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OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

THE NEW POPE.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—The vacancy at the Vatican has been quickly filled. In the midst of the solemn rites of the interment of the deceased Pope (and it was melancholy to observe the number of Requiem masses which were deemed necessary for the repose of the soul of the deceased Pontiff) the preparations for the holding of the Conclave were in active progress. The Cardinals from all parts hastened to Rome, and in very brief time they had elected a new Pope. The Cardinal on whom this high distinction has been conferred, bore the name of "Pecci," but as he had the right of choosing his own title, he elected to be called

LEO XIII.

and bearing this name, he ascends the Papal throne. Very favorable impressions are entertained of the new Pope, and all that he has done since his election has been of a moderate and pacific nature. He is reported to be an excellent scholar, an ascetic and exemplary priest, and not extreme in his views. He is 68 years of age, and it is not at all likely that his reign can be a protracted one. He has no personal wrongs over which to brood, and it is not probable that he will resent the loss of temporal sovereignty as keenly as Pius IX., from whom it was wrested. Yet it is difficult to infer what a new Pope will be, for all his powers and difficulties are untried, and in the case of the late Pope, the bright hopes of his early days were obscured by the acts of following years. The party of Ultramontanes are represented as already dissatisfied at the moderation of the Holy Father, and anxious for a declaration of antipathy to the Kingdom of Italy, German liberty and all other forms of modern progress and ecclesiastical freedom, wherever it has asserted itself.

THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT

has been several weeks in session, but we cannot yet report any great amount of business. The lengthened debates upon the vote for six millions and the various stages through which the Bill had to pass in both Houses, has taken up much time, that little else has been really accomplished. There is an immense pressure of work, and if Parliament could sit for an entire year, there would be full employment for it at its present rate of getting through its business. Some of the great questions of the day have been discussed and received a quietus for this session, and probably for this Parliament, as its duration cannot extend over two years from the present.

THE BURIALS' QUESTION

was earnestly pressed in a very full house, and was lost by a narrow majority. Great pressure had been brought to bear in opposition to the resolution for opening the graveyards of the nation. A petition signed by 15,000 clergymen, and 30,000 laymen was presented; but yet the cause of religious freedom gains perceptibly, and every year marks some fresh triumph. The friends of the cause are not in the least discouraged. It is only a question of time. The Government which is so strong in many respects, dare not attempt to force their measure and have no intention of introducing it.

WARLIKE PREPARATIONS

are heard and seen throughout the whole of England. Recruiting officers are busily at work, persuading young men to join the army. The pressure of bad times, is very much in their favor, and they are successful in obtaining a better class of men, than they could hope for in more prosperous times. Horses are being purchased in great numbers, and all the varied material of war, is being prepared and collected in vast quantities. The money voted by Parliament is being

rapidly and freely spent, employment is found for thousands of extra hands, and a large number of very superior war vessels will soon be ready for sea. England will retain her undoubted superiority on the sea, and it is claimed that in a very short time a land force would take the field, which for numbers and efficiency would surprise the enemies of the land.

PEACEFUL PROSPECTS

are in the ascendant, and for the present the dark and threatening war clouds are lifted, and appear to be passing. The terms of peace have been settled between Russia and the Porte, and have been duly signed. This was not done until the Russian head quarters had been moved very much nearer Constantinople and a little extra pressure had been put upon the prostrate Turk. The terms of peace, as far as they are known are not so terribly severe after all, and even the most inveterate enemies of Russia do not appear to have much cause of complaint. The wild rumors which have been current were created for a sinister purpose, and in the hope of provoking immediate intervention on behalf of Turkey. It now appears that Russia never asked for such unheard of concessions, and fabulous sums for indemnity. Very much yet remains to be settled between the Powers so recently engaged in fierce conflict, and their terms of peace must yet undergo revision at the hands of an European Congress. Months must elapse before the final settlement, and the Russian armies will remain upon Turkish territory until the whole matter is determined. Yet the immediate danger of war between England and Russia is over, and the Congress will take the difficult question in hand. It is not yet determined when or where the great diplomatic gathering will be held, or who will be delegated to conduct the proceedings. It is a great advantage that time is thus gained that angry passions will yet cool and that calmer counsels will prevail. Public opinion in England is widely diverged upon the great question of peace or war, but at present the most beligerent are willing to wait and all are hopeful of a more peaceful solution than when I last wrote. "B."

March 7, 1878.

A curious mistake is reported from New Zealand. A circuit minister, discoursing awhile ago upon the divinity of our Lord, quoted from the President's work on the subject describing it briefly as "Pope on the Person of Christ." Some of his hearers were greatly scandalized at such a degeneracy from Protestant propriety and Methodist orthodoxy as admitted of a Pope being quoted in one of their own pulpits as a theological authority, and that, too, on a subject which had been so much impaired by other conflicting Romish doctrines. During the week several murmurs were heard. One of the senior brethren, bolder than the rest, conceived it to be his duty to re-monstrate with the pastor on his pulpit delinquency. Adopting a sorrowful yet a severe tone, he informed him that the previous Sabbath was the first time in his lengthened experience as a Methodist (both in the old country and the colonies) that he had heard a Papal authority quoted in a Methodist pulpit; he had sometimes been ashamed and grieved to hear Shakspeare, Byron and even Dickens quoted; but that, shock as it was to be compelled to hear the names of these authors brought into a Methodist pulpit, in his opinion nothing could be worse than to quote the Pope of Rome as a doctrinal authority. The pastor held his tongue while this rebuke was being administered; and his censor, construing his silence into an indication of conscious guilt, waxed warm, and delivered his message of faithful reproof in a key somewhat higher than the usual conversational tone. Then turning round to his bookshelves, the man of books and sermons quietly took down an octavo volume, and opened it at the title page, politely invited his office bearer to read it aloud who, hastily adjusting his spectacles,

read out, "The Person of Christ: Dogmatic, Scriptural, Historical. The Fernley Lecture of 1871. By the Rev. W. B. Pope, Theological Tutor, Didsbury College. London: Wesleyan Conference office." "Rev. W. B. Pope!" "Didsbury College!" "Wesleyan Conference office!" The spectacles were readjusted for a second perusal, but with the same result. Confusion—a few drops of perspiration breaking out on a flushed face—a brief, bungled apology—the clutching of hat and stick—and a hasty retreat from the pastor's study brought the interview to an abrupt termination.—Recorder.

THE RELIGIONS OF THE RUSSIANS AND THE TURKS.

The Rev. Dr. Pope, President of the Conference, speaking at the annual missionary meeting at Tiviot Dale Chapel Stockport, last week, traced the history of missionary enterprise. He proceeded to say that the resolution which he moved referred to the old mission stations and the openings which were afforded for missionary enterprise, and it might be well to remind them of the different kinds of heathenism with which they were called upon to deal. There were two kinds of heathenism. One would have been represented by Mr. Jenkins had he been there. That was the heathenism which was to be found in the East, and in China. There heathenism had been refining itself, and becoming so philosophical as to test to the utmost the skill of the most cultivated and cultured missionaries they could train. This was especially the case in India. And this high class heathenism could point back to thousands of years, to looks of great learning and antiquity, to an existence even when Abraham was alive. Then there was the opposite heathenism that which was to be found amongst the savages and lower grades of the human race—the heathenism which had not been cultivated, represented on the platform that night by Mr. Wilson, whose services were not surpassed by any living missionary. (Hear, hear.) There was also a midway kind of heathenism. Yes, there was a kind of heathenism which was neither one nor the other of those to which he had referred, but a combination of both. That was to be found amongst the Mohammedans in Turkey, a country which was filling their minds just now. And there was a kind of heathenism which had sprung out of Christianity, which was to be found at St. Petersburg, if anyone would make a critical examination of it. These classes of heathenism were now meeting in one of the most deadly conflicts which have taken place in the history of the world. The Greek Church, taking it altogether, was the most degraded form of Christianity. In some parts of the Oriental Church there was more downright miserable superstition to be found than in any part of Romanism. In Mohammedanism there was a certain amount of truth, such, for instance, as the belief regarding the unity of God, and the devotion paid to the name of Jesus, for in the Mohammedan religion and literature the name of Jesus occupied a high position. But the most melancholy thing to him was that, in Russia and Turkey alike, there should be openings for the Gospel, and that the old Missionary Society, to which they belonged, had never entered these openings. Methodism had no mission amongst the Oriental Churches. It had not a single missionary in all those lands which owed allegiance to Petersburg; neither had Methodism a single agent in all the broad lands owing their allegiance to Turkey. There was opening in both, and yet they, as a Christian people, had never entered them.

The President then went on to speak of a visit he had paid to Russia. In St. Petersburg, he said, he saw openings which had not then, and had not even yet, been entered. There was a most religious people, perhaps the most extraordinary religious people, on the face of the earth. During his visit he went into the great Stock Exchange probably the greatest for its size, in the world, and as he looked round and listened to the buzz of conversation he could see that almost all the nations of Europe were represented; but the natives, he observed, were distinguished from the rest, for he noticed that as they entered the Russians turned aside bowed to their patron saint, and paid their devotions before they commenced business. There, then, was a people with the most intense religious feeling, a people whose inmost instincts were bound up with their religion, so much so that their country was called Holy Russia; and yet there was the most wide-spread superstition, and the most gross errors in regard to Christianity. In Russia, then, there were great openings for Evangelical preachers, of the Gospel of Christ. And had as it was with the Russians, the Turks were not much better. A miserable religion indeed was theirs, consistent with the most frightful enormities, but without there was a deep sense of the supernatural. There, too, again were openings, for the spread of Christianity, and their American friend had taken advantage of the field for missionary effort that was there open, but they themselves had not yet done so. Let them then, Dr. Pope urged in conclusion, increase their prayers and liberality, in order that the openings which were offered might be filled, and that God's kingdom might extend. But while he asked them in all earnestness to send the Gospel and light of truth amongst the heathens, he besought them not to dedicate to them a zeal, a devotion, and an anxiety which they did not bestow upon themselves. Their first concern should be the conversion of their own souls; and being saved themselves it was their duty to do their utmost to bring about the time when Christ should be proclaimed the Saviour of all. (Cheers.)—Recorder.

IS THERE A HELL?

AN ENQUIRY AND AN ANSWER.

(Conclusion)

IV.—GEHENNA.

So far we have found no hell of misery for lost souls. Shall we find any? Two of the words which are sometimes translated "hell" have been shown to mean the region of the dead, the abode of departed spirits. Cannot the remaining word be shown to have the same meaning? Would God it might be so. Heaven and earth would join in one eternal hallelujah if it could be shown that the remaining word *Gehenna* had no other meaning. O, what unutterable joy would come to a thousand homes, from which some unsaved ones have gone into eternity, if it could be shown that there is no eternal misery in *Gehenna*! But this cannot be shown. The fair scheme of so-called Universal Salvation is shivered to atoms on this rock. All the wisdom of the ages has failed, so far, to escape the obvious meaning of this awful word. No argument has ever fallen from lip or pen which can for one moment satisfy an unprejudiced inquirer after truth. We find no doctrine of hell in *Sheel*; we find no future misery taught by the word *Hades*; but *Gehenna* does teach the doctrine of a hell of endless misery. *GEHENNA!* Upon this word the doctrine rests immovably firm. *GEHENNA!* from this awful word shoots forth the lurid flames of perdition. *GEHENNA!*

In its echoes we hear the wail of lost souls. *GEHENNA!* In the presence of this word of fearful omen let us lay aside all dogmatic assertion, and reverently seek to learn the truth.

What does the word mean? All men are agreed that *Gehenna* is the Greek form of the Hebrew words *Gee Hinnom*, and that it literally means "the valley of Hinnom." This was a pleasant valley at the south of Jerusalem by the brook Kedron. Here, in ancient times, and under idolatrous kings, the worship of Moloch, the idol-god of the Ammonites, was practised. The head of this idol was like that of an ox, while the rest of its body resembled that of a man. The image was hollow, and was heated by fire before the sacrifice began. The young children were laid in its arms and actually roasted alive—offered thus in sacrifice to Moloch. The place was sometimes called Tophet, (in Jeremiah), from the word meaning Tympanum, because in those sacrifices the priests beat violently the tympana, lest the shrieks of the dying children should disturb the worshippers. But when these horrible rites were abolished by Josiah, and the Jews began again to worship God, they detested this valley as the scene of their awful guilt. Josiah caused to be carried there all the filth and offal of Jerusalem, and the place was desecrated, and made one of lathing and horror. For above six hundred years it had been regarded by the Jews as the common lay-stall of Jerusalem a receptacle into which they threw every species of filth, as well as the carcasses of animals and the dead bodies of executed criminals. To prevent the pollution of the air from this mass of decaying matter, fires were kept incessantly burning from the beginning to the end of the year. Hence came the phrase "the fires of Gehenna." And as the offal would breed worms, as all putrefying meat does, there also arose the expression "Where the worm dieth not."

To the Jewish mind this valley was associated with all that was most fearful, horrible and appalling; and was the fittest symbol on earth to represent the place of future retribution, in the existence of which they now fully believed. It is now agreed by most men,—theologians, critics, historians, and poets, whether Christian or infidel,—and is beyond successful contradiction from any man, that during our Lord's sojourn on earth, and for at least two hundred years prior to his advent, the Jews employed the phrase "valley of Hinnom," as a symbol of the fearful retribution of the future world; and when, in conformity to their law, (Matt. v. 22), they cast an apostate Jew into its fire and flame, all men knew that in like manner God would cast his soul into a *Gehenna* of misery in another world. And now let it be noted and pondered: This valley, with all its sickening and horrible associations, was seized upon by Jesus Christ and by him made to represent the place and condition of all wicked men in the world to come, precisely as the Jews did then employ, and for hundreds of years had employed it in all their speech concerning the hereafter. Ay, let it be noted and pondered yet again: He who left his bright home in Glory to die for man; He whose advent in human form was heralded by angelic music and blazing star; He who spent His life in healing the sick, in comforting the sorrowing, and in doing good; He who told us of the home of many mansions; He who left His pathway from the manger to Gethsemane marked with tears, and from Gethsemane to Calvary with blood; He whose tender, compassionate soul cried out, while on the cross, for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,"—yea, even He, our Saviour, Bro-