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THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

Like the other important festivals, the feast of the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven is celebrated with an octave, that is to say, the Church commemorates the Ascension during the entire eight days from the Thursday on which the feast falls to the following Thursday inclusively, and further importance is given to this mystery from the fact that even on the two succeeding days the office of the Ascension is recited and the Mass in honor of the same mystery is celebrated, so that the whole ten days between the feast of the Ascension and that of Pentecost are devoted to the remembrance of our Blessed Lord's triumphant return to His Heavenly Father, after completing His victory over sin and death and the powers of darkness and evil.

The Ascension of Christ to heaven is mentioned briefly in the gospels of Sts. Mark and Luke, and with further details by the latter evangelist in his "Acts of the Apostles," chapter 1.

After His resurrection from the tomb, our Lord remained forty days on earth, "speaking of the kingdom of heaven" to His Apostles, thus preparing them for the mission they were to accomplish by preaching the Gospel throughout the world.

The Evangelist tells us that on the day of His Ascension He warned His Apostles not to separate or leave Jerusalem until the accomplishment of His promise to them that the Holy Ghost should descend upon them, which, He said, would take place "a few days hence." After this, while they were looking on He was raised up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Then while the Apostles were looking upward in astonishment, two angels, under the appearance of men, stood by them in white garments and said to them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven."

The place from which the Ascension took place was Mount Olivet, close to Jerusalem, and from which the streets of the city are distinctly to be seen.

The Ascension of Christ into heaven was accomplished by His own power, and in this it differs in character from the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into heaven, and the entry of the just into the kingdom of God, as these events are the effects of God's power and mercy, and not of any power of their own.

After the Ascension the Apostles returned to Jerusalem, remaining there "until the days of Pentecost were accomplished."

Heaven is the proper abode of Christ, hence though He might have remained many years on earth, His purpose, the redemption of mankind, was now accomplished, and as soon as this end was attained it was proper He should return to His Heavenly Father, to gladden the angels who earnestly expected Him, and to open the gates of heaven to the souls who had been detained in Limbo during the four thousand years which preceded redemption, as none could enter heaven until Christ prepared the way. St. Cyprian says of the joy with which God the Father greeted His beloved Son, after His thirty-three years on earth: "All the powers of the angels, and of human talent, cannot describe the joy of the Father on His Son's return, if it can be properly said that the infinite and immutable happiness of God is capable of being augmented," and St. Chrysostom says of the effect of the heavenly host: "To-day the angels and archangels beheld human nature shining with immortal glory on the throne of the Lord." The glorious ascension of our Lord, who is both God and man, was therefore the triumph of humanity, which is now for the first time admitted to the immediate presence of God and the company of the angels.

The principal end for which Christ came on earth was that He should die

for us on the cross, but His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven constitute part of the plan of salvation, and the work of redemption was not complete until this final act of the enthronement of human nature when Christ took again His place in heaven, where He sits at the right hand of the Father.

That the feast of the Ascension was kept by the Church at a very early date is evident from the early Christian Fathers who mention it. Tertullian and Origen, of the third century, do not name this feast as being one of the holy days observed in their time, but it is mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions, which are believed to have been composed at about that period. In the fourth century the feast is frequently mentioned, there being sermons by Sts. Epiphanius and Chrysostom, preached on the feast of the Ascension, and one which is attributed to Eusebius, the Church historian who lived during the reign of Constantine the Great; and St. Augustine, of the same century, declares that the feast was in his time universally observed. This illustrious Doctor of the Church says that "Our Lord Jesus Christ, by bearing our human nature to heaven, showed that heaven is now open to believers, and while He raised Himself to heaven as the conqueror of death, He opened heaven to the other conquerors who were to follow Him. The Ascension of our Lord is therefore the confirmation of Catholic faith, so that all the faithful may place confidence in the promises of God, and preserve in grateful memory His past and present favors."

We are reminded also by the occurrence of the Feast of the Ascension, that the period during which the Easter Communion is to be fulfilled is rapidly drawing to a close. Those who have not as yet fulfilled this obligation should be careful to do so within the time appointed, which extends to Trinity Sunday, May 31.

AN ANGLICAN PAPACY.

The question has been mooted for a few years past to unite all the Anglican Churches of Great Britain and the colonies into one by making the See of Canterbury a Patriarchate having jurisdiction over all. The purpose of this proposal is to preserve unity of faith, as many Anglicans are beginning to see clearly that the inevitable result of the present division will be a gradual divergence from whatever imperfect unity exists at present. As a matter of fact there is not a semblance of unity of doctrine among Anglicans at present, for the Church includes every variety of belief from the High Churchism to which the late Dr. Pusey gave such an impetus, to the extreme laxity of the writers of the "Essays and Reviews" which created so much scandal among the more orthodox Anglicans some years ago, and which practically denies the historical truth, and, as a matter of course, the inspiration of Scripture.

But there is a semblance of union arising from the fact that all Anglicans preserve the Prayer Book, and profess belief in the thirty-nine Articles of faith therein set forth.

The result of having independent national churches has already been seen in the departure of the American Protestant Episcopal Church from the old landmarks, the Prayer Book itself having been tampered with in its case, and made to conform more with the views of Low Churchmen or the so-called Evangelical party. But all this occurred at a time when High Churchism was comparatively young, and, therefore, weak. Yet the changes made then have not prevented High Churchism from making rapid progress among American Episcopalians, and there is in the United States now a strong High Church element, though not so powerful as in England and some of the Canadian dioceses.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is anxious for this elevation of his See into a Patriarchate; but it does not appear likely to be established, as the Colonial Churches, having already declared their independence of the Mother Church, are not likely to submit themselves anew to the Church in England. They have tasted the sweets of independence, and they are not much disposed now to the bitter belus of obedience and submission to a higher authority.

It is intended that the question of the Patriarchate shall be brought up before the decennial council of the Church, which is to be held next year at Lambeth, but it has already elicited much opposition, and as it would not be easy to establish it if the Colonial Churches are unwilling, the proposi-

tion may fall through even before the meeting of the Council, so that it may not be deemed prudent to bring it up for discussion at all.

Dr. Nevill, the Protestant Bishop of Dunedin, New Zealand, has sent a pretty sharp answer to a letter of the Bishop of Salisbury written to the New Zealand Bishops urging them to consider the matter favorably.

Dr. Nevill says the proposal would "be more likely to cause a breach than to ensure harmonious action." He says the proposed Patriarchate would be essentially a papacy, and in a few generations would become absolutely a papacy. He declares that the Colonial churches prefer their own forms of worship and disciplinary canons to those which would be issued from Lambeth, and he reminds the Bishop of Lambeth that the English Bishops can do nothing without permission of the Crown, a servitude from which the Colonial Churches are exempt, and to which they are not inclined to subject themselves. Besides, he says, "there is more danger of aberration from the faith in the Mother Church than there is in the daughter Churches," all of which may be quite true, though it is a disagreeable matter for the Church in England to reflect upon.

The proposed Patriarchate is not intended to have any authority over the Episcopal Church of the United States, unless perhaps there might be some English congregations who would accept it. The proposed papacy would therefore be a very local one, as its operations would be limited to the dominions of England and to a few foreign missions, for a time. It would be a very different thing from the Primacy of the Apostolic See, which, by divine institution, has authority throughout the world. But the English Bishops could scarcely hope to have their Patriarchate accepted in America, in the face of the fact that they themselves take oath that no foreign prelate "hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, spiritual or temporal, within this realm." If this is a truth which can be sworn to, the rule must also work the other way to preclude any English prelate from exercising spiritual jurisdiction in the United States. The case is made stronger from the fact that the English Church is so completely subservient to the Crown—and submission to the Archbishop of Canterbury would mean submission to the Crown of England, a thing to which Americans could not consent under any consideration.

THE NEXT PAPAL ELECTION.

The Roman correspondents of the press constantly busy themselves very much in prognosticating the future of the Church, and the policy of the Pope and the College of Cardinals. But it is remarkable that though regarding secular matters these correspondents are frequently, if not generally, well-informed, their horoscope of ecclesiastical matters is nearly always wide of the truth.

A recent despatch from Rome via Berlin relates that the European powers composing the Dreibund are busying themselves now to secure the election of a successor to Leo XIII. who will be favorable to the triple alliance, and not so democratic in his views as the present Supreme Pontiff.

The correspondents divide the probable successors of Pope Leo XIII. into two classes or groups, one, headed by Cardinal Svampa, being in favor of Pope Leo's policy, and the other, under the leadership of Cardinal Galimberti, being favorable to the continuance of the Dreibund; and it is said that the powers are working, each in its own way, to have a Pope elected whose general policy will be in accord with their own, and that diplomatic life is very much stirred by the matter.

It is undoubtedly true that the powers have from time to time endeavored to control the conclave, but never in the Church's history has the Sacred College been more independent of Court control than at the present time, and it is safe to say that no combination of Governments will have or can have a controlling voice in the next election of a Pope. On the contrary, it is sure that an attempt from any quarter to control that election would be resented by the Cardinals, and the more surely so because during the present Pontificate, and that of Pius IX., the Papacy has become more cosmopolitan than it has ever been previously.

It certainly cannot be said that the Governments had anything to do with the election of Leo XIII., who has shown himself superior to all the machinations of diplomatists and politicians,

and the next election will be quite as independently conducted as the last.

There were prognostications before the election of Pope Leo to the effect that the Pope to be elected would be one who would reverse the attitude of the Papacy toward the Italian Government in regard to the spoliation of the Church, but these prognostications have proved to be totally unfounded, and the present forecasts will be seen to be equally without any foundation in fact. It will be time enough, however, to make prognostications on this subject when Pope Leo will show some signs that his end is approaching, which is not by any means the case at present. Notwithstanding his great age, he is still remarkably healthy and vigorous.

A PROPHET OF EVIL.

The length to which some men are carried, by mistaken zeal, in traducing and slandering their neighbors, under the pretence of serving the cause of religion, or civil and religious liberty, or equal rights, or any other pet fad that may answer their purpose for defamation, is as remarkable as it is deplorable. It is bad enough for laymen, in the heat of political warfare and when party feeling runs high, to scatter around the brands of religious strife and discord and to create bad feeling and heartburnings in the community. But when this wicked work is done by a minister of the gospel, by one whose mission should be the inculcation of peace and good-will among men, the least that can be said is, such a man's moral sense is greatly perverted, and in undertaking to preach the word of God he has missed his vocation.

These thoughts have been suggested by the following item of news, from Kingston, published in the Montreal Star of the 4th inst.:

"Last night, Dr. Ryckman, ex-President of the Montreal Methodist Conference, in his sermon, stated that the Roman Catholic Church in Canada was being used as a great political power, and that if the people did not rise to the emergency the country would soon be at the feet of the hierarchy. That Church was now interfering with the autonomy of a province. When the Anglican Church interfered with the State a rebellion was the result."

This most grave and mischief-working charge against the hierarchy is not supported by a shred of proof. It is the mere ipse dixit of Dr. Ryckman, and it is utterly groundless. Does the ex-President of the Montreal Methodist Conference base his assertion upon the protest made by the Canadian hierarchy against the cruel and unjust deprivation of their rights which the Manitoba minority have suffered? Is it "interfering with the autonomy of a province" for the Church to ask for the removal of an injustice, and that parental rights of conscience be respected? The hierarchy have done no more; they could not do less.

Does not Dr. Ryckman know that, next to a dogma of faith, the religious education of his children is the most necessary and important duty devolving upon the Catholic parent? This is most forcibly enjoined by the teachings of the Church. The neglect of this obligation, where it can be carried out, entails the severest ecclesiastical penalties. And rightly and logically should this be the case, because education without moral and religious training is more than a doubtful boon. It were not going too far to say it is a positive evil. Who is there that observes the results that follow from purely secular education can avoid coming to any other conclusion? Cast a glance at those countries where godless schools are maintained by the State and what do we find? No doubt Dr. Ryckman could answer this question from his own experience.

Since, therefore, the education of his children, in accordance with the teaching and rules of the Church, is for the Catholic father or mother a matter of conscience, binding under pain of mortal sin, where practicable, is it right or just or Christian, on the part of Dr. Ryckman, or any other well-disposed Protestant, to interfere with or throw any obstacle in the way of fulfilling this parental obligation? If so, what becomes of our much boasted civil and religious liberty and our insistence upon the doctrine of equal rights? Is it not, rather, the invasion of the rights of conscience, and the trampling under foot of religious liberty?

The Catholic asks no more than he is ready and willing to accord to his Protestant neighbor of every denomination, namely, the freedom to educate his children according to his conscientious convictions. If certain Protestants have no scruple on this score, and are content to have their children brought up devoid of religious train-

ing in school, well and good, that is their own affair; but they should not act as "the dog in the manger."

When the Separate school question was being discussed, in Ontario, the religious ferment and strife, excited mainly, 'tis painful to say, by clergymen of Dr. Ryckman's stamp, far surpassed what has been caused by the Manitoba difficulty. The antagonism to the Scott Act, west of Brockville, culminated to an alarming extent almost to the verge of civil commotion. The reign of Popery, the subversion of the Protestant religion and of civil and religious liberty, the destruction of the Public school system and all manner of dire calamities were predicted as the consequence of the passage of the Bill. Well, in 1863, it passed, and how many of those predictions have been realized, let Dr. Ryckman tell.

For the intolerant and narrow-minded, a visit to Austria would be advantageous. In that most Catholic country of the world, to-day, they would find that education is a matter of most anxious solicitude to the government, which provides gratis instruction for all who cannot afford to pay for it, and extends State aid to the schools of every religious denomination, including Jews and Mahomedans. To secure an ample supply of teachers for non-Catholic schools, numerous normal schools have been established in various parts of the country, particularly in Vienna, which furnishes hundreds of teachers annually. But it will not be necessary for Dr. Ryckman and his ilk to travel to Austria to learn the lesson of toleration and see the working of civil and religious liberty in the true and full sense of the terms. In the Province of Quebec the man who is not blinded by bigotry and fanaticism can see all this in full operation, among the Protestant minority, with the consent and approval of that hierarchy, "at the feet" of whom Dr. Ryckman predicts the country will soon be prostrate "if the people did not rise to the emergency." "Tribulation" Cumming was a great prophet in his day. His prophecies have died with him. Perhaps his mantle has fallen on Dr. Ryckman, endowed with like virtue?

DISCUSSION ON A VITAL QUESTION.

The Methodist Episcopal General Conference was in session last week in Cleveland, Ohio, and the question of the representation of women in Conference, which was thought to have been disposed of by the general vote of the Methodist body, forced itself on the Conference in a very disagreeable manner.

From an account of how this question stands, given in another column of this issue of the CATHOLIC RECORD, it will be seen that it has been settled by general vote of the local Conferences that for the present, at least, women shall not be recognized as having a right to sit on the General Conference. The proposition was negatived by a very small majority; or to speak more explicitly, while it was sustained by a very decisive majority, it did not receive the three-fourths' majority which the rules of the Church require in order to make a constitutional change.

But it appears that in view of the belief which was entertained very generally that the women had gained the right of sitting as delegates, many were elected to the offices, and presented themselves at the Conference, resolved to make a bold fight for recognition, in spite of the adverse vote given by the Conferences.

One of the delegates, Mr. Sharp, of Ohio, noticing the presence of women, presented a resolution for their exclusion as delegates, but providing for the payment of their expenses to the date of their withdrawal. The resolution was not considered acceptable by other members of the Conference, and a substitute was offered by Dr. Neeley, of Philadelphia, inviting the women to be as honored guests, with their expenses paid, though they were not to be regarded as actual delegates.

Bishop Hurst favored Dr. Neeley's resolution, but the excitement became so intense that it was impossible to preserve order between the contending factions, and the Bishop broke his gavel by the energetic pounding of the desk by means of which he desired to bring the two parties to terms.

At the end both parties were allowed to withdraw their motions, and thus the Conference was enabled to pass the matter over without coming to any conclusion. The session is described as having been "most uproarious."

THE PROGRESS OF THE CAMPAIGN.

The Dominion election campaign is going on briskly, and both parties are as busy as possible selecting candidates whom they suppose to have a good chance of success in the respective constituencies.

A notable incident of the campaign is the formal entry of Sir Oliver Mowat into the arena of Dominion politics. Sir Oliver states that he was requested by Mr. Laurier "to give up the Premiership of Ontario with a view to accepting a position in the Dominion Reform Government which is confidently expected to follow the general elections." He has replied by a letter which has been published, and in which he says that when the offer was first made he felt that he could not entertain it, as there is an abundance of able men in Parliament already from among whom a selection may be made to fill all the Cabinet positions. Besides, the acceptance of the offer would necessitate the severance of his connection with North Oxford, in which constituency he has so many personal friendships formed during the many years he has been its representative in the Ontario Legislature.

Sir Oliver says also that to his advanced age of seventy six years, the assumption of new duties in a new field would increase his work and worry, the more especially as the sessions of Parliament last twice as long as those of the Ontario Legislature, and the hours of work are much later, and on the other hand his position as Premier of Canada's greatest Province is quite as highly esteemed by the public and by himself as would be any position in the Dominion Government. Nevertheless further consideration induced him to accept conditionally Mr. Laurier's offer, and in case of the success of the Reform party at the elections, he suggests that he may be relieved of the necessity of contesting a seat in the House of Commons, by being appointed to the Senate, if it be determined to retain the second chamber for the Dominion. Sir Oliver has thus determined to enter into Dominion politics for the sake of ensuring the success of the Reform party during the coming contest, because, as he says, he has confidence that the trade policy of the party will benefit the country more than that of the Conservatives.

On the Manitoba school question, Sir Oliver makes the statement that he believes it can be settled in such a way as to be satisfactory both to the majority and the minority in that Province. He says that Ontario has settled satisfactorily questions as difficult as this, and he believes that it can be settled likewise.

We have frequently pointed out in our columns that it is the undoubted duty of the Government, to whatever party it may belong, to see to it that justice be done in this matter. Even if there had been no promise given by the Dominion to the original settlers of Manitoba that they would be secured in the enjoyment of all their rights on entering into Confederation, it is a right inherent to humanity that parents should be at liberty to give their children such religious instruction as they see fit; and to employ teachers who will fulfill this duty for them. A school law which interferes with this right is an injustice and a tyranny, but the tyranny is all the more odious when it is perpetrated in violation of a solemn compact, as is the case in Manitoba.

The Dominion Government admits that this compact was entered into, and recognizes its obligation to carry it out, hence Sir Charles Tupper in his appeal to the electorate calls upon all fair-minded electors to sustain the Government in the fulfillment of its pledges to the people of Manitoba, and he promises that in the next session of Parliament the Remedial Bill will be again brought up and passed, unless in the meantime the Manitoba Government settle the difficulty itself by passing satisfactory legislation to the same effect.

It is admitted on all hands that it is more desirable that this troublesome question should be settled by Manitoba itself, which Province created the difficulty. Sir Oliver Mowat and Mr. Laurier declare that they believe that Manitoba can be induced to deal with the question in a satisfactory manner. Perhaps so.

So far, however, Mr. Greenway has, with the obstinacy of the mule, rejected every effort to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion by conciliatory methods.

In case Mr. Greenway still insists upon doing injustice to Catholics—still