

Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, Chap. III, Sec. 249.
As to my advice to join this or that society, I formally Catholic, the Question Box cannot give any advice to individuals. It lays down the principles that guide them. Investigate the nature, aims and tendencies of the society in question, and then consult your natural adviser, the confessor.

HIGHER CRITICISM.

CATHOLIC OPINION ON ITS EFFECT UPON FAITH ON FAITH OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS.

In answer to the question, "Is higher criticism undermining Christian faith?" the New York Herald published lately the opinions of a large number of clergymen of different denominations. Among the responses were the following: from Most Rev. John M. Farley, Rev. A. P. Doyle, C. S. P., and Rev. Dr. H. A. Brann, of New York.

MGR. FARLEY'S OPINION.

Sound criticism of the Bible, confining itself to scientific facts and sober inferences, is not prejudicial to higher religious thought and duty. In confirmation of this the majority of those who have applied themselves most assiduously to the modern scientific study of the Bible are distinguished members of the clergy, regular as well as secular. I am not aware that higher criticism has to any appreciable extent produced in the ranks of the Catholic laity those undermining effects which cause alarm in some other religious bodies. Rather, it has served to comfort and reassure many earnest believers to whose thoughtful minds certain received notions concerning the Bible had become of difficult acceptance. Questions pertaining to this topic are never discussed in the pulpit and but seldom touched upon in Catholic periodicals; for, according to Catholic belief, Holy Scripture is not the exclusive vehicle of God's revelation to man, the sole authority in matters religious. While it is held in a true, yet undefined and mysterious, sense to be the Word of God, it is not considered as a direct and immediate rule of faith. God's dealings with man are primarily through the medium of an organized living body, and the sacred writings, however precious, are relatively to the living Church only incidental.

FATHER DOYLE'S RESPONSE.

In considering the influence of higher criticism on the devotional life of the people in America it is very necessary accurately to define terms. There has been a great deal of destructive criticism inspired by writers who are adverse to all religious belief, and these writers have entered the sanctuary of reverential faith in the spirit of a vandal. They have cut and slashed and destroyed every precious heirloom within reach. They have hauled down their ancient shrines the time-honored beliefs of the people and have trampled them under foot. Because some beliefs have been found to be of clay, they have generalized and have said the "whole show was sham." Such criticism has injured the cause of Biblical learning far more than it has the faith of the people.

There is, however, another school of higher criticism that has approached the sacred edifice of Biblical study and tradition with bare feet and with uncovered head. These higher critics are conservative men, seekers for truth. There is undoubted a vast amount of fallacy and fable that has adhered to the framework of Christian belief, and the sooner the people find out what is fallacy and fable the better for their religious life. Religion can not afford to rest on anything but the rock bed of truth. The ladder that rests on the snowbank will topple when the warm summer comes. There are no greater benefactors than higher critics who are earnest seekers for the truth, who stand for conservatism and traditional belief and who will not yield one iota of what has been handed down until the demonstration of its fallaciousness is complete.

To meet this condition of affairs the Catholic Biblical Commission has been established. On this commission are all the great Catholic Biblical scholars. Their business is to stimulate exegetical studies in line with all recent scientific research and discovery to judge controverted questions when necessary among Catholics, and to give answer to all throughout the world who may consult the inquisition.

DR. BRANN'S REPLY.

The so-called higher criticism of the Bible does not affect either the clergy or laity of the Catholic Church, for the reason that we start from the stronghold of the Church first and proceed thence to matters concerning the sacred book. The Church antedates the Bible, and when the Church gave us the book it also gave us the certain assurances and fixed factors regarding it. For instance, it bids us assume without any shadow of question that there is a natural law and a supernatural law, that the miracles were performed beyond all doubt or cavil, that the words of God came to man and still do so in the form of a divine revelation, and there can be no cause of hesitancy in accepting divine inspiration fully and gratefully. Starting out with these premises, it is no wonder we arrive at conclusions at once satisfying and edifying in the highest degree.

As for the minor criticism there is as much in the Church now as there ever was, and no more. Learned professors of theology differ very widely upon many points of interpretation, legend, history and authenticity of certain books and parts of books. Legitimate investigation is always encouraged; any person who can bring new light upon obscure points of history or doctrine is listened to with respectful gratitude. What we believe highly prejudicial to the Church as a fixed institution, founded and perpetuated for the uplifting of the human race, is taking its vital and fundamental exponent, the Holy Scriptures, and dissecting them from the exterior point of view, just as if they were merely a man-made book, like the words of Dante or the miracle plays of the elder dramatists.

Would he not be regarded as an unjust judge who considered a prisoner as guilty until some one proved him innocent? That is what the higher critics would do with the Bible—start out with the assumption that it is the product of human genius alone and then proceed to prove it a divine inspiration—if they can, which alas they never do. To start out with accepting its divine inspiration and proceed with our minor criticisms from the inner point of view is our strong hold and it leaves faith safe from all the assaults of secular investigation.

NOT ALWAYS RIGHT.

The New York Sun, while remarkable, as a general rule, for conforming to the laws of logic, sometimes draws one of those conclusions that makes the careful reader say, "Oh!" A deduction of this character appeared in its editorial columns last Sunday in a comment upon Mr. Goldwin Smith and his ideas about the immortality of the soul. The premises and conclusion run as follows:

"It is an old question, as old as the intelligence and imagination of man. The mystery of the universe appeals to both the savage and the civilized, and essentially the solution of the riddle which has been reached by both is the same. The highest development of the human intelligence can get no further toward a rational settlement of that mystery than can the lowest. The natural cannot comprehend the supernatural, but must take it solely on faith; hence arises dogma."

That the question of the immortality of the soul is an old one, is giving no new thought relative to Mr. Smith and his ideas about the immortality. That the mystery of the universe appeals to both savage and civilized is also waste of ink and paper to remind any human being. However, that the solution of the riddle which has been reached by both is essentially the same, may be said to be true and not true at the same time. As far as the important solution is concerned, namely, arriving at the conclusion that the soul is really immortal, it is quite true that both savage and civilized have the same conviction. And herein lies one of the greatest proofs of the immortality of the soul. But that the savage and the civilized have both come to their conviction by the same methods is so evidently untrue as to need not even an explanation of the terms.

It is absolutely false that the highest development of the human intelligence can get no further towards a rational settlement of that mystery than the lowest. The fact is that only mediocre intelligence is required to solve the mystery in its most important bearing, which is the fact that the soul is immortal. The arguments drawn from the nature of the soul, from free will and the consciousness of imputability, and from the evident prosperity of the wicked in this present life and the apparent misfortune of the virtuous, clearly prove that there is another world in which the soul lives its final existence forever. Doubtless, if the editor of the Sun had devoted his time to the learning of scholastic terms of philosophy instead of those of the rationalist school and the evolutionists, which are scattered pell-mell throughout the editorial in question, he would be a little more modest in his statements about the capabilities of the human intellect.

Again, admitting that the natural cannot comprehend the supernatural (whatever that means—we suppose it implies that the human intellect cannot understand the supernatural), it is unimportant to take everything true that we must take everything false. Even if there were no such thing as revelation, if God had never spoken to man personally, still the human intellect could know a great deal about God and the existence of the soul after death. The existence of a Supreme Being, His attributes, the creation of man and the reason for it, the end of the universe, the existence of the soul and its attributes (most important of which is immortality), can be known and have been proved by the human mind; and such difficulties as those of Mr. Smith have been answered long before either Mr. Smith or the editor of the New York Sun ever existed. Let both invent in any Catholic textbook of philosophy and they will learn something to their advantage.

Lastly, that because the natural cannot comprehend the supernatural hence arises dogma, is the most astonishing travesty of logic we have seen in a long time. A dogma is something laid down as true and imperatively offered for belief upon authority of the one publishing the matter of belief. Dogma essentially cannot have existed except for revelation. Dogma, therefore, arises not from the supposition that the natural cannot comprehend the supernatural, but because the Lord appeared to Moses and because Christ came upon earth. Mankind would be foolish, indeed, to believe in a mystery, even as regards its existence, upon the opinion of men, however learned they might be.

The paragraph quoted above bears the motto that a man ought not to launch forth into deep waters with which he is not familiar.—Providence Visitor.

HEROIC CATHOLIC NUNS.

TWO ANECDOTES OF SISTERS WHO HAVE BEEN EXPELLED FROM FRANCE BY ORDER OF PREMIER COMBES.

Sometimes one is forced to go far to find striking news. In a Spanish exchange we see it related that the Sisters of Charity, of Vernon, France, after their expulsion found a refuge in Nivelles, Belgium. An epidemic of small-pox broke out and the Sisters offered their services, many of the sufferers having been abandoned by relatives and friends. They nursed the sick through the pest, burying some of the dead with their own hands in the neighboring cemetery. The Belgian government conceded them a medal of the first class for their heroic conduct. The same paper says that the newspapers of Russia are loud in praise of the work of the Sisters of Charity.

who labor attending the wounded and dying on the field of battle. One of these says that it "is impossible to relate how the presence of these saintly women, who toil for the love of Christ, cheers our soldiers." One Sister, working in the field hospital, approached a wounded Japanese officer who in French hastened to express his appreciation of her kindly assistance, but added that probably she mistook him for a Christian. "It makes no difference," she replied. "God has sent me here to work for all." Such devotion inevitably will have good effect.

PULLING AGAINST THE STREAM.

It is the destiny of the Church to play a militant part in the grand work of redemption and salvation. Until the era of universal peace, when truth has won the great fight with error, this is her position. So we know from the word of her Divine Founder; and so we perceive from the study of the story of her march down the road of nineteen centuries. The Church militant is her proper designation, under present conditions. Not even the eye of a prophet may see, through the haze of the future, when that condition shall be merged in the joyous life of the Church Triumphant. But as surely as Christ came to break the darkness and the doubts of ages by the radiance of God's truth, so shall the day of His final triumph, when there shall be, all over the world, one faith and one law, come to crown the great eternal work. Whatever else betide, this consummation is as certain as the rise of tomorrow's sun. Such is the immutable belief of the Catholic mind.

Militancy being the present lot of the Church, it is also the inevitable function of the Press which represents her and defends her interests. "In paribus infidelium"—in countries where different beliefs find acceptance and "the Queen's writ does not run"—the law of our loving mother Church, in other words, is only law within her own pale—the necessary attitude of the Catholic press is militant. It is so, not of choice, but of necessity. Easygoing people sometimes complain that the Catholic press is constantly protesting against the facts of its environment. Sad and tragic would be the day, so long as this environment in many countries remains what it is, when that press should cease to maintain that attitude. It would be a prelude of downfall. The Church could slough a diseased skin of immorality, as she did when Luther led the forces of disease; but an experience of apathy of craven fear would be a more deadly trouble to deal with.

Always to pull against the tide is the fate of the Catholic Church. She is beset by sleepless foes. To these she can never turn her back. To front the enemy, to repel his assaults at every side, and to steer, at the same time, an undeviating course, is her appointed task. She herself must be serene and unflinching, for such besetments her holiness of character. But her champions in the Press must fight her battles, as she pursues her sacred way. They are her men-of-war, her squires, her vassals. If it became necessary for her, at any time, to don the armor they would do it. But that day may never come.

Peculiar difficulties embarrass the ways of the Catholic Press in this country. So interwoven is the scheme of political life with the daily interests of the people that it is only the most watchful care that can prevent the overflowing of the dam of party politics into the meadow lands of the Church. That care is never lacking, as far as the Church herself is concerned, but the Press is often exposed to danger. At times of electoral contest its course is especially beset with trials. It is exposed as much to the artful attempts of the party in power to drag religion into the dangerous arena as to the endeavor of the party which seeks to oust it to enlist its sympathies on the side that is lacking in the advantage of the immense influence that the possession of office and patronage gives. By a thousand artful methods it is sought to entrap the Church, through the Press, into the battle of parties, so that her action to-day may be flung in her face in the next political crisis. The Church is an adamant. She knows no party. The Catholic Press ought to know no party likewise. But it must fight the battles of religion, even though there be danger of having its action misconstrued or intentionally misrepresented. The defense of religion is the sole reason for its existence. Once it strays into the quagmire of party politics its influence, as a religious paper, is at stake. The general public gets as much enlightenment as it needs from the secular press on the points at issue in any political campaign. The Church wisely allows her children to form their own judgment on the political issues of the time.

There is at the present time a peculiar delicate situation, because of the subtle schemes of unprincipled individuals to drag religion into the present political struggle. It behooves all Catholics to guard against this insidious scheme. The motto "separation between Church and State" was never so useful as at present. Some who use it seem to believe it to be a double-edged weapon, acting much on the principle of the game of pitch and toss in "Box and Cox," "heads, I win; tails, you lose." These snakes in the grass must be avoided, or else crushed wherever they raise their heads.

But at all times there is need of an attitude of protest. So vigilant are the agencies of prejudice and hostility that the eyes of Argus are needed to defeat their schemes to thwart the onward march of the Church. A perpetual stream of calumny is maintained in the anti-Catholic Press. Able pens and glib tongues assail her from a thousand desks and a thousand pulpits. Divided in doctrine, these unite in defamation with the heartiest accord. The Macedonian phalanx never moved with such unanimity of purpose and action as the independent irregulars of the motley army. Their policy is too often successful in nullifying the blessings of the American Constitution, and under various pretexts (as in the case of the taxation for the schools) subjecting Catholics to the gravest injustice. While these conditions prevail a Catholic Press above all suspicion of party politics is a vital necessity for the Church. —Catholic Standard and Times.

THE D'YOUVILLE READING CIRCLE.

A very large number were present at the first "work" evening of the D'Youville Reading Circle, and many interesting matters were mentioned.

It seemed our first duty to express our sincere thanks to His Grace, Archbishop Duhamel, for his presence on Oct. 16th and also for his words of cheer and encouragement addressed to the Circle. The words "Noblesse Oblige" emphasized by His Grace shall be our motto for the year.

Daily in the far East, events are transpiring that are fraught with deep personal interest for each of us. On every after every careful study should we decide upon the right and the wrong of a war. History is best studied by reading the biographies of great men. In applying this principle to Asia we naturally have chosen to study the life of Buddha, Asia's great man. In his "Light of Asia," Edwin Arnold imagines himself a Buddhist and writes the story from that standpoint. The Preface explaining the author's reason for this was read, and also the few lines of the poem that relate the circumstances attending the birth of Buddha.

A poet is allowed many liberties that would be denied the historian. To ensure perfect truth we shall refer constantly to Dr. Aiken's History of Asia. Dr. Aiken is a well-known Professor of Washington University and is therefore a reliable authority.

Side by side with this study will go that of the great religious revival of the nineteenth century as it manifested itself in England especially. The English have always been a religious people. The majority will not tolerate atheism. No matter to what Church they belong they are usually in earnest. The reactionary spirit was abroad in the nineteenth century and its influence was felt in religion as elsewhere. The consequence in England was the Oxford Movement, in which figured so prominently such men as Cardinal Newman, Father Faber, William Ward and Matthew Arnold. In America, the Transcendental Movement was really the same thing.

"Higher Criticism" is a much used and much abused term in our day. One requiring to be familiar with its meaning. There are several books bearing on these topics in the library and a careful reading of some of them would be of great help in this department of our regular work.

For things purely human it is safe to say we have no other authority who at all compares with Shakespeare. No course of study would be complete that would ignore this—Immortal. For immature minds—improbable as it would be at first sight—his tragedies are safest. Heavy reading though they are when school days are passed his comedies come naturally. This year we shall make special mention of "A Winter's Tale." Members might, with profit, read this play and be prepared thus for the notes given at each meeting. Our first lecture will have a direct bearing on this subject, the title being "Shakespeare's Lesser Brethren," and the lecturer Mr. Watters, M. A. To be called one of even the "lesser brethren" of the immortal Shakespeare is no small compliment.

In the October Truth may be found all the correspondence that has been between the Vatican, and the French Government with regard to the breaking off of the Concordat. The Rev. Lucian Johnson prepared the article for The Truth. Every thinking person wishes to know the history of the Concordat, its condition and the events leading up to the present crisis in France.

The Rev. Henry Van Dyke has won his way into our hearts by his Little Rivers and The Blue Flowers. In the Harpers, A Study of Life, by this author, is well worth reading.

Each evening five minutes will be devoted to spiritual reading. Rev. Geo. Tyrrel, S. J., is the author chosen for this year.

The next meeting will be on Nov. 8th. B. DOWDALL.

A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

Intense indignation has been aroused among fair-minded Irish Protestants over a recent speech of the Protestant Bishop of Kilmore, Dr. Elliott. That narrow-minded divine, although living in a region mostly peopled by Catholics, and where consequently not a breath of religious strife is ever heard, had the bad taste to accuse the Government of doing—namely, the slightest intention of doing—namely, giving a Catholic University to Ireland as well as a measure of Home Rule.

Not only this, but he referred to the Catholic people, by whom he is surrounded, as "demoralized," and added that the average Irishman "will cheat you within the four corners of the law, if he can." This, coming from a representative of the class who plundered the Catholic Irish for over three centuries, and who still live on the proceeds of their plunder, reveals a death of "gall" that few would suspect to coexist with a clerical breast. Dr. Elliott asserts that the spirit of the Catholic Church is persecution, and that if Home Rule be granted that spirit will show itself in the persecution of the Protestant minority. This is the coward fear of a guilty conscience. As it is, the Irish have a large measure of Home Rule in the shape of the County and District Councils, and can any one say that the action of these Councils, largely Catholic, has been one of intolerance toward the Protestant majority? The fact is "the boot is on the other foot," so to speak, since the minority still manage to secure the lion's share of all the good things that are to be had in Ireland.

Now, this is the second occasion dur-

ing the past year on which groundless complaints have been uttered by dignitaries of the disestablished institutions in Ireland. On each occasion it was at the hands of eminent Protestant laymen they met their deserved castigation. Mr. Swift McNeill, M. P., not long ago lashed Bishop Chambers for his untruthful and uncharitable references to the Catholic people among whom he resides in perfect peace and comfort; and now another Ulster Protestant member of Parliament, exposes the falsehoods of this other calumniator from Kilmore. Mr. Samuel Young, one of the members for County Cavan, writes to the press a scathing reply to the Bishop's speech. He gives an analysis of public offices and offices in the County Cavan, in which a large portion of the Bishop's diocese lies. Mr. Young's tables show that "in the county there are 78,000 Catholics and 14,000 non-Catholics. One would imagine the official appointments would bear some relation to the religious census, but no. Of the honorary and lucrative appointments, 182 are held by Dr. Elliott's persecuted people, and 19 by Catholics."

There are eight medical officers in the Cavan Union, and of these six are Protestants—a proportion which may be taken as a fair sample of the mode in which the Catholic majority all over Ireland use their elective power and "persecute" their Protestant fellow-countrymen. It is necessary to go a little further into the existing facts, however, in order to be able to estimate fully the iniquity of such falsehoods of which these two Protestant members are guilty, in regard to the most liberal and forgiving people in the whole world. Mr. Young asks:

How can Dr. Elliott say that "the scope of Catholic power is limited," since His Lordship must know that the Establishment of County Councils and District Councils gave the Catholic people full control over twenty-six counties in Ireland, and how does he venture to say in the face of the official appointments for the county here given that the Catholics "make most of their opportunities to persecute?" I may point out that all the large business houses are non-Catholic, and are supported chiefly by Catholic trade; besides it may be noted that the would-be persecuting Catholics of Cavan at the last contested election returned the writer of this letter and Mr. Vesey Knox (non-Catholics) to represent them in Parliament by the largest majorities recorded for any member of the British Parliament, and on the same occasion rejected a Catholic for the now sitting member for East Cavan.

We can safely point to the case of Ireland whenever any maligner of Catholicism ventures to fling the reproach of intolerance against its professors. Ireland affords a bright and shining example in many ways, if not in all things; but in this particular virtue she is matchless. —Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times.

MAN'S CITIZENSHIP.

HIS TRUE RELATION TO CIVIL SOCIETY.

By Mr. Roeker.

Two sets of obligations, as it were, impose themselves on every citizen: one coming from the general scope of civil society, and which binds every man to whatever society he may belong, and the other arising from the special circumstances which characterize the concrete society of which he is a member. Nor can he claim to have fulfilled his obligations when he has satisfied those of the first class; since no man, being a concrete individual, is or can be simply a member of civil society in the abstract, which does not actually exist, but must of necessity be a member of some definite, concrete, civil society. To know these obligations we need only to understand as precisely as possible the aim of civil society in general and in the concrete, and the means imposed by nature for accomplishing such aim.

Man has a capacity for indefinite happiness—so indefinite, indeed, that we may call it infinite. But we know well that, at least in this life, he never reaches any such happiness. The reason is evident: in this life no infinite good is ever presented to him as an object to be attained. He sees only finite goods, and these differ one from another. Each one will provide some happiness for him, and, above all, may be a means leading him toward the attainment of his true and infinite happiness. It is in order that some one of these finite goods may be the more easily and surely attained by the individual that a number of men unite their energies and form a society.

To secure that happiness, or to make that progress toward happiness which the knowledge of truth imparts, various social and scientific societies are formed. To gain the happiness and acquirement from the contemplation of the beautiful, art associations are instituted; and so for many other special needs and aspirations of human nature. Now why do men form civil society? It can be for nothing else than to secure to each individual the greatest possible amount of happiness which can be got out of his daily contact with his fellowmen. Civil society differs from all other societies in that it is public, while every other human society is private; and a man's life is public only in those relations which arise from his external contact with other men.

BOSTON IS A CATHOLIC CITY.

Boston is rapidly becoming a great center of Catholic thought and endeavor. The religious change which fifty and even twenty years has wrought in this one-time metropolis of Puritanism is a subject of common remark.

Protestants look with uneasiness upon the decay of that ascendancy which was once theirs. A. A. Berle, in The World of To-day, commenting on the decline of Congregationalism in that city, says that at present there are not a half-dozen of the old type of Congregational churches left in a city which was once a Congregational capital, and of those remaining few show a healthy condition. Three or four he declares to be so dependent upon tem-

porary conditions as to have no "future." The pastor of another Congregational church is a wealthy man who for the past five years has given his church \$3,500 each year, and two others have been dependent for the payment of running expenses on two individuals who have passed away.

On the other hand, Mr. Berle declares (and we give his exact words): "The growth of the Roman Catholic Church has been so great that Boston can fairly be called a Catholic city. The statement was made a few years ago in the midst of an election controversy in which religious prejudices had a large part, that 'at noon Boston is Republican and Protestant, and at 6 o'clock it is Catholic and Democratic,' alluding this way to the presence for business purposes of the Protestant suburban population during the day, and their absence when the real Boston went to bed at night. The ideas and ideals which go with this change in the religious expression of the population apply with almost equal force to every city in New England. It is true of Worcester, of New Haven, of Hartford, of Providence and of Springfield."

From the West.

It's the West for real eloquence. One Methodist pastor from that section was preaching in the metropolis a Sunday or two ago on the eternity of the soul. He started on a long recital of his emotions while gazing at the wonders of nature in the far West, and presently he electrified his congregation thus:

"I looked at the mountains, and could not help thinking 'Beautiful as you are you will be destroyed, while my soul will not.' And to the ocean I cried: 'Mighty as you may be, you will dry up, but not I.'"—From the Catholic Union and Times.



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