

The Catholic Record.

"Christianus nihil solum eat, Catholicus vero Cognomen."—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname.)—St. Paclan, 4th Century

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AFFAIRS IN FRANCE.

A writer says that the true France, melancholy and delicate, conservative and religious, is not represented by the heterogeneous mob of financiers and demagogues, political adventurers and opportunists, which makes up the government of France. Combes has all the bitterness of the renegade. Jaures the blatant leads the socialists, who are the principal allies of the French premier. Behind the Socialistic leaders are seven hundred thousand voters who war not upon capital, but, as the Bishop of Nancy said, "a Dieu qui u' jamais embête personne."

But so far as we are concerned it is a mystery how a few adventurers can dominate so successfully some millions of Catholics. And yet the Catholics seem to love the men and women who were expelled from France—the religious who were devoted to God and to their country. But the love that manifests itself only by the kissing of hands, by tearful adieus, costs little. The farewell scenes at railway stations were pathetically futile; and the Frenchmen who took part in them went homeward in sullen mood doubtless against Combes but disinclined to pay the price for a determined opposition to him. What is needed is the love that brooks no lowering of the fame and prestige of country, which is a foe to apathy and indifference and urges every citizen to contribute his quota to good government.

WHAT IS NEEDED.

Not to shouting past watchwords, or to chanting past glories, should all our time be given. The bye-gone ages, glorious indeed—a wondrous picture of struggle and achievement—can but serve to inspire and to guide us. But we have to make our own history and to show that our principles have not lost their vitality. In our keeping is the faith that overcometh the world, to keep and propagate. For this we must be faithful Catholics, in touch always with the sacraments, which are the source of true manliness. We must, of course, be organized: schemes for this and that must not be neglected, but the power to influence others comes not from without but from within, and our success depends primarily not upon plans, however well laid, but upon humility and obedience—in a word, on our living out the truth and love which we claim to possess. In doing this we must necessarily come into the open. We must be soldiers and not camp followers. Our place is in the firing line, either to repel any attack on the Church or to carry its colors onward. Inaction means cowardice at times, and to skulk behind the barricades of memories of past ages or to hymn the praises of things that have been done instead of directing our energies to things which should be done, is merely "rainbow chasing."

AN EXAMPLE.

Just what organization, pulsing with the blood of practical Catholicity, can effect, may be seen in Germany. Not so many decades ago wise men saw no future there for the faith. But the Catholics, minding not human prophecies, bent themselves to the task of safeguarding their principles and interests. They took their weapons from the sanctuary and used them in congress, in every department of human activity. Priest and layman fought side by side, giving of their energy and courage and self-sacrifice in no rigidly fashioned, and the result is that to day there are those who admit that the day is not far distant when the Catholics will have a predominating influence in Germany. Their press is well manned and supported, and their party—the Centrist—watches with unceasing vigilance over the interests of the Church, and here, be it noted, as a writer has observed, that though this party comprises members of all possible groups, Aristocrats, Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives, nothing is ever permitted to stand in the way of the pursuit of the one fixed goal—to defend the rights and interests of the Catholic Church. Further, the German Catholics bring to the Catholic press the support of their purse and good will, and when one considers the practical sense, the cohesion, and the intelligent activity of the party, the conviction is forced on one that the party is a power which will win in the end.

THE CONCORDAT.

Some of the quill-drivers who do the French question are merely echoing the statements of the anti-Catholic correspondent. They seem to think that the Concordat is something new in France and that Pope Pius is working hard to have it done away with. They chirrup about freedom and democracy, to show they have not forgotten the ditty that was sung a few months ago in Toronto by the eminent French cleric, d'Aubigne. But it is rather discouraging that editors who we presume have little respect for Combes and the nun and monk harring "democrats" who have just now a stranglehold on French liberty, do not bid their henchmen to comport themselves with some show of decency.

Our readers know that a Concordat of some kind or other has been in France for hundreds of years. The present one dates from 1801. In coming to his agreement with the Holy See Right Rev. Dom Gasquet says:

"Napoleon was certainly not actuated by any love for the religion of his country. To him it was a matter of policy. It was necessary for instance to wipe out the great debt which the nation owed to the Church on account of the confiscations of the Revolution. This required the Pope's sanction, and it was the price paid for the measure of protection to religion secured by the Concordat, and for the guaranteed though slender stipends to be paid to the clergy by the State."

In attempting to show that Rome has violated the Concordat M. Combes has given one more proof of his unscrupulousness. His argument that the Pope in summoning the Bishops of Laval and Dijon disregarded the dispositions of the Concordat, is absurd on the face of it.

The first article of that treaty guarantees the full and free exercise of the Catholic religion. In this "free and full exercise" the Pope must be ever a factor. His is to watch over the fold, to eliminate abuses from it, to govern and to punish. The government, therefore, which essays to hamper Papal authority necessary for the free and full exercise of the Catholic religion, is acting in bad faith. There is not a word in this treaty to justify the attitude of the French Premier. And that its untenability is well known to him is amply evidenced by his suppressing the note of Cardinal Merry Del Val which covered the case of the Bishops and answered his objections.

A FALSE PROPHECY.

The followers of Combes are not a whit disconcerted by his tactics in regard to this issue and go gleefully on. Already these half-Bourbons who learn nothing and forget everything foretell the downfall of the Papacy. The study, however, of the careers of those who have led crusades against the Church might have a quieting effect on their ardor. Greater men than Combes have stormed at the gates of the Vatican and announced the death of the Papacy, but it remains "not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor." The failures of those who tried to stay the progress of the Bride of Christ dot the centuries, for "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that resisteth thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

DOGMATIC RELIGION BREAKING UP OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH.

REV. CHARLES ALFRED MARTIN SHOWS CONDITIONS OBTAINING AMONG NOTABLE PHENOMENA.

The breaking up of dogmatic religion outside of the Church is one of the noticeable phenomena of the times. It is interesting in its history, its evolution from certain causes and principles, its phases and effects; but to us as missionaries, I take it that it is of absorbing interest as a condition of the day with which it is our lot to deal, and the very account of it means to turn to the very account of our Apostolate. Curiously, at first sight and happily enough, the intellectual and religious unrest of this time of transition, while disastrous to other churches, is favorable to our own, since it emphasizes spiritual wants for which we have the remedy.

Students of the times have long been telling us that the religion of the future will be Naturalism or Agnosticism when it is not Catholicism. The fundamental controversy of the day is religious, it does not get beyond first principles; and it is Reason vs. Revelation.

The religious uncertainty among non-Catholics which tends to filter down through the press and other agencies to the common people, was no doubt bound to follow eventually the teaching of an authoritative teaching Church. Dr. Sheehan traces its connection with the transcendental movement of the past century (Irish Ecclesiastical Review, January, 1904). That philosophy, the characteristics of which were vagueness and abstraction, the fancy that its intuitive knowledge

transcended all experience and was independent of reason and the senses, he finds running through the writings of Rousseau; then broadened and developed in the great German systems; caught up and crystallized in the half-prophetic, half-delirious ravings of Carlyle in England; finally brought across the Atlantic and popularized here by Emerson and the New England school. For the time it was received with boundless enthusiasm; it inspired poetry, and permeated literature, and interpreted history, and became a religious creed.

But nebulous hypotheses about "over souls" and "immensities," and "eternal silences" could not satisfy the native logic of the mind, which demands principles and proofs, and says: "No dogma, no ethics." At the very notion of truth became lost in this subjectivism, people got to quoting such vague sayings as, "Things depend very much on how you look at them;" religion without creed came into fashion; it was counted vulgar to formulate or even to know just what one believed; and so men failed to see why they should go to a Church with no higher claim than the self-imposed task of presenting personal opinion in the form of chiselled essays, and took to reading their Sunday paper at home in indifference, or turned to science or socialism for the meaning and rule of life.

Another cause of the loss of faith; of the religious groping of many to whom the name and personality of Christ is dear and venerated, but who are at a loss to say "who the Son of Man is," and dare not cast the die; who are dazed, not irreverent, and bewildered whose neglect is rather a bewilderment than an apostasy, is the dethronement from its position of authority of the Bible.

In the matter of Biblical criticism, as well as of Philosophy, the conclusions of the thinkers and students gravitate to the masses through books and magazines and lyceum lectures; and with them comes the startling exploitation of whatever in them is sensational or destructive, by men who may be publishers without being students or thinkers, and who may be preachers in pulpits without being teachers of Christian truth or conservators of Christian faith.

That difficult questions are involved in the nature of the matter and is suggested by the history of Rev. Abbe Loisy and the writings of our learned Pere LeGrange, and perhaps quite as significantly by the silence of others, or again by the creation of the Papal Biblical Commission. The reader of the Sunday paper, even, is made familiar with the destructive part of the work of the Critics. The said reader may not be very learned, nor able to grasp the whole subject; but he need not be learned at all to have his discussion brought to him and thrust upon him, and to be impressed by it. At any rate the reading, thinking Protestant knows that the Bible, to whose infallibility he had pinned his faith, has been questioned; and that not by infidels but by the leaders of his own party; and has been discredited by them. Henceforth it can never be to him quite what it was to his father and mother, and Christianity grows dim and confused before his blurred eyes.

However it came about, there is undoubtedly a widespread tendency to drift away from Christianity as a super-naturally revealed faith, and to retain at most only its exposition of the natural moral law.

We may observe the conscious expression of the "new Christianity" in the liberal churches. Occasionally its heralds are of the strenuous sort, who are already ringing the knell of old-time orthodoxy; and they deny the faith of their fathers and grow impatient at their very names.

Often the new teachers are more tolerant. They repeat the old names even while they strip them of all meaning; perhaps because they feel they can afford, with the patience of culture, to soothe the worn-out creed to its death with the narcotics of the condescension and pity; perhaps because they are not quite sure there is some mysterious reality after all. Familiar instances of this might be multiplied. Among the latest examples is Harnack's saying, that the Resurrection is a great truth; if taken in its higher spiritual sense; or that the world is saved by the sufferings of Christ and His dying for all, just as Luther inwardly bleeding and striving, or any hero of self-sacrificing deeds, redeems the race.

In its positive side, which is the one most frequently presented for our admiration, we find the relic of the old Christianity—to consist of natural religion clothed in the adornment of Christian terms and poetry. Religion is eternal life in the midst of time; God and the soul are its elements; the Kingdom of God within you its end; the fatherhood of God and the infinite value of the soul are its teachings; and the higher righteousness and the commandment of love are its law. This we are told is all of Christ's message—its kernel and essence, and at once simple enough to teach, and broad enough for Jew and infidel, for Catholic and Protestant—to be the religion of the world. And certainly the best expression of its positive teaching, as I have set it down, is simple and sublime, and true as far as it goes. But it is not all of Christianity; it is only the Christian statement of the common religious ideas that underlies all religions, and which they all are an instinctive endeavor to interpret. You will recall how Leo XIII. empha-

sizes the word Naturalism in his encyclical on the Free Masons.

Harnack, whom as rector of the faculty of theology in that hotch of learning, the University of Berlin, we naturally quote as the chief prophet and redoubter of advanced Protestant thought, we find to be but a Robert Elsemer.

Years ago Ernest Renan expressed the regret that he was not a German professor instead of a Frenchman, that he might be a Christian at the same time that he was an infidel. Today he might be both in America as well as Germany.

The effect of this eclipse of the light of faith is a widespread desertion of the news. Only thirty millions of Americans are affiliated with any Church. Many of the great unchurched are merely indifferent, morally at fault perhaps, and intellectually uninformed about religion, but yet the unconscious expression of the loss of Christian unity and an accredited custodian and teacher of the faith. Others attempt to find in socialism or other isms of the day the solution of the problems of life which belong to true religion to provide: the questions of the soul which will not down, the whence and the whither of destiny; the how and the why of morals. Among the better classes are great numbers, I believe, who are in a condition of "waiting," a composite of unattached Unitarian and reverent Agnostic, whose picture of Christ is a dimmed heirloom retained by sentiment, and whose religion is a natural hope more than a Christian faith. If the class gave themselves over to Dr. Sheehan's, he typified by Herbert Spencer in his last days, sitting on the sands of Brighton and peering out, silent and dull of eye, over the unathomable sea. But as they happen to be busy and prosperous and not sad, while they "wait," their truer type might be the crowd around the Marconi wires in the saloon of the transatlantic steamer enjoying the applications of science and eager to catch the gossip of two continents.

So much, then, for the non-Catholic who is left a Christian still, by the breaking up of dogmatic religion!

Dr. Sheehan in reviewing the Question Box expresses surprise that the questions are so largely the old-fashioned and oft-repeated objections and misunderstandings which arose at the very time of the Reformation and have been classics for generations, and that the non-Catholic public seems so little affected by the advanced thought of liberal Protestantism.

Happily the affection is not so widespread as one living among the scholars might expect; but I think it is much more general than the contents of the Question Box would indicate.

That vastly many reading and educated non-Catholics are undoubtedly influenced by advanced and rationalistic thought is obvious from the fact that their demands are supplied by the most cultured and generously paid pulpits; by the fact that so large a portion of our better classes are affiliated with no Church at all, or go confessedly for the mental stimulation of listening to another man's views of a question, or for the sentimental nourishing of the hungry religious instinct.

Only yesterday the bright young reporter sent out here to write up our meeting, told me, not flippantly, that he feared he was a pagan. Another reporter, this morning told me, and without my asking him, that he believed in God, but did not understand or believe in the divinity of Christ, and belonged to no Church. His father had been a Methodist, his grandfathers were Catholic. What an endless procession of bright young men, students and business and professional men, whom we meet on the trains and everywhere, are such reverent agnostics! They admit that there is a more satisfying inspiration in a church steeple than in a skyscraper, but their religious education, failing to keep pace with their secular development, was left behind, and the "theology" of the boy of ten is found inadequate to sustain the man of thirty.

It has been said that we can safely neglect the half-dozen unbelievers to the audience to give our attention to the stray Christians whose conversions are more probable and easy. Alternate series of lectures for the two different classes might be a safer solution of the problem, especially in cities where there are many of each.

Men whose faith must be built up from the bottom are likely to let slip a series of lectures whose subjects seem to assume the very things they want proved. A lecture on "Saints' Worship," or "The Blessed Virgin," or "Prayers for the Dead," or "The Sacramental System," will hardly appeal to the man whose questions are: "Who was Christ that we must believe Him?" "Can we trust the Bible?" "Is Science and Religion in Conflict?" "What is Christianity?" "What the need of organized Religion?" "Is there a Revelation of God's will except through reason and nature?" or yet "Is there a further Life for the Individual?" "Is there a Personal God apart from Universal Life and Law?" A popular and convincing response to these fundamental questions, at the proper place and time, might bring us into touch also with the children of God whom the breaking up of dogmatic religion has left without the light of faith.

Cheered by the presence of God, I will do at the moment, without anxiety, according to the strength which He shall give me, the work that His Providence assigns me. I will leave the rest; it is not my affair.

THE CARDINAL ON PURGATORY.

COMMON SENSE, SAYS HIS EMINENCE, DEMANDS MIDDLE PLACE OF EXPIATION.

Preaching his monthly sermon in the Cathedral in Baltimore on Sunday last, Cardinal Gibbons took as his text St. John v., 25-29. He said in part: "The Catholic Church teaches that besides a place of eternal torments for the wicked and of everlasting rest for the middle state of temporary punishment allotted for those who have died in venial sin or who have not satisfied the justice of God for sins already forgiven. She also teaches that, although the souls consigned to this intermediate state, commonly called purgatory, cannot help themselves, they may be aided by the suffrages of the faithful on earth. The existence of purgatory naturally implies the correlative dogma of the utility of praying for the dead; for the souls consigned to this middle state have not reached the term of their journey. They are still exiles from heaven and fit subjects for Divine clemency.

A CONSOLING DOCTRINE.

"I do not know of any doctrine of the Catholic religion that is more consoling to the human heart than the article which teaches the efficacy of prayers for the faithful departed. It robs death of its sting. It reconciles us to our loss. It keeps us in touch with the living dead, as correspondence keeps us in touch with the absent living. It preserves their memory fresh and green in our hearts.

"It gives us that keen satisfaction which springs from the consciousness that we are helping the loved ones who have gone before us; that we are alleviating their pains, shortening the term of their exile and hastening their entrance into Paradise, their true country."

"It familiarizes us with the existence of a life beyond the grave; it inspires us with the hope of being one day reunited with those whom we cherished on earth and of dwelling with them in that blessed home where there is no separation or sorrow or death, but everlasting peace and rest in the kingdom of our common Father.

"It is a doctrine plainly contained in the Old Testament and piously practiced by the Hebrew people. At the close of an engagement which Judas Maccabeus had with the enemy he ordered prayers and sacrifices to be offered up for his slain comrades. 'And making a gathering he sent 12,000 drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. For, if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.' * * * It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins."

STUMBLING BLOCK TO REFORMERS.

"These words are so forcible that no comment of mine could render them clearer. This passage proved a great stumbling block to the reformers. Finding that they could not by an evasion weaken the force of the text they impudently threw overboard the books of Maccabeus, like a man who assassinates a hostile witness. They pretended that the two books of Maccabees were apocryphal. And yet they have precisely the same authority as the Gospels of the St. Matthew or any other portion of the Bible, for the canonically portion of the Holy Scriptures rests solely on the authority of the Catholic Church, which proclaimed them inspired.

"But even admitting, for the sake of argument, that the books of Maccabees were not entitled to be ranked among the canonical books of Holy Scripture, no one, at least, has ever denied that they are truthful historical monuments and as such that they serve to demonstrate that it was a prevailing practice among the Hebrew people, as it is with us, to offer up prayers and sacrifices for the dead.

"When our Saviour, the Founder of the New Law, appeared on earth He came to lop off those exorcisements which had grown on the body of the Jewish ecclesiastical code and to purify the Jewish Church from those human traditions which in the course of time became like chaff mixed with the wheat of sound doctrine.

"But did our Lord at any time reprove the Jews for their belief in a middle state or for praying for the dead—a practice which, to His knowledge, prevailed among the people? Never. On the contrary, more than once both He and the Apostles of the Gentiles insinuate the doctrine of purgatory.

QUOTING OTHER AUTHORITIES.

"Our Saviour says: 'Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him. But he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come.' When our Saviour declares that a sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven in the next life He evidently leaves us to infer that there are some sins which will be pardoned in the life to come.

"St. Ambrose, fourth century, on the death of the Emperors Gratian and Valentinian, says: 'Blessed shall both of you be (Gratian and Valentinian) if my prayers can avail anything. No day shall pass you over in silence. No prayer of mine shall omit to honor you. No night shall hurry by without bestowing on you a mention in my prayers. In every one of the oblations will I remember you.' On the death of the Emperor Theodosius he offers the following prayer: 'Give perfect rest to Thy servant Theodosius, that rest

which Thou hast prepared for Thy saints. May his soul return thither whence it descended, where it cannot feel the sting of death * * * I loved him, and therefore will I follow him, even unto the land of the living. Nor will I leave him until, by tears and prayers, I shall lead him * * * unto the holy mountains of the Lord, where is life enduring, where corruption is not, nor sighing nor mourning.'

"St. Augustine, who lived in the beginning of the fifth century, relates that when his mother was at the point of death she made this last request of him: 'Lay this body anywhere; let not the care of it in any way disturb you. This only I request of you, that you would remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you be.'

THE LIFE AFTER DEATH.

"If a brother leaves you to cross the broad Atlantic religion and affection prompt you to pray for him during his absence. And if the same brother crosses the narrow sea of death to pass to the shores of eternity, why not pray for him then also? When he crosses the Atlantic his soul, imprisoned in the flesh, is absent from you; when he passes the sea of death his soul, released from the flesh, has gone from you. What difference does this make with regard to the duty of your intercession? For what is death? A mere separation of body and soul. The body, indeed, dies, but the soul 'lives and moves and has its being.' It continues after death, as before, to think, to remember, to love. And do not God's dominion and mercy extend over that soul beyond the grave as well as this side of it? Who shall place limits to God's empire and say to Him: 'Thus far Thou shalt go and no farther?' Two thousand years after Abraham's death our Lord said: 'I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.'

"If then, it is profitable for you to pray for your brother in the flesh, why should it be useless for you to pray for him out of the flesh? For while he was living you prayed not for his body, but for his soul.

MIDDLE PLACE DEMANDED.

"If this brother of yours dies with some slight stains upon his soul—a sin of impatience, for instance, or an idle word—is he fit to enter heaven with these blemishes upon his soul? No; the sanctity of God forbids it, for 'nothing defiled shall enter the kingdom of heaven.' Will you consign him, for these minor transgressions, to eternal torments with adulterers and murderers? No; the justice and mercy of God forbid it. Therefore your common sense demands a middle place of expiation for the transgressions of the soul before it is worthy of enjoying the companionship of God and His saints.

"God will render to every man according to his works; to the pure and unspiced, everlasting bliss; to the reprobate, eternal damnation; to souls stained with minor faults, a place of temporary purgation.

"I have seen a devoted daughter minister with tender solicitude at the sick bed of a fond parent. Many an anxious day and sleepless night did she watch at his bedside. She moistened the parched lips and cooled the fevered brow and raised the drooping head on its pillow. Every change in her patient for better or worse brought a corresponding sunshine or gloom to her heart. It was filial love that prompted all this. Her father died and she followed his remains to the grave. Though not a Catholic, standing by the bier, she burst those chains which a cruel religious prejudice had wrought around her heart, and, rising superior to her sect, she cried out: 'Lord, have mercy on his soul!' It was the voice of nature and of religion.

CONSOLATION OF CATHOLICISM.

"Oh, far from us a religion which would decree an eternal divorce between the living and the dead! How consoling it is to the Catholic to think that in praying thus for his departed friend his prayers are not in violation of, but in accordance with, the voice of the Church and that as, like Augustine, he watches at the pillow of a dying mother, so, like Augustine, he can continue the same office of piety for her soul after she is dead by praying for her! How cheering the reflection that the golden link of prayer unites you still to those who fell asleep in the Lord, that you can still speak to them and pray for them!

"Tennyson grasps the Catholic feeling when he makes his hero, whose course is run, thus address his surviving comrade, Sir Bedivere: 'I have lived my life, and that which I have done I have done within Himself make pure; but if thou shouldst never see my face again—Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer.'

"Oh! it is this thought that robs death of its sting and makes the separation of friends endurable. If your departed friend need not your prayers they are not lost, but, like the rain absorbed by the sun and descending in fruitful showers on our earth, will be gathered by the sun and will fall in refreshing showers of grace upon your head. Can you upon the running waters that long time thou shalt find it again!

"When we ourselves are passing through a cloud, when we feel so alone and deserted, when we bear the stinging accusation in silence, or do not attempt any justification of ourselves lest we hurt others, there is a quiet consciousness of peace and rest, at first incomprehensible. The explanation is this—that we are drawn nearer to God as the ties binding us with ignorant devotion to others are broken.