

PRINCIPAL GRANT AND PURITY OF WORSHIP.

MR. EDITOR,—The men who whined about contemptible particulars were not the men of influence. They but convulsed the Church with little matters, such as whether it was proper to sit or stand during prayers, and whether an organ should be used to assist in worship.

So spoke the Rev. Principal Grant, the Moderator of the General Assembly, at the recent convocation at Knox College. Does he believe that God has appointed the acceptable way of worshipping himself? Does he believe that Christ is the head of his own house and has the sole right of ordering its service and everything about it as He pleases? Does he believe in divine institution necessary to acceptable worship? I know he has subscribed to the following contained in Chapter XXI. Confession of Faith, namely: "The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan; under any visible representation, or any way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture." If this is true, and I believe it to be founded upon and agreeable to the word of God, can there be any "accidentals" in the mode or manner of His worship with which we may play fast and loose at our pleasure? Are we left to our own judgment, taste or to mere expediency as to how we are to worship the great God and only true object of worship? Are there any contemptible particulars in or connected with so solemn a matter? Was it a "contemptible particular" for the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, to put into their censers other than the fire prescribed, for which they were devoured by fire from the Lord? Was it a contemptible particular that Uzzah, with even a good intention, laid his hand upon the Ark, for which he was struck dead on the spot? Was it a small matter, an accidental, a contemptible particular, that Cain, consulting his own judgment, taste or mere expediency, brought of the fruit of the ground instead of that which was appointed, for which both himself and his offering were rejected? Was the eating of a little forbidden fruit one of the "accidentals," a "contemptible particular" for which our first parents were driven from the Garden of Eden and which brought such dire results upon themselves and their descendants, exposing them to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and the pains of hell for ever? There are no little matters, much less contemptible particulars in or about the public worship of God. "There is nothing," says the celebrated Thomas Brooks, "in all the Scripture that God stands more upon than purity of religion, than purity of worship, than purity of ordinances, in opposition to all mixtures and corruptions whatsoever. O sirs! the great God stands upon nothing more in all the world than upon purity of worship. There is nothing that doth so provoke and exasperate God against His people than mixtures in His worship and service; and no wonder for mixtures in His worship are exactly cross to His commands, and pollutions in worship do sadly reflect upon the name of God, the honour of God; and therefore His heart rises against them. Defilements in worship do sorely reflect upon the wisdom of Christ, and the faithfulness of Christ; as if He was not faithful enough, nor wise enough, nor prudent enough, nor understanding enough to order, direct and guide His people in the matters of His worship, but must be beholden to the wisdom, prudence and care of man, of vain man, of sinful man, of vile and unworthy man, to complete, perfect and make up something that was wanting in His worship and service. And what does the moral law require and forbid? Does it not require the "receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in His Word? Does it not forbid all devising, counselling, commanding, using and any wise approving any religious worship not instituted by God Himself? (Larger Catechism, questions 108 and 109.) This is the kind of worship, divinely prescribed worship, for which John Knox and our covenanted forefathers in Scotland and Ireland contended and suffered. This is the kind of worship on account of which 2,000 ministers in England in one day willingly left their homes and livings and suffered untold hardships rather than conform to that which was nowhere prescribed in Holy Scripture. Was it one of those "little matters," a mere "accidental," a "contemptible particular" on account of which they convulsed the Church? Is it a "little matter" now that Presbyterian and other ministers of Protestant churches are balking themselves to what the Apostle Paul calls "the beggarly elements of the world," and recognizing and teaching their congregations to recognize and respect the paganly derived and humanly appointed festivals of the Church of Rome? In my humble judgment there are no "accidentals," no "little matters," much less "contemptible particulars," in the divinely-appointed mode of worship, the only worship that is acceptable to God. "In vain do ye worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." "Where ye come before Me who hath required this at your hands?" "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." Col. ii. 20. To speak of the men who stand up for purity of worship and talk of "accidentals," "contemptible particulars," and of "little matters" in the worship of the great and only true God who is jeal-

ous of His own honour, and of the nasal twang of some precursor he had in his mind as the Moderator of the Assembly did on the occasion referred to, was not only unbecoming of him and the position he occupies, but in my humble opinion it was foolish and profane. I would presume to give him a hint, namely, that the Convocation Hall of Knox College is one of the worst places in which any person could ventilate his broad churchism.

A. WILSON.
April 9, 1860.

THE (Y)EASTERN QUESTION.

"Yeast" is the title of a tract by Pastor Joshua Denovan, as our good brother, the writer thereof, prefers to be called. His "theme" is Matt. xiii. 33: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."

The picture presented to the mind in this parable is simply that of a woman putting some leaven into some meal. At once the leaven begins to work on the meal, and by-and-by the whole of the meal is affected by its action. What in it chiefly engages our attention is the power of the leaven, as I have just described. We think of the woman simply as the cause of the leaven entering into the meal. It could not do so of itself. In a picture the chief object must take the eye most. In the one on which we are now looking what takes our eye most is not a woman putting leaven into meal, but the leaven subduing to itself the meal into which it has been put; such was the intention of the "Great Master" who painted it.

Mr. Denovan very rightly says that "the kingdom of heaven on earth is what the Divine Artist now pictures in parable." "While Messiah's kingdom is given Him by God the Father, while His royal authority emanates from heaven, His kingdom is located upon earth." In the close of the paragraph devoted to this subject the writer says: "And now saith He (Christ). Know this, My disciples, one remarkable phase in the history of My kingdom on earth will very closely resemble the act of a woman putting leaven into three measures of meal with this result the whole was leavened."

Setting the parable before us in a way to cause us to look mainly at the leaven working on the meal, and, at length completely overcoming it, is to make the parable "majestic in its own simplicity."

Mr. Denovan makes a very great deal more of the woman who figures in the parable than I, for one, do. I say that she represents just a woman, "and nothing more." He asks "Who is she? What mighty force in the kingdom of heaven does she illustrate?" He answers: "Not Jesus Christ our Lord, for He is never spoken of under this symbol." In the Old Testament He compares Himself to a mother comforting her child, and in the New to a mother here. Why, then, may He not represent Himself under the figure of a woman here? But let that pass. Mr. Denovan immediately adds: "But the Church frequently is (spoken of under the figure of a woman)." In proof of this he refers to Psalm xlv., the Song of Solomon, the language of John the Baptist, "He that hath the Bride is the bridegroom," Paul's using in the Epistle to the Ephesians, marriage as a figure of the relation of Christ and His Church, and the title, "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," given to the Church in the Book of the Revelation. Then he sums all up as follows: "All this is so generally, may I not say universally, admitted by Bible students, argument in proof is unnecessary, the woman of this parable is the Church."

Mr. Denovan reasons here to the following effect: "In Scripture a woman is often the figure of the Church. The person spoken of in this parable is a woman. Therefore she represents the Church." I am sorry that I cannot say to our good brother: "Thou reasonest well." According to his reasoning the woman who lost a piece of silver is the Church. So also is the widow who applied for justice to an unjust judge. But what are we to make out of the two women grinding at a mill, of whom Christ speaks? Does each one represent the Church? And what are we to make out of the five wise virgins and the five foolish ones? Does each one represent the Church?

Mr. Denovan, as we have already seen, says quite correctly that the kingdom of heaven in the parable is the kingdom of heaven on earth. In other words, the Church on earth. Our Lord says that this kingdom, His Church on earth, is like leaven, that is, leaven is a figure of it. To state this in plainer language is an impossibility. The woman and the leaven are, of course, two perfectly distinct things. But Mr. Denovan, as we have also seen, says that the woman is the Church. Then both the woman who handled the leaven and the leaven which she handled represent the Church. She did a feat not less wonderful than that of a man carrying himself in his arms, or on his back, or lifting himself up by the collar of his coat.

Mr. Denovan, by spiritualizing the woman and other parts of the parable which we shall by and by consider, destroys the "majestic simplicity" of the picture, and "clogs it with cumbrous ornaments." There is no importance in our Lord here speaking of a woman instead of a man. In Jewish cities there were men bakers, as there are among us. We read of the bakers' street in Jerusalem. But in country places baking was done by women. In one of these our Lord spoke this parable. How natural then it was for Him to represent a woman doing the act described.

Here I must pause for the present.

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CONFIRMATION OF THE GOSPELS BY JOSEPHUS.

Nothing is more consolatory to Christians than evidence that will confirm the truths of the holy Gospels of the four evangelists taken from outside historical sources—which are supposed to be adverse to the early Christian Church.

Now Josephus, the great historian of the antiquities of the Jews, is generally looked upon as a trustworthy historian of the age of Christ and His apostles—of a period extending from the age of Julius Cæsar to the Emperor Nero especially—so far as relates to Judea and Rome and the difficulties of the Jews with the Roman governors. Many incidents spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles are alluded to and confirmed by his words. We find how Cyrenius a Roman Senator, and one who had gone through other offices and become a consul (the highest office below the Emperor) and a man of great merit, was sent into Syria with a few others to levy tribute or taxes on the Jews by Augustus, Emperor of Rome, Judea being considered a province of Syria.

In the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel we find these words, verse one: "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." 2. And this "taxing was first made when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria." 3. "And all the Jews went to be taxed, every one into his own city." 4. "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the City of Nazareth into Judea, into the City of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David)." 5. "To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child." And while there Christ was born.

Josephus also speaks particularly of Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas and Annas, the high priests. Luke says, chapter iii., that in the days of these high priests of Pontius Pilate and of Herod and Philip, Governor of Ituria, John the Baptist came into Judea and about Jordan preaching on baptism of repentance. Josephus, Vol. III. p. 284, speaks of John the Baptist as having been put to death by Herod, "though he was a good man and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue both as to justice towards one another and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism—for baptism would be acceptable to God."

"Now, many flocked to him for they were greatly moved by hearing of his words." Herod, Josephus says, fearing his popular power, put him in prison and afterwards put him to death. This narrative confirms the apostle's account. Luke, in his Gospel, chapter viii., verse 29, it will be remembered his being put to death was caused, the apostle says, by the anger of Herod's wife, "And all the people that heard him (John) and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John." Luke vii. 29, St. Mark vi. 15-28 gives an account of how Herod killed John the Baptist the great influence he had and how great and good a man he was. Mark also speaks of Herodias, the wife of Herod, whom he had unlawfully married—which illegal act is spoken of by Josephus, Herod being at the time married to another. Now some infidels have gone so far as to assert that no such person as Jesus Christ ever existed. Josephus confirms the fact of Christ's existence. At p. 247, Vol. III., he speaks of Jesus in this wise—"Now about this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it may be lawful to call him a man," etc. This assertion is said to have been inserted by some one in the work of Josephus. We find it there nevertheless. But in another part of Vol. III. p. 405, we find these words of Josephus: "In the high priesthood of Annas he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, whose name was James, and some others, and delivered them to be stoned." This sentence was opposed at the time by influential Jews, and it is not said it was carried out. We find also in Josephus the names of Agrippa, Festus and others, particularly described in the gospels and by Paul. Jesus Christ bears witness to the great goodness of John the Baptist, and John speaks of Christ as infinitely greater than he. It would be very interesting for those who wish to be confirmed in the truth of many incidents spoken of by the evangelists in the four gospels, to read through Vol. III. of Josephus, where Herod, Pontius Pilate, Agrippa and Caiaphas are spoken of. He was evidently a very just man, and although not a Christian, yet anxious to speak, as he does in all his history, fairly of all men heathens and Jews. He gives a very particular account of the terrible wickedness of the Romans, their cruelty towards the Jews and each other. The present world has no nation (not even the Russians or Chinese) so selfish, lustful, vile and tyrannical as the Romans were in the times of which Josephus wrote, covering a period of about a century, until Titus, in the most barbarous way, destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the nation. But whilst this is said of the Romans, not much can be said in favour of the great body of the Jews themselves. When we therefore compare the pure Gospel of the Lord Jesus—as given to the apostles—and their pure lives and doctrines, we marvel that such purity arose from such sinks of iniquity as the heathen nations—the Romans, or even the great body of the Jews. We are forced then to come to the conclusion that John the Baptist (and much more the Lord Jesus Christ) were endowed from God with their doctrines, and that God in His mercy to men commenced a new dispensation in the world.

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ARCHBISHOP RYAN, of Philadelphia, has assumed the chief editorship of the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*.