

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

ROMANISM: EFFECTS UPON ITS ADHERENTS INTELLECTUALLY AND NATIONALLY.

BY REV. JOHN DUNBAR, DUNBAR, N.B.

All past history shows us, and all present observation assures us, that the religion of a people must ever naturally and necessarily exercise a mighty influence over the character and condition of all who profess it. We wonder not at this when we consider that religious impressions are the earliest and the deepest we receive and the strongest and most sacred we retain, inasmuch as they reach out into all that we intermingle with here, as well as reach onward into all that we anticipate hereafter. In this respect it matters but comparatively little whether that religion be true or false, heathen or Christian, or a mixture of both; its place in the mind and its power over the man is ever keeping with his conception of it, his confidence in it, and his consecration to it. It also holds no less uniformly and universally true, that the character of the devotee ever becomes assimilated more or less manifestly to his conception of the nature of the deity whom he adores; so that from the character of the devotee we may readily infer his ideal of his deity, for, "like deity, like devotee," is a maxim world-wide and weighty and not easily gainsayed.

If we look for a little at the intellectual aspect of the matter, we will ever see how markedly the different kinds of religion produce their kindred effects. Compare for instance the ancient idolaters of Greece and Rome with those of India and Persia, and mark their manifest intellectual diversities. The same thing is seen when we compare the Hindoo with the Mahometan, or the Mahometan with the Christian, though living in the same land and subject to the same laws; and if we compare the Romanist with the Protestant we see the same causes at work, and the same consequences follow. Well do I yet remember, as if but the other day, though a full quarter century has since intervened, when as a student for the time in one of our provincial towns, where the Catholic church and the Protestant being near to each other, and the services of both often terminating at the same time, the congregations met and mingled and moved on for some distance together, that the intellectual stamp of their countenances was such as to make easily discernible to me as to others to which congregation they respectively belonged. But not to limit the view either to local position or to individual observation, it cannot be denied that, be it where it may, when we pass from a community wholly Catholic to a community wholly Protestant, we seem almost to have exchanged one race of our humanity for another. But further, if we take a cursory glance at the comparative amount and merit of Catholic and Protestant literature, and see what intellect in each produces and provides for intellect, it will ever be found that in the former there is a narrow range, a cunning caution and an imperious dogmatism in keeping with their system, presenting a strong striking contrast to the breadth of thought, the freedom of conception, and the luminous and logical deductions of the other. Look for a moment at our own Dominion. While in it hitherto and from necessity, there has been seen more of the manual than the mental, more of the product of the plough than of the pen, yet of the little home literature we have, how much, or rather how little, is the product of the Romanist pen. And when we compare the intellectual status of the Romanist population of the Province of Quebec where Popery is, if not most pure, at least most powerful, with that of the Protestant population in the adjoining provinces east or west of them, or their American neighbours south of them, how marked and melancholy the difference—a difference in defect, showing in the former a pitiable and painful lack, alike of manly vigour and mental power. And while we can as yet boast of but few who in intellectual stature and culture stand out and up over their fellows, yet we have at least a Dawson and a Wilson—and whom have they? But should we cast our eyes over the ocean and scan the literati and literature of the mother isles of the sea, how many amid the glorious galaxy of lordly intellects, and how much of the learned literature found there, in proportion to population, belong to the adherents of the Church of Rome? True, they may point you to a Lingard, a Butler, and a Wiseman, but beyond these

can they point to any who, either by nature or by culture, either by eminent scholarship, gigantic intellect or original research, have commanded any large share of the public attention? Look too, alike at the system as well as the substance of their education. Compare for instance the teaching as well as the text-books of Maynooth and all her collegiate circle of satellites with the teaching and the text-books of Protestant universities, and one would stand amazed at the immeasurable intellectual superiority of the latter over the former, while each is found yielding fruit after its kind.

Cross the channel to France, and while the Romanist may, in divinity proudly point to Massillon and Bossuet, and while each revels at will in the blaze of a brilliant genius, yet few would be led to say that either their intellect was powerful or their orations profound; or do they point to Pascal or Quesnel, these were far from being true sons of the Church, for while the former lashed it with his sarcastic satire, the latter strenuously combated many of its unscriptural and imperious dogmas. Do they point, in philosophy, to De Cartes? it will be found that his adherence to the Church was more nominal than real, more servile than sacred. Do they point in science to La Place, or in literature to Voltaire and Rousseau? yet amid the fame of the former and the celebrity of the latter it is not too much to say that these, with their confederates, with hardly an exception, were infidels.

But what is said of them intellectually—and the illustrations might have been greatly extended—is no less true of them nationally, for it is a matter of history that throughout the Christian world, in the present as in the past, whatever progress has been made in intelligence, in liberty, in wealth and the arts of life, has not been made by or because of the Church of Rome, but in despite, and often in defiance, of her; and in whatever country we may travel or in whatever community we may sojourn, this progress has everywhere been, the rather, in the inverse proportion to her power. If we compare nations with what they once were, we see in the downfall and degradation of Spain—once the first among monarchies—a sample of how some of the loveliest and wealthiest provinces of Europe, have under Romish rule, been sunk into comparative poverty, political servility, and all but intellectual inanity; while such a country as Holland, in spite of her many disadvantages, has risen to position and power, such as is seldom reached by any commonwealth so circumscribed. Or if we look at Italy away in the fair fertile south, at one time first in warfare, in wealth, and in world-wide renown, but now, long alike the seat and the slave of Romish power, and compare with it Scotland away in the bleak and barren north—what it was under Popish serfdom and what it now is under Protestant liberty—compare their respective countries, their capitals and their communities, and we will see there too how Protestant countries once proverbial for sterility and barbarism have been by intelligence and enterprise transformed into luxuriant gardens and fertile fields, and can now present, out of these once barbarians, a long and deservedly honoured list of heroes and statesmen, poets and philosophers. But if we compare even one part of a country with another, the same truth stands out in all its sad significance. Pass from a Popish county to a Protestant one in Ireland, from one such canton to another in Switzerland, or from one such principality in Germany to another, and the contrast is at once self-evident and significant. Or if we again cross the ocean and see how far the United States have left behind in intelligence and enterprise the no less favoured countries of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil, we are forced to the same conclusion. Or if we come to our own home, where in it is found the intelligence, the energy and the enterprise of our country? certainly, with but few exceptions, not among the Romanists. And if we take a glance at our neighbouring province, which is peculiarly though unfortunately for them their own, we will meet there on every hand the dark and degrading contrast, and this is the more marked in proportion as they fail to meet with and mingle with their more favoured Protestant fellowmen. What is found in Romish countries is equally seen in settlements or communities, vividly recalling to mind an instance in which I and a friend were travelling by our own conveyance through one of the most fertile regions of our western province, when, as we journeyed, we came upon a continuation of farms, the soil evidently as good as the fertile fields we had so lately passed, yet the houses and fences were so

poor and dilapidated, and the fields and their products in such full keeping therewith, as to excite a mutual wonder which all our conjectures could not dispel, until as we drove along we sighted in the near distance a Romish church, which at once solved and settled the otherwise insoluble mystery. All these things taken together point without a doubt to a powerful and a permeating something in the essence and operations of Romanism at once detrimental and destructive to man's higher development, alike intellectually and nationally.

I cannot wipe my pen without noticing with scornful indignation the consummate impudence of Archbishop Lynch, who was so unmannerly as to intrude himself on the privacy of the Marquis of Lorne and his royal lady while visiting the Falls as best they could, *incog.*, and still more his egotistical and presumptuous impertinence in asking them to visit the nunnery close by; but thus we see everything after its kind.

A FAREWELL CHARGE.

BY REV. JOSEPH ELLIOTT, CANNINGTON.

In immediate connection with the charge we are about to consider, Moses said unto all Israel, "I am 120 years old this day; I can no more go out and come in; also the Lord hath said unto me, thou shalt not go over this Jordan."

On the anniversary of his birthday, in the land of Moab near to the river Jordan, in the vicinity of Mount Nebo where he was about to die—looking back to an earthly pilgrimage of 120 years, upward to the eternal God "as seeing Him who is invisible," and onward to life everlasting, he addressed to the people this farewell charge "choose life." (Deut. xxx. 19.)

The opinion has been advanced by some that the doctrine of a future life is not taught in the Pentateuch. But surely, without referring to any other parts of the writings of Moses, that opinion is sufficiently opposed by his farewell charge—which clearly proves that he believed in a higher life than merely natural life on earth, a life to be perpetuated beyond this state of existence. When he said "Choose life," he could not possibly mean natural life on earth. That life they had, previous to any possibility of choice of their own. Or, can we suppose that when he said "choose life," he was calling on them to choose whether they would go up with him to Mount Nebo and die, or remain yet longer on earth? And, assured as they all were that man is mortal, we cannot suppose that he called on them to choose whether they would continue to live without tasting of death.

The life he called on the people to choose was the life he himself had chosen long before the 40 years' journey in the wilderness.

When he was a young man, in the palace of Pharaoh, surrounded by the splendors of the Egyptian court, and a recognized member—by adoption—of the Royal family; then it was that "by faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of reward."

When Moses said "choose life," he evidently felt that man must be of a co-operative spirit if he would be saved; that it is necessary to choose life if we would have it. What the poet Cowper wrote respecting the cross of Christ, may be said of the farewell charge of Moses, "No mockery meets you, no deception there," but with equal appropriateness it may be added, *no shraldom meets you, no compulsion there.* All the heavenly host were originally placed—holy and happy—in a sphere of moral freedom; but, part of their number abusing that freedom, "kept not their first estate." Our first parents whom God created in His own image—pure and happy—occupied in Eden a sphere of moral freedom "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall;" and, from the very dawn of the revelation of the purposes of Divine mercy, the ways of the Lord have fully recognized the freedom of the human soul. Led by the Spirit, Moses said "choose life;" Joshua said, "choose ye this day whom ye will serve;" Paul said, "we beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The "Eternal Godhead" ever recognises the free agency of man. The Father says, "Why will ye die?" The Son says, "ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." The Spirit says, "To-day,