

The Catholic Record.

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PABULUM FOR ALL TASTES.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States commenced its sessions at Detroit on Thursday, 21st ult. It will have before it two important matters for consideration: first, the charge of heresy which has been brought against Dr. Briggs of the New York Theological Seminary, and secondly, the question of revision of the Westminster Confession of faith.

The charges against Dr. Briggs, as formulated by the New York and other Presbyteries which have entered the indictment against him, are chiefly three: First, that he places reason and the Church on a par with the Bible as fountains of divine authority and as sources of divine Revelation. 2ndly, That he asserts that the Bible contains errors. 3dly, That he maintains that after death the souls of the saved are still liable to commit sin, and that the wicked are also still in a state of probation in which they may return to God by repentance. This condition of souls in the future life he styles "the larger hope."

The New York committee which has indicted him consists of six ministers and one layman, of whom four ministers agreed in indicting him. One resigned from the committee, leaving one minister and one layman who brought in a minority report to the effect that his teaching did not constitute sufficient divergence from the Confession to justify a trial. They go even further than this, maintaining that where the Dr. expresses views differing from other clergy of the Church, a wide latitude of opinion may be allowed.

Dr. Briggs is sustained by the faculty of the seminary in which he is one of the Professors. They maintain that the doctrines of the Confession of Faith differ materially from what is now taught in the Presbyterian pulpit and that greater liberty should be accorded to clergymen to give free utterance to their opinions, even though they wander from what is laid down in the Confession. There is much sympathy with Dr. Briggs among the clergy, though it is highly probable that his views will be condemned by the Assembly. The fear is freely expressed among Presbyterians that the diversity of sentiment which exists will be settled only by a division in the Church into two distinct bodies, the "progressive" and the "conservative" parties. The burning question of revision of the Confession is likely to complicate the situation.

It is understood that the committee to which the task was allotted to prepare the work of revision has made changes in the wording of the Confession on the subjects of Election and Reprobation, though they claim to have retained unchanged the old Calvinistic doctrines. This claim may well be doubted; for it is well understood that the wish for revision expressed by the Presbyteries calls for a real change, and not a mere blind; so that only a substantial modification will satisfy those who are agitating for revision.

A curious fact in connection with the stand taken by the faculty of the Union Theological Seminary, in Dr. Briggs' case, is the recent election of Dr. Henry Vanduyke to the chair of Professor of Systematic Theology. Dr. Vanduyke has been long one of the most prominent Presbyterian clergymen of Brooklyn, and his views are esteemed as being of the very "orthodox" kind, so that they will be diametrically opposed to those of Dr. Briggs in the same institution. There will, therefore, at least be variety in the professorial teachings, if not consistency. The students ought to be able to find some views to suit their respective tastes where so many diverse dishes of theological opinions are set before them.

Since the above was written we learn that the Union Theological faculty have obtained from Dr. Briggs his signature to a declaration of orthodoxy on the points in dispute. It does not appear that he retracts any of the views to which he already so defiantly gave expression; but as a way out of the difficulty it is possible the General Assembly will accept this declaration as sufficient for all purposes. The Canadian Assembly a few years ago got out of a similar difficulty in this way, requiring no retraction; and the Detroit meeting may follow this precedent. Meantime the obnoxious teachings will make headway until after a time they will predominate in and out of the pulpit. The wedge of liberty of opinion being once introduced the spread of positive unbelief will be inevitably the next step in the downward course.

A THREATENED SCHISM.

The Reformed Presbyterians of North America held their sixty second annual synod last week at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, with two hundred delegates present from the United States, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Eleven young ministers who were recently suspended for exercising the right of suffrage, which is contrary to the principles of the denomination, have appealed to the synod to be reinstated, but it is believed that their appeal will be quashed, as a majority of the synod maintain that it is wrong to take part in the Government of a country which does not recognize God in its constitution. One of the suspended clergymen said to a reporter:

"Our cases are already decided. We will have no chance here. There is a large majority against us and we will have no show. Of course, if we get a hearing we will make a fight; but I fear we will not be permitted to have our say. It is likely a motion to quash the appeal will be made on the ground that we have been preaching since our suspension, as we all have, and if this is carried it will end our case without a hearing, and out we go. They want to prevent us from doing any preaching. If the synod sustains suspensions and puts us out of the Church at least twenty-five ministers will follow us."

The same clergyman gave the names of those who would secede with them if their suspension were sustained.

The suspended clergymen not only voted at elections, but some were also candidates for office, which greatly augmented their offence. A schism in the Church seems inevitable. If such proceedings were to occur within the Catholic Church, the whole country would be lashed to fury by the denunciations of preachers against ecclesiastical oppression, and the inhibition against the exercise of the rights of American citizenship. But happening within the precincts of a Presbyterian body, the event will not be regarded as vitiating the Reformed Presbyterians' claim to be "one of the branches of the Christian Church."

Concerning these heresy trials which have recently been so numerous, the Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, pastor of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church of New York, said a few evenings ago, in his sermon to his congregation:

"When a recent vote was passed in our presbytery, indicating that one of our number would have a chance pretty soon to stand up to the ecclesiastical rock, the moment the vote was declared I saw one of the oldest and one of the saintliest members of the presbytery smile with a smile that was well on towards six inches in length. He is a saint, if there is one in our presbytery, but there was the same spirit in that smile that was in the satisfied faces of the old inquisitors who used to toast heretics over slow fires and tickle their flesh with hot pincers. It is a conundrum that I have no ethical or psychological solution for. But it is a fact, and the Church is steadily against the man who dares express original convictions, and takes what seems to it a holy satisfaction in seeing him squirm for it."

Dr. Parkhurst must have a queer idea of sanctity. His reference is specially to the case of Dr. Briggs, whose heterodoxy is being considered by the General Assembly in session at Detroit. There seems to be little doubt that the Assembly will express their disapprobation of Dr. Briggs' teachings; but it appears that the only action they can take at present is to veto his appointment to the professorial chair of Biblical Theology in the New York Union Seminary. Meantime the professor will be sustained by the seminary faculty and alumni, and the threat has been thrown out that in case the doctor be condemned the seminary will be conducted in future as an independent institution. The faculty maintain that nothing can be found in Dr. Briggs' teaching which is contrary to the Confession of Faith.

Dr. Parkhurst's sarcastic references to the inquisitorial character of the prospective trial have excited a considerable amount of irritation amid the more orthodox section of the members of the General Assembly.

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION AND CHRISTIAN UNITY.

A curious discussion took place at the session of the Presbyterian General Assembly in Detroit on the 22nd ult., the second day of meeting. The subject was the question of Christian unity. The occasion which gave rise to the debate was a proposal which had emanated from the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States that committees of both Churches should meet to take into consideration the possibility of union between the two denominations, and the general subject of union among all the denominations was taken up by the speakers during the interchange of views,

though the debate had all through special reference to the question of union between Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

A previous meeting of the Assembly had received a letter from the General Synod of the Episcopal Bishops, in which the former were cordially invited to meet with a committee from the latter body to consider on what basis a union might be effected. The conference took place in New York, with the hope, rather than the expectation, on the part of the Presbyterians that it might lead to a general union, not only with Episcopalians, but also between the various bodies generally called Presbyterian, which include a multiplicity of sects with peculiarities of doctrine and practice, and known under various names, as the Reformed Church of America, United Presbyterians (so-called perhaps because they are not united with any other body), Cumberland Presbyterians, etc.

The Presbyterian Assembly expressed its readiness to enter into closer union with these other bodies, while not desiring that any of them should renounce their independent organizations, forms of government, worship or internal affairs. The union, however, was to extend to just such matters as should meet the general approval, and there should be a Federal Council to manage their common affairs, to send missionaries to particular fields, so as not to interfere with each other, and above all to conceal from the heathen the differences which now sever them. This purpose was artfully hidden under the plausible form of words:

"To avoid unseemly strife before the heathen."

They proposed also to uphold in common "Scriptural views on marriage and divorce, the Sabbath, temperance, education, and other moral and social questions."

We might very well ask why scriptural views on other questions besides those here enumerated should not be equally demanded from the Federal body, and equally we might ask where in Scripture the Christian Sunday is ordered to be kept after the manner of the Jewish Sabbath, as the Presbyterians insist must be done. The reference to the education question also evidently implies that Scripture is opposed to the religious education of youth; for this is the only ground on which the sects of the United States have succeeded in uniting on this question, the object being, not to drive out religion altogether, if they were able to secure two conflicting objects, but to prevent Catholics from educating their children in accordance with their conscientious convictions.

We say it in no carping spirit, but because candor requires us to state the matter truthfully, that a union such as is here proposed would be but a sham. It is not our purpose, however, to enter here into a discussion on all the points touched upon, but merely to record the result of the efforts to bring about a union with the Episcopalians, and the result was indeed rather farcical, after so solemn an inauguration of the movement.

The Rev. Dr. Hayes, of Kansas city, moved, seconded by Hon. George Junkin, of Philadelphia, that "the committee be discharged from further consideration of the subject of union with the Protestant Episcopal Church of America."

He explained that the letter of invitation from the Episcopalians had for a time been mislaid, but that it was found again, and "it was about the only thing that ever was lost that I was not glad when it was found."

Dr. Hayes and other ministers continued, showing how the Presbyterian clergy are regarded by the Episcopalians. They had been invited to the conference as a Christian clergy, but when the conference assembled they were at once given to understand that they were regarded only as laymen.

The Episcopalians letter acknowledged that the three orders of the Episcopal Church are not a matter of dogmatic faith; yet when the conference met the Presbyterians were at once informed that as a historic fact the Episcopal Church had inherited a succession of clergy with Episcopal ordination, and they could not relinquish that treasure under any consideration.

The Presbyterians replied substantially that they had no wish to deprive Episcopalians of any satisfaction they might derive from the possession of such a treasure as an "Apostolic Episcopal succession," whether it were real or fanciful, but they insisted as *sine qua non* of any further negotiations, that the Presbyterian ministry should be recognized as equally valid with the Episcopalians.

The Rev. Mr. Proudfit, of Baltimore, put the matter thus:

"I believe we ought to take such a stand here in this Assembly as shall convince the house of Bishops and the committee appointed by the Protestant Episcopal Church and all the Churches of that denomination that we are not weakening at all in the matter of claiming validity for our vows—that we consider our vows as good as theirs, and a little better." (Applause.)

Dr. Hays, after weighing the whole circumstances, said that he is convinced "that neither denomination is in a position to hope at this stage of the world, and at this time, to come into any union. We respect each other highly. They call us laymen, and we haven't any precise name for them. (Laughter.) We do not find them in the Bible, and we do not care to look for them anywhere else." (Laughter.)

The situation was one which the whole Assembly evidently regarded as ludicrous in the extreme. The Presbyterians know the fallacy of the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal claims to Apostolic succession; but does the absence of such a valid claim justify the Presbyterian claim, which is equally preposterous, and which amounts to this, that any denomination which thinks proper to call itself the Church of Christ has a right to create its own ministry, and, on setting up such a body, to claim for it that it is a ministry just as scriptural and as valid as a ministry which is truly derived from the Apostles?

The Catholic Church alone can lay just claim to such a ministry, and it is only by denying the necessity of such succession that Presbyterians have even a plausible pretext for saying that they possess a valid Christian ministry. But from Holy Scripture we learn that under the New Law there is a succession which is just as obligatory as was the succession of the Aaronic priesthood:

"No man taketh to himself the honor (of the Christian priesthood) but he that is called by God as Aaron was." (Heb. v. 4.)

Sts. Matthias, Paul, Timothy, and Titus took not this honor to themselves, but were duly called, and received their ordination from the Apostolic College; and any orders derived from any other source than this can be of no avail, whether they be called Presbyterian or Episcopal.

The Assembly, by a majority of 240 to 186, passed Dr. Hays' motion in an amended form, "discharging the committee from further consideration of interdenominational comity and Church unity," and changing its name to the "Committee on the Federation of the Protestant Denominations of the United States."

On explanations being given of what might be meant by this new departure, it was discovered that the Assembly had acted rather precipitately, as no one could tell what would be the duty of the committee under its new name, and on a vote the matter was taken up for reconsideration, and it was finally sent to a special committee to consider the subject more carefully and to report at a subsequent session of the Assembly.

MR. REDMOND CONDEMNED.

A cable despatch announces that the electors of North Wexford have decided to stop payment of Mr. Redmond's salary. If the report be correct it is certain that that gentleman's course is not approved by his constituents. It is very much to be regretted that a man of Mr. Redmond's acknowledged talents and powers as an orator should be drawn into the maelstrom that has already engulfed Mr. Parnell's reputation as a statesman and his character as a Christian gentleman. Mr. Redmond's attempt to hoodwink the people of Canada has not been successful. His arguments cannot stand the test of honest criticism. He says that all we hear of home transactions are cable lies and misrepresentations. On further investigation, however, we discover that the misrepresentations, at least, are all on Mr. Redmond's side. For instance, he repeats on all occasions at his meetings that the Archbishop of Cashel is on the side of Parnell, or, at least, is not opposed to him. His reasons are that the Archbishop declared he would treat alike the priests of his diocese who were in favor or against Parnell. What does this prove but that the Archbishop is not a despot, and that he allows his priests the freedom of their opinions. Does it say that he condones Parnell's public crime, or considers him the right man just now to earn the respect of Irishmen and hold their confidence, or that the great cause of Ireland's liberation would gain in honor and furtherance by his advocacy of it? By no means. But facts well known to Mr. Redmond and to the whole world prove

more than abundantly that Archbishop Croke does not approve of Mr. Parnell's leadership.

A few weeks ago Mr. Parnell went down to the county of Tipperary with the intention of addressing masses of people in Thurles, Clonmel and other towns. His adherents in Thurles had a platform erected for him right under the wall and windows of the Archbishop's palace. This proceeding was considered by the people as an insult to their much-revered Archbishop. They assembled in large numbers and drove the Parnellites from the platform. The latter returned to the charge, and again took possession, but were finally routed and driven pell-mell through the streets to the shelter of their homes. Mr. Parnell did not stop in Thurles that day, but went on to Clonmel. The Archbishop, later on, came on the platform and thanked the crowds present for their determination and courage in protecting him from public insult. On that occasion he said that, instead of being the admiration of Europe and America, the Irish people are to-day the laughing-stock of both, all through the wickedness of one man forcing his leadership on a nation that no longer believes in his honesty or his patriotism.

Does all this tally with Mr. Redmond's statement in Ottawa, Quebec and Montreal, that the Archbishop of Cashel is not opposed to Parnell's leadership?

If the Bishops of Ireland denounce the Parnellites they are accused of being politicians, and told to mind their Church. If they take no active part, or say they will not punish or applaud priests for their opinions, then they are claimed as adherents and backers of Mr. Parnell. They complain of cable misrepresentations of Parnell's case and cause. But they do not hesitate to give publication to the lying and disreputable letters of Mr. Smalley to the New York *Tribune*—as appeared in a Catholic contemporary last week, under the heading of "He Still Lives."

The following is a choice *moreau* that should never have appeared with approval in the columns of an Irish Catholic journal. It comes from London, and is dated May 17:

"He is still believed to be losing ground in Ireland, where clericalism is arrayed against him, where the four Archbishops, the twenty-three Bishops and the whole Roman Catholic clergy have set in motion, and are keeping in motion, day and night, every engine of priestly influence that can be used to compass his destruction. Nevertheless he survives. . . . He may not be, and probably is not, a match for the big black band who beset him, but neither among all his foes is there any one who is his match."

That a so-called Catholic paper could approvingly give currency to such false and insulting rubbish as the above is scarcely credible.

If Parnellism had no worse effect than that of ranging some Irish Catholics on the side of Smalley, Gambetta and Crispi the sooner Parnellism disappears from the political horizon the better it will be for Christianity and civilization in Catholic Ireland.

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

The subject of evangelizing the French Catholics in the Province of Quebec was discussed at the Presbyterian synod held last week in Lindsay, Ont. Rev. S. J. Taylor, of Montreal, appeared on behalf of the French Evangelization Board, and briefly addressed the synod. He urged that the people of Ontario ought to take a deep and practical interest in the work of extending the blessings of the gospel among the people of Quebec. On the motion of Rev. J. Carmichael, Norwood, seconded by Rev. J. McEwan, the following motion was passed:

"The synod, having heard Rev. Mr. Taylor on behalf of the work of French evangelization, in which our Church is engaged, commend this important work to the serious attention of presbyteries, and request that they relax no efforts that our French-Canadian fellow-citizens be brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus."

In this connection we would merely ask Rev. Mr. S. J. Taylor and Rev. Mr. Carmichael a few pertinent questions: Are our French-Canadian fellow-citizens Turks? Do they swear by Mahomet? Are they disciples of Bob Ingersoll? Are they Buddhists? Are they Mormons? Are they Unitarians, and thus reject the doctrine of the divinity of Christ? Do they practice polygamy like the Protestants of Utah Territory, or feticide like the Plymouth Rock fanatics of the New England States?

In fact those rev. gentlemen who take so much interest in the spiritual welfare of our French-Canadian fellow-

citizens "ought to be able to lay their hands upon something tangible, of an un-Christian character, in the belief and habits of the French-Canadians before undertaking at great expense and labor to 'bring them a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.'"

Rev. S. J. Taylor, who resides in Montreal, unless he is wilfully blind and too bigoted and prejudiced to know or learn anything, must be perfectly well aware of the Christian code of ethics and convictions that regulates and permeates French-Canadian life and morals. The people of this Province may not know it—at least the Protestant people who reside in the back townships, and who learn all they know from bigoted, ranting preachers. There is some excuse for their ignorance, which is more or less "inevitable." But how can Mr. S. J. Taylor be excused? He has every facility of knowing the French-Canadian character and mode of life, both in town and country. Now we venture to ask Rev. S. J. Taylor has he ever yet encountered a French-Canadian of mature age who could not recite for him the Apostles' Creed? Has he ever met a French-Canadian who was not able to tell him the whole history of Bethlehem and Calvary? Did he ever in his apostolic wanderings through the Province of Quebec meet with a full-grown French-Canadian who could not recite the Lord's Prayer and formulate an act of contrition for sin? Or did he ever converse with one of them who did not believe in future punishments and rewards, or who scouted the idea of Heaven and hell? We have no hesitation in declaring that it would be utterly impossible for Mr. Taylor to discover any such *rara avis* among French-Canadians in the Province of Quebec. And we have just as little hesitation in advancing the belief that hundreds, nay, thousands, may be found in Ontario incapable of reciting the Apostles' Creed, and many amongst them—preachers included—who do not believe in the essential articles of Christian faith it contains. The Agnostics, Latitudinarians and downright Infidels are to be found largely distributed all over Ontario. We do not think we are very far astray in predicting that the census enumerators, now engaged in classifying the population, will have several thousands enrolled under the heading of "no religion."

What folly, then, must it not appear to all thinking men, and what a waste of time and money, to carry the gospel to people who know and practice its teachings far better and more profitably than we do in Ontario! Carrying "the knowledge of truth as it is in Jesus" to the French-Canadians is just as ridiculous and unprofitable as shipping coal to Newcastle in England. Especially does it seem ridiculous when undertaken by rev. gentlemen who are all quarrelling among themselves about what "essential truth" is—by Presbyterians who are beginning to discover that the Westminster Confession is all wrong; and that what they and their fathers hitherto believed and practised was opposed to right reason and to God's attributes of justice and mercy as much as to Scripture itself.

In the New York *Star* of last week we read, speaking of the Presbyterian assembly about to be held in Detroit,

"Now, the real issue between the Presbyterians is as to whether faith has any positive foundation in Revelation, whether theology is merely human speculation or is the only perfect and complete science, with the absolute knowledge of the Almighty Himself as its infallible and indisputable foundation. A few years ago it seemed impossible that this question should ever be raised by the Presbyterians, for they accepted the Westminster Confession, which is the most precise and logical statement of orthodox Protestant doctrine, as to the fundamental questions of theology, that has ever been formulated. The first blow came from themselves, whose reason and whose justice were shocked by the merciless logic of its doctrines, and after some time the 'revision of the creed' was referred for decision to the Presbyteries as a whole. Then it was made manifest that a majority of the Presbyterians were professing to believe what in their hearts they *denied and rejected with horror*. Formerly every Presbyterian child had been instructed and drilled in the catechism based on the Westminster Confession, but the practice has long fallen into disuse, and ignorance as to the precise doctrines of the Confession is general and profound."

How those people who do not know their own catechism, whose horror of their own doctrines admit of no catechism, can undertake to teach others is very absurd on the face of it. That Presbyterians who have no practical knowledge of the "truth as it is in Jesus" should spend so much money and time in endeavoring to enlighten