

THE ARCHBISHOP

Of Canterbury and English Church History.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has apparently lent, says the London *Tablet*, his sanction to the strategic reconstruction of English history which has entered so largely into the ambitions of the Church Defence Institute. At a meeting at Ashford held on December 15, the Archbishop, according to the report of the *Guardian*, expressed his views on continuity in the following terms:

"He commented upon the extraordinary amount of ignorance that existed among rich and poor alike as to the history of the Church, and pointed out the continuity of the Church of England from primitive times to the present, showing that it was the same body, with the same organization, and urging as one proof of the claim that the Reformation did not manufacture a new Protestant Church, the fact that nearly all the clergy remained at their posts after that event. A prevalent idea even among Churchmen was that there was a time when the English Church was Roman Catholic, and that this was altered by Henry VIII., who substituted for the older body a Protestant Church which we have to day, and handed over to it all the property that had previously belonged to the Roman Catholics. He had even found in a school reader in use in a large number of National schools a statement of this description, and he added he intended to have a thorough examination of all the readers he could find in order to get them revised where possible. They knew that the Church now existing was the same body as that which existed before the Reformation, and which dated from a period which could not be defined; and in proof of this he cited William the Conqueror's refusal to do homage to the Pope for the kingdom of England (finding his predecessors had never done the like), the fact that the Preface to the Prayer Book alluded to the service in the Church of England having before the Reformation been read in Latin, and also the fact that England was the only country of Europe that had never accepted the Canon Law unless parts of it had been specially adopted and enacted in the country."

We note that it is stated that at the end of the meeting questions were invited. We will assume that this invitation was not limited to those who had the advantage of listening to the Archbishop's address, and we will avail ourselves of it, so far as to address to the Archbishop, and to those who share his views, the following three questions:

1. In proof of the continuity of the English Church, "he cited William the Conqueror's refusal to do homage to the Pope for the Kingdom of England (finding that his predecessors had never done the like)." Now this fact is a commonplace of English history. No one with even an elementary knowledge of the Middle Ages or of feudal custom could for a moment mistake the meaning of such words as "homage" or "fealty." William refused — very properly, we think — to enter into that temporal alliance which Professor Freeman calls "commendation," by which the English King would become the temporal vassal or "man" of the Pope, and hold his kingdom as a temporal fief of the Holy See, after the manner of the Norman kingdom in Naples. Such a political and temporal arrangement has no more to do with the spiritual and dogmatical obedience which a Catholic gives to the Pope as successor of St. Peter, than it has to do with the transit of Mercury, or the latest eclipse of the Moon. William would not have been one jot more a Roman Catholic if he had granted it, nor was he one jot less a Roman Catholic when he refused it. Neither Spain, Austria, France, nor any Catholic country at the present moment is a fief of the Holy See. Yet the existence of a Roman Catholic Church in the world is hardly a fact that can be called in question. Clearly, then, no tie of "homage," "vassalship," "feudal fealty," or "commendation," can be reckoned as an essential to Roman Catholicity, nor can any person or country be argued to be not Roman Catholic for the want of it. These are facts known to every ordinary well-informed reader of English history. It would be discourtesy to doubt that the Archbishop of Canterbury was perfectly aware of them. Therefore we ask the question: If it is a well-known and clearly established fact that the medieval "homage" refused by William the Conqueror was simply a matter of temporal relationship or feudal commendation, is it quite honest to speak of it as if "homage" were meant in its general and modern sense, and as if it referred to the spiritual allegiance which every Catholic yields on dogmatic grounds to the Pope, and to imply that William's refusal of such "homage," proves that the English Church in Norman times was not Roman Catholic? That in the rank and file of mere Church Defence lecturers, who harangue popular and sympathetic audiences, there should be found occasionally some who descend so far as to play tricks of this description, is a matter not of surprise, but of regret. We naturally refuse to associate the thought of conscious dishonesty with educated clergymen of the Church of England, and least of all with the Archbishop of Canterbury. But precisely for that reason, it seems to us a city that the Archbishop should even in appearance have lent his sanction to what every student of history must recognize to be a discreditable piece of historical sharp practice.

2. Our second question bears upon

the same point. The Archbishop's argument proves nothing unless it proves that William the Conqueror was not a Roman Catholic. We invoke the following facts: 1. The Church in Normandy, of which William was a member, plainly acknowledged Papal Supremacy. Its Primate received the Pallium from the Pope. Only a few years before the Conquest Manger, Archbishop of Rouen, was deposed by a Council presided over by Papal Legates, who pronounced the sentence of deposition. 2. William himself, not only recognized the jurisdiction of the Pope, but had recourse to the Pope for a validation of his own marriage with Matilda. 3. William, before undertaking the Conquest, submitted his whole case and claim to the Pope before whom it was discussed in conference. 4. William carried out the Conquest with the sanction and blessing of the Pope, and under a consecrated banner solemnly bestowed on him by the Holy See. 5. William had himself specially crowned by Papal Legates. 6. The whole reconstruction of the English Church at the time of the Conquest was effected by Councils presided over by the Pope's Legates, and convened by the authority of the Pope and of "the Roman Church," as may be seen in the letter of citation given in Wilkin's *Concilia*, (vol. i, p. 323) 7. William himself, in the very letter in which he refuses the claim of temporal homage or fealty for his Kingdom, assures the Pope, "We have loved your predecessors, and you, above all, we desire to love sincerely and to listen to with obedience." (*obedienter audire.*)

With these seven unquestionable historical facts before us, we ask how is the life and action of William to be squared with the Archbishop's contention that the Conqueror was not a Roman Catholic? Was the man who lived and died in communion with the Roman Church, who had himself crowned by Papal Legates, and who had the chief ecclesiastical affairs of the realm settled by Papal and Legate Councils, one who believed that "the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England?" Was the man who protested that he loved the Pope and desired to listen to him with obedience, one who believed that spiritual obedience to the Pope is neither due nor desirable but a result of falsehood and usurpation?

3. Our third question touches the general issue. The Archbishop implies that amongst the mistakes of a popular and prevalent ignorance is the belief that the English Church before Henry VIII. was Roman Catholic. Again we turn to the facts, English Kings—Henry III., Edward II., and a long list of others—declare in their letters that they are "devoted sons of the Roman Church." In 1246 the English Primate and Bishops declare that "the Kingdom of England has ever been specially devoted to the Roman Church." In the same year the English Abbots and Priors protest that "the English Church is a special member of the Most Holy Church of Rome." (Matthew Paris, anno 1246.)

3. The Archbishop has only to look in the registers in his library at Lambeth to see the oath of "fidelity and obedience to the Pope and the Roman Church," which the Catholic Archbishops of Canterbury and the English Bishops for centuries before Henry VIII. took at their investiture or consecration.

The following was the declaration of the faith of the English Church, which Archbishop Arundel in 1413 drew up, and with the full sanction of convocation applied as a test to the Lollards of his time: "Christ ordained Saint Peter the Apostle to be his Vicar here in erthe: whos See is the Church of Rome, ordeyning and graunting the same power that he gaue to Peter shoude succede to all Peter's successors: the which we callyn now Popes of Rome, by whos power in churches particular special be ordyned prelates, as Archbyshopes, Bysshopes, Curates, and other degrees to whom all cristien men ought to obey after the lawes of the Church of Rome."

Our question, then, to the Archbishop is this: Are men who affirm that they are "faithful and devoted sons of the Roman Church," not Roman Catholics? Is a Church whose clergy solemnly state that it is "a special member of the most holy Church of Rome," not a Roman Catholic Church? Are archbishops and bishops who solemnly swear before the Church and the nation that they will "be faithful and obedient to the Pope and the Roman Church," not Roman Catholics? Is a Church which through its Primate in convocation makes an open declaration of the Divine institution of the Papacy, and the claims which the Pope, as the Vicar of Christ, has to the obedience of all Christians—and is so deadly in earnest in doing so that the Archbishop and convocation are ready to send to the stake their fellow-Englishmen who would not accept it—is such a Church not a Roman Catholic one?

If these are not proofs of Roman Catholicism—public, official, judicial and sworn proofs—then what, in the name of historical evidence, are or ever can be?

These are our questions. They are not ours alone. They must have arisen, on the publication of the Archbishop's address, in the minds of thousands of educated readers in this country. We submit that to them and to us his Grace owes a plain and straightforward answer.

There are other passages of the address which sufficiently answers themselves. It seems to us purer to confess doctrinal and organic with mere material continuity. Doctrinal and organic changes were distinctly the

work of the Reformation. If doctrinal changes do not effect a solution of continuity, and if mere material identity suffices to maintain the sameness of a Church, then we are landed in the preposterous principle that a Church remains the same as long as it is composed of the same people, and worships in the same buildings, and preserves the framework of the Christian hierarchy, whatever be the changes in its belief and teaching. But if so, the Church of England might equally well have laid claim to continuity if Henry VIII. had made her Arian or Unitarian. Continuity of that kind would surely not be worth having or claiming. It is the continuity of the person who remains the same man, and says his prayers in the same house, even when he has become an apostate. A nation may, like an individual, recede from Catholic unity. If it rejects a portion of what it itself declared and held to be Catholic faith, and serves its organic connection with the Holy See and Catholic Christendom, it remains indeed the same nation, is composed of the same clergy and people, worships in the same religious buildings. But the same Church it is not, and cannot be, as long as the very meaning and character of a Church is, and must be, determined by considerations of belief and doctrine and canonical allegiance. The worst of such arguments as those which the Archbishop and his friends employ, is that they are conspicuously marked by a tendency to secure a cheap verbal continuity, at the price of demoralizing public opinion, by sinking the notion of continuity itself into the lowest and most grossly material level of its acceptance.

The Archbishop contemplates a thorough revision of the school readers, so that Anglican school children may learn their history from the Church Defence Institute. We would suggest that His Grace should go farther. It will be absolutely useless to remove all traces of pre-Reformation Roman Catholicity from the school readers, unless he can erase them from the records and archives of the country. He must suppress the Rolls Series, close the Record Office, expurgate a whole section of the British museum, and, above all, he must be careful to withdraw the Registers in his palace of Lambeth. In a word, he would require to eviscerate English history. Until then his efforts must be the merest pin-scratching on a granite wall. Rather will those very efforts have an effect diametrically opposite to what he wishes, and serve to direct public attention to the wall, against which he wastes his strength, and to the indestructible strength and solidity of its construction.

The Deathless Dead.

Star, Jan. 5, 1895.

On the occasion of the State Funeral, commenced in England and terminated in Canada, of the late Sir John S. D. Thompson, P.C., K. C. M. G., Premier of the Dominion.

In the presence of our Monarch, at the throne's feet to die! When his sun of life was flashing in the zenith of his noon-day. When he smil'd path of glory, with successive foot was trod: Thus to pass from out a palace through the palace gates of God! While the murmur of his triumph through historic Wunder ring. Comes the lightning flash that spirit, with his mandate came and fled: But the giant oak was shattered—lo! the honored one was dead!

Royal tributes out of number scattered on his glorious bier:

Garland, wreath and fond inscription, kindly word, and sigh, and tear,

Curfew-bell and half-mast standard, warlike trumpet, and battle-staff,

Middle which Quesnay, we are watching as they bear him thro' the gate.

London in its great confusion, with its rush and crush of men.

Pauses for a breathless moment at the tolling of "Big Ben."

While the sun of all the Empire seems to beat in muffled tones.

As the world from zone to zone.

In the temple-lighted taperers, and the incense-perfumed air,

As the Church in sombre greatness, offers up the requiem prayer:

With his crucifix beside him, with his rosary by his side—

Rests he near the sacred altar, in regalia as Meanwhile forth an order goeth to Great Britain's iron fleet, to Great Her levithans, awaiting at Gibraltar's granite feet:

See, the Blenheim weighs her anchor, and Swiftly cleaves her giant pathway, as she heads her prow for home.

Not the concurring Roman galleys; not the Not the gilded prows of Greece;

Not the argonauts' ship, bearing home

Not the Median Flotilla,

From St. Helen's lonely rock:

Not the proudest British warships, thunder-brimmed for battle's shock:

Not thy caravels, Columbus, seeking out the Sped up more solemn mission, or with sadder flags unfurled

Black and moving seraphim, plunging o'er Atlantic's breast,

The transformed Blenheim carries the dead Prester home rest.

When, at eve, the fiery chargers of the sun have stoo'd to drink,

And the pallid moon is hanging on horizon's dizzy brink,

O'er the vastness of the ocean the Almighty

Comes to band.

And to watch the funeral vessel as the shades

Loudly through the steel clad rigging how

The wailing tempest raves,

As a billion stars are gazing on the wilder-

Like the phantom ship of story, with its hull

Swiftly speeds the thrashing monster on its phosphorescent track.

Meanwhile thousands are awaiting, in the silence deep of grief,

Canada's great breast is heaving, anxious for

the grand relief

When the flood of her affection like a pent-up lake, may burst,

And, in gathering strength and volume,

Eyes are fixed upon the one she nursed;

Eyes are straining, where afar,

By the blue horizon's circle must appear the man-of-war.

On the first noon of the New Year—"the command that England gave;

On that day, as flashed the noon gun,

dropped the anchor in the wave.

Prelates, warriors, statesmen gather, from

all sections of the land:

"Round that bier a nation's greatest, with her hundred, weeping stand;

From the Queen and Consort to the lowliest peasant; all

In procession, speechless, breathless, throng

the Legislative Hall;

Creeds are blinding, strife forgotten, many

tears are freely shed;

As the winds singe in silence past the basket of the dead.

Glorious tribute, from Atlantic to Pacific's lordly wave,

Come the garland gifts of sorrow for the Pre-

mier's hallowed grave.

In St. Mary's what a concourse, as the som-

berous profusion and richness, o'er the gorge-

ous funeral pall,

While the "Dies Irae" rises, in a vast,

holy dirge,

From the steeples of the nation comes the

Acolytes are moving slowly, thurifers their

censors swing,

Loudly peals the deep-ton'd organ, solemnly

the prelates sing;

Words of comfort come from the pulpit, ere

the Church's rites are done.

"Dust to dust"—she nation weepeth o'er her

dead, but deathless son.

Once again the martial music breaks upon

the woman's air;

As that vast procession forms round the

sacred body of Prayer.

Funeral march, reversed arms, muffled

drums and steady pace,

As the "deathless dead" is borne to his last

resting place.

Let us pray that this example may be cher-

ished with his name;

He is now beyond the clangor of ambition,

strife, or fame,

Rest his ashes, as he'd wish it, neath his

lovd Canada's sod;

Rest him in joye eternal, in the mansions

bright of God!

Montreal, January 3, 1895.

J. K. FORAN.

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