

The Catholic Record.

"Christianus mibi nomen est Catholicus vero Cognomen"—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname)—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

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1418

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THE GLAD TIDINGS.

The peace and joy of Christmas roll over the world, subduing its selfishness, and attuning it to the angelic hymn that bathed the sleeping town of long ago in floods of harmony. We remembered how an angel announced to some shepherds who were watching their flocks the good tidings of great joy. They were men of simple minds, and knowing nothing of the world, to whose habits and thoughts they were utter strangers. And as they kept vigil that wondrous night a bright star shed its radiance at their feet, and down from heaven clad in robes of dazzling whiteness descended an angel in rapid flight, and the brightness of God shines around about them and they fear with a great fear. Fear not: said the angel, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy. After the long waiting the Christ had come to announce that the reign of death was over, and Love took the place of Fear: to bid us walk bravely on towards the lasting city and to give unto our keeping the light of faith whereby we can avoid snare and pitfall. And in thinking upon the good tidings we throw off the years and become like children. We may not fail to remember the records of disenchantment—the black marks that stain our book of life which was erstwhile so pure and beautiful, but we can forget our pride and self-seeking, our hurts and non-success, our small thoughts and bitterness and resolve once more "to be honest, to be kind, to earn a little and spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier by his presence: to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered, to keep a few friends but these without capitulation. Above all on the same grim conditions to keep friends with himself."

THE IDEALS OF OUR YOUTH.

We are impelled to seek after the things we have lost, and mayhap some of us have reason so to seek. The ideals of our youth and early manhood—are they still before us? Do they beckon us, or have we bartered them for worldly maxims, for success which is but failure and which clogs the heart and blinds us. Have we set out carrying holy things, hope and love, joy and fear, the realization of God's presence and gratitude that we have life to labor for eternity, and do we find ourselves to day not only bereft of these things but stumbling on under the burden of disenchantment, of sin, of despair.

NO HOPE BUT FROM A REDEEMER.

But hard indeed must be the hearts in which Christmas bells awaken no responsive echo. They may be a summons to us to go back to our Father: they may carry a message of courage to the despondent, and to the despairing happiness and hope in all their golden chords; but to all because they announce the birthday of the Babe of Bethlehem they must have some meaning. And that meaning is clear. That Babe Who comes adown the centuries lined by the patriarchs who chant His glories is our Teacher and Master. Before His coming men sat in darkness. Gradually the memory of primitive tradition was obscured by vice and error. Humanity, however, sought by every means to unlock the gates of the invisible world and to win back the God whom it had lost. Men seek him in nature and in their hearts. They fashion objects in silver and gold, hoping they may represent Him. In temples high-uptitied and rich with all the stateliness and grandeur at the command of genius, they look for some sign of His presence. But their best and brightest chronicle all these as failure to sate the hunger of the heart for God. They discuss present theories; they ransack the literature of the world, and with its wisdom sifted and analyzed they still peer into the darkness of doubt and ignorance and declare there is no hope but from a Redeemer.

THE STRONGEST INCENTIVE TO VIRTUE.

And at the hour marked out by God as the fullness of time He came in poverty and humbleness. Simple men heard the angelic song which heralded His advent. But the world reeked little of the Babe nesting in the arms of His mother. It would have laughed scornfully if it had been told that He was to refashion the earth. It had its own way of doing things, and that way seemed justified by its success through

many centuries. The honor and power of Rome, its strongest representative, was guarded by the steel of the legionary from the Atlantic to the Euphrates. Its glories were sung by poets and attested to by all on which men set store. But man was of no value save to advance the interests of the State, and woman was but a plaything. Vice walked unabashed and unnoticed. The cries of the poor and the suffering were but discord in their hymn of life. And the Babe of Bethlehem took that sudden and desecrating humanity into His arms and set it upright, cured and enlightened on its way to eternity. He taught it to say "Our Father," its origin and destiny, the dignity and responsibility of life. He freed the woman from tyranny and reconstructed the family. He gave the wife and mother an assured position in the family, and so laid the foundations of a new society. In a word, He gave the world, as Lecky says, an ideal character which has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown itself capable of acting in all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions, and has been not only the highest pattern to virtue but the strongest incentive to its practice.

OUR MASTER AND OUR TEACHER.

But let us bear in mind that He is our Master and Teacher. He came upon earth as "the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world: He was born to bear testimony to the truth . . . that they may have life. He speaks as one having authority. He speaks to-day through the Church, which He commands us to hear, and in it and by it continues to bless, dispense mysteries and to offer sacrifice. His doctrines, all of them, must be accepted without reserve: not only the Sermon on the Mount, but all His words, with docility and humility. For He is Emmanuel, God with us, claiming the submission of minds and hearts. He, then, who realizes that the Word was made Flesh for him must, if he have within the instincts of a Christian, kneel down by the crib and become a little child. He will ask that Divine Infant for light to know his work and for strength to do it—to live his truth in his life, to defend his faith by obedience and good work and to understand that his is the glory and privilege of protecting that faith.

A SUGGESTION.

We remember how the poor carpenter of Nazareth and the Virgin Mary were denied hospitality at the inn. There was no room for them. They who crowd their hearts with lust and hate and shams re-echo the cry of the innkeepers of Bethlehem. Then again we prate about human brotherhood, and hard by our doors are our brethren and the Lord's and we suffer them to want and to suffer. The dwellers in tenements, they of the hard and grey lives, the boys who are ill fed, and who can be made joyful with a trifle—these are our brethren. The sick, the mechanic out of work, the little ones who need boots and clothes—these are our brethren. Instead of giving useless presents to our friends, why not transmit that money into deeds of love which shall accompany us to the tribunal of God, and to know that we have helped one person to happiness and have lifted one childish heart into the light will make Christmas music all the sweeter, and moreover "Whatsoever you have done to the least of My brethren you have done it unto Me."

Or as Father Tabb says:
A little boy of heavenly birth,
But far from home to-day,
Comes down to find His bill the earth.
That sin has cast away,
O comrades, let us one and all
Join in to get Him back His bill.

In Catholic countries it is roughly accurate to class all non-Catholics together as "enemies of the Church"; for there no man who is in sympathy with religion, however he be harassed with doubt or loss of faith, will abandon the outward profession of Catholicism, there being no other religious communion, socially or intellectually respectable, in which he may enjoy more liberty of opinion. To leave the Church is the act of those only who are against her, and not of those who are merely quiescent or indifferent. But here (in a non-Catholic country) it is otherwise, and only a small minority of those outside the Church can be called its "enemies" in any proper sense. Their dislike, when it exists, is usually due to misunderstanding, and is nearly always resting on some principle of the Gospel or of the moral law which they suppose to be violated by our religion. To deal with such, as with "enemies" of the Church, is a violation of policy, no less than of charity and good taste.—Father Tyrrell, S. J., in the "Faith of the Millions."

IS ONE RELIGION AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

CHRIST'S ANSWER TO THE QUESTION.
Rev. Bernard J. O'Connell, S. J., in St. Louis Church Progress.

Reason points with unmistakable clearness to the fact that the proposition, one religion is as good as another, necessarily implies that falsehood is as good as truth. For different religions, by the very fact that they are different, must needs be opposed in doctrine and as opposite doctrines cannot all be true, it follows unobviously that some of these religions are false; consequently if, as indifferentists say, one religion is as good as another, it must perforce be admitted that a false religion is as good as a true one, or that falsehood is as good as truth—a statement that is an insult both to God and to man.

Yet as so many, apparently sane individuals, defend said proposition with an assurance that seems born of conviction, it would appear much to the point to ascertain what answer Christ has given to the question, whether one religion is as good as another. Let us look to Christ as their ideal, His answer ought to be final.

Now, Christ's answer is evidently embodied in the religious system which He proposed to His followers and in the obligation which He put upon them to adhere to that system. Consequently the one question to be settled now is, whether Christ put upon all the obligation of believing the same doctrine, or whether He granted freedom of choice in matters of belief. For, if all must believe the same doctrines, there cannot possibly be more than one religion, and if there is and can be but one religion, it is sheer folly to ask whether one religion is as good as another. He who establishes one religion and enjoins upon all to accept that religion in its entirety, by that very fact condemns all other religious systems as inventions of the devil, intended, as St. Paul puts it, to seduce the hearts of the innocent.

Now, that Christ did put such an obligation upon all, can easily be demonstrated from the various texts in which He makes reference to His Church. For clearness sake we will take the passage that contains the commission which gave His Apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations. These are His words: "All power is given to me in Heaven and on earth. As the Father sent Me, so I also send you. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

In these words Christ puts upon His Apostles a two-fold obligation. First to teach all nations; not this nation or that, but all, without exception. Or as St. Mark words it: "Preach the Gospel to every creature." So that it was evidently Christ's intention that His religion should become the one universal religion of the world. Men might perhaps refuse to accept that religion, but such a refusal would be against His wish and will and intention.

Secondly, Christ commissioned His Apostles, not only to teach all nations, without exception, but to teach all the same identical doctrines. "Teaching them," He says, "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." He left nothing whatever to their own choice and discretion. They were to teach the whole Gospel to all nations; all things whatsoever He had commanded to every creature.

And whilst He thus enjoined upon His Apostles to teach all nations, and to teach them all the same truths, He solemnly, and under the severest penalties, obliged every nation, and every single individual, to accept and believe the truth as He announced. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me." As He left nothing to the discretion of the Apostles in teaching, but required that they should teach all nations, and teach the whole Gospel, so neither did He leave anything whatever to the choice of those to whom the Gospel was announced. All without exception must believe, and believe all that is preached to them; for if they believe not, they shall be condemned, or as the Protestant version has it, they "shall be damned."

Does that sound like religious indifferentism? Can the Christ Who announced, with such terrible clearness and emphasis, that all who believed not the whole Gospel, should be damned—can that Christ, I say, give utterance to phrases like these: "One creed is as pleasing to God as another?" "One religion is as good as another?" "It matters not what a man believes, provided he is a good man, he is not God for he contradicts himself; and yet, as we have seen in last Sunday's lecture, Christ is true God of true God, He is Truth itself, the eternal and unchanging Truth.

Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and will bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." The Apostles were indeed fallible men, but Christ sent them to all nations as infallible teachers, whose doctrines were to be stamped with the seal of His own truthfulness. He Himself had come into the world to bear testimony to the truth and that testimony, divine and infallible, He would present to all nations, through the teaching of His Apostles. For "as the Father hath sent Me," He said to them, "I also send you. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And because they were to teach with infallible authority, hence all were to heed their teaching, and believe the same with unquestioning faith, for if they believeth not, they should be damned.

This same absolute oneness of faith and religion implied in Christ's commission to His Apostles, is inferred with equal clearness from every reference which He makes to His Church. That Church He always speaks of as one, not as many. He says, "He builds it upon one foundation, the rock, which is Peter. He appoints but one supreme pastor to feed His lambs and to guard His sheep; but one vicar to whom He gives the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. He seems to have multiplied illustration upon illustration and figure upon figure in order to impress upon His Apostles the absolute necessity of unity in the faith.

In fact, so completely does He appear to have been taken up with the desire for unity among His followers, that He made it the object of His last prayer on the eve of His death. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name . . . that they may be one, as we also are one." And to show that He intended this unity not for His Apostles only, but for all who might believe in Him, He added: "Not for them only (the Apostles) do I pray; but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me." And this unity among His followers, which He desired so earnestly and prayed for so touchingly, was to be most perfect, so that "all who believed in Him might be one even as He and the Father are one." Furthermore, this perfect unity, modeled upon the ineffable unity of the Father and the Son, should be so conspicuous that it might be unto all the world a proof of His own divine mission; for He added: "I pray that they all may be one, so that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

For all this it is quite evident that the unity of faith, which Christ prayed for and demanded in all His followers, is most absolute. He knows nothing of essentials and non-essentials in religion; nothing of fundamentals and non-fundamentals; nothing of branch theories, or any other theories, ex-cogitated by modern innovators. His final injunction is: "Be ye one in faith, as the Father and I are one in nature; believe the whole Gospel, or be condemned."

That this was really Christ's mind concerning the matter in hand, follows also with unmistakable clearness from the manner in which the Apostles understood and carried out their commission to preach the Gospel to all nations. Listen, for instance, to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, whom non-Catholics sometimes foolishly point to as the first Protestant: "I beseech you," he says, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit; as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." In the same epistle he declares that Christ's purpose in appointing pastors in His Church was to ensure unity of faith and oneness of doctrine for he says:

"And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . . that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by craftings, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

What the same Apostle thought of those who ventured to reject certain doctrines, somewhat after the fashion of our modern Indifferentists, may be gathered from his Epistle to Titus, whom he directs how to deal with heretics, that is, with persons who follow their own private judgment in matters of religion. He writes: "If a man be a heretic, admonish him once or twice, and then avoid the man. For such a one is a reprobate and a sinner, and stands condemned out of his own mouth." The same course of action he prescribes to the Christians to the Christians at Rome. "Now, I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not Christ our Lord, but . . . by pleasing speeches and good words, seduce the hearth of the innocent."

Stronger still is his crushing condemnation of discord in doctrine, and of want of unity in faith, contained in his Epistle to the Galatians, some of whom were wavering in the faith which he had preached to them. "Wonder," he says, "that you are so soon removed from him that called you into

the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. Which is not another, only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel from Christ. But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we said before, so now I say again: If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema. For I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. Nor did I learn it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Such is the interpretation which the great Apostle of the Gentiles put upon Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to all nations. One Gospel to all nations. One Gospel to be preached to all, and if anyone venture to announce a different gospel, let him be accursed. That one Gospel is to be received by every one in its entirety, and if any one refuse so to receive it, let him be accursed, that is, if in his belief he differ from the Gospel in this point or that, avoid that man, for he is a reprobate and a sinner, and stands condemned out of his own mouth.

From this it is quite evident that St. Paul would make short work of our modern religious indifferentism. Were anyone to ask him whether one religion is as good as another, his answer would be: "Let the man who preaches such a gospel be anathema, let him be accursed." This is a terrible answer, yet it is but the answer of the meek and gentle Christ Himself. Who says: "If any man believeth not all things whatsoever I have commanded My Apostles to preach, he shall be condemned."

NOT A SINGLE CATHOLIC RESIDENT.

BUT FATHER SUTTON GOT THE HANDSOME HOUSE AT OPELIKA, ALA., FOR HIS LECTURES.

The Catholic Standard and Times.
After a very successful lecture course given in Greenville, Ala., Father Xavier Sutton visited Opelika, Ala. The reverend lecturer, who is, notwithstanding the inconveniences and hardships of Southern missionary labors, doing such noble work among the non-Catholics of Alabama, was warmly received. Accompanied by a local priest, Father Sutton called on some of the most prominent people in town, and was welcomed by them with typical Southern generosity. Through their efforts the auditorium of the Court House, a handsome and imposing modern edifice, was secured for the lectures free of charge. The auditorium has a seating capacity of 15,000, and is heated and lighted according to the most improved methods. The fact that the lectures were to be delivered there had much to do with focusing attention on the advertising. The enterprising owners of the Opelika Daily News attended to the latter feature. Their devotion to the cause was commendable. Besides several attractive notices and advertisements, they generously donated Opelika, then, being a purely Protestant centre, could not be expected to jubilate over the advent of a Catholic lecturer. Furthermore, the morals of the town was seriously disturbed by a so-called temperance divine, with ears and tent and stereopticon, and the inevitable traveling shows and circuses. There is, we believe, a colloquialism much in use that would fitly exemplify by application the perversity of fate. We would like to use it, but we dare not.

"DONE BIN A CAT'LIK."
And then the inclement weather! Braving this and other obstacles, Father Sutton and his clerical friend, "doomed to death, but fated not to die," at least without a struggle, entered the magnificent hall, where they were greeted by that rarest specimen of decaying feudal faith, the old-time Southern "darkey." "Uncle" had snowny locks, toothless gums and a wagging hirsute appendage, which did full justice to its claims for a lingering existence, as the proud possessor, with inimitable grace, feelingly informed his black-robed visitors that he "done bin a Cat'lik." Surprise and then commiseration was depicted on Father Sutton's countenance. Father Sutton could not accuse the "ole gem man" of romancing, because he knew that

"Uncle" was sincere, his sincerity being the inheritance of distorted notions of Catholicity. Every Christian was a Catholic in "Uncle's" estimation. A little questioning evinced that the word Catholic was, indeed, universal, by a strange elasticity of comprehension. "Alas! poor Yorick." Leaving "Uncle" for the time being to his reflection, Father Sutton turned to the more serious business of the evening. His audience was small, but eager and gratefully attentive throughout the lectures. Father Sutton's remarks were violently punctuated by the elaborate assenting process of our needing religious "Uncle." "Yo" all sho' an right, cap, yo' sho' am," was his concluding reverie, resembling in his mental receptivity, the judge, who, hearing the defendant's plea, forthwith charged the jury to "acquit the prisoner," but charged his judicial sanction when the plaintiff's case was argued, with the remark: "That beats everything. This man lost first, and now he wins."

THE WRITING OF THE BIBLE.

The attitude of our old slave friend, however, exemplified the convictions of intelligent men who followed Father Sutton's clear logic very closely. "Do you think Christ had anything to do with the writing of the Bible?" asked one at the close of the discussion on the Bible. "The earliest book of the Bible was not written until at least eight years after the death of Christ, and that certainly does not seem to indicate that Christ Himself wrote a single line in it," replied Father Sutton. "That's a revelation to me," continued the interrogator. "And yet we are told that the Bible is the word of God—the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible. Preachers tell you that the Bible is enough. Then they shout for money. If you don't pay your dues you are driven out of the church and you are lost. I can't see the force of their arguments." Another gentleman told an acquaintance in the presence of his own minister that he had, for years, all his life in fact, attended a certain church and took an active interest in its affairs, but had learned more from one of Father Sutton's lectures than all the preachers he had ever heard taught him. "History does not record what attempt at justification the minister referred to exploited, but we are in a position to state that, in the words of a bystander, he was seen 'chasin' round a corner with coat tails a flyin' and no flies on his darby, either.' "So the world wags" and poor souls grope in darkness, gladly welcoming the faintest ray that would illumine the gloom of their unhappiness. Non-Catholic divines, with many a trumpet flourish, rush into print, advancing reasons why their churches are not filled. Why should they be filled? What light of truth can radiate from error? For true Christianity is the popular questions of the day are unhappy substitutes. They can be heard presented with greater freedom in the lecture hall. Men will not go to Church if the auditorium serve their purposes equally. Ministers may rail, and advance as causes what are in reality effects, but until they go back to the first and only cause—namely, the poverty of their systems of belief, and until they recognize the instability of their authority—they will never solve the problem of desolate waste and empty pews.

MINISTER AT A CATHOLIC DEATH BED.

And this apropos of a recent conversation between the writer and a minister in the neighborhood of Opelika, who was an attentive listener when Father Sutton preached the Gospel of the true Church to teach Catholic faith, and its consequent influence on the heart and mind. "Why have not we," the reverend gentleman said, "the same authority as Catholic priests? We seem to have it. For instance, I some time ago took upon myself the responsibility of attending the death bed of a Catholic whose system of belief I possibly do amound. I felt that it could do as much for the dying as any priest. Therefore, I read a selection from the Catholic Bible, one from the revised edition, and conducted a service that was as Catholic as could be." The inevitable Bible! Father Sutton had already demonstrated the necessity of confession, as a medium of forgiveness by the Bible, the revised edition, too—and what a consolation indeed the Bible alone must be to the soul upon its entrance to eternity! The instance narrated was advanced to illustrate the possession of authority. What the grounds of that authority were the writer was not permitted to hear or to investigate. *Roma locuta est causa finita est*—with apologies.

Do we wonder they are empty pews confronting empty doctrine? During his visit to Opelika Father Sutton boarded at the town hotel. His associations were exclusively non-Catholic. The Holy Sacrifice was offered in his room. Mass celebrated in private rooms of residences is a common occurrence in missionary districts. Father Sutton engaged a responsible person to distribute Catholic literature. Several hundred copies of "Clearing the Way," written by Father Sutton, were delivered at so many family homes and gratefully received. T. E.

Minister Convert.

English exchanges report another important conversion. Rev. J. C. Thompson, a member of a well-known North of Ireland family, and formerly curate of St. Andrew Anglican Church, Stockwell Green, London, S. W., has been received into the Catholic Church at St. Benedict's Abbey, Fort Augustus, by Dom Columba Edmonds, O. S. B.