

## **VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER**

### **THE POWER OF THE PULPIT**

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THE Rev. Jonston Meyer, of Chicago, is reported to have recently told the theological students of the Chicago University that the people are tiring of preaching, that the power of the pulpit is on the decline, and that the people continue going to church only from force of habit, to hear the preacher. A Detroit newspaper, in an editorial, asks Dr. Meyer where oratory could find a weightier matter for discussion than in the redemption of mankind, and then speaks as follows about the great preachers of the past:

"These people knew what they believed, and preached what they believed, without apologies, without reservations, and without dodging inconvenient facts. Perhaps they were sensationalists, but only because their message was intensively dramatic. Their confidence in their mission was the secret of their strength. Dr. Meyer would have been more correct had he said that modern preaching is losing its power because those engaged in it are half-hearted evolutionists and not expositors of the Scripture. They are as highly educated as their predecessors, perhaps just as polished and eloquent, but they are not so sure of the ground on which they stand, not so certain, or if they are they lack the courage openly to state what they secretly believe. The ministers are, therefore, degenerated and give, in place of a sermon, a literary treatise, which convinces nobody. It is the sensationalism of the melodrama, and not the sensationalism which lends to the tragedy of the Master's undying power. The sooner the pulpit is no longer the place of entertainment in competition with the theater and the lecture stage, that much

sooner will it regain its old power and those ministers who will preach without fear the gospel which they have believed, and do so without bending their necks under the public opinion will have comparatively little reason for complaint."

## **SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS IN ITALY**

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Rome. – Ancona has a peculiar kind of haunted house, the residence of Sig Maracini, the public prosecutor. Unique in the annals of psychical research is the particular kind of manifestation with which this residence has been visited. The extraordinary happenings are thus described by the sons of Sig. Maracini, who are both lawyers:

For several days the strangest things have been happening in unoccupied rooms. Meanwhile there was an electrical disturbance, and all the bells in the house began to ring. Nothing, however, was wrong with the electric installation.

But the most remarkable thing was the discovery of jets of water springing from the walls and almost flooding the floors. In the dining room milk welled up from the floor. We had the walls examined, the flooring broken up and the blocks raised, but not the least traces of milk, water or any other liquid was found.

A cup filled with milk suddenly appeared in the dining room, followed by a cup of coffee and milk. Our father cried jokingly:

"Coffee and milk? Bah! I should prefer wine." Shortly afterward we saw a liquid running from the walls; it was wine. Once a pear appeared, and then we recalled that our little sister had asked at table for a pear, but was refused, as she had already eaten enough fruit. The pear was on a dish which was locked away in the sideboard. When the latter was opened the pear was

no longer there. We then thought that some mysterious medium-like force might be exercised by our sister, so we watched her carefully and followed the child, when she rose from the table. When she passed close to a book shelf where there were two volumes on Spiritualism one of the books was raised in the air. It touched the girl several times on the shoulders, then danced for a few moments in the air, and then was clapped against the wall at the very spot whence the milk had issued.

– *Cincinnati Enquirer*.

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We keep track of such manifestations, as they are in line with and leading up to *greater* developments and manifestations by the demons who personate the dead. It will be noted that all who to any degree meddle with spirits, mediums, seances, etc., seem to make themselves the more liable to annoyances of this kind. Note the reference to two books on Spiritism and the kindnesses expressed. We know of at least two cases where *Millennial Dawn* volumes aroused an opposite sentiment in the spirits – the demons. "The darkness hateth the light!"

## CLERICAL WEAKNESSES DRAMATIZED

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"The stage has been so often assailed by the Church that the time appears to have come for a turning of the tables. A play just produced in Baltimore, called 'The Servant in the House,' sets out to show that 'the Church, as at present constituted, is a hollow mockery from foundation to dome, and [R4186 : page 180] that if Christ were to be born today instead of two thousand years ago, the first people, or rather the only class, he would revile would be the clergy.' The Church is measured by its own yardstick and found wanting.

"The scene is the home of a young English vicar and his wife. Into the home comes 'the servant in the house.' He is introduced as an Indian butler and he performs good service.

"In the home of the vicar is his niece, the daughter of a long-absent brother, a miserable, drunken specimen of humanity. This representative of Socialism and the dregs of London unexpectedly shows up and incidentally becomes the real 'hero' of the play. He is the 'drain-pipe,' as he says – for there must be drain-pipes – that carries off all doubt and sorrow. He finds the trouble, all the trouble, right under the foundation of the crumbling church. His dramatic description of the cesspool of sham and show and form and creed, and miserable hypocrisy, that he discovers right under the pulpit, makes his parson brother throw off his coat and jerk off his clerical habiliments with disgust.

"I am no longer a preacher, a pretender,' he declares. 'I am a man. I disown my creeds and my shams. I go to do the work of a man; the work that God has shown me.'

"But into the house comes what the 'servant' calls 'the abomination.' He is *James Ponsonby Makeshift, D.D.*, the Most Reverend, the Lord Bishop of Lancaster – a mighty man in the Church. His main object in life, he confesses confidentially, is to swell the ranks of 'The Society for the Promotion and the Preservation of Emoluments of the Clergy.' He is the friend of the wealthy men and he gets them to dig deep into their pocketbooks. He is scornful of all that is not sanctimonious.

"The Bishop is finally forced to confess that his doctrine, and the secret doctrine of all his profession, is 'to give as little as possible and grab as much as we can.'"

– *Literary Digest.*

## EPISCOPALIAN PAPERS ON ANGLO-ROMAN UNION

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The Protestant Episcopal Church bids fair to have a vigorous question on its hands regarding the movement for Anglo-Roman union. The tendency of which this is a crystallized form has been frequently treated in her Church organs, but the steps taken under the leadership of the Rev. Father Paul James Francis, General of the Society of the Atonement, have precipitated something like a crisis. His new organization (treated in our issue of February 22) aims "to promote the corporate union with the Apostolic See." It seems to have been mainly inspired as a protest against the action taken by the Episcopal Church at its general convention at Richmond last fall in adopting the canon of the open pulpit, allowing any one, whatever his denominational affiliations, to preach in the pulpits of the Episcopal Church if he first obtains the consent of the bishop of the diocese. The new union, then, is in its nature reactionary.

*The Churchman* (New York), in commenting upon Father Francis' movement, assumes a favorable attitude, but criticises the members of the Anglo-Roman union as bad "students of facts when they interpret to the public what can be done or what has been done by the Apostolic See of Rome under curial control inspired by traditions of absolutism, handed down and enforced through long years of incapacity and wilful aspirations for temporal control." But the importance of what the new movement aims at, *The Churchman* points out, "lies in the fact that churchmen on all sides, of all kinds and conditions, are beginning to recognize that reunion is a thing not to be talked about only, but to be worked for." This paper favors the project of the Anglican communion in trying to do away with its "isolation." Thus:

"While hosts of people are pressing for closer relations with historic Protestant bodies, there should be the same liberty in the Anglican Church for a movement toward closer relation with Roman Catholics. Disloyalty should not be charged in either direction. There is not only the same liberty in the one that there is in the other, but there is the same necessity. The wrong attitude or the wrong-doing of Romanism and Protestantism does not lessen our duty toward unity. No kind of separation can be looked upon as a finality. Such men as Archbishops Temple and Maclagan, when they addressed a letter to Pope Leo XIII. on Anglican Orders, spoke of him as their venerable brother. Does this term of address mean nothing? Is not Christian courtesy based, after all, on the reality found in Christ's teaching as to what brother means, as to what brotherhood implies?

"The Anglo-Roman union is not the sign of a revolution, but in a double sense it is a sign of the times, however insignificant its numbers. The desire for union of some sort is becoming universal among Christians, and publicity is a distinctive sign of the times. The members of the Anglo-Roman union in proclaiming their desires and their methods to the world, protect themselves from any charge of treachery or treason. In this respect, at least, they are to be congratulated in contrast with those who would Latinize and yet localize the American Church as a petty sect in opposition to the worldwide sectarianism of the Roman Communion. If it is right and praiseworthy that men should desire and work for union in Protestant directions, it must in all fairness be admitted that men should be allowed the same privilege to work for unity in the other direction."

The idea that "Uniat churches" would result from the going over to Rome *The Standard* calls "a mere pipe-dream." It adds:

"We wonder that these men do not reflect upon the peril in which they leave their immortal souls. They cannot plead

invincible ignorance, for they admit that Rome is right and Anglicanism is wrong. They cannot plead their good intentions, for the Holy Father is perfectly well aware of the quixotic nature of their enterprise, and he would prefer to have them execute the much better intention of following out their logic. It is nothing to him that they admit his primacy and supremacy, for that is merely academic so long as they fail to do the logical and practical thing. Until they shall do that and make their submission, from his point of view they are contumacious rebels against his authority, all the more because they admit that authority with all its implications. We have no wish to see any of our clergy or communicants go to Rome; but, as a matter of elemental honesty and for the peace of the Church, we should be really glad if those who thus proclaim themselves to be alien to our faith and polity were consistent and scrupulous. They should go out from us because they are not of us. It is painful to have a carbuncle lanced, but it is better for the body to let out the poisonous humor. These men are living in a realm of utter illusion. They grant all the premises of the Roman argument and flinch at the conclusion. The inference from their admissions is not the propriety of their staying where they are until they can convert the whole Church; it is that they should make haste to save their own souls by acknowledging the vicar of Christ and shaking from their feet the dust of the doomed city. To refuse this act of obedience is an exercise of private judgment more groundless than any Protestant's, and none would be more forward to tell them so than Archbishop Ryan or Cardinal Gibbons, or his Holiness, Pope Pius X."

*The Living Church* (Milwaukee) is the organ of the extreme high-church party of Episcopalianism, and has long striven toward achieving a "Catholic unity," but one which does not recognize the primacy of the Papal See. Concerning this movement it says:

"Gentlemen who are taking up with this latest novelty in religion must realize that they are seriously embarrassing us who would maintain the Catholic position among Anglicans. If they were strong enough to prove a serious factor in our Church life, they would prove a most useful ally to ultra-Protestants, in assuring churchmen that the *terminus ad quem* of the Catholic Movement is Rome. All of us, we trust, desire unity, and unity that left Roman Christendom out would be far from complete; yet it would be cowardly for us to surrender, for the sake of unity, the impregnable position with [R4186 : page 181] respect to Catholicity which we hold. This position is that the Catholic Church is complete wherever the valid ministry of the Church, in its threefold orders, is teaching the Catholic faith and administering the Catholic sacraments with the living Presence of the Holy Spirit in her; that any primacy, whether of Rome or of any other see, depends upon the Church, and not the Church upon the primacy; that the faith can be finally defined only by the consensus of the whole Church, expressed generally and corporately as such consensus, and not by any single bishop; and that unity will eventually come, in the good providence of God, if at all, by the recognition throughout the Church of the equal authority of all bishops severally, and the appellate authority of all of them collectively.

"We cannot do otherwise, then, than to condemn this movement which some have sought to exploit, through this most recent of ecclesiastical novelties. Whatever else may be said for or against it, we repudiate it as an expression of Catholic churchmanship."

– *Literary Digest.*

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