

Church Observer.

"One Faith,—One Lord,—One Baptism."

MONTREAL, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 12, 1870.

THE RITUAL COMMISSION.

The distinguished prelates, noblemen, and gentlemen of the Ritual Commission are to be congratulated on the conclusion of their labours. They have done very little, and what they have done will probably vanish into the limbo in which the results of innumerable Royal Commissions lie; but it is satisfactory to know that there is no further possibility of their doing mischief, and an end to the sham of their doing an immense amount of good. From the very first the Ritual Commission has been regarded with anxiety by the timid and with distrust by all. No one with an adequate view of the task which devolved on it, the variety of subjects to be investigated, and the nature of the evils for which a remedy was to be sought, ever supposed that such a Commission could arrive at a satisfactory result. Its very composition made such an issue impossible. The commission has failed, certainly not through lack of talent, but in consequence of the extreme views of the persons selected to serve. Had the oath administered to jurymen been put to them, had they been placed under obligation to report simply "according to the evidence adduced," not one of them could have taken his seat as a Commissioner. They had individually made up their minds on the matters to be investigated, and most of them had declared their convictions so frequently and so positively that what is now published as their "Report" might have been compiled three years ago. How could a Commission so constituted arrive at a result which would be of the slightest practical value? Meanwhile the existence of the Commission has been an effectual check to serious efforts in the direction of reform. "Wait till the Report appears,"—"who knows what happy compromise the 'collective wisdom' of the Commission may hit upon?"—these and the like arguments have been a conclusive reply, when the necessity of reform has been insisted on. For three long years the evils for which the commission was appointed to find a remedy have existed and grown, and now instead of a remedy we have certain trivial changes blandly recommended, and which are as much out of proportion with the seriousness of the case, as the prescription of a very mild aperient to a patient in the last stage of consumption. We wanted to know something about the lawfulness of birettas, chasubles, dalmatics, and tunicles and the endless variety of strange things with strange names which are supposed to make up a complete clerical outfit. We wanted to know whether incense was an abomination, or a sweet savour. We wanted to know whether the order of service was so fixed that nothing could be omitted from it or added to it, or whether every clergyman was at liberty to do that which seemed right in his own eyes. And, lastly, we wanted to know whether our Church had altars, priests (in the ritualist sense) and sacrifices, or communion tables, ministers and sacraments. Are we satisfied on any of these points? Is any one satisfied? Does the highest of High Churchmen see anything in the Report which he can urge as conclusively justifying the views he holds and the ceremonies in which he takes part? Can the lowest Evangelical discover a word which makes his position one whit more secure? And can any of the thousands of church members who do not profess to be either high or low, but who simply love the church and are

anxious for her deliverance from the uncertainties which have gathered around her, find anything in the report to assure them that she is safe, consistent and Scriptural? So far as the labours of the Commission go, the church is in the same position as she was three years since. The question of vestments has been trifled with, not settled. "It is expedient to restrain all variations in respect of vesture from that which has long been the established usage." This is what the Commission solemnly give as their decision of this momentous question. Is "trifling" too harsh a term to apply to it? Had the question been whether the clergy should wear something which had never been worn by English clergymen—say pig-tails—such a deliverance would have been intelligible enough, every one would have understood that the innovation was condemned. But ritualists contend that the vestments in which they "sacrifice" are not innovations, and all their arguments for the use of the Babylonish garments are professedly drawn from long established usage. The Commissioners knew this, and their report does not rebound to their credit as candid men. Had they said that it was impossible to decide what was "long established usage" they would have stood higher in the estimation of men who dislike ambiguity and despise shuffling. They were appointed to consider this and kindred matters, and if possible to give a definite report, but they were not sworn to report whether they could arrive at any result or not.

The same ambiguity is observable in every part of the report in which there is apparent unanimity. The value of the report is generally least where the agreement is greatest, and greatest where the protests are most numerous and energetic.

As we propose to discuss the most important features of the report as opportunity offers we shall not go more at length into it at present.

THE ROMAN QUESTION.

It is not very long since that Roman Catholic journals of all shades of opinion were agreed on the absolute necessity of the Pope's temporal sovereignty. The very thought of uncrowning him, of displacing him from his anomalous position among "princes of this world," was scouted as blasphemy. All conceivable calamities and judgments were predicted as certain to fall on the doers of the sacrilegious act. Yet the act has been done, and the Pope seems rather thankful than otherwise. We have not heard that any of the predicted judgments have yet fallen. So far from this, the dethroners of the ex-Sovereign Pontiff seem to have been acting merely as the ministers of heaven, so smoothly and easily have they accomplished their designs. And, strange to say, everybody seems satisfied. If any one has reason to complain, it is the Pope. But whether because the poor old man was weary of contending with secular powers and vainly trying to induce his lethargic subjects to improve their condition in a material sense, or because he was taken by surprise and was glad of any escape from his embarrassment, he showed no unwillingness to lay aside the sceptre, and content himself with spiritual empire. The cardinals—in this case a power behind the throne—seem to have acquiesced in the change with similar heartiness. The Catholic powers of Europe have not uttered a word of remonstrance against the policy of Victor Emmanuel. The Roman Catholic bishops alike of the old and new world—with the exception of Archbishop Manning who is zealous to eccentricity—have vied with each other in submission to the inevitable. And, lastly, the Roman Catholic journals of Canada, to whom the temporal power

was as inviolable as any divine attribute, have concluded to say nothing about the new arrangement so long as the Holy Father is pleased with it. How marvelously easy is it to reconcile oneself to anything when it is an accomplished fact!

The proposals made by the Italian government as the basis of a settlement of the Roman question are in substance as follows:—First, the preservation to the Pope of the prerogatives of sovereignty, with precedence over the king and other sovereigns as heretofore; second, the undisturbed exercise by the Pope of the powers he claims as head of the church patriarch of the west and primate of Italy; third, the recognition of the right of the Pope to send nuncios to foreign countries, and a guarantee of the safety of such representatives while within the limits of the new kingdom of Italy; fourth, the recognition of the right of the Pope to summon councils and synods when, where, and how he pleases, and to hold free communication with his bishops and the faithful; fifth, a pledge that the clergy shall not be interfered with in the discharge of ecclesiastical duties; sixth, the subjection of the clergy to the common law as regards crimes punishable by the law of the kingdom; seventh, the relinquishment, on the part of the king of Italy, of ecclesiastical patronage; eighth, the further relinquishment of the claim to nominate bishops; ninth, a guaranteed revenue to the holy See; tenth, a pledge to open negotiations with Catholic powers to determine the quota to be contributed by each towards that endowment; the eleventh article of agreement is obscure, and the twelfth is merely formal.

A remark appended to the telegram of which the above is a summary needs elucidation. It is as follows: "There only remains to add—a most important addition that—the giving up of the Leonine city to the Pope is understood to have formed part of the plan in its practical working." The meaning of this is by no means clear. There seems to be an intimation of something in reserve—some secret understanding which may modify the above proposals very considerably. The Pope's fondness for the craft and subtlety of diplomacy is proverbial, and this his last opportunity of finessing may have been an irresistible temptation to do worldly things after a worldly fashion.

ALLEGED REFUSAL TO BURY.

Just as we were going to press last week, we received two communications from Quebec calling our attention to a letter from the Rev. A. J. Woolryche to the editor of the Quebec Chronicle, in rebuttal of the charge brought against the reverend gentleman of having refused to bury the child of a Methodist. A careful perusal of Mr. Woolryche's letter, which we subjoin, will probably leave on the minds of most readers the impression which it has left on ours, namely, that there has been unworthy attempt to misconstrue a perfectly lawful act on the part of the reverend gentleman.

(To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.)

SIR,—I am now at liberty to furnish you with the following particulars respecting my alleged refusal to permit the interment of sergt. Proven's child, in the Church of England burial ground, Levis:—The statement I am about to make was made by me on Wednesday last, in the presence of Colonel Hamilton, R. E., and other officers, and was corroborated by the testimony of corporal Gilchrist, who accompanied sergt. Proven, and was the only person present, during my interview with him on the 16th of Aug. last.

I deny that I refused to allow the interment of sergent Proven's child on the ground that it was "a Methodist child," or that the burial ground was "consecrated." To sergent Proven's request that I would permit the Revd. Mr. Lewis, a Wesleyan Minister, to say a service at the grave, I

replied that it was out of my power to allow any ministrations at the grave other than those of the Church of England, but that I was quite willing either to say our service myself, or to allow the interment (without a service) by any dissenting Minister competent to register the burial. I may here state that the burial-ground belongs exclusively to the Church of England, and was consecrated by the late Bishop of Quebec. On sergent Proven's persisting, after consulting with the Methodist Minister, in refusing my services, and on understanding from him that the Methodist Minister was not provided with a register for interments, I suggested the name of the Revd. D. Anderson, the esteemed Minister of the Established Church of Scotland, Levis. This was also declined.

In addition to the testimony of corporal Gilchrist, I am prepared with that of three clergymen and a layman who were in an adjoining room, and to whom, immediately after the departure of sergt. Proven and corporal Gilchrist, I related the particulars which I have now mentioned. I shall decline any further correspondence on the subject.

The papers which have circulated sergent Proven's charges will oblige me by publishing my refutation of them.

Your obdt. servant,

A. J. WOOLRYCHE.

Levis Parsonage,  
October 1st, 1870.

CANARD.—A stupid rumour obtained circulation in the columns of the Toronto "Church Herald" this week, to the effect that the Rev. E. Sullivan, of Chicago, had been invited to, and had actually accepted the position of, assistant minister at Trinity church, Montreal, at an annual stipend of five hundred dollars! We have the best authority for giving the rumour a positive denial. If an invitation had been extended to the Rev. Mr. Sullivan, the annual stipend would, in all probability, have been fixed at five "thousand" instead of five "hundred" dollars. Our Toronto contemporary would do well to be more careful in future, touching rumours.

CHURCH OPENING AT GRANBY.—We learn from an esteemed correspondent at Granby, that St. George's church, in that village, has undergone extensive alterations and improvements during the past summer, and that it is purposed to be re-opened for Divine service on Wednesday morning, the 26th inst., at eleven o'clock, when a special sermon for the occasion will be preached by the Rector of Freleisburg, Rev. J. B. Davidson. A collection will be taken up in aid of the endowment fund for that mission. We also learn that, with the usual liberality of the Vermont Central Railway Company, trains will be run from all way-stations to Granby on that day for half fare to parties attending the church opening service.

—The Rev. A. Ramsay Macduff, B.A., of Trinity College, Dublin, and McGill College, Montreal, was ordained priest on the 25th ult, at Carlisle, by the Bishop of that Diocese. Mr. Macduff is Curate of St. Mary's Within, in the City of Carlisle.

Notes on the Collects.

(Written for the CHURCH OBSERVER.)

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Lord, we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If we be only wise in spiritual matters we shall pray as well as vow, and our vows and prayers will have much in common. We can safely promise God as much as we receive from him, but no more. It is possible to vow anything and everything, but the fulfilment of our pledges is possible only to the extent of our receipts of grace. Hence it is well to make the matter of our vows the matter of our prayers. In using this collect we do this. The solemn baptismal pledge becomes a prayer. At the font an engagement is made to renounce the world, the flesh and the devil; when we use this collect we seek the grace by which alone this pledge can be redeemed.

They err greatly who think it an easy mat-