

The Great Visitant.

Deep in the dark I hear the feet of God; He walks the world; He puts His holy hand Upon the watcher's soul; and more than this, Within it benefits for each one— Then passes on, but ah! where He meets A watcher waiting for Him, He is glad.

SECTARIAN ECCE TRICITIES.

FOR THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

When, on the "heresy hunting" topic, we read in the public prints (chiefly of the United States) the numerous articles from time to time appearing, frequently light and frivolous in tone, or indicative of a very imperfect conception of the matters at issue, considered in their relations, one wonders at the vagueness, so far as doctrine is concerned, of the objective Christianity prevailing among masses of non-Catholic communities, which the secular press so largely represents. Yet considering the fact, that the notions of men, in respect to Christian belief, have not in accord with principles recognized by right reason, must necessarily be attributed to mere sentiment, fancy, or ideas derived from social and sectarian tradition, we can, at least, begin to understand the why and the wherefore of the multifarious variations of opinion met with, not only in lay, but in clerical circles also. So that it is not surprising if the contradictory views as to the "word of God," propounded from the pulpits of their recognized instructors, are found occasionally to mystify somewhat secular journalists, causing them often-times to fail in perceiving the real significance of many theological propositions and statements. As to the vast body of the less criticality, who merely echo the ideas of their chosen spiritual guides (the "Bible alone" theory, as a matter of fact, being in practice a manifest fiction) we need not concern ourselves much. Interesting indeed, and inviting for remark, modern notions and beliefs regarding Christianity must be held to be; but it would be quite impossible, within space at command, to describe and unravel the inconsistencies, sophistries and confusion of thought, now prevailing on the subject in both lay and clerical minds and meeting us every day in the columns of the press. As samples, however, calling for little or no special remark, which in some degree will illustrate my meaning, I, in the first place, recall the old time platform, still nominally adhered to by many, i. e., "Private judgment," and the "Bible alone without note or comment"—a rule which, at the present day, we find to be modified thus by the Rev. Professor Schaff: "According to the fundamental principle of all Protestant Churches, the bible is the supreme rule of faith and duty, and is the final tribunal in all theological controversies. . . . but the bible is not unchurchly or anti-churchly, nor irrational. . . . It inspires the Church, and enlightens reason. . . . and it is explained by the teaching of the Church, and apprehended by reason." Upon which, I merely observe, that although Professor Schaff stands in the very first rank of Presbyterian divines, it would seem from this statement that his ideas on the Protestant rule are of a somewhat mixed character, and not indeed perfectly perspicuous. To call the bible a "final tribunal" for settling disputes, which, by it, are never settled, is surely nonsense. But let us hear the Rev. Lyman Abbott, (Congregationalist) editor of the Christian Union, and successor generally of the late Rev. Ward Beecher, of Brooklyn: "The bible is the revelation of the laws both of God and man, because God and man are in every essence one. It is not a book external to man. It is the revelation of those truths implanted in the heart of man by his Creator. . . . The bible must be infallible if it is the revelation of external law. To me, it is more sacred, because probably human." Here, apparently, as suggested, is the theory that the Christian revelation is simply a republication of natural law and religion; from which I should suppose it to be not impossible that Doctor Abbott may go a little further, and endorse the views of his predecessor in Plymouth Church, the Rev. Ward Beecher, who denied both original sin and even the existence of Adam: ("There was, there is, no lost race. . . . Adam never stumbled. . . . Adam never existed.") But, whatever Doctor Abbott may think on these points, it is obvious to remark on the theory he propounds, that it is clearly open to the objection that nature, as simple nature, should certainly suffice for itself; and, furthermore, that if "the truths of revelation are implanted in the heart of man by his Creator," revelation may, not without reason, be considered superfluous; needing no Lyman Abbott, at all events, to tell us what its contents are. Next (3) we have the Rev. Heber Newton (Episcopalian) pronouncing as follows: "The truth of the creed rests, not on the authority of the body setting it forth, but on its own intrinsic truthfulness, its interpretation of the Christian consciousness." Yet an ordinary, old-fashioned Christian man would probably, with more reason, maintain that the truth of the creed rests, not at all on the Christian consciousness, but on the objective word of God, who is truth itself. Furthermore (4) the same divine observes that "the thoughts of laymen need not concern itself with any doctrine not embodied in the creed." A remark which seems to

imply, that in the opinion of the preacher "the creed" exhausts revelation, in respect to the articles contained in it, and excludes as non-essential all limiting explications thereof, as well as all articles of belief, not contained in it—a view of the creed which seems to explain a previous declaration of Newton, that "God the Word was as truly incarnate in the person of the monk Martin Luther, as in the person of Jesus Christ." (Sermon 13th Jan., 1889). The ridiculous position as to the creed thus taken, which indeed is a favorite one with a large number of Episcopalians, I may further illustrate by Dr. Newton's enquiry, (5) "What does the Church (Episcopal) teach us concerning the atonement? Only that which is contained in the simple undogmatic language of our creed, which for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And again (6), "What must we believe concerning the Bible? Nothing beyond the simple declaration of the Nicene Creed, 'who (the Holy Ghost) spake by the prophets.'" But we need not believe even so much, according to the Rev. H. McQuerey (ex-Episcopalian), who says (7) that "now that the Church and the Bible have both been shown to be fallible, the reign of dogma is at an end. Doctor Newton, however, continues his enquiries, on the supposition that something or other should be believed, and asks (8) "What the Episcopal Church requires him to believe concerning the sacraments?" "Nothing," he answers, "beyond that which may be necessarily meant by the great phrase of the Nicene Creed, 'I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.'" True, indeed, it is that some of the declarations of Doctor Newton are about to cause his arraignment for heretical teaching, but it remains to be seen whether the orthodoxy of his brethren will be found on that occasion to be more pronounced than in the case of Doctor McQuerey, whose conviction was secured by a bare majority of one (3 to 2). Meanwhile, having perhaps his arraignment in view, we find the Rev. Doctor discoursing eloquently upon charity, which he calls "the foundation of religious belief"—an observation somewhat equivocal, and liable to the objection that since it is man alone of whom faith can be predicated, to believe in God, and in part to know Him, are certainly conditions sine qua non of love or charity. Hence the Rev. B. F. Dewosta (Episcopalian), referring to Newton's observation, retorts that if charity is greater than faith and hope it is "because it is built upon faith and hope." But, returning to the Rev. Lyman Abbott, and referring to the Boston Arena, vol. 3, page 36, in an article on Christianity, he remarks of Christ that "He organized no society, no Church, which confessedly was not established until after His death. He framed no liturgy. . . . His object was simply and solely to promote the well-being of mankind." There may be some question here as to the precise meaning intended by the word "organized," but the learned writer clearly wishes to convey the idea, not that Christ established His Church after His death, though before His ascension, but that He did not establish a Church at all—a notion which, though not agreeable, I think, to Protestant teaching in general, is doubtless in accord with the tradition of the modern sect of Congregationalists. It is a view, however, which is tantamount to the denial of a divinely authorized ministry of teachers, and must effectually dispose of any pretensions the Rev. L. Abbott may personally advance to a ministerial character, notwithstanding what might perhaps be inferred from the statement of a Chicago delegate at the recent Congregationalist council in London, viz., that the old Congregational "leaders" were as truly called of God "as were the Apostles." Congregationalists are, however, free pulpiteres, and evidently not of one type or mind; hence, while Dr. Abbott's theories really admit of no "Church," but merely of local associations of religionists, we find the Rev. J. H. Thayer, who is described as "the brightest authority in America on New Testament matters" (Detroit Free Press 24th May, 1891) recognizing, at least, a primitive Church, and declaring that circumstances "show that the Church produced the bible, and not the bible the Church"—a fact which, though indisputable, sectarian preachers in general are extremely loath to admit, deterred, no doubt, by what the Rev. Heber Newton would call the Bible's superstition." But, finally, as a last resort of dogged and obstinate heterodoxy, we may note the re-appearance, from time to time, of the old theory of the imperfection of language, and the consequent comingling of error with truth. Thus, "thoughts may be communicable," says an Episcopalian writer, "by a written or spoken language, but perfectly, entirely, unmistakably, by neither." To this rule the thoughts of God form no exception." More recently the Rev. Professor H. I. Vandye (Presbyterian) says: "I do not think it possible for a man to frame, or for God Himself to reveal, a creed, in human words, that will not be subjected to various interpretations." As to this contention, however, it is obvious that if what is claimed be conceded in respect to the uninstructed (limiting such concession to notions, subjective impressions of fanciful ideas not expressed, but external to the formal wording of any proposition), it must remain evident that, as an apology for heresy, the plea cannot be admitted to apply to revelation as actually propounded under the divinely appointed method; that is to say, not by a dead book, but by a living and supernaturally protected institution. Were it otherwise it is clear that as

the plea in question virtually implies the impossibility of Revelation being made publicly, and to mankind in general, of the unadulterated truth, as to matters of faith and morals, it would follow that making a revelation through the medium of language, as employed by Christ and His Apostles, God might be said to teach accompanying errors—a supposition which is equivalent to denying the possibility of revelation at all, as well as the possibility of the existence of faith, the only ground of which is the veracity of God, who cannot communicate anything to His creatures but the exact truth. The fact, however, is that the mistake of sectarians on this point consists in their arguing as if the New Testament Scriptures were the original and exhaustive source of Christian doctrine, forgetting that the writings in question were the product of the pre-existing Church, and addressed not to unbelievers, but to people who had already received instructions in the faith, and to which instructions these writings were simply supplementary. Herin, no doubt, is the origin, largely, of what unintelligibility there may be, to modern readers, in Holy Writ—the primal sectarian error, and root of other errors, being, of course, an absolutely unauthorized, false, and absurd rule of procedure, necessarily terminating in a confusion of tongues and thought, now seen among non-Catholic theologians and people generally.

A PRIEST HERE.

Administering the Sacrament of Extreme Unction Under Difficulties.

An accident in some chemical works at Felling, on the Tyne, England, has given occasion for an exhibition of heroism on the part of a priest. There were six condensers—that is, chimney-shaped erections filled with coke, not for burning, but for chemical filtration. The coke in one caught fire; water was poured on it, and the condenser fell, drawing after it in its fall the other five, and burying six men under the ruins. The fire burned volumes of chemical-laden smoke, and in this atmosphere one of the buried men survived for twelve hours, slowly dying of the fumes. He was a Catholic, and when timely extrication proved impossible, was ministered to under the ruins, by a priest. The Newcastle Daily Chronicle says: "In addition to the affecting accounts already published relating to the poor man, McCuskin, whose imprisonment for about twelve hours in the ruins before death came to relieve him of his feeling in the district, the following weird particulars have been obtained. The deceased, a Catholic, was attended on Sunday night by Father Rafferty for some time, and when the reverend gentleman had become prostrated, he succeeded in his ministerial work by Rev. Father Fitzgerald, of Gateshead. During the early hours of Monday morning, when hope was all but abandoned, and the efforts of the workmen were futile to effect a recovery, Father Fitzgerald, at the imminent risk of his life, stepped through the ruins and stood as close to the dying man as he possibly could, whilst the workmen stood a little way off. The danger was great in the extreme, as at every moment it was expected that one of the other large condensers would give way and fall with a crash to the ground. The good priest, in calm tones, and with a quiet demeanor becoming his sacred office, administered Extreme Unction. The scene was most impressive. The place was only illuminated by the flickering light of the torches and the pale rays of the moon. Every now and then the view was obscured by the dense volumes of white smoke which ever and anon completely enveloped the priest as he stood as near as he could to one who was dying under such dreadful circumstances. The solemn scene so impressed the spectators that they ceased work and reverentially uncovered their heads, and no sound was heard save the solemn tones of the priest's voice. Poor McCuskin, we are told, judging by his countenance, seemed intensely pleased that the priest had shown so brave a spirit, and he appeared reconciled to his dreadful fate. As the priest finished his sacred duty and stepped from the ruins a feeling of relief seemed to be experienced by every one of the spectators, who dreaded every moment that a further dreadful catastrophe might occur by the fall of another condenser. As the priest passed out every man involuntarily lifted his cap, or made a salute with his hand, as a mark of respect for one who had, amidst great danger, given the only consolation that could possibly be given to their unfortunate comrade, who soon afterward passed away, after exclaiming 'I'm done.'"

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If you are suffering from a feeling of constant tiredness, the result of mental worry or over work, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will promptly cure you. Give them a trial.

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

The Story of Her Divine Faith and Happy Death.

After the ascension of Christ into heaven sixteen years passed before the Blessed Virgin died. She went from Mount Calvary on the night of the crucifixion to the home of St. John on Mount Zion. There she remained as long as the beloved disciples stayed in Palestine. She passed her life in prayer in rehearsing for the instruction of neophytes the mysteries of which she was the chief witness, and in visiting the dolorous stations of the cross. Although she was perfectly resigned to the will of God, she longed with even a more intense longing than St. Paul and other saints "to be dissolved and to be with Christ;" for separation from Him was for her, who had been so close to Him for years, a slow martyrdom. Yet the days lengthened into months, and the months into years, and still she was left on earth—in the world but not of it, "walking the ground, but with her heart in heaven."

In the year 44 the first persecution broke out in Jerusalem. It was violent and bloody, and numbers of newly professed Christians gave up their lives for the faith. Then St. John, fearful lest any harm should happen to the Mother of the Lord, took her to Ephesus.

Beside the Icarian Sea Mary remained for about five years. In her exile from Palestine she was comforted by the companionship of Mary Magdalene who, shortly after the Blessed Virgin went to Asia Minor, followed her thither and abode with her there. The sky above her new home was beautiful, the climate delightful and the Christians of Ephesus vied with one another to make her stay among them pleasant; still she pined for the city of David and the scenes of our Lord's life and death. One day Mary's heart was more than usually full of memories of Bethlehem and Nazareth and Jerusalem. So lonesome was she and so strongly did she crave a sight of Jesus that tears filled her eyes. Even while she wept Gabriel stood before her.

"Hail, full of grace!" he said; "Mother of Jesus, Son of God."

Mary recognized the angel, and her very heart leaped with joy.

"The Son of the Most High, Who is at the right hand of the Eternal Father," continued Gabriel, "sends me to call thee to Him. Return to Jerusalem. There He will meet thee."

Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." And immediately the angel left her. When St. John was told what had occurred, he was troubled at the coming loss of the Mother whom the Lord had given to him. Still her happiness was his first care. As she was eager to go, he made haste to prepare for the journey back to Judea.

As soon as they arrived in the Holy City they called on St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem. When he learned that the Blessed Virgin was about to die he sent word to all the faithful in the city, and they came to bid her goodbye, and to ask her prayers when she should be with her Son.

Finally, the hour approached that had been foretold by the angel as Mary's last on earth. To be ready for it she retired to that upper chamber, wherein the Holy Ghost had come upon the apostles, and there she made her final preparations for her dissolution. When the moment predicted was close at hand she laid herself on a couch, and tranquilly composed herself for the sleep of peace. St. John was at her right hand. St. James gave her absolution. Then she requested those about her to send greetings to the other apostles, assuring them that even to the last she had thought of them, and would be mindful of them in the other life.

Lo! as she spoke, from the four corners of the earth, nine of the apostles, including Matthias, appeared in the room, brought by the power of God. It was a great comfort to the Blessed Virgin—the sight of these old and faithful friends. After they had been welcomed, Mary spoke her last words. She addressed all those who were present, talking of faith, hope and charity, of time and eternity, of God's infinite love, of the bliss of heaven. As she was speaking her face became transfigured so that Peter whispered to John: "How much she resembled the Lord!" The likeness was truly striking at that moment. Her voice grew lower, and finally she ceased to speak; and while those about, thrilled to the soul with her wonderful discourse, wept silently because soon they should see her face no more on earth forever, she closed her eyes and engaged in secret prayer. The room was sunless. It was night. Presently a sound as of a mighty wind was heard, a strong light illuminated the apartment, and an exquisite perfume filled it with subtle sweetness. The Lord had come. Surrounded by legions of angels and a multitude of saints, He appeared to His Blessed Mother, radiant with the majesty of the divinity. His wounds glittered like jewels. His face beamed with love for her, and His hands were stretched out to her in welcome. She alone saw Him—she alone of all the group at the couch, although the others felt His presence and were filled with awe and ecstasy at His nearness to them. Mary gave one look at His beloved countenance, and for joy of seeing Him again her soul burst its bonds and left her blessed body.

On the following day the apostles bore the precious remains of the Blessed Virgin to the Valley of Jehosaphat. There in a tomb hewn in the rock they laid her; there for three days

and two nights they remained in company with the Christians of Jerusalem and the surrounding country, and singing alternately with a choir of invisible angels' canticles in honor of God and His Virgin Mother.

Towards the close of the third day the one apostle who had been absent when Mary died arrived from the heathen country that was towards India, where he had been preaching the Faith, when word was borne to him mysteriously that the mother of the Lord was dying. When the thought came to him to hurry back to be present at her death and to attend her funeral, he doubted that God would have him transported to Jerusalem, so he did not share to the full in the miracle that had brought the others to her bedside in time to receive her last words; but, even as it was, his appearance so soon afterward was a mystery. When he came to the place where they had laid her he was overcome with emotion, and broke into lamentations for her death. He recalled her virtues; what she had been to the Church; her goodness to him. He begged to be permitted to see her face once more. So pitifully and so persistently did he beseech Peter and the other apostles, especially John and James, to grant him this favor, that eventually they agreed to open her tomb.

Slowly the stone that closed the sepulcher was unsealed and moved aside. The last rays of the descending sun fell back upon the place where the body had been laid, but lo! when the apostles entered the tomb they found only the winding-sheet of the dead! Mary was not there—she was celebrating the first feast of the Assumption in heaven.—L. W. Kelly, in the Irish Catholic.

Went as far as the Pump.

A small Scotch boy was summoned to give evidence against his father, says the Dublin Times, who was accused of making disturbance in the streets. Said the Bailie to him: "Come, my wee man, speak the truth, and let us know all ye ken about this affair."

"Weel, sir," said the lad, "d'ye ken Inverness street?"

"I do, laddie," replied his worship. "Weel, ye gang along in and turn into the square and across the square—"

"Yes, yes," said the Bailie, encouragingly. "An' when ye gang across the square ye turn to the right, and up into High street, and keep on up High street till ye come to a pump."

"Quite right my lad; proceed," said his worship; "I know the old pump well."

"Well," said the boy with the most infantile simplicity, "ye may gang and pump it, for ye'll no pump me."

Malaria.

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