

A LESSON IN CHURCH HISTORY.

THE discussion of the Jesuits Estates Bill has been the occasion of teaching the people of this Dominion a very much needed lesson in Church history. In spite of themselves they have had forced on their attention those facts which we for years past have been insisting upon, but which being irreconcilable with sectarian theories, our nonconformist brethren have obstinately ignored. Even the *Globe*, which not only publishes the legal opinions that are based upon those historic facts given below, but boldly avows itself convinced thereby, still speaks of the Church of England as being "Roman Catholic" prior to the Reformation—the old leaven not being worked out.

The Law Journal for Feb. last in an article upon the constitutionality of the Jesuit Act affirms that,

"The Imperial Parliament has from the earliest days made it a criminal offence for subjects of the Crown to procure judgments or determinations from the See of Rome or from any foreign powers or Potentates out of the Realm. In the 25th, 26th and 38th years of Edward III., and the 13th and 16th years of Richard II., this prohibitory legislation against the Pope's jurisdiction in England commenced."

This is not consistent surely with the Church of England at that period being Roman Catholic? It is indeed a demonstration that 200 years before the Reformation, the English Catholics were protesters against Popery.

Coming within the Reformation period, as popularly understood, we find legislation in England thus spoken of by the Law Journal:

"The statute, 24 Henry VIII., c. 12, prohibits any foreign inhibitions, appeals, sentences, judgments, or any other process, etc., from the See of Rome or any other foreign courts or potentates, and prescribes penalties against persons within the realm, or within any of the King's dominions, attempting to procure any such from the See of Rome, or from any foreign court or potentate.

Another statute of the next year (c. 21), prohibits the King, his heirs and successors, Kings of the realm, and all subjects of the realm, or of the dominions of the Crown, from suing for licenses, dispensations, compositions, faculties, grants, rescripts, delegations, or any other instruments in writing from the Bishop of Rome, "called the Pope," or from any person or persons having or pretending to have any authority by the same."

In the same Journal for March we read:

The pope in early days asserted a civil jurisdiction as an appellate sovereign over the English Government. To prevent this, various statutes were passed. The 16 Richard II., c. 5 (still in force), after reciting that "cognisance of cases belongeth only to the King's Court, in the old right of his Crown," but that divers processes hath been made by the Bishop of Rome, whereby the regality of the Crown was submitted to the Pope, thereupon prohibited all persons from pursuing in the Court of

Rome, or elsewhere, any processes, or instruments, or other things whatever, which touch the King or his realm, or which so sue in any other than the King's Courts, "in derogation of the regality of our Lord the King.

Another statute (still in force) recites the vigorous protest of Parliament that "the Crown of England which hath been so free at all times, that it hath been in no earthly subjection, but immediately subject to God and none other, in all things touching the regality of the same Crown, should be submitted to the Pope, and the laws and statutes of the realm defeated by him, and voided at his will, in perpetual destruction of the sovereignty of our lord the King, his Crown, his regality and all his realm.

Another statute (26 Henry VIII., c. 21) has an important bearing on this Quebec Act, for it expressly prohibits the Sovereign from procuring licenses, delegations, etc., or any instrument in writing, from the Bishop of Rome, "called the Pope:" and being binding on the Sovereign, is also binding on her representatives and Ministers.

These statutes, says Lord Coke, are declaratory of the ancient or common law of the realm (*Coke's Inst.* 340), and they declare that every encouragement or acknowledgment of the Papal, or a foreign power, within the realm, is a diminution of the regal authority of the Crown, and is an offence (4 *Bl. Com.* 110.) By the several statutes, 24 Henry VIII., c. 12, and 25 Henry VIII., c. 19 and 21, to appeal to Rome for any of the King's courts, which (though illegal before), had been connived at; to sue to Rome for any license or dispensation, or to obey any process from thence, were made liable to the pains of *præmunire*, though the penalties of *præmunire* are now obsolete.

We again affirm that legislation by Englishmen who were to a man members of the Catholic Church of England, which made the acknowledgment of Papal power a penal offence, cannot be reconciled with the theory that the Church of England in those days was Roman Catholic.

How far the making the Pope a party to the Jesuit Bill, giving him a legal status in Canada as Pope, that is, by an Act of a Canadian Legislature, acknowledging his authority as a quasi sovereign, is a violation of those old laws which are yet in force, and in force in Canada, is a question for constitutional lawyers to decide. But that the Jesuit Bill is an open violation of the spirit and intention of the legislation of England prior to the Reformation, is beyond question. Sure are we that if the men of King Edward's time, or King Richard's were living to-day, they would quickly pass such laws as would render it a very dangerous thing to establish a foreign society like the Jesuits amongst them!

The protestantism of to-day is a poor, limp, back-boneless creature compared to the protestantism of the old Catholic, pre-Reformation Church of England. Our ancestors backed up their protests with swords, our contemporaries merely support theirs with—talk.

BIBLE AND PRAYER BOOK.

THE general reverence for Holy Scripture is a thing to be very thankful for, but it often degenerates into superstition. There are those who prize of 'the Bible and the Bible only,' much as if they believed that the Authorised English Version had come straight from Heaven, like the Hebrew Decalogue, before, or at any rate at the very beginning of the Christian Religion, and that every person was intended to find out the truths as well as the precepts of Christianity from it and from it only.

Now it is of the highest importance that such persons, should have it impressed upon them, that they would derive much more benefit than they do from the study of the Bible, if they would read it by the light of the *Prayer-book*. The fact is that they are in the habit of putting the Scriptures to a use for which they were never intended. Just as those persons are utterly baffled, who approach such accounts as the famous First Chapter of Genesis with a view to getting information on natural science, so do those well-meaning students fail, who think to form, each for himself, a system of theological dogmas, merely by searching within the four corners of the Bible. We had a conspicuous instance of this a few weeks ago, when, in our correspondence columns, a puzzled writer stated that he could not find infant baptism ordered in the Bible. There are several important things besides this, as other correspondents have pointed out, which a person would not discover from the Bible, merely by his own unassisted search. How, for instance, would he gather, and rightly formulate, the great doctrine of the Trinity from the Bible only? To be sure, with the Authorised Version, he might go some way towards doing so by the help of 1 St. John 5-7; but the whole of this verse, except the first seven words, is acknowledged to be interpolated, as well as the beginning of the following verse, so that this passage, as correctly given in the Revised Version, would not give the least help towards learning the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. Nay, the Authorised Version here affords an instance of the Bible being illustrated by Church teaching; for the interpolated words are clearly from some ancient Church formulary, and agree with the teaching of the *Quicumque vult*, which is found, not in the Bible, but in the *Prayer-book*.

The undoubted historical fact that the Church was in very active operation, and spreading into many lands, for some twenty long years before a single word of the New Testament was written, is a fact which is far too much lost sight of, and of which people should be reminded constantly, from the pulpit and elsewhere. For the corollaries which spring from the fact are of the utmost consequence, viz. (1) That the doctrines of the Church are antecedent to the New Testament, and were originally taught, not from the Bible, but from the sacred deposit of the truth which was given to the Church, *once for all*, when it was founded or inaugurated, on the Day of

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