

The Catholic Record

Price of Subscription—\$1.50 per annum. United States and Europe—\$2.00 per annum.

Approved and recommended by the Archbishops of Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa and St. Boniface, the Bishops of London, Hamilton, Peterborough, and Ogdensburg, N. Y., and the clergy throughout the Dominion.

Advertisements for teachers, situations wanted, etc., 50 cents each insertion. Remittance to accompany the order.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION. Apostolic Delegation, Ottawa, Canada, June 13th, 1905.

Mr. Thomas Coffey. My Dear Sir—Since coming to Canada I have been a reader of your paper. I have noted with satisfaction that it is directed with intelligence and ability, and above all, that it is imbued with a strong Catholic spirit.

Mr. Thomas Coffey. Dear Sir—For some time past I have read your estimable paper THE CATHOLIC RECORD, and congratulate you upon the manner in which it is published.

LONDON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1914

"WHO CAN FORGIVE SIN?"

"Who can forgive sin but God alone?" asked the Rev. Mr. Riddiford, a Baptist minister, preaching to his little flock on Egerton street, who presumably were greatly tempted to go to confession.

This learned Baptist, if we are to judge by his own synopsis of his sermon, does not credit his hearers with any intelligent curiosity on the subject which he professes to treat.

"If a man sins against me," said the speaker, "I can forgive him, but when he sins against God it is not for me to forgive. This is the decision of Jesus Christ.

This is about the only passage that could be dignified by the name of argument. We seldom hear pulpit tirades against Confession nowadays.

"In business matters we use common sense." Just so. It is, therefore, well to take a business example. If Mr. Riddiford were to sell some property of ours, he might get to jail for appropriating what did not belong to him.

As for confessing one's sins, it follows naturally, necessarily and logically from the nature of the power to forgive; this is a judicial power; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.

All through the centuries, dark or light, ignorant or learned, the Church of God, founded by Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Ghost, exercised that tremendous power conferred on her by her Divine Founder.

Christ said to the man sick with the palsy, "Thy sins are forgiven thee. And there were some of the Scribes sitting there and thinking in their hearts: Why doth this man speak thus? he blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only? But Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said to them:

them: Which is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, arise, take up thy bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say to thee: arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house."

But that Christ wrought a miracle to answer the objection we hear to day: Who can forgive sins but God only? Christ thus showed that He had this power and could exercise it on earth as the Son of man.

It was after the Resurrection, however, that Christ principally instituted the sacrament of Penance. "As the Father hath sent me I also send you. When He had said this He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

He then conferred the power of forgiving sins in words that bear no other interpretation: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

It is, therefore, clear from the words of Christ that the Apostles had power to forgive sins. And it is equally clear that this was not a personal prerogative that would cease with their death; it was granted them in their official capacity and was hence a permanent institution in the Church founded on them;

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power was a function of the priesthood. "It seemed impossible that sins should be forgiven through penance; Christ granted this power to the Apostles and from the Apostles it has been transmitted to the office of priests (op. cit. II, ii, 12). Against the same heretics St. Paeian, Bishop of Barcelona (d. 390) wrote to Sympronianus, one of their Leaders: "This (forgiving sins) you say only God can do. Quite true: but what He does through His priests is the doing of His own power" (Ep. I. ad Sympron., 6 in P. L., xiii, 1057).

But Protestants do not all speak of Confession with the flippant irreverence of ignorant self-sufficiency. We shall quote one learned German Protestant philosopher, mathematician and man of affairs, of whom the Encyclopedia Britannica says he was "more perhaps than any one in modern times, a man of universal attainments and almost universal genius."

Leibnitz ("Systema theologicum," Paris, 1819, p. 270) says: "This whole work of sacramental penance is indeed worthy of the divine wisdom and it might else in the Christian dispensation be meritorious of praise, surely this would ruin institution. For the necessity of confessing one's sins deters a man from committing them, and hope is given to him who may have fallen again after expiation.

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ecclesiastical grounds that have occurred in the three hundred years of Quebec's history could be recorded on a single page. But the clippings from Ontario papers of references to "Quebec marriage cases" would make a library of scrap books.

"THE TRAGEDY OF QUEBEC"

The parish of Ste. Sophie de la Corne, county of Terrebonne, has become entirely Jewish. Originally it was a Scottish settlement, but the Scots were supplanted by French Canadians. Now there are only three French Canadians and one English farmer in the entire parish, and tobacco-growing has displaced mixed farming.

We should like to have the private opinion of Robert Sellar on this new tragedy of Quebec.

"CHRIST OR CAESAR"

Under this heading the Globe of Feb. 16th had a leading editorial that is worth considering. "Dr. W. S. Rainsford," says the Globe, "smote without sparing the imperialistic ideal of greatness and power. His hope for our citizenship and for our civilization is in the democracy of Jesus: 'If any would be great among you let him be your servant.'"

Over against all this exaltation of Christ we have had in Toronto during recent days a glorification of Caesar. Some of the very men who yesterday responded to Dr. Rainsford's challenge were assured three nights before that the strength of the Empire is in military and naval power, and that "all over the world peace came by power rather than by preaching."

It is the old conflict: love versus force. The young Jew from Nazareth had to make his choice. The economists, philosophers and statesmen of his day said force. The crowd said force. Roman imperialism said force. Caesar was force incarnate.

Through nearly three centuries that idea of love as the supreme motive of life and the organizing principle of the social order spread from Judea to Asia Minor, to Rome, to Gaul, past the pillars of Hercules, and on to the borders of Scotland. The Church's first reversal was in its own apostasy. It lined up with Caesar. It joined hands with the military power. It substituted force for love.

Here we have the essentially Protestant and pre-Christian confusion of Church and State. Protestants have never grasped the distinction between them. Religion and nationality were one with the Jews; with pagan Rome; with Protestants, as with almost every heresy and schism throughout the history of the Church. But there is a clear distinction between Church and State.

ALL WELL WITH HOME RULE. The great speech delivered by the Irish Leader to his constituents at Waterford a few weeks ago is destined to become historic. It was Mr. Redmond's last appearance on an Irish platform as Leader of the Irish Party. When next he speaks to his fellow-countrymen it will be in his capacity as Prime Minister of Ireland.

Those who put their trust in the "special correspondents" are either in high glee or deep in despair, according as their sympathies are for or against Home Rule. "The Cabinet has capitulated to 'King Carson.' 'Ulster' is to be excluded from the operations of the bill."

Such distinction the Jews did not conceive. Such distinction the Romans could not for a moment admit. Religion was with them a department of the State: their priests were government officials; the Emperor was the Pontifex Maximus of the Roman religion. Their deities were national. The Romans were not bigoted with regard to religion; they admitted the gods of all nations into their temples.

It took centuries to drive home the novel idea that the Church and the State had their own distinct spheres of action; that the Christian religion was not national but Catholic; that in its own sphere it was and must always be independent of the

State. National Protestant and Schismatic Churches were a reversal to the old pagan ideal of religion identified with the State.

It is a woeful misconception of Christ's teaching and mission to say that "He threw down the gauntlet to Caesar." Christ proclaimed the truth that His Church has ever since witnessed, that His kingdom is not of this world, that Caesar has his rights and duties, but that God's Church has her own divine mission over which Caesar has no shadow of control.

His Church did not "line up with Caesar" in the time of Constantine. The Church never conceded to him the right to pass upon doctrine. It was the Donatist, the Arian, the heretic and schismatic that appealed from the synod or council to the Emperor. And it is notoriously true, as the Globe says, that the churches of the Reformation repeated that apostasy in Germany and in Britain.

To-day in Canada and elsewhere the great Protestant grievance against the Catholic Church is that she is true to the teaching of Christ, that she distinguishes clearly and unequivocally between what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. To-day, as in the pagan Roman empire, to-day as in the days of Elizabeth, it is precisely for the reason that the Church claims to be and is Catholic and independent of the State, that the charge is made of a "divided allegiance;" and Catholics are accused of being disloyal to Caesar because they are loyal to Christ's Church.

And to-day, good and sincere Protestant Christians, because they are utterly unable to grasp the fact that Church and State are independent each in its own sphere, "smite without sparing imperialistic ideals of greatness and power," and believe they are delivering Christ's message of eternal life when they rail at Caesar for devoting the coin of the tribute to the building of Dreadnaughts. Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and let Caesar attend to his own business; Christ's business is the salvation of the individual soul; it is through the regeneration of individuals that society will be transformed, that Christian ideals will prevail and Christian precepts be observed in the things that belong to Caesar.

Howsoever sincere and eloquent he be the Christian preacher who leaves the individual to reform society in the mass is but tilting at windmills.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

SINCE our comment of some weeks ago upon the introductory lecture of Professor Hume Brown to the class of Ancient Scottish History in the University of Edinburgh, the full text of the lecture has appeared in the Scottish Historical Review. It is characterized by its author's usual carefulness of statement and fullness of information, and while not wholly free from those blemishes which appear inseparable from the Protestant view point, will none the less repay perusal on the part of Catholics versed in historical subjects.

THAT PORTION of the address which we singled out for comment at the time, viz: the intellectual sterility of the two centuries following the Reformation in Scotland, we may be pardoned for reverting to again. For the Reformation period itself Prof. Brown lays claim to Alexander Alesius (or Alesius) and George Buchanan, but while both of these scholars espoused the cause of the "Reformers,"

and upon the latter, especially, was mainly erected the great mountain of falsehood and slander which has ever since remained so apparently hopeless a tradition of Calvinistic Scotland, it should not be forgotten that all that was genuine and profound in their learning was the product of Catholic universities. It is for the tainted superstructure alone that the Reformation is responsible.

More ridiculous still is the talk of a general election on the Home Rule Bill. To submit the bill to the judgment of the electors means the abandonment of the Parliament Act and the restoration of the absolute veto of the House of Lords. It means the betrayal of the democracy into the hands of the old Tory aristocracy, and would condemn the Liberal Party to utter impotence.

For all these reasons, then, and for more that we might enumerate, the Home Rule Bill is certain to become law. Whether or not further concessions shall be made to "Ulster" depends entirely upon the Orange leaders. "If any change be made," says Mr. Redmond, "it must be not to enable it to pass, that is unnecessary, but to buy the good-will of our opponents in Ireland, and I must say to you frankly that at present I see no prospect of that good-will being purchased at any price whatever."

Small as the chances of the Orangemen listening to the voice of reason and patriotism are, Mr. Redmond holds out to them the olive branch. "Over these men," he said, "I want no party triumph. I want to influence their intelligence. I want to dissipate their suspicions and I want to soften their hearts; and, therefore, so long as it is possible for me to do so, even against hope, I will preach to them the doctrine of conciliation. I say there are no lengths, short of the abandonment of the principles which you and I hold, to which I would not go to win the confidence of these men, and not to have them lost to Ireland."

Brave words these, and generous, as the soul of Ireland has ever been generous and quick to forget the wrongs of the past. When one reflects on the attitude of the Anti-Home Rule leaders towards the majority of their fellow-countrymen one cannot but pay the tribute of respect and admiration to the magnanimity of the Irish Leader. In him the statesman speaks.

In one of his latest speeches Sir Edward Carson attempted to justify his position by arguing that consent of the governed was the first essential for good government, and because Ulster refused its consent therefore the Home Rule Bill should be dropped. But surely what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and since four-fifths of the Irish people refuse, and have always refused, consent to the Act of Union, it should therefore be repealed. And we are glad to be able to say that it is as certain as anything human can be that it shall.

THAT DR. Hume Brown is not alone in his casting back for inspiration to "the happier times that were," we have many examples from time to time. The latest that has come under our notice is that of Dr. M'Adam Muir, who as a Presbyterian minister presides over the present-day destinies of the old Catholic Cathedral of St. Mungo, Glasgow. Dr. Muir has actually in this year of grace, held in that venerable but desecrated edifice, a "special service" in honor of St. Kentigern (St. Mungo), founder of the See of Glasgow, and still venerated by Catholics as its patron. Since the days of Ninian, Columba and Kentigern, said the preacher, the horizon had been marvellously widened, but, none the less, he added, "they regarded with reverence and admiration those who, despite what they now esteemed as childish efforts and crude superstition, walked according to the light they had."

PUTTING ASIDE THE pious snobbery which, no doubt unwittingly, characterizes such a mental attitude towards his country's apostles, there is a degree of hopefulness in the thought that underlay the commemoration. It was a direct setting aside of the Westminster Confession for one thing, and it marked a de-

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THAT THE Reformation itself, deeply as it affected Scotland, was not a native product, Prof. Brown makes clear. The ideas that underlay it, he says, were not of home growth, but were taken over from the Continental Reformers. We know only too well how this exotic, under the fanatical leadership of Knox, laid the country prostrate in the dust, and how, with the burning out of Buchanan's erudition, learning in its wider sense ceased to be a factor in Scottish life. It is remarkable, as Prof. Hume points out in unmistakable terms, that for the two centuries following that era of destruction, "there is but one Scot, Napier of Merchiston, whose name is written in the European firmament." He quotes Hugh Miller as saying that, as a result of the turmoil which the Reformation brought upon the country, with its accompanying intolerance and fanaticism, "Scotland lost her brain time," and ceased to have that influence upon European letters which was hers all through the Middle Ages. The "Intellectual Influences of Scotland on the Continent," is indeed the subject of Prof. Brown's lecture and that that influence had its most unrestrained outlet in pre-Reformation times he does not leave in doubt.

IT IS Prof. Brown's opinion that Scotland regained something of her old pre-eminence in the eighteenth century, and in illustration he cites the names of David Hume, Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, and several others, who flourished during that period of depression and gloom. But in what manner does the infidel philosophy of Hume, the fatalism of Hutcheson, or the lifeless economy of Smith contrast with the life-giving genius of Duns Scotus, the mighty learning of Michael Scot of Balevearie, the poetic fervor of Gavin Douglas, or the profound philosophy of Nicholas Hoppern, all of whom found their source of inspiration in their Catholic faith. It is like contrasting light with darkness.

WITH THE eighteenth century, such as it was, closes, in the lecturer's estimation, the succession of Scotsmen who in their respective spheres made their contributions to European culture. It will be something of a shock to Presbyterians to be told that even in the nineteenth century, so prolific in the makers of literature, there is but one, Sir Walter Scott, who by his original genius appealed to the civilized world and influenced the imaginative literature of every country. There is the genius of Robert Burns to be sure, but, unique as that was, it cannot be said to have made its way as yet beyond the limits of English speech. Burns as a poet was born out of due time and had no sort of kinship with the hopeless Calvinism of his surroundings.

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