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SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

Among the papers read at the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair, one by Sir William Dawson of Montreal, entitled "Science and Religion," is well worthy of attention.

Sir William was invited to prepare a summary of his mature convictions on the relations of natural science to religion, a field in which infidels and agnostics revel. He was prevented by infirmity from being present in person; but he contributed the paper asked of him, and it was presented before the assemblage.

Infidels and Agnostics are accustomed to boast that they have demonstrated that on certain points where Revelation or the Holy Scripture touches upon natural science, the two are found to be in irreconcilable contradiction.

It has been frequently proved that this is an error. Revelation was not designed by God to teach man science, but to lead him to save his soul, nevertheless there are certain passages of Scripture which touch upon scientific subjects more or less directly. Thus the history of the creation of the universe as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, and the account given of the deluge in the 6th, 7th and 8th chapters of the same book, might be expected to find some illustration in the discoveries made by geologists in their researches into the bowels of the earth.

These researches have not enabled man to penetrate very far below the surface, in comparison with the size of this globe which has a diameter of nearly 8,000 miles. Nevertheless the operation of the laws of nature has produced in the course of time, during millions of years, undoubtedly, so many convulsions and changes that the interior of the earth has been from time to time greatly disturbed, and even portions of it at a depth of miles have been forced to the surface. By examining carefully the various rocks which have been thus brought within the possibility of research a pretty accurate knowledge has been obtained of the general character of the earth to a depth of at least eight or nine miles; for it must be remembered that the numerous cuttings which have been made in the building of canals and railways, and in mining and quarrying have greatly increased the opportunities of search in this direction.

It is, of course, possible that the earth came from the Omnipotent hand of God in the condition in which it has been found to be, and therefore there can be no contradiction between the lesson taught by Geology and the account of Creation given in Genesis. But the analogies of nature make it extremely improbable that this is what has occurred. The power given by the telescope and the spectro-scope to penetrate into the mysteries of nature has thrown great light upon what has been going on through the vast universe, and has shown that the earth is but a speck among the myriads of worlds which are found in the vast regions of space, many of them being thousands of times larger than this comparatively small orb of ours. The process of the formation of new worlds is seen to be gradual, and it must have taken millions of years to bring a globe like this from an atomic to a solid state, and even in its solid state millions of years must have elapsed while it passed through the various stages of existence of which geologists have discovered the evidence.

But, properly understood, the first chapter of Genesis gives plenty of time for all these changes to have happened before Almighty God began to prepare the earth for man's life upon it, so that there is in all this no contradiction between science and Revelation.

It will be noticed that we are told in Genesis that "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and dark-

ness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the waters." After this began the remote preparation of the earth for the purpose of being fitted as a place of habitation for man. Even then six days were required for this preparation, and it is a question very debatable whether these six days were ordinary days, or periods the length of which is absolutely unknown to us. But one thing is evident, that before these six days began there was an interval between the original creation and the first day spoken of by the inspired writer. During this interval may have occurred all the lengthened periods the evidences of whose existence have been discovered by geology.

All the efforts of Professor Tyndall, and the horde of infidel Sciolists who have endeavored to show a conflict between the scientific and the Mosaic records, have been unavailing. But there is one salient fact of which the secret is revealed in the Scriptural account, whereof physical science affords us no solution: it is that matter was created by God. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." Elsewhere we have it, "Praise Him ye heavens of heavens: and let all the waters that are above the heavens praise the name of the Lord. For He spoke, and they were made: He commanded and they were created. He hath established them for ever, and for ages of ages: He hath made a decree, and it shall not pass away." (Ps. cxlviii.)

Sir William Dawson does not enter at length upon the question of the apparent, or rather the pretended, conflict between Science and Revelation; but he points out that science leads us to the belief that "there must be a first cause for the phenomena of the universe." We cannot reasonably suppose that the dead matter, still less that the sentient and rational beings which swarm everywhere where the ken of man has penetrated, are causeless. It is equally irrational to say that they are self-made or eternal. Science itself, therefore, intimates to us that there is a Great First Cause by whom they were designed, and the unity of design proves the unity of that cause, who must also be powerful and wise beyond human conception. An effect cannot exceed its cause in perfection; and so, the Great First Cause of the universe and its phenomena must be above matter, immaterial, and spiritual, like the soul of man, but infinitely surpassing the latter in the qualities which make the human soul superior to matter.

As Sir William says: "Since the whole universe must in some sense be an illustration and development of its first cause, it must all reflect light on this primitive power, which must thus be known to us at least in the same manner in which such agencies as gravitation and the etherial medium occupying space are known."

This science refutes the agnostic fancy, which is but a fantastic theory, that the Great First Cause is unknown and unknowable. We may know something of Him by His works, and we may know much more of Him if He vouchsafes to reveal Himself to us, which He is certainly able to do since His power and wisdom are infinite. This is not precisely pointed out by Sir William Dawson, but it is an undeniable inference from the facts which he lays before us.

It is therefore clear that a revelation from God is possible and reasonable. Now when it is considered that our own capacity to know something of our future destiny is extremely limited, may we not very reasonably also expect that the Great First Cause should give us some light, where scientific research has left us in total darkness? The only answer we can give to this question is an affirmative one; and therefore we have deduced from science itself the reasonableness of the Christian Revelation.

The qualities of the Great First Cause, as science reveals them, are just those qualities which are required to lead us to believe in a personal creator such as Christianity declares God to be; and thus instead of the conflict which Infidels say exists between religion and reason, we find an admirable concord: reason leading us to precisely those conclusions which theology teaches us as having been received through Revelation.

Concerning the existence of a future life for man science is, perhaps, not quite so clear; but it is the favorite theory of scientists that matter is imperishable; and as far as human power is concerned this is certainly the case. Matter is, and must be, imperishable, unless He who created it wish to

destroy it, or to withdraw His ever-sustaining hand. It is God's perpetual Providence which preserves the universe. If then, science claims that matter is imperishable, what reason has any one to assert that the more perfect being, spirit, will perish with the dissolution of the body, which means only that the parts of which the body is composed assume other forms and enter into other combinations? No reason can be assigned, therefore, for a belief in the annihilation of the soul, and we are thus led by science itself to believe in the soul's immortality.

Sir William Dawson gives us another consideration which leads to this same conclusion, namely, that

"All animals are actuated by instincts adapted to their needs and place in nature, and we have a right to consider such instincts as in accordance with the will of their Creator."

Now it is certainly a universal human instinct that man will enter upon another life after he shall have ceased living on earth. Sir William concludes, therefore, that

"This instinct of immortality should be recognized by science as constituting one of the inherent and essential characters of humanity."

There is, therefore, on this point also a great accord between science and religion. We welcome the good and elevating thoughts which this able scientist has contributed to the Parliament of Religions, and we feel confident that they will do their share towards helping to Christianize the world. They are, indeed, an embodiment of Catholic philosophy. We would be pleased if we could say of the other emanations which were placed before that Parliament by Protestant divines that they would have effects as beneficial as Sir William Dawson's paper, but we fear that their contraries will have a very different effect on the learned Paynim who were present. Their chief object seemed to be to prove that Christianity is just a little more reasonable than Mahometanism and Buddhism, all religions being very much of a sameness.

THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE.

Among the curiosities to be seen in the Catholic historical collection at the World's Fair are two Bibles in German printed in the year 1470. This fact alone is sufficient to show that the oft-repeated assertion made by Protestant polemical writers that the Catholic Church is opposed to the circulation of the Bible in the vernacular is without foundation. The Bible was, indeed, the first book printed when the art of printing was discovered, and before Luther was born there were several editions of the Bible printed. They were numerous and easily accessible long before Luther declared himself a rebel against the authority of the Church.

The story, which has been so frequently and feelingly repeated as to Luther's accidentally finding some pages of the gospel and of St. Paul's Epistles, the beauty of which and the sublimity of whose doctrine struck him for the first time and led him to the adoption of the so-called Protestant rule of Faith, "the whole Bible and the Bible only," is, of course, a fiction pure and simple. In every ecclesiastical seminary the study of the Bible has always been part of the seminarist's education, and all sermons are founded on the teaching of the Bible. Now as Luther received this ecclesiastical training, and was a preacher of considerable ability, he must have been familiar with the Bible, and it was no new thing for him to read the gospel or the writings of St. Paul.

The Catholic Church has always regarded the Bible as the most excellent of all books because it is truly the Word of God. But she does not ignore the fact mentioned by St. Peter (2 Peter iii., 16.) that there are in the Scriptures "many things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction." They should therefore be read even by the learned with due humility, and with reverence for the interpretation given to them by the Catholic Church, which is "the pillar and the ground of truth."

It is certain that the majority of Christians are not able of themselves to draw from the Holy Scriptures a complete and satisfactory knowledge of the truths of religion; and this is true of the learned as well as of the unlearned. The unlearned are apt to err through want of knowledge, and the learned through pride and self-sufficiency. Hence both classes of readers are equally in need of assistance from the living voice of the Church of God to enable them to understand the sacred

volume. There is, therefore, this great difference in the manner in which Protestants and Catholics regard the reading of the Bible by the generality of Christians. As Protestants reject the infallible authority of the Church, they maintain of necessity that each individual is bound to read the Bible in order to find therein the doctrines he must believe. This leads to indiscriminate reading of the Bible, and it is notorious that from such reading many of the most grotesque and dangerous errors have arisen. The crimes of patriarchs, for example, have been supposed to be virtues from the fact that they are recorded on the pages of the Bible. The lawfulness of polygamy and divorce has been maintained, on the plea that they were tolerated in some cases in ancient times, though they are expressly forbidden in the New Testament; and other evils have arisen from the wrong understanding of isolated passages.

The Catholic, on the other hand, is guided through these difficulties by the teaching of the Church. He is instructed by her infallible voice in the doctrines which he must believe, and it is unnecessary for him to wade through pages of history, legal observances and ceremonial, in order to discover them. He reads the Bible to strengthen his faith and to animate his virtues by means of the good examples and counsels which he finds therein; and for this purpose he prefers to read those parts which will best produce the desired results.

The purpose for which the Bible should be read is well explained by the letter of Pope Pius VI. to Archbishop Anthony Martini of Florence, commending him for having published his Italian version of the Bible. The Holy Father says:

"At a time when a vast number of bad books which most grossly attack the Catholic religion are circulated among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge excellently well that the faithful should be exhorted to the reading of the Holy Scriptures. For these are the most abundant sources which ought to be left open to everyone to draw from them purity of morals and doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times. This you have seasonably effected, as you declare, by publishing the sacred writings in the language of your country, suitable to every one's capacity: especially when you show and set forth that you have added explanatory notes, which, being extracted from the Holy Fathers, preclude every possible danger of abuse."

It may be seen from this that the reading of the Holy Scriptures is highly commended to Catholics, provided always that they are read with the spirit of faith, and with those safeguards which prudence points to as being necessary to protect the reader against the dangers of insinuating error.

Of course, before the invention of printing, when books had to be written out by hand with much labor and at great expense, it was an unusual thing or any one to be possessed of a Bible unless he were rich enough to pay well for the expense of transcription, and it was only when printing had made considerable advance as an art that the Bible, or any other book, could become so cheap and accessible as to be in common use. This fact is a proof that it was not the intention of Almighty God in inspiring the sacred writers to make the book the sole rule of Christian faith, as Protestants have done. Both before and after the invention of printing, the Church of Christ was the supreme judge in all matters of doctrine and morals, and this is the case still. However, from the beginning the Church was anxious that the Bible should be within the reach of all who would read it with profit, and she legislated to this effect. There were published editions of the Bible in several languages long before Protestantism was established, and the two German copies at the World's Fair are simply samples of what had already been done before the end of the fifteenth century.

DIOCESE OF HAMILTON.

(OFFICIAL.)

At Cayuga on Monday morning, Oct. 30, the month's mind for the Very Rev. Dr. Bardou, will take place in the parish church at 10:30. The priests of the diocese who can conveniently do so, are invited to attend.

His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his consecration on Wednesday, Oct. 18. Solemn Pontifical Mass was celebrated by His Eminence, and Archbishop Corrigan delivered the sermon. The new diocese of Idaho, which the Holy See has just elevated from the rank of a Vicariate-Apostolic to that of a Bishopric originally formed part of the Louisiana territory.

NOTES ON LACORDAIRE.

Somes years ago we had the pleasure of hearing the celebrated Dominican, Pere Monsabre, in Notre Dame of Paris. We remember the scene very well—the sea of upturned faces and the white-robed monk announcing to them in irresistible language the great truths of Christian doctrine. Among the audience we beheld men noted in the boulevards as the maturest products of the school that believes only what it understands, members of the Academy, and poor old men and women who appreciated little the finished periods of the orator, but were honored personators of the faith on which the oration was grounded.

Pere Monsabre has worked hard and successfully and he bears gracefully the mantle of Father Lacordaire. Not that he is the equal of that celebrated preacher; for no one since the days of Bourdaloue has swayed a French audience like the silver-tongued Lacordaire. Great talent is his, but he lacks the warmth, the impetuosity of his predecessor. One is like unto a river that winds down through pleasant fields to the sea, and the other is as the rushing torrents that over rock and obstructions bounds into the ocean. Even at an early age he gave signs of great ability, and one of his friends, speaking of a debating club of which he was a member, says that he "can never forget that voice, clear and vibrating, full of emotion, intoxicated with its own richness, attentive to its own echoes alone, abandoning itself without reserve or constraint to the quenchless fullness of its poetic inspiration." Thrown amidst gay companions, the bright flame of faith became dim; but the noble soul could not long subsist on the husks of infidelity. His warm, sympathetic heart clamored for something to love, and bitter experience taught him how powerless are unstable and transient things to minister to human happiness. Nearer and nearer he approached the faith of his fathers, and at length we see him renouncing the success of the bar that was presaged by experienced judges and lending himself to the work of equipping himself for the ministry of preaching. It was a comparatively easy task for the brilliant genius of Lacordaire. His sermons were at first delivered before the pupils of the college of St. Stanislaus; but God had His designs upon him and placed him in the pulpit of Notre Dame, to be a new prophet, to spread broadcast the truth that enlightens every man that cometh into the world.

He thus tells us of his first appearance as the preacher of Notre Dame: "The day having come Notre Dame was filled with a multitude such as had never before been seen within its walls. The liberal and absolutist youth of Paris, friends and enemies, and that curious crowd that a great capital has always ready for anything new, had all flocked together and were packed in dense masses within the old cathedral. I mounted the pulpit firmly, but not without emotion, and began my discourse with my eyes fixed on the Archbishop, who, after God, but before the public, was to me the first personage in the scene. He listened with his head a little bent down, in a state of absolute impassibility, like a man who was not a mere spectator, nor even a judge, but rather as one who ran a personal risk by the experiment. I soon felt at home with my subject and audience, and as my breast swelled under the necessity of grasping that vast assembly of men, and as the calm of the first opening sentences began to give place to the inspiration of the orator, one of those exclamations escaped from me which when deep and heartfelt never fails to move. The Archbishop was visibly moved."

From that day Lacordaire held undisputed right to the title of France's greatest orator. Year after year the multitude thronged to hear him, now denouncing the false and pernicious systems that had wrecked his own faith, and again, in accents that struck deep into the heart, exhorting all to live so as to make their country better for their living. And yet, endowed as he was with such a marvellous aptitude for expression and gifted with a profound and clear mind, his mission was also of great difficulty and responsibility. Around his pulpit gathered men renowned in science and letters, who came to criticize, who clung fondly to the traditions of the school of Voltaire. To sow these unbelief-swept souls some seed of faith and to warm it with the sunshine of conviction into a goodly tree was the aim of Lacordaire. And did he succeed? With some he failed, but upon the majority he exercised an influence that was to last long after the grave held all that was mortal of the great Dominican.

He was in sympathy with his age

and its inspirations. He appreciated its qualities and saw clearly its dangers. "Christianity," he says, "has never braved the world; it has never insulted reason and nature; it has never made its light a power which blinds by irritating; but, as gentle as it is bold, as calm as it is energetic, as tender as it is immovable, it has always known how to penetrate into the heart of its generation; and these souls who will be found remaining faithful to it at the last day will have been preserved or conquered by the same means." His preaching was of an order different from that which Frenchmen were accustomed to hear. Dry theological disquisitions were never employed by him to win souls to God. He left the past, all its old theories and systems, and to the present, with its false notions, he devoted his care. The Church was the foe of science, said many; but Lacordaire showed them how the Church has ever fostered and encouraged every progress of the human intellect; how she has defended reason against those who would fain belittle its dignity, and that between reason and faith, children of the same God and portraying truth each in its own sphere, there can be no possible conflict. His words were steeped in the kindness of a noble heart, and no one ever heard from his lips, even in the heat of an oratorical outburst, one sentence that could leave a bitterness in any soul. Error he denounced. He tore off the flimsy veil with which the enemies of faith concealed their malevolent designs, but it was more in pity than in anger. The thought that human souls, dowered with sublime perfections, created for the Infinite, could harbor aught unworthy of its origin and its destiny, evoked his compassion, and in his conferences and letters we see how he deplored it. He was of too lovable a character to use invective as a means of assailing falsehood, and this, perchance, constituted the greatest charm of his discourses and rendered them capable of effecting a permanent good.

CONCLUDED IN NEXT ISSUE.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

We were asked some time ago our opinion of Augusta Watson, author of St. Elmo and of other novels. Wishing to pass an impartial judgment, we secured her principal productions, and with the aid of a classical dictionary we succeeded in deciphering her meaning. Verily she is wonderfully learned, in fact she is a female Miranda lecturing us on all things and some others. But that would be comparatively innocuous were it not for the morbidness that pervades it. Visions of wicked men and high-strung damsel trooped through our mind till we almost felt like assuming a mournful mien and murmuring lofty platitudes for the sake of hearing some noble-browed being, "with eyes of dark azure," upbraiding us for our wickedness. There is nothing healthy about her novels, as regards style or thought. She is also a rank bigot, venturing to distort and misrepresent the practices of Catholics. Critics have praised her works, but criticism cannot claim infallibility.

It is amusing to read the remarks of some Episcopalian ministers ament the Parliament of Religions. They did not attend its sessions, because, forsooth, a divine institution had no need of being "boomed." Do they not misunderstand the real nature of the Parliament of Religions, whose sole object was to put the truth clearly and forcibly by contrasting it with systems founded on prejudice and error, and thus giving solution to many questions that are agitating the minds of men. Perhaps they recoiled at the thought that truth is great and will prevail. But it serves no purpose for them to robe themselves in the mantle of Churchmen and wonder why "the Church of Rome participated in the Parliament." The Church of Rome was there to utter with no uncertain tone the message of her Founder, Jesus Christ, to humanity, hoping that it might gain willing entrance into ears now pained by the clamor of contradictory systems. She sent her prelates to show that Catholicity could satisfy the minds of humanity. No one expected wonderful conversions, for human nature is prone to cling fast to time-honored traditions, but "the net result of the Parliament will be for the good of religion." "It has surely," says Bishop Keane, "been pleasing to our Heavenly Father to see His scattered children meet on the basis of mutual respect and charity—a delightful substitute for the mistrust and hostility

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