

The Catholic Record.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION. UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA. Ottawa, Canada March 7th, 1900.

To the Editor of THE CATHOLIC RECORD, London, Ont.

Dear Sir: For some time past I have read your estimable paper. THE CATHOLIC RECORD, and congratulate you upon the manner in which it is published.

Its matter and form are both good; and a truly Catholic spirit pervades the whole.

Therefore, with pleasure, I can recommend it to the faithful.

Blessing you and wishing you success. Believe me, to remain, Yours faithfully in Jesus Christ, D. FALCONE, Arch. of Lissa, Apost. Deleg.

London, Saturday Feb. 22, 1902.

MORE SENSATIONAL HERESIES.

Sensations arising out of sudden and unexpected leaps made by prominent ministers of the various Protestant denominations down into the fields of rank latitudinarianism or infidelity have become so frequent that they excite but little surprise in the general world, though they cause great commotion in the little cosmos in which they occur.

College professors seem to be the most subject to these aberrations. We witnessed some years ago the seismic disturbances caused in Presbyterianism by the idiosyncracies of two professors, one in a theological college in New York city and another in Cincinnati. The high positions occupied by these two occasioned a general turmoil in the ranks of Presbyterianism, and the General Assembly itself was moved to its foundation to such an extent that it was thought at one time that the matter might end in a schism which would range the whole Presbyterian Church into two factions, one "orthodox," and the other "heterodox."

In the conflict, the Orthodox party won in the first encounter. But it was very dubious what would have been the result if the battle had been continued a little longer. It was well known that the "Liberal" or Latitudinarian party could make a strong fight, and that it was likely to become stronger, the longer might have been the delay, and the Latitudinarians were already calculating how near they might come to the dividing of the next Assembly into two equal or nearly equal factions. The stalwarts were determined, however, and the result showed that they were correct in their estimate that the Church as a whole would sustain them in the effort to repress the rising heresy.

The Latitudinarians, however, were fairly confident that even though they might not obtain the victory at the first onset, it would be finally theirs, and prepared earnestly for the coming battle. But the chief champion on whom they relied, the Rev. Dr. Briggs of New York, gave the victory to the stalwarts by resigning definitely his position in the college, and finally leaving Presbyterianism altogether. The expected conflict thus collapsed; and the denouement was as farcical as it could well be, for the recalcitrant professor was received with open arms into the Episcopal Church, and ordained a clergyman thereof—"a priest," as that Church claims, though, so far from retracting his Latitudinarianism, he reiterated it several times in his writings both before and after his reception into Episcopalism.

But since this incident the like heresies of college professors have become frequent. Presbyterianism gave birth to Professor McGiffert's well-known heresy, and similar instances have arisen in other sects both in the United States and Canada in several denominations. It is, indeed, the natural result of the primary Protestant principle of private interpretation of Scripture that this should be the case.

The result is saddening, but it is inevitable when the authority of the Church instituted by Christ is set aside. These professors naturally, after asking themselves by what right their Churches, which have rejected the authority of the only Church which has come down indisputably to the present time from the Apostles, claim to lay down creeds which must be accepted by all their adherents, agree in the conclusion that such a claim is preposterous.

The most recent sensation of this kind has been created in the Methodist

Episcopal Church of the United States by Professor Charles W. Pearson, head of the department of English Literature in the Methodist Northwestern University of Evanston, Illinois.

The Zion's Herald, the Boston organ of the Methodist Episcopalians, says this is the worst case of heresy "ever known to have occurred in the Methodist Episcopal Church, if not any orthodox body."

This paper says "there can be no condonation of his (Professor Pearson's) deliberate and libellous utterances," and it demands his immediate dismissal from his professorship. It continues: "The Methodist Episcopal Church allows marked tolerance in individual opinion on non-essentials, but it has no place in its fold for any man who attacks the very citadel of its faith. Let the institution immediately purge itself of the unbearable reproach which this man has brought upon it and upon the denomination at large."

According to Professor Pearson, the infallibility of the Bible is a "superstitious and hurtful tradition, and the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments are 'mere poetic fancies incredible and untrue. Among these incredible fancies he specifies the stories of the fiery furnace, the ravens which fed Elijah, the dividing of the waters by Moses and Joshua, all being equally declared to be puerile legends, and the writing of the ten commandments by the finger of God on the tablets of stone is placed in the same category.

A Washington paper says of the Professor's pronouncement: "As a professor of English literature, it was not incumbent on him to meddle with theology. . . . and as an employee of a Methodist Board he had no right to attack or declare his disbelief in anything which the Methodists uphold as a part of their faith." Other Methodist papers are calling for the expulsion of Professor Pearson from his professorship. But a large section of the press openly take the side of the professor, and call upon the Methodist Church to modify its statutes and discipline so that revelation may be reconciled with evolution and the views of such thinkers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, "or otherwise," say they, "it will be so much the worse for Methodism; for Emerson, evolution, and the Bible, are to remain joint and harmonious factors in the religious life of the future." These are the words of the Chicago Unity, so-called undenominational paper of that city: that is to say, a Rationalistic paper which still keeps up a show of Christianity.

In all this we have the theory practically asserted that revealed truth must give way to human theories.

We certainly can have no sympathy with Rationalism, and we would regret to see either Methodism or any other form of Christianity becoming less dogmatic or more Latitudinarian than it is at present, for even an imperfect religion is somewhat better than none; but we must remark that Professor Pearson has only followed to its natural consequences the principle which Protestantism has always maintained, that the supreme judge in all controversies of religious faith is the individual judgment. This principle leads directly to the denial of all revealed truth, and it does not surprise us that Methodism and other sects are to-day reaping the fruits of the teachings of Protestantism for the last three and a half centuries. Methodism and all the other sects are finding all their energies insufficient to stop the current of infidelity which they themselves have set in motion in the first instance.

The statement of the case by Zion's Herald, as quoted above, deserves special notice. That journal admits that the Church in which the present scandal has arisen "allows marked tolerance in individual opinion on non-essentials."

We may well ask what is meant here by "non-essentials." It is easy to see that the subject spoken of is the general body of revealed truth, which not only Methodism, but all the denominations of Protestantism have come to regard as non-essentials, regarding only a few of these truths, namely, such as the vast majority of the sects admit to be fundamental, to be absolutely essential to true Christianity.

According to this theory, which is now very common among Protestants, the great bulk of the teachings of Christ and His Apostles consists of non-essential doctrines. They are revealed, indeed, but every man is free to reject them from his creed without forfeiting his claim to be a Christian.

It is easy to see that such a theory sets man as a judge over God Himself. It is a theory for which there is not, and there cannot be, any warrant in reason or Scripture. It is, besides, injurious to God and entirely subversive of Christianity, which declares by the mouth of Christ that "He that believeth not shall be condemned." (St. Mark xvi, 16.) That is to say, we are bound to believe all that God has taught. If we refuse to yield to God the homage of our understanding by believing whatso-

ever God has taught, we are certainly guilty of receiving another gospel than that which constitutes the "faith once delivered to the saints," (Jude 3) and we so incur the anathema pronounced by the Apostle St. Paul against the teachers and disciples of such strange gospel. (Gal. i, 7, 8, 9.)

The Catholic Church is the only harbor of safety against these dangers, because the Apostles who were sent by Christ, and who provided for the future teaching of Christ's faith by perpetuating the sacred ministry which Christ conferred upon them, through the ordination of a priesthood which should continue to the end of time, intended that the authority of Christ's Church, "the Church of the living God," should be always what it was in their day: "the pillar and ground of truth." (1. Tim. iii, 15.)

We have learned that since the Chicago Professor made his utterances which have given so much offence, he has volucarily tendered his resignation as professor in the Northwestern University. He has asked for a letter of dismissal from the Methodist Episcopal Church, but the authorities refused to grant this, as compliance would imply that he is in good standing in the Church, which they deny to be the case.

A THEOSOPHICAL VIEW OF RELIGIOUS RITES.

On behalf of the Theosophist sect, Mrs. Annie Besant in a recent work entitled "Esoteric Christianity" takes the ground that religious ceremonies are to be approved on the principle that the ethical character of ritual and the impressiveness of ceremonial are made certain by the fact that the Pagan nations made use of ceremonies in their religious worship. She asserts that the ceremonies used in the Catholic Church, which are also used by many Anglicans who imitate the Catholic ceremonial, are derived from Paganism, but this she considers to be rather a proof of their instructive and moral or ethical value than their evil character as the followers of Calvin and Knox have maintained.

As regards the matter of fact, Mrs. Besant is wrong in her assertion that Catholic ceremonies are derived from Paganism. There are indeed certain ceremonies of the Church the like of which were in part used by Pagans, but it was not from the Pagans they were derived. Sacrifices and the use of incense and holy water are derived from the Old Law, and were prescribed by Almighty God to Moses. Thus we have direct evidence that their use is lawful, and well calculated to raise the human mind to heavenly thoughts; and we cannot doubt that these symbols were used in the divine worship by command of God Himself from the creation of the world.

Sacrifices were offered up by Cain and Abel, and every reader of the Bible knows that it was because Abel's offering was made with a pure heart, whereas Cain's heart was fixed on things worldly, that "the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering," whereas Cain's sacrifice was not acceptable to God, wherupon "Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him."

Noah's first act on going forth from the ark by means of which he had been saved from the waters of the deluge, was to build an altar unto the Lord, and to offer thereon as burnt offerings "clean animals and fowls" of every kind. This was a sacrifice of thanksgiving and homage or adoration. Abraham and Jacob also offered sacrifices, and thus we find this rite among the people of God long before it was practiced by Pagans.

The first record of the use of incense in God's worship is found in the laws given by God to Moses, but we cannot doubt that it was used by the people of God at an earlier date, and the same is to be said of blessed or holy water. That these were used by Pagans with in the historical period is no proof that God borrowed their use from Paganism, but it would rather show that the Pagans retained the use of the symbolical rites which had been employed previously in the worship of the true God in accordance with commands given to mankind in some primitive revelation. The abuse of this revelation by Pagans who offered to false deities what was due to the true God could not deprive God of the right to what was due to Him. Mrs. Besant's theory, therefore, is not founded upon the facts of the case, or, to say the least, it is a gratuitous assumption.

This same Theosophical leader then gives a reason for a use of religious rites; but though she admits that they are reasonable in worship, her explanation of their reasonableness is absurd and farcical. She says Latin is used in the Catholic Church chants, "not to hide knowledge from the people, but that certain vibrations may be set up in the invisible worlds which cannot be set up in the ordinary languages of Europe, unless a great occultist (presumably a Theosophist) should compose

in them the necessary successions of sounds."

Thus, according to Mrs. Besant's theory, there is a system of wireless telegraphy instituted between earth and heaven whereby the vibrations of the air or ether are communicated to God in the Latin language, whereas He would not understand them if they were addressed to Him in any other tongue. In fact, it would require a Theosophist to compose a prayer which God would understand in English, French, or German! In absurdity, this cannot be surpassed.

The Sacramental rites are also explained as having "a magnetic effect" which "summons to the celebration the angels specially concerned with the materials used and the nature of the act performed, and they lend their powerful aid, pouring their own magnetic energies into the subtle counterparts, and even into the physical ether, thus reinforcing the energies of the celebrant."

It will be readily seen by our readers that this is arrant nonsense. The sacramental matter and the words used as the form of the sacrament are not based upon any magical forms such as those employed by the priests of the Egyptian Gods and goddesses whom the Theosophists appear to adore; but they symbolize the graces given to man through the sacraments by virtue of God's institution, and they signify and explain the effects of the sacraments, and it is for this cause that they are used. Other rites of ecclesiastical institution are used with the same purpose. There is this difference, however, between these two classes of rite, that those which have been instituted by God are essential, and cannot be changed by man or the Church, whereas those which are of ecclesiastical institution may be changed or modified by the proper ecclesiastical authorities by whom they have been instituted.

The ceremonies of the Old Law are not obligatory on Christians, but there is nothing to prevent that the Church should make use of them in public worship, so far as they may be deemed appropriate towards raising men's thoughts to heavenly things, the essential difference between the Old and New Law being duly regarded. The Old Law established by Moses was divine, but it merely prefigured Christ, Who was to come to open by His sufferings the gates of heaven which had been closed by the sin of our first parents. The New Law is the law of grace in which we have the work of Redemption accomplished, and the ceremonies used by the Church in offering up the sacrifice of the New Law, which is the Mass, differ from those of the Old Law, because they signify that the work of Redemption has been accomplished. It is the office of the Church of Christ, therefore, to order and arrange the ritual or ceremonial of the Church so as to effect this purpose. This is what the Catholic Church has done, not from any thought that her ceremonies have any magical effect by the vibrations which, according to Mrs. Besant's theories they produce on the atmosphere or the suppositions ether which surrounds the earth and reaches the angels, but because they have in their allegorical or symbolical signification an effect upon believers which makes them contemplate more effectually God and His attributes, and His mercies to mankind.

A REBUFF TO THE PROTESTANT ALLIANCE OF ENGLAND.

The Protestant Alliance of London, England, have met with a setback which ought to be of some use to the artificially excitable people composing it who see the threatening finger of the Pope influencing every movement which takes place in the country.

These are the people who wish to keep the King's accession oath just as it is, through a pretended fear that if the King were not obliged to perjure himself and insult Catholics as soon as possible after coming to the throne, the country would not be safe from Papal domination. They are made of the same material and cast in the same mould as our Canadian Orangemen, and those who were for a time members of the defunct P. P. A. in our own Canada.

The Alliance, of which John Kensit is a leading light, had summonses issued against the Jesuit Fathers Sidney Smith, Thurston, and Jules Gerard, as representing Jesuits resident in England, and those who had been driven from France by the iniquitous Law of Associations which recently became law in that country. The charge was that under the Emancipation Act of 1829, known as the "Catholic Relief Act," Jesuits are forbidden to come into England from abroad, and persons residing in the country are forbidden to become members of the order, and all are subject to banishment who contravene these tyrannical laws.

The Court decided that these laws are obsolete and must be considered as a dead-letter, whereas there is no record that they were ever enforced. Consequently those living in the country may remain undisturbed, and those coming into it cannot be expelled.

Besides, Judge Kennedy decided that if there were to be a prosecution under the Act in question, proceedings should be taken by the Crown and not by any private persons. The information was therefore dismissed and the Jesuit Fathers were discharged.

It is said that Attorney-General Sir Richard Webster, and Solicitor-General Sir Robert Finlay advised the Judge to render this decision, as the Government is adverse to engendering religious feuds at the present moment when recruits for the army are badly needed, as an anti-Catholic decision in the matter might seriously interfere with the recruiting which is now going on. In addition to this reason, it is deemed unwise to encourage the excessive and dangerous zeal of the imbeciles who see the menaces of the Inquisition on the slightest occasion, and who, whenever a new Catholic chapel is erected, imagine that the fires of Smithfield are to be relighted.

The officials of the Protestant Alliance assert that the matter will not be allowed to rest here, but will be appealed to the High Court, but the probability is that the appeal will not be granted.

THE CATHOLIC PRESS.

The following wise admonition has been issued by the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., to Catholic editors in Italy who have so far forgotten the charity with which they should treat each other as to indulge in harsh language when they differ in opinion from other Catholic journalists. The advice is equally applicable to Catholic journalists on this continent. It must be remarked, however, that it would be a mistake to suppose that the rebuke is intended for the Catholic editors of Italy in general, as only a small number have offended in the manner indicated by the Holy Father:

"Certain writers in Catholic newspapers, or periodicals, allow themselves at times to address injurious words to their confères and to give to their discussions a tone of haughtiness and acrimony which, while it is utterly inconsistent with their professions as Catholics, embitters minds ever more, and cannot but produce fatal divisions in the field of Catholic action. These methods of discussion must cease forthwith, in obedience also to the august desires which the Holy Father has repeatedly expressed and recently confirmed in the Brief addressed to the Catholic Congress at Toronto; wherein he gravely warned and exhorted those who devote themselves to Catholic activity to remove every conflict, and thus to direct the forces of all to one and the same scope, so that the fruits of harmony and concord among themselves shall no longer be desired in vain."

AN ILLIBERAL LIBERAL.

On Friday, 14th inst., Lord Rosebery addressed a great meeting at Liverpool and spoke pointedly on the various matters which bear most directly upon the respective policies of the Conservative and Liberal parties. He praised Dr. Kuyper, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, for his efforts to bring about a peace in South Africa, and expressed his opinion that notwithstanding the limited power of the Boer delegates in Europe, it would have been wise for the British Government to have considered the propriety at least of giving them passes to enable them to consult with the Boers on the field in South Africa. In his opinion no honorable means should be left untried to bring about a peace.

But he is not in favor of bringing about a lasting peace with Ireland, and on behalf of his wing of the Liberal party, he repudiates any alliance with the Irish nationalists. Their claims, he says, cannot be conceded. He continued: "The Irish Nationalists have declared that nothing short of absolute separation will satisfy them, and no sane man will ever advocate the granting of independence to Ireland, which in time of war might turn the balance between the success and defeat of the British army."

It appears to us a strange position and a confession of great weakness on the part of a would-be leader of one of the great parties of the British Empire to apply rules so opposite to each other to two or more countries which form parts of that Empire, viz., Ireland and the late South African Republics. To Ireland, which is not in arms at all, and which has no intention of taking up arms, the wisest leader would apply the harshest of coercion, while to the Boers in arms he would be most lenient, and would grant almost everything they ask.

A would-be leader who would thus give a premium to armed resistance is not worthy ever to occupy the position of leadership.

The late Mr. Parnell, and Mr. John Redmond himself have many times declared their desire to be at peace and

harmony with the English people, and their readiness to live with them on such terms if Ireland's admitted grievances be redressed, and it is only on the assumption that a deaf ear is to be turned to the legitimate demands of Ireland that the Irish leaders have spoken from time to time in such a way that they might be understood to ask for the entire separation of Ireland from the British Empire.

It ought not to be forgotten that Ireland was impoverished by oppressive legislation favoring the few who constitute the British garrison in Ireland, and that she now asks that this legislation be reversed by legislation favoring the people. This is what Lord Rosebery by implication declares cannot be granted, while he is ready to do for the Boers who are in arms all that they demand. Such tergiversation would be as disgraceful to the Liberal party who might adopt it, as to their hypocritical leader who propounds it.

CHEAP WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

A very satisfactory arrangement has been made between Mr. Marconi and the Canadian Government whereby a contribution will be given from the Federal exchequer toward the erection of a station at Cape Breton for the receipt and transmission of messages to Cornwall by wireless telegraphy, in return for which Mr. Marconi guarantees to send commercial messages at 60 per cent. discount on present prices: that is to say, messages which now cost 25 cents per word will cost only 10 cents per word by the new system. In addition to this, light houses are to be equipped with instruments so as to communicate to the shore messages for help in the case of disasters at sea in all kinds of weather, and such messages will be sent free by the Marconi System. It is expected that by this means much life and property will be saved, as ready relief can be sent as soon as these disasters shall be known to have occurred. These arrangements will certainly be of immense advantage to Canada, if the communication with England by this system can really be effected. We have Mr. Marconi's assurance that he really received messages from Cornwall, and hitherto he has never made announcements of successes which have not been realities. It must be supposed, therefore, that his success is real, so far as he has announced it; yet the public will await with anxiety a tangible proof that the messages can be really transmitted across the Atlantic. There is no doubt, however, that the messages can be sent to and from the lighthouses, along the coast, so that the benefits to be derived from this quarter may be taken as a certainty, while those to be derived from telegraphy across the Atlantic remain as before very highly probable.

THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIANITY.

A remarkable article appeared recently in the columns of the New York Sun which treats of the commission recently appointed by the Holy Father Pope Leo XIII. "to consider all questions connected with Biblical studies."

It is understood that the aim of the commission will be to ascertain the limits of the freedom which can be made use of by Catholic exegetists in their treatment of matters referred to in Holy Scripture and which are connected with the conclusions drawn by scientific investigators of the present day, namely, what conclusions of modern scientists are incompatible with the teachings of revelation, and where is to be found the debatable ground where both theologians and men of science are free to hold such opinions as commend themselves to their minds, inasmuch as these opinions do not trench upon the domain of faith.

All Catholics must hold that the Bible has God for its author, and that the Latin Vulgate is an authentic translation which does not depart from the original truth in any thing which concerns faith or morals.

Upon these two propositions, and especially on the first, all Christian doctrine rests, so that, if it be denied, no reliance can be placed upon Christian teaching.

This being the case, the Catholic Church can have no fear of the result of any solid scientific investigation. Truth cannot be opposed to truth. Mathematics can never demonstrate the falsity of a historical fact the truth of which is known by the testimony of witnesses who were themselves certain of the fact, and were not deceivers.

The miraculous facts, and even those which are not miraculous but are attested in Holy Scripture as historical, can never be shown, and therefore never will be shown, to be against reason or science, whether mathematical, astronomical, geographical or historical. But the so-called higher critics who have pretended to find contradictions to Scripture in their scientific researches, must have erred in their conclusions drawn from unskilful inves-

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