

The Catholic Register.

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1900. CALENDAR FOR NEXT WEEK.

MONDAY, Feb. 6th, White. V. after Epiphany, St. Andrew Confessor, Double. Solemnity of the Purification of B. V. M. After "Apostrophe" follows the blessing of candles. Mass of the Feast. Preface of the Holy Trinity. At solemn Vespers con. of the feast. St. Andrew and of Sunday.

The Feast of the Purification.

Friday, the 2nd of February, is the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the solemnity of which is celebrated on the following Sunday. From the ceremony observed in the Catholic Church of blessing and bearing lighted candles in procession, it is known as Candlemas Day.

There are various accounts of the origin of the custom of blessing and carrying candles on this day. Some connect it with the words "holy Simeon" as they occur in the gospel—"a light to the revelation of the Gentiles," whilst others ascribe it to a previous custom of the Ancient Romans of burning candles on this day to the goddess Febris, the mother of Mars.

Jewish ceremonial purifications were commonly regarded by the Christians as emblematic of holiness of soul, though some undoubtedly were directed primarily to the purification of the body. Viewing the Feast in its purely religious aspect, we cannot do better than follow the gospel of the day in which all the essentials for the right understanding of the meaning of the Feast are tersely yet fully described.

Three events stand holdy out—the compliance of the Blessed Virgin with the Mosaic Law, which required the Purificatory offering of a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons in the temple, and the fulfilment of holy Simeon's wish and the Holy Ghost's promise that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.

from a study of this Feast and its meaning is that of strictly and conscientiously complying with the commandments and observances ordained by the Catholic Church.

A Changed Emphasis.

In the editorial columns of the Globe, of Jan. 27th., appeared an article entitled "A Changed Emphasis," by which, so far as we could learn, is meant the change in religious thought that is now going on in the non-Catholic world. "Modern Criticism," says the writer,—by which we presume he means the so-called "Higher Biblical Criticism,"—with its keen scent for reductions and other fearful and wonderful things, has led off by setting Paul against Peter, and both against their Master. We are fully in accord with this statement and most readily acknowledge that "Modern Criticism," in the eyes of its votaries at least, has criticised the Bible out of existence as a book of revealed truth.

What else can be expected when practically any man with a name in the world, be he churchman, agnostic, infidel, or heathen, in his interpretation of the Scriptures, makes use of the right of private judgment vested him by the Reformation, and has that right and his interpretation recognized by thousands of ready and ardent followers?

Individual opinion is set against the consensus of opinion that has prevailed for so many centuries. It results in the lowering of the written word of God, upon which the great and fundamental truths of Christianity are built, to the level of the works of any standard and erudite author. If they deal so with Paul and Peter, they will deal so with Christ Himself, and Christianity will become a mockery and an exploded doctrine, if it is not so already with many who erstwhile were loud in their profession of it.

The way in which one doctrine after another has been criticized out of the sphere of belief leads to the inevitable result, a religion based enough not to entertain Jesus Christ as a factor in it. The loving, consoling fact of the Redemption will be eliminated from it, hell and heaven will have no meaning, man will walk in the pride of intellect and bow to some unknown and indefinable Deity, who is not the God of the followers of Christ. If "Modern Criticism" confirmed the wavering soul in its belief in the Christ who reasoned sinners, its effect would make for good and for the religious peace and eternal happiness of mankind; but its aim is to rend asunder, to tear down, to destroy, and it has no substitute to offer by which the conscientious seeker after truth can be kept from despair, or from the loss of that hope in a future life, which tends to alleviate the sorrows and inequalities of human existence upon this earth. The object seems to be to mystify the reason, to puzzle the judgment and to plunge the soul into the interminable shade of doubt and unbelief. The aim is the destructive one of endeavoring to supplant faith by conviction, to teach, to persuade people, not to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed. The Apostles, the early Christians, the Church in the first era of Christianity, who were all nearer by many centuries to the actual teaching of Jesus Christ and to primitive interpretation of His word are held to be of no account in the effulgence of nineteenth century learning and scientific enlightenment.

The Globe writer concludes that the present reaction from Puritanism is "Back to Christ," but not through the teachings of his Apostles Peter and Paul and John. "It is almost a necessity," he says, "that the words of the Teacher (Christ) should receive an attention unequalled since the early centuries."

If such be the case, the aim is sound and good; but we doubt if it is the case with the Apostles of "Modern Criticism," who steadfastly refuse to "become as little children." Rather do they pose as teachers of their own new doctrines, which are not the doctrines of Christ built upon his words and accepted by the early Christian Church.

For instance, how many of the Apostles of "Modern Criticism" are qualifying to accept the words of Christ, "this is My body; this is My blood," and "do this in commemoration of Me," in their literal meaning and as they were intended by Christ,

unless He purposely designed to mystify and mislead the Apostles and the teachers in His Church? "Hitherto," the writer says in another place, "theology has been, perhaps justly, criticised because it dealt too much in dogmas. It projected a series of logical propositions against the clouds and left them there. It was not living, and did not directly affect life. Its religion was not ethical, and its ethos was not religious."

If the scope of the article is confined to the theology introduced by Luther and the Reformationists, then these statements are in a great measure true, as most of the Reformation dogmas have been long scouted by Protestants themselves and the remnants, in the English Church particularly, are at present being scattered to the winds. They were doubted, scouted and rejected, because they were innovations, some of them directly contrary to the very words of Christ, and not entertained by Christians before the Reformation. In the atavism of religious thought at the present time, these dogmas are found wanting both in substance and in authority.

How could the religion—the established religion of England, for example be ethical, when the motive of its being was the gratification of the lustful passion of the first royal head of the Establishment. There was certainly little religion in the ethics of Henry VIII, and his covetous band of monastery spoilers.

But if the article was directed equally against the unaltered and unalterable dogmas of the Catholic Church, or against the system of ethics that has prevailed in that Church, then we take exception to such sweeping assertions.

It is acknowledged to-day by non-Catholic thinkers and writers, it is written in the history of many lands, that the system of ethics, flowing from the doctrines, and teaching of the Catholic Church, apart from individual or sectional abuse, has been and is the mightiest force the world can show for the preserving of the integrity of the family—the unit of society—inviolable.

Another result will be to draw social reform and religion closer together. The social conscience submits to the golden rule as its standard of judgment. When theology and sociology find themselves at the feet of the same Teacher, they will discover a common ground, and each will more readily understand the other.

This may seem all very new to people who, tired of their worn-out, thread-bare beliefs, are in search of a religion; it is not new to the Catholic Church, under whose authority and guidance, religion and the welfare of society have ever gone hand in hand. Outside of the Catholic Church, it is true, there are signs of a break-up in religious systems and an evident desire for unity of faith, but in the process of disruption and disintegration, faith is dwindling away to a shadow—beaten out of the field of actuality by the multiplicity and division of human opinion, misnamed research, and decentralized and unauthorized doctrine.

Is Old-fashioned Partyism Dead?

Notwithstanding all that is said and written about the hide-bound party adherence to party policy, it becomes more and more apparent that political parties on both sides of the Atlantic are adopting less rigorous lines, are so constituting themselves and shaping their aims as to swing with the least possible delay into the course marked out by the growth and trend of popular sentiment. One party, rejecting the worst features of their opponents policy, do not hesitate to adopt and utilize whatever they find of good in it as suitable to the exigencies of the times and the country at large.

Nor can they be blamed for doing so. Rather is it a healthful sign of the times. The welfare of the people should be sought at all costs, even at the sacrifice of such party avowal of policy as is found by experience not to be conducive to the common weal. The time was when a political party would go to the country on a distinct and definite policy, fight out the battle at the polls on the strength of that policy, inaugurate it upon suc-

cess and sink or swim with it when put into practical operation. Not so now. The game seems to be to take a leaf or two out of their adversaries' note book, add to them what they consider to be improvements, or what will commend themselves as such to the fairly-well ascertained opinion of the majority of the people, and so gain the treasury benches. That government is a wise government which will not hesitate to abandon any part of its policy which in practice is found not to work for the best interest of the people. To take back water may be looked upon as an acknowledgment of weakness; it is really a sign of healthy strength and a desire to subserve the public interests.

This spirit of pliability and adaptability to prevailing circumstances, is noticeable in the ranks of the Liberal Party in Great Britain, and the day seems to have gone by when a great political party is prepared to stake its existence upon a principle or upon some great question agitating the masses. Imperialism is now the cry, and Imperialism has been emblazoned upon the banners of the Conservative party. Whether the Conservative party brought it into being or it forced itself upon the Conservative is not quite clear, since some of the Liberal leaders claim that they are and always have been quite as imperious in their political opponents. Lord Rosebery defined Imperialism as "the greater pride in Empire—a larger patriotism," and claimed that it is not and should not be allowed to remain the prerogative of the Conservative party. "I should not care to exist," said his Lordship, "with anybody who claimed that he first spread, or held, or preached the doctrine of Imperialism. What is enough for me is this—that they parade every section, and almost every individual of the community, and it seems to me to matter little who was the originator, or who has the title deed to this particular sentiment. Of course, now that we are all Imperialists, we can only differ about the method of carrying these great principles out." Thus we see an inclination of one party to set into the other's ground, and instead of pulling in conflicting directions to pull in the same direction indicated by the trend of public feeling and to strive to out-do each other in the pulling.

John Ruskin.

Our issue of last week contained a notice of the death of John Ruskin, one of the most eminent men of the century. Artist, philosopher, man of letters, political economist, moralist and above all the Apostle of true aestheticism and culture, it is fitting that death should come to him in the last year of the century he has marked so strongly by his words and personality. As a thought-maker he is classified with Newman and Carlyle.

Ruskin was an enthusiast of the highest type, with the sense of criticism probably more highly cultivated in him than in any of his brilliant contemporaries. He was the son of a London wine merchant, who from small beginnings built up a large fortune for himself. His mother was a lady of rather severe character, who kept her only son in complete isolation from children of his own age and the ordinary amusements of childhood. At an early age, she induced him to read the Bible and the early English Masters, which undoubtedly had a great effect on the formation of his literary style.

When he was thirteen years of age he travelled with his parents through Switzerland and Italy, where he continued his study of architecture begun in England, and first recognised the splendor of ancient art. He studied at Oxford when in 1839 he won the much coveted Newdigate prize. He graduated in 1840. In our last issue we gave a list of Ruskin's works. Amongst his greatest achievements are "Modern Painters" or "The Stones of Venice," though much of his noblest work is to be found in the short lectures published in book form under the titles of "Sesame and Lilies," "The Ethical of the Domes," "The Crown of Wild Olive" and "The Queen of the Air." During the last thirty years of his life, believing that "his forte was really not description, but political economy," he attacked the orthodox economists of political economy with the same characteristic vigor with which

years before he had waged war against what was considered orthodox criticism.

"Splendid Isolation."

The Presbyterian Witness says, "The Catholic Register rather gleefully declares that Great Britain still stands alone with not a friend in the world" and then quotes a paragraph from the Register which thus forcibly contradicts the Witness statement: "But (Great Britain) has hardly a friend amongst the nations of the earth," which is strictly true, and admitted not only by her more calm and self-contained statesmen but even by her Jingolitic public men who are so far honest with themselves as not to close their eyes to facts which are strikingly evident to impartial observers. There was nothing particularly gleeful about the paragraph quoted by the Presbyterian Witness, which we reproduce for the benefit of our readers who may be able to judge for themselves and acquit us of any intentional display.

"She has hardly a friend amongst the nations of the earth. True there are what might be termed individual sections of the people of various lands who are either mildly sympathetic with her or thoughtful persons who are not seeking for the cause of this intense and apparently world-wide hatred or hostility toward her."

Now, what is there to cavil at in that?

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The Presbyterian Witness thus comments on the above paragraph,

"Suppose this were literally true, how does her position compare with that of other nations? How many friends has France in the world? She has an alliance with Russia, but it is good only in case France is attacked by any German power. It is of no service in the time of the 'Fashoda incident.' How many friends has Russia? At present she might count on France to almost any extent, but there the list closes. How many friends has Germany? How many friends has Italy, and Italy, and the United States? May be circled friends of Great Britain as truly as any two nations can be regarded as friends of a third. The truth is there is a larger volume of friendship in the United States for Great Britain than in any other country in the world. It has been the fate of England to be hated by other nations. Germany is under a debt of gratitude to England for having a million saved. So is Austria, and it must be admitted that Austria has very seldom been found antagonistic to England."

It is one thing for a nation to be alone, that is free from alliances or particular friendships, but knowing that other nations have no special, pronounced hatred of it, but quite another thing to be alone with the disturbing consciousness that all the other nations capable of making things unpleasant are either indifferent or openly hostile. The latter is Great Britain's condition.

At the beginning of the war, a considerable part of the American press was in favor of England, but its enthusiasm seems to have cooled since that time.

The friendship of Italy for England is to be found only amongst government organs and government officials; the Italian people are not behind it. There is about as much friendship for England in Italy as there is in Germany, where we find the Emperor William, within the last two weeks censuring the German press, which voices the feeling of the German people, for making it difficult for him to avoid friction with England. As to the United States, say any one who argues that, because the President and his cabinet merely preserve a strict attitude of neutrality, the whole of the people of the United States or even the majority of them are on terms of friendship with Great Britain? If we except a few journals and American officialdom, we look in vain for any utterances that can be there construed into practical and reliable leadership for her.

What did Mr. Chamberlain's speech of the other day evoke from Germany and the United States except disgust? What was the pronouncement on it by many of the London papers after waiting to see what effect it would have? Just this—the salutary conclusion that England in her South African enterprise would have to rely upon herself and on herself alone. As we before stated, "there are what might be termed individual sections of the people of various lands who are either mildly sympathetic with

Great Britain in her present struggle with the Boers or quite indifferent; we shall require something more than mere statements to convince us that there is one nation on the face of the earth at the present time willing, we will not say desirous, to lend a helping hand or cast in her lot with Great Britain.

On the other hand, the Powers this could do her harm, even on the opinion of some England's foremost statesmen are keenly watching, for a chance to cut in and thwart her in her purpose in South Africa.

To put a mild test case, if Russia, France and Germany were suddenly to call "Hands off" in South Africa, is it conceivable that either the United States or Italy would put a mark in England's column? The Presbyterian Witness knows perfectly well that any government of the United States would as soon think of tearing the Declaration of Independence into shreds as levelling a gun against a people fighting for their homes, country and freedom as the Boers are doing.

The Presbyterian Witness is welcome to seek in the delusive paradise of Anglo-Saxon friendship created by Mr. Chamberlain's fatuous protestations and diplomatic ledger-entries; for our part we prefer to accept things as they really are. If the war continues with Boer successes unabated there will be such a "slump" in public opinion as will prove the extent of the friendship for England, and call for the recognition of the Independence of the South African Republics.

At the Pro-Boer meeting held in Buffalo on Sunday night (21st ult.), \$800 was subscribed to provide an ambulance and equip a corps for the Boer army. On Monday the 29th, inst. the Church celebrated the Feast of St. Francis De Sales, bishop, confessor and doctor, whom the Sovereign Pontiff, out of his particular regard, for the Catholic Press, the usefulness of which has frequently been recognized by Leo XIII, named as the special patron of the Catholic press.

The Paulist Fathers of New York are making an effort to reach the uneducated masses. Rev. A. P. Doyle in explaining the object of the mission said that Protestant Churches to all denominations complained that they were losing their hold on the masses. It was stated that the Protestant churches numbered on their rolls only seven per cent. of the population of greater New York, so that ninety-three per cent. are either Catholics or out of the Church altogether. The object of the movement was to reach these masses.

The Catholic Directory of the present year makes the total Catholic population of the United States 10,129,677 souls against 9,907,412 last year, a gain of 222,265. It may not be uninteresting to examine the figures and see in what dioceses this gain was made. Baltimore reports no increase. Boston's Catholic population advances from 600,000 to 610,000. Chicago's mounts from 650,000 to 700,000, and the only other archdiocese which shows a gain is Santa Fe, whose population has risen from 115,000 to 138,000.

The recent pastoral of Cardinal Vaughan, upholding the course of the British in the war with the Transvaal, has not met with a very kindly reception in England, whilst in the United States, it has evoked much unfavorable comment. The plea against the English Cardinal seems to be that, whilst he is, as an Englishman, conceded the right to stand by his country's cause, be it right or wrong, he has no right to saddle the Church with responsibility for his opinions. The fact is that popular opinion is growing more and more sensitive, and it behooves men in high and responsible positions to weigh well what they are going to say. The world is very much mixed on the Boer question, as on the war itself, and the stout and successful resistance of a people fighting for freedom and fashioned will tend to enlarge public opinion in favor of the Dutch Republics in South Africa.

The leader of an evangelistic society states that two-thirds of the people of New York do not go to Church. The New York World maintains that New