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London, Saturday, Oct. 24, 1891.

DRIFTING INTO RATIONALISM.

WE MENTIONED last week a saying of the Rev. W. T. Davidson, the Professor of Biblical Literature in Richmond College, England, at the Methodist "Ecumenical Council" in session at Washington, that "the trial of Dr. Briggs is not the result of the Doctor's teaching, but of the arrogant and damning manner in which he sought to force his ideas down the throats of everyone."

This utterance was loudly applauded in the council; and that applause was much more significant than might appear to the cursory reader of the occurrence. It will be profitable to examine the meaning of this sentence a little.

In an editorial article a few weeks ago we mentioned the fact that the Protestant religious press are occupying themselves with praising the General Presbyterian Assembly, which met a short time since in Detroit, saying that in condemning Dr. Briggs the Assembly has boldly asserted the Christian truth against the inroads of Rationalism.

Not all of even the religious press, however, take this view. There are not a few papers of what they are themselves pleased to call "the advanced school" which maintain that the Assembly stultified itself by adhering to standards compiled by men who have been dead for centuries in their graves.

We do not agree with either of these views of the case. Those who maintain that Dr. Briggs should not have been condemned found their opinion on the supposition that religious truth is changeable according to the age in which we live. According to their theory, every generation has the right to make its own creed. It will be readily seen that such a theory saps the foundation of Christianity and of all revelation.

Religious truth is not a human invention. It is a revelation from God of truths which we could never discover by any process of mere reasoning, and it is as unchangeable as God Himself. It has been revealed by God for the purpose of leading the human race to heaven, and it is the duty of the Christian Church to uphold it in its integrity in every age. We say, therefore, that the attack made by Dr. Briggs upon the inspiration of Holy Scripture, which is the foundation of Christian truth, ought to be condemned. But the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church did not condemn his error, and it is, therefore, not deserving of the laudations which have been so copiously bestowed upon it. It did no more than veto his appointment to a professorship in which he would be able to propagate among the rising generation of Presbyterian ministers his own Latitudinarian views. The Assembly did quite right in curtailing the Professor's power to propagate error, but it failed egregiously in its duty as the supreme authority of a professedly Christian Church, inasmuch as it did not unmistakably assert the Christian truth of Scriptural inspiration. This fact was evidently understood by the delegates at the Methodist Council, when they applauded Dr. W. T. Davidson's statement, that the trial of Dr. Briggs is not the result of his erroneous teaching. It is merely the condemnation of a man who rendered himself obnoxious by his arrogance in forcing his opinions upon the world; and the General Assembly has not earned the praise which is being so lavishly heaped upon it by the Presbyterian and Methodist press, as the bold upholder of Christian truth.

We are not surprised at this milk-and-water course of the General Assembly. We are told by St. Augustine that the Church of Christ not only avoids the teaching of error, but that she is not silent when doctrinal errors are taught. The Church of Christ is declared in Holy Scripture to be the pillar and ground of truth; and the

silence of the General Assembly in regard to the teaching of Dr. Briggs is simply an additional proof that it does not represent the true Church of Christ. Moreover the applause of the Methodist Ecumenical Council when it was virtually stated that Dr. Briggs' doctrine was not condemned, seems to us a proof that the principles of Latitudinarianism are about as widely spread through the world's Methodism as through Presbyterianism.

To any one who considers the matter seriously it will be evident that Dr. Davidson's statement, which was applauded in the Methodist Council, was equivalent to saying that there are no doctrines in Christianity which we are bound to accept. On this theory, there is no such thing as Christian truth, no revealed doctrine which Christians must believe.

Such a Christianity as the "Ecumenical Council" thus puts before us does not differ from that of Tom Paine or Bob Ingersoll. We can only draw the inference that Protestantism in all its forms is fast drifting into infidelity; and that our inference is correct is further evinced by the fact that day after day the Protestant religious press speak of the "Catholicity" of the Church, as if it meant that it should include within its fold believers in doctrines most contradictory to each other.

There is no foundation in Christian tradition for such an interpretation of the term Catholicity. The Church is called "Catholic" in the Apostles' Creed, not because she includes within her fold innumerable diversities of belief, but because the one faith revealed by Christ is taught everywhere, in accordance with the commandment given by Him to His Apostles: "Teach ye all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

LET THERE BE UNITY.

THE CABLE reports of the past week indicate that a movement is on foot on the part of the Parnellite members of the Irish party to keep alive the agitation which proved to be a forlorn hope in the hands of their deceased leader. To the Irishmen in this country, at least, the continuance of the turmoil appears to be utterly causeless. Sincerity may be claimed as the guiding motive of Mr. Parnell's followers; but for this they will get no credit, we feel assured, by the vast majority of Irishmen in all parts of the world: and the result of their unjustifiable agitation will undoubtedly have for effect the postponement of the blessings of home government for Ireland. When a majority of the Irish members declare that a certain one of their number be chosen as leader the minority should accept the situation and at once fall in with their brother members in an earnest desire to achieve the great object in view: failing in this, they should be swiftly and surely relegated to private life; for we can never hope to achieve a triumph for Ireland so long as stubborn and unbending spirits are permitted in the ranks of the Home Rule party. The Irishmen of America will, we fancy, take this view of the matter, and money from this side of the Atlantic will most certainly not find its way into the pockets of reckless disunionists in the Irish ranks. They must either submit or be ejected from the party.

The time has now arrived, we are proud to say, when a spirit of union seems to permeate the Irish race. Those who are seeking Home Rule at the hands of the English Tories, or who imagine that they can achieve that boon as an independent party, are the veriest madcaps, and represent most fully that reckless element whose doings have from year to year cast a shadow on Ireland's prospects as they began to emerge from the clouds of despair. In future elections in Ireland it is to be hoped that the people will be more careful in the selection of their representatives. In the present Parliamentary party there are a few, we regret to say, who are, for many reasons, unworthy representatives of the Irish race. These men may be talented; they may be full of patriotism, and declare their willingness to die in the cause; but the people should see to it that no man be given a representative capacity whose character is not above reproach on the score of morality. The member who is morally unsound is not a fit representative of the Irish or any other people; and there are, we regret to say, altogether too many of them in public life.

Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of grapes were destroyed by frost in Chantanooga Co., N. Y., on Sunday night, 17th inst.

JINGO NONSENSE.

ON THE 13th of the present month the anniversary of the battle of Queenstown Heights was duly celebrated in Toronto. Most of our people, we surmise, will question the advisability of reviving the memories of these struggles of by-gone days: they should be left to the past, and to history, where they belong. The marshalling of large numbers of school-boys, arrayed in all the glory of wooden guns, marching and drilling like soldiers, and fired with military ardor by such hot-house warriors as Colonel Denison, is as laughable as it is nonsensical. In these days what we should cultivate are peace and plenty and happiness and the onward march of progress in all those achievements which make a people truly great and noble. Were we to pay more attention to these things and less to Denisonian Rule Britanniaism, Canada would become a country far more inviting to her own children as well as to outsiders. When we look the solid facts straight in the face we find that the Toronto warrior's caramels become olives—for in fifteen years from date a large per centage of his youthful heroes will owe allegiance to the stars and stripes. Much mischief, we doubt not, will accrue from the antics of Colonel Denison. He appears to be perpetually spoiling for a fight in time of peace. It would appear, indeed, as if he had a cut-away coat made of Union Jacks, and this garment he trails after him on the streets of Toronto, daring somebody to tread upon it. Another conspicuous warrior on this occasion was the tremendous James L. Hughes, the champion Orangeman of the county of York, who loves the Queen and hates the Pope with all his heart and soul. These little demonstrations are not calculated to create a friendly feeling towards us on the part of Uncle Sam; and as we cannot see any glory to be achieved for Canada by their continuance, it would, it seems to us, be better policy to turn our attention to something more practical and sensible.

THE DEATH AND ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

OUR attention has been called to an article from the pen of J. W. Reilly which appeared in the Irish Catholic, and was copied into our columns a few weeks ago, the subject of which was "The Story of the Divine Faith and Happy Death of the Blessed Virgin Mary." The article in question was duly credited to its source, and was published in our columns without being critically examined as to its theological accuracy. We have, however, been asked recently to pass an opinion on the following passage.

We are told in the article in question that Mary the mother of our Lord remained at Ephesus for many years while a persecution was raging in Palestine against the Church of God, but that when the time of her death approached, warned by the Angel Gabriel of her approaching end, she went to Jerusalem to die: and that "when the moment predicted was close at hand she laid herself on a couch and tranquilly composed herself for the sleep of peace. St. John was at her right hand. St. James gave her absolution. Then she requested those about her to send greetings to the other apostles, assuring them that even to the last she had thought of them and would be mindful of them in the other life."

As it is the faith of the Catholic Church that the Blessed Virgin was conceived immaculate and lead a sinless life, the question very naturally arises, "on what grounds is it stated that she was absolved by St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem?" We did not write the article in question, and we do not at all assume the responsibility of the statement; but as we understand that we have been somewhat sharply criticized for publishing the article, we have only to say that absolution is often pronounced even when there is not a certainty that the subject has committed sin; so that though we are aware that the learned writer of the story of the Irish Catholic has not any sure foundation for his statement on this subject, it is perhaps rather severe to assert that there is an error against faith in it. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was not formally defined at the time, though it was undoubtedly held by the Church; still if history really attested that St. James had done what was attributed to him by Mr. Reilly, it is not clear that he would have been blameable.

Mr. Reilly's account is not purely historical, but is evidently in part legendary. It is based upon

details which are attested by early writers, one of whom, St. Denis the Areopagite, declares that he was present at the Blessed Virgin's death, as were also many of the brethren, besides Sts. Peter, James and Paul. We believe that the authenticity of St. Denis' writing has been proved beyond doubt, but we must add that neither St. Denis, St. Gregory of Tours nor the Mozarabic liturgy makes any mention of the absolution given by St. James. It is, therefore merely a hypothetical statement.

St. Gregory of Tours says that the Apostles were present, having come together for the purpose, and that our Lord appeared, surrounded by His angels, and that He confided the soul of His mother to the Archangel Michael, after which the vision disappeared. The sacred body was then placed in the tomb, near to which the Apostles remained for some time, awaiting a new appearance of our Saviour. In fact "He did appear again, and taking up the sacred body of His mother, bore it amid a brilliant cloud, to the bosom of paradise." This illustrious saint continues: "There, reunited to its glorious soul, it reigns in glory amid the elect and surrounded with the never-ending splendors of eternity."

There is no doubt that this testimony of St. Gregory was the authenticated tradition of the Church in the sixth century. An ancient Gothic liturgy in use at the same period contains an account of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in terms identical with those of St. Gregory, but in all this there is nothing of the absolution mentioned by Mr. Reilly. We must, therefore, set it down as not authenticated, though we will not go so far as to assert that it is contrary to Catholic faith.

SECRET SOCIETIES.

A REPORT reached us from Toronto last week that at the meeting of the Presbyterian Council Rev. Dr. Parsons, in discussing the relation of the Church members towards organizations outside of the Church, said societies such as Masons, Oddfellows, Foresters and others of similar character were formed of a grain of morality covering a multitude of sins. Many of our separated brethren, including ministers, have frequently hurled the charge of intolerance and narrowness at the heads of the ecclesiastical authorities of the Catholic Church because they have condemned these secret societies. It is only now, at this late day, that the ministers are beginning to discover good reasons for the attitude of the Catholic Church in their regard; and we cannot help remarking that this discovery has only been made when it is found that the secret societies are playing havoc with the membership of their churches. In this, as in almost all other matters, there appears, however, to be no sense of unity in the utterances of the ministers; for we find that while some condemn, others approve of these organizations; and many reverend gentlemen are active members. It is noticeable, too, that at each anniversary of these Lodges—from the Masonic Grand all the way down to the Young Briton—a preacher can ever be found to sound their praises in the highest key.

MR. GOSCHEN'S CONFIDENCE.

MR. GOSCHEN has announced that a general election will probably not be held for the British Parliament until 1893. He maintains that the Liberal successes at the by-elections do not amount to a forecast of a Liberal success at the general election, and that the confidence expressed by the Liberal leaders, and especially by Sir William Vernon Harcourt, is but "mere chuckle and chaff." He declares that the Unionists are not at all discouraged at their prospects. We cannot blame Mr. Goschen for keeping his courage up, but the temper of the British people is undoubtedly hostile to that gentleman and his political allies. If he does not think so why is he afraid to face the music and dissolve the House? The British electorate recognize in this gentleman one not only unjust in his treatment of Irish affairs, but one also who is possessed of a desire to put new props under the tottering fabric of privilege which is first falling to ruins in the mother country. Quite recently he made reference to the House of Lords in terms which would lead one to suppose that he considered that body possessed something little short of a divine right to rule the empire; and Mr. Gladstone's threat to re-furbish or destroy the worse than useless concern was characterized by Mr. Goschen as an utterance not far

removed from treason. It is quite likely that the next election will cause Mr. Goschen to express great astonishment; for the time has arrived, we think, when the English people will open their eyes to the fact that they have for some time past been ruled by a set of men not in touch with the mass of the people.

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND THE PILGRIMS TO ROME.

THE FRENCH CABINET has issued an order prohibiting Bishops from leaving their dioceses without permission from the Government. This order has been issued in consequence of the recent disturbances which took place in Rome on the occasion of the pilgrims' visit to the Pantheon. The Bishops of Rheims and Angers have protested against this piece of tyranny, but so far the Cabinet have declared their intention to enforce the order.

It is difficult to see in what way the act of an irresponsible and over-zealous visitor to the Pantheon is attributable to the Bishops, but the Government is evidently anxious to interfere with them on the slightest pretext. It is not even certain that it was one of the French pilgrims that offered the insult to the memory of Victor Emmanuel, which was, of course, an indiscreet act. Cardinal Langeneux has written to the French Minister of Public Works, Mons. Fallieres, denying that French pilgrims had anything to do with the transaction; nevertheless he is taking steps to prevent the recurrence of such episodes in future, by putting a stop to such pilgrimages, at all events while the present temper of the Italians lasts.

He has also called the attention of Mons. Fallieres to the anti-French character of the Italian demonstrations on the occasion referred to. The incident was to be regretted, but it is no excuse for holding all the pilgrims, and still less for holding the Bishops of France responsible. The action of the French Government cannot be regarded as anything less than a petty tyranny, against which the Bishops very properly protest. The act of the pilgrim, if pilgrim he was, is done, and cannot be recalled. The cablegrams inform us, however, that the party who was guilty of it expressed his sorrow and left the city. It does not appear that he could do more than this to atone for his action, which so excited the Italians.

Should the incident result in preventing more pilgrimages from taking place for some years, the Italians will be themselves the greatest sufferers, as the visits of so many respectable strangers to the city cause the circulation of a large amount of money by which the Italians derive a great profit. It is not denied that the pilgrims generally conduct themselves with decorum, and that they are law-abiding visitors.

WHAT PASTORS HAVE A MISSION.

IN THE educational sermon delivered before the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, now in session in Toronto, the preacher, Rev. J. E. Trotter, made some remarks which, if proper application were made, would be very appropriate, regarding the importance of the ministry of the Church of God, which, he said, is "ordained of God for the development of the spiritual man. In writing to the Ephesians Paul tells us that when Christ left this world He committed to His Church this function: 'When He ascended up on high . . . He gave gifts to men. And He gave some to be Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ till we attain unto the unity of faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'"

He proceeded to show that to fulfil this her sublime mission of the perfecting of the saints, "Christ has endowed her with gifts, while the Holy Spirit dwells in her midst to make the exercise of these gifts effectual in developing the individual and corporate life of His people."

He spoke of the duty of the Church to discover those who have special gifts to fit them for the ministry, and exhorted individuals to make use of and prize the ministry of the Church; "for he is under moral bonds to work out his own salvation, which can be done only by means of the appropriate agencies; and the ministries of the Church are one of the special agencies."

As we have said, these views are in

themselves very sound. But is it not rather inconsistent with the Protestant idea that the ministry should be of so much importance in the plan of salvation? According to the Protestant view, each individual is his own judge of the doctrine he is to believe, and the very "Evangelical" ones add that all Christians are equally priests. If this be so, how can it be said that the priesthood, or ministry, occupy a peculiar position in the Church by divine appointment, as the rev. gentleman asserts to be the case?

He has, indeed, quoted passages of Scripture in support of his view; but this is where the inconsistency lies. It is certain that the Baptist ministry are not of divine appointment. They have no direct succession from the Apostles, and they do not even claim it. Have they a direct call to the ministry from God? If they have, they should prove it by the indubitable signs or miracles whereby God has always given His ministers direct succession, when He has conferred it. They are, therefore, not among those whom God has appointed "Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers," and the words of St. Paul, which Mr. Trotter so confidently quotes, are not applicable to them.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The Louisiana State Lottery, by establishing offices in Montreal and Toronto, has succeeded in flooding the United States with its circulars, contrary to law, and complaints by telegraph have been made by the Washington Government to that of the Dominion, asking the latter to take such action as will lead to the discovery of the objectionable parcels sent by mail from Canada to the United States. The Dominion Government is requested to mark all such packages as are suspected, as containing dutiable matter, so as to ensure their being examined by United States Customs' officials. It is provided by the Postal Union agreement that this shall be done, for dutiable matter, and the American Government desires that the agreement shall be made to cover the case in point.

A GREAT sensation has been created in Philadelphia, especially in the neighborhood of Chestnut and Twentieth streets, by the return home of a young woman named Miss Sarah Ferry, who has been on a visit to the celebrated shrine of our blessed Lady at Lourdes. Some months ago Miss Ferry received a legacy, and as she has been nearly all her life confined to bed and unable to walk, she resolved to pay a visit to the shrine in company with her brother. She stayed at Lourdes two weeks, occupying herself in constant prayer to be relieved from her infirmity, and occasionally bathing in the water of the miraculous spring the parts of her body which were paralyzed and unable to perform their functions. Her success in attaining the object of her visit to Lourdes was made evident to the people who knew her in Philadelphia, when on her return on the 7th of Sept., instead of being carried into her home, she stepped briskly from the carriage and went into the house in a most sprightly manner. Hundreds of visitors have called on her to congratulate her on her wonderful cure.

It is announced officially that Mr. Balfour has been named to succeed Mr. Smith as leader of the Government in the House of Commons. The Chief Secretaryship of Ireland, it seems, is to be still retained by the same individual. The party now in power in England must find itself in a poverty-stricken condition when it is forced to ask Mr. Arthur Balfour to command the Tory army. It has been moving rapidly on a down grade for many years, and the old Conservative heads in the mother country must surely look with dismay on the future when they compare Disraeli with Smith, and Smith with Balfour. It is claimed for this gentleman that he possesses capacity to govern, and that he is a man of courage and resolution, as evinced by his treatment of the Irish peasantry; but those who give the Secretary this credit ignore the fact the most insignificant potroom in the empire, with the British army at his back, could have done the work quite as effectively. So far as the Irish people are concerned, we do not think they have any reason to feel distressed at this latest move, for we know of no man who will more surely lead the Tory hosts to destruction when the general election takes place.

The unpleasantness arising out of the treatment of Minister Egan by the new Chilean Government has been followed by a riot which may precipitate

trouble with complete satisfaction not known to the blamable embroglio. Washington the marines Baltimore, a riot with which eight down. Anno boatswain's marines excitement at Washington intelligence, has been held telegram pulled at As the affray of individual tipsy sailors, State complicatedly as the class of citizen the occurrence

ARCHDIOCESE

Episcopal VI special to Saturday, remembered South Adjalala, Toronto for James.

Under the Father Killeen the parish, had been made to be extended prelate of the Long before ham of the 10 natives from family in themselves in depot, anxious to greet the renowned or whom they much.

The train accompanied by the St. Michael after hearty formalities, a rage in wai Killeen. A ioners on Mr. popular Reeve over two hundred and the tall sp in view.

Above the n and presbyter been erected, artistically de in large capita appeared.

The guard precision salt stepped on the of carriages a bright coveri morning sun, spectacle that old Adjala bef

When the pr the sacred edit to the altar ran a few words of all dispersed to await the comi

The aftern Grace in an ex who had been Communion a the past six m

The answeri was exception great credit on dren themse their devoted pously striven t result.

Sunday mor lovely, and when the par by many vis parishes, bega take part in the day.

In the early assisted by O'Donohoe, offic of the Mass 8:30 by the Ma were to receive Rev. Father K The children one hundred, altar and rec from the han returned to th orderly and gr testimony to th had received. The girls w of flowers and veils; the boys and had white arms. At the usual Mass was celeb hee, at the Co Grace delivere which was rec tion by the imm He reminded established a C such marks ar manifest to ev distinguish it Churches. He also inst ments, which through which the soul. His Grace sp many grace ro and concluded discourse by s den's minds