

(*Liverpool Catholic Times*) learn that in the Commune of Kappel-on-the-Rhine 310 persons, who in 1870 formed themselves into an "Old Catholic" parish and obtained possession of the Catholic church in the district, formally renounced their errors on the 13th inst. The church will therefore be henceforward devoted to its original purpose, after it has been reconsecrated by the Archbishop of Friburg. The "Old Catholic" schism, despite the attempts of the Anglicans to bolster it up, has long been doomed.

THE EPISCOPAL CONGRESS ON THE GROUNDS OF CERTITUDE.

(*Brooklyn Catholic Review*.)

As usual, the Church Congress of the Protestant Episcopalians at Philadelphia, the other day, presented some very ludicrous features and they are admirably reported by the *Independent*. It seems a pity that so grave and important a question as that of "Grounds of Certitude in Philosophy and Religion," should have been presented in such a light as to furnish a theme of amusing comment. But what else could you expect? Of all the subjects that were calculated to give rise to the Babel of confused discussion peculiar to the Episcopal Congresses that question of the grounds of certitude caps the climax. The report of the *Independent* is a happy one, the writer evidently appreciating and enjoying the whole scene. He says Dr. Huntington of New York read the first paper and that it was "very clear, well read and well received," yet as his position was open to criticism it would seem that his "ground of certitude" needed some previous ground of certitude to confirm it.

The next speaker was Professor Sterrett, a well-known student of Hegel and expounder of his philosophy.

"His paper was read under the most hopeless disadvantages. He had not himself read it over since it was written; it was about three times as long as his time for reading would allow; and he missed out dozens of pages without in the least realising how the parts retained would get joined together. Moreover, probably not twenty people in the audience had the faintest notion of the principles on which his propositions were based. The audience was a delightful spectacle. Some were trying to look as if they understood what was said. Some were blowing their noses and wiping their eyes. Some were reading, or pretending to read the programmes. It was perfectly obvious that Professor Sterrett's paper—or fragments of a paper—was wholly and hopelessly above them."

Of the next address by Rev. Dr. R. Harris, of Brooklyn, N.Y., the writer says:

"It is impossible to describe the rush and gush and drive of his delivery. The reporters—not the stupid routine noodles of the Philadelphia newspapers, but genuine stenographers—were baffled and unable to follow him. So was everybody else who heard him for the first time. The effect was ludicrous and awe inspiring. 'There is only one kind of certitude,' he said, or seemed to say, as the thunder and lightning of his rapid eloquence rushed by, 'viz, truth as apprehended by knowledge.' Probably the oracular statement was merely a whirl on the wings of rhetoric—or the rapidity of its utterance may have turned it upside down."

"Truth as apprehended by knowledge" is excellent as a ground of certitude in every department of life.

The next speaker was Dr. Bates, of Cleveland, Ohio. His position was that "we may often get a clear view of truth by considering its contradictory," which the reporter considered a very pregnant thought which the Doctor worked out well. But we are not at all surprised to learn that, "at the end of his speech, he very naturally arrived at our orthodox beliefs and when he came to Jesus Christ the audience welcomed what he had to say with wild applause. They felt as if they were getting out of a dismal hell of mere speculation into the sunny heaven of their own opinions." Could anything be more graphic or more amusing than that description? Could anything more admirably describe the Protestant position on this important subject than "the dismal hell of mere speculation?" Their true happiness is in the "sunny heaven of their own opinions."

We very much fear that Rev. W. M. Groton, of Westbury, R.I., who was the next speaker, will not appreciate the compliment paid him by our somewhat facetious reporter. "His speech," he says, "was applauded to the echo, and for the obvious reason that it had nothing in the remotest degree to do with the subject." And he continues: "His speech was delightful and delusive. As a very edifying address at a prayer-meeting it was above all praise; as a contribution to a question of the profoundest metaphysics it was sheer moonshine. But the audience was immensely relieved. They finished wiping their noses and reading the programme; they understood what was said; they clapped their hands and felt their hearts warm. And they had really listened to something which did them good, though it had nothing whatever to do with 'the grounds of certitude.'"

That is certainly not very encouraging for the popular settlement of the great and important question.

The last speaker was a volunteer, the Rev. Mr. Conger. He is represented as a very modest man, coming forward with trembling "hands everywhere and nowhere—twitching, quivering, restless," but the writer thinks he will, sooner or later, make his mark, and that we shall unquestionably hear from him again. His statement was that "any proposition which is guaranteed by the united testimony of our spiritual nature is trustworthy." We sincerely hope we shall hear from Mr. Conger again, and that he will explain the meaning of his proposition. We trust he will especially see the importance of explaining how and where the "united testimony of our spiritual nature" may be found.

Oh, when will our good, sincere, and zealous Protestant friends find their way out of the "dismal hell of mere speculation," not into the "sunny heaven of their own opinions," but into that haven of rest and peace in the Holy Catholic Church, which furnishes the only sure foundation and impregnable ground of certitude in

religion? We are glad the subject is being discussed. The very agitation of the question is evidence that the necessity of having some ground of certitude is being more and more realised, and the discussion cannot but result in good in the end.

GERMAN CATHOLICS AND SOCIALISM.

(From the *Catholic Columbian*.)

As already announced, the German Catholics under the presidency of Prince Loewenstein, have just formed a "Peoples' League" (*Volksverein*), with the object of meeting the menacing advance of socialistic doctrines and propaganda in the Empire. The following is a translation of the Manifesto issued by the League, and signed by Dr. Windthorst and all the chief Catholic leaders:

"To the German Catholic people—" Grave errors and dangerous revolutionary tendencies are showing themselves on all sides. Social order and the established monarchical order are threatened in their very foundations. Socialism not only preaches these errors, but endeavours to put them into practice. In fact Socialism feels that the Catholic population of Germany is the most formidable adversary of these errors and tendencies. Hence, in their Congress at Halle, the Socialists declared open war against Catholicism. It is, therefore, urgently necessary to repulse the enemy with our forces united and well-organised. For this purpose Catholics from all parts of Germany have several times met together. They have decided to organise a Catholic League, the object of which is to combat revolutionary errors and tendencies on social questions and to defend Christian social order. This end can be obtained only by the personal action of each member, by instructive lectures, and by the propagation of good books and papers. Every German Catholic who is of age may join the League by paying an annual subscription of one shilling.

"Forward then! Let us march against the common enemy. Let us form this great League which shall embrace all German counties. This League will organise our forces, increase our resources, direct Catholic action in the Press, in pamphlets, and in popular meetings. We shall thus be organised in the smallest village, in the tiniest hamlet, and we shall be able to combat every where in the cause of truth against socialistic errors. Let each member of our League undertake a personal propaganda. The League aims, not only at the refutation of errors and false doctrines, but also at the spread of true principles on social questions. The League desires that both employers of labour and workmen should become more and more convinced of their reciprocal duties, and recognise more and more the solidarity of their interests. Our bishops, always anxious for the public weal, have recently in their meetings at Fulda sounded the alarm on the subject of the approaching danger. Our union will show the bishops that their appeal has been heard. When the Holy Father hears of our work, his paternal heart will be filled with joy, because the German Catholics have understood the needs of a new era and are desirous to meet them by working together for a common good.

"It the German Emperor, in agreement with the German Princes has abandoned the policy of combating ideas by police measures, he has done so with the full confidence that there is still sufficient Christian spirit in the people to overcome, of its own free action, ideas as dangerous for the Church as for the State. Catholics of Germany, let us be the last to abuse this confidence. Gather yourselves together then, Catholic people! Give a fresh proof of the spirit of sacrifice and fidelity to Church and country. Gather together for the defence of Christian society. Defend the altar and throne, the hearth and the home. Let us all unite together, great and small, priests and laity, masters and workmen, to oppose the enemy that menaces us; to instruct the ignorant, to support the feeble, and to enkindle the zeal of the faithful. By this means we shall preserve to our people their faith, and effect a great and important social action.

A RABBI ON MORAL TRAINING IN THE SCHOOLS.

(From the *Catholic Review*.)

RABBI LEON HARRISON lectured last Sunday before the congregation of Temple Israel, in Avon Hall, on Bedford avenue, Brooklyn, on the subject of teaching morals in public schools. He said: "Now, I prize education above all other earthly goods. I honour the scholar far more than the millionaire. And yet some of the greatest scoundrels on record have been educated men. Some of the most villainous thieves have been Lord High Chancellors. Statesmen, and poets, and sages have wallowed in the foulest mire of moral corruption."

"Is there any people in the world more saturated with learning and culture than the German nation? Can education do more for a people than it has for the countrymen of Goethe, Immanuel Kant, Heinrich Heine, Mommsen, Wagner and Beethoven? Yet could any fouler crime be committed against civilisation than the bounding by them of an entire race—a blasting indictment of their pretended philosophy, their liberalism, their enlightenment?"

"If moral culture is a daily necessity and is to train our emotions and sympathies then churches alone and Sunday schools are insufficient—miserably insufficient. We need more than homeopathic doses of morality. Little children do not gain much from this meagre instruction. The little ones have their own trials and troubles, their own faults and virtues that are quite as large to them as full sized cares are to their elders. They need more strengthening moral food than is given them to-day, and more of it. In an age like this, when culture does not imply character, when education is often but a thin veneering for polished villany, do not lay sole stress on mental training, but prize it at its true value, add thereto strength of purpose, enlightened conscience, trained and true sympathies."