

POPE LEO

ON RELIGION VERSUS SCIENCE.

On the 27th of November, 1894, M. Ferdinand Brunetiere had a private audience with the Pope at the Vatican. As a result of this audience he wrote an article, with the above caption, for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Paris, of which he is the editor. While no one expected that M. Brunetiere would show himself so ill-bred as to relate what took place at the audience, many persons, doubtless, would be glad to have one of the greatest living masters of French prose describe, in his own vivid way, the impression made on him by Pope Leo. The writer, however, has done something far better for his readers than satisfying vulgar curiosity by elaborating for them the reflections which passed through his mind as he stood before the earthly head of the Roman Catholic Church, whom millions of human beings all over the globe reverence and look to for spiritual guidance. These reflections related to a question of deep interest and importance to persons of all grades of intellect and culture, that question being how far the advance of science has crowded out religious faith. From the acute and lucid observations of a shrewd observer, so competent to deal with the question discussed, we translate the following extracts:

"The time is not very distant from us when learned incredulity passed generally for a mark or a proof of superiority of intelligence and force of mind. People did not despise the importance of 'religions' in history, and especially the importance of 'religion' or of the 'religious sentiment' in the evolution of humanity. This mental disposition was even something which was thought to be an advance on the Eighteenth Century, for people, while professing infidelity, still reproached the Voltaires, the Diderots, the Condorcets, for the violence of their anti-Christian polemics, for the unfairness of their arguments and the narrowness of their philosophy. Equal fault is found with the 'theological state of mind,' which is called the embryonic phase of the human intellect. 'Religions,' says a recent book, 'are the residue of superstitions. . . . All intellectual progress is followed by a diminution of the supernatural in the world. . . . The future belongs to science.' These words are found in a book dated 1892, but the spirit which dictated them is twenty or thirty years older than they."

"What has come to pass since then? What silent work has been accomplished in the depths of contemporaneous thought? Whatever has come to pass, describe it as you may, it warrants our pointing out the 'bankruptcy of science.' The men who are devoted to science are indignant at this phrase and laugh it to scorn in their laboratories. For, say they, what promises made by physics and chemistry have not been kept, and even more than kept? Our sciences were not born yesterday, and, in less than a century, they have transformed the aspect of life. Give our sciences time to grow! Moreover, who are those who talk about bankruptcy or even failure? What do they know about science? What discovery, what progress in mechanics or natural history has made their name famous? Have they even accomplished so much as to invent the telephone or discover some vaccination against the croup? When some scientific man, of a more chimerical or venturesome spirit than his comrades, makes, in the name of science, promises he cannot fulfil, should science be accused? Good sense, which Descartes thought 'the most widely disseminated thing in the world,' is, on the contrary, the rarest thing known—more rare than talent, as rare perhaps, as genius; and we admit, without hesitation, that some great men of science have lacked the quality of common sense. Thus talk those who claim that 'the bankruptcy of science is naught but a resounding metaphor; and I cannot say that they are altogether wrong."

"Nevertheless, what is thus urged is not altogether sound; and whatever distinction is attempted to be drawn between the good sense of some 'true' scientific men and the sorry rashness of others, what is certain is that science has more than once promised to renew the 'face of the world.' Condorcet wrote just a hundred years ago: 'I think I have proved the possibility of making good judgment a quality nearly universal; of causing the habitual condition of

man, in an entire people, to be governed by truth, to submit in its conduct to the laws of morality, to be nourished by sweet and pure sentiments.' And he added: 'Such is the point to which the labors of genius and the progress of intelligence must inevitably lead.' Almost the same promise was made by Renan who died only the other day. He said: 'Science will always furnish man with the only means he has for ameliorating his lot.' Were Condorcet and Renan not 'true' men of science? Are not these promises of theirs to be considered the promises of science? Well may one pretend that these promises have been fulfilled, or that in this respect science has not shown itself a bankrupt!

"Let us regard the question a trifle nearer. No one can deny that the physical or natural sciences have promised to suppress 'mystery.' Not only have they not suppressed it, but we see clearly to-day that they never will throw light on it. They are powerless—I will not say to resolve, but even to give a hint of a solution of questions of the utmost importance to us: these are the questions relating to the origin of man, the law of his conduct, and his future destiny. The unknowable surrounds us, envelopes us, constrains us; and we cannot get from the laws of physics or the results of physiology any means of knowing anything about this unknowable. I admire as much as anybody the immortal labors of Darwin; and when the influence of his doctrine is compared to that of the discoveries of Newton, I willingly admit the truth of the comparison. Yet, whether we are descended from the monkey, or the monkey and ourselves have a common ancestor, we have not advanced a step toward knowing anything about the origin of man. Neither anthropology, nor ethnology, nor linguistics, has ever been able to tell us *what we are*. What is the origin of language? What is the origin of society? What is the origin of morality? Whoever, in this century, has tried to answer these questions has failed miserably. And every one who hereafter shall try to answer these questions will fail as miserably, because you cannot conceive of man without morality, without language, or outside of society; and thus the very elements of the solutions are beyond the reach of science."

"Yet those who put their whole faith in science keep saying: 'Give us more time. The day will come when science will throw more light on the questions you suggest.' Supposing that to be so, in the meanwhile we have got to live, to live a life which is not purely animal; and no science to-day furnishes us with any means of living such a life. Life is not contemplation, or speculation, but action. The sick man laughs at rules, provided you cure him. While the house is burning, the sole question for those who dwell in it is to extinguish the fire. Or, to use a comparison at once nobler, perhaps it is neither the time nor place to oppose the rights of a community with the caprice of an individual when we are on the field of battle."

"It is clear that the fact that science after long trying, has been unable to aid us in any way in living properly has been recognized by a great multitude of persons. This is proved unmistakably by the literature of the last few years. There has been an undeniable change in the sentiments of both writers and readers. The present situation may be summed up in a very few words: Science has lost its prestige, and Religion has reconquered a part of its own."—*The Literary Digest*.

A PRAYER OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

The Abbe Fouard, in his recent work, "Saint Paul and His Missions," writing of worship in the primitive churches, quotes a prayer which it was customary to recite after partaking of the Holy Communion. It was found in a Greek manuscript recently discovered in a library at Constantinople, and entitled "The teaching of the Apostles. This precious MS. is the earliest Christian work we possess outside of the inspired pages. According to the most reliable opinion, it was composed toward the close of the first century. It affords us a picture of some church in Syria or in Palestine, depicting its inner life, public teaching, religious services and practices. The prayer is translated as follows:

"Holy Father, we thank Thee because of Thy Holy name, which Thou hast made to dwell in our hearts; and for the

knowledge, the faith, and the immortality which Thou hast revealed unto us through Thy Servant Jesus. Unto Thee be glory for ever and ever. Almighty Master, Thou didst create all things for the glory of Thy name. Thou has given meat and drink to men, that they might enjoy themselves in thankfulness to Thee; but unto us Thou hast given a spiritual meat and drink, and life ever lasting, through Thy Servant. Above all we give Thee thanks for that Thou art almighty. Unto Thee be the glory for ever and ever. Be thou mindful, O Lord, of Thy Church, delivering it from all evil, endowing it with all perfectness in Thy love! From the four winds of heaven gather together this Church, made holy unto the kingdom which Thou hast prepared for us; for unto Thee is the power and glory for ever and for evermore! Oh, let grace descend, and let this world pass away! Hosanna to the Son of David! Whosoever is holy, let him draw nigh; whosoever is not holy, let him repent. Maranatha (the Lord cometh.) Amen."

It gives one a fresh realization of the perpetuity of the Church to know that a prayer recited as early as A.D. 80 is still exactly appropriate to the most solemn act of our holy religion.—*Ave Maria*.

NOT AMERICAN ENOUGH.

In the light of the following facts, things have come to a pretty pass for real Americans in this country. N. M. Estee, the defeated Republican candidate for governor of California, made this declaration at a recent meeting of the state committee. Just previous to the senatorial canvass a committee came to me and promised that I would be elected if I would give certain interests the control of my appointments. That committee also asked me to discharge a trusted employee on account of his religion. I refused to do either. I thought that I was a pretty good American. My grandfather fought in the revolution. My grandfather was a captain in the war of 1812; one of my brothers was killed at Vicksburg, and another was wounded at Gettysburg, but I was not American enough for the "American Protective Association."

MAGAZINES.

THE NORTH-AMERICAN REVIEW for February opens with three timely and important articles on "The financial Mud dle," written respectfully by the Hon. J. Sterling Morton, Secretary of Agriculture, Representative Wm. M. Springer, Chairman of the House Committee on Banking and Currency, and Henry W. Cannon, President of the Chase National Bank in New York and formerly Comptroller of the Currency.

In the CENTURY, for February, Prof. Sloane's "Life of Napoleon" is continued down to the first success at Toulon, and captivity at Antibes, following the fall of Robespierre. Mrs. James T. Fields contributes some reminiscences and letters of Dr. Holmes; Mr. Victor Louis Mason describes the new army weapons; there is an account of Emin Pasha's death by Mr. Dorsey Monun, United States agent in the Congo State.

The variety that young people always expect in St. Nicholas is to be found in the February number. Hon. S. G. W. Benjamin tell of "The Last Voyage of the Constitution from New York to Portsmouth, where the noble old frigate is now falling to decay. Mr. Benjamin was aboard the vessel during the cruise, which was one of peril and excitement."

The National Bank of Milan, O., was entered at an early hour Monday morning by five men, who blew open the safe and secured about \$30,000. Two men have been arrested for the crime.

Owing to a disagreement with Attorney General Olney, Lawrence Maxwell, Solicitor General, resigned. The president nominated J. M. Dickinson of Tennessee to be assistant solicitor general.

It is proposed to connect Lake Erie and the Ohio by making a canal from the Ohio River at Rochester, Pa., twenty-five miles from Pittsburgh, thence by Youngstown, Niles and Warren, O., and probably ending at Ashtabula, Fairport, or Lake Geneva on Lake Erie. It is proposed to make the canal large enough to provide for all economical transportation.

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