

Lord Russell on Confession

The late Lord Russell, man of intellect, man of affairs, and model Catholic, bore the following fine testimony to the value and salutary influence of Confession: 'During over sixty years I have made certainly more than 1700 confessions, to hundreds of different confessors, and in various countries, and I have never discovered therein any trace of wrong or harm. In addition to my belief in a priest's power of absolution, which as a Catholic I hold, I have found that the duties incident to every confession, of making a careful examination of my conscience, an express and vigorous mental act of sorrow and a firm resolution to avoid sin, most useful; and though these mental acts may be made without intending confession, the habit of confession certainly causes many of them, which would not otherwise be made. My experiences of confession have, so far as man can judge, been those of my mother, sisters, wife, and daughters, and of many female friends, and I have always noted in myself and others that devoutness and regular attendance at confession and at Holy Communion, which it ordinarily precedes, ebb and flow together.—RUSSELL.'

The Primitive Methodists and the Bible in Schools

Our Presbyterian contemporary, the *Outlook*, credits the President of the Primitive Methodist Conference with a quite Machiavellian turn for scheming and plotting. According to our contemporary, the Rev. Knowles Smith published his recent deliverance on the Bible-in-schools question with malice aforethought, and with the wilful and deliberate intent of smashing the present union in the Methodist ranks on the subject and ultimately inducing the Methodist Conference to rescind the motion of approval of the Bible League proposals which it has already adopted. Here is how our contemporary figures it out—and we give his version without expressing, without, indeed, possessing, any opinion as to the correctness of his diagnosis. 'It is a curious fact,' remarks the *Outlook*, 'which may well give pause to the thoughtful, that the most effectual opposition to any and every practical proposal to restore the Bible to the public schools—thus giving back to the children of this Dominion the grand national heritage of which they are at present deprived—has ever come, not from atheist and rationalist, not from the Roman Catholic Church itself, not even from public school teachers, but from ministers of certain sections of the Protestant Church. The latest instance of this anachronism is the lengthy deliverance—published in full in the Dunedin papers, and telegraphed in substance throughout New Zealand—of the Rev. G. Knowles Smith, President of the Primitive Methodist Conference and minister of one of the Primitive Methodist congregations in Dunedin. The tactic that inspires the policy of attack on the platform of the Bible-in-Schools League indicated in this address, is sufficiently clear, and it is as well that it should be stated. Arrangements for the absorption of the Primitive Methodist Church of New Zealand into the larger Methodist Church are now in active progress, consequent on the agreement for union some months since decided. Mr. Knowles Smith is giving this lead to Primitive Methodism in the hope that, when amalgamation is complete, there will be in the united Methodism a sufficiently strong opposition to the Bible-in-schools proposals to compel Conference to rescind the motion of approval which it has already given to those proposals. And it is anticipated by those who view with disfavor the present movement for importing religious instruction into the schools, that such action on the part of a united Methodist Church, taken together with the negative official attitude of the Baptist and Congregational Churches, will give denial to the statement that the Churches of New Zealand, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, are in practical agreement on the matter; and thus so influence the minds of the ever-susceptible members of Parliament as to hinder the passing of the necessary legislation providing for the taking of a plebiscite or referendum.'

Catholics and Freemasonry

The following resolutions, first published in English dress by *America*, are going the round of our exchanges; and they are well worth placing on permanent record. They will certainly leave little doubt in the mind of the reader either as to the relations which Masonry has to Catholics or as to the relation which a Catholic ought to have towards Masonry. The *Bien Public* of Ghent (according to our contemporary), quoting from the principal Review of the German Freemasons, the *Bauhütte*, in its issue of March 30, published a series of theses, or maxims discussed and voted on at a Masonic meeting held at Frankfurt to consider the admission of Catholics in the Order. The most important of the resolutions formulated are the following:—'1.—The Catholic Church is one and the same as Ultramontanism and Clericalism. Ultramontanism is the doctrine of the Church applied to life; Clericalism is the guardian and champion consecrated by the Church. 2.—The Catholic Church is the irreconcilable foe of intellectual culture, that is to say, of civilisation. It opposes progress, while Freemasonry favors it as a means of promoting and diffusing intellectual education. 3.—In the much controverted questions of education and human destiny there is open opposition between Freemasonry and the Catholic Church. 4.—If a believing Catholic cannot become a Freemason it is not because any Lodge will refuse to admit him on account of his faith, for men of all beliefs are admitted, but it is because the laws of his Church forbid it. 5.—It is, nevertheless, true that no sincere Freemason can be a Catholic who can properly be regarded as such. For no Catholic can accept the idea of an emancipated humanity. His faith exacts from him the sacrifice of his intelligence.'

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'6.—Every Catholic who aspires to be a Freemason ought to be warned, before being received, of the ecclesiastical censures with which his Church will strike him. After his reception he must be told that in order to rid himself and his family of annoyances on the part of the clergy, he must declare by his last will and testament that he is to renounce Christian burial. The following is the formula of such renunciation: "Knowing the laws of the Catholic Church with regard to Freemasonry, I declare by these presents my firm will—(a) That at the approach of death I renounce the assistance of a Roman Catholic priest, as I do not wish to renounce my masonry, or violate my promises, or betray my brethren. (b) That after my death my obsequies shall be performed according to masonic usages, which, however, will not prevent my family from requesting the presence of a minister of any sect they may choose for their own spiritual comfort." 7.—Freemasonry recognises the moral and civilizing resources of the Catholic Church, nevertheless, it should not close its eyes to the general anti-social tendencies of that Church. 8.—Wherever the Catholic Church puts its ban on religious toleration, or crushes liberty of belief, and wherever it eliminates freedom of research in its effort to make ecclesiastical dogma the basis of all intellectual culture, Freemasonry should be its avowed enemy and combat it with the greatest vigor.'

Mr. Thomas Barr, a very old resident of Wollombi, died recently. He was a native of Ireland, and came to the State when very young. He lived a secluded life, only coming into the town of Wollombi on Sundays to attend Mass, and to draw his old-age pension. Failing to put in an appearance a few days before his death some friends called to see him, and found him in a low state. He made a will, and to the surprise of those who knew him, was found to be possessed of nearly £1000 in cash. Forty-five pound notes and £200 were found concealed in an old shirt. The rest of his money was in gold, and was buried under the floor of his room. He left £100 to the local parish priest, the Rev. Father Dowling, and the rest to be sent to Ireland to assist in the Home Rule campaign. He was twice married, but left no family.

Bird and Jansen

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