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They who glory in the advancement of science and foresee in its every discovery a sign of the impending disruption of Catholicity will perhaps have their illusions dispelled by a correct estimate of the doctrine of the Church. Now and then, though the question has long since been discussed, we read that the Mosiac Cosmogony has been proved false and untenable by the scientific investigations of recent years. The proofs of this assertion have not been given to the world, and yet it attains the dignity of a dogma in the minds of individuals who glean their knowledge from magazines—from articles written by obscure writers, for money. The God of Revelation cannot contradict the God of nature, and therefore there can be no antagonism between the truth of Revelation and the truth of nature. Much error arises from the fact that many mistake a generally received opinion for a definition of the Church. Commentators and theologians may wage war against scientists and philosophers, but so long as there is no official pronouncement of the Church in the question under discussion, individuals are at liberty to give free utterance to their opinions. Untrammelled discussion by competent persons is always productive of much good, inasmuch as it dispels prejudice and misrepresentation, and sheds a strong and clear light on the disputed point.

Take for example the question of Evolution. Some years ago a scientist, whose name is cherished by all lovers of original thinking, undertook the task of championing the cause of Darwin. He did not, of course, admit the transmutation of species—a theory with but the vain imaginary arguments of its progenitor to commend it, and one utterly discredited by reputable scientists. But, under certain restrictions, Evolution can certainly be said to be not at variance with the teaching of the Church. We admit that matter, under the omnipotent hand of the Creator, sprang from no pre-existing substance—from nothing. It does not follow that God created, directly, all the various forms which the matter may assume. May we, then, not admit that God, having directly created matter, gave it certain laws, which guided its subsequent evolution into various phases and forms? There is nothing in Catholic theology to contradict such an opinion; and they who urge a relentless, indiscriminating war against Evolution manifest more zeal than discernment.

Again, a distinguished writer of the present day published, but lately, an article that occasioned a great deal of adverse criticism. We refer to St. George Mivart's paper on the "Happiness of Hell." Many and talented writers, armed cap a pie with theological armor, took the field against him. It was a goodly fight. Surely were the guns trained against the position of the English scientist, and when the smoke cleared away it was uncaptured, simply because it was impregnable. His opponents had undoubtedly the laudable desire of defending a truth they deemed imperilled. Accustomed to the beaten tracks of theological thought, they exaggerated the apparent newness of the doctrine, and over-estimated its importance. The theory of St. George Mivart may be rash, and calculated to do much harm to the unlearned and unthinking, but it cannot be branded with the stigma of falsehood or heresy.

It has been said, and justly, that the over-zealous defenders of the truth mislead the weak-minded: they bring confusion into the ranks; they impede the action of competent men, and shut them out from achieving real good. Truth is too vast to find shelter in any text-book, or to be hemmed in by narrow boundaries, drawn out with mathematical precision. An original mind may, from out the fullness of genius, broadened by observation and

deepened by long thinking and continuous study, unfold an opinion whose very novelty may startle the world. It may run counter to our cherished convictions, but we may not, with any show of reason, relegate it by a mere assertion to the domain of the fanciful and absurd. A writer who has a regard for the verdict of posterity, and who understands his responsibility, will not venture to uphold a theory absolutely false. We may not grasp its whole import, but succeeding generations may seize upon it and place it in its true light. We speak of doubtful scientific and philosophical questions, in which the greatest latitude of opinion is allowed by the Church.

Sure, as past records prove, never bestowed her approval on any theory. "When the Copernican system," says Cardinal Newman, "first made progress, what religious man would not have been tempted to uneasiness, or at least fear of scandal, from the seeming contradiction which it involved to some authoritative tradition of the Church and the declaration of the Scripture? It was generally received as if the Apostles had expressly delivered it, both orally and in writing, that the earth was stationary, and that the sun was fixed in a solid firmament which whirled around the earth. After a little time, however, and on full consideration, it has found that the Church had decided next to nothing in questions such as these, and that physical science might range in this sphere of thought almost at will, without fear of encountering the decisions of ecclesiastical authorities. And so, with the exception of atheistic and materialistic opinions, may it be likewise said of all current scientific theories. Between true science and the Church there can be no conflict, for each in its own way leads us to God. "It is clear enough," says an old author, "that they who affect in company to combat the most common truths of religion, say much more about it than they think. Vanity, rather than conviction, enters into their disputations. They imagine that the boldness and singularity of the sentiments they maintain will secure for them the reputation of great minds."

MISS ANNIE BESANT, the High Priestess of Theosophy, is endeavoring to convert America to her peculiar doctrine. Her zeal and learning are worthy of a better cause. She is undoubtedly a woman of great ability, and it is pitiful to see her wasting it in a fruitless task. Better for her to employ her talents in a manner more befitting her sex and more beneficial to humanity. But ours is an age in which woman plays many parts, and Miss Besant is just as much entitled to exhibit herself as any other female with a craving for notoriety. Eloquent does she depict the benefits that Theosophy desires to bestow on mankind; and yet in India, the cradle of Buddhism, where all its beauty and truth and good producing power should be apparent, we behold naught but myriad of human beings separated from their fellows by the hard, selfish lines of caste. This, of course, is quite accidental, and must be ascribed to the unintelligent and unappreciative minds of that people. The phrasology of the new fad is extensive and bewildering. The thirst of the multitude for the mysterious is satiated with disquisitions on "ghosts," or, as they are termed in theosophical language, aggregations of invisible molecules. Astral light, cosmic energy, unconditioned potentialities, the eternal ego, reincarnation, Karma and various other terms, flow peacefully from the lips of Miss Besant, and arouse within us strange, mystic yearnings, and make us feel positively learned.

We feel, however, she is sincere. We admire her passionate enthusiasm, and regret that an airy nothing enlists all its thought and fervor. Bereft of the divine faith that teaches humanity to find peace and consolation in the Divine Heart, whose every pulsation was one of love and which shelters all who labor and are burdened, she seeks support in the exploded theories of Eastern visionaries. But it will not last long. The immortal soul must tend to its own perfection. It will burst asunder the fetters that bind its creatures, and, exulting in its freedom, will wing its flight to higher things; and, in the possession of the light which enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world, will find rest.

In connection with Theosophy there is a favorite objection to the polished imitations of ungodliness, viz., that Christianity is but an off-

shoot of Buddhism. Two centuries before Christ, they tell us, Buddha is said to have been born without a human father. Angels chant the glory of his coming, an aged hermit blesses him, and at an early age his wisdom astonishes his elders skilled in all manner of knowledge. Hence, it is argued that Christianity cannot be from heaven. This argument, apparently so convincing, was disposed of by Bentley, who discovered that this legend of the life of Buddha was invented by the Brahmins in the seventh century, and fraudulently inserted in their religious records.

The seventeenth annual meeting of the Tabernacle Society of Washington took place on Feb. 6, in the presence of about one hundred members. The Tabernacle Society is a guild of pious ladies who furnish needy missions over the country with the various sacred vessels, vestments, and altar cloths and linens necessary for Divine service. Truly a noble charity! Last year it distributed more than \$4000.

NATURALISTS tell us that in Africa there is an insect so unclean that it poisons everything with which it comes in contact. It is a very good representation of the detractor, who has no nobler aim in life than the rending of his neighbor's reputation. His sly tongue is forever casting the filth of an impure mind upon another's character. Motives are misrepresented, and baseless reports are circulated. He should be scourged out of any respectable community. As it is the season of Lent let him make a resolution to abstain, for he who refuses to listen to backbiting and calumny putteth out from the presence of Jesus an unclean animal. "He who is grieved to hear evil of others dresseth the wounds of Jesus."

THE HOME RULE DISCUSSION.

As was expected, the introduction of the Home Rule Bill into the British House of Commons gave occasion already to some spirited speeches delivered from both sides of the House, but from the despatches so far received the Liberal supporters of the Bill have had by far the best of the argument.

One episode arising out of the question was rather an amusing one, as it resulted in Viscount Wolmer, the Tory member for West Edinburgh, being obliged to make an apology to the House for having maligned the Irish members.

The Viscount stated at a meeting in St. James Hall that the Irish members subsist on contributions given to them by the Gladstonian Parliamentary caucus; and starting from the basis of this statement, the London Times heaped up a number of unfounded accusations against the Nationalist party, saying amongst other things that "Mr. Gladstone's majority would be wiped out if the Irish members did not receive stipends from the Liberal party fund or from the private liberality of rich English partisans."

Mr. Thomas Sexton, the Nationalist member for North Kerry, pointed out that these statements are entirely false, as neither the Liberal party nor any rich partisan supplies funds for the support of any Nationalist member. The Speaker of the House called upon Viscount Wolmer either to bring forward satisfactory proof of his statement or to apologize to the House. Being unable to sustain his assertion, he chose the latter course, and very unwillingly admitted that he had gone too far, and expressed his regret.

The Times has also been obliged to publish an apology for its statements. Sir Randolph Churchill attempted to be witty at Mr. Gladstone's expense, comparing the Home Rule Bill to the marvels witnessed by Alice in Wonderland. He brought up no solid reasons, however, against its passage, nor any reason at all which has not been already brought forward and triumphantly refuted as unsatisfactory.

He declared that there is a British majority against the Bill, and that it is sustained by an Irish majority, which is of course in one sense true, but it is also sustained by Scotland and Wales. The argument, however, is of no force against the Bill. As the Hon. Edward Blake pointed out in one of his speeches delivered recently at Bath, there was a popular majority of 245,000 in the United Kingdom in favor of Mr. Gladstone's candidates; and as long as the countries are united they must be dealt with as united. Scotland and Wales are one with Ireland on this question, and the English majority in favor of the Tory administration being blotted out by the majorities from these three countries, all of which have a right to their voice

in the matter, the result must be accepted as the expression of the will of the united Kingdom.

If there were an Irish majority against Home Rule we would soon hear it said in triumph that Ireland does not want the measure; but as it is it must be conceded that Ireland wants it most decidedly, and it is a question on which Irishmen are the best judges. They know best the needs of their own country. England does not follow Ireland in this, because England having a larger representation in Parliament than all the rest of the united kingdom, practically has Home Rule, and she does not appreciate its need for Ireland. But as all have been united to have one Legislative body, the voice of the majority in the united Parliament must be taken as the ruling voice.

The Hon. E. Blake also answered the speech of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, in the House, and in his answer showed the thoroughness with which he has mastered the subject under debate. His speech has been pronounced by Sir William Vernon Harcourt the best on the subject which has ever been heard in the House of Commons. There is no doubt that Mr. Blake's advocacy of the Irish cause will do much towards making the demands of Ireland better understood, especially in England and among the Protestants of Ulster. Mr. Blake has all along appreciated the honor and liberality which prevail among the Catholics of Ireland and he is firmly convinced that there is no real need of guarantees for the preservation of the rights of the Protestant minority. Mr. Gladstone's bill, however, so completely provides all the guarantees which could possibly be required that there is no basis for any reasonable protest against it on the ground that the rights of the minority are overlooked.

THE QUEBEC LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The present position in Quebec in regard to the Legislative Council is both curious and instructive. There is now little doubt that the cumbersome machinery of Local Government in the sister Province will soon be simplified on the model of the Ontario Legislature, which has no second Chamber, and yet gets along remarkably well without one.

The theory according to which a second Chamber is supposed to be necessary to secure well-considered legislation is that the hasty measures of the popular branch will be revised by the more sedate body which may be supposed to represent the concentrated wisdom of past Parliamentary generations. But the experience of Ontario is to the effect that such a revising Chamber is unnecessary, at least in the Local Legislatures.

The Dominion Parliament may need a second Chamber, and it is generally conceded that the peculiar relations in which the Confederated Provinces stand towards each other make it necessary that there should be a counterpoise to the popular branch in which population only is represented. Hence the need of a second Chamber in which the respective Provinces are represented on a different basis, so as to afford a protection to Provincial rights.

In Quebec the local legislative Council was established expressly with a view to guarantee to the Protestant minority a safeguard against possible aggression from the Catholic French majority; and for the purpose of making the guarantee more efficacious, there is a special provision in the British North America Act to secure an English Protestant representation in it as well as in the Dominion Senate, so long as there remain any Protestant districts in the Province. It was believed the security thus afforded to the minority would be well worth the expense which would be incurred by keeping it up.

But it now appears that the Protestant minority are the most anxious to sweep the Legislative Council out of existence, and the chief reason is because of the expense. We presume that they have opened their eyes to the fact that they are not in any danger from French Catholic aggression, else they would not be so ready to get rid of the guarantee for which they were so anxious in 1866.

The bill for the abolition of the Council which came up in the Assembly recently was supported by every Protestant representative in the House, and the vote upon it was a tie, the measure being defeated only by the Speaker's casting vote. This fact is an indication that the Legislative Council must go sooner or later, and probably very soon. The Councilors

themselves appear to take it in very ill part that they have received so strong an intimation that the people do not want their services any longer; but it would be more creditable to them if they would show a disposition to retire gracefully under such circumstances.

We are pleased, however, to find that the movement to get rid of this fifth wheel of the wagon was not supported in this first instance by a majority of the Catholics in the House, as it would certainly have been interpreted by the irreconcilable wing of ultra-Protestants in Quebec and Ontario as if the Quebec Catholics wished to destroy the main prop of Protestantism in the Province. They cannot now truthfully say that such is the state of affairs, since these irreconcilables are the loudest in demanding the repeal of those clauses in the Constitution whereby the second Chamber is established. In fact these snarlers, through their organ, the Toronto Mail, have already said that it is the Catholic Church, always aggressive, that wishes the Council to be retained as "a home for crippled statesmen, and a sort of last resort to which the Church can appeal against measures of reform." (Mail of Feb. 17.)

We do not put on any mask of a pretended desire to meet the whims of these grievance-mongers. It is impossible to satisfy them, and we shall not attempt it, for whatever course we advocate they will discover evil intentions on our part. We therefore state our opinions frankly whether they please or displease these discontented politicians.

Of all the Provinces in the Dominion, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island alone have retained Local Legislative Councils; but it is probable that before long all will adopt the simpler governmental machinery of Ontario. In Nova Scotia this will soon be the case, as matters are already in preparation with this object in view. It is to be hoped that the example will shortly be followed in the other two Provinces. Economy is especially desirable in Quebec, where the people are already saddled with a heavier burden of debt than they can readily pay.

ALTERING HISTORY.

A course of historical lectures was begun in Trinity College on Thursday 16th February with a view towards instructing the students of that institution and such of the people of Toronto as may avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them to become acquainted with "early English history."

The first lecture was delivered by Professor Rigby; and considering the matter which the Professor laid before his audience, we are by no means surprised at the statement of the Mail's reporter that the audience was "amused."

The Professor said on opening his address, "When a man tells me he does not find history interesting, I don't try to alter history, I try to alter him." Notwithstanding this declaration, our reading of the synopsis of the lecture convinces us that the purpose of the lecturer was to alter history so as to make it accord with certain new-fangled notions which have of late become popular with Anglican clerics, for the simple reason that they seem to afford some pretext, though a poor one, for the Anglican schism of the sixteenth century.

The Professor gave an account of the Druidical religion of Britain which existed before the introduction of Christianity. He next spoke of the conquest by the Romans, and of the introduction of Christianity. We are told that after "he had exploded several myths as to how Christianity came to Britain, it was shown that the Church of Gaul was the Mother Church."

It is a pity that the learned Professor while exploding some myths thought proper to bring in so palpable a myth as is contained in the last clause of this statement: "The Church of Gaul was the Mother Church of Britain."

We can easily understand with what object such an assertion was made. It was for the purpose of giving some air of plausibility to the next assertion, which is:

"That the British Church was independent of the Roman See is clear from the fact that the usage of the two Churches differed in the important matter of the time of keeping Easter, the difference of the tonsure, differences in the liturgies, and minor usages: all of which prove the independence of the early British Church."

The object of all this is, of course, to give the impression that the ancient

British Church was one and the same with the modern Church of England. It will be remarked, however, that even if this distorted historical narrative were perfectly true it would not prove the point aimed at.

Apparently for the purpose of showing the Gallic origin and affinities of the British Church, the professor states that "at the Council of Arles, 314 A. D., there were present from Britain three Bishops, a priest and a deacon, thus proving that there was an organized British Church at this early date."

All this is very true, and it proves that the British Church was at this time, two hundred and eighty-three years before St. Austin or Augustine preached in Kent, in communion not only with the Church of France, but with the whole Western Church, for this was a Council of the Western Church, and Bishops or their delegates were present at it from Spain and Africa, Italy, Sicily, Gaul and Germany as well as Britain.

It is undeniable that these countries were all in communion with and subject to the authority of the Pope, whose delegates also assisted at the Council.

It will be sufficient to quote the synodal letter sent by the Council to Pope Sylvester, to show this:

"To the most beloved Pope (Papa) Sylvester. . . eternal salvation in the Lord. Bound together and adhering together by a common tie of charity, and in the unity of the Catholic Church, our mother . . . we with well merited reverence salute you most glorious Pope. . . We would, most beloved brother, that you had done us so much honor as to be present here . . . because we assuredly believe that a more severe sentence would have been pronounced against those (Donatists); and you, judging together with us, our assembly would have exulted with greater joy. But as it was not in your power to leave those places in which the Apostles daily sit . . . it was resolved that by you who hold the greater dioceses, by you especially, our sentence should be made known to all men."

As a further evidence that the Church of France, from which, according to Professor Rigby's statement, the British Church derived its faith, recognized the Pope's authority, we shall here add St. Cyprian's testimony that Pope Stephen had authority to excommunicate Marcianus, a heretical Bishop of that very city, Arles, and to order a new Bishop to be elected.

St. Cyprian said, (Ep. 67 to Stephen):

"Let letters be addressed from thee to the Province and people dwelling at Arles, by which Marcianus being excommunicated, another may be substituted in his place, and the flock of Christ, which at this day is uncared for, scattered, and wounded, be again gathered together."

Want of space obliges us to defer to another issue, the proof that it was from Rome, and not from France, that the missionaries were sent who converted Britain in the second century. We have, however, quoted enough to show that the Pope's authority was recognized by the Church of the entire West, not only in the reign of Constantine the Great, but much earlier, namely, in the middle of the third century, when St. Cyprian flourished. The British Church was part of that "united Catholic Church" of which the Council of Arles spoke; and Britain must, therefore, have acknowledged the Pope's authority like the rest of the Catholic world. In fact the British Bishops signed the synodal letter of Arles equally with the other Bishops present. The independent British Church was not thought of till the sixteenth century.

A NEW DEVELOPMENT.

It is an axiom in all reasoning that a principle which leads to absurd consequences is itself absurd; and it has been frequently shown that such a principle is the supposed right of private individuals to sit in judgment upon God's revelation, which is the very foundation stone of Protestantism.

A recent illustration of how schism directly results from this principle is to be found in a statement which has been published by the New York Sun on the authority of its Cincinnati correspondent, that a new development has arisen out of the heresy trials of Dr. Briggs of New York, and Dr. Smith of Cincinnati. The statement is to the effect that the two professors, being accused on the very similar grounds that they have both attacked the inspiration of the Scripture, though in a different manner, have come to an agreement to secede from Presbyterianism and form a new Church, if the charge against Dr. Briggs be sustained by the General Assembly which is to meet this year.

The case of Professor Smith, it will