

Our Contributors.

DR. LANGTRY AND THE SAINTS.

BY REV. W. G. JORDAN, B.A.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in a slight review of a book that has caused much controversy, tells us that he can express his feelings about the "Oxford Movement" in the language which Dr. Johnson used concerning the Second Punic War, "I desire never to hear of it again as long as I live." We can quite understand this feeling in the mind of a literary critic who is constantly seeking for "sweetness and light," and no doubt most of us are quite content that a movement which has made so much noise should now be handed over to Church historians, that its actual influence may be fairly measured, and it may be judged according to its works. Many men who have clear views and strong convictions as to the nature and constitution of the Christian Church have also an utter distaste for bitter and barren controversies on such questions, because they believe that thereby so much time and energy is lost to the highest work of the Church. The real battle between faith and unbelief is so intense and far-reaching that the questions how Dr. Langtry views the Presbyterian Church and what the Pope thinks of "Anglican orders" seem in comparison very small.

There are no doubt many strong champions among us prepared to enter the lists on behalf of Presbyterian "orders" when they see any real danger, but most of us are called to make full proof of our ministry in other and, as we think, higher ways. Such controversies even, when necessary, are full of danger in causing loss of temper and disturbing the kindly relationships which should exist among Christian people. I daresay a man may be both a controversialist and a saint; but it certainly requires a large measure of grace to combine the two characters. Now this short article, prompted by Dr. Langtry's suggestion that the Presbyterian "body" produces characters rather strong than saintly, aims to be as little controversial as possible. Of course it would be idle to deny that a gentleman, who undertakes to give in a few words and in a patronizing tone the scope and spirit of our Church life, lays himself open to the charge of being "a superior person." The present writer has not the honor of knowing Dr. Langtry, but he had the pleasure once of meeting a dignitary of the Church of England who, to put it mildly, has as much right to speak for that communion as this reverend doctor; namely Dr. Peroune, now Bishop of Worcester. Dr. Peroune, author of a "learned commentary on the Psalms," and editor of the "Cambridge Bible for schools," is known to biblical students as a scholar of a very high order. In a powerful sermon published some years ago Dr. Peroune spoke of the Church as the Church of all the saints, and having mentioned many noble names which belong to the distant past, he was not afraid to go outside his own communion and speak of Calvin, Knox, Wesley Whitefield, Carey and others as saints in the one great universal Church. I had the pleasure of reviewing that sermon at the time and expressing joy in this true Catholicity of spirit. I listened with much profit to a lecture from him on the "Revised Version" and found him to be a gentle, kindly man of whom any Church might be proud. Dr. Wescott, Bishop of Durham, one of the first scholars of the present century in his lectures on the "Historic Faith" referring to "the Holy Catholic Church" says that it is an object of faith not of sight, hence the expression, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." This is a spiritual and not a mechanical view of the one true universal Church, and we are glad to find it expounded by one of the greatest lights of the Anglican Church. But leaving the

constitution of the Church and coming back to the question of the saints, one wonders how much can be known about the saintliness of the members of a Church by those who are outside of it and out of sympathy with it. One would like to remember, when tempted to criticise the life of any Church, that there is purity and piety which are not seen and known by a foreigner. It is from the inside that the real life of a Church is seen. The Church is not without spot or wrinkle; indeed there seems to be much truth in a remark made by the late Prof. Elmslie, that a man needs to have strong faith before it is safe for him to venture inside the Church machinery. If that is true there is also another truth that loyal service within the Church brings us into contact with some of the noblest influences of life. The Christian minister has his cares and disappointments, he meets with meanness in himself and in others, he sees character in the making when the imperfections are more apparent than the beauties. Not with critical eye, or in a cynical spirit, does he look upon the struggles of the soul, but with kindly helpfulness, which seeks to become helpfulness. But has he not his hours of depression and weariness, and in addition to the direct ministry of the Divine Spirit where does he find help if not in the saintly lives that he has known? He has seen a gentle woman lying long upon a bed of sickness, transforming the sickroom into a sanctuary and sending from it sweet gracious influences. He has talked with young men and women who have faced a cruel death with real submission and reverent loyalty towards Christ. He has known little children, who with quickened insight, had learned to say "Speak Lord for thy servant heareth." He has met with strong men bowed down with the heavy burden of life's bitterest disappointment, yet maintaining a true faith in a heavenly Father. These are the memories that sustain us when even the life of the Church threatens to become flat and unprofitable. It is true that we cannot number the saints or placard and parade them for show. But it is also true that all the pomp and show of ecclesiastical ceremonies would collapse before the stern pressure of the world if real saintliness was not still behind it. Not in cloistered cells, not in stained glass windows, not merely in histories that are hoary with antiquity, but in the actual battle of life must we have our saints.

"The common round, the daily task
Will furnish all we ought to ask
Room to deny ourselves—a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

This word saint has grown antique; the present use of it is often artificial. In the days of Paul it was not confined to priests, monks, or cloistered men and women. It was the common name for a true Christian believer, a loyal disciple, a faithful brother. It contains God's promise and purpose and our aspiration "called to be saints." This is our vocation whatever may be the particular pathway of our life. It may be that we are all in danger of becoming moderate, sordid, mean, that we lose our noble enthusiasm, our finer spirit of devotion, our perception of the real poetry of life, our sense of the nearness of God's kingdom. If so then we need a new consecration in simple childlike faith. We need to live more in the company of Him "who went about doing good," that we may gain a life that is saintly and will yet stand the wear and tear of common life. To those who have the true hope in them, who are pressing on toward the prize of the high calling, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of this faith, it is a refreshing thought that the ultimate judge of saintship is One who was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." God has His heroes and saints to-day in many spheres, common place as well as romantic, obscure as well as prominent, silent as well as vocal. "Judge not by appearances, judge righteous judgment."

JOY IN HEAVEN.

BY REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

We are told that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. I never realized so vividly what that really means as I did about five years ago. I was a passenger on the steamer *Humboldt* when she lost her rudder in a heavy sea. Without a rudder what could we do but drift wherever the wind and tide might carry us? And we did drift for three days and nights, happily without being wrecked, but without any possibility of reaching the Golden Gate of San Francisco to which we were bound. But the steam tugs had been searching for us night and day, for we had drifted further out of our course than they suspected. At length one of them found us, and towed us safely into the harbour. As we neared the docks of San Francisco I was surprised to see the dense mass of people assembled on the piers. What were the people there for? They were there to welcome us home. It was known that our ship was far too long out at sea, and there was no news of her except that she was disabled; so it was feared she was lost. Now when the news came that we were found, the people came down to the docks in thousands; there they waited with strained and eager expectation for the first glimpse of the steamer; and when the gallant little tug towed us into port, what shouts of joy and welcome greeted us from those crowds on the piers. I was involuntarily made to think of the rapture there must be in heaven when one erring sinner is brought home. There is a band of kinship and tenderness in all of us far deeper than we know. In that great company that gave us welcome there were comparatively few known to any of us on board. But one touch of nature made us all kin, and all hearts bounded in joy, or melted into tenderness, as we came safely ashore. So there is a latent love and tenderness in many a heart where it is not suspected, but where it may be developed by the right conditions. I can imagine, then, something of the welcome, the rapture, the songs of those who are safe on the other shore when one soul is rescued and received home. Till we get there we shall never know how much meaning there is in the statement that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

Mimico.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK.

BY REV. JOHN BURTON, B.D.

It is quite plain that the Gospel was preached before it was written, and that the earliest of the New Testament writings are not our gospels but several of St. Paul's Epistles. Very soon however "narratives concerning these matters which had been fully established among" the disciples, as Luke's preface points out, arose; and it is now the almost settled conviction among the critics that in Mark we have the earliest extant writing embodying the substance of apostolic preaching. Of the four gospels John is by far the latest, probably the last written of all the New Testament canon. The other three, with manifest marks of independence and of interdependence appear to have all been "committed to writing" before the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus, that is, before A.D. 70, or within thirty years of our Lord's crucifixion. This is an important fact in estimating, on apologetic grounds, the trustworthiness of the records. In his introduction Dr. Gould emphasizes this, and states as practically an ultimate position of the newer criticism the acceptance of these gospels as substantially contemporaneous history. We need not begrudge all the shakings and the questionings of the past half century if after the air is clear we see this position left secure.

In the introduction, which fills about forty pages, the peculiarities of the Gospel

"A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark." Rev. E. P. Gould, S. T. D. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons.

of Mark as compared with those of Matthew and Luke are briefly but clearly brought out. There are peculiar difficulties connected with the origin of Matthew's gospel; what testimony we possess from the early fathers is unanimous in pointing to a Hebrew original. No present traces of that original—if such there was—is to be found. Dr. Gould maintains this Hebrew original to be earlier *logia* or writings from which both of the two first gospels drew material, and thus accounts for the identities to be found in them; at the same time it is quite plain that each of these gospels has a character of its own; that neither can be a mere copy or adaptation of the other. The reasons given for these conclusions are convincing; would suffer by being abbreviated; and cannot be transcribed into a notice, brief as this must be.

Dr. Gould decidedly maintains that the verses 9 to 20 of chapter xv are not part of the gospel as Mark left it. In this he follows Westcott and Hort, and our Revisers. Scrivener maintains their genuineness. On the whole we incline to hold with Dr. Gould that they are not in accord with Mark's method of handling his material. Account for it as we may, our evangelist dwells specially on "the active life of our Lord—the period from the beginning of the Galilean ministry to the close of his natural life." The introduction to the Saviour's public life, and the events after He had been crucified, are treated with exceptional brevity. Mark does not undertake to "trace the course of all things accurately from the first and write in order" as Luke; or group teachings as Matthew does the parables, e.g., in chap. xiii: "The life of Jesus has not made on him the effect of mere wonder which he seeks to reproduce in disconnected stories, but of a swift march of events toward a tragic end." In short, Mark presents a vivid picture of Jesus working, and leaves the events with their sayings to tell the story. We have the living working Jesus as He appeared to Peter from the day the fishing nets were left behind on the shores of the Galilee lake till the women from the sepulchre brought to the fugitive disciples the tidings of a risen Lord.

The tendency of the present day to discredit the miraculous is evident in the commentary; not that the miraculous is denied, far otherwise, "you cannot separate the miracles from the rest of the story," still "the reality of demoniacal possession is a matter of doubt," probably due to the superstition of the day; and the accounts given of the temptation of Christ are "evidently the pictorial and concrete story of what really took place within the soul of Jesus." Without venturing in a mere review a decision upon such questions, we unhesitatingly fall back upon this position: these records have a story to tell of glad tidings of great joy, through an anointed Saviour, the Son of God; tell that story out, and let it win its widening way.

We quote with approval part of the comment on chap. iii. 28-29, restoring the true reading *guilty of an eternal sin*. "This is the philosophy of endless punishment. Sin reacts on the nature, an act passes into a state, and the state continues. That is, eternal punishment is not a measure of God's resentment against a single sin, which is so enormous that the resentment never abates. It is the result of the effect of any sin, or course of sin, in fixing the sinful state beyond recovery."

"A tenderer light than moon or sun,
Than song of earth a sweeter hymn,
May shine and sound for ever on,
And thou be deaf and dim."

Endless consequences attached to endless sin.

Interpreting chap. xiii., Dr. Gould presses verse 30, maintaining that "generation" is always used by Jesus "to denote the men living at that time," and never of the Jewish race as distinguished from other peoples. We believe this to be strictly correct. "All these things" is pressed as against any division of the prophecy into two parts, one