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## THE ANNUNCIATION.

The festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, which is celebrated by the Church on the 25th of the present month, is one of the important feasts in the Calendar, because the mysteries which are commemorated on it are of the highest importance to every Christian. The event in the life of Christ which we are on this day invited by the Church to honor is His Incarnation, which is the greatest of all benefits conferred on man, inasmuch as it is the means whereby the inheritance which was lost through the sin of our first parents is restored to the human race.

On Christmas day we also commemorated this mystery of the Incarnation, with special reference to our Redeemer Jesus Christ in person, and for this reason the feast of the Annunciation, instituted in memory of the same mystery, is especially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, whose share in the mystery is not to be overlooked. While Christmas day is reckoned as one of the feasts of our Lord the Annunciation is on this account regarded as a feast of the Blessed Virgin, and the offices of the Church recited on this feast keep in view the honor due to the Blessed Virgin, which is paid to her because God Himself so much honored her.

The history of the Annunciation is to be found in the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke.

The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to Mary, a virgin espoused to Joseph, of the House of David. "And the Angel being come in said unto her: Hail full of grace: the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women."

Mary was much surprised and troubled at being thus addressed, "and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: 'Fear not Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end.'"

"And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the Angel answering said to her: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'"

The Angel then, as a sign of the truth of his statement, and to assure Mary that what he foretold should happen, gave her the information that her cousin Elizabeth was about to give birth to a child in her old age. Then Mary said:

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. And the Angel departed from her."

The purpose of our divine Saviour's birth was the redemption of mankind. By the sin of our first parents heaven was closed against the whole human race, and it could not be opened, except by God Himself, and the method adopted by God was that His Son, the second person of the adorable Trinity, should take upon Himself human infirmities, and live on earth a life of poverty, obscurity and suffering, and should die the death which we deserved for our sins. In no other way could sin be adequately atoned for and the debt due to God on account of it be sufficiently paid.

It was on the feast of the Annunciation, therefore, that Christ took the first step towards this great work of Redemption by becoming the Son of Mary. Holy Scripture mentions no other purpose of the Incarnation except the one we have pointed out, our Redemption. God may in His infinite wisdom have had in view other purposes besides, but as far as we are concerned, we know only of this one, and

we may regard it as God's only purpose in His act of humiliation in coming down from His throne in heaven to be our brother in the flesh: so we are told in the Nicene Creed:

"For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven."

And by St. Paul:

"Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him and hath given Him a name which is above all names." (Phil. ii., 6, 9.)

"It hath well pleased the Father through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross . . . blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us . . . fastening it to the cross."

The share which Mary had in this work of Redemption is described in the passage from St. Luke which we have already quoted. The Incarnation of our Lord is made to depend on her consent to the mystery of the Incarnation: and the Redemption of man is in suspense until she utters the consenting words:

"Be it done to me according to thy word."

We therefore owe to her, in the second place, after our Lord Himself, our Redemption from the power of the devil, and it is most proper that on the recurrence of the feast of the Annunciation we should express our profound gratitude to her.

The mystery of the Incarnation, whereby God becomes the Son of Mary, must ever be a strong motive on account of which we should honor the Blessed and Immaculate Mother of God. The greatness of the dignity conferred upon her by this event is proclaimed by her cousin Elizabeth, who declares herself unworthy that she should be honored with a visit from one so elevated:

"Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke i.)

Mary also, with all humility, declares the dignity of her position:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . . Because he that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy is his name."

But she does not forget to continue the practice of humility in the midst of her dignity, for she is fully aware that it is on account of this virtue which shone so brightly in her character that she has received so great a favor, for:

"He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid."

We must, therefore, on this great feast, unite in honoring the ever Blessed Mother of God. This honor is due to her, and is paid to her by all nations in the Catholic Church, as Mary herself should be the case.

"For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed."

## SUPERSTITIOUS CLAIMS.

It was not formerly the case, but of late years it has become a common practice, for Anglicans to endeavor to make it appear that the modern Church of England is identical with the Church as it existed in England before the so-called "Reformation."

To those who know the history of that Reformation this claim is too preposterous to require refutation; yet there are some well-meaning Anglicans who accept the statement, because they place implicit confidence in the assertions of their clergy or of polemical writers who by such groundless statements try to justify the Anglican schism. Others will adopt any theory which will give them a chance to maintain for a time that their heretical establishment is the one true and Apostolic Church which has existed for more than eighteen centuries, having been established by Christ Himself and having continued to exist from the days of the Apostles down to the present time.

A recent article in the *Canadian Churchman*, which was especially intended for the instruction of the young in the principles of Christianity, is a sample of the absurdity of which we here speak. We are told:

"Perhaps you may say, 'I thought the Church of England began three or four hundred years ago, at the Reformation. Was it not begun by Henry VIII. and Cranmer?'"

"This is quite a mistake, as all persons who have studied the history of England know."

It is a common practice for dishonest writers to pretend that their fallacies and misrepresentations of history are well known facts, and this course often terrifies the ignorant and timid into admissions which they otherwise would not make. This

game, which is attempted by the writer in the *Canadian Churchman*, is generally called by the significant name, "bluff." It consists in boldly asserting what is not true, in the expectation of bearing down opposition by the sheer force of brazen effrontery.

The article in question appeared in the *Churchman* of 21st Jan., and we notice it because the assumptions contained in it are so frequently put forward by those writers, clerical and lay, who are engaged in discussing the intestine bickerings which are raging within the bosom of Anglicanism, perhaps more so in Canada than even in England and the United States.

The case as stated by the writer in the *Churchman* stands thus:

"In the reign of Henry VIII. the Church of England, the old National Church of this country, reformed herself. That is why it is called the Reformation of the Church of England. We do not speak of anything which begins for the first time as being reformed."

The writer then says that the chief reform required was to abolish the authority of the Pope which had been introduced into England "four or five hundred years" previously, and Henry VIII., seeing that he would be supported by the people and the Church, openly quarrelled with the Pope and declared that the Pope had no authority in his realm. Henry was not a good man, and his quarrel was begun on a bad pretext, but God used him as an instrument for the reformation of the Church as He used John for a similar purpose."

We are then told that a number of superstitious customs and errors which had crept into the Church were cut away "and the old Latin services, with some changes, were translated into English. . . . The ancient customs and creeds were retained. The old succession of Bishops, priests and deacons went on as before. Times change, but our Church ways of teaching and worshipping are just the old ways which once all Christians used. Queen Elizabeth said: 'There is no new faith propagated in England. . . . Strictly speaking there were never any Roman Catholics in England except modern ones. Certainly there never was any 'Roman Catholic Church' here. Though the Bishop of Rome had influence here, and though things were done, to a large extent, in the same way as they are now done in Roman Catholic countries, yet ours was always the English Catholic, not Roman Catholic Church, and the name by which it was always known was the name it has still, 'the Church of England or Anglican Church.'"

There is no greater absurdity imaginable than all this effort to make the modern Church of England appear to be the ancient Catholic Church. Before Protestantism arose it certainly often happened that the Church in any particular country was called the Church of that country, as the Church of England, the Church of France, etc., but this mode of speech by no means implied independent national Churches existing in those countries. They were simply portions of the one universal Church which for convenience of speech were thus designated, and it may be seen even from the admission of the *Canadian Churchman* that all these portions of the Church recognized as their head the Bishop of Rome, whose authority was universal.

Christ did not institute a plurality of Churches, so that each nation should have an independent ecclesiastical organization, with doctrines to suit the fancies of its adherents. He commissioned His Apostles to teach His one gospel everywhere as He had revealed it, and in the Apostolic body was the centre of unity. The Apostolic body did not claim to be the source of as many distinct organizations as there were Apostles, but all assembled in council to decide upon matters of general interest to the Church, and the decisions of the council were obligatory on the whole Church, so that the Council of Jerusalem, the assembly of which is described in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, issued its decrees as being the voice of the Holy Ghost.

The Commission (St. John xxi.) which Christ gave to St. Peter to feed His lambs and His sheep is also general, thus positively excluding the Anglican idea of independent national Churches; and if any further proof of this be needed it will be found in the building of Christ's one Church on the rock, Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (St. Matt. xvi., 18.)

From these considerations it follows that so essential to the Church of Christ

is its absolute unity that any organization which is not part of that universal Church, or which does not recognize the successor of St. Peter as its head, cannot have the least claim to be either the Church of Christ itself or any portion thereof. The Anglican Church is precisely in this plight. The Church of England, as it existed before Henry VIII., was admittedly part of the universal Church of Christ, and, like the Churches of all other countries, it recognized the Pope as St. Peter's lawful successor. But as soon as it ceased to have communion with the universal Church and its Supreme Head, it became but a rotten and dead limb, and as such it was lopped from the tree from which was derived all spiritual life. Instead of acknowledging the authority which Christ established as supreme it recognized as its head a king whom the *Churchman* admits to have assumed that authority for an evil purpose. This purpose, it is well known, was that he might free himself from subjection to the divine law, which binds kings as well as subjects, to be faithful to their marriage obligations.

The *Churchman* misrepresents the causes which led to the establishment of the modern Church of England, when it states that it was established for the purpose of getting rid of the usurped authority of the Pope. It was established by Henry VIII. because he foresaw that a National Church, recognizing him as its head, would be more accommodating than the Church of God to exempt him from duties which all Christians are bound to fulfil. In this he was not mistaken. He used his earthly power to substitute a human for a divine Church, and the result was that this creature of his will gave him all the liberty he desired to violate God's law, and went through the mockery of approving and blessing his second, third and even his seventh marriage: a mockery which of itself is sufficient to show that it has no claim to be called the true Church of Christ.

The boast of the *Churchman* that the modern Church of which it claims to be an organ is now alone called the Church of England is of little avail. We are nowhere told in Scripture or ecclesiastical tradition that a Church is necessarily the Church of Christ because it has the civil power on its side enabling it to usurp the name of the "Church of England," though the "Church of England" was truly a part of the Church of Christ when the name was indicative of what it ought to mean at the present day. The Church which is one with the ancient Church of England is the Catholic Church in union with St. Peter's successor.

The statement that the Church of England was not Roman before the Reformation is a misstatement. It was a Pope who sent the missionaries who Christianized King Lucius in the year 187, and a Pope who sent St. Augustine and his monks to convert the Angles and Saxons after these nations had succeeded in conquering the country; and after both of these periods, as well as after the Norman conquest, the authority of the Pope was fully recognized by the English Church, though it did occur from time to time that the kings were sometimes inclined through motives of avarice or ambition to interfere with the liberty, or to assume rights in the government of the Church which neither the Church itself, nor the Pope, its supreme head, would ever recognize. But with all this not even these rebellious kings ever assumed the supremacy which was granted to Henry VIII., Edward IV. and Elizabeth by the civilly created modern Church of England.

We might continue this subject by showing the changes of doctrine introduced by the modern English Church, but as the present article is already sufficiently long, we shall merely add that neither in doctrine nor in discipline is the Church of England, so called now-a-days, one with the Church of St. Anselm, Cardinal Pandulf, Venerable Bede, St. Augustine, and Fulgentius, through whom we are brought to the first introduction of Christianity into Britain.

As the *Churchman* appeals to Magna Charta to prove that the Church of England was in the days of King John called the Church of England, we must remind our contemporary that Archbishop Pandulf, the Primate of England, whose name appears as the most prominent among the nobles who secured that great charter, is described on that same document as "Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church." Such a title would be very incongruously applied to the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Church of England as it exists to day.

## A CONTROVERSY ON RITUALISTIC PRACTICES.

It was announced a few weeks ago that Dr. Ellicot, Anglican Bishop of Gloucester, had received from his admirers in that city the gift of a mitre, a cope, a crozier and other ecclesiastical ornaments. The Evangelical or Low Church section of his Cathedral parish, always on the lookout for anything of Papistical tendency, protested strongly against the acceptance of the gift, and still more vehemently against the use of these ornaments in any way in public worship.

Dr. Ellicot has replied publicly to those who made this protest, and he informs them that he will make use of the vestments, and will hand them down to his successors in his See. The reason he gives for showing this much respect for these ecclesiastical ornaments is the strangest part of the matter. It is not because the ornaments are necessary for the decorum of public worship, nor because they are prescribed by the Church Ritual that he will use them, but because "it would be disrespectful to the donors if he treated their gifts as of no account." He can discover no better reason for adhering to an ancient ecclesiastical usage than to minister to the pride of a number of his more wealthy parishioners.

The Evangelicals are now in a great rage against their Bishop because he pays no attention to their remonstrances. They regard all special vestments used in the Church as wicked and superstitious, but it is clear that Dr. Ellicot is of a different opinion. The malcontents believe that the use of emblems of episcopal authority in the Church will be a step towards a return to ancient Catholic usages and doctrines, but the Bishop sees no such danger. The Book of Common Prayer expressly approves the use of such vestments as were prescribed to be used in the Church, during the reign of King Edward VI., and we believe this rubric implies the use of mitre, staff and cope, but this has been slighted so long that we presume it will puzzle the Bishop himself and the masters of ceremonies of Gloucester cathedral to know how to make proper use of these so long neglected symbolical ornaments.

The Bishop, however, has the Rubrics on his side, and in the argument he can snap his fingers at the Low Churchmen who are so ready to detect signs that Protestantism is in danger. But the Low Churchmen will perhaps take the course which has been adopted by their brethren of the Church of the Ascension in Hamilton, Ont., who are cutting off the supplies and refusing to contribute their usual offerings because the Rector there follows the prescriptions of the prayer-book by using ecclesiastical vestments as required by the standards of the Church.

It is somewhat strange that both in Canada and England the ultra-Protestants, who are the loudest in proclaiming that the Catholic Church was thoroughly purified and reformed by the institution of the Church of England, should now discover that a strict adherence to the rubrics of the reformed Church will lead back to Popery. Popery must have a very strong foundation in truth if the logical consequence of even Protestant practice thus leads the mind to the adoption of those very things which have hitherto been loudly denounced as Popish errors and superstitions. We regard Dr. Ellicot's reason for retaining the ornaments to be a very weak one. A Catholic would point out that reason itself shows that the use of special vestments in divine worship is calculated to excite respect; and for this cause among others their use was commanded by God under the Old Law; and we learn from history and ecclesiastical tradition that they were used in the Church of God from the time of the Apostles.

These are valid reasons why appropriate ornaments should be used by Catholic Bishops, as there is a real authority attached to the office of a Bishop in the Catholic Church, inasmuch as a Catholic Bishop is actually a successor to the Apostles. But this is not the case with Dr. Ellicot and his confederates, who are Bishops only by virtue of authority conferred on them by the civil law. They are civil officers, but an Act of Parliament cannot confer ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It is the ground of the Low Church opposition to the use of mitre and other episcopal ornaments by Dr. Ellicot, the malcontents would have reason on their side, for the mitre and crozier or staff are by time honored usage essentially emblems of ecclesiastical authority.

The mitre was used by the high priest under the old law (Ex. xxviii., 4, 37, etc.) and the staff by "law-givers." (Num. xxi., 18.) These emblems are therefore properly used by Catholic Bishops, but they are without meaning in the hands of pseudo-Bishops, like Dr. Ellicot, who cannot claim Apostolic authority. To them the words of St. Optatus of Milevis (A. D. 368), addressed to the Donatist Bishops, are perfectly applicable:—

"Whence, then, is it that you strive to usurp unto yourselves the keys of the kingdom of heaven, you who sacrilegiously fight against the chair of Peter, by your presumption and audacity repudiating that blessedness with which he deserved to be commended 'who walked not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners.' Your predecessors went away in the counsel of ungodliness, that the Church might be divided. They also entered into the way of sinners, when they made the attempt to divide Christ, whose robes even the Jews would not tear, whereas the Apostle Paul asks: 'Is Christ divided?'"

"Understand, then, late as it is, that you are ungodly children, branches broken from the tree, tendrils cut off from the vine, a stream separated from its fountainhead. A small stream which has no spring can be a fountainhead, nor a branch a tree, since a tree flourishes from its own roots, but a branch cut off withers."

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

A MOVEMENT is on foot to procure for the letter carriers an increase of salary, and last week a large and influential deputation waited on the Postmaster General with this object in view. It may be said that his statement in regard to the matter bore for the carriers an encouraging aspect, and we trust that the increase will be brought about at an early day. The wonder is that for so many years such a shamefully small pittance has been doled out to these men, holding, as they do, most responsible and onerous positions. They are, in fact, at the beginning, placed on the same level as the most poorly-paid class of unskilled laborers in the country, and the yearly increase is miserably in the extreme. Uncle Sam pays his hired help in a manly fashion, and the rate of wage allowed his letter carriers enables them to make ends meet and live in a respectable manner. Fancy a letter carrier, with a wife and family to support, receiving a dollar a day! Shame! Shame! Give the hard workers a lift, gentlemen at Ottawa.

THE BAPTISTS have been celebrating the centennial of Wm. Carey, a person who, it is claimed, was in his time a great missionary. In the Baptist communion Mr. Carey is no doubt considered a very prominent personage, though in the great world outside that denomination he holds a very small place. Rev. Z. Grennell, of Detroit, spoke at the meeting held in this city after this fashion:

"This year was marked by the celebration of two great events—the discovery of the new world four hundred years ago and the opening up of the foreign missionary movement 300 years later. Columbus and Carey were alike, inasmuch as that they both opened up new fields of enterprise and great developments. These men were unlike in that one went forth as a result of selfishness and the other because of his love. The star of Columbus pales in comparison with the radiance of Carey. Christians gave thanks to God for the great man He raised up 100 years ago. The Carey centennial was a fresh recognition of the goodness of God. We might speak of the Carey epoch and the Luther reformation in similar terms."

The Centennial Commissioners at Chicago may possibly make a note of the assertion that the star of Columbus pales in comparison with the radiance of Carey. Whether they will govern themselves accordingly remains to be seen.

It was the *Calgary Tribune* which first made the public accusation that Sir John Thompson, or at all events the Government of Hon. J. J. C. Abbott, had plotted with the Catholic hierarchy for the purpose of securing the solid Catholic vote for the Conservative party at the bye elections, the price being the reconstruction of the Cabinet in such a way as to please the Bishops. The absurdity of this statement is such that there is scarcely any need of a refutation of it; however, as far as Sir John Thompson is concerned, that honorable gentleman has written a letter to the editor of the *Tribune* answering certain questions asked him by the editor. Sir John denies in most emphatic terms that he had any share whatever in such intrigues as were attributed to him. His letter is as follows:

"Ottawa, 5th March, 1892.

"DEAR SIR—Thanks for your kind-