

The Church Journal

AND

GOSPEL MESSENGER.

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ARGUMENTS WHICH ARE NOT STRONG.

A cloud of pamphlets have been called out, on one side or another, of the question broached by the famous Illinois Committee of Thirteen, as to the right and power of Standing Committees. Some of them have been wise and some foolish, some strong and some weak.

It has been very clearly shown that the right of absolute rejection has been always exercised, and twice before the present case, upon candidates presented by Illinois. To a lawyer one would suppose that unbroken precedent was a sufficient interpretation of a disputed law.

We do not care to go into the ground of the right of the Province to accept or reject the election of a Diocese. To any one, even moderately learned in Canon Law and Church History, the talk that "a Diocese should have the Bishop it wants, and if one wants an extreme Low Churchman it ought to have him, and if another wants an extreme ritualist it ought to have him, it is nobody's business beside," betrays utter ignorance of the Constitution of the Church Catholic. There has been a good deal of such talk, and we confess our amazement at the quarters from which it has come. Some have imagined themselves sound Churchmen, when they have uttered this pure and simple Congregationalism and Independency. They have, it would seem, not had the slightest conception of the Church in which circumstances had made them officers, or perhaps legislators.

For a Bishop is not and cannot be a Bishop for one Diocese. The Episcopacy is a unit undivided, of which each Bishop has his undivided share. He governs and legislates and speaks for and represents the whole Body. And the man and his views and character, while of first concern to his own people, are of very serious concern to the whole Body.

The fact is, that never in all Church History can the time be found when a Diocese had only itself to please in the choice of its Bishop. The Constitution of the Catholic Church, from the first day till now, has forbidden it.

But we leave this. Our object now is to consider some arguments which have been used by men from whose judgment and supposed acumen we should have expected better things.

They are arguments from consequences. It is said "If the Standing Committees or the House of Delegates go behind the certificate from the Diocese, you make laymen judges of doctrine." And again, "If they have the right to go behind the certificate, the Standing Committees may even prevent forever a given Diocese from having any Bishop."

To the scientifically trained intellect the argument from consequences is folly, with which it has no patience. A truth is a truth, and a fact is a fact, and if the inevitable consequences are not pleasant, so much the worse for the consequences.

To the legally trained intellect the argument from consequences should have no more weight, for the law should be carried out to its end, and if the end be bad then alter the law.

But while the law stands it is the part of neither a scientific nor a legal intellect to repeal it by refusing its consequences.

But let us examine these consequences.

"Laymen are made judges of doctrine." Certainly. We believe they always have been. Certainly they are to judge it for themselves. Moreover, they are more conservative in the holding of traditional doctrine than the clergy. The great heresies have been always started by the clergy. Arius was a priest. So was Eutyches. So was Pelagius. Nestorius was a Bishop, like Paul of Samosata before him. Laymen did not start, among ourselves, the novelties that disturb us. The layman, by his position, is conservative, and clings to the old ways, right or wrong. The new, confusing, and debatable thing in doctrine or practice, is always started by some clergyman.

But as a matter of fact (to pass this), the Church in America has purposely and deliberately made the layman, in a score of ways, the judge of doctrine. If she does not intend him to be so on the Standing Committee, then that is the one sole exception to an otherwise universal rule, and it ought to be proved to be an exception to the uniform intention in a way that cannot be doubted.

By giving to the laity the patronage of every parish, by authorizing the laymen to fill every cure of souls in the land, the Church has made them judges of doctrine.

And they do judge. The vestry will unhesitatingly discuss "High Church" and "Low," debate about this man's "views" and that other man's "tendencies," get testimony and the opinion of other men, and decide according to the convictions of two wardens and eight vestrymen, point blank, often against their Bishop, and nine out of ten clergymen in the Diocese.

By making the laymen coordinate electors of Bishops, the Church makes them judges of doctrine also. And as in more than one case, of late, they have entered upon the business very heartily and confidently (small as their qualifications may have been), and have spoken without hesitation their opinion about the value and importance of very pronounced and decided doctrine indeed. No layman ever conscientiously or fittingly voted for a Bishop in a vacant Diocese, who did not pronounce, among other things, on doctrine; never signed a testimonial without certifying to the candidate's soundness in doctrine. We have never heard that the laymen in the late Illinois Convention, who did so sign, showed the slightest hesitation as to their fitness to certify on the question of the candidate's doctrinal position, though it has puzzled many a Bishop and clergyman.

Again, in the General Convention, which revises the Prayer Book when it will, and the English Bible when it will, and the Articles of Faith, and even the versions of the Catholic Creed, the layman sits, speaks, and votes coordinately, and all the Bishops and all the clergy can make no change in word or letter, nor carry one smallest proposition without his consent.

But enough! The notion of arguing that Standing Committees must take the candidate as he comes, lest laymen become judges of doctrine, is the most extraordinary argument we have ever heard, to be used to laymen who are officially, coolly, and deliberately made judges of doctrine all the days of their life, and who have no choice left, except to be wise and conscientious judges of doctrine, or hasty judges and shallow.

The other consequence is even weaker as an argument. "The Standing Committees might prevent a Diocese from ever having a Bishop."

So they might. So the Bishops might bind themselves together and never ordain another Deacon nor Priest nor Consecrate another Bishop! So the clergy might enter into a conspiracy and refuse to baptize another candidate or administer another Communion! So the laity might band together and refuse to contribute another dollar for Church purposes, or "call" another rector to parishes as they fall vacant! So the clergy and laity might conspire to refuse to elect another Bishop in any vacant See, and as the present Bishops die let the Church become as congregational as many seem to desire, where each parish and each man will have its own psalm and its own doctrine and its own ritual! So the officers of an army may surrender the army to the enemy. So the commander of a fleet may deliver up his fleet without striking a blow! So indeed any person in whose hands are power and trust may prove a traitor to his power and trust!

Shall we, therefore, refuse to put power and trust into men's hands? Shall we have no Bishops and no clergy, no Standing Committees and no Conventions? Shall we have no commanders-in-chief, no admirals, no judges, not even a bank cashier, because trusts may be betrayed or used for evil?

If the argument as above is of the value put upon it, it would bring life to an end: civil and business life, as well as ecclesiastic.

Standing Committees have such power—a power they might, were they composed of utterly evil and unprincipled men, very badly abuse. But all life goes on the supposition that men are not utterly evil or false. They may be trusted. We do trust them, and our dearest interests are safe in the care of upright hearts and pure consciences.

Each member of a Standing Committee acts in this business on conscience before God. He is acting wickedly to act from caprice, or personal feeling. No earthly power has the right to call his act in question. So much the more is he bound over to have it honest and true before conscience and God.

And we know no way to prevent it from being the solemn, deliberate, conscientious action it ought to be, and is required to be, by the very words of the testimonials to be signed, than to persuade the signers that those solemn words formal, unmeaning, and perfunctory, and are to be subscribed *without thorough examination, full knowledge, and absolute conviction.*

We print in another place a letter from the President of the Standing Committee of Illinois, giving as its writer claims, Dr. DeKoven's "views."

We would much rather have Dr. DeKoven's own explanations. One man's mind filtered through another's, is scarcely clarified in the process. And we like to take Dr. DeKoven pure and simple.

It will be distinctly noted that Dr. Cushman does not deny that Dr. DeKoven teaches and practices Adoration of Christ in the Elements.

As to "Ritual of Posture" which he lumps with it, Dr. DeKoven has fully explained how easy it is to get along without it. And in fact he is too bright a man to have found a high ritual with a false or a true doctrine. There are many churches where the ceremonial is higher than in the chapel at Racine, in which Adoration of Christ in the Elements is condemned as a perilous error.

Of course Dr. DeKoven does not enforce Confession. He could not if he tried. No such charge was ever, we believe, made. It is not denied that he encourages it, and habitually defends and persuades it among those under his charge and influence.

If Dr. DeKoven defends (as he has) the *Treasury of Devotions*, and gives it about, and recommends it as a book of private devotions, it is a waste of words to say Invocation of Saints and Angels is not taught by him. There is here a mere quibble, of which Dr. DeKoven would not, we think, take advantage; and which Dr. Cushman, if he had examined the book, would see to be a quibble.

As to Prayers for the Dead, right or wrong, Dr. DeKoven advocates them, as we have evidence in our files.

"The Perpetual Virginity of the Mother of Our Lord!" It is wonderful to find Dr. Cushman writing on the supposition that this needs defence or excuse. It weakens one's confidence in his correct theological hearing, or theological stating, of what he has heard. We suppose if there be one matter of Opinion in the Church, which by the universality of its reception is almost (indeed, for ourselves, we believe it is) a matter of Faith, it is the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Virgin! We trust all good Churchmen in Illinois and everywhere else believe that much.

Messrs. Editors: In THE CHURCH JOURNAL of Feb. 11, and again more positively in the issue for Feb. 25, it is stated that we have no record that any divine honors were paid to our Lord when He was on earth, and that such passages as St. Matt. ii. 11 and xxviii. 9, do not indicate that He was worshipped as a divine being. May I ask you to compare with these passages other texts, such as Acts x. 25, 26, and Rev. xix. 10? It seems to me that the comparison will show that Christ was "worshipped" as divine. It will be observed that the very same worship which our Lord accepted in the texts first named, and on many other occasions, was positively refused by St. Peter when offered by Cornelius, and also refused by the Angel at the hands of St. John. Both St. Peter and the Angel base their refusal upon the same ground, namely, that they have no right to it, because they are (not divine, but) only fellow-servants. The original word rendered "worshipped," is in every case the same.

I will add to this a quotation from the present Bishop of Winchester, Dr. Harold Browne. It is from his Lectures on the Thirty-nine Articles, article i., section 2, page 42 of the American Edition, 1865. He is proving the divinity of Christ, and says: "Another reason why we infer that the Son is God, is that the worship due to God is offered to Him."

(1) He receives worship as God, and is prayed to. See Matt. ii. 11; viii. 2; . . . xxviii. 9," etc., quoting many other texts to the same purpose. If I mistake not, the work from which I quote is a standard in the most of our theological schools.

H. T. W.

As an argument for the divinity of our Lord, which is the purpose for which Bishop Browne and Dr. Liddon, and other writers, use these texts and the like, they are unanswerable.

The Lord accepts without rebuke, as Dr. Liddon says, "acts of homage ranging, as it might seem, from the wonted forms of Eastern courtesy up to the most direct and conscious acts of divine worship"; whereas St. Peter refuses to receive "the worship" of Cornelius.

But in order to show that these acts were acts of divine worship, it must be shown that the person offering them believed in the divinity of our Lord. It is impossible to suppose that Cornelius intended to worship Peter as God. Nevertheless, Peter forbids him. Christ, in such case, does not forbid; for while the person may be only "worshipping Him" as a rabbi or a wonder-worker, he is in no danger of rendering Him undue homage.

Now to admit that the Magi, in their intention, adored the Babe as God, is to admit that they knew more of His divine nature than his own Mother and brethren, and even His Apostles, after years of intercourse.

The truth of our Lord's nature dawned but gradually, as it is clear, even upon His chosen Apostles. On the very last journey to Jerusalem, they are still contending about earthly thrones in an earthly kingdom. Even Peter, who first confessed the great Confession, so soon lost the vision, that he denied Him. And after all His teaching, they were all unbelievers, at first, in His resurrection.

After the Resurrection and Ascension, the whole truth flamed upon them, and all He had said came to them, and they knew who He was who had walked with them all those years. St. Thomas' exclamation is the recognition of a truth toward which he and the other Apostles had been slowly educated.

The Lord rebukes no suppliant for his most lowly expression of homage, because all homage was, and is, His; and from lower steps He was training His Disciples to higher—from their conception of Him as a Jewish earthly political Messiah, to the belief in Him as the Lord Jehovah incarnate.

So His unrebuking acceptance of homage, is unanswer-