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A Calendar of the Liber Niger and Liber Albus of Christ Church, Dublin by H. J. Lawlor

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Protestantism is towards unbelief! And the author concludes with an appeal to Protestants generally—"If you do not see anything—and you cannot see more—in the work of the first reformers but a human work, well then! be logical; come back to the Roman Church or give up Christianity, be Catholics or Freethinkers."

Los von Luther, zurück zur Kirche.

L. A. P.

A CALENDAR OF THE *LIBER NIGER* AND *LIBER ALBUS* OF CHRIST CHURCH, DUBLIN. By H. J. Lawlor, D.D. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. (Hodges, Figgis and Co.) 2s.

These volumes, calendared by Dr. Lawlor, are mediæval manuscripts belonging to Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

The *Liber Niger* is a collection of booklets of uniform size, bound together for convenience: all appear to have been transcribed not later than the fourteenth century. It is practically the remains of what must have been the extensive library of Christ Church in the Plantagenet period. This collection contains such literary texts as the "Secretum Secretorum" ascribed to Aristotle, a treatise on the Sibyl, a treatise on Purgatory, the French poem "Imago Mundi," a history of our Lord in French, a poem and some verses. It contains the legal tract "Fet a Saver," which gives an account of forms of pleadings in the King's Court, another tract which gives lists of various kinds of writs, precedents for writs, and explanations of legal procedure; a large collection of the principal English Statutes from the Magna Charta to the end of the reign of Edward I., and the acts of the Council of Irish Magnates in 1297. There are also some annals and ecclesiastical tables. Subsequently, copies of royal charters, etc., similar to those in the *Liber Albus*, were transcribed on the margins and blank spaces of these booklets: so far as it has been used for this purpose, the *Liber Niger* is a monastic register or chartulary.

The *Liber Albus*, on the other hand, is a volume compiled solely to serve as a chartulary, or register, to perpetuate and furnish copies of important documents dealing with the property, privileges, and history of Christ Church. Almost the entire volume was prepared by Thomas Fyche, sub-prior of Christ Church, during the dozen years previous to his death, which took place on 17th January, 1518. A few documents of later date have been copied by other scribes. It contains copies of Royal Charters, Papal Bulls, grants, leases, rentals, inquisitions, awards, wills, legal proceedings, and miscellaneous documents and memoranda.

The literary texts in the *Liber Niger* furnish the student of mediaeval French, poetry, and religious thought, with extremely useful and interesting material. The legal tracts in the same volume are very instructive to the legal antiquary; and, before Acts of Parliament were printed, the collection of English statutes in the *Liber Niger* was of great importance. These Acts were probably sent to Ireland under the great seal of England to form part of the law of the land.

The notices in the Calendar concerning the various members of the literary and legal sections of the *Liber Niger*, are, naturally, as brief as possible: it is quite sufficient to identify them. But we should like fuller descriptions of "A French Poem," and various verses contained in the same volume.

On the other hand, the Calendar has very full abstracts of the Royal Charters, grants, etc., copied into the *Liber Albus*, and the "chartulary" portion of the *Liber Niger*. These furnish much information concerning Christ Church Cathedral, St. Patrick's, and the archbishops, and the Diocese of Dublin; and they greatly add to our knowledge of topography, personal and family history, monastic and diocesan history, and the legal position of the Irish Church in the middle ages.

The Calendar is reliable, has a good index, and gives evidence of much technical scholarship, research, and patient industry.

It is difficult to over-estimate the great historical value of the Irish monastic and early diocesan registers. The publication of the entire series would be a great boon to students of Irish history: until this shall be done, calendars of merit will be extremely useful.

M. J. M.

ESSAYS ON THE SOCIAL GOSPEL. By Adolf Harnack and Wilhelm Herrman. Crown Theological Library. (Williams and Norgate.) 4s. 6d.

The one question that seems to recur most frequently at the present day is that which is summed up in the term Socialism. Sermons are preached, essays are written, novels are composed, and many discussions are carried on in the columns of Church and other papers, in which the subject is expounded in every possible light. There is great need of clearness of thought and preciseness of definition when dealing with such an intricate matter. This volume is well worth study by those who wish to have clear ideas as to the attitude the Church ought to adopt with regard to modern socialistic theories. One thing is very evident, that she