, "the spirit of the Lord," that He is the "spirit of wisdom and of fortitude, and of godliness." These were the qualities especially necessary for the Apostles to enable them to profess their faith openly, and to brave the opposition which they expected to meet when they went forth on their mission, as Christ had foretold to them that they would be treated like Himself. When they received the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, they were made courageous as being endowed with the fortitude of the Holy Spirit who then animated them. That same Spirit is conferred upon those who receive the sacrament of confirmation, and all Catholics should celebrate with joy and thanksgiving the approaching feast of Pentecost which commemorates the coming of the Holy Ghost to impart His blessings upon His Church and the members thereof.

There was a feast of Pentecost which was one of the great solemnities of the Old Law; and it was upon this feast day that the event which we have here described occurred in regard to the apostles. The feast of the Old Law resembled that of the New, as it was the festival instituted in commemoration of the Law then delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, and was thus the feast of the establishment of the Mosaic law and religion, just as the Christian Church was established on the same festival day. It is still celebrated by the Jews with great solemnity.

DISESTABLISHMENT IN WALES.

After long expectation, the Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales has been introduced into the British House of Commons by Mr. Herbert Asquith, Home Secretary.

By this measure, the area of the disestablished Church is not precisely terminous with that of the Principality. There is a certain portion of the diocese of St. Asaph in which the Church of England is stronger than elsewhere, and this portion, consisting of fourteen parishes, is to be transferred to one of the neighboring dioceses in England; while, on the other hand, in twelve English parishes in Monmouthshire disendowment and disestablishment will take effect, as in Wales.

The case of several other boundary parishes will be considered by a special commission, as their treatment in connection with disestablishment involves certain delicate considerations.

Mr. Asquith said, on introducing the Bill, that "the vast majority of Welshmen had regarded the Church of England in Wales as an aggressive and sectarian power. It had been, to them, a symbol of national discord."

He stated also that the gross income of the Church in Wales is £279,000, which sum will be applied to national and public purposes, such as providing for hospitals, nurses, parish halls, libraries and laborers' dwellings.

One year from the first of January next is to be given before the law will come into force, should it be passed during the present session; and though the meagre report of the measure given by telegraph does not inform us that any pension is to be allowed to present beneficiaries, it is probable that, as when the Irish Church was disestablished, some provision has been made so as not suddenly to reduce their condition too greatly. It was announced, however, that all public and private rights in patronage shall become extinct on the date named, that no Welsh Bishops shall sit in the House of Lords, that ecclesiastical law in Wales shall cease, and ecclesiastical courts be deprived of their authority.

The intention of Mr. Gladstone to disestablish the Church in Wales was expressed as soon as he assumed the authority of Prime Minister, and as a preliminary to the intended measure he introduced a bill last year to leave vacancies to existing benefices unfilled, thus preparing the way to disestablishment, by diminishing the number of difficulties to be overcome when the time should arrive for the introduction of the present bill.

There is no doubt of the will of the Welsh people on this question; for out of thirty Welsh members of Parliament in the present House of Commons, twenty-eight were elected on a pledge to support disestablishment, and this fact gave occasion to Mr. Gladstone to say that "the Non-conformists of Wales are the people of Wales."

The Bishop of St. Asaph asserts, however, that Mr. Gladstone's statement is incorrect, and claims that the non-conformists, according to their own statistics, number only about 46 per cent. of the population. To get this result, he adds certain statistical figures given in the year books as including the adherents of four non-conformist bodies, Calvinistic and Wesleyan Methodists, Congregationalists, and Baptists, which sum up the percentage named. Besides overlooking Catholics and Presbyterians, and smaller bodies, the Bishop does not give prominence to the fact that the other bodies named above, for the most part, especially the Methodists, omit in their returns the non-communicants, who form, however, a considerable proportion of their population. The fact is as Mr. Gladstone stated it—and the return of nearly 93 per cent. of members to Parliament favorable to Disestablishment is a sufficient proof of the almost universal sentiment of the people. In fact even of the two members who are not counted as being for Disestablishment, one, Sir Pryce Pryce-Jones, once offered to vote for it, if the majority of the people demanded it; and the other, the Hon. G. T. Kenyon, said nothing about this question in his election ad-

dress. All the other members were outspoken as to the course they would adopt in Parliament, and were elected accordingly.

During the last general election out of 185,105 votes cast, 121,210 were given to candidates who favored Disestablishment, and 63,895 to the Unionist candidates, without counting the four constituencies where anti-State Church Liberals were elected by acclamation. It is fair to presume that in these constituencies the anti-State Church feeling was even stronger than in the rest of the principality, and to infer that the sentiment of the people is at least two to one in favor of disestablishment.

When Mr. Gladstone spoke in Wrexham, Wales, before the election, he told the electors that if they wished really that their views should be carried out, they must "put away the sheep-like attitude they had hitherto assumed." This is what they actually have done, and Lord Rosebery is now fulfilling Mr. Gladstone's promise to them.

The present determined attitude of the Welsh people to obtain Disestablishment is not to be wondered at when the oppressive measures used by the Anglican clergy in Wales during the last few years, in order to collect their tithes, are taken into consideration. Between the clergymen and the lawyers, the yoke was made absolutely unbearable. Mr. J. Walter Jones, barrister, and Mr. Frank Edwards, who made minute enquiries upon the whole subject, said that it was the custom to leave cattle and goods upon the farms, deliberately, after they were distrainted for tithes, and "by means of actions of pound breach, and other legal devices, to have the costs run up to an enormous extent."

By such means as these, in one case a claim of £10 15s was run up to £98, which had to be paid, and in another £71 had to be paid for an original claim of £5 17s 6d. In another yet, four and a half tons of hay worth £20 5s. were seized and sold for a tithe debt of £7 18s. 3d, and no balance was returned. In numerous other instances, treble the original claim was collected.

The sweeping victory gained in Wales by the Liberals at the last election was brought about by such facts as these, which raised the people to a frenzy hitherto unparalleled, and the result is Lord Rosebery's bill, which sounds the knell for the destruction of State Churchism among the descendants of the ancient Britons.

Sir Richard Webster and Sir Michael Hicks Beech spoke strongly against the measure, the latter saying that the Government's proposals are akin to legislation of sacrilege and plunder. But the time is past when such denunciation as this could stem the tide which has set in, and the Bill, or one similar to it, must soon become law, even if the Lords should be able to delay it for a time by means of their veto power.

There is not the least doubt that the disestablishment of the Church in Wales is preliminary to that of the whole Anglican organization, and it is for this reason especially looked at with so much alarm by the Anglican Bishops and clergy. The people of England may not be fully prepared as yet for this sweeping measure, but they are evidently coming up to the idea; and when they are so ready to yield to the desire of the people of Wales to sweep away the anomaly of their supporting a Church in which they have no confidence or belief, we may be sure that the days of the Established Church in England are numbered also.

Even in England the Established Church now comprises a minority of the population, and the majority naturally object to being tithed to sustain the Church of the minority; though as yet the general public have not been thoroughly moved to make serious objection to the present state of things. Disestablishment in Wales may for a time distract attention from the evil, as so much territory which was the worst aggrieved by it will be removed from the agitation for redress; but no one doubts that before long the whole question of State Churchism will be brought up again, to be solved once for all by total disestablishment, not only in England, but in Scotland also.

Speaking of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Governor of South Australia, the Earl of Kintore, recently said: "They could not help admiring the self-sacrifice, the philanthropy, and the piety of the good Sisters of St. Joseph. They could see them in the houses of the poor, feeding and clothing the wretched. They could see them in the jails and the abodes of vice striving to raise the fallen and save the lost."

A FEW WORDS ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

An esteemed correspondent, writing over the signature J. K. L., makes enquiry of us in regard to the interpretation of three scriptural texts which bear upon the subject of Transubstantiation, and which seem to him to be a serious objection to the Catholic doctrine that in the Holy Eucharist the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

The texts are the following: "He that cometh to me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." (St. John, vi., 35.) "Amen. Amen I say unto you: He that believeth in me hath everlasting life." (vi. 47.) "Amen, amen, I say unto you: unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood you shall have no life in you." (vi. 54.)

Our correspondent's difficulty is as follows: "Now, according to this last text, only those who partake of our Lord's body and blood can be saved; but according to the other two, belief alone is necessary. May we not conclude, then, that our Saviour speaks figuratively in verse 54, meaning a firm and lively faith?"

In reply we have to say to our inquiring friend, that whosoever believes in Christ with the lively faith which is admitted to be necessary will fulfil His laws, and make use of the necessary means of grace which He has placed at man's disposal in the sacraments. Hence in verses 35 and 47 we must understand that "whoever cometh to Christ" and "believeth in Him," will also fulfil His command to partake worthily of the Holy Eucharist, such a one "shall not hunger" and "shall not thirst" but "shall have everlasting life," because he is nourished with the life-giving food furnished by our divine Master and Redeemer.

It is clear from this that the proper participation of the Holy Eucharist is implied in these two verses, and it is not to be inferred that when Christ elsewhere, as in verse 54, speaks of the necessity of eating His flesh and blood, He is to be understood as speaking vaguely and indefinitely, as would be the case if His words were not literally true.

The words of Christ, asserting His Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist are so positive and clear, and so frequently repeated in this very chapter, the sixth of St. John's Gospel, that any other sense than the literal is unnatural and strained. It would, however, be out of place for us to attempt, in the limited space at our disposal, a complete essay on the Real Presence. We must, therefore, refer our esteemed correspondent to works in which this subject is fully and ably treated. We shall only remark here that the teaching of the Church of Christ, the pillar and ground of truth, is the only sure guide in the interpretation of the doctrines taught in Holy Scripture. This teaching on the question of the Real Presence of Christ has been constant and definite, as will be seen from the words of the Holy Fathers of all ages. Among these, St. Cyril has the following, referring expressly to the passages our correspondent quotes, and it will be seen that his interpretation is identical with that which we have given:

"What, therefore, does Christ promise? Certainly not what is corruptible, but the blessing we gain by the partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, whereby we shall be brought fully to such incorruption that we shall not need material food and drink; for the Body of Christ gives life, and through our partaking thereof leads to incorruption."

St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church have spoken with equal clearness on this subject.

THE SPIRIT OF OUR AGE.

We have frequently had occasion to quote the sayings of Protestant clergymen, both in Canada and the United States, who have braved the indignation of Apapists and other fanatics by doing justice to Catholics and repudiating in the name of Christianity and humanity the bigotry of those who under various names have attempted from time to time to raise a persecution against Catholics by representations of "Roman Catholic aggressions" which had no existence except in the imaginations of those who were endeavoring to excite a no-Popery crusade at the time.

From the frequency of these manifestations of liberality, and the prominent position occupied by the clergymen who have in this way given expression to their feelings, it might be supposed that a majority of the Protestant clergy are of this way of thinking. We would be rejoiced to give them due credit if such were really the case;

but that the facts are otherwise is too evident for us to hope to conceal the truth, even if we desired to do so.

This, however, we do not wish to do, as it would be an act of treason to our co-religionists to lull them into a false security at a critical moment when fanaticism is putting forth incredible efforts to inaugurate an era of intolerance.

We have had many proofs of this during those periods when the wave of bigotry passed through Ontario. At the meetings of the various synods, conferences, presbyteries, etc., which have been held throughout this Province, there have not been wanting men who have set themselves to stem the torrent, and who have struggled manfully to this end, but their efforts were invariably unsuccessful, and they have been borne down by the avalanche of votes against them. Ability and learning were usually arrayed on the side of toleration, but where numbers predominated, these qualities count only on the preponderance of argument. The voice of the multitude prevails when the votes are counted.

A new instance of this condition of affairs occurred at a Methodist convention of the New England States held at Waltham, Mass., on April 18. A report was read by the Rev. Dr. E. K. Stratton, in which it was said that "The power of Rome has been lessened in its old strongholds, and now an effort is being made towards massing Rome's forces on these shores. This effort has been successful to such an extent that the statement is made that in no country in the world is the power of Popery so strong as in America."

Some extracts were then given purporting to be from Abraham Lincoln, Dr. Joseph Cook, and Reverend Dr. McGlynn. The utterances attributed to Dr. McGlynn were stated to have been made "while he was riding the high wave of Protestant popularity."

As he reached this point, Dr. Stratton, to exhibit his wit, remarked "that was when he was honest."

The report then proceeded to state that New York is ruled by Romanism, the daily press of Boston is almost entirely in the hands of Romanists, the navy, and the public offices in Washington are filled by Romanists, and, in the belief of the committee, a crisis in national affairs is coming rapidly.

The Government of New York city has undoubtedly a large proportion of Catholics in it simply for the reason that Catholics form a majority of the population of New York, and by the laws of the country the majority rule. It is not to be supposed that the Catholics will ostracize themselves. Nevertheless Protestants have their full share in the Government, and though we have not at hand the statistics which would show the full state of the case, we have reason to believe as a certainty that Protestants have more than their share, through the liberality of the Catholic majority.

It is the custom with politico religious orators of the class which made this report to consider every man with a name at all resembling an Irish name to be a Catholic, when it serves their purpose to do so. Thus Mr. Richard Croker, who is considered to be the chief man in controlling the municipal destiny of New York city, is assumed to be a Catholic simply because he was born in Ireland fifty-three years ago. He came to America a child, and he has been all his life, we may say, an American citizen. He is said to have nominated nine men of his choice to represent New York city in the State Senate, and it is taken for granted that his nominees will be elected. But Mr. Croker is not a Catholic, so that, it appears, the New England Methodist ministers are altogether astray in their statements. But they have no care for this. It is their business, or they make it their business, to make a charge against Catholics, and they manipulate facts to suit their theory, or rather their iniquitous designs.

Boston is very nearly one-half Catholic. Indeed throughout the New England States Catholics have so progressed in numbers that they are a most important factor of the population. It is not much to be wondered at that the Catholics should exercise considerable influence in political matters in these States, the more so because they are particularly numerous in the cities, as in Boston, Burlington, Falls River, Lowell, etc.

The Methodist ministers of New England are altogether mistaken if they suppose that Catholics will be a nonentity in the municipal government of these cities, or of the States, in the government of which by the nature of things the cities exercise considerable influence.

Boston, though almost half Catholic, was controlled for two or three years by an anti-Catholic clique of one hundred, who managed during that period, by procuring the registration of some twenty thousand women voters, to supersede the most honest and economical Government that ever managed the city's affairs; and during the short time that it was under the control of Methodist and Baptist divines the voters had time to regret their apathy in allowing such a clique to rule. They will probably never again get the reins of the city government into their hands; though they may whine against Catholic municipal government. We are happy to say that during the period of Methodist and Baptist clerical mismanagement there were no Catholics permitted to remain in office, where these gentlemen had sufficient authority to keep them out.