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EDITORS:
REV. GEORGE R. NORTHGRAVES,
Author of "Mistakes of Modern Infidels."
THOMAS COFFEY,
Publisher and Proprietor, THOMAS COFFEY,
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EASTER.

The voice of the Church that during the last few days was hushed and sorrowful breaks out to-day into glad, exultant strains extolling the power and glory of the Risen God. She throws aside her garments of mourning and robes herself in the mantle of rubricated pomp and majesty—for this day is as no other, pregnant with memories of her Spouse, who, by clothing the livid and mangled body in the vesture of life and immortality, proved He was God, and gave unto her for all time the guarantee of divinity. Hence the joy of the Church for every recurring Easter brings vividly to her mind the source from which she sprang and the certainty that its living waters will sustain her vitality undiminished and unimpaired.

Though this Easter brings no change in the condition of our Holy Father, and though men of perverse mind are endeavoring to pollute the minds of her children with the foulness of Infidelity, she cherishes, and justly, the hope that before many Easter days shall have passed by, the Supreme Pontiff will again assume the kingly dignity of which tyrant hands have despoiled him, and his enemies, as they who have gone before, will see their maledictions return upon themselves and their attacks to come to naught.

That Christ our Lord rose from the dead has been the doctrine of all ages. When the body of our Saviour hung on the cruel nails of the cross, and when the faithful few who loved Him to the end looked up through blinding tears upon the agonized face, His enemies went back to their homes rejoicing at their triumph. His history was finished! The majestic Figure that knew the lanes and byways much better than the regal thoroughfares trodden by the Pharisees, was numbered among the dead. The voice that stirred the Jewish heart as never before was silent.

But their joy was of short duration, for on grew dawn of the first Easter morning; the sepulchre is empty, and the holy women who went out to place perfumes and flowers upon the dead body learn from the lips of an angel that He is risen.

The Resurrection proves that Christ is God. During His life He worked many a wondrous miracle, and though each was sufficient to show He was God, yet upon them He did not choose to rest the proof. He, as the Jews knew well, stated His entire cause upon the Resurrection. He repeatedly foretold that He would of His own free will lay down His life and that He would arise on the third day. When He drove out the men who were buying and selling in the courts of the temple they demanded upon what authority He did it. And our Lord said to them: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

Here was the test of His divinity and the public challenge to His enemies. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that when the Divine Body was placed in the tomb, the Jews resolved to prove the prediction false, and, to effect this, adopted every possible measure. They placed Roman soldiers, men inured to fatigue and fearless, around the grave, with orders to guard it sleeplessly and vigilantly. They determined to show that He could not rise from the dead, and thus make manifest that He was an impostor.

History tells how they were baffled: how the soldiers fled precipitately into Jerusalem and told the wondrous story of the stone rolling back by the bright light of the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

The fact of the Resurrection is so indisputable that even the bitterest enemies of religion have not dared to call it into question. It remained for modern freethinkers to hazard the statement, as false as it is impious, that the Resurrection is but a myth, a legend. They recognize, indeed, that it, if established, carries with it an overwhelming testimony to the divinity of Christ, and hence they leave no means untried to destroy the evidence of this most capital truth. They, in order to support their assertion, declare that Christ when placed in the sepulchre was not really dead; that the ointments used in the embalming of the body healed the wounds, and the chill air of the sepulchre revived the inanimate form. This vain sophistry is completely refuted by St. John, who says expressly that the lance of the soldier inflicted a deadly wound, for it transfixed the heart: "For therewith there came out blood and water." That our Redeemer rose from the dead is beyond a doubt. We have it on the testimony of those who saw Him, not in a vision, or in a dream, but in broad daylight. Many times during the space of forty days He appeared to the two disciples who journeyed from Jerusalem to Emmaus; and Thomas was permitted to put his fingers into the print of the nails and to thrust his hand into the side of the Risen God.

Observe, also, the attitude of the Apostles after the Resurrection. When their Master, a defenceless captive, was led away to Calvary, dark and dismal doubts played havoc with their belief of His divinity. They hoped that at the last moment He would manifest the power which He claimed to possess, vanquish His enemies and proclaim Himself King of Jerusalem. Three days of suspense followed, and their timidity gives place to courage. What is the reason of the sudden transition from abject fear to indomitable zeal and fearless energy? Why do they rejoice that they are found worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus, especially when they are conscious that suffering must be their inevitable attendant? Rationalists explain the conduct of the Apostles by saying they were misled by a phantom and deceived by a well-contrived plan into believing a sort of hobgoblin story. Leaving aside the testimony of past ages, this explanation is passing strange, and scarcely accounts for their devotion to a cause that entailed sorrow and suffering and renunciation of everything that man holds dear: that made them objects of abomination to Jews and Gentiles and sent them wanderers over the earth, exposed to persecution and to death. The Resurrection alone explains. They believed their message to mankind to be divine because He who taught them proved Himself God by rising from the dead. "If Christ be not risen," says St. Paul, "then our preaching is vain."

No wonder, then, does the Church sound forth the note of rejoicing and call upon her children to exult! It gives her the assurance that she possesses the truth from heaven and inspires her to bear her teachings to the uttermost bounds of the earth. And to-day, on this feast of faith, we may look back upon her glorious history and see how well the task has been accomplished.

This feast is for us one of special joy, for it is the pledge of our Resurrection. As Christ our Lord rose in triumph from the grave, so should we, if His law be the guide of our lives, rise glorious and incorruptible and participate in His glory forever. What a source of consolation to know and feel that we may cherish the hope our body, so frail and infirm and subject to suffering, shall put on in the world beyond the grave the vesture of incorruption, and in the possession of Jesus shall fear no death but enjoy the happiness that will last as long as God is God!

SECRET SOCIETIES.

A respected correspondent desires to know from us what societies fall under the condemnation issued by the Church against secret societies. In reply we have to say: 1st. The Freemasons and Carbonari are expressly named in several Pontifical Bulls and Encyclicals, as forbidden under penalty of excommunication. Societies affiliated to these fall under the same prohibition, and all societies which fall under the denomination of secret societies.

2nd. The societies condemned under the name of secret societies must be ascertained from what the Church intends by this designation, and there are decrees of the Sacred Congregation of the Penitentiaria of the dates 21st Aug. 1850, and 13th July 1865, which define that all societies which bind themselves by oath to a secret compact fall under this class, even though they profess not to have in view anything against religion or the civil government: also all societies formed against the Church or the civil government, whether or not they

exact an oath from their members.

There are certain societies which so guard their secrets that it is difficult for outsiders to ascertain whether they fall under these condemnations or not. They must be judged on the principles here laid down; but if they conceal their objects, or prevaricate concerning the oath which they are supposed to take, they must be regarded as suspicious or dangerous, according to the circumstances of each case. It is not our province, but that of the ecclesiastical authorities in each diocese, to make a decision in regard to the societies specially named by our correspondent, and we therefore must rest with referring him to them for further information on this subject.

The reasons on account of which these condemnations have been pronounced are briefly the following:

1. An oath whereby one binds himself to do things unknown is a rash oath, and is therefore forbidden by the Second Commandment.

2. There is good reason to suspect that the societies indicated have evil designs in view; and in the case of the societies named in the Pontifical decrees, we are assured, especially by Pope Pius IX., that he knew from positive information that such designs existed.

3. The inviolable secrets of these societies which are not to be revealed even to lawful authorities can be turned to very evil purposes, and, in practice, are frequently so turned.

TROUBLE IN THE CAMP.

Since the last issue of the RECORD, in which we mentioned that Lord Rosebery had announced that the policy of the new British Government will be the same with that pursued by Mr. Gladstone, another announcement has been made which considerably modifies this declaration as far as Home Rule for Ireland is concerned. Lord Rosebery has stated that it is still the intention of the Government to concede Home Rule, but he added that it is necessary to convince England first of the justice of Ireland's demands.

His exact words as reported by cable were:

"Lord Salisbury made one remark on the subject of Home Rule with which I confess myself in entire accord. He said that before Irish Home Rule can be conceded by the Imperial Parliament, England, as the predominant member of the partnership of the three kingdoms, must be convinced of its justice. That may seem to be a considerable admission, because your Lordships will know that the majority of English members elected in England proper are hostile to Home Rule."

Considering the great advance made in England towards admitting the justice of the Irish demands, there is good reason to hope that before long there will be an actual English majority in favor of conceding them; but at present the English majority in the House of Commons against this necessary reform is 70, the Liberal majority of 38 arising from the fact that the Irish, Scotch and Welsh majorities more than suffice to counterbalance the hostile English majority. But it cannot be denied that the requirement that the hostile English majority must be overcome before Home Rule be conceded puts off very indefinitely the solution of the Irish problem.

Will this hostile majority be overcome in fact? Perhaps it will in time; but this is doubtful, and it is no wonder that the enemies of Ireland are in jubilation on account of Lord Rosebery's announcement. The London Times asserts that "it has changed the whole aspect of affairs and shattered the very basis of the new Prime Minister's policy." It is evident, therefore, that the Conservatives consider that the announcement is equivalent to an abandonment of Home Rule as part of the Liberal policy. Hence Lord Randolph Churchill announced confidently in his speech on the address that "he could safely predict that there is not a man living to-day who will live to see the establishment of an Irish Parliament, nor is there a man living who will live to see the abolition of the House of Lords."

Lord Rosebery does not wish his words to be interpreted in this sense, however. He said in a speech in the House of Lords on the 12th inst., that "the present satisfactory condition of Ireland is due to remedial measures and to the promise of Home Rule." Being convinced of this, he declared that the Government has no desire to evade or shirk the question of Home Rule for Ireland, and that the only reason why it was not mentioned in the Queen's speech was that it will not be introduced into parliament this session. It is understood that it is deemed necessary to make another

appeal to the people before the matter be urged further.

Referring to the position of England on the question, he repeated his former statement in other words, saying, "of course the decision rests upon England, but he believed the conversion of England to Home Rule will not be a difficult task when the Irish people show by their conduct that they are worthy of it."

As a matter of course, the Prime Minister's declaration is received by the Irish members with much dissatisfaction. They are not likely to admit that it should depend upon the verdict of Englishmen alone whether a measure so necessary to the peace and prosperity of Ireland should be granted. Why should this be the case? Is it because England was a party to the contract of union made in 1801? That was no contract. It was indeed accepted by England as such, but it was brought about by the English Government without the presence even of the consent of the Irish people. It was a one-sided contract, and therefore no contract at all.

It may be truly said, indeed, that it was passed by the Irish Parliament, but it was notoriously carried only by bribing a bare majority in a Parliament which in no sense represented the people of Ireland. It represented the English garrison in Ireland, and nothing more; yet even so there was sufficient love of country among a portion of that garrison that a minority amounting to almost half the House could not be induced, even by open bribery, to consent to the act of treason by which the autonomy of the country was bargained away for gold.

But let us pass over the dark history of this nefarious deed. Let it be granted (for the present purpose only) that the Act of Union was a compact between England and Scotland on the one side, and Ireland on the other. By the terms of that contract, the union of the three kingdoms was Legislative and not Federal. It was a contract by which England benefited, and by which England had all the voice to which her greater population entitled her, and it was deliberately agreed to that the majority of the whole House should rule, and not the majority of any one of the three consenting parties. England's position was quite strong enough on this understanding, inasmuch as an English majority could be over-ridden only when the English members were so equally divided as to leave it almost a matter of doubt what was the real opinion of England on any given question. Under such circumstances, it was only fair that a very decisive Scotch and Irish majority should predominate over a less decisive English one. The pretext that England must decide the question becomes still more preposterous when the question is so purely an Irish one as that of Home Rule. Home Rule is asked for by Ireland, only because the British Parliament has persistently turned a deaf ear to the demands of Ireland to begin to legislate with some consideration for the needs of that country.

If England is to insist upon the bond being carried out, she must be content to submit to the clauses which limit her powers, as well as those which are detrimental to Ireland. It is the case of Shylock over again:

"My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond."
But if the bond insists upon the "pound of flesh," it does not give the right to take the "jot of blood" also; and herein is found the safety for Ireland at the present moment. The United Kingdoms have decided in her favor, and it is probable they will do so again, and if Lord Rosebery be not content to accept the verdict he will be obliged to retire to the background.

Already the existence of the new Ministry has been threatened in consequence of its having partly alienated the Irish party. A motion was proposed by Mr. Labouchere in amendment to the address, condemning the principle of the veto by the House of Lords; and though this was opposed by the Government it was carried by a majority of 2, the vote being 147 to 145. It may be true that it was a catch vote, as it was evidently given by a thin house; nevertheless it is a warning both to Lord Rosebery and the Peers that the will of the nation is not to be trifled with lightly. The warning is all the more impressive as the Government was supported on this occasion by the Liberal-Unionists and Conservatives, who rally to the defence of the Lords because of their determined opposition to Home Rule.

The Government does not regard this vote as one of non-confidence, and it will probably be sustained for some time longer by the present House; but the Irish members will not submit to have the solution of the Irish question indefinitely postponed. The support accorded by them to Mr. Labouchere's motion is an evidence of this.

Since writing the above the cable brings us further intelligence which puts a very different complexion on the present condition of the Irish question. It would appear that Lord Rosebery, in the speech referred to, was purposely misrepresented by the Tory press. The news agencies, largely controlled, we believe, by Tories, take every opportunity to injure the Irish cause by sending over the wires false reports concerning it. We publish in another column a report of a speech delivered by Lord Rosebery at Edinburgh, by which it will be seen that he is just as anxious as was Gladstone to carry out the promises made by the Liberal party in regard to Irish autonomy.

THE TACTICS OF FANATICISM.

The similarity of the methods of the United States A. P. A. and those of the P. P. A. on this side of the border is being constantly illustrated, even to the fact that the pulpit is habitually desecrated to promote the nefarious purposes of the organization.

On Sunday, the 4th inst., the Rev. Madison C. Peters, of the Bloomingdale Reformed Church, Washington, preached a sermon which was replete with similar falsehoods to those which constitute the pretext on which the P. Aists of Ontario justify the existence of that association in Canada. He made the statement that the "Roman Catholics have at work a regular machine in the government offices, which controls all appointments and manipulates the civil service commission." Further he stated that:

"The Church has \$12,000,000 worth of property in the city of Washington, largely secured during the last thirty years, two-thirds of it contributed by Protestants, by a systematic begging from government employees and from government appropriations. If the clerks in the departments do not pay money over to the nuns and priests, they lose their positions."

Mr. Roosevelt, the Civil Service Commissioner, was interviewed next day regarding the truth of the statement, whereupon he replied:

"This is a mere slanderous falsehood. Of the four gentlemen who handle the Civil Service examinations one is a Catholic and three are Protestants, but it would not make the slightest difference to me whether they were all four Protestants or all four Catholics. I don't care a rap what the religion is of any of our subordinates or any of the applicants who come before us, and I will guarantee that as far as this commission is concerned no applicant ever is or ever has been discriminated for or against because he was a Catholic, Protestant, a Jew or a Gentile."

Continuing, he showed that the Commissioners are not to be browbeaten into making a distinction between citizens on account of creed. He said:

"Not long ago we were called upon to choose between two candidates for membership of the Michigan board of examiners. The A. P. A. filed a protest against the selection of one of the two, on the ground that he was a Catholic, whereupon we promptly appointed him. If any Catholic organization had protested against the appointment of one of these men merely because he was a Protestant, we would have chosen him just as promptly. This is only an illustration of the fact that we permit no discrimination or religious prejudice."

The pension office was particularly specified by Mr. Peters, who stated that nuns are permitted to solicit money, which the employees are virtually forced to pay them. This was declared by Deputy Commissioner Murphy to be a "tissue of falsehoods." He said:

"The only changes in the personnel of the office have been made upon a recommendation of division chiefs, not one of whom is a Catholic. The only soliciting permitted here is a privilege granted to the Little Sisters of the Poor to enter the building and take away whatever voluntary contributions may be placed in their baskets. This privilege is granted on the express ground that the money is expended for Catholic and Protestant alike and for blacks as well as whites."

The Little Sisters of the Poor, in whose favor this privilege has been granted, as an exception to the general rule, receive contributions solely for the relief of the poor and distressed, and it is well known that this relief is distributed by them impartially, without any distinction of nationality or religion. It is, therefore, not true that any special favor is accorded to them as nuns; but by the promulgation of such slanders as are preached by the Rev. Mr. Peters, a gospel of

lies is substituted for the gospel of truth which is supposed to be taught in his and other churches. Precisely such falsehoods as these, both in regard to the employment of Catholics by the Dominion and Local Governments, and other subjects calculated to excite ill-feeling, have been frequently made the text for attacks upon Catholics in Ontario, not only in the columns of the Mail and similar journals, but even in the pulpits occupied by those political parsons whose sole object is to create dissension in Canada. We have frequently had occasion to call attention to such utterances, and we do so again now to show that the tactics of fanaticism are everywhere similar.

A DOCTRINAL REACTION.

Not long ago at the meeting of the General Assembly of the Scotch Presbyterian Church the most prominent clergymen were very free in expressing the opinion that the "Thorough Godly Reformation" of Scotland had gone too far in abolishing prayers for the dead. The very Catholic doctrine was openly maintained that the prayers of pious people on earth benefit the dead, and that charity dictates that we should give them the benefit of our aid by praying for them.

In view of the fact that the Larger Catechism of the Church (Qu. 183), says, "We are to pray for the whole Church of Christ upon earth . . . for all sorts of men living or that shall live hereafter, but not for the dead, nor for them that are known to have sinned the sin unto death," the advocacy of the doctrine that we should pray for the dead indicates an unexpected reaction among Presbyterians towards the original creed of Christianity as taught by the Catholic Church, and supported by the traditions which come down to us from the apostles.

The Westminster Confession, it is almost needless to say, has the same teaching as the Larger Catechism, in almost the same words; and it is remarkable that the proof given by the Westminster divines, that the dead are not to be prayed for, is taken from 2 Samuel xii: 21, 23; 2 Kings:

"Then said his (David's) servants unto him, What thing is this thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said: While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

The reason for David's reply here is evident. The child was an infant who died in grace, and who therefore needed not to be prayed for when dead, though when living the Royal Prophet prayed and fasted for his recovery from illness. But in the case of adults whose death in the state of grace was doubtful, King David's method of procedure was different. Thus for Saul and Jonathan, when their death was announced, "David took hold of his garments and rent them, and likewise all the men that were with him. And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan, his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword." (2 Kings i.: 11, 12.) After the death of Abner, he did similarly:

"King David lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner: and all the people also wept. And the king, mourning and lamenting over Abner said: Not as cowards are wont to die, hath Abner died . . . and when all the people came to take meat with David, while it was yet broad day, David swore, saying: So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else before sun set."

Fasting and mourning was therefore customary among the Jews as modes of prayer for the dead and as an act of religion for their relief and benefit, when it was supposed that they were in need of such relief. It was for this reason also that Judas Machabeus ordered sacrifice to be offered in the temple of Jerusalem "to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. . . . It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be absolved from their sins." (2 Macc. xii.: 43, 46.)

But we have a still more recent evidence of the gradual return of Presbyterians towards the ancient faith in the mourning card issued by the family of Argyll on the occasion of the death of the Duchess early this year. The following is a copy of the card in question:

"Jesu, Mercy! Mary, Pray! Of