

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

THE SO-CALLED CATHOLIC VOTE.

A FEW days ago we listened, with patience worthy a better theme, to an earnest plea made by a Romanist on behalf of the rights of the Roman Catholics to proportionate representation in parliament. It was claimed that in as much as the Romanists in Ontario number, say one-third of the people, that one-third of the members of parliament from Ontario should be Roman Catholics. We quietly asked, "What do you propose to do with those who, like ourselves, are members of the *ancient and original Catholic Church of England*?" Our friend smiled as he knew what the point was, but seemed unable to compose any reply. The point is a most important one in view of the power already wielded by the Roman Church in Canada, owing to its being made as such a factor in our political life.

Do we, or do we not admit the principle involved in the recognition of what is called "The Catholic vote?" If we do, then in justice we must also admit that *the true Catholic Church of Canada*, as Bishop Anson desires it to be called, must also be allowed a proportionate representation in Parliament, so also the Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Baptists, all along the scale of religious bodies. Were this done our Parliament would be turned from a national assembly into a convention of Church representatives, and *Church interests, not national*, would be the ruling motive in debates. A readier plan for bringing Parliamentary government into contempt could not be framed. What, pray, underlies the principle involved in the so-called Catholic vote? That the Romanists are by Church sympathies a separate people is true, so also are other sections of the population. The wage-earners to wit, are becoming more and more consolidated into a class apart from capitalists, and from non-wage-earners. Why then should not they have proportionate representation as a separate part of the community? Their interests are touched at far more points and their life is affected more seriously by legislation than the interests and life can be of a mere religious organization. "A workingmens' vote" has far more reason than the Catholic vote, yet who is fool enough to desire thus to split the people of this free country into classes by such an arrangement? We have also business sections. Why not have a "dry goods vote," a "retail merchants vote," a "farmers vote," and as reasonable as a Catholic vote, would be a "Freemason vote," an "Oddfellows vote," a "Foresters vote." But the natural supplement to the "Catholic" would be a "Protestant" vote, and the danger is, for such a gulf between our people would be a danger to the peace of Canada, that if the Romanists push their demands much further, those who are not Romanists will combine to frustrate the machinations of Rome. The plain truth needs speaking on this matter, and we English Catholics should use great plainness of speech in regard to a vote, the very name of which is an insulting denial of our historic

position which no well educated person denies. If the vote of the Catholic Church is to be recognized *we must demand that as British Catholics our suffrages are included therein!*

The truth then is that the root idea of the "Catholic vote" is the notion that the audacious claim that the Church of Rome has peculiar and exclusive rights in this country *as a church*, that popery has a right to dominate over the national Parliament, as it does that of Ontario, that a foreign potentate called the "Sovereign Pontiff" has a right not merely to a voice in the Councils of Canada, but to power in distinct antagonism to the general rights of those who do not owe this foreigner, the Pope, any allegiance. The claim to a "Catholic vote" based on numbers *is a move directed from Rome to control the Canadian Legislature.*

Whosoever then recognizes such claims, whoever aids and abets the Papistical authorities by paying court to the Catholic vote is a traitor to Canada. Our Parliament is the very centre, the hearth and home and heart of our national unity and life, patriotism should be the inspiration of all its acts, Canada first and last, should be the rallying watchword of our rulers.

The so-called "Catholic vote" is treason, is a menace to liberty, is a conspiracy against the unity of this young nation, is a cancer in the body politic. Shame on any Canadian who trails the honour of his country in the dirt at the bidding of a foreign priest. Doubly disgraced is any son of Canada, who being a son also of the Catholic Church of Canada, bows his abject knee to the Pope of Rome by recognising in any way that most dangerous and treasonous element—the Catholic vote.

THE HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION.*

THERE can be no question of the importance of the subject which Dr. Farrar has chosen for his Bampton Lectures. Nor can there be any doubt that the lecturer has many of the qualities which fit him for treating the subject in an attractive manner. His sound scholarship, his varied learning, his wonderful memory, and his power of vivid and picturesque expression all serve to qualify him for treating a subject that in other hands might be dry, in a manner which is well adapted for a popular audience. Nor can we say that these lectures are unsuited for the more learned reader. In the variety of the information which they convey they will certainly contribute something to increase the knowledge of the best informed of their readers.

It is not quite easy to give an account of a book like this, nor is it quite fair to read it with the intention of finding as much fault as possible. It is hardly just, for example, to complain that a good deal of its learning is second-hand. No man alive could know the contents of Dr. Farrar's lectures from an acquaintance with the original authorities. We

*Bampton Lectures for 1885 by Archbishop Farrar (Dutton, New York; Macmillan, London, 1886); Rowse & Hutchison.

must be satisfied to know that he has not blindly followed the opinions of his predecessors; that he has thought for himself, and that he has sufficient acquaintance with the original documents to test the opinions of others and to verify his own. We must say one thing more in favor of this book. Dr. Farrar's style improves as he grows older. We confess that the floridness of some of his early productions was positively offensive to us. Even his "Life of Christ" was not free from this fault. The "Life of St. Paul" was better. Better still, in this respect at least, and perhaps in some others, was his "Early Days of Christianity." There is very little to find fault with in this, his latest production. The language is vivid and picturesque, but very seldom overloaded with ornament, and some times highly felicitous.

The first lecture is on the Success and Failure of Exegesis, and is intended to illustrate the remark that the history of interpretation is, to a large extent, a history of errors. In this lecture he gives in outline the divisions of the subject and points out the perils of misinterpretation. It might, perhaps, be objected that Dr. Farrar hardly takes sufficient account of the fact that, in the early Church, men derived their knowledge of the Christian faith and its leading doctrines, not from the text of the Scriptures, but from the living, teaching Church. At the same time, we do not deny that a defective or erroneous exegesis must always be very hurtful to Christian thought and doctrinal knowledge.

Dr. Farrar enumerates seven main periods of interpretation: (1) the Rabbinic, (2) the Alexandrian, (3) the Patristic, (4) the Scholastic, (5) that of the Reformers, (6) that of the Post Reformation Epoch, and (7) modern Exegesis. Generally speaking, we may assert that Dr. Farrar does justice to the merits of each school, and points out its faults. To some he is more tender than he is to others. He has his favorite likes and dislikes; but we cannot say that we ever differ widely from his conclusions. Occasionally we shiver a little as he deals a hard blow at some great historical figure, as at Augustine, for example. But, on the other hand, we must admit that in many cases, when he points out the imperfections of the exegete, he is ready to acknowledge the greatness of the theologian.

As far as we can judge from a somewhat careful perusal of the book, it is weakest when dealing with the times immediately preceding our own, and we think he has passed over some prominent names without doing them full justice. We are quite at one with him in the high eulogian which he pronounces upon Calvin and upon Bengel. But we are rather surprised at the small notice which he takes of Grotius, although what he does say of him is good and true. Of Meyer, also, we might have heard a good deal more, if full justice had been done to his eminence as an expositor, and to the great influence which he has exercised upon the modern school of Commentators on the New Testament in England. While we are in the critical vein, we will point out some other things which we would ask our readers

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