

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1916

MATERIALISTIC ASSUMPTIONS

In a recent article commending the great work that Newman Hall, with-out sufficient appreciation or co-operation, is attempting to do for Catholic students in the various departments of Toronto University, we said:

"In the lecture room day after day, week after week, and year after year our Catholic students must listen to the assumptions of agnostics and materialistic evolutionists."

This we considered a mere statement of fact which would be accepted by any educated Catholic conversant with conditions quite as a matter of course. A correspondent, however, boldly challenges the statement and denies the fact. Now we meant no aspersion on the University Professors. They are not Catholics; that is all. They may not call themselves materialists; indeed they may claim to be Christians with as good right as many ministers of the Gospel whose preaching is subversive of the fundamental truths of Christianity.

Materialistic evolution is, nevertheless, a widely accepted scientific assumption in the University. In the University Monthly (November 1912) Professor McCallum did not confine himself to physical science but boldly attacked the antiquated and outworn theology which clung to miracles and scornfully warned sleepy and ignorant theologians to readjust their views if they would keep "even their present tenuous hold on the man in the street."

"The man in the street does not believe in miracles. A religion that is based on miracles, or makes belief in miracles a cardinal point in its creed, is certain in this modern day, to fail to appeal to the average individual. Scepticism is in the air he breathes, and a miracle is a stumbling-block in his path to religious belief. When he is told, on the one hand, that life was brought into being by a special act of the Deity, and, on the other, that the man of science attributes its origin to the operation of natural forces, there can be only one result in the long run."

Our esteemed Catholic correspondent will admit that this is not "misinformation", but an ex-cathedra pronouncement which goes far to justify the statement to which he objects. Moreover, until within the last couple of years biology was an obligatory subject in all the courses, so that our Catholic students were compelled to listen to materialistic assumptions which Professor McCallum very frankly admits are incompatible with "a religion based on miracles or that makes belief in miracles a cardinal point in its creed."

On this very subject Dr. Moynihan, in the Ecclesiastical Review, in an admirable article, Miracles and Modern Thought, shows how the materialistic assumptions to which we have referred clash with fundamental Catholic truth.

"The Christian religion stands or falls with miracles. They formed an integral part of our Lord's ministry; they are the sureties of his stupendous claims; they are bound up with the world's conception of Him—the Christ men believe in is One who as Gregory the Great has said, revealed Himself sometimes in words, sometimes in deeds of power; and they constitute the web and woof of the Gospels. The fact that Christ wrought miracles is the best attested fact in the story of His life; and if they are torn from that story and eliminated from that life, the gospels become a heap of ruins and Christ Himself almost a mythical personage."

"And against miracles all who, for many years past have labored to shatter the worth of Christian revelation, have in every case directed their fiercest assaults. To dis-

credit miracles, or to whittle them away by reducing them to purely natural occurrences, has been the supreme aim and ambition of those who have resolved that 'in the person of Christ no supernaturalism shall be suffered to remain.'"

"Pantheists and deists, sceptics, agnostics and materialists are divided by gulfs and gaps from one another; but in spite of their warring views on the meaning of the universe, they are fast wedded to the theory that all phenomena, whether of matter or life or mind or personality, are but so many links in an unbroken chain of cause and effect. Whatever exists, they maintain, has come to be what it is in a purely natural way; the present is the inevitable outcome of the past, the future will be the necessary result of forces in operation at present. It is the mechanistic view of nature born in the very dawn of modern philosophy, with which miracles at once come into sharp collision wherever or whenever the subject is broached."

It is, of course, quite impossible here to reproduce or even summarize Dr. Moynihan's excellent review of conflict between this crude scientific dogmatism and Christian revelation; but a sentence or two more may serve a useful purpose:

"Of late years the trend of science has undeniably set against the extension of mechanism beyond the frontiers of inorganic nature. Dr. Hans Driesch, who in days gone by was an ardent advocate of mechanism, now stigmatizes it as 'an uncritical dogmatism of a materialistic mode of thought.' Dr. J. S. Haldane, of Oxford, has recently subjected mechanism to a searching analysis and does not mince his words to express his contempt for it: 'I should as soon go back to the mythology of our Saxon forefathers as to the mechanistic physiology.' In Europe among the younger generation of biologists, destructive criticism of the older physiology is cropping up on all sides."

The conclusion is this: when the University "man of science attributes the origin of life to the operation of natural forces," the Catholic student should be put in touch with the best Catholic criticism of such theories and he will find that even in the judgment of non-Catholic scientists such views are merely "an uncritical dogmatism of a materialistic mode of thought." This we conceive to be one of the important features of the work of Newman Hall. Its finances should allow it to have a good reference library and to place at the disposal of the students all that is best in current Catholic literature.

FOR CATHOLIC SOLDIERS

Will you allow me space in your columns to make an appeal to my co-religionists? Hitherto my list of home correspondents has been balanced that of the soldiers at the front. But I have now received, somewhat unexpectedly long lists of names of Catholic soldiers—many of them Irish—mainly sent by our chaplains, and I am desirous of as speedily as possible putting these heroes into touch with co-religionists who will undertake to write an occasional letter and send in addition little articles of Catholic devotion.

Although my appeal is to Catholics, I feel sure, among so vast an army of readers as your admirable paper possesses, there must be large numbers of such.

H. M. N. CUNNINGHAM, Catholic Soldiers' Correspondence Guild, 15 Bramham-gardens, South Kensington, England.

A kind-hearted reader who read the above appeal in the Daily Mirror of London, England, has requested us to reproduce it in the columns of the RECORD. She herself wrote and she tells us that an interesting correspondence ensued with a Catholic soldier at the front.

It must be remembered that even on the firing line periods of feverish activity alternate with periods of dreary, heartbreaking, monotonous waiting.

Correspondence with Catholic soldiers opens up a field for Catholic sympathy, helpfulness and charity. It, moreover, helps to bring home to the individual what the whole population of the Empire is beginning to realize more or less during the War, namely that there are common ideals and common interests for which all are willing to fight and if need be die.

Not only to the individual soldier but to the individual who corresponds with him will the experience be useful. It blesses him who gives and him who receives. It affords an opportunity to help and encourage a fellow-Catholic in the practice of his

religion and at the same time to give deeper significance to his sentiment of patriotism.

Write, not to us, but to the address given above.

DEATH OF MRS. FOLEY

Mrs. Mary Foley, widow of Maurice Foley, and mother of Rev. Dr. William Foley, rector of St. Mary's Cathedral, Halifax, N. S., passed away Thursday, April 18, at her residence, 136 Queen street. There will be wide sympathy with Rev. Dr. Foley and the other members of the family, who include his brother Maurice of this city, and John, in the United States, and sister, Mrs. M. McAviney, of New Jersey. Three grandchildren, children of a deceased daughter, resided with the deceased lady. Mrs. Foley was a fine type of womanhood, charitable and motherly. She leaves a wide circle of friends to mourn her demise. She has been ill over a year and her death was not, therefore, unexpected.—Halifax Daily Echo.

The Rev. Dr. William Foley, of Halifax, has for many years been a valued contributor to the columns of THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

Many readers of his editorials (first page) will join with us in extending sympathy to the bereaved family and praying for the repose of the soul of the valiant woman who has closed a long and useful life with a happy death.

EASTER'S MESSAGE AND THE MAN WHO MISSED IT

If there be one man more than another for whom Eastertide has a message, it is the man who spent it outside a church. Such a man has so many questions that he can never hope to solve by purely natural methods. What is the purpose of this mystery which men call life? What is man's ultimate end? Philosophers of all ages have sought the solution of such problems and after writing reams have found them wholly inscrutable. To-day the desire for truth grows more insistent than ever. The war has brought new problems. Before the war, there were people who found great comfort in the belief that the human race was steadily advancing to the goal of perfection by a purely natural process of development. There may be still such sanguine persons to-day, but they do not live in the war-zone. The thousands whose homes have been destroyed and who have seen their dear ones murdered in cold blood by a "cultured" foe must find it hard to believe in moral evolution. The war has discredited the old shibboleths of armchair agnostics. The man in the street has been thinking during the war. He has come to the conclusion that there is something wrong with the world. What is lacking? A lack there is beyond question. Why should two thousand years of civilization culminate in this most bloody war of all history? The man in the street feels pessimistic. But there is a brighter side of the question. Those who stepped into a Catholic Church this Eastertide found no lack of light upon the path. They were treated to no vague speculations or shadowy theories, but had placed before them, in various shapes, the truth that the life of man for its proper completion must be directed to God and that only by seeking the supernatural can life on the human race find release from its sorrows.

There is an attraction about Easter that draws some men to Church who had forgotten the habit for the rest of the year. Sometimes that return to church at Eastertide is the beginning of a lifelong habit. What other season can impress the mind like Eastertide and the week that precedes it? Palm Sunday comes with joyful procession and bright waving branches. It is the commemoration of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Sadness swiftly succeeds in the story of the Passion. The fickle multitude forsakes the Messiah; its adoration changes to outrage. Even those who had sung the Hosanna were ready to cry: Crucify Him.

Upon Him whose whole life was one long, loving sacrifice, the Church fixes our eyes at this holy season. Out in the world, men's minds are distracted with passing schemes of pleasure, gain or ambition. But near the altar of the Crucified, the light of truth grows clear. The need of a supernatural aim is seen in its true proportions. The events of history are invested with new light. Pagan empires have waxed and waned, Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage passed like pictures of a dream. But Jesus Christ remains. As He hung on the Cross in that awful agony of Calvary, between two male-

factors, mocked at by a faithless mob, who among his proud persecutors could have had more to do with a vague inkling that this poor abandoned Galilean was really God? They had the wisdom of the world, and it misled them just the same as it misleads thousands to-day. No man is really wise whose life is not directed to God as the ultimate end. Only Christianity can banish the spectre of war. Till the principles of Christianity are actually accepted as the basic principles of government, so long will lasting peace be merely a dream.

So Eastertide has a practical message for every thinking man. It is, as it were, an annual retreat from which to derive new strength and wisdom for the coming year. Even the War, in the light of the sacrifice of Calvary, is shown to be no pure evil. Out of sorrow and death, God can bring blessing in His own good time. Without the darkness of Good Friday, there would never have been the joyous resurrection of Easter Sunday. No cross, no crown, is as true to-day as ever. It is a basic principle of the Christian life.

INCONSISTENCY

It is very difficult to get the viewpoint, to gauge the mentality of the people of Ontario, especially that element that is bent upon reforming the country. We were held up recently by a gentleman who asked us in trembling accents "Do you think that terrible demon will be slain?" We thought that possibly the man was demented or that some monster in human form had appeared in our midst. "What demon?" said we. "Why, the demon rum!" he replied. Now that man could see only one evil in the world. Just one demon, while there were several others close at hand chuckling to themselves, and we can imagine that the aforesaid one was winking at them. Moreover, that man was firmly convinced, that, if Prohibition passed, the country would be saved. He put too much faith in politicians.

That shrewd philosopher, The Khan, who made the Toronto Star worth the price when he wrote for it, penned some reflections on the occasion of the agitation against the Ne Temere decree that are very apropos. "The Methodists," says Old Twilight, "are getting real sassy over this Nay Tamary business. They say that they are going to take the matter before their several Governments—by judges. It looks to me as if they wanted to have some more laws passed. Now that's where the whole trouble comes in with the Protestant part of this great country. We are always making an appeal or a squeal to Caesar, in spite of the fact that we have been warned not to put our faith in princes. The only part of this Dominion that doesn't put its faith in princes is Quebec. They put their trust in the Church or the Lord. The only Church in Canada that can shut up a saloon, without an appeal to Caesar, is in Quebec. The only place in Canada where a filthy play or a ribald publication can be put out of business, without an appeal to Caesar, is Quebec. If one of the great churches of this Province were to order Mr. Clancy to close up the Dew Drop Inn and sell no more booze, it would only cause unwonted hilarity in the bar, and Mr. Clancy would have to open an extra keg. Down in Quebec Mr. Clancy would know that his goose was cooked. We're all the time appealing to Caesar, and after all, what has Caesar done for us? Of course, when we want anything done, we ask the Lord to do it; but that's only a bluff. We really put our faith in princes; for we rush off and give the job to Caesar." No one can deny the Khan's contention: for to-day Quebec, though it has not passed Prohibition, is the most temperate of all the provinces. It is true that the civil power can assist the Church, by removing occasions of sin, but this wholesale State regulation of morality, that is being now attempted, is Socialism, pure and simple.

It is another aspect of this question, however, that has suggested this article. It is not strange that many of these red-hot prohibitionists seem to be blind to other and greater vices that are in our midst? The Government of this Province will give no quarter to what is not an evil in itself and will tolerate what is a positive evil, for example immoral plays and literature. Of course it will point to its Board of Censors and the Purity Leagues; but we may well ask with Old Twilight: what have they done? We do not expect that the State, or the Church

itself, can prevent all immorality, so long as human nature is human nature. But what the State could do, if it wasn't bluffing, is to prohibit the sale of scurrilous publications and post-cards and posters that make undisciplined appeals to animalism. To take an instance in point, how common it is to hear a newsboy on a train shout out "Toronto Globe, Jack Cannuck, Police Gazette." We wonder that the Sons of the Heather have not protested against their bible being named in the same breath with these publications. Perhaps it is their proverbial slowness of perception that prevents them from seeing the humor of the situation. It were bad enough to have these immoral sheets kept under the counter in some hole-in-the-corner book store, but when they are offered for sale in public railway cars, on which travel people from all parts of the country and even from overseas, we are offering gratuitous insult to strangers, calumniating the decent people of this country and advertising our own shame before the world.

It is this inconsistency that disgusts many people with these emotional moral waves that pass over the country. Prohibition, if it were enforced, would no doubt prove at least a present blessing, but there is a danger that, when this emotion has subsided and the politicians come out from under cover, the situation will be worse than ever. While we accord all praise to those who throw their energy into any movement that seems, in their judgment, calculated to lessen the evils of intemperance, it is well to remember that the viewpoint of Protestants is not ours. Many of them are opposed to the use of liquor on Manichaean principles, believing it to be an evil in itself. Others, and they constitute the most sincere element, are opposed to it from humanitarian motives, because of the misery that it causes. Others condemn it on economic principles and not a few because its abuse jars on their sense of outward decorum. Now none of these motives are necessarily supernatural nor are the remedies suggested. "All the glory of the King's daughter is from within" is not a popular axiom of morality outside the Church. Outward respectability is rather the end that is aimed at. Since, however, their object is praiseworthy in itself, we would gladly waive these considerations if there were not so much hypocrisy associated with the movement. Over indulgence in liquor is not considered good form—and it is well that it is not; but there are other much more serious sins that do not shock the public conscience. Why? Because that conscience, seared by the winds of passion, is wilfully deceived. We must confess, that when we see men, devoid of a sense of justice and charity, enemies to truth, and often corrupt in their private lives, given places of prominence even in church circles because they are ardent prohibitionists, we refuse to believe that God is going to reform the world through such whitened sepulchres.

"THE GLEANER."

ON THE BATTLE LINE

The sanguinary struggle around Verdun continues its ghastly and apparently futile course. The immediate object of the Germans seems to be to gain Dead Man's Hill and Hill 304: the French seem just as stubbornly determined as ever to hold these points. It looks as though the best of the German forces will dash themselves to pieces against the impregnable rock of the magnificent marvellous French resistance.

The Turks have either been driven from Trebizond or have evacuated that great Black sea port. In any case it seems that they are entirely unable to stem the advance of the Russians into Turkey in Asia.

The Verdun struggle assumes a new aspect. No longer are the French content to hold their trenches or retire to others after inflicting on the attacking Germans the maximum of loss. They are now beginning to counter-attack with vigor in the effort to regain the outlying positions captured by the Germans the past two months. The French and German official reports yesterday featured a French attack upon the German line on the eastern slope of Dead Man's Hill. The German statement asserts that "in general these attacks were repulsed with sanguinary losses to the assailants."

These evidences that our Allies can strike as well as ward off the German strokes seem to have been taken to heart. There were no infantry

actions yesterday, but the Crown Prince's gunners poured a rain of shells on the new French positions on Dead Man's Hill and all along the front east of the Meuse from the river to Vaux. Another assault is thus being prepared for.

An indication of the failing reserves of Germany is seen in the posting of notices calling for the enrollment for military service of the class of 1919—that is, of lads who are only seventeen, and who under normal conditions would not be called up till 1919. In Aix-la-Chapelle the order directs them to inscribe their names on the Land-sturm register. This, doubtless, means that they are not to be sent to the front, but, after training, are to be utilized, like the elderly men, on the lines of communication for garrison and guard duty. The fact that thus early in the year all German males between seventeen and fifty, except such as are retained in civilian occupations for the benefit of the State, have been called to arms proves that the losses at Verdun have been very great, and that the strain is reaching the breaking point. Austria's case is even worse. There all males between eighteen and fifty-five have been called up.

The battle of Monday and Tuesday on the Tigris was one of the most sanguinary struggles of the Mesopotamian campaign. An official report issued in London yesterday says that the number of Turkish dead is estimated at over 3,000 out of a total of 10,000 Turks who attacked on Monday night in dense formation. They penetrated part of the British front, but the gain of a few trenches was purchased at a fearful price. The total British casualties in killed, wounded and missing were very considerably less than the Turkish killed. Slaughter on such a scale in what the Turks hoped would prove a surprise attack must have shattered the morale of the Turks. The relief of Kut-el-Amara is rendered much more difficult by the floods. The Tigris is still rising, and if General Lake is to break through it must be by amphibian warfare. The lack of boats in sufficient numbers must be a serious drawback.—Globe, April 22.

T. P. O'CONNOR'S LETTER

THE METEORIC CAREER OF PEMBERTON BILLINGS

Special Cable to THE CATHOLIC RECORD (Copyright 1916, Central News)

London, April 22.—This week's fierce conflict at Wimbledon is a mark of the growth of that spirit of general uneasiness and dissatisfaction with the Ministry which comes from the slowness of the war, the incessant attacks of the Northcliffe press, and the notorious division of opinion in the Cabinet, increased by the knowledge that as powerful a personage as King George is ranged against Mr. Asquith and the other conscriptionist members of the Cabinet.

The chief personal effect of the campaign is the bringing into great prominence of two personalities. One is Kennedy Jones, son of a poor Ulster Irishman and a Scotch mother, who had a youth of fierce poverty and scraped into journalism. He was once my chief reporter. Jones got in touch with Lord Northcliffe by helping him to buy his first daily paper. Finally Jones left journalism altogether with three quarters of a million sterling.

But the hero of the election was Pemberton Billing. He is the only member of Parliament who took a place on the Jones platform. The campaign which had begun hopelessly obscure suddenly began to burn fiercely. Billing did it. Dashing through a wide and populous constituency, covering sixty miles and a hundred thousand people on a torpedo motor car, violating all speed laws, Billing was everywhere, speaking with lurid fierceness and passion. His excitable, forceful nature and whirlwind oratory were just the kind to capture the crowds who did not know quite what they wanted, but found relief in cursing and swearing at the government, especially at Mr. Asquith, the destruction of whose premiership is the chief object of the Northcliffe campaign.

Meanwhile the newspapers are publishing accounts of his hitherto unknown life. It is one of the most varied careers of adventure. There is scarcely anything he has not been since he ran away from home at the age of fourteen to go to sea. He spent a good part of his life in South Africa, and has taken every possible job. From actor to journalist, brick-maker, street car conductor, soldier at Ladysmith and Spionkop, manager of a circus shooting gallery and land speculator, he finally turned to aviation. He took out innumerable patents and became a promoter of aviation companies. Of course he is now being subjected to severe criticism, and his records are examined to discover how far his own achievements correspond with the severity of his criticisms of others. The violence of his language has led to it being called Billingsgate.

The other night I dined with Mr. Billing, the Air Candidate, as he has come to be called. He is one of the most curious of the phenomena that are thrown up in political life at a time of storm and stress. Nobody thought he was anything but a flash in the pan. His candidature for the Mile End of London was put forward by some journalists—it is said that Lord Northcliffe was the chief contributor, though the name of Mr.

Bottomley was also mentioned. Mile End is a curious kind of constituency. Every London constituency in the poorer parts is, in fact, curious, because of the unaccountable foreign as well as the unaccountable native vote. It was therefore quite possible that even a freak candidate like Mr. Billings might get returned from such a constituency; but he was defeated.

It was not the end of him, as everybody knows; but when he stood for East Herts, nobody had any doubt at first that all chance of his surviving was at an end. There is no stodgier Tory constituency in all England. It has nearly always been represented by a strict Tory. The constituency is one of those sleepy old world corners of Southern England where people seem to have arrested all political development about the time when William the Conqueror had won the battle of Hastings, Hatfield, the seat of the great Cecil family, looks down upon it and anybody not contented by a Cecil was always regarded as a hopeless outsider intruding on a family seat.

Tory members of Parliament went down and spoke on the same platform as Liberal members; both the money and the agents of the two great parties were given with equal lavishness to the candidates of the Coalition; the Churchman for the first time in the history of the constituency stood on the same platform as the Nonconformist in opposing the daring upstart who threatened the existence of a ministry composed of the best men of the two great parties.

How then, could such a man win in such a fight. It was all the Zeppelin raids. Of course every government which does not win battles, and win them pretty rapidly, is bound to be unpopular. The story of Abraham Lincoln in the first years of the Civil War is one of the historic examples of that truth. And there is a good deal of underground resentment against the Government in this country because of that fundamental fact, though less than one might have expected considering how much Germany has been able to gain. The robust good sense which is at the bottom of the British mind recognizes that such vicissitudes are inevitable. The same good sense demonstrates to the overwhelming majority that just as in the case of the North against the South in the Civil War in America the weight of metal is on the side of the Allies, and must ultimately win. But all the same there is the inevitable impatience; and this impatience is being as sedulously increased and fed daily by what is another of the strange phenomena of the war—namely the attempt of the press to carry on the war and the government of the country. Lord Northcliffe is the chief figure in this press campaign partly because he loves power and partly because he is a violent conscriptionist, and seeks to use the different disappointments of the war as a weapon for forcing conscription on the Ministry. His success would mean, of course, an entire upheaval of politics.

The Zeppelins have brought all these discordant elements to a head, and Pemberton Billing, speaking as an airman and roundly denouncing the aviation service of the Government was just the man to be the embodiment of this dim, fierce resentment. You can understand the sentiment. A Canadian officer, whom I saw a day or two ago told me how he had seen seven little coffins stretched out together at (place deleted by censor). They were the coffins of seven children whom the Zeppelins had killed a few days before. And in several towns of England there had been the same cruel maiming and murder of babies and women; and the assassin machines and assassin crews that did the work, had been able to fly away with perfect impunity. It was more than flesh and blood could be expected to bear.

Pemberton Billing was fashioned by nature to be the spokesman of such a feeling. He is very tall, thin almost to shabbiness; the whole body gives an impression of whipped cord—perhaps of chilled steel. Every movement is vivid, alert, almost feverish. He talks rapidly and continuously; he is full of his subject and full of himself; though I must add that he is so good humored and so humorous that he is just saved from being himself too seriously; and amid his story of his adventures the vein of egotism is constantly interrupted by a smile that is simple and almost childlike. He looks at such moments, just an excitable and truant boy, so that you can't really help liking the fellow. I certainly took to him at once. The face is also striking. Like the body it is long and thin; the complexion also is pale, the cheek bones prominent. He looks to me as the late Joseph Chamberlain must have looked as a young man. The resemblance is increased by the fact that the late Joseph Chamberlain, wears a monocle. But there is a difference, Chamberlain's monocle was always held by a string; Pemberton Billing just puts the eyeglass into his eye, and takes it out now and then, which gives a curious weird expression to the face.

Whatever else he is, Pemberton Billing is an electioneer by instinct. Nobody but a born electioneer could have won such a fight. He had nearly two hundred villages to address, and to do this within a week. The organization which he created, though improvised, was perfect. Before he reached any village, he