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CLERICAL CELIBACY AND CHRISTIAN RE-UNION.

The London, England, Daily Chronicle has recently had a number of letters written by priests, to the effect that a relaxation of the discipline of the Catholic Church on this point is contemplated with a view to promote re-union with the Church of England; and these letters, if authentic, would lead to the belief that there is a widespread desire among the priests that such a relaxation is much desired.

It is scarcely necessary for us to tell our readers that no such desire exists. A representative of the Chronicle waited upon Mr. Johnson, secretary to Cardinal Vaughan, the Archbishop, to ascertain his views on the matter, and was informed that there is certainly no such desire among Catholic priests, or any section of them, and that it is difficult to believe that the letters signed "A Catholic Priest," emanated from the Catholic clergy at all.

The Monsignore said:

"Nothing is easier than to write a letter to a newspaper, and sign it: A Catholic Priest, or Sacerdos, or anything else. Such letters carry no proof of their genuineness."

Such rumors as regard the intention of the Holy See to relax the discipline of the Church on this matter are entirely without foundation, and have been contradicted on the highest authority from Rome; but they continue, nevertheless, to be circulated, as they have been published and circulated from time to time by the press during the last thirty years, but Mr. Johnson says the step would not create the satisfaction suggested by the writers of those letters. It would, on the contrary, be regarded with deep and general regret.

Mr. Johnson explained that the matter is purely one of ecclesiastical law which the head of the Church can abrogate, but there is no thought or intention of abrogating it, and that the purpose of its institution is so important that it is not likely that it will be abrogated, even for the sake of coaxing into the Church a certain number of Anglican married clergymen who might desire to become priests of the Catholic Church if they returned to the fold.

The law of the Church prescribing the celibacy of the clergy arises chiefly from the answer of our Lord to the saying of the Apostle: "If so—it is not expedient to marry." The reply was: "All men take not this word but they to whom it is given." He that can take, let him take it. (St. Matt. xix. 10-12.)

Equally clear are St. Paul's words: "He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided." (1 Cor. vii. 32, 33.)

The married state is holy, and is blessed by God; but the state of celibacy, embraced for God's sake, is more perfect; and the Church requires this perfection in her priests, and is not likely to abrogate it for a doubtful expediency which in a few years time may prove to be an injury instead of a blessing.

We remark that even the Presbyterians are beginning of late to discover that the Catholic belief on this subject is a reasonable one, and that they have been in error in supposing, or in pretending to believe, that there was a command of God from the beginning for all men to marry. The following quaint talk from a recent issue of the Chicago Interior proves this:

"To demand that a minister shall be married is carrying anti-Popery principles too far. Our theological students as a rule are sound on the celibate question. No class of young men in the country quite equal them in fidelity to the teaching of Scripture on this subject. But there are two sides to the question. Paul was a shining example of the minority, and we have always thought that there was a defect at this point in the instructions in pastoral theology of most of our sem-

inaries. Paul is entitled to a hearing."

This language stands in favorable contrast with the angry comments of other journals upon the Pope's appeal, and as it represents the sentiments of certainly a large section in the Church of England, it holds out a strong hope that the Holy Father's appeal to the Christian sentiment of the English people will not be in vain.

We are told: "We may not like such a consummation." But why should it not be liked, unless that pride revolts at the implied acknowledgment that rebellion against lawful authority in religion is wrong. But this is implied equally in the acknowledgment which the same paper makes, that "unity is the first necessity of the Church." How can unity be preserved unless there exists a supreme authority to which obedience is due? And if such an authority there be, it was wrong to resist it in the first instance, and the pride which now suggests persistence in rebellion should be laid aside.

It cannot be supposed that the writer in the Church of To-Day overlooked the fact that the Holy Father does not propose any modifications of the doctrines of the Church in order to bring about a union. The London Times, in order to magnify the difficulty of re-union, takes care to point out that this is the case. It said recently:

"The Papal letter is marked by two significant features. Nobody who is at all acquainted with the teaching of the Roman Church can have anticipated that in any circumstances the Pope could assent to the slightest modification of her distinctive doctrines, or to any abatement of her claims. To do so would be to stultify that Church in the eyes of her own members, and to proclaim her cardinal tenets to be a fraud."

As the Church of To-Day says expressly that a reunion may be desirable, even on the terms proposed by Rome, it must be taken for granted that there is a considerable section in the Church of England who are prepared to accept all the doctrines of the Catholic Church just as they stand. It follows from this that even though there is a party in the Anglican fold which has for its watchword the motto "No peace with Rome," there is also a strong contingent which is ready to accept the olive branch which has been extended to them. We may hope that within a short time this party will show itself, and that though there may be no corporate union with the Church of England, there may be a large accession to the Catholic Church from the ranks of those who admit that the true Church should be of one fold, and under one shepherd.

The second point to which the Times calls attention is that the "Apostolic letter does not say one word in reference to the possibility of any change even within the sphere of discipline," though "the Pope has the amplest powers of modifying discipline."

It is quite true that the power of modifying the discipline of the Church exists; but it is unnecessary, and it would be absurd, that the Pope should offer to make such modifications, at least before those who propose to re-unite state what modifications of this kind they wish for; and then the desirability of the changes proposed may be discussed.

Further objection is made by the Times against the Encyclical because "Leo XIII. insists on some of those teachings which are most emphatically repudiated by Anglicans and most alien to British feeling." Among these teachings, it mentions "Invocation of saints and of the Virgin Mary, which English Churchmen regard as 'a food thing vainly invented.'" "Indulgences," and the authority of the Roman See "as 'this centre of Christian unity, divinely constituted in the Roman Bishops.'"

The Times has itself given a good reason why the Pope should make it perfectly well understood how far concession may be made for the sake of bringing about unity, and by his references to Catholic doctrine he has done this. He has shown that the sacred deposit of faith cannot on any consideration be tampered with. It was the Holy Father's duty to disabuse of their error any who might imagine that the authorities of the Catholic Church can sit down in conference, as the sectaries have frequently done, to consider what truths of religion may be set aside. Truth cannot consent to such compromises; and it is clear from the comments of some at least of the Anglican papers that there are many among the clergy of Anglicanism who will not demand that such a compromise be made; and though the Times says: "Reunion with Rome is at present a mere dream," there may be earnestness enough

among these many to turn this dream into a reality as far as they are concerned.

A WHIPPING POST NEEDED.

It is to be regretted that the whipping post is not in honor amongst us. There are certain crimes that should be punished by the lash and scourge. We know that every law-abiding citizen will endorse our opinion, for there are misdemeanors so shocking in brutality and repulsiveness that a few months imprisonment is an inadequate and pitiful punishment. Criminals of a certain kind should be scourged so severely as to carry with them to the graves the marks that should serve as a reminder of their punishment and an argument to convince them that it could not be repeated with impunity.

The ultra-refinement of the century shrinks back from such a barbaric mode of procedure, but the common-sense of the people will welcome its institution as a boon and a blessing. We have often longed to hear the whip hissing and see it cutting deep into the miserable body of that unmentionable scoundrel, the brutal husband. He should be scourged like a hound. In carceration, even in the most loathsome dungeon, is too good for such a man. He deliberately brings sorrow upon the woman that he is bound to protect and cherish as he would his very life. Years pass, and he is permitted to run roughshod over all that is sacred and dear to humankind. He may be prominent in church circles, veiling by a hypocritical piety the perfidy and rottenness of a paltry soul. The wife, goaded to desperation, may have him arrested, and then, we say, give the rascal a dose of the whip. Lash him for the anxiety and anguish, the shame and sorrow, for the brutalities that have marked his life since his wedding-day. Aye—lash him for his cowardice and for his imposition upon society. These words sound harsh, but if all could look behind the veil that conceals the villany that makes some households but living hells, we should wish for stronger language to express our indignation.

Not only do we speak of the husband who is an habitual drunkard, but of him who is always in a semi-intoxicated state, and whose mode of expression never rises superior to that of brutal censure. Such a one is perchance more in need of the whipping-post than the habitual drunkard.

Many a poor wife has walked hand in hand with sorrow for years—sorrow that crushes the soul and makes existent an intolerable burden. Pitiful tragedies are acted daily at our doors. Children lose all respect for the father, and are happy only when he is away. John Ruskin once said, in speaking of children who were employed in the mines—"Hell pits, where little boys and girls not only worked like brutes, but were beaten with horrible cruelty as they crawled on their hands and knees harnessed to coal carts." Horrible! And such things are done in a Christian land. But the little children who have ever before their eyes a besotted father, who hears nought but the curse and the language of the bar-room and brothel, are objects of deeper commiseration.

MUTUAL CHARITY.

The Western Watchman's denunciation of the Christian Endeavorers has been a veritable God-send to the divines who are wont to indulge in sensational preaching. Its editor has been termed a monster, and many and graphic have been the delineations of the baseness and enormity of his crime.

We confess indeed that his words must have grated harshly on the ears of some of our separated brethren. We deplore their utterance, for we believe that unity and concord can be fostered and developed only by means of mutual charity. We are strongly opposed to Catholics attacking Protestants or Protestants attacking Catholics. Father Elliot says that nothing in the way of controversy can equal the direct statement of the truth by a man esteemed by his hearers for his virtues. This we believe, and never shall we without just cause give utterance to a syllable that may pain our brethren. Let us banish for all time the loathsome demon of religious discord.

Yet we must say that some of the critics have been somewhat illogical and unreasonable in their attempts to secure the scalp of the rev. editor of the Watchman. Have they not been the upholders of the ex-priests and nuns? Have they not applauded the foul and mendacious statements that have been made by these wretched individuals against the Catholic Church?

Not alone were they against the Church of thousands of their countrymen, but against the character of men and women who have consecrated their energies to the regeneration and uplifting of humanity. Day after day have they heard blandly utterances as foul as they are false. They knew they were countenancing an ignoble crusade repugnant to every man who retained a vestige of honor, and unworthy of those who were ministers of Him of the meek and humble heart who went about doing good.

Not a protest, however, did we hear. There was not one amongst them all who had the manly courage to cry "Anathema." And now when Father Phelan has used some homely Anglo-Saxon they are calling upon the powers of heaven and earth to destroy him. Is not this unreasonable? Cannot they take a little dose of their own medicine? Why mention "charity" when they know it not. Why talk of tolerance when they have forsaken it?

We are speaking only to those who have been the leading spirits of the propaganda against Catholicism, and not to the myriads who are content to worship God according to their conscience and to permit others to do the same. Some of the ministerial critics who are lecturing Father Phelan for his onslaught against the Christian Endeavorers remind us of that passage in Sir Walter Scott where King James says of Dalgrous: "I left Baby Charles and Steenie laying his duty before him. O Geordie, jingling Geordie, it was grand to hear Baby Charles laying down the guilt of dissimulation and Steenie le-turging on the turpitude of incontinence."

THE POPE'S APPEAL TO THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

The Apostolic letter of Pope Leo XIII. to the English people, issued with a view to lead them to a consideration of the advisability of returning to the one fold, is still attracting much attention from the clergy and press of all denominations, and the secular press as well, and this fact alone that against their will the anti-Catholic element is so thoroughly alarmed at a pronouncement of the Holy See, proves the immense influence of the Pope's authority, even amid a Protestant community, where so many pretend to despise it.

It is not surprising to us to find that a hostile writer in one of the papers should say concerning the Encyclical: "There is a mingled feeling of amusement, suspicion, and contempt" at the Holy Father's recommendation. The little sectaries of fifty or a hundred years' existence, and with a local following of two or three hundred thousand followers or even two or three million, may affect to despise the religion which, built upon a rock (against which the gates of hell shall not prevail) has existed for nearly nineteen centuries, and will continue to exist to the end of time; but, in spite of their pretensions, they cannot prevent their own self-sufficiency from being the object of contempt for the whole world. Their pretended contempt for the Head of the Catholic Church is simply the contemptible artifice of an insignificance which is beneath contempt.

Here is what is said to be the source of the amused and contemptuous attitude of the "English religious press"—that is to say, of the rabid anti-Catholic Low Church and pseudo-Evangelical editors—toward the Pope's Encyclical. The Encyclical offers 300 days indulgence to all those who "piously recite the prayer for reunion appended to the letter, and a Plenary Indulgence once a month, on the observance of the usual conditions, to those who have recited it daily."

Of course it is an easy matter for those who have no ecclesiastical authority whatsoever to pretend to belittle the authority which is really derived from Christ through the Apostles; but there is no getting over the fact that the Pope is the legitimate successor of St. Peter, the Chief of the Apostles, to whom authority was given by Christ to bind and loose, with the assurance that His and their judgment on earth would be confirmed in heaven. It is in the exercise of this authority that the Holy Father grants the Indulgence attached to the prayer in question on the usual conditions.

We could readily understand an objection raised by Protestant clergy against the exercise of Apostolic authority on the part of the Pope, if it could be shown that he lacks ecclesiastical authority; but it comes with very bad grace from a body of men who certainly have no Apostolic succession, and who almost universally admit this to be the case, and yet

maintain that they have a right to exercise Apostolic ministerial functions, to deny this right to the legitimate successor of St. Peter, whose ministry has been recognized by the Christian world for nineteen centuries.

Perhaps, however, this pretended contempt for the authority of the Pope arises out of the erroneous idea they entertain concerning the nature of an Indulgence. Nearly every Protestant controversialist since the time of Martin Luther has pretended to believe that it is a license to commit sin. Every Catholic is aware that it is nothing of the kind. It is a remission of the temporal punishment due to sin, and in this sense there is scarcely a Protestant minister in the world who does not pretend to exercise authority to grant Indulgences, inasmuch as for the most part they reject entirely the need of penitential works as an atonement for sin.

It is easy to see that the pretended contempt for the Pope's exercise of authority is merely a mask put on to conceal the fact that they have themselves no ministerial authority whatsoever.

It is not to be supposed, however, that all the Protestant clergy and press have taken the Holy Father's kind words in the surly manner of those of whom we have spoken. Some of the Anglican papers have received responsibly the Pope's appeal to their Christian sentiment, and express themselves as being favorable to wide concessions to Rome. The London Church of To-Day thinks that if England were to return to the Church she might exert a reformatory influence therein. It says:

"We may not like such a consummation; but is it not conceivable that God might will that the Church should be reunited on the terms proposed by Rome and then slowly struggle back to a better and truer life, rather than that it should continue riven asunder? Unity is the first necessity of the Church. Rome has not exaggerated its importance."

AN EVIDENCE OF RETURNING FAITH.

A recent issue of the New York Sun records with considerable surprise the fact that on the high tower of the new Presbyterian Church, which has been erected at Scarborough, Westchester county, N. Y., in memory of the late Elliot F. Shepard, a handsome cross has been erected.

As the Sun says, "Not very many years ago, the cross could not have been put upon the tower, steep, bell-fry, or any other part of the Presbyterian church. It was regarded as a sign of Popery," but "the change in this respect has been very marked within a generation."

John Knox was peculiarly hostile to the use of the cross in any form in religious worship, and to carry out his views, the Scotch Presbyterians under his guidance took especial delight in tearing down the crosses from the grand old cathedrals they demolished when they were carrying out their so-called thorough godly reformation of religion. The Presbyterian Larger Catechism was also so worded, in accordance with Knox's views, as to include among the sins forbidden, by the second commandment, the use of the cross or any other emblem of Christian worship, all of which are included under the term "monuments of idolatry" which good Christians are not allowed even to tolerate, but must remove or destroy if it be in their power.

In the Anglican rite of baptism, the sign of the cross was retained, and this was one of the objections which rigid Presbyterians made against the Anglican book of Common Prayer, which they denounced as a rag of Popery, though, outside of this use of the sign of the cross, Anglicans generally regarded the cross with no less aversion than Presbyterians.

The cross has been used as the recognized emblem of Christianity from the earliest times. For ages it has been placed in the most conspicuous position on Catholic churches. It was used in the Palace of Constantine the Great, and there is still to be seen over the principal stairway of the ruins of that palace in Rome, the picture of the crucifixion erected by that first Christian Emperor. Crosses and representations of the crucifixion are found in the catacombs of Rome over the tombs of the martyrs who were put to death for their faith during the first three centuries when persecution raged against all Christians, and the cross is mentioned by the Apostle St. Paul as the well-known and universally recognized emblem of the Christian faith, when that Apostle declares: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. vi. 14.)

In spite of these evidences of the earliest Christian use of this emblem, it was a characteristic of Protestantism to regard the use of the cross as an idolatry, and this was especially the case with Presbyterians, who regarded the sacred emblem with intense horror.

The Sun remarks that Protestant Episcopalians especially had so changed within a recent period that the cross has been long placed over their churches, and that now it is found on the towers of most Christian denominations. But the Presbyterians have resisted its use most stoutly, and though we have seen, in rare instances, crosses on Presbyterian churches, there was usually a strong protest raised by a large section of the congregations against their introduction on those occasions.

The erection of a cross on Mr. Shepard's memorial church, being in the midst of a long-established and very representative Presbyterian congregation, is indicative of a great change of sentiment among Presbyterians generally. Surely in the face of such facts, which are now becoming frequent, Presbyterian controversialists will be obliged to lay aside their old favorite thesis that the use of the cross in Catholic churches is an act of idolatry.

The cross is the emblem of our faith, as it represents to us vividly the fact of our redemption on Mount Calvary through Christ's death on the cross. It has been in the past peculiarly the emblem of Catholics; but though other denominations are now beginning to use it, and are thus endeavoring to take from Catholics its distinctive use, we are glad to see this evidence of a gradual return of the Protestant denominations to the ancient Christian faith which they have denounced so bitterly for three centuries. We hope that the final result of this gradual revival of Christianity will be the return of all the sects to the faith which was "once delivered to the saints," and which has been preserved intact only in the Catholic Church.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

ON THE 11th, 12th and 13th of the present month the great University of Notre Dame, Indiana, will celebrate its golden jubilee. It will be a brilliant and notable event, some of the most eminent churchmen in the country having promised to take part in the proceedings. The Very Rev. E. B. Kilroy of Stratford, in this diocese, who is the oldest living graduate of the University, will deliver an address.

THE Right Rev. John Sweeney, D. D., Bishop of St. John, N. B., was in Paris on May 21, and intended leaving that city for London with the other prelates the following day. His Lordship had been a week in Paris, waiting the arrival of Bishop Cameron, of Antigonish, N. S., and Bishop MacDonald, of Charlottetown, P. E. I., who had left the Eternal City at the same time with him, and during the interval visited other places of interest in Italy. In a letter to the Right Rev. Administrator of the diocese, Monsignor Connolly, V. G., Dr. Sweeney stated that he would leave England for home on June 4th. Contrary to previous reports, His Lordship is in good health. During their stay in Rome the weather was unpleasant.

THE Baptist Union at its recent meeting in London, England, passed a resolution calling upon the officers of the association to prepare and submit to the autumnal Assembly of the Union, a letter to the Pope, in reply to his invitation to English Christians to return to the "Church of Rome." A very few years ago the Pope's invitation would be treated with scorn and contumely; but it is indicative of a great change for the better even among Baptists, that such a resolution should be carried, as it was passed, not for the purpose of expressing indignation, but apparently in a courteous spirit. The Rev. Dr. Glover, the mover, remarked, when offering his resolution, that a courteous letter, such as that of the Pope is, should be courteously answered. We may see from this that, even outside of Anglicanism, the invitation of the Holy Father is treated with respect; and we can scarcely reconcile this fact with the assertion which has been widely published that the Encyclical "has been generally received with unmistakable manifestations of amusement and contempt." The only opposition which was offered to Dr. Glover's resolution was made to the expression which occurred in it that the reply should be sent to "His Holiness the Pope." One member vigorously opposed this application of the term "his Holiness," and the resolution was passed with this expression left out.