

those who are satisfied to pay the rents they agreed to, or those who, in the exercise of their rights, take vacant farms. With this decision we are in agreement, though we think the Cardinal might have left out his allusion to the Land Courts. It was sufficient to say that a contract freely entered upon cannot be violated without a breach of justice. The introduction of the question of the Land Courts gives the Leaguers a handle for tergiversation, for they allege that the Land Courts do not afford them justice. If a course of action be morally wrong, it is not made more wrong, but only more reprehensible, by loading it with an appeal to a side issue.—*Church Review*.

THE POPE AND THE HOME RULERS.

THE League has received the news of the Pope's condemnation of its tactics with astonishment. It was hoped that Mgr. Persico's mission would end in smoke, and the Parnellite organs are not slow to assert that the decision was obtained by chicanery and intrigue. The Campaigners and Boycotters have been misrepresented at the Court of Rome they declare; and much indignation is levelled at the heads of Lord Salisbury and the Duke of Norfolk. The Leaguers view with satisfaction that the Pope has not condemned the League itself. They are welcome to all the satisfaction they can get from this. The League deprived of the Plan of Campaign and the lever of boycotting would be a very mild affair and not worth proclaiming in any district. What then will be the result of the Pope's action? Time alone, of course, will show. We do not anticipate any startling results. If it be true, as the *Daily News* asserts, that Dr. Walsh, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, is to be superseded by Cardinal Moran, of Sydney, it would appear that the Pope is in earnest in giving practical effect to his decision. But we have always held the opinion that—to use a paradox—the Irish Roman Catholic clergy only "lead" their people by "following" the current of popular opinion. The late Father Burke got himself into sad trouble for denouncing the murders in Phoenix Park, and on one occasion after preaching a sermon against murder he received a threatening letter, which, by the way, with his native humour, he said he answered in his sermon the same night "for one must be punctual with correspondence." We are satisfied that if the Roman clergy in Ireland were to place themselves in antagonism to any popular movement their hold over the people would snap like a thread. Doubtless the Pope knows this far better than we do, and it must have required some courage on his part to have spoken as strongly as he has on the point submitted by him to the supreme congregation of the Holy Office. We do not mean that the Irish people would, if the worst came to the worst, give up their religion in consequence of the latest decision of the infallible authority. But as they have dealt with the British Government and the landlords, so would they deal with the authorities at Rome. With one voice they would

proclaim their unalterable decision to take their religion from the Pope, but their politics from Mr. Parnell. They would distinguish between a decision of the Pope on questions of faith and a circular dealing with a political question. They would hardly be logical in so doing, for by the decrees of the Vatican Synod the Pope, when speaking *ex cathedra*, is the infallible teacher of the faithful in matters of morals as well as of faith. But whatever the result may be it cannot but be satisfactory to all who value integrity in moral conduct, that Leo XIII. has decided that refusing to pay rents which have been voluntarily agreed upon, and persecuting those who do not agree with them by a social interdict, are courses which no Roman Catholic can be permitted to adopt.—*Church Review*.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

THE following words of Professor Huxley, which have appeared in the February number of the *Popular Science Monthly* (New York), deserve notice, because they seem to indicate a growing moderation in the attitude of Science towards Religion, and a greater reasonableness of spirit in making concessions, thus allowing the scientist and the theologian to occupy common position which bring them nearer to agreement than they have been before. Speaking about the old dispute between Science and Religion, as to the reasonableness and probability of miracles and of answers to prayer, Professor Huxley frankly admits that he cannot see how any *a priori* objection can be alleged to these beliefs, and says:

'Nobody can presume to say what the order of Nature must be; all that the widest experience (even if it extended over all past time and through all space) that events had happened in a certain way could justify, would be a proportionally strong expectation that events will go on so happening, and the demand for a proportional strength of evidence in favour of any assertion that they had happened otherwise. It is this weighty consideration, the truth of which every one who is capable of logical thought must surely admit, which knocks the bottom out of all *a priori* objections to ordinary "miracles" or to the efficacy of prayer; in so far as the latter implies the miraculous intervention of a higher power, no one is entitled to say *a priori* that any giving so-called miraculous event is impossible, and no one is entitled to say *a priori* that prayer for some change in the ordinary course of Nature cannot possibly avail. The supposition that there is any inconsistency between the acceptance of the constancy of natural order and a belief in the efficacy of prayer is the more unaccountable, as it is obviously contradicted by analogies furnished by every-day experience. The belief in the efficacy of prayer depends upon the assumption that there is somebody, somewhere, who is strong enough to deal with the earth and its contents as men deal with the things and events which they are strong enough to modify or control, and who is capable of being moved by appeals such as men make to one another. This belief does not even involve theism, for our earth is an insignificant particle of the solar system, while the solar system is hardly worth speaking of in relation to the All; and, for anything that can be proved to the contrary, there may be beings endowed with

full powers over our system, yet, practically, as insignificant as ourselves in relation to the universe. If anyone pleases, therefore, to give unrestrained liberty to his fancy, he may plead analogy in favour of the dream that there may be, somewhere, a finite being, or beings, who can play with the solar system as a child plays with a toy; and that such being may be willing to do anything which he is properly supplicated to do. For we are not justified in saying that it is impossible for beings having the nature of men, only vastly more powerful, to exist; and, if they do exist, they may act as and when we ask them to do so, just as our brother-men act. As a matter of fact, the great mass of human race has believed, and still believes, in such beings, under the various names of fairies, gnomes, angels and demons. Certainly I do not lack faith in the constancy of natural order; but I am not less convinced that if I were to ask the Bishop of Manchester to do me a kindness which lay within his power he would do it, and I am unable to see that his action on my request involves any violation of the order of Nature. On the contrary, as I have not the honour to know the Bishop personally, my action would be based on my faith in that "law of nature," or generalisation from experience, which tells me that, as a rule, men who occupy the Bishop's position are kindly and courteous. How is the case altered if my request is preferred to some imaginary superior being, or to the Most High Being, who, by the supposition, is able to arrest disease, or make the sun stand still in the heavens, just as easily as I can stop my watch, or make it indicate any hour that pleases me? I repeat that it is not on any *a priori* considerations that objections, either to the supposed efficacy of prayer in modifying the course of events, or to the supposed occurrence of miracles, can be scientifically based. The real objection, and, to my mind, the fatal objection, to both these suppositions, is the inadequacy of the evidence to prove any given case of such occurrence which has been adduced. It is a canon of common sense, to say nothing of science, that the more improbable a supposed occurrence, the more cogent ought to be the evidence in its favour. I have looked somewhat carefully into the subject, and I am unable to find in the records of any miraculous event evidence which even approximates to the fulfilment of this requirement.'

On reading the above, while we cannot but regret that Professor Huxley cannot go all the way with the theologians, we cannot but be glad and surprised that he goes as far as he does; for the position which he takes up is far more reasonable, moderate, and fair, than that which we have generally been accustomed to see scientific sceptics taken up. The theologian has contended that, reasoning on *a priori* grounds and from analogies, there is nothing unreasonable in believing that He who ordained the laws of Nature may alter the laws or make them operate in a contrary way by modifying or counteracting one law by another, as the engine-driver of a train may reverse the engine when he hears the cry of a child who has fallen on the line in front of the train. And they have said, secondly, that, whether we might expect it beforehand or not, as a matter of fact we can point to instances of the occurrence of miracles, or of the direct suspension or modification of the ordinary course of Nature; as in the case of Christ's Resurrection and of the miracles of the Apostles, of which there is sufficient evidence to command