

**The Catholic Record**

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LONDON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 1925

**EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLE**

Seldom has anything received so much newspaper publicity as the trial at Dayton, Tennessee, of a young High school teacher for contravening a State law prohibiting the teaching of the evolution of man from a lower order of animals.

The law in question enacts: "That it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any school supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of this State, to teach any theory that denies the story of the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals."

Millions read details of this world-famous trial; millions, doubtless, discussed matters of which they were about as ignorant as they well could be. Their "science" was the half-baked science of newspaper writers or of lawyers. The agnostic, Clarence Darrow, who made a plausible defense for the unspcakably foul murderers, Leopold and Loeb, and for many another vile criminal, was of course able to ridicule the Bible and scoff at all believers. Yet he knows little of physical science and quite evidently nothing at all of exegesis, the science of interpretation of the Scriptures—a science, like all other sciences, mastered only by deep study.

For instance Mr. Darrow, again and again, was particularly scornful in his references to what he supposed was the Biblical assertion of the age of the world and the age of man. Even W. J. Bryan, whose ignorance under Darrow's cross-examination was positively pitiable, was able to tell the agnostic lawyer that the marginal dates inserted in the Bible were the conclusions of the Protestant Archbishop Usher, who deduced a Biblical chronology from unwarranted assumptions nearly three hundred years ago. Of course these dates, useful as they may be to the reader, are no more a part of the Bible than what might be found in one of Mr. Darrow's briefs.

There is no doubt that the broadcasting through press and radio of the supposed conflict between science and the Bible, indeed the assumed discrediting of the Bible by science, must have done untold harm.

Leo XIII., in his Encyclical on the Study of Holy Scriptures, points this out very clearly:

"In the second place, we have to contend against those who, making an evil use of physical science, minutely scrutinize the sacred book in order to detect the writers in a mistake, and to take occasion to vilify its contents. Attacks of this kind, bearing as they do on matters of sensible experience, are peculiarly dangerous to the masses, and also to the young who are beginning their literary studies; for the young, if they lose their reverence for the Holy Scripture on one or more points, are easily led to give up believing in it altogether. It need not be pointed out how the nature of science, just as it is so admirably adapted to show forth the glory of the Great Creator, provided it be to be entirely false, or at all events we must, without the smallest hesitation, believe it to be so." To understand how just is the rule here formulated we must remember, first, that the sacred writers, or, to speak more accurately, the Holy Ghost who spoke by them, did not intend to teach men these things (that is to say, the essential nature of the things of the visible universe), things in no way profitable unto salvation. Hence they did not seek to penetrate the secrets of nature, but rather described and dealt with things in more or less figurative language, or in terms which were commonly used

at the time, and which in many instances are in daily use at this day, even by the most eminent men of science. Ordinary speech primarily and properly describes what comes under the senses; and somewhat in the same way the sacred writers—as the Angelic Doctor also reminds us—went by what sensibly appeared, or put down what God, speaking to men, signified, in the way men could understand and were accustomed to.

"The unshrinking defence of the Holy Scripture, however, does not require that we should equally uphold all the opinions which each of the Fathers or the more recent interpreters have put forth in explaining it; for it may be that, in commenting on passages where physical matters occur, they have sometimes expressed the ideas of their own times, and thus made statements which in these days have been abandoned as incorrect. Hence, in their interpretations, we must carefully note what they lay down as belonging to faith, or as intimately connected with faith—what they are unanimous in. For 'in those things which do not come under the obligation of faith, the saints were at liberty to hold divergent opinions, just as we ourselves are,' according to the saying of St. Thomas. And in another place he says most admirably: 'When philosophers are agreed upon a point, and it is not contrary to our faith, it is safer, in my opinion, neither to lay down such a point as a dogma of faith, even though it is perhaps so presented by the philosophers, nor to reject it as against faith, lest we thus give to the wise of this world an occasion of despising our faith.' The Catholic interpreter, although he should show that these facts of natural science which investigators affirm to be now quite certain are not contrary to the Scripture rightly explained, must, nevertheless, always bear in mind that much which has been held and proved as certain has afterwards been called in question and rejected. And if writers on physics travel outside the boundaries of their own branch, and carry their erroneous teaching into the domain of philosophy, let them be handed over to philosophers for refutation."

The whole letter is deserving of profound study. We call attention to the one sentence which we have put into italics. It goes far to put out of court all alleged contradictions between scientific truths and scriptural statements. Again on the 80th of June, 1909, the Biblical Commission declared that "it is not necessary to take all the words and phrases always in their exact meaning but that it is sometimes permissible to depart from the exact sense, and this especially when it is quite apparent that the expressions are used in a peculiar way, metaphorically, or anthropomorphically, and when reason forbids the adoption of the strict sense, or necessity obliges us to abandon it."

Theology, too, is a science, a science that claimed the life-long devotion of men of genius. St. Thomas Aquinas nearly seven hundred years ago wrote:

"But we must bear in mind that Moses was speaking to an unlettered people, and that condescendingly to their weakness—*quorum imbecillitate condescendens*—he put before them what was apparent to their senses." Again St. Thomas lays down the practical principle that, "since the divine Scripture may be expounded in many ways, it is not right to attach one's self so strictly to any one opinion as still to maintain it after sure reason has proved the statement, supposed to be contained in Scripture, false; lest on this account Scripture be derided by infidels, and the way to faith closed against them." St. Thomas could hardly make a plainer profession of the canon that to some extent the Book of Revelation must be interpreted by the Book of Nature, even as the Book of Nature yields its highest lessons only to such as have studied the Book of Revelation.

If Catholic theology and exegesis were better known to non-Catholics our separated brethren would not be so often scandalized by the absurd literalisms of Fundamentalists or the anti-Christian negations of Modernists.

Catholics do not wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. When they find passages hard to be understood, hard to reconcile with ascertained facts of physical

science, they calmly wait for the authoritative interpretation of the Church whose infallibility rests on the clear promises of Jesus Christ. "In those things which do not come under the obligation of faith," . . . "things in no way profitable unto salvation," the Church is very slow to impose any authoritative interpretation of passages of Holy Scripture. St. Augustine, over fifteen hundred years ago, rejected the literal meaning of the six days of Genesis. Cardinal Cajetan, a Roman theologian of four hundred years ago, believed that the first chapter of Genesis was an allegory. The Church remained silent; the reasons for her silence are clearly explained by Leo XIII. in the extracts quoted above.

AN UNWORTHY APPEAL TO PREJUDICE

In this city of London promoters of the Ku Klux Klan have adopted what one of the local papers calls "an interesting plan of campaign." An official of the Public Utilities Commission had handed him a neat little card with the following legend and question:

"REMEMBER  
"Every criminal, gambler, thug, libertine, girl ruiner, home wrecker, wife beater, dope peddler, moonshiner, pagan, papist, priest; every crooked politician, white slaver, Rome-controlled newspaper, brothel madam, shyster lawyer, K. of C. and every black spider is fighting the Klan.  
"Which side are you on?"

For further particulars the recipients are told to apply to a Post Office Box in Toronto.

If the compilers of this delectable list had omitted "papist," "priest," "K. of C." and "Rome-controlled newspaper," it is safe to say that most of those who get hooked would not give a second look at the bait. It is an interesting if somewhat inexplicable phase of the religion of love which they profess that Christians are to be found who respond to this coarse appeal to prejudice and unreasoning hate. It is an unenviable state of mind; and though some Catholics may feel angry at the coarseness of the calumny, the average Catholic will feel nothing but pity.

There is no evidence whatever that Protestants generally give any countenance to the Klan. And the Grand Master of the Masons of Ontario, after denying emphatically that there was any connection whatever between his Order and the Klan, added:

"It is perhaps not within my province, nor do I deem it necessary at the present time, to express my opinion or make any ruling on the question of members of the Masonic Order becoming members of the Klan, but I venture to suggest that members of the oldest and most honorable fraternity in the world will do well to consider seriously before associating themselves with an organization which, in a country where the franchise is universal and freedom of speech assured to all, finds it necessary to conceal the identity of its membership behind a hood or mask."

In some parts of the States Masonry was allied with the Klan and other anti-Catholic movements; but reputable Masons of high standing fought strenuously against this degradation of the fraternity. It is not likely that Canadian Masons, after the Ontario Grand Master's warning and contemptuous reference to Klan methods, will have anything to do with masked knights of the invisible empire.

By the way there must be an enormous number of "Rome-controlled newspapers"; for the reputable newspapers of North America, without exception, are opposed to the Klan.

However, the organizers of the Klan will not worry much over the standing of prospective members; one man's ten-dollar bill is as good as another's. And it has become a proverb that "there is one born every minute."

OLD ERRORS IN NEW GUISES

By THE OBSERVER

When the nations of Europe which broke away from the Church took for the main purpose of their existence the making of money, their influence and example were strong enough to affect those nations which still remained in the Church. England was as dominant in war, and as successful, when she

was Catholic as after she became Protestant. But when she was Catholic she was less intent on money-making. After the so-called Reformation, business and commerce became the main purpose of national existence, and the main test of a nation's greatness was taken to be her financial and commercial success.

Since the seventeenth century, it has been a stock argument of Protestant writers that the Protestant nations were more prosperous in dollars and cents than the Catholic nations. This ideal, set before the eyes of successive generations of people, as the greatest of all the ideals that were worth striving for, could have, as in fact it did have, but one effect; it unduly emphasized in the eyes of the people in general the importance of money, the importance of being well off. At the same time, the new social organization of the Protestant countries put the profits of this search for money in the hands of a minority, a small minority, of the population. Social aristocracy was never an ideal of the Catholic Church. She was, in the days of her power in Europe, a check at all times upon the power of the richer classes. The poor farmer, if ill treated on the lands of the wealthy landlords, could, and did, resort to the lands of the Church, to the vast holdings of the great abbey and monasteries, and there he found equitable treatment. When, under the attacks of the new head of the Church in England, Henry the Eighth, those lands were seized, the only existing check on the greed of the lay landholders passed away.

The poor of England lost their only social friend. The landed aristocracy became the leaders and the bulwark of Protestantism and had their price therefore in the sharing amongst them of the lands of the Church. With their fingers dripping, as Mr. Lloyd George has so graphically described it, with the fat of sacrilege, the landed aristocracy became the champions of the new philosophy of life which defied wealth. The foundation of private wealth in England, that is, of the huge fortunes and huge estates which have given to that country its distinctive social character, was not precisely laid in the robberies of the Reformation, but was tremendously solidified, and the erection of a money caste was facilitated thereby; and from those aristocrats came the funds which, on the arrival of the age of machinery and machine production, made possible the rise of a new aristocracy—an aristocracy of money, the industrial aristocracy, which has for a hundred and fifty years exercised a rule more cruel and more absolute than any that was ever exercised by the landed aristocracy which in time the new aristocracy of factory and trade came to rival and finally to surpass.

In the Church, and in the lands and funds she held for the people, the private aristocrats of England had always seen a formidable obstacle to their plans for dominating the whole country. When the Church was broken down in England and in Scotland, when her property had been seized and distributed amongst greedy courtiers who had squandered their own property and money, they had no longer a check on their greed. All her lands and other property, the slow and laborious acquisitions of nine hundred years, they took from her in four years, and thenceforward the workingmen of England were at their mercy. In the course of time the commons throughout the country, which were occupied jointly by the poorer people for grazing their flocks and herds, were "enclosed"—in plain terms, were grabbed and taken into the possession of greedy landlords.

It must be well understood that the social situation, out of which has come the present class struggle, was a product of the "Reformation" and not an incidental product, but a direct result of a definite and settled policy by which the power of the rich was increased, at the same time that the only property-holding institution which had ever consistently stood friend to the poor and the helpless was chased out of the country and its property stolen and converted to the use of the rich.

Then came the invention of machinery. Then came a new impulse to industrial expansion; and who profited by it? Those who furnished the capital. And who furnished the capital? The class

who by robbery and greed had taken possession of all the capital in the country. They had the money; they had the property; they had the influence; and they no longer had to fear a power which had often said to them: "Thus far but no farther." They had a hundred times been checked and challenged by the Church; now the Church was suppressed in that country; and they could do—and in fact did—exactly as they liked.

A new day had come in the matter of manufacturing and trade. Machinery came to change the face of things. The Church had extended her beneficent influence into the field of industry in the days of hand-made goods. She had set up her guilds, enrolling in them the employer and the employee as co-laborers and brothers in Christ. It was a league of Christian labor, the old Catholic guild; and its principles are today being put forward by thinkers who hardly know that they ever existed, as a new and vital discovery of a means of promoting a better understanding between employers and employees. The Church had inculcated amongst the guildsmen, the principles of Catholic charity, and had impressed on them that they had a duty to the public who bought their goods; and it was part of the rules of a Catholic guild that the employer and the employee were both to do their best to put out a good and sound article from their workshops. We should like to ask where at the present day the just claims of the buying public are conserved in any negotiations between the employer and the employee.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE RECENT "Call to Action" of the Low Church element in the Church of England, embodying what is tantamount to a threat to force the "Anglo-Catholics" out of the National Church, is likely to be met with a counterblast from the latter. Just what it will say is not difficult to conjecture, for while the "Call to Action" bore the signatures of many who under the banner of Modernism have fore-sworn belief in most of the cardinal Christian beliefs, the Anglo-Catholics include some of the best Scriptural and Patriotic scholars in England, and behind them practically the entire body of churchmen worthy of the name of Christian.

To the outsider it is difficult to visualize the outcome of the struggle between the two schools within the Church of England, just as it is difficult to understand how they can long continue to exist in the same communion. Prior to the Civil War in the United States Lincoln averred that it was impossible for the Republic to exist half slave and half free. It was no more impossible than that the Church of England should go on indefinitely half "Catholic" and half Protestant. It is of course the power of the State that holds it together just now, but should dis-establishment come about, disruption is inevitable. The Englishman's pride in his National Church has carried it over many a crisis, but that the strain should not eventually reach the breaking point is inconceivable. Dis-establishment would necessarily precipitate the crisis, in which event, however distant it may be, a large influx to the Catholic Church would probably follow. Meanwhile the Catholic world can but look on dispassionately, and prayerfully await the outcome.

THE DEATH of Mrs. Ellen M. Larkin at St. Catharines last week removes from this terrestrial sphere a valiant Christian woman. The widow of Captain Patrick Larkin, so well and favorably known a generation or two ago as a navigator on the Great Lakes, and later as a contractor to whom was entrusted the construction of many of the most important public works in the Dominion, it was her lot to witness the transition of Canada from a few scattered provinces into the vigorous nation of today.

MRS. LARKIN will be long remembered as a lady of wide culture about whom centered all that was best and most elevating in the community in which she lived. She will be still longer remembered for her lofty Christian character and her innumerable acts of benevolence to all who stood in need of a friend. No good work was foreign to her

sympathies, and no cry of distress fell unheeded upon her ears. Only those who were close to her knew the extent of her charity, but we may be sure it is stored up in the heart of God. In recompense it was her happiness to die fortified by the rites of the Church she had served so well and surrounded by those she loved. The five daughters whom she leaves behind and who inherit their mother's virtues will have the sympathy of all in their bereavement. R. I. P.

CATHOLIC AUTHOR REFUSES TO AID

A. W. McCANN TELLS WHY HE DECLINES INVITATION FROM BRYAN

(By N. C. W. G. News Service)

Yankers, N. Y.—Alfred W. McCann, a Catholic and author of "God, or Gorilla," has declined an invitation from William J. Bryan to assist in presenting the prosecution's side in the trial of John T. Scopes, charged with violation of Tennessee's anti-evolution law, now going on at Dayton, Tenn. Mr. McCann died in the Dayton case and while reiterating his disbelief in many of the so-called evolutionary scientific theories, sets forth his reasons for being unable to accept Mr. Bryan's invitation as follows: "June 30, 1925.  
"Hon. William Jennings Bryan,  
"Marymont  
"Cocoanut Grove, Florida.  
"Dear Mr. Bryan:  
"In declining your kindly invitation to come to Tennessee as a witness in the evolution trial scheduled for the 10th of July at Dayton I recognize the obligation of giving you a good and sufficient reason for my inability to appear on your side. "I cannot resort to the unworthy expedient of saying that other engagements make it impossible for me to comply with your request. That would be false. The simple truth is that I disapprove of the entire procedure from beginning to end. I cannot believe that good will come of it for I am very sure that the spirit of this generation must feel outraged by the spectacular methods invoked to put a muzzle on the teachings of any sect or cult, however erroneous those teachings may be.  
"I have never doubted your honesty of purpose in assailing the one-sided theory of evolution commonly presented in popular works on the subject, for although I, too, have thundered against the contradictions, paradoxes and forgeries masquerading as evolutionary 'science,' I doubt the wisdom of bringing the other side to trial under the Tennessee law or any other law.  
"Even though we have succeeded in bludgeoning the world with Volsteadism we can't hope to bottle-up the tendencies of men to think for themselves. We cannot put a harness on their freedom of will nor can we control their imaginations. To attempt to do so is to resort to futile violence and men will go on thinking their thoughts regardless of any inhibition or dictum to the contrary. Perhaps they would think more rightly if less sensational and more truly American methods were employed to aid their thinking by presenting them with the other side to their thoughts, thus leaving them in full possession of their own freedom of choice and avoiding for ourselves the abhorrent and indefensible devices of suppression and persecution.  
"Quite possibly my belief in the Bible is as unshakable as your own, yet I am convinced that any insistence upon the literal interpretation of some biblical passages must run counter to the very truth which such passages were obviously intended to convey. The word 'day' for instance, as used in Genesis, did not mean and could not have meant our solar day of 24 hours. The sun was not created until the 'third' day and could not have controlled the duration of the time periods expressed by the 'first' and 'second' days.  
"The chronological order in which the vegetable and animal works of creation followed each other in the Mosaic narrative is in extraordinary agreement with the so-called 'Record of the Rocks' as interpreted by many geologists and paleontologists. Moses couldn't have guessed the details of such sequence with such accuracy if he had not been inspired, for he certainly possessed none of the human knowledge of this subject now available. It is for this reason that Amperio, the scientist, insisted that Mos's must have been inspired.  
"I grant you that the teaching of many evolutionists is wholly beside the mark and needlessly cluttered up with what seems to be an obsession to challenge everything supernatural, even God Himself. But I know of chemists, biologists, physicists and engineers who profess agnosticism and atheism. Though not militantly aggressive in their assaults, upon revealed religion, they are none the less contemptuous of all religion except that curious thing called by them 'the religion of Nature.' This, to me, does not mean that chemistry, biology, physics or any other branch of science is in any way responsible for the spiritual convictions, or lack of them, by which this or that individual scientist may be distinguished.

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