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THE BRIGGS CONTROVERSY FROM A CATHOLIC STAND-POINT.

North-American Review for September.

Judicious and thoughtful people cannot be averse to hear a member of the Roman Catholic Church explain from what standpoint and in what particular what standpoint and in what particular light his co-religionists view the Briggs controversy. Two points in particular strike them as most surpris-ing. In the indictment perferred against Professor Briggs we are told that the errors charged are fundamental, and relate, first to the question as to the supreme and only authority in matters of faith and practice, and, second, to the question as to the inerrancy or truthfulness of the inspired word of God. The other three principal charges, or funda-mental errors, as they are called, are subordinated to, or at least congenial with, the second mentioned above.

Nothing could surprise a member of the Roman Catholic Church more than the statement that Presbyterianism having been in existence for such period of time, the fundamental and vital question of authority should not have long since been definitely agreed upon and settled forever. And what w here say of Presbyterianism can be, we think, fitly applied to other reformed denominations. A Church is necessarily a society, and what society, a Catholic asks, can, we do not say grow and prosper, but even live or exist, without that chief and indispensable element-authority? What els is there that could give cohesion and unity to the several parts whereof a society is composed? What else can make a society that one, solid compact which it essentially is? Authority is absolutely necessary to the very ex-istence, let alone the growth and progress, of any society—as necessary to it as the head is to the body. This being so, a Roman Catholic, when he is told that the question as to the supreme and only authority in matters of faith and practices is still being mooted in a religious society of many years standing, becomes conscious that the following dilemma imposes itself : Either a so called religious society of that nature is, in reality, no society, since it lacks the most vital element of since it lacks the most vital element of a society, namely, authority; or else, though it is possessed of such an ele-ment, it is indeed strange that the wisest, most learned and most influential members of that society should be in such a state of doubt and hesit ancy in that regard that they hotly discuss the matter among themselves, and have impanelled a jury-we should say summoned a council-nnwilling to give a unanimous verdict. Suppos ing, according to the latter alternative, authority does exist in a society of that kind, would not the result practically prove as disastrous as in the former hypothesis?

As to the question of the inerrancy or truthfulness of the inspired word of God, are we not forcibly led to a similar conclusion, that is, the utter neces sity of a supreme authority, competent to elucidate those very points of the inerrancy, truthfulness and inspiration of what is proposed to men as the word of God, and, by unappealable sanction, impose belief in and adherance to the same? It is not enough that men be presented with the Word of God, inerrant, truthful and inspired, they must moreover be possessed of an in-fallible means of reaching an inerrant, truthful and therefore inspired interpretation of it. For we know that the language of the Bible is not in every case so clear and self-evident to the mind of men, that all are enabled to find out its meaning at once. We know, on the contrary, tha

most men it is impracticable ; on reach-ing its conclusions it does not definitely the mind so as to convince i that all further research after the truth is unnecessary; nor can it impart to the heart that peace without which the latter can never be at rest. What re-mains then? What else than the acknowledgement of, and submission to, a supreme authority, empowered to interpret the word of God with infal-lible assurance. That this conclusion should not yet have been arrived at, that the absolute necessity of a suprem authority to decide on the inerrancy and truthfulness of the inspired word of God, and to interpret the same, should not yet have become manifest to all adherents of Presbyterianism, or that they should still be seeking where that authority is to be found, in whom it is vested—is, we repeat, a cause of singular surprise to a Roman Catholic.

But let us for the sake of argument, concede that the system of private in terpretation is practicable, available, indeed, the only true, reasonable and authorized mode of interpreting the word of God, shall the position held by the General Assembly in the Briggs from it, and this is at the very first glance obvious. The right to private interpretation means that each private individual is entitled to give to any passage, text, or word the significance which his own judgment may dictate, and that he may sately adopt the con-clusion which, by using that standard, he has eventually reached; else the words are void of meaning. We sup-pose that Dr. Briggs is no more to be debarred from the full enjoyment of that with them the full enjoyment of that right than any other minister of his own denomination. We admit that his inferences and teachings are of a somewhat startling character-main-taining, as he does, that Moses is not the author of the Pentateuch; that Isaiah did not write more than half his book ; that sanctification is not com-plete after death. But what of all this, and why should Dr. Briggs be singled out, summoned before his peers, convicted of heresy and eventually suspended for believing and teaching as he does, if, in accordance with the doctrine and by the gift of his own Church he has a right to attach to scriptural writings whatever meaning his own private judgment may suggest? Whether he has made a more lavish use of that right than other Presbyterians are wont to do, is merely a question of more or less; the question of principle and right remains the For, after all, the case is simply this: We have before us a minister of the Gospel belonging to a Church which holds as one of its essential tenets that all its members, shepherds and

flock, are vested with the unlimited right to interpret the Bible in the manner which to them seems good and proper. This same minister is con-scious of the fact that by using this right he violates no law, no rule of his Church ; that on the contrary, he is acting in conformity with its spirit and its views; and lo and behold when on a certain day he sets forth his own interpretations of the divine word, he is pointed out as a dangerous man, made the victim of obloquy, dragged from one tribunal to another, eventually condemned and suspended as guilty of heresy. Thus rebuked and entenced for doing that which he wa taught and told it was his right todo, Dr Briggs may well wonder at the course followed by his self appointed judges, and exclaim : "Consistency, thou art a jewel." We are not surprised that W_e a jewel." We are not surprised that trees. Their others are valid, their $r_{\rm in}$ - Dr. Briggs should, after hearing of the Mass and other services in Latin, and sentence pronounced against him, have vestigations, in reference thereto are doomed to be baffled, unless they be appeared quite unconcerned and told his friends that he "would go right accompanied with deep study, serious And we deem the course of the on." knowledge of archæology, comparative philology, scientific lore, etc. How many among the busy sons of men can minority in the General Assembly quite natural, when "declaring their hearty belief in a love for the Holy ind time to equip their minds with such an amount of erudition, and yet, Dr. Briggs' assumptions to the con-trary notwithstanding, his co-religion-Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and their entire loyalty to the principles of the Presbyterian Church, they desire respectfully to record their solemn protest against the verdict and ists maintain that the way of salvation must be sought, and can only be found in and through the Bible. Number-less, indeed, must be the perplexed and afflicted souls crying aloud : "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the scale thereof. judgment of suspension, and the pro-ceedings leading to the verdict, in the ceedings leading to the vertice, in the case against the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., in the General As-sembly of 1893." Yes, if the right to private interpretation exists in the Presbyterian Church, and if words bear with them the meaning which worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof . . . And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open the book." (Apoc. V. 2, 4.) And even with the best qualified ex-pounders of the sacred text when a nessage of abstrase meaning must he they are intended to convey, the Briggs trial was a farce and the sentpounders of the sacred text when a passage of abstruse meaning must be interpreted, does it not happen that senses differing widely, nay, anon, that violently clashing conclusions are ence passed upon the man a piece of iniquity. These remarks concerning the free interpretation of the Bible and the case of Dr. Briggs have been made eventually arrived at? Now, if the truth investigated be one which, under pain of eternal reprobation, I am bound to believe, and the knowledge of merely for the sake of argument ; for bound to believe, and the knowledge of which imposes stringent moral obliga-tions upon me, what am I to do? Which of the two opinions shall I adopt? Shall I weigh and compare their intrinsic value? But I have so? Does it not, therefore, follow that is a link and the compared of the ability to do so? Does it not, therefore, follow that is a link and the compared of the ability to do so? Does it not, therefore, follow that is a link and the compared of the ability to do the all-wise and all-merciful Founder a Roman Catholic believes and main the Founder of Christianity. Just as the safe keeping of the Holy Scriptures has been instrusted by Christ to His Church, so must there be in that same Unravel all intricacies and to illustrate the all-wise and all-merciful Founder of Christianity, whom all denomina-tions alike acknowledge and worship, must have given to them whom He came to redeem and save an easier and safer means of reaching the true Church of His an infallible means to unravel all intricacies and to illustrate all sayings of recondite significance contained in those sacred books. That means is the teaching as well as gov-erning authority set up in the Church meaning of his utterances? Yes, evidently, and that means can be none else than authority-that authority, we pure interpretation. That authority the contrary doctrine is sufficient proof it is, which Augustine himself, a most that the Catholic belief in this regard pure interpretation. This do notice is the catholic belief in this regard to you to day. The end does not, and, is the only one deserving of respect and support. For who shall give to will be an immoral act, however good the end aimed at may be, if the means est, causa finita est." ences, when he says : est, causa finita est."

Therefore, sifted and scanned by un-prejudiced and upright persons, the system of private interpretation of the Holy Scripture is found wanting. For most men it is impracticable; on reach-ing its conclusions it does not definitely. conflict arises between two or more persons attributing different senses to some biblical expression, who shall decide the question ? The local Presbytery or the General Assembly ? how could they thus tamper with the right to private interpretation vested in each of the wrangling parties? It is evident, therefore, that an absolute, supreme teaching authority must have been deputed by Christ to His Church ; that to this authority must be referred all difficulties met with in the interpretation of the sacred text, and that all the members of the Church must con sider the decision arrived at by that same authority as final and binding. Such is the Catholic belief, and we leave it for any sensible reader to say whether or not it is the only reasonable one. Authority in these matters of such serious import 1s so obviously necessary that all in practice recognize

it and follow its dictates. The child, whether reared in the Catholic faith or not, receives the interpretation given him by his parents, and, later on, the man follows the teachings of his pastor. Why? Because this is for all the readiest, most natural and, generally speaking, the only practicable way of learning and understanding the Holy

SLOWLY DECREASING.

Dwindling Away.

The Jansenists of Holland, the only living representatives of a once power-ful and always memorable schismatic movement, carefully keep up their old customs. Whenever they have a Bishop consecrated they send a notification of the fact to the Sovereign Pontiff, who replies with a solemn excommunication. Last year they selected as their Archbishop of Utrecht a certain Rev. Gerard Gul, and he was consecrated by a schismatic Bishop. With what appears like arrogance they officially notified the Pope of this

sacrilegious consecration. His Holiness, by a letter directed to the real Archbishop of Utrecht, has just lately declared that he has been looking forward with hope to their return to the bosom of the Church, but that he now feels compelled to pass upon them the sentence of excommuni This punishment is then cation. formally inflicted not only on schismatic Bishops, but on all their

followers and supporters. The Jansenists of Holland are desendants of those Dutch Catholics whom Jansenist refugees from France imbued with their principles in the seventeenth century. In 1689 Peter Kodde, who had been appointed the Vicar Apostolic for the Dutch missionsafter the revolt from Spain the Hierarchy was overthrown - championed the Jansenist cause, and in 1702 he was suspended by Clement X1. The schismatic prelate declared that he had been chosen Archbishop of Utrecht by the chapter of that See, although it had no proper claim to the title of a Cathedral Chapter, and with him fifty-two missions and eighty priests tell away from communion with the Roman See. The schism has lasted from that time

to the present day, and its votaries are remarkable in this respect that with the exception of their Jansenistical errors they are still Roman in their doctrines, liturgy, usages and prac-tices. Their orders are valid, their Mass and other services in Latin, and acknowledge the Pope as the visible Their prayer head of the Church. books and hyman books are exactly like the regular Catholic manuals of the same kind. But the number o the Jansenists is gradually dwindling, and it is now said to be not quite On the other hand, since the 5.000. Catholic hierarchy of Holland was re-established by Pius IX. in 1851 the members of the communion have rapidly increased and multiplied.

explicit, and yet the lie will be told and retold in the future as frequently as in the past. It is too valuable and effective for the enemies of the order to part with.

Pope Leo has sent a special letter to Madrid, thanking the Spanish Government for ceding to the Franciscan Order the Con-vent of La Rabida, where Columbus spent the night previous to his departure on the voyage which resulted in the discovery of America.

of America. In the yearning tenderness of a child for every bird that sings above his head, and every creature feeding on the hills, and every tree and flower and running brook, we see how everything was made to love, and how they er, who, in a world like this, find anything to hate but human pride, -N. *P. Willis.*

THE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE.

An Interesting Chat With the Secretary of St. Mary's.—She Explains why the Sisters and Their Pupils are so Healthy—Due to Strict Rules of Hygiene and the Medicine used in the Home—Information of Value to Every-body.

body. From the Terre Haute, Ind., Express. Four miles to the northwest of Terre Haute lies the becautiful and picturesque village of St. Marys. This is a Roman Catholie Institution which has attained something more than established by six Siters of Prance to tas the foundation for this great charitable or is the work of the shores of France to tas the foundation for this great charitable or is the new consists of the home of the Sisters of the method for this great charitable or is the method by the shores of the Sisters of the new consists of the home of the Sisters of the new consists of the home of the Sisters of the new consists of the home of the Sisters of the new consists of the home of the Sisters of the new consists of the foundation of the Sisters of the new consists of the foundation of the Sisters of the new consists of the Sisters of the Sisters of the new consists of the Sisters of the Sisters of the new consists of the Sisters of the Sisters of the through the establishment remently asked Sis-ter Mary Ambrose the the with which the Sis-ters and their public are bested. The answer was the charte to be the health and happiness of the Sisters of Health where the Sis-ters and their public are bested. The answer was the charte to be the field the Sisters and the mind. In different to keep the mind bright and active condition must be as nearly perfect is possible. Mote earlie and more of bitidents, which was probably due to atmos-particitat is origin really was. Shortly after intended a medicine called Dr. Williams Pink provemended to say that these Pills where so has the problem and of the Silein earlie when yers intended a medicine called Dr. Williams Pink provemended to say that these Pills were so bightly recommended to a strate these Pills were so bightly recommended to a strate these Pills were so bightly recommended to a strate these Pills were so bightly recommended to a strate were the sile interesting as coblood builder and an excellent neresting From the Terre Haute, Ind., Express

Secretary of the Sisters of Providence. Medical scientists concede that weak blocd and shattered nerves are the fruitful cause of nearly every disease to which human alesh is heir, and if Dr. Willaums 'Pink Pills is, as sood blocd builder and an excellent nerve tonic," the source of good health at St. Mary's is easily traced.

source of good health at St. Mary's is easily traced. Sister Ambrose said they are never withou Pink Pills, and that now they order a gross a stime.

Sister Ambrose said they are never without Pink Pills, and that now they order a gross at a time. This is certainly a very high recommendation for the medicine, for there is probably no class of people that gives more attention to the physi-cal health and welfare of 14 members than the Sisters of Providence, and they would not use anything in which they did not have un-bounded faith. Dr. Williams of the set of the age. They are the by brings reports of remarkable cures they barries reports of remarkable cures they be reports of remarkable cures that bare resulted from the use of this wonder ful medicine. In many cases the good work has been accomplished after eminent physic-ians had failed and pronounced the patient beyond the hope of human aid. An analysis in a condensed form all the elements necessary restore shattered nerves. They are an unfail-ties, neuralgia, rheumatism, set on the socomotor ataxis, partial paralysis, St. Virus' dance, scin-tics, neuralgia, the many cases as locomotor the after effects of la grippe, paipitation of the article humors in the blocd, such as scrotal, chorait, that thred feeling resulting from nervous prostration; all diseases depending upon vitiated humors in the blocd, such as scrotal, chorait cure in all cases arising from merval work, overwork or excesses of whatever a radical cure in all cases arising from mental work, overwork or excesses of whatever a radical cure in all cases arising from mental work, overwork or excesses of whatever a the are in locas form by the dozen or humdred in specific for a store down of healt to taple or sallow checks. In the case of men they effect a radical cure in all cases arising from mental work, overwork or excesses of whatever in the in locas form by the dozen or humdred.

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Scriptures. L. A. NOLIN, O.M. I., LL. D.

The Jansenists of Holland Gradually

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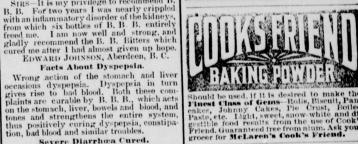
A Calumny Dies Hard. Baltimore Mirror.

"The end justifies the means'

how often this has been quoted as the cardinal principle of the Jesuits; so often, that every time you think of the one, the other is brought to mind. In all the books written against the Jesuits, you will find it. There are, even, persons not unfriendly to the

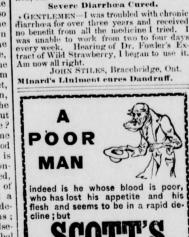
society, who suppose that the maxim originated among them. And yet, carried out to its logical conclusion, what could be more opposed to the teaching, not only of Christianity, but holding, that the end justifies the means, but the contrary is the fact. My constant ethical teaching for twenty years, has been what I say to you to-day. The end does not, and,

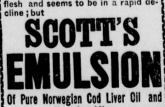




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