

The Catholic Record.

"Christianus mihi nomen est, Catholicus vero Cognomen."—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname).—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

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REV. DR. DE COSTA'S RESIGNATION FROM THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

New York, October 7, 1899.
The Right Rev. Henry Codman Potter, D. D., LL. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Diocese of New York:

Dear Sir—I hereby respectfully resign the Office of Presbyter.

It is proper for me to give some reason for this course, which, at the end of long years of service, is adopted deliberately and in the fear of God. I must now, however, confine myself to a few points. In what I have to say at this time I desire to speak with entire plainness, as well as with kindness and respect; while, to avoid possible misapprehension, I would add that I do not resign on account of any personal grievance. I cannot reconcile my convictions with the present condition of the Episcopal Church, which, contrary to its own principles, has been drawn into the adoption of a policy of toleration towards a school of theology and Biblical criticism, which, in my judgment, is hostile to Revealed Truth. Your own attitude in relation to the subject forms, of course, a very subsidiary consideration. I may observe, however, that I do not see that you have opposed the system to which I refer. Further, permit me to say, respectfully, that I do not find that you have been "ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word;" while much less have you seemed inclined "both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same."

On the contrary, I think, the testimony proves that you have discouraged and baffled men inclined to such action. I do not, however, undertake to impugn your motives, or charge upon you the "lamentable ignorance" and deliberate "malice," which, sometime since, in the public press you attributed to men by no means your inferiors either in learning or charity. I desire, nevertheless, to indicate that, as I view the subject, you have acted with and defended those who have struck at the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the plenary inspired and infallible word of God. You have thus championed a revolution hostile to every evangelical body in the land. You have done this, I think, by accepting, as admissible and worthy of toleration, a system of interpretation which undermines creeds, orders, and sacraments, leaving the most sacred interests of believers of every name without the support of the unerring Word upon which, hitherto, they have been grounded. The progress of doubt during the last few years is most notable. If Newman had lived in our day he would hardly have been able to write that beautiful eulogy of the Bible, in which he says speaking of the Englishman, that "it is the representative of his best moments," and that "all that there has been about him of soft and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him forever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing which doubt has never dimmed, and controversy never soiled." Even in Episcopal Seminaries, the inerrancy of Holy Scripture is boldly and systematically denied. You, Right Reverend Sir, have entered the field at a crucial hour, plainly declaring that the system of denial or negation embodied in the "Higher Criticism" forms an allowable method of interpretation, and that the acceptance of the methods and its conclusions does not disqualify candidates for the Ministry. You have, therefore, deliberately received into the denomination, and you have approved as proper teachers for the people, men who declare that the Scriptures are errant, and do not form an infallible guide, abounding in myths, fables, scientific and historical errors. Men of this kind plainly declare that what, hitherto, we have called the Bible is not the Bible, and that the real Bible lies buried underneath the rubbish of ages, waiting to be recovered.

The long catalogue of errors credited by so-called "Higher Criticism" to Holy Scripture, may or may not in your estimation, appear as trifles. That, however, has nothing to do with the present issue, but the system that you vouch for, as within the liberty of clergymen, leaves, in my judgment, no sufficient authority for the Christian religion. We are plainly told that "The prevalent dogmatic theories of the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible have been undermined in the entire range of Biblical study, and it is a question in many minds whether they can ever be so reconstructed as to give satisfaction to Christian scholars."

The party you represent has taken possession of the Church, and adopted a new standard of qualification for the Ministry. Heretofore an attempt has been made to maintain at least an appearance of respect for orthodox rules of interpretation, and a class of critics has allowed that those parts of the Bible that clearly relate to faith and morals were inspired and authoritative. But the School of "Higher Criticism" now does not make even this poor distinction. On the contrary, it is taking away the props of both faith and morals. I cannot affirm that you agree

with the details of this system, but it is plain that you deem its teachers fit persons for the Ministry. The system cannot be employed and repudiated at the same time. This decision revises the standard of qualification, and, in the future, men cannot prescribe a higher standard. The minimum is the maximum. I submit that you have degraded the qualifications, and arranged the terms of admission in accordance with a scale that now affords gratification to enemies of Christianity. The worst is that the Church approves your course. Future candidates may openly deride the story of Pentecost, as the world has understood it from the time of the Apostles. The former belief in the Bible is no longer required. Candidates of the School to which I refer will indeed continue to sign papers, agreeing to accept the Scriptures as the Word of God, but such subscriptions, practically, will prove little better than perjury.

The phrase, "Word of God," is now a phrase only; its meaning has been juggled away. Again, let me not be misunderstood. One standing by the Nileometer does not fancy that the Nileometer causes the rising of the Nile. No more can I think of you as the author of the tide now brimming and swirling in upon the Episcopal body. Without abating anything from your responsibility I must, with all due respect, think of you mainly as the exponent of an accomplished revolution. Episcopalianism has been set adrift. "Higher Criticism" has struck every diocese in the land, and from all the States of the Union there is coming a wild, ungovernable flood of opinion and sentiment that renders your position as an indicator still more significant. "You do not stand alone. You are upborne by the power of unconsecrated wealth. Your Convention, which has just closed its session is with you, having overwhemingly vindicated your *laissez faire* Standing Committee by endorsing its dark acts. Your examiners give unqualified support. Thus far the case is diocesan; but the Bishop of Minnesota, men of superior judgment and influence, applaud the "wisdom and good sense" displayed in this phrase of your administration; while the criminal silence of other Bishops speaks louder than words. The Press, being credulous, is, for the most part, with you, and holds you as the exponent of incoming "liberal thought." A leading editorial in a prominent daily, describing present society as one that "has outlived the faith of dogmas," that "your position is 'inviolable.' Humanly speaking, it is indeed secure. The masses of Episcopals are with you. The suggestion that the House of Bishops might once seemingly probable, now appears puerile. The House of Bishops, as a whole, is on your side. Practically, your voice is the voice of the Church. It takes no personal or diocesan issue. It takes the whole body. As one result, discipline seems to be practically dead. Indeed how could it be otherwise, when you, taking a fuller view of the situation, declare, in a charge, that the Episcopal Church now forms one of the congregies of Inter-denominational branches of the Anglican Communion that is without a head to think or a hand to act."

I can understand why the Bishop of Western Texas is obliged to admit: "We know that the young men are not in the churches and the laboring classes are entirely alienated." The President of your Standing Committee has just reported to Convention that the youth of the denomination "deny any obligation to go to church. They go if they please, but if not, it makes no difference." Indeed, what has they to go for? To listen to the reading of what preachers pronounce myths and fables? Substantially, the battle for the Bible has been fought. The cause is lost, and now you can present no inducements for either youth or age "to go to church." By a town-meeting process, the Bible has been declared "literature." This new relation of your denomination to the Bible changes the relation of the denomination to other religious bodies; and never again can Episcopals approach the Presbyterians, calling them union on the basis of a "Common Bible." The real Bible, when you get it, must at least prove a very uncommon Bible. Its exact character is not yet known. It is still to be recovered by a patent mining process from beneath the rubbish of the Ages. Your Church has lost its supposed grasp upon the essential factor in any plan of unification. The new Bible, when produced by a "critical acumen," will prove no more acceptable than the Apostolic Succession described in your "Third Triennial Charge," where you show how nimbly the neglected order, disregards "gaps in neglected order," and puts a broken line in authoritative connection with the Apostles. If all you say as alleged, these denominations, to whom you will be obliged to offer the new Bible, may prefer to put themselves in position, and, without the aid of obliging Episcopals, allow the Apostolic current to overleap the "break in the twisted wire," and "fly onwards on its swift enkindling errand," into their own receivers. All this is in harmony with private judg-

ment. Episcopals are proceeding logically in their work of destruction, and in accordance with Reformation principles. Do not say that I am misinterpreting your theological opinions. I am not dealing with your opinions, but with the policy and action which rules the people. I accept the verdict. You register the revolution correctly, and, however certain Bishops and others may dissent, the revolution is a fact. Unless some swift counter revolution takes place, this destructive work must go on to the end.

At this point I regret that it seems necessary to turn, and indicate that the long-studied scheme to inaugurate Arianism is substantially perfected. The windows of Episcopalianism are now opened, not towards Jerusalem and the fair realms of Catholic thought; the range, on the contrary, being down hill towards what is called the broad and coveted landscape of Dissent. The distinguished Rector of the leading parish in Brooklyn declares over his name, that "it is probably true that ninety per cent of our Bishops believe and teach the views for which Bishop Colenso was deposed." On the eve of Trinity Sunday last, there appeared a public and open repudiation of the Holy Trinity, and your neglect, in another case, to allow a hearing under Canon II, Title 2, indicates that it would be idle to attempt any action in this or similar cases. Proceedings against heresy are no longer to be tolerated; for if the guilty come to trial, may not Bishops be brought to the bar? The sense of culpability is general. Unbelief is in the air. Indeed, I must here call attention to the fact, as yet little noticed, that the worst of the prevailing skepticism does not appear in print, nor even in public addresses. Yet in private not a few of both clergy and laity openly repudiate the authority of bible and creed, using no concealment. One very prominent rector, who stands high in the ranks of your supporters, speaks of the New Testament as a bundle of left-over documents. Another has declared that the first three chapters of St. Matthew form simply a beautiful legend; while another even ridicules the Apostles' Creed. Important positions are held by men of this class, who remain in the pulpit to win present bread or accomplish ulterior ends. Such men are well known. They enjoy the favor of the body at large, and we must not measure the situation simply by the publication of an occasional volume, intended to mislead, it may be, and guard its author's position, or defiantly attack the Faith. The thought comes often in the well formed favor of the Socinian School of Hoadley, in the last century, who then exhibited in the Church of England that system of "reserve" practiced by many in and out of the pulpit to day. Still, with all this precaution, the underlying hostility is by no means concealed. The perforated, honeycombed condition of Protestant Episcopalianism is indicated by agnostic phrase. We all know perfectly well that clergymen in your diocese are assailing and riddling the Faith, and openly circulating Socinian literature. The skeptic is secure, and the revolution wins honor and applause; though it cannot be said of the system carefully sheltered in dioceses by the purple of the Episcopate, that "the scoffer observes a side of it that reduces his sneers to silence." In reality, it forms the *bouleversement* of Christianity.

I have thus endeavored to point out to the "Higher Criticism," for the reason that I wish to keep well up in the front the true state of the Church, that no one may pretend that I leave the Episcopal Ministry because you or any other person may disagree with my conception of truth. This revolutionary process in the denomination, possibly, was inevitable. I recognize, but do not accept, the result. For years, in common with others, I have tried to stem the current, and in the course of discussion, the temper of Episcopals has been thoroughly tested. Evils have been pointed out, privately, to the Bishops, and the pessimistic reply of one, "Things will never be any better in your day or mine," may be accepted as the expression of nearly all. Letters in my possession from some of your associates in office form instructive reading. For myself, recognizing the situation as I do, there is but one course; and, therefore, whatever other men, whom personally I esteem, may do, and however they may regard their obligation, mine seems clear. While no action on your part could lead me to go out, I recognize a condition that no one man, or any possible combination of men, can now successfully meet. Episcopalianism, based on private judgment, is not only far overshadowed by doubt that will characterize the incoming twentieth century, but it is possessed by the unbelieving spirit. The storm is already here, but the Protestant Episcopal body has no anchors. Are not your people hastening to accomplish their evolution? Few will be misled by the pompous diction of that Bishop, who, in his last charge, foretells great victories. Fewer still, allow me to say, with all kindness, will be persuaded by your own phraseology, where you speak of "the Book" as "incomparable and precious," since it is commonly believed that many

Churchmen will not now disdate such language if applied to the works of Shakespeare and Homer. One can very well anticipate the reply of men, who, with assumed indignation, deny that they refuse the Bible as the Word of God; but discerning persons know the value of a phrase out of which the erstwhile faith, robustness and honesty have departed. You are, of course, ready to affirm that this school now in power honors the Word of God, and that the effort being made is one simply to "separate the chaff from the wheat," the false from the true. You would indeed place the Bible on a more "impregnable basis" than ever. No doubt it will be set upon the impregnable basis of Veda, Shasta, and Book of Mormon.

Your charge, that "a modern fetishism which has dishonored the Bible by claiming to be its elect guardian has shut it up these many years within the iron walls of a dreary literalism, robbing it thus alike of interest and of power." You have thus furnished a remarkable discovery. All along the people have regarded the Bible as a free book. It has stood the pride and glory of the nations, accredited with the uplifting of society and the advance of civilization and modern thought. No language has been found too superb in describing its work of emancipation and purification. Now, however, you assure us that we have been mistaken, and that, all the while, the Bible has been shut up within iron walls robbed of interest and power. Do you, Right Reverend Sir, suppose that the people of this land, who have organized Bible Societies, and carried them on at a large cost for many years, are sufficiently ignorant of the history and influence of the Bible to accept tamely this charge? Your language is astonishing. I deeply deplore the necessity which exists for saying this, yet you are winning laurels among infidels far and wide. Still you have Christian people, Catholic and Protestant alike, to reckon with in this attempt to charge an ignorant and degraded fetishism upon scholars and holy and enlightened men of every name, who, rejecting a carping, uncritical criticism, reverent as formerly "The Bible of our forefathers." It is hardly to be supposed that one in your position is qualified to make this charge of "fetishism" and "intolerable ignorance." The particular kind of usefulness that Higher Criticism may aspire to is indicated by the language of one of your own friends, the Bishop of Washington, who declares that, "under the influence of the 'Higher Criticism,' thousands have lost their faith in the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God; while 'the faith of multitudes is so shaken that even Sunday School children speak of the Scriptures with an irreverent freedom that would have amazed the preceding generation.'"

This statement is sadly emphasized by the last Annual Sunday School Report, which shows that while your party has been engaged with plans to secure the ascendancy and make the Bible acceptable with skeptics, no less than twelve hundred and fifty Sunday school teachers have parted from their work. The youth recognize no more loyalty to Sunday school than church. Of the influence of the whole scheme upon the body at large, one may judge from the testimony of Dr. Paret, the Bishop of Maryland, who says: "The Church in this country has almost lost the idea of aggressive work. Its missionary enthusiasm, if it ever had much, is now very feeble." This is echoed by the church press. One may, therefore, safely dismiss your statement, where you speak of what "a higher scholarship has done for us in our generation for the advancement of Godliness and good learning throughout the Christian world." It is, on the contrary, driving people away from the religion of Christ. It should, therefore, be borne in mind, that the Episcopal body was not founded on this "Higher Criticism." However logically it may put in force private judgment, no logic will enable it to survive on this new system of Biblical interpretation. Furthermore it might be remembered, with profit, that it was never designed to entertain any comparative religions; and the system you applaud can only degrade the Episcopal denomination to a plane where the maintenance of the simplest element of Christianity will prove impossible. As for your own diocese, the central and most important, when its actual state is known, it will be seen that it is rapidly approaching the condition of the bloodless heart. Spiritually, your strongest corporation is failing. The appearance of prosperity, as the statistics prove, is unreal. As things are tending, far sighted friends say, that if the cathedral is ever finished, it will prove the sarcophagus of Episcopalianism, the coffin of its creed. It is to be devoutly hoped that the policy with which you are identified may yet be paralyzed.

I need not say that I write these words with much regret. I am not here, let it be understood, speaking against the Episcopal Church, but against its administration. I have always recognized the Church of England as the masterpiece among modern denominations. I can make the language of Newman my own, where he says, "I recognize in the Anglican Church a time-honored institution of

noble historical memories, a monument of ancient wisdom, a momentous arm of political strength, a great national organ, a source of vast popular advantage, and, to a certain point, a witness and teacher of religious truth." Moreover, I should desire to see it preserving whatever of truth and integrity it may possess, since no right minded man can find any satisfaction in religious decay. I should be glad to see it demonstrating essential superiority over other modern systems found around us; and I can only feel a profound concern when I view the course upon which the branch of the Anglican body in this land has now fully entered. Others are not simply concerned; but one of the most eminent of your Bishops, a wise, far seeing man, says to me in his letter, that he is "greatly alarmed." One of your leading and most trusted periodicals comes to me while I write, saying, editorially, how serious is the situation, and how great the danger of the movement "which threatens to make patches and shreds of Holy Scripture and to reduce the faith of the Church to an iridescent dream."

I regret to view the successful attempt to pervert a time honored institution, and to discredit noble historical memories associated with fealty to the Word of God, reducing ancient wisdom to "fetishism" and "intolerable ignorance." To day, authority is gone. I can no longer declare that Episcopals hold as formerly to the Bible. The idea of inerrancy is a "fetish." I cannot, on the prevailing theory, present a single text from Genesis to Revelation that carries any final authority; and, with the departure of inerrancy from the Written Word I lose the Inherent Word that was made Flesh; since, if one cannot depend upon written tradition, how can he accept any spoken tradition, coming down through various languages and peoples during a long course of Ages? You destroy the value of the Church, since a body that cannot vouch for a written record cannot vouch for anything. That I am sorry to say, is the case with the body you so fully represent. It is the case of the blind leading the blind. In quoting Canon Gore, you say that the Church "is not tied by any existing definition of inspiration," and that "we cannot make any exact claim upon anyone's belief in regard to inspiration, simply because we have no authoritative definition to bring upon him." Therefore, you well observe and confess, "that what is heterodox to day in one jurisdiction may tomorrow be pronounced by some other court in another to be orthodox," and that such a decision in the Episcopal church "absolutely determines nothing."

No more deadly stab has ever been aimed at the Protestant Episcopal System than this which you have given. You wrote even almost gaily, conscious of the fact that you were getting the better of the men who sought to defend the Bible, and the world recognizes what you have done. It is sad that the Episcopal body stands helpless in the midst of attack, but the saddest of all is, that you give no sign that the situation is distasteful. For myself I cannot bow to the guidance of the "distinguished critics" whom you have set forth as teachers and examples for the Faculties in Episcopal Seminaries, masters in Israel, who now, side by side with the professional infidel, stand forth to lecture on the "Mistakes of Moses." My sense of right would not support me in any such course; I retire from the field, convinced that I am no longer called to struggle with an overwhelming and rapidly increasing force. I cannot accept the revolution or drift with the tide. Your school is indeed benevolent, and quite willing to tolerate Catholic Faith, bestowing upon it from time to time nothing more severe than ignominious terms. But for myself I ask no favors. I will not remain where doubt commands a premium, and the belief in an infallible Bible enjoys simply the immunity granted to a fallible Koran. Therefore, however the issue may be regarded by some excellent brethren who have stood firmly by the Word of God, for myself I must be guided by the Light that is given. I may have been misled by my teachers and examiners, but I entered the Episcopal Ministry with the distinct understanding that, whatever theories some individuals might hold with respect to inspiration, the Scriptures themselves were inspired and inerrant. That was the view held by all so-called Orthodox bodies. By degrees, however, new views arose, shocking the Protestant sentiment at first, but afterwards making progress, until, finally, the present opinion took on form. The situation is therefore changed. The Episcopal Body has relinquished the former belief and requirement, and the contract that I made is broken. I am free.

I have not, however, lost any faith in Christianity. My belief is brighter and fuller than ever before. I am an optimist, cheerful and hopeful, trusting in the ever increasing good; and I leave the ranks of your Ministry with Charity for all, and especially for highly respected brethren still accepting illusions by which I was once enthralled.

In closing, while wishing you personal prosperity and happiness, allow me to express the hope that the eyes of your soul may yet be opened to see the

real character of the work which has secured the influence and support of the Episcopal Body; and that, by the Divine blessing upon the labors of earnest and upright men, Episcopals may finally be brought to realize the splendid realities of the Catholic Faith mirrored in the Divine Work.

Committing my future to God, and to the Holy Angels.

I remain, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
B. F. De Costa.

RELIGION AND PROGRESS.

A reverend gentleman, Dr. Robert Hunter, makes use of the Galilean century to point a horrible moral against Romanism, in the Presbyterian Journal. According to Brother Hunter, the village of Loreto, founded by Catholics, is to day a sleepy old hamlet, without a single trolley car or whang-doodle to brag about; while its neighbor, Ebensburg, founded by Welsh Protestants, thrives apace. "This," quoth the man of God, "is the story of Romanism and Protestantism the world over."

We are not aware that Catholics have ever disputed that Protestantism is a better religion so far as this world is concerned than the religion which Christ founded. Rank paganism would be better still; for it is plain that the duties of religion and especially the restraints of conscience are impediments in the race for riches. Brother Hunter's point of view is the natural fruit of an unspiritual religion, and illustrates Cardinal Newman's saying that Protestant and Catholic ethics will no more mix than will oil and vinegar. "Different churches exhibit moralities of different and often inharmonious types," says Mr. W. H. Mallock. "Compare the Scotchman who solemnizes Sunday by not whistling as he gets drunk with the Frenchman who celebrates it by a happy evening at the opera." And of the flocks shepherded by the sectarian clergy whom Brother Hunter represents, that acute analyst and hard hitter says:

They have made the pursuit of riches the chief business of their lives. Their ideals have been the ideals of men who kept at least one maid servant, who value themselves on the gentility of their parlors and their mahogany chairs, and who consider a black coat as important as a white conscience. Voluntary poverty has never been one of their virtues, and involuntary poverty has had for them a strong savor of sin. They have, in fact, only existed as a class by pursuing and gaining riches so far as their powers allowed, and their ideal of righteousness has been painted on the sacred background of competence. The whole turn of mind, the whole point of view, implied in this is in complete contradiction to the letter of Christ's teaching.

Yes, Brother, "this is the story of Romanism and Protestantism the world over."—Ave Maria.

ANointing WITH OIL.

It is with a sad heart that we Catholics see sincere Protestants groping for the truths of faith and the graces of the sacraments, yet resolutely keeping away from the Church where only can the needs of their souls be supplied.

In New York, for instance, there are two ministers of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Mr. A. B. Simpson and Mr. Henry Wilson, who reading in the Bible the passage: "Is any man sick among you—let him bring in the priests of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." (St. James v. 14), have begun to call on the lame, the halt, the blind and the diseased to come to their Gospel Tabernacle and be anointed. "We touch the brow with a drop of olive oil," says Mr. Simpson. "It has no healing power, but it is the sign of the Holy Spirit." He bids the sick trust in the Lord, he prays over them, and he anoints them on the forehead with a drop of olive oil.

These sincere men are trying to carry out the directions of the Scriptures. They have read what was written by St. James. They see the need, the comfort of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. But the best that they can do is to "touch the brow with a drop of olive oil" that "has no healing power." Alas! too, it has not the sacramental power, for only they can administer the Sacraments who have been anointed by God for that office—the ordained priests of the Church.

Poor sufferers crowding by hundreds into the "Gospel Tabernacle," hoping for relief from bodily ailments! Poor ministers wishing to fulfil the words of Holy Writ but having no authority to dispense the sacraments! The Catholic Church echoes the words of the Saviour when He wept over Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings and thou wouldst not!—Catholic Columbian.

I expect to pass through this life but once. If, therefore, there is any kindness I can show or any good I can do to any fellow-being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.—Anon.