

HISTORY OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

BY THE ABBE J. E. DARRAS.

(Translated from the original French for the NEW ZEALAND TABLET.)

8.—A PASSAGE FROM ST. ATHANASIUS.

THE extrinsically miraculous characteristics of the gospel preaching cannot be too strongly insisted upon; our forefathers were well acquainted with these things. This century has learned to forget them. It does not think itself quite sure that Jesus Christ ever raised a dead man to life. Innumerable times have we heard the literary men of our day ask, with an ingenious haughtiness, what essential difference exists between the teaching of Socrates and that of the gospel. Hear St. Athanasius answer them: "Where," he says, "is the sage, the revealer, the human philosopher, whose doctrine has worked the miracle of enlightening the world, from the dungeon of the slave even to the throne of the sovereign, and of leaving the impress of its divinity on the face of human society? If Christ was no more than man, how is it that his doctrine did not give way before the authority of the pagan divinities? Were there wanting kings and potentates when Jesus came into the world? The Chaldeans had their learned men and their magi; Egypt and India abounded in them. Where is the king, where is the philosopher, who even in the zenith of his glory, succeeded in rendering his doctrine universal; in snatching the world from the darkness of idolatry? The Greek philosophers have written eloquent pages. Yet, compare the effect of their sublime discourses with the conquests realized by the cross of Jesus Christ. At the death of the philosopher, his doctrine was forgotten; during the lifetime of its author it did not even succeed in triumphing over the attacks and controversies of rival disputants. The Son of God appears—he disdains pompous oratory, he borrows the language of the simple, as he had adopted their poverty; and, beside his teaching, that of all the philosophers pales. He puts an end to all their systems, he draws to himself the whole universe! Cite for me one philosopher who wrought the conversion of souls, who restored innocence to hearts sullied by debauchery, plucked the sword from the hands of murderers, inspired the most timid dispositions with a superhuman courage? Who has subdued barbarism and transformed the pagan world, if not the belief in Jesus Christ?"

9.—THE GOSPEL IS A PERMANENT MIRACLE.

Behold, in reality, the miracle of the gospel. Miracle historic, permanent, visible, palpable. At the time marked out, in the series of ages, for the great advent of the Word made flesh, the tide of humanity was being violently hurried along into the most brutal excesses of sensuality and abject materialism. Who was it that drove back those floods of barbarity, voluptuousness and blood? When the torrent rushes headlong from the mountains, sweeping away in its impetuous course embankments laboriously constructed, aged trees, houses, even rocks, were a man to present himself in the midst of the dismayed population, and stretching out his hand, command the bounding waters to flow back towards their source; if the liquid avalanche, docile to his voice, were to stop suddenly, as if suspended above the valley, and taking an inverse direction, were to rush back instead of descending; had you witnessed that surprising scene, could all the sophists of the world prevent you from proclaiming the miracle? Would it be needful for you to assemble the learned societies, to consult "a commission composed of physiologists, physicians, chemists, and persons skilled in historical criticism?" Ere you had time to reflect on such puerilities, you would be prostrate on bended knees, praising the marvel of the Divine bounty. In truth, that miracle, which might have saved some few cottages in an Alpine valley from destruction, is it to be compared with the one which on a sudden arrested in its victorious flight the highest pagan civilization that ever existed, and thus saved the entire of humanity? That is not sufficient for you, you say. "As an experiment ought to bear a series of trials, as what one has done once he ought to be able to do a second time, and as in the miraculous order there can be no question of easy or difficult, the thaumaturgus should be invited to reproduce his marvellous action in other circumstances. If, at each trial the miracle succeeded, two things would be proved; the first, that supernatural coincidences do occur in the world, the

second, that the power of producing them belong, or is delegated to certain persons. Well, the miracle has been reproduced twenty times, forty times, in other circumstances, it has been multiplied in as many nations as have by turns submitted themselves to the action of the Word made flesh. Why do the sons of the Franks no longer go, as their fathers went, in solemn procession to the Druidical forests to cut down the mistletoe bough, and pour out the blood of the vanquished on the stone of Teutates? How is it that the Goths, Alans, Vandals—that deluge of barbarians—were suddenly changed into a beneficent source from which our Christian civilization had its rise. Ask who it is that at the present hour wrests from the hands of the South Sea Islander his blood stained trophies, who teaches the cannibal of Polynesia and of central Africa to respect the flesh and blood of his vanquished enemies. It is the Word made flesh, who has accomplished these miracle, who has renewed them, with a visible perpetuity, and who will repeat them even to the consummation of ages!

10.—MIRACLE OF THE CONVERSION OF THE PAGAN WORLD.

After that, what signifies your unbelieving dogmatism? You say, with a supercilious disdain: "It is not in the name of such or such philosophy, but on the part of constant experience that we banish the miraculous from the pages of history." We answer: The world was pagan, voluptuousness was a goddess, men worshipped her without reluctance; vengeance was a duty, they found it sweet; enjoyment was the supreme law, it was freely accepted, the passions were consecrated with altars, incense was not refused to them; the most corrupt instincts of the human heart were deified, sacrifice was offered to them without resistance. Suddenly, a few fishermen from Galilee, without learning, without eloquence, without influence, without power, without human prestige, appear in the midst of this world inebriated with sensuality, they say: Let voluptuousness, even to its name, be henceforth banished from amongst you, in the cross of Jesus Christ are all your delights to be found. If your enemy strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the left; mortify your body, reduce it to servitude; blessed are the poor, the humble, the merciful; blessed the suffering, blessed the persecuted! Behold their teaching. And the world, disturbed in its ancient possessions, grows incensed against the importunate voices which aim at wresting its cupidity, its pleasures, its remorseless feasting, its endless orgies, its accommodating divinities, its banquets, its riotous songs.

[By an oversight, the heading was omitted from the portion of the translation published in our last week's issue.]

THE PATIENT CHURCH.

BY DR J. H. NEWMAN.

Bide thou thy time!

Watch with meek eyes the race of pride and crime,

Sit in the gate, and be the heathen's jest,

Smiling and self-possessed.

O thou, to whom is pledged a victor's sway,

Bide thou the victor's day!

Think on the sin*

That reap'd the unripe seed, and toil'd to win

Foul history-marks at Bethel and at Dan;

No blessing, but a ban;

Whilst the wise Shepherd hid his heaven-told fate,

Nor reck'd a tyrants hate.

Such loss is gain;

Wait the bright Advent that shall loose the chain!

E'en now the shadows break, and gleams divine

Edge the dim distant line.

When thrones are trembling, and earth's fat ones quail.

True seed! thou shalt prevail!

* Jeroboam. † David.

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MAYORALTY.

TO THE CITIZENS OF DUNEDIN.

GENTLEMEN,—On a previous occasion, when solicited by a large number of my fellow-citizens to offer myself as a candidate for the honourable position of Mayor, I then intimated my inability to do so, through a pressure of business prevailing at the time, but announced that if a future occasion presented itself, I would then be induced to crave the suffrages of the electors.

After careful consideration whether or not to come forward as a candidate at the forthcoming Election, I have concluded to do so solely on account of the heavy pressure I have

received from many friends and supporters, to allow myself to be placed in nomination.

It is now three years since you did me the honour of electing me as one of your Councillors for High Ward; and if I may judge from the support promised me at the ensuing contest for the Mayoralty, my services as a Councillor have in some measure merited the confidence of the electors.

My highest ambition in being placed in the proud position of Mayor of the City will be, as I trust it has always been, to study the welfare of my fellow-townsmen, and if it should be my lot to attain to the Civic Chair, I shall have the grateful reminiscence that I have been placed Chief Magistrate over a spot of ground which many years ago was to me well known as little better than a desolate waste.

I think my views on Municipal matters while in the Council are so thoroughly conversant to the Electors generally that it will be unnecessary to hold any public meetings. Suffice it to say that I have, as consistently as lay in my power, tried to carry out a prudent system of retrenchment and economy in matters affecting the interests of the City, at the same time with a liberality of purpose where it was essential for the public good.

I leave myself, Gentlemen, in your hands, feeling confident of the result on the day of election. Meanwhile,

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

A. MERCER.

TO THE CITIZENS OF DUNEDIN.

GENTLEMEN,—I respectfully inform you that it is my intention to contest the Election for the Mayoralty, which takes place next month.

Your most obedient servant,

L. THONEMAN

TO THE ELECTORS FOR THE CITY OF DUNEDIN.

GENTLEMEN,—I will be nominated as one of your representatives in the Provincial Council at the ensuing Election. My return will strengthen the votes of the progressive party, numerically in the minority in the late Council. If you wish to return me, it must be by your unsolicited votes, as beyond taking an early opportunity to address you; I do not intend to encroach on the independence of the electors.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM BARRON.