

The Evening Witness

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REV. DR. LANGTRY ON "CHRISTIAN UNITY."

A REVIEW BY "CRUX."

This may or may not be considered a review, for I purpose rather to present the reader with a number of extracts from the paper read, before the Toronto Ministerial Association, by Rev. Dr. Langtry, rector of St. Luke's Church in that city. Possibly my remarks may not even be regarded as an appreciation, for I prefer to leave the reasoning out of my propositions to the common sense and intelligence of the reader. No more do I intend a criticism—either constructive or destructive—of the highly interesting and strangely inconsistent production of the reverend divine. I simply wish to take the extracts referring to the disunion and divisions of Protestantism, and then a few on the remedy suggested by Rev. Dr. Langtry to the evil which he bewails. I might, at once, preface my present contribution by stating that the reader will notice how closely Rev. Dr. Langtry adheres to the teachings of the Catholic Church in regard to the causes and effects of dismemberment of Christianity known as Protestantism; and then how, at the very moment when logic would naturally cause him to turn his eyes towards Rome, he darts off into a very labyrinth of errors equal in every sense to those which he so much laments.

In other words, it will be seen that half way along the road this able student is a "Catholic in theory, if a Protestant in practice;" while during the remainder of his journey he is evidently so bewildered that he does not exactly know what he is—at best he is a universalist in theory and an Anglican Episcopalian in practice.

I need not quote from the introduction to his lecture, or paper, but will come at once to the portions thereof which have immediate bearing on the subject. He says:—

"The subject of unity or the restoration of union to the shattered fragments of the Christian host, is one, I am thankful to feel, of growing interest and of great practical concern to the Christian cause. It will not, at all events, be denied that we are woefully divided. The records of the Registrar-General of England showed the existence a few years ago of 228 Christian denominations within the British Isles; and there is not much doubt, but that the fertile soil of this new continent has added greatly to that number. At all events, the divisions abound and go on increasing. And yet we all worship one Father. We all believe in one Lord Jesus Christ. We all invoke the illumination and guidance of the one Regenerating Spirit. We are all, I am sure, trying to preach the one everlasting Gospel of salvation through the atonement of the cross. But we are split up into hundreds of disunited, alienated and often warring denominations. Some of the evil consequences of this state of things are apparent to all men, and are freely admitted. No one can think that it is a right state of things or the best state of things. Everybody must see that it is fraught with great evils and great dangers."

So far the Rev. Dr. Langtry states exactly what any Catholic might state, and he gives the ground work of more than one eminent conversion to the True Church—may his own follow some day! He then speaks of some of the evil results of this disunion, in the following language:—

"One of the first effects of this multiplied and multiplied denominationalism is seen in the vast waste of men and money which it involves. Look at almost any of our Canadian towns or villages. If they are of any size you will find from three to ten or twelve churches in them, representing as many denominations. All except one or two of them very small, with small congregations, all struggling for existence, all trying to live by enticing away each other's adherents, and all, or nearly all, appealing to and receiving support from grants from some society, while one good-sized church and one, or at most two, good men could sufficiently minister to all these congregations put together."

Again, the Catholic can find no fault with the reverend doctor's remarks in this regard. Although not exactly within the range of what I am seeking to convey concerning this peculiar address, still the following language is eminently suggestive, and might be profitably studied by the men who have to do with educational matters and especially educational legislation. He says:—

"Out of this there necessarily grows an alienation of sentiment

and feeling and view of the religious life, which is more fatal to the spirit of brotherhood than the doctrinal differences which have produced them. The true spirit of Christian charity is lost, brotherly love is destroyed, and men who ought to be walking together in the House of God, as friends, praying together, communing together, consoling together, regard one another with suspicion and apprehension, and merely and often hardly extend to one another the courtesies of civilized life. One of the most startling practical consequences of this state of things confronts us in the educational problem. An elaborate, well-constructed and costly system of education has been devised for the purpose of teaching our children what they ought to know. And lo! in a Christian land the only things which a teacher is not allowed to teach the children are the truths of the Christian religion. I was on a committee the other day, and I was ashamed to be on it, which practically asked the Government of Ontario to limit the amount of religious teaching that might be given to our children to the Mosaic decalogue and the Lord's prayer. All the great, sanctifying, moulding, uplifting, guiding truths of the Gospel must be kept out of sight, or, at least, not taught, lest some denominational corn should be pressed. The consequences of this practical agnosticism in school life are becoming painfully apparent, and men are crying out for moral teaching in the schools. But moral teaching which is not built upon the faith is like the elephant upon which, in the Chinese mythology, the world stands. It stands upon nothing. Apart from belief in God, and accountability to Him, no morality will stand in the hour of temptation."

Let us suppose for one moment that a Roman Catholic made use of these same words—and they are exactly the teaching of our Church in regard to all the other creeds—what would be Rev. Dr. Langtry's reply? Would he see the force of the argument coming from an infallible Church, when he entertains it for his own Church which he does not claim as infallible? If so, he should become a Catholic at once. But the rock upon which he splits, and wherein he destroys, at one fell sweep, the whole fabric of his previous argument, may be found in these words, with which he closes his proposal of action:—

"There need be no renunciation of previous convictions, no recantation of errors, real or supposed, no acknowledgments that our former actions were mistaken, and no definition as to what the ministry or episcopacy is—only merely agree for the sake of unity and because of the weak brethren who cannot see in this matter as you do."

There, then, is the grand and all important difference. We, as Dr. Langtry says, "have no doubt about the validity of our position and claim," because we know, through the Infallible Vicar of Christ, that we have the truth. But, in order to become a Catholic—unlike the becoming an Anglican, according to Dr. Langtry—there must be "recantation of errors;" there must be an acknowledgment that former actions were mistaken. To agree with the teachings of the Catholic Church "for the sake of unity" is not sufficient. That would be simply a sham. You must agree because you believe, otherwise you cannot be a Catholic. This is the difference, the essential difference between the Catholic and Dr. Langtry—and it is exactly this difference which establishes the Truth of Catholicity and error of all outside its fold.

CATHOLIC NEWS NOTES.

CATHOLIC CLUBS.—The Bishop of Southwark at a recent entertainment very practically pointed out the many advantages to be derived from organizations for our young men. In referring to the club, under which the entertainment was held, His Lordship said:—

"The object of the club was to extend to the members that help which they might frequently stand in need of and also give them the opportunity of standing shoulder to shoulder and enjoying the benefit of mutual friendship. There was a great danger in isolation. After school days the work of life began. Outside their daily occupation, in what might be called the higher mission of life, they occasionally realized what isolation was; they lost heart, and ceased to take an interest in those things around them. People felt all the better for having the association of others and appreciated companionship and comradeship. That was the object of a club, such as that which met that evening."

PROTESTANT DONATIONS.—It is so seldom that Protestant firms give donations to Catholic charities in Glasgow, or for that matter in Scotland, that when they do Catholics, like Captain Cuttle, "make a note of it," says a correspondent to the London "Univers." This year, as in former years, the firm of D. Y. Stewart, iron founders, St. Pollock, have donated a sum of £16 16s. to Catholic charities, allocated as follows: Little Sisters of the Poor, £8 3s.; Whitevale Refuge, £2 2s.; Vincent de Paul Society, £4 4s. Of course, Catholic workmen have contributed to this fund, but on other works where they contribute they

HAPPENINGS IN IRELAND.

DEAN OF OSSORY DEAD.—Exchanges of this week contain the intelligence of the death of a distinguished member of the clergy in the person of the Very Rev. Thomas Kelly, D.D., Dean of Ossory, which occurred two weeks ago at St. Canice's Presbytery, Kilkenny, after a comparatively brief illness. The deceased dignitary, who was 68 years of age, was a distinguished alumnus of Maynooth College, and was ordained about forty-five years ago. His first mission was at Mooncoin, where he soon became noted for his zealous and saintly character as a priest. Having spent about five years in this parish, he was removed to St. Mary's, Kilkenny, the Cathedral parish, where his great piety, his exalted character, and his deep and abiding interest in the lot of the poor and lowly won for him the love and esteem of all classes of citizens. There he remained until about twelve years ago, when, on the death of the late Very Rev. Dean Macdonald, he became parish priest of St. Canice's, in Kilkenny, the parish, it may be added, in which he and his forefathers were born. lived. Mr. Kelly was one of the most popular, as he was certainly one of the most distinguished, clergymen of the diocese of Ossory. He was always identified himself with the interests, and every National movement found in him an earnest and practical supporter.

A LAWYER'S BEQUESTS.—Another noble example of generosity which might be emulated by thousands of others is afforded by the will of a well known member of the Irish Bar who died some months ago. Catholics are slow in comparison with Protestants, in remembering their institutions when preparing their affairs in order to meet the dread summons. The report says:—Mr. William P. McEvoy, of 26 Royal Terrace, West Kingston, Dublin, solicitor, whose estate has been valued at £75,000, bequeathed to his late apprentice, Hugh Horan, £2,000; to the Very Rev. Canon Edward Quinn, £3,000; to the Very Rev. Canon William Keon, £1,500 each; to the Rev. Father Gossan, £500; to the Masses for the repose of the testator's soul to be said in a church or churches in Ireland, £1,000; and the residue of his estate, including the Queen's pension of £35,000, to the hospice for the Dying Harold's Cross, Dublin, and the St. Vincent de Paul Male Orphanage in Glasnevin.

UNITY AND SUCCESS.—Signs are not wanting, if the reports of the speeches of Irish leaders are to be relied upon, that the opening years of the new century will behold a great change in the administration of affairs in the old land. A large meeting, organized by the United Irish League, was held recently in the Rotunda, Dublin. Alderman Hennessy, M.P., and Mr. John Dillon, M.P., were present. Mr. Redmond, M.P., in the course of his speech, said that disunion was to a large extent, at an end. He bitterly, for example, as Mr. Dillon and himself, had come together again. They had put behind them all memories of the bitterness and divisions of those years, and he thought of the new century with hope to Mr. Dillon to bear him out when he said that during the year which had just concluded Mr. Dillon and he, forgetful of the differences of the past, had been able to work together in perfect amity.

Disunion among the leading men of Ireland had disappeared, so had apathy through the country commenced to disappear; but it was a slow business to build up again a national movement. The movement of ten years ago was destroyed, and theirs was the task to-day of trying to gather together again the threads and to build up again the movement. They were face to face with a condition of English parties favorable, he believed, to the advance of Ireland's cause. The Liberal party had gone to pieces, he must say, almost entirely, in his individual judgment at any rate, because a large proportion of it proved false to Ireland and Home Rule. He believed that everything favored at this moment the advance of the Irish cause, but the pivot of the whole situation from their point of view, in his opinion, turned upon the maintenance in London of an independent party. Mr. Redmond, in conclusion, urged upon the country the vital necessity of subscribing to the Irish Parliamentary Fund, the failure of which would negative all the splendid generosity of the people in subscribing to the advance of the Irish cause, and also the splendid successes scored at the polls. Mr. Dillon also addressed the meeting.

THE IRISH LANGUAGE.—The report of the Gaelic League for 1899-1900, which has just been issued, shows that the movement is still ad-

vancing with leaps and bounds, there being at present one hundred and twenty branches of the League enrolled in Ireland and Great Britain, as compared with fifty-eight in existence twelve months ago. The report says:—

"Side by side with the development of the organization a strong national sentiment for the maintenance of the native speech has been developing throughout the whole country and in every class. It has been strikingly manifested in the resolutions passed by the County and District Councils, Boards of Guardians, Municipalities, and other public bodies; by the place given to Irish in the programing of political organizations and at their public meetings, and especially, in this connection, by the clear and satisfactory declaration made by Mr. John Redmond, M.P., speaking as chairman on behalf of the Irish Parliamentary Party."

The "Monitor News" in referring to the report, remarks:—

The Irish Party have lost no time in pressing the claims of Gaelic upon the attention of Parliament, and the United Irish League Directory have made it a plank in their platform. The Irish bishops too, have earnestly considered the matter, and passed a valuable resolution in support of the movement. The Gaelic League has done splendid service in this great work, and to the executive and members generally much credit is justly due for the success attained. The report notes that two occurrences produced a great effect on the public mind, and helped greatly in the notable advance that has been made. The first of these was the admission by the promoters of the Irish Literary Theatre, that "No literature can deserve the name of National which is not in the national language," and the second was the strong condemnation passed by the resident Commissioner of National education on the system of education hitherto enforced by his board. The study of the Irish language is in fact becoming fashionable, and that the fashion has come to stay is guaranteed by the perseverance and determination shown by the Gaelic League.

THE CHURCH IN HOLLAND.

Holland built a wall around the whole country, a dyke, that serves to keep out the sea, and, despite the fact that the land is considerably below the water level, there is no record of it being flooded, since that barrier was raised. But were there to be a gap made in the great dyke, soon, indeed, Holland would be no more. The Zuyder Zee would rush over its fertile plains and prosperous villages, leaving not a trace of their existence. The people of the country have faithful kept guard over their bulwark of protection.

Protestantism has also built a religious dyke around the country. But it could not hold water, and the result is that wave after wave, and tide after tide, of the great Catholic world have been seen deluging the spiritual domain of Holland. As an evidence of this we take the following interesting extract from a letter, by Rev. Charles Haaymakers, S.J., to one of our American Catholic papers. "The learned Jesuit Father says:—

"As a rule, Holland is called a Protestant country. Yet, there is hardly any country in Europe where Catholics are as unmolested as they are in Holland. This has not always been the case. Though already in 1798 religious freedom was proclaimed in the new constitution, though our long and severely persecuted forefathers in the faith danced with the Republicans round the tree of freedom and joyfully joined in their chorus of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' yet their liberty was, to a great extent, only nominal. But gradually all restrictions have disappeared. Since the restoration of the episcopal hierarchy, in 1853, Catholics have displayed such vigorous efforts and have lived such an intense religious life that at the present day their liberty is no longer a mere word, but a perfect reality; no difference, either political or social, is any more to be noticed between Catholics and those belonging to other religions. Though this, of course, is by no means an ideal state of things, yet, for the present, we ought to be thankful for the peace we enjoy."

"Whenever and wheresoever the Church of Christ is left in peace, she immediately shows outward signs of the strong vital principle which she is animated, which has kept her alive for nineteen centuries and which makes her raise her venerable head, as soon as persecution ceases, with greater splendor than before. This is what happened in Holland. From every town and every little village stately towers or elegant spire points to heaven, and bears aloft its golden cross. I remember having read an article by a well known Protestant minister who, having traveled from the north to the south of our little country, was so unpleasantly struck by this fact that he could not restrain his morbid indignation and poured out his anger in a most violent article, warning everyone against the evident danger of Roman supremacy. Nevertheless new churches and chapels are building everywhere, and a new, really magnificent Cathedral is being erected at Haarlem. Catholics have tried to repurchase the old St. CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE.