

GLADSTONE ON REUNION.

The Letter which has Astonished English Churchmen.

Gladstone's letter on the subject of the unity of Christendom and the validity of Anglican orders, which has so greatly stirred up the nonconformists of England, and has had its author denounced as a traitor to his Church and a Jesuit in disguise, has been given to the press by the Archbishop of York. The remarkable contribution of the aged statesman and scholar is as follows: "The question of the validity of Anglican orders might seem to be of limited interest if it were only to be treated by the amount of any immediate practical and external consequences likely to follow upon any discussion or that might now be taken in respect to it; for the clergy of the Anglican Communion, numbering between 30,000 and 40,000, and for their flocks, the whole subject is one of settled solidity. In the oriental Churches there prevails a sentiment of increasing friendliness towards the Anglican Church, but no question of intercommunion is likely to present to arise, while, happily, no system of proselytism exists to set a blister on our mutual relations. In the Latin Church, which from the magnitude and the close issue of its organization overshadows all western Christendom, these orders, so far as they have been noticed, have been commonly disputed or denied or treated as if they were null. A positive condemnation of them, if viewed in its letter, would do no more than harden the existing usage of reordination in the case, which at most periods has been a rare one, of Anglican clergy who might seek admission to the clerical order in the Roman Church, but very different indeed would be the moral aspect and effect of an AUTHORIZED FORMAL INVESTIGATION of the question at Rome, to whichever side the result might incline. It is to the last degree improbable that a ruler of known wisdom would at this time put in motion the machinery of such a Curia for the purpose of widening the breach which severs the Roman Catholic Church from a communion which, though small in comparison, yet is extended through the large and fast increasing range of the English-speaking races, and which represents in the religious sphere one of the most powerful nations of European Christendom. According to my reading of history, that breach is, indeed, already a wide one; but the existing schism has not been put into stereotype by any anathema or any express renunciation of communion on either side. As an acknowledgment of Anglican orders would not create intercommunion, so a condemnation of them would not absolutely excommunicate, but it would be a step, and even morally a stride, towards excommunication, and it would stand as a practical affirmation of the principle that it is wise to make the religious differences between the Churches of Christendom conspicuous to the world, and also to bring them into a state of the highest fixity so as to enhance the difficulty of approaching them at any future time in the spirit of reconciliation. From such a point of view an inquiry resulting in a proscription of Anglican orders would be no less important than deplorable. But the information which I have been allowed, through the kindness of Lord Halifax, to share altogether disposes from my mind every apprehension of this kind, and convinces me that the investigations of the Curia did not lead to a favorable result, wisdom and charity would in any case arrest them at such a point as to avert their becoming an occasion and a means of EXHIBITING RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY. I turn, therefore, to the other alternative, and assume for the sake of argument that the judgment of the examining tribunal would be found either to allow upon all points the preponderance of the contentions on behalf of validity, or at least to place beyond controversy a portion of the matters which enter into the essence of discussion. I will for the present take it for granted that these fall under three heads: 1. The external competency of the consecrators. 2. The external sufficiency of the commission they have conferred. 3. That sufficiency of intention which the eleventh canon of the council of Trent appears to require. Under the first head the examination would of course include, in addition to the consecration of Parker and the competency of his consecrators, the several cases in which consecrators outside the English line have participated in the consecration of Anglican Bishops, and I have in this manner furnished independent grounds for the assertion of validity. Even the dismissal from the controversy of any one of these three heads would be in the nature of an advance towards concord, and would be so far a reward for the labors of His Holiness.

POPE LEO XIII.

in furtherance of truth and peace. But I may be permitted to contemplate for a moment as possible or likely even the full acknowledgment that without reference to any other real or supposed points of controversy the simple abstract validity of Anglican consecrations is not subject to reasonable doubt. And now I must take upon me to speak in the only capacity in which it can be warrantable for me to intervene in a discussion properly belonging to persons of competent authority—that is the capacity of an absolutely private person, born and baptized in the Anglican Church, accepting his lot there, as is the duty of all who do not find that she has forfeited her original and inherent privilege and place. I may add that my case is that of one who has been led by the circumstances, both of his private and of his public career, to a life long and of his public observation of her character, her fortunes and the part she has to play in the grand history of redemption. Thus it is that her public interests are also his personal interests, and what they require justify what is no more than his individual thought upon them. He is not one of those who look for an early restitution of such a Christian unity as that which marked the earlier history of the Church; yet he ever cherishes the belief that work may be done in that direction which if not massive or imposing may nevertheless be legitimate and solid, and this by the least as well as by the greatest. It is the Pope who, as the first Bishop of Christendom, has the noblest sphere of action, but the humblest of the Christian flock has his place of daily duty, and according as he fills it helps to make or mar every good and holy work in this character. The writer has viewed with profound and thankful satisfaction during the last half century the progressive advance of a great work of restoration in Christian doctrine. It has not been wholly confined within his own country to the Anglican communion, but it is best that he should speak of that which has been most under his eye within these limits. It has not been confined to doctrine, but has extended to Christian life and all its workings. The aggregate result has been that it has brought the Church of England from a state externally of halcyon calm, but inwardly of deep stagnation, to one in which while buffeted more or less by external storms subjected to some peculiar and searching forms of trial, and even now by no means exempt from internal discussions she sees her clergy transformed (for this is the word which may be advisedly used), her vital energy enlarged and still growing in every direction, and a store of bright hopes accumulated. Then, she may be able to contribute her share, and even possibly no mean share, toward the consummation of the work of the gospel in the world. Now, the contemplation of these changes by no means, unfortunately, ministers to our pride. They involve large admission of collective fault. This is not the place, and I am not the proper organ, for exposition in detail; but I may mention the widespread depression of evangelical doctrine, the insufficient exhibition of the person and the work of the Redeemer, the coldness and deadness as well as the infrequency of public worship, the relegation of the Holy Eucharist to the position of a mere sacrament, the neglect of the Holy Scriptures, a solemn one among its occasional incidents, the gradual effacement of church observance from personal and daily life—in all these respects there has been a profound alteration which is still progressive, and which, apart from occasional extravagance or indiscretion, has indicated a real advance in the discipline of souls and in the work of God on behalf of man. A single-minded allegiance to truth sometimes exacts admissions which may be turned to account for the purpose of inflicting polemical disadvantages. Such an admission I must now record. It is not to be denied that a very large part of these improvements has been in a direction which has DIMINISHED THE BREADTH OF SEPARATION between ourselves and the authorized teaching of the unreformed Church both in East and West. So that, while, on the one hand, they were improvements in religious doctrine and life, on the other hand, they were testimonials recorded against ourselves and in favor of bodies outside our own precincts, that is to say, they were valuable contributions to the cause of Christian reunion. With sorrow we note that, so far as the western Church was concerned, its only public and corporate movements, especially in 1870, seemed to meet the approximations made among us with something of recession from us; but it is not necessary to open further this portion of the subject. "Redemptur Saturnia regna"—certain publications of learned French priests, unsuspected in their orthodoxy, which went to affirm the validity of Anglican ordinations, naturally excited much interest in this country and elsewhere, but there was nothing in them to ruffle the Roman atmosphere or invest the subject in the circles of the Vatican with the character of administrative urgency. When, therefore, it came to be understood that Pope Leo XIII. had given his command that the validity of Anglican ordinations should form the subject of an historical and theological investigation, it was impossible not to be impressed with the profound interest view by such a step if interpreted in accordance with just reason as an effort towards the abatement of controversial differences. There was, indeed, in my view, a subject of thought anterior to any scrutiny of the question upon its intrinsic merits which deeply impressed itself upon my mind. Religious controversies do not, like bodily wounds, heal by genial force of nature. If they do not proceed to gangrene and to mortification, at least they tend to harden into fixed facts, to incorporate themselves with law, character and tradition, may even with language, so that at last they take rank among the data and presumptions of common life and are thought as inexpugnable as the rocks of an iron-bound coast. A poet of ours describes the sharp and total severance of two early friends. They parted—never to meet again. But never either found another. To free the hollow heart from paining,

They stood aloof, the scars remaining. Life cliffs which had been rent asunder. A drury sea now flows between. Since we remember in the fourth century since the convocation of Canterbury under Warham, in 1531, passed its canon or resolution of the royal governorship of the Church. How much has happened during those centuries to inflame the strife! How little to abate or quench it! WHAT COURAGE MUST IT REQUIRE in a Pope, what an elevation above all the levels of stormy partisanship, what genuineness of love for the whole Christian flock, whether separated or annexed, to enable him to approach the huge mass of hostile and still burning recollections in the spirit and for the purpose of peace! And yet that is what Leo XIII. has done in entertaining the question of this inquiry, and secondly in determining and providing by the infusion both of capacity and of impartiality into the investigating tribunal that no instrument should be overlooked, no guarantee omitted, for the possible attainment of the true, lie who bears in mind the cup of cold water administered to "one of these little ones" will surely record this effort stamped in its very conception as alike arduous and blessed. But what of the advantage to be derived from any proceeding which shall end or shall reduce within narrower bounds the debate upon Anglican orders? I will put upon paper, with the utmost deference to authority and better judgment, my own personal and individual and, as I freely admit, very insignificant reply to the question. The one controversy which, according to my deep conviction, overshadows, and in the last resort absorbs, all others is the controversy between faith and unbelief. It is easy to understand the reliance which THE LOYAL ROMAN CATHOLIC places upon the vast organization and imposing belief and action of his Church as his provision for meeting the emergency, but I presume that even he must feel that the hundreds of millions who profess the name of Christ, without owing the authority of His Church, must count for something in the world, and that the more he is able to show their affirmative belief to stand in consonance with his, the more he strengthens both the common cause—and his own particular position. If out of every hundred professing Christians ninety-nine assert amidst all their separate and clashing convictions their beliefs in the central doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation, will not every one of the particular and imperfectly informed, but to the place of one (though, doubtless, a solemn one) among its occasional incidents, the gradual effacement of church observance from personal and daily life—in all these respects there has been a profound alteration which is still progressive, and which, apart from occasional extravagance or indiscretion, has indicated a real advance in the discipline of souls and in the work of God on behalf of man. A single-minded allegiance to truth sometimes exacts admissions which may be turned to account for the purpose of inflicting polemical disadvantages. Such an admission I must now record. 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Spencer, the apostles of the fad, were preaching his gospel with individual variations; but there are also those who still hang on to the rag of anti-Christian thought because they have never happened to come across its opposers. It is a strange thing to chronicle that Agnosticism has a creed when we analyze the two words; credo, I believe, and agnostos, not knowing that is, ignorance. And yet Laing drew up eight articles of its creed for Gladstone, much to the disgust of Huxley, who had invented the term to fit his own amplification of Spencer's idea. As it tries its case on the lines laid down by its inventors,—a "rigorous application" of its principle that whatever cannot be grasped by the human mind is "altogether vicious and illusive, and in no way distinguishable from pure fiction," detects itself. "Taking a blind man as an illustration Father Fitzsimons says: "But observed that the only reason why men are agnostics is because they cannot conceive or know the power which lies behind phenomena. The relation of the agnostic mind to the truths of Christianity is precisely the relation of a man born blind to the light of day, as far as knowledge of conception goes. The faculty by which he might form the conception—the sense of sight—is absent, just as the faculty of conceiving the Infinite is wanting to the agnostic. It is his duty to proclaim himself a blind agnostic, and light, as unknown?" If the agnostic position toward Christianity is the correct one, it follows that the same attitude is the correct one for a man born blind to assume towards the world of light. Let us assume the case of an asylum for the blind where there might happen to be a considerable number who were born without the sense of sight. And let us further suppose that amongst the latter there were two or three blind, independent spirits, with a love of philosophical research like Mr. Spencer, enterprising champions of intellectual freedom who by a laudable ambition to emancipate if not the entire human family, at least that microcosm in which they lived, from the thraldom of ancient superstitions. Having mastered well their Kant and their Hume, and their Spencer, and with the spirit of a Huxley plus a little seasoning of sound logic, going forth conquering and to conquer, they had become thoroughly imbued with agnosticism and individualism, and at last they turn their attention to the question of sight and light. Here, too, was a question on which the world looked it over with an affection of superior wisdom and knowledge, just as in matters of religion. Did not men insult their intelligence by pitying their blindness, and speaking sympathizingly of their darkness? What in reality was this sight and light of which men spoke with "the luxury of unqualified assurance"? What was this shade, this color, which even "the man of science" spoke gibbly of? Assuredly here was another superstition which agnosticism had overlooked and which it was their bounden duty to overthrow. Why not rise in rebellion against it at once? Why not betake themselves at once to the heights of their agnostic superiority and look down with supreme scorn on those who maintained that there existed an "unseen world" of light and color? Surely all conception of it was just as impossible as the conception of the infinite, the absolute, nay more so, for in the latter case there was an ever-present consciousness which would not away, while in the former there was but a huge blank, utter vacuity. Why not, as true agnostic disciples of Mr. Spencer, rule such notions out of court altogether? Were they not unthinkable, inconceivable, unknowable? Was it not their "highest wisdom as well as their highest duty" to regard them as such? And at once they begin to preach their agnostic gospel of demolition of this idol. To them comes Mr. Spencer with "Hold, my good friends; you are wrong and rash. Let me read to you, my friend, Mr. Proctor, on the beauty of the starry heavens; let me intrude, to you, my friend, Mr. Tyndall, who will explain to you the nature and properties of light. Do not rash, be not hasty. All the world will hold you in derision; be persuaded by me." "But," reply our blind agnostics, "we have studied this question of sight carefully again and again in the light of your teachings, and we are forced to the conclusion that it is 'beyond the reach of our faculties.' Have you yourself not taught us with Hume, nay insisted that 'duty requires us to submit ourselves with all humility to the established limits of our intelligence? Even Professor Huxley, whom the other day taught us that 'it is immoral to say that there are propositions which men ought to believe, without logically satisfactory evidence, and this in this case we cannot possibly have. All our conceptions of light are as we have taught us, oh wise and good master! merely symbolic conceptions of the illegitimate order, and 'no cumulative or indirect process can enable us to ascertain that there are corresponding actualities,' nor can any predictions be made whose fulfillment can prove this to us; are we not, therefore, to regard them as 'altogether vicious and illusive, and in no way distinguishable from pure fictions?'" "But," says Mr. Spencer, "you must believe me. Just as you can hear with your ears, or feel with your hands, so you could see light with your eyes had you the faculty of vision. Trust me, there is a world of sight of which you know nothing."

To which we get the answer: "Oh trusted and learned teacher, long since we have learned of you the true principles of knowledge. You ask us to believe you, and it is probable you may be right. Yet of this we have our own opinion; but 'it is not a question of probability and credibility, but of conceivability, as one of our own wise maxims have it. Or, again, we cannot 'put together in consciousness' the notions upon which you insist. Mr. Spencer, of course, is naturally perplexed at this unlooked for but at the same time just application of his method, and feels the full force of the logic of their position, and at last in despair loses his hold upon his principles and turns for refuge to credibility, and with a full sense that even if in opposition to his own philosophy, he is at last on solid ground, says 'but all mankind believes in the existence of sight and light, as they know the world of sight.' Hear the voice of all the world and believe." But it is with reproach they now turn from him and say, "False, lost leader! Hast thou brought us into the wilderness there to desert us? Thou hast taught us to put conceivability far above credibility, and now when it pleases thee dost thou reverse the order? Thou hast laid down rules and established principles, and thou hast not the courage to consistently pursue them to their logical conclusions. If conceivability, then, is to yield to credibility contrary to thy former wise maxims, at what point must it yield? To what amount of testimony?" If Mr. Spencer and Mr. Huxley are right, then are the blind right also. If Mr. Spencer's argument is sound and valid for the removal of God out of court, then is their argument sound. If the philosophy which culminates in the Unknowable and treats it as nonexistent is right, then is the man born blind justified in treating with contempt all that the most learned physicist can tell him about the properties of light. The same applies with equal force to that vast multitude who fill our asylums for deaf-mutes, and who have never heard the music of a human voice. The sun shines, is a proposition as incomprehensible to a man born blind as the proposition God created the world, is to the most sanguine of Agnostic philosophers. The birds sing, would be a proposition as inconceivable to a man born deaf as the idea of three persons in one God is to a follower of Mr. Spencer. The idea suggested by the first proposition is as intelligible to the one and to the other as the idea of square fluids or moral substances. Let me conclude with this suggestion: If the sun, which with its train of light and glory glides the hilltops at early morn, and at eventide tints with crimson and gold the clouds in the western horizon, and through the livelong day bathes the world in rays of shimmering beauty; if the world of light which at night studs with stars like glistening spears the depths of azure, be so near the blind as yet hidden from their eyes by a mere film, may not the Sun of Justice with all His divine attributes and all His eternal glory be just as near to our eyes, yet hidden by a veil no more dense? And if the sun in the heavens and the light which it dispenses are the veriest commonplaces to us, while to some men they are wholly hidden and unknown, what must be thought of the philosophy which in the face of this standing fact of the world of sense, glories in the title of agnosticism, and has only scorn and ridicule for those who seek to learn what little they may of the eternal Sun of Justice and of Glory?—Catholic Columbian.

No man is worthy of heavenly comfort who has not diligently exercised himself in holy communion.—The Imitation. In silence and quiet the devout soul goes forward, and learns the secret of the Scriptures.—The Imitation. All carnal joys enter pleasantly, but in the end bring remorse and death.—The Imitation. There is no true liberty nor solid joy, but in the fear of God, with a good conscience.—The Imitation. Strive manfully; custom is overcome by custom.—The Imitation. It is oftentimes a want of spirit which makes the wretched body so easily complain.—The Imitation. There is no man in the world without some trouble or affliction, though he be a king or a Pope.—The Imitation. What you want when you are ailing is a medicine that will cure you. Try Hood's Sarsaparilla and be convinced of its merit. consumption There is ease for those far gone in consumption—not recovery—ease. There is cure for those not far gone. There is prevention for those who are threatened. Scott's Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil is for you, even if you are only a little thin. SCOTT'S EMULSION has been endorsed by the medical profession for twenty years. Ask your doctor. This is because it is always palatable—always uniform—always contains the purest Norwegian Cod-liver Oil and Hypophosphite, made in U.S.A. Insist on Scott's Emulsion, with trade-mark of man and fish. You work right around now. No trouble to make \$18 a week easy. When you see this ad, you will be surprised at how easy it can be done. Send us your address any way. It will be sent to you at once. Write today. Write to the publisher, make \$18 a week easy. LITERARY AGENCY CO., 75, Water St., N.Y.C.



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BLIND LEADING THE BLIND. An illustration of the Spectacles of Agnostic Argument. The claims of Agnosticism as a basis of religious or philosophic belief are not as prominently advanced in these present days as they were a decade ago, when Huxley, Laing and

Spencer, the apostles of the fad, were preaching his gospel with individual variations; but there are also those who still hang on to the rag of anti-Christian thought because they have never happened to come across its opposers. It is a strange thing to chronicle that Agnosticism has a creed when we analyze the two words; credo, I believe, and agnostos, not knowing that is, ignorance. And yet Laing drew up eight articles of its creed for Gladstone, much to the disgust of Huxley, who had invented the term to fit his own amplification of Spencer's idea. As it tries its case on the lines laid down by its inventors,—a "rigorous application" of its principle that whatever cannot be grasped by the human mind is "altogether vicious and illusive, and in no way distinguishable from pure fiction," detects itself. 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What in reality was this sight and light of which men spoke with "the luxury of unqualified assurance"? What was this shade, this color, which even "the man of science" spoke gibbly of? Assuredly here was another superstition which agnosticism had overlooked and which it was their bounden duty to overthrow. Why not rise in rebellion against it at once? Why not betake themselves at once to the heights of their agnostic superiority and look down with supreme scorn on those who maintained that there existed an "unseen world" of light and color? Surely all conception of it was just as impossible as the conception of the infinite, the absolute, nay more so, for in the latter case there was an ever-present consciousness which would not away, while in the former there was but a huge blank, utter vacuity. Why not, as true agnostic disciples of Mr. Spencer, rule such notions out of court altogether? Were they not unthinkable, inconceivable, unknowable? Was it not their "highest wisdom as well as their highest duty" to regard them as such? And at once they begin to preach their agnostic gospel of demolition of this idol. To them comes Mr. Spencer with "Hold, my good friends; you are wrong and rash. Let me read to you, my friend, Mr. Proctor, on the beauty of the starry heavens; let me intrude, to you, my friend, Mr. Tyndall, who will explain to you the nature and properties of light. Do not rash, be not hasty. All the world will hold you in derision; be persuaded by me." "But," reply our blind agnostics, "we have studied this question of sight carefully again and again in the light of your teachings, and we are forced to the conclusion that it is 'beyond the reach of our faculties.' Have you yourself not taught us with Hume, nay insisted that 'duty requires us to submit ourselves with all humility to the established limits of our intelligence? Even Professor Huxley, whom the other day taught us that 'it is immoral to say that there are propositions which men ought to believe, without logically satisfactory evidence, and this in this case we cannot possibly have. All our conceptions of light are as we have taught us, oh wise and good master! merely symbolic conceptions of the illegitimate order, and 'no cumulative or indirect process can enable us to ascertain that there are corresponding actualities,' nor can any predictions be made whose fulfillment can prove this to us; are we not, therefore, to regard them as 'altogether vicious and illusive, and in no way distinguishable from pure fictions?'" "But," says Mr. Spencer, "you must believe me. Just as you can hear with your ears, or feel with your hands, so you could see light with your eyes had you the faculty of vision. Trust me, there is a world of sight of which you know nothing."

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