

THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.

Our attention has been attracted by the following letter which appeared in a late number of a Protestant Episcopal contemporary:

To the Editor of the Churchman:

What is the principle of Authority in the Church? It seems to me that this is the most important and urgent of all questions. It is impossible to answer many questions that have been asked until this is answered, and answered very definitely. The Church has declared for Unity and urged her historic claims as the ground of that Unity. We believe she is right, but will others heed and accept until she can show some definite voice or principle of authority? It is very well to talk of liberty. Liberty without authority is license. What is the Principle of Authority in the Church? Is it the voice of the Bishop of each diocese? The late utterances of some of our Bishops seem to give the negative to this question. Is it the voice of the House of Bishops? In the last pastoral we read: "We feel assured that the clergy and their congregations will gladly order the details of public worship and of the administration of the sacraments and other rites of the Church strictly according to its (i. e., the Standard Book of Common Prayer) rubrics." The charges of some Bishops to their dioceses, the usages of some parishes seem to give the negative to this question. Is it the voice of the General Convention? The voice of the Convention is expressed in the book of Common Prayer. The letters in your paper on "Variations from the Standard" give the negative to this question. Is it the voice of Catholic tradition? The uncertainty of what Catholic tradition is, when it begins, where it ends, seems to give the negative to this question. Is it the voice of the conscience of each presbyter? Then we have almost as many answers as there are presbyters. What is the Principle of Authority? What voice am I to obey? How am I to order the worship of a parish? Is there any authority? Is the Church a Church of authority or license? JOHN GASS. Charleston, S. C.

These are certainly very pertinent questions, and they go right to the point and as they have evidently been asked by an Episcopalian who is sincerely anxious for light on a vital subject we have anxiously looked for any answer that might be given. Thus far no notice has been taken of his letter. "Is there any authority? Is the Church a Church of authority or not?" Those are, indeed, very solemn questions, for if there be no recognized authority in the Church for deciding the truth and settling disputes they may well ask what is the use in having a Church? How can you be sure that you are in the Church? The Apostle Paul says, "The Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth." Now if you can not be sure as to what the Church teaches: if it speaks with "stammering lips and double tongue," what will be the result but confusion worse confounded? "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

The difficulty with the Episcopal Church is that it is founded in compromise between two utterly incompatible systems. When the English Church cut itself off from the centre of unity it became a Protestant Establishment with the elements of the old Catholic teaching and tradition, still remaining. The XXXIX. Articles represented the Protestant element, and so far as there could be an official expression of opinion they represented the English Church. But they have never been cordially accepted by the Catholic party which to be consistent has felt compelled to put upon those articles a non-natural sense. In other words they have contended and do still contend that the protest against Catholic doctrines was not really aimed at Catholic doctrines but at some exaggerated and false teachings and practices under the Catholic name. Whereas the Low Church party claims—and justly—that the Articles are the true exponents of the Reformation—that the Church is necessarily Protestant, and the Articles are to be understood in their natural, obvious sense.

These two parties, with every grade of opinion in each, are pitted against each other and the consequence is endless controversy and irreconcilable hostility. In all their legislation they are obliged to recognize these two parties. Hence in England when any great council or synod is held they studiously avoid all discussion of important doctrines about which there are differences of opinion. The same may be said of the General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States of America. The fact is every man judges for himself and adopts such opinions as he pleases.

There could not be a more striking illustration of the necessity of a central authority, a head and centre of unity of the whole Church, than is furnished by the present condition of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country and the Establishment in England.

It is really surprising that our Protestant friends are so slow to apprehend and acknowledge the important truth that there must be an inflexible tribunal, and final court of appeal to decide great questions of faith and morals and end disputes. Without such a tribunal there will be no end of controversy, even on the most fundamental principles of the gospel, and the honest enquirer is necessarily left in a condition of endless doubt and uncertainty. If there is anything in Christianity; if it is what it claims to

be—a supernatural revelation of the will of God—then it follows as a necessary consequence that there must be some inerrable authority upon which we can rely with implicit confidence to determine what that truth is. Other wise we are left, as we have said, to endless doubt and uncertainty, and we might as well have no professed revelation. Thank God! the Catholic Church has such an authoritative tribunal, established by our Lord Himself. She alone claims that prerogative and that very claim is prima facie evidence of her truth.—N. Y. Catholic Review.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

Sermon by the Rev. Luke Rivington, M. A.

On Sunday (the Feast of St. Anne) the annual sermon in aid of the liquidation of the debt on St. Anne's Church, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, were preached by Rev. Luke Rivington, M. A., in presence of large congregations. The sermon in the morning was preceded by Pontifical High Mass, at which His Lordship the Right Rev. Dr. Knight, Bishop of Shrewsbury, presided. The celebrant was Rev. James O'Reilly; the deacon, Rev. P. Newman; subdeacon, Rev. Father Giles; master of ceremonies, Mr. McCabe; deacons at the throne, Fathers Carton and Arnoux; assistant priest, Very Rev. Canon Lynch. The music of the Mass (Gounod's) was excellently rendered by the choir, under the conductorship of Mr. C. H. Barker, organist, the solos being taken by Mrs. McCabe, soprano; tenor, Mr. Murphy; contralto, Miss Barnett; bass, Mr. Thomas. The altar was handsomely decorated by the nuns of the order of the Immaculate Conception, whose convent is adjacent to the church.

The Rev. Father Rivington, M. A., was the preacher, taking his text from the 15th chapter of the 1st Book of Kings, 32nd verse—"Doth bitter death separate in this manner?" He said he remembered a few years ago going in the early morning to read some prayers in the company of a number of men who were just proceeding to build a house intended for religious purposes. It was the 15th of July, and he remarked to the man in charge of the workman that it was St. Swithin's Day, and he hoped that they would have fine weather. The man answered that he did not believe that a dead man could affect the weather. The belief in St. Swithin's power over the weather, he (the preacher) need not say, was not a matter of faith or a matter of fact, but what the man (who was a Protestant) meant by saying that he did not believe in St. Swithin was, that he did not believe in the "Communion of Saints"—that no one could come between the living and the dead. The belief in the Communion of Saints is, of course, with Catholics a matter of faith, and the question—"Doth bitter death part us in this manner?" is answered by the Church saying—"I believe in the Communion of Saints." When they spoke of the Church triumphant, the Church militant, and the Church suffering, they did not speak of three Churches, but of one, and in that one Church there is a perpetual circulation and interchange of good offices, services, and prayers—in other words,

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS IS A LIVING REALITY. This was one expression of the great law running throughout God's creation, that the circulation of all good things is in proportion to the closeness of the relation which the members bore to each other. In the life of a nation there was a continual interchange of thought, of work, of power, of gratitude, of sympathy, of fortune and misfortune, between the various classes and communities, and in proportion to the unity and closeness of fraternal feeling which distinguished them was the circulation of the privileges, advantages, blessings and misfortunes of the whole. And it was the same in the case of a family, where the unity was closer still than in the case of a nation. There the life of virtue led by the parents re-acted for good on the children, and the sufferings and blessings and enjoyments of the one were felt and reciprocated by the other. How often had they seen the daughter sacrifice all her future in order to devote herself to the care of the mother who was confined to a sick bed. In their own persons they found a similar illustration of

THE GREAT LOVE OF UNITY. In the marvellous unity and closeness of connection of the soul and the body; the soul giving to the body its intellect, its memory, its understanding, and all the mental powers it possessed, whilst the body served as the tabernacle and instrument of the soul. The word "body" had been used by the Apostle Paul to illustrate the closeness of unity in the Church. "The Church is a nation—a holy nation; the Church is a family—a holy family," says St. Paul, and he recurs again and again to this thought of the unity of the body and soul to show the unity of the Church of Christ, which is called the mystical body of Christ, and this body is not the exalted dream of the mystic, for it was stated in Scripture that when the Holy Ghost came upon the Apostles He found them all of one heart and one mind. They had all things in common, and so close was their union that those who had much shared their worldly goods with those who had little. This was but a sign and sacrament of the closeness of the unity of Christ with His Church, a UNITY THAT WAS NOT CIRCUMSCRIBED

BY TIME OR SPACE OR PLACE. BY TIME OR SPACE OR PLACE. but obtained throughout the whole of God's creation in heaven and on earth, whilst a constant interchange of good

offices was going on day by day and hour by hour between all portions of this mystical body of Christ. And so the Church says, "I believe in the Communion of Saints." Protestants in speaking on this subject contended that when the last breath was drawn the soul returned to God or was condemned to hell, and that no power of further communication with earth existed. But Catholics believed that there was a place where souls who had not fully satisfied the offended majesty of God would be allowed a time to purge themselves and give satisfaction to the Divine justice. Protestants also contended that those remaining on earth could derive no assistance from their friends in heaven, because they cannot hear us, and that if we ask them to hear us they will do nothing! Didn't

ALL THE GENEROUS INSTINCTS OF OUR SOULS rise up against such teachings? Turning to the teachings of the Catholic Church, they found that she taught belief in the Communion of Saints and the unity of all in Christ. We, continued the speaker, are in active service here on earth, as our friends in heaven were before us. They have fought the battle and won the fight. We are the soldiers left on the field of battle, and we look to our friends at home in heaven to supply us with fresh ammunition, and to aid us in the strenuous fight we are engaged in, and

WE HAVE A RIGHT OF APPEAL to them, too, for aid that we may fight the battle to a successful and glorious end. Our friends who have left us and gone to heaven have not lost their memory of us. God enlightened them as to our wants, and they knew those wants better than we do ourselves. The men now in heaven who, while on earth, had been enabled by the power of God, to raise the dead to life, to heal the sick, had surely not lost the power to assist those who were still engulfed in the sea of sin and trouble, and it was comforting to know that the Communion of Saints was a reality. The speaker concluded by a public appeal on behalf of the fund to reduce the debt on the church.

In the evening Father Rivington again preached on the same subject, which he amplified and elaborated in an eloquent and convincing manner. Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament was afterwards given by the Bishop of Shrewsbury.—London Catholic News.

OUR COMMON HERITAGE.

To every Protestant, looking at the luminous periods and personalities in historic Catholicism, comes times of profound regret at the loss of a birth-right necessarily sacrificed by religious schism, says the Independent.

Divorce in politics does not destroy radical affinity nor the heritage of national and literary traditions, as witness England and America. Separation in doctrine, or more particularly in ritual, does obscure similar origin and widens a chasm, across which no appeal can be made to former community of development. Yet the lines of curve start at a common spring, run concurrently and broadly through centuries in a common channel, and though separated by natural or artificial obstructions, must inevitably unite, sometimes returning to a mutual flow in the glorious tide water of a common faith and future. It is in this sense that the monks of the mediaeval Church and the saints of the Catholic calendar are still our spiritual fathers, and that men must be more than narrow not to glory in the ancestral Church which can boast among so many others the saint that bore the name of Francis, and far greater than that—St. Francis of Assisi.

Boyle O'Reilly and Cardinal Manning. In a recent number of the London Month, the Rev. John Morris, S. J., who served as diocesan secretary both to Cardinal Manning and Cardinal Wiseman, tells the story on the authority of John Boyle O'Reilly, who heard Cardinal Manning preach to the prisoners at Millbank:—"While at Millbank," he said, "the favorite topic for sermons to the prisoners was the Prodigal Son. They were all weary of the Prodigal Son, and hated his very name. One day a stranger came to preach in the jail chapel. They knew by his violet cassock that he was one out of the ordinary. As usual he began about the Prodigal Son, and the convicts settled themselves down to sully inattention. But in a very few minutes they were all listening eagerly, and, after a few minutes more, tears began to steal down the rough cheeks of several. Before the sermon was over hardened ruffians were sobbing, so touching was the simple description of the home of the prodigal, the picture of his old father and heart-broken mother, of the innocent joys of his childhood, and its contrast with his after-degradation and self-reproach. That sermon left a deep mark on the remembrance of all who heard it; and John Boyle O'Reilly said that apart from all his love for Cardinal Manning for his devotion to the cause of his country, the remembrance of that sermon had endeared him to him for the rest of his life."

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ham' in Norfolk, where the names of the chief benefactors to the church are set down with rare minuteness, there appear the names of not less than nine rectors and vicars of the parish who, in a period of less than a century, had very materially contributed to the sustentation of the fabric of the church (one of the finest in Norfolk), and had restored some really splendid gifts in the shape of service books, plate, vestments, candlesticks and ornaments of all kinds for rendering the ritual and the service of the sanctuary as splendid and imposing as it could be made." And the churches that they built were not few, as witness what Dr. Jessopp says: "Thus, in the diocese of Exeter, the Bishop was called upon to rededicate between the years 1259 and 1268—actually in nine years—no less than eighty-eight rebuilt or enlarged churches." Summing up the results of his researches Dr. Jessopp comes to this conclusion: "Take them all in all, I cannot resist the impression, which has become deeper and deeper upon me the more I have read and pondered, that the parochial clergy in England during the centuries between the conquest and the reformation numbered among them at all times some of the best men of their generation."

Our readers may wonder that such a tribute to priests of the Catholic Church should come from such a source. But Dr. Jessopp is not a disinterested party in the matter, for he has an axe to grind. He concludes his essay by attempting, somewhat egotistically, to trace an analogy between the early pastors and himself and his fellow ministers of the present day. For Catholicity and Catholics in general he has no words of praise. He can say nothing bitter enough about the monks and the members of religious orders. But without admitting the truth of his assumption, that he and his fellow-ministers of the Anglican fold resemble the early secular pastors—we can set down as worthy of belief his statements about the priests of old, for he is, evidently, a deep student of history. The types of the early pastors of England are to be found in that country to day. They do not exist in the Anglican fold, however. They are the rectors and pastors of the Catholic faith.—Boston Republic.

EARLY ENGLISH CATHOLIC PASTORS.

The current number of the Nineteenth Century has a most interesting paper on "The Parish Priest in England before the Reformation," by Rev. Augustus Jessopp, D. D., an Anglican minister. The essay was first read as a lecture by Dr. Jessopp at a convention or "movement" of ministers and professors at Cambridge University. It pays a glowing tribute to the Catholic parish priest of ante-reformation days, which is somewhat remarkable if one considers the religious tendencies of its author and his original audience.

First of all, Dr. Jessopp avers that the parish priests of the early days were good and worthy men. They were recognized as the guides and teachers of the people, and "their influence was an influence for good." Moreover, they enjoyed the confidence of the people, for Dr. Jessopp says: "Nevertheless, though the parish priests were growing poorer and poorer from the conquest to the reformation, it is noticeable that they never ceased to retain the confidence and esteem of their people from first to last." The Catholic pastors were men of learning and ability. Dr. Jessopp says: "Meanwhile, all through the Anglo-Saxon era we find the parish priests quite able to hold their own as teaching, preaching, working clergymen." Again he adds that "there were among those parish priests no inconsiderable number of men deserving in that age to be called scholars and students." They had other gifts, too. "There are among them," the same writer says, "men of consideration and weight who were perfectly qualified to take their places in council side by side with the greatest abbots in the land, to travel from one end of England to the other that their voices might be heard in the debates, and, moreover, when the religious houses had been harried and burned by the Vikings, that these same priests were ready to fill up the vacant seats in the assemblies of the church and to rally round their Bishops whenever and whithersoever they might be summoned to attend and deliver their judgments or tender their advice in times of peril and perplexity."

Dr. Jessopp dwells at length on the generosity and charity of these early fathers of the church. Their charity is especially noted in their contributions to the cause of religion. "It is the rarest thing," says their historian, "to meet with a parson's will in which some legacy is not left to the church in which he officiates." Nor did they wait till death called them before giving generously to the church. They not only contributed their own mite to the support of the churches then standing, but they influenced the people to assist financially in the building of new temples. These hard-working parish priests were great church builders. "Everything goes to show," says Dr. Jessopp, "that the immense majority of the old churches in England were built not by the great men, but by the small people with the clergy at their head." Again he adds: "In the famous 'Black Book of Swaff-

AWAKENING OF THE SPIRIT.

An awakening of the spirit is an earnest, thoughtful consideration of the responsibilities of life, and precedes a change of heart, or what is sometimes called conversion. It was an effect of grace, and may be produced in us in answer to the prayers of the Church, or the supplication of friends or relatives or others in our behalf. Christ has produced the occasion and fitted the circumstances to our needs, for He has said: "Without Me you can do nothing." When you behold a sinner turning from his or her sin, if you have a kind look, or hopeful word, bestow it freely, for God and the angels are looking. Infinite power and supernatural influences are at work on a human soul producing a change that produces a joy in Paradise. The Lord tells us that "There is joy before the angels over one sinner that repenteth." You see, there is a divinity in repentance that operates on two worlds in a miraculous manner, proceeding as it does from the Holy Spirit.

Suppose the Angel of the Trumpet could announce that the time for repentance had closed, how many thousands would cry to the Lord to restore the privilege? We read in St. Luke 13: 3, that our Saviour was preaching repentance, and He said in unmistakable language: "I tell ye nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." He said: "My words will not pass away." They have the same force to-day that they had then. If these words were traced on the sky all would read them with an extraordinary interest, and the whole city would repent.

After reading these lines and knowing your startling condition; being sensible, too, that God is watching your decision, then what will you do? IF YOU COULD SEE

If you could behold the horror of your condition with the eyes of the Spirit, you would fall as one dead. If you were told that your time for repentance had closed you would shriek in wild dismay the words, "My God!" ere you fainted to earth. How startling is the tolling of the death bell! Not one is alarmed! If you could see the anxiety of your guardian angel who would pity that radiant creature who loves you more than you deserve. Does the danger of dying in your sin bring no alarm? Has an eternity of suffering no feature of dread? My friend, it is a frightful thing to be in enmity with the living God, even for one moment. If you saw the terrible flash of his sleepless eye as He looks deep into your heart with an infinite loathing for your shocking sins, you would turn white. Will you have the hardihood to insult that awful Being by remaining indifferent?

How awful is death! Death in nearly every case is a fearful tragedy, only divested of its terrors because it is so common. Men and women are afraid of death. All they need is to have it forced on their attention. If you knew how little time you have left you would be alarmed. If all the men and women who are to die within twelve months were to be informed by the death angel, a wail would go up from there that would be heard in all the neighboring villages, and the greatest excitement would prevail.

A number died since they read the last article, who did not expect so sudden a call. A few hours' or days' sickness ended their probation here, and they launched into an eternity so vast, so endless, as to bewilder thought. Commence to night and let your repentance be the most extraordinary effort of your life. Eternal salvation is the prize.—Philip O'Neill in Catholic Mirror.

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These are from the Episcopate what every one pointed the things, com- lies, but with that which is most deeply confident in prayer: pri- the other's s- other to re- and both u- love and de- If it is su- ought not to- lligion is evi- cessary prac- divine pray- for all man- of every Ch- brethren, a- Catholics fi- the bonds of- That both- given up by- ingly make- Protestants- liged to do- good works, for its disun- ing and en- This inter- a spiritual- given and t- hearts. In- one of the- love betwe- devoted peo- cannot expl- the spiritua- code with th- and purest- this is what- doing for o- is as natura- "Good in- The priests- prayers, and- the people's- have the gra- joy fulfill th- tion. What, in- people, exa- tations of th- devil, if the- time lifting- cation at th- Divine Viet- for sinners, ing and th- end heart, and mourn- despairing, rushing blin- tion. And as- your priests- prayers. T- one, full of- knowledge t- labor are in- their courag- tion. None kno- precious you- to be in th- and compass- If they we- your prayer- reason, inde- to fall shor- which they- are so oeroc- ties are so g- prayers that- their graces- tions overco- driven off, th- fortified, and- smoothed. See, too, w- have in the- Death for ou- Make separa- spirit. We- of intercess- still nearer- bered among- worship the- away the sin- tending for- Learn, dea- truly divine- which we be- in union wit- tion of our b- living; i-nt- for yours- others, for s- are filled wi- who prayed- sake, but f- whether fri- never otherw-