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THOMAS COFFEY.

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London, Saturday, Dec. 3, 1892.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception of the ever Blessed Mary, mother of God, is celebrated on the 8th day of the present month of December.

The prerogative of the Blessed Virgin which is honored on this feast is one which distinguishes her among all the saints of God and entitles her to be called, as she is styled in the Litany, "Queen of all Saints," and in the well-known anthem which is used in the offices of the Church during one of the seasons of the year: "Queen of Heaven, Mistress of the Angels, the source and gate by which light has risen to the world."

By the sin of our first parents the human race became subject to death, as we are told by the Apostle St. Paul, "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned . . . and death reigned from Adam unto Moses" (Rom. v., 12, 14).

Though we do not know by revelation the full details of the manner in which original sin is transmitted to mankind, we know that its effects are disastrous, and that by it alone we would be excluded from the kingdom of Heaven if we had not in the sacrament of baptism a means whereby the merits of Christ's sufferings on the Cross are applied to our souls, and we thus become once more "children of God and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven," cleansed "by the laver of water in the word of life" (Eph. v.; 26).

It has been always the belief of the Catholic Church that the Blessed Virgin, selected in the designs of God, before all ages, to become the Mother of God on earth, was exempted from the general decree which made the rest of mankind children of wrath.

From all eternity the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, the Son of God, had Mary in view as His Mother when He should take human flesh to "dwell amongst us" and to redeem us by the shedding of His precious blood.

We cannot reconcile it with the love of a perfect Son for His earthly mother that He should have left her, even for a single moment, subject to the power of His enemy, and the enemy of the whole human race, with her soul tainted with the stain of original sin. Hence St. James, Bishop of Larug, one of the early Eastern Fathers of the Church, declared that "if Mary had been stained with even one sin, Christ would have selected another mother who would be free from such a stain; and when we further consider that Christ Himself could not be so reconciled to sin as to assume a body which had ever been subject to sin, the reasonableness of St. James' teaching on this subject becomes still more apparent. It is, however, the constant tradition of the Church, "the pillar and ground of truth," and especially by the infallible doctrinal decree issued on the 8th of December, 1854, which makes us certain that the Blessed Virgin was conceived without sin. By this decree it is decided that the Immaculate Conception is a truth revealed by God.

This decree is epitomized in the catechism as follows: "The Blessed Virgin Mary was by a special grace and privilege from Almighty God preserved from every stain of sin by virtue of the merits of her Son Jesus Christ, whose death availed beforehand to prepare a pure body for the Son of God from which He might assume human nature."

Among the passages of Holy Scripture which refer to the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, we may briefly mention, 1st. Gen. iii. 15, from which we learn that after the fall of our first parents a Redeemer was promised through the instrumentality of a woman between whom and the serpent there should be enmity, and that she should crush the serpent's, that is the devil's, head. This text is interpreted by the Fathers and the

tradition of the Church as referring to the Blessed Virgin, who fulfills it by her unstained purity from the moment of her conception.

2ndly, St. Luke 1, 28, wherein the Angel of God addresses Mary with the salutation, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." This fullness of grace implies that she possessed the grace of God from the first moment of her existence.

3rdly, Apoc. Rev. xii., wherein the Apostle St. John describes his vision of a woman who with her child appeared in heaven, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." Before her stood a great dragon who sought to devour her son, but the woman fled to the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God, and the great dragon was cast forth in a battle with Michael and his angels, and the dragon was angry against the woman who was miraculously delivered from him notwithstanding all his efforts put forth for her destruction.

This deliverance is also to be interpreted of the Blessed Virgin's complete triumph over Satan.

The Immaculate Conception and purity of life of the Blessed Virgin place her in the highest rank of the saints of God in Heaven, and she is there as our Mother and intercessor before the throne of God. The prayers of the just are powerful with God, and the Blessed Virgin is therefore the most powerful intercessor we could have from among creatures. Thus her great privileges redound to our benefit, and give us occasion for special gratitude to God when we celebrate the feast of her Immaculate Conception.

SIR JOHN THOMPSON AS PREMIER.

Sir John Abbott has handed in to Lord Stanley his resignation of the Premiership of the Dominion, on account of ill health, and on the recommendation of the retiring Premier, Sir John Thompson has been entrusted with and has undertaken the task of forming a Government.

It has been long understood that this change was contemplated, and that sooner or later it would become a reality.

It was evident from the beginning of the new ministry that Sir John Thompson was practically the leader of the Government, and the longer this condition of things lasted, the more evident it became that when a change should take place, Sir John Thompson's known integrity and ability pointed him out as the proper person to be actually put into the position of which he was doing the duty. Hence his appointment to the Premiership now occasions no surprise, and it is acknowledged on all hands that he is the man on the Conservative side of the House best able to fill it. We are pleased to notice that even his political opponents recognize this, and though there have been bigots, such as the Mail, the Rev. Mr. Douglass, a Methodist minister of Montreal, and some few others who have declared their determined opposition to such an appointment on account of Sir John Thompson's religious beliefs, we are confident that the good sense of the people of Canada will cause them to recognize that in this mixed community the creed of a statesman must be no obstacle to his promotion to the highest position in the land.

We give due credit to the Toronto Globe and Empire and to the press of the country generally that they fully recognize the justice of this view of the case. There are some exceptions to the rule among those journals which have posed as Equal Righters, but they are so few and so inconsiderable in influence that their irate rhapsodies are not worthy of serious notice.

The new Premier is a native of Nova Scotia. He was born in Halifax in 1844. His father was a native of Waterford, Ireland. Sir John was called to the bar of Nova Scotia in 1865, and was made a Queen's Councillor in 1879. In 1878 he became Attorney General, and in 1882 Premier of Nova Scotia. The latter office he resigned after two months, and he was appointed judge of the Supreme Court of his native province. In 1885 he accepted the position of Minister of Justice and Attorney-General in the Cabinet of Sir John Macdonald, which office he continued to hold down to his present appointment as Premier of Canada. He was made a K. C. M. G. in 1888, in recognition of services rendered in negotiating a fishery treaty.

Mrs. Thompson is a lady of refinement and ability. Her name previous

to her marriage was Miss Annie E. Affleck. The marriage took place in 1870.

PROTESTANT EPISCOPALIAN PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

The Protestant Episcopal congregation of the Church of the Transfiguration of New York on All Souls' Day, November 2, assisted at what must have been for most of those present a very novel service, namely, "Vespers for the Dead." The communion table, to which High Churchmen are now fond of giving the name "altar," was decorated with black, and had on it a number of lighted candles. The clergy and choristers, robed in white, sang the Psalms which are used in the Catholic Church at the Office for the Dead, adding at the end of each psalm the prayer:

Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, And let light perpetual shine upon them.

The Magnificat followed, together with other prayers for the souls of those departed.

Bishop Isaac Lea Nicholson, of Milwaukee, preached on the occasion, and his sermon was on the efficacy of prayers for the dead. The New York Sun gave from the sermon the following extract:

"That Christian and Catholic doctrine of prayers for the dead—how we love that doctrine! It is taught and practiced in our prayer book, as it has been taught in every true liturgy since the Lord was on earth. Ours would not be a true prayer book if it did not teach it."

Elsewhere he said that "not a single doctrine of the Anglican Church is more Catholic or more scriptural or rests on a more sure and certain foundation. It has always been taught in the English Church. Archbishop Usher, Bishop Andrews, Jeremy Taylor, Barrow and Bull, not to speak of lesser lights, taught it." In conclusion he exhorted his hearers to "pray for the souls of their dead relatives and friends."

It is very true, as Bishop Nicholson says, that the doctrine of the efficacy of prayers for the dead is Scriptural and in accordance with the constant teaching of the Christian Church, that is to say, the Catholic Church of all ages, and that the same is to be found in all the liturgies which have been used in the Church from the most ancient times; but truth compels us to say that we fail to detect this teaching in the liturgy of the Church of England. This liturgy is ancient only in the sense that it is composed for the most part of extracts from the ancient Roman liturgy; but it is to be remarked that in the selections of these extracts the compilers of the Anglican liturgy carefully omitted everything which seemed to them to imply that prayers may be offered for the dead. Hence a few days after the New York Sun published the account of the Vespers in the church of the Transfiguration, a correspondent of that paper, himself an Episcopalian, wrote a communication in which he says:

"I have thoroughly searched the prayer book and fail to find anywhere anything referring to prayers for the dead." The nearest approach to a reference to this subject which this correspondent can find in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer is in "Article 22," which says:

"The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, etc., is a fond thing, vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God."

He then asks: "Will the Rev. Bishop kindly explain, if the doctrine of purgatory is not accepted by the Episcopal Church, why should prayers be offered for the dead, as those in heaven do not need them, and they would certainly be of no avail for the lost souls in hell?"

The truth of the matter is that studious divines of the Anglican Church have, like Dr. Nicholson, made the discovery that the constant teaching of the Christian Church and Holy Scripture agree that "there is a purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful," and so they wish to make it appear that the Anglican Prayer Book teaches these doctrines, which in reality it does not. The most that can be said of the teaching of the Prayer Book is that it is purposely obscure, so that the reader may derive from it whatever doctrine is most pleasing to him. It will be observed that even the doctrine of Purgatory is not positively condemned in the 22nd Article, but only some undesignated "Romish" doctrinal details on the subject. Hence the High Churchmen may hold concerning both Purgatory and prayers for the dead whatever belief they think proper, and they may with some

plausibility maintain that their view is not in opposition to the authoritative teaching of their Church.

It is not to be wondered at that Bishop Nicholson can name some noted teachers of the Church who have advocated prayers for the dead. There is scarcely a doctrine of Christianity which is not maintained by some and denied by other prominent Anglican theologians.

If doctrinal consistency is to be looked for it will be found only in the Catholic Church. We know that prayers and sacrifices were offered for the dead under the Old Law, and that it was regarded as "a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins." (2 Macc. xii., 46.) But in the Church of England it is a new and unusual notion that prayers for the dead are of any benefit to them. We are glad to notice, however, a gradual return to the ancient traditions of Christianity on the part of a large and influential section of Anglicans. We hope that this may be the sign that many of them will yet return to the one true fold which has never ceased to teach the ancient and Apostolic doctrine on this and every point, in accordance with the commission given by Christ to His Apostles: "Teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (St. Matt. xxviii., 20.)

AN IMPORTANT ECCLESIASTICAL MEETING.

On Wednesday, the 16th of Nov., the Archbishops of the United States, thirteen in number, held in New York a most important Conference in matters which regard the welfare of the Church.

The subjects which the Conference has been considering are announced to be, 1, the school question, especially with the view to make provision for the large number of Catholic children in the United States who cannot attend Catholic schools; 2, the relations of the Church to the numerous societies which at the present time are forcing themselves upon the notice of the public; 3, the lay Catholic Congress which is to be held in Chicago during the continuance of the World's Fair in 1893.

It is also believed that the means of supplying instruction to Catholic immigrants from foreign countries was carefully considered.

The meetings of the Archbishops take place annually to discuss matters which relate to the administration of the Church, and to promote the general welfare of their flocks and the progress of religion. From the magnitude of the questions which have been under discussion, it is anticipated that this meeting will be the most important which has taken place since the third Plenary Council of the Church of the United States which was held in Baltimore in 1884.

The sessions are attended only by the Archbishops, but as in every Province of the thirteen into which the United States are divided Provincial Councils have recently been held, the Archbishops assembled on this occasion with full knowledge of the sentiments of their suffragans in each Province.

The meetings are private, as the public are concerned only with the conclusions which will be arrived at by the Archbishops. Of this privacy some of the anti-Catholic journals have taken advantage to compare the council with the meetings of Freemasons and other secret societies condemned by the Church. These journals ask why are secret societies condemned, since the Bishops and Archbishops of the Church themselves hold private or secret sessions?

We answer that the Church nowhere condemns private consultation on matters which are properly private in their character. Never has the Senate of the United States been condemned because it discusses relations to foreign Governments with closed doors; nor have the British, and Canadian, and other Governments been condemned for keeping secret their Cabinet consultations. These are not secret societies; but oaths to keep secret all the proceedings of an assembly of private individuals, where there is a possibility that some of these proceedings will be unlawful, are unlawful oaths. Societies which administer such oaths are called secret societies, and these are the associations which the Catholic Church forbids Catholics to join. False, rash, and unnecessary oaths are strictly forbidden by the second commandment of the decalogue, and this is one reason why secret societies are condemned; and in addition to these oath-bound societies, every Association which has in view

an evil object, such as the overthrow of religion or lawful civil authority, is also forbidden; likewise associations whose members swear to obey the commands of office-bearers, who may command what is unlawful.

It has also been very gracefully stated by the press reporters that the conference was most inharmonious, and that "Archbishops Ireland, of St. Paul, and Kutzer, of Milwaukee, have generally been on opposite sides in some heated arguments." We are then asked, "Where is the boasted unity of the Catholic Church?"

To this we answer that the Councils of the Catholic Church are not conducted in the acrimonious manner our querists would have us believe, and it will undoubtedly be found that there has been a good deal of exaggeration of small matters by reporters, who have imagined that an assembly of Catholic Bishops is like the assembly of sectaries of incongruous beliefs which recently met at Grindelwald, Switzerland, for the purpose of considering the question of Protestant union. From such an assemblage there could be no satisfactory result; anticipated, and in fact there was no such result. The Pan-Protestant Council was comparatively harmonious; but the reason of this was that all matters of doctrine were rigidly excluded as subjects which must not be treated. It was simply a gathering with no legislative authority but merely for purposes of mutual congratulation. The most capacious could scarcely find room for differences in such an assembly. But councils of Catholic Bishops have a legislative purpose in the domain of the Church; yet we have always found that they are conducted in a spirit of charity and forbearance.

At these Councils there are subjects discussed wherein there is room for divergence of opinion; and such divergence is quite lawful. On matters of faith Catholics are one. In this the unity of the Church consists; but in all other matters differences of opinion are quite allowable, and it was to be expected that on such matters there were differences of opinion between the Archbishops assembled in New York. It was enough that they observed the dispositions of mind recommended in the well known proverb:

"In essentialibus unitus, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas." (In things essential, unity; in things doubtful, liberty; in all things, charity.)

There must have been, indeed, differences of opinion on matters which depend merely upon human prudence, but such differences do not in the least destroy the glorious unity of faith which exists only in the Catholic Church.

It is announced that on the subject of the education of Catholic children the following resolutions were unanimously adopted by the council:

First. Resolved, To promote the erection of Catholic schools, so that there may be accommodation for more, and, if possible, for all, our Catholic children, according to the decrees of the third Plenary Council of Baltimore and the decisions of the Holy See.

Second. Resolved, That as to children who at present do not attend Catholic schools, we direct in addition that provision be made for them by Sunday schools and also by instructions on some other day or days of the week, and by urging parents to teach their children the Christian doctrine in their homes. These Sunday and week day schools should be under the direct supervision of the clergy, aided by intelligent lay teachers, and when possible by members of religious teaching orders.

The conference was brought to an end on Saturday, the 19th inst. Before the Archbishops left for their homes, Archbishop Corrigan made the following announcement of their sentiments regarding the beneficial influence of the Catholic press:

"The Archbishops of the United States willingly recognize the great services rendered to religion by Catholic journalists, but at the same time, that these labors may be rendered more fruitful and efficient, the Archbishops earnestly request the editors of Catholic newspapers to bear in mind the wise and weighty words more than once used by the Sovereign Pontiff on the duties of the press, especially regarding the intemperate discussion of matters that belong by right to episcopal authority."

They also deprecate all acrimonious controversy and recall to memory the remark of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, that "Christian charity and difference of opinion can amably coexist and be united in men of good will."

The College of the Propaganda at Rome announces the conversion of 40,000 persons to Christianity in the first six months of 1892. The greater portion of the converts were in Asia, West Africa, and a considerable number in the British provinces.

BAPTIST THEORY AND PRACTICE.

It will be remembered by our readers that after the decease of Mr. Spurgeon, the Baptist congregation of his Tabernacle in London, England, invited the Presbyterian, Rev. Dr. Pierson, of Detroit, to succeed him.

As the Presbyterians of all the Protestant sects are most resolute opponents of baptism by immersion, which they generally hold to be an anti-Scriptural practice, there was good deal of speculation as to whether or not the rev. doctor would accept the position, and whether, in case of his acceptance of it, he would practically renounce the Presbyterian doctrine and submit to be rebaptized by immersion. It was scarcely to be expected that the Baptist body would accept his ministrations unless he would conform to their belief, which is that the only true baptism is by immersion, administered by one who has been himself immersed.

The doctor is now fully installed as pastor of the Tabernacle, and many Baptists are very indignant, as it appears that he was given the position without being immersed; and the officers of the Tabernacle have recently issued a circular to the members, in which they declare that it is imperative that their pastor should be a firm believer in immersion, and should pledge himself to teach the Baptist creed in its integrity.

The Baptists are exceedingly strict in not admitting to their Sacramental Communion any one who is, in their estimation, unbaptized, as the Rev. Dr. Pierson is. It is a puzzle, therefore, how they can receive the Communion as administered by the unimmersed doctor who declines to fit himself for the position he is now filling.

It is said that the contract with Dr. Pierson will only last till June, 1893. It is unlikely, therefore, that he will conform to the usual Baptist requirement during the few months which remain, as he would thereby incur Presbyterian animosity, and would render himself less eligible hereafter to a Presbyterian pastorate.

The incongruity of the present state of affairs is, therefore, likely to continue till the date indicated.

The whole occurrence shows how readily the sects can change their doctrines to suit the expediency of the moment. Yet they profess to be uncompromising upholders of pure doctrines.

THE CONVENT OF LA RABIDA.

The Convent of La Rabida, where Columbus sought a refuge after his many disappointments and his plans being rejected as visionary by the governments to which he had applied for assistance in his great undertaking, has been thoroughly restored to the style in which it existed when he made his visit to it in 1484, and when afterwards he and his men received Holy Communion there previously to their leaving Palos to sail over unknown waters in search of lands equally unknown. The chapel in which this memorable event occurred is pointed out to visitors, and the spot also where Columbus knelt in pious supplication to Almighty God for the success of his undertaking.

By going up a narrow stairway the "Columbus Room" is reached, where the Admiral had his famous conference with Father Juan de Perez, the result of which was that Father Perez laid the matter again before King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and was finally appointed to command the three ships which succeeded in reaching the new world.

At La Rabida took place some of the most interesting features of the Spanish Columbian celebration on the 12th inst. A magnificent monument, which has been erected in honor of Columbus, was unveiled in the presence of the Queen Regent, King Alphonso, the ministers of State, members of the Chamber of Deputies, many military and naval officers and a vast crowd of civilians. The cable despatch announcing the ceremony mentions also that the river and bay were crowded with all descriptions of craft, and that a salute was fired by the war-ships as the veil covering the monument was dropped.

The river is the Rio Tuito, through the lower part of which Columbus sailed when leaving Palos on his way to the sea, Palos being distant from the monastery only about three miles.

The city of Huelva is on the side of the broad bay opposite La Rabida, from which it is visible. In Huelva the grand parade was held, thousands of spectators lining the streets on which the procession wended its way.

In recognition of the services rendered to Christopher Columbus-by

Father Juan Perez and

cans, it is stated that made to the Order a great stored convent, which decay and disuse during some periods experienced the past four centuries of October has also been a perpetual nation.

THE REGIOPOLIS

What the Archbishop

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From the Kingston

The entertainment of Notre Dame convent Academy on Monday of the twelfth anniversary bishop's consecration attended, about 400

The hall was beautifully and some two hundred an animated appearance and carrying baskets of flowers, hymns and recitations, an address read to the behalf of the pupils, himon his anniversary him for the many good accomplished while ch diocese, and praying spare him for many sions. The Archbishop reply to the children a of parents, in which many works in comm cause of education i taken part since his a cess, and pointed out large and commodious nection with the conv a boarding school f He hoped within a s such a building in con tion. His Grace then hour on the advisabil High School or college education of the you low the clerical, legi mercial, journalistic, ingly remarked, pol although the last nam considered a good o stress on the fact t although principally oles, was not to be sively, and that Prot admitted. His Grace to carry out the er school which will be polis University schoo brief summary of his

Undoubtedly the e Catholic High Scho Archbishop outlined th: children and the Vincent's Academy, a timable boon to King diocese, and indeed tario. Our Catholic with talent enough t learned professions a and more lucrative civil and intellectu Provincial Legislat fairly mutilated out ten by limiting out to the elementary br tion, and denying Separate High Scho their proper goal, of our youth would rected as they advan The result is that C cally debarred from and thus are handi start in the race of are confined to the Excelsior has no sig Their educational o when they begin t pulse of ambition. bishop vigorously t of supplying us scientific, literary High School, we ha succeed as well o other work he has benefit of his people and Archdiocese. crowning glory of the most fruitful of blessings to our pe his acknowledged plans well and solid institution of learni associated with his time. From what side, we may assu most cordial and ge of the laity, as well this his greatest wo ness, in which all ested.

EDITORIAL

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