

# Northwest Review

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SATURDAY, NOV. 7, 1903.

## Calendar for Next Week.

### NOVEMBER.

- 8—Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost. Octave of All Saints. Commemoration of the Four Crowned Brothers, Martyrs.
9. Monday—The dedication of the Church of St. Saviour in Rome.
10. Tuesday—St. Andrew Avellino, Confessor.
11. Wednesday—St. Martin, Bishop of Tours.
12. Thursday—St. Martin, Pope and Martyr.
13. Friday—St. Stanislaus Kostka, Confessor.
14. Saturday—St. Josaphat, Bishop and Martyr.

### LEO XIII. AND THE PAPACY.

This momentous subject, now of such intense actuality, was admirably treated, a few days ago, by M. l'abbé Le Coq, the new Superior of St. Sulpice. All over Canada, he is revered as one in whom beauty of soul and power of intellect are wonderfully united. To those who were privileged to hear him, the oft-repeated eulogy became a proven truth. The occasion of the lecture was the first annual meeting of the "Cercle Ville Marie," a literary association for young men, attached these many years, to Notre Dame parish, Montreal.

Of course it were impossible to do full justice to this masterly discourse, especially when the summary must also be a translation. Yet the attempt seems well worth making.

On the 20th of July, Leo XIII. passed from earth. For sixteen or seventeen days the world had held its breath in order to hear the last throbbings of the aged Pontiff's heart. No sooner had the news of his death spread abroad than a concert of praise burst forth. Even to this day, scarce one discordant note has been heard, all nations and all creeds having united to glorify the illustrious dead. Why this unanimity?

We are still too near to view Leo's pontificate in its proper perspective. This, therefore, cannot be a complete synthesis, but merely the expression of a few scattered ideas. The name given without any knowledge, to this lecture is admirably suited to the nature of the subject we shall examine together "Leo XIII. and the papacy."

The Papacy! Open the Gospel, you will find therein the first charter of its foundation: "Thou art Peter" (Matt. XVI, 18). St. Paul calls the Church "the pillar and ground of truth" (I Tim III, 15); its corner stone is the Papacy. Both have a dual life, at once immutable, yet ever moving. Immutable, yet not motionless, for absolute immobility belongs not to this world. The Papacy is conservative, yet progressive. Viewed in this double aspect, we shall see how Leo XIII. discerned, with unerring eye, what was to endure, and what was to change. What Saint Augustine says, with reference to God's immutability, might as truly be applied to God's Church: "Thy works change, Thy Councils are unchanging."

Dogma is the first of the unchanging elements in the Pope's jurisdiction. The Church will never lend her assent to that modern

judgment of Solomon by which the men attempt to divide the indivisible soul, and thus reconcile the conflicting claims of faith and infidelity. Intellect, they declare, must move with the times. Let our minds follow the progressive transformations of science and not be bound in humiliating servitude. Religion, we shall relegate to the region of sentiment—thus will all claims be satisfied. No! All is grounded upon dogma, which emanates from God, and like God, is immutable. The infinite thought of God meets the finite mind of man. The latter strives to master it more and more perfectly, and thus the light grows, but does not change. A truth once defined can never come to be received in any other than its primitive sense. This is that principle that ever guided the pontificate of Leo XIII. He added not a single dogma to those previously defined—he treated them in all his encyclicals according to the most traditional manner.

This was not enough. Eternal truths, coming into contact with the mind of man, have been investigated, compared, co-ordinated, and the result is theology.

It is a science at once human and divine. Evolution being the universal law of things human, theology has known various stages. The Apostles were content to enunciate dogma just as God had revealed it. Then arose heresies, and it became necessary to shed a brighter light upon revealed truth. Thus were developed the dogmas of the blessed Trinity, the Holy Eucharist, grace, etc. Later sprang up a fresh need. In the East and the West, great minds strove to gather into one harmonious whole, these various teachings of the Church. In His own good time, God, gave to the world a mighty genius, who achieved what others had only attempted—and the Summa of St. Thomas was compiled. Theology, as contained in this immortal work, may be defined to be the sum of human knowledge, grounded upon the word of God, and in harmony with it. Later, came that renewal, familiar to you all as the Renaissance: changes in politics, the invention of printing, and its manifold results, closer and more frequent intercourse among different countries, progress in science and art, a more minute scrutiny of ancient documents, and it was discovered that of old, mistakes had been made. Was, then, all that appertained to the first thirteen centuries of the Christian era to be cast aside as useless, worn out, decayed? Leo XIII. answered this query by doing more for the glory of St. Thomas and his philosophy than any of his predecessors.

St. Thomas had already, it is true, been crowned Saint and Doctor, but Leo held up to the admiration of the world St. Thomas' Summa, affirming for all time its worth as a grand and imperishable monument of theological science.

In our scientific age the Holy Scriptures have been fiercely assailed by sceptics and infidels. Leo was stirred and in a luminous encyclical, he laid down the true principles of Biblical interpretation; and on the broadest and most liberal basis, established a Biblical Congress to examine into, and define, the mooted questions accurately and authoritatively.

Another part of the immutable domain of Peter is, if less vital than dogma, yet of immense importance. Discipline is, in its substance, immutable; but in its application, progressive. Its principles were not applied in olden times, just as they are now. Formerly there could not be such facility or frequency of intercourse among nations. In practice Bishops seemed to use their authority in a somewhat more independent manner. When the dogma of Papal infallibility was defined, some were troubled, affirming that the result would be an utter annihilation of episcopal authority. Men might willingly promise allegiance to a far-off power, while shaking off the more galling yoke of their own Bishop's authority. Such errors, contended the malcontents, would surely creep into the Church. Leo proclaimed the sacred rights of each individual bishop. He fought for the principle, and showed that

the dignity and authority of the Bishop are inseparably bound up with the dignity and authority of the Pope. Some see in this act his greatest glory and his greatest achievement.

Another institution, less essential but which belongs to the innermost constitution of the Church, is that of religious life. Many have claimed that Leo XIII. sacrificed to other interests those of religious orders. The published (official) account of his recent correspondence with the French government, tells a far different tale. All may not have come out, but enough has appeared to refute so false a charge. Leo rose up as an ardent and intrepid defender of those orders. To aim a blow at them, he declared, was to wound Jesus Christ as it were in the pupil of his eye. What he did for each in particular, during the years of his pontificate, only representatives of each could fully disclose. What for the sons of Dominic? He glorified St. Thomas and exalted that most Dominican of devotions, the Holy Rosary. What for the sons of Francis of Assisi? He reorganized the third order, and in the rules he gave to it may be recognized the pen of Leo. What for the sons of Ignatius? More, perhaps, than for any other. We all know how Clement XIV. suppressed the Jesuits, and the gentle remark of the most charitable of men, St. Alphonsus Liguori, shows how contemporaries looked upon the enactment: "The poor Pope! What could he do?" Pius VII. reorganized the Society, but did not reconquer upon it the plenitude of its ancient privileges. Nor did his successors, not even Pius IX. It was left to Leo XIII. and he did it fully. We have now beheld Leo defending the vital forces of the Church, preserving dogma, exalting theology and the Summa, upholding episcopal authority, never, perhaps, so ably defended, protecting religious orders, never perhaps, more at one with the Church than now—truly, we may well call him a traditionalist and a conservative.

Among the enemies of the Church arise two opposite complaints. One party contends that she never changes, refusing to reconcile herself with progress and civilization. All things go on and up the path of progress, she stands still, estranged and indifferent. The other grumbles just as loudly that her vaunted immutability is a mere dream, impossible of realization. The Church of Leo XIII. they say, nor is the Church of Innocent III. that of the Catacombs. What they mistake for change is the marvelous adaptability of the Church of Christ: she finds her own place, she is at home always and everywhere, be it in the midst of persecution, when she goes forth to meet barbarian hordes and make them her own, or now, in the very midst of a world that would fain be rid of her. Like the Kingdom of Christ, she is "in" the world, mingling "with" the world, but she is not "of" the world. She must speak the words of truth to all alike, she must appeal to every conscience, to that of the potentate and to that of the peasant. It has been erroneously said that there are two kinds of popes, religious and political. Yet all must be religious, since all are vicars of Christ, and all must handle politics, because the government of nations does not merely affect temporal interests, but, most often, eternal ones as well.

What has been the political attitude of Leo XIII.? This is a burning question, and we shall but state facts that are incontestable, without venturing to tread on dangerous ground.

In 1878, when the frail old man mounted the steps of Peter's throne, every European government was either hostile to the Holy See, or coldly indifferent. True, foreign ambassadors came to the Papal court and Papal nuncios went to foreign countries, but relations were strained. The cause lay in crimes and misfortunes, which we shall not pause to enumerate. Leo's first encyclicals to the powers bear the date Feb. 20, 1878. All are gentle and conciliating. The hand of friendship was extended, and the sign was understood. In Russia, there were, I think, two bishops in captivity; Switzerland favored the



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