



THE HONORABLE THOMAS COFFEY, LL.D.  
LATE OF THE SENATE OF CANADA

**The Catholic Record**

Publisher and Proprietor—Thomas Coffey, LL.D.

LONDON, SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 1914

**THE LATE SENATOR COFFEY**

Many thousands throughout the length and breadth of Canada and beyond its boundaries will feel a keen sense of personal bereavement in the death of the Hon. Thomas Coffey. For thirty-five years the CATHOLIC RECORD has been in every sense his paper. He was not merely its publisher but its informing and guiding spirit. His own gentle yet staunchly Catholic personality pervaded the RECORD from those early uncertain days when its very existence depended upon his abiding faith, his never failing courage and his unwavering tenacity of purpose. Then came success unquestioned. Instinctively Catholic always, gentlemanly, courteous and cultured, he remained steadfastly loyal to the high aim that informed his life-work. Financial success came unthought and was regarded as an incidental. His work was to provide a Catholic journal. No other consideration weighed with him. An ever-widening circulation showed the appreciation of the singleness of purpose of the Editor and Publisher of the CATHOLIC RECORD, and placed the veteran journalist in close and sympathetic touch with the Catholics of Canada. His rare qualities thus enlightened by ripe experience, humanly speaking, to make his loss irreparable. However, Senator Coffey had passed the allotted span of three score and ten; may we not hope that his life-work was in the sight of God well and nobly accomplished? The Vicar of Jesus Christ, whose vision from the watch towers of Israel sweeps the world, has proclaimed most insistently that amongst the greatest needs of God's Church is a loyal and enlightened Catholic press. Then if the noble life-work of Thomas Coffey is accomplished the CATHOLIC RECORD is established on a permanent basis and will continue its mission, ever treasuring as a precious legacy the spirit infused into it by him who under God's blessing created its present vast field of usefulness.

If so the CATHOLIC RECORD will remain a noble monument to a noble life. While perpetuating his memory on earth it will be a pledge of the reward in heaven promised to the faithful servant. Dead he will still speak, and his message to all will be one of hope and courage, of fidelity and loyal service.

Every reader, young and old, will consider it a duty and a privilege to join in the Church's prayer for the

soul of him whose personality made the CATHOLIC RECORD enter as an intimate and cherished friend into nearly thirty thousand Catholic homes.

"Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord! and let perpetual light shine upon him."

**A TRUE IRISHMAN**

The twelfth of August, 1843, Thomas Coffey saw the light of day in Castleconnell, Tipperary, Ireland. Though he left the old land with his parents Patrick Coffey and Ellen O'Keefe and arrived in Canada on June 1st, 1852, he ever retained a true and warm-hearted love for the land of his birth. His earliest recollections enshrined the accounts of the great victory of his countrymen in securing Catholic Emancipation just fourteen years before his birth; but the lad of nine years who left Ireland had grown into the young man of twenty-six, had married and established his home in the land of his adoption before the land of his birth was relieved from the incubus of supporting an alien church.

When we realize that the life span of Senator Coffey covered so many events that are but of historic interest to most of us now living it is not surprising that his loyalty to Ireland, and his sympathy with her struggle for freedom were deep and abiding. An instance of how he translated his sympathy into intelligent service will be of interest. The heat and bitterness of the Home Rule discussion during the last two years are well known. A mischievous pamphlet by Robert Sellar, "Ulster and Home Rule—a Canadian Parallel" was widely circulated. Then came the peculiarly inept argument of Bonar Law drawn from Canadian conditions. "How would the Catholics of Quebec like to be under the Protestants of Ontario, or the Protestants of Ontario under the Catholics of Quebec?"

Senator Coffey at once set to work to provide an effective answer. He appealed to eminent Quebec Protestants with whom he was on terms of personal intimacy and amongst others the Honourable Sydney Fisher.

Referring to Bonar Law's absurd analogy Mr. Fisher wrote to Senator Coffey:

"I need not point out to you what a misleading suggestion this is. There is no analogy between it and the condition of Ulster and the rest of Ireland. If there is any example in Canada for the situation in Ireland to day it would be that of the Protestant English-speaking minority in the Province of Quebec. Ireland is a local entity, just as in our confederation Quebec is. A vast majority of the people in Ireland are Roman Catholics; so they

are in Quebec. There is the Protestant minority in each case, probably the richest commercial part of the community in each case, paying the bulk of the taxes, having less influence numerically in any local legislation.

"Judging from this analogy our experience in Quebec is emphatic that Ulster need fear no oppression. . . ."

"From the time of Confederation up to the present day the Protestant minority of Quebec have had not the slightest reason of complaint, not one single instance of invasion of their rights has occurred. No occasion has arisen for them to appeal to the Federal Government to veto any action of the local legislature on any such ground. . . ."

"In the Province of Quebec we have had an additional difficulty of language, most of the Catholics being French-speaking and nearly all the Protestant English speaking. This difficulty does not present itself in Ireland. With it, however, and all the fears expressed at Confederation, no difficulty has arisen. The Roman Catholic French majority has shown itself very generous. . . ."

"To my mind no more perfect analogy could be cited for the condition in Ireland, and it is an absolute proof that Ulster need not be afraid. I had some thought of writing on these lines to the Times in reply to Mr. Bonar Law's analogy drawn from Canadian affairs. I did not do so, because I think, in a general way, it is unwise that Canadians should enter into a discussion of the local political affairs of the United Kingdom. If, however, you find that misrepresentations are being circulated in Ireland as to the condition of affairs in Canada, you are at liberty to use what I have here written in any way that may best correct these misrepresentations and to use my name as the author."

Needless to say Irishmen at home appreciated the value and effectiveness of first-hand Canadian testimony on Canadian conditions. The letters of the Hon. Mr. Fisher and others were published by the Irish Press Agency in Leaflet No. 55. And wherever the Canadian analogy argument was pressed into service by anti-Home-Rulers it was promptly met by the documents placed in the hands of his countrymen by Senator Coffey.

The quiet, unobtrusive but singularly effective service rendered on this as on many another occasion is characteristic of the Irish patriotism of Thomas Coffey.

**THE KINDLY HEART**

Seventy-one years ago Thomas Coffey was born at Castle Connell, Co. Limerick, Ireland. Sixty-six years later a lonely student at St. Michael's College was enduring all the bitterness of recent exile from the same fair spot "where the river Shannon flows" when one evening he heard with much surprise that there was a visitor to see him. Utterly unacquainted in the city, the identity of the caller was a complete mys-

tery to him. He descended to the parlor and there met Senator Coffey for the first time. Mr. Coffey was on his way to the capital, but hearing that an Irish cousin had arrived at St. Michael's he broke his journey at Toronto to call upon him.

Some months later the same Irish cousin was ordained to the holy priesthood in St. Peter's Cathedral, Peterborough, by the late beloved and sainted Bishop O'Connor, and the first to kneel for the young priest's blessing was Senator Coffey. He was not feeling very well at the time, and the journey from London to Peterborough was long and arduous, but at home in Ireland were hearts that would be gladdened by the knowledge that, even in the land of the stranger, there was at least one among the crowd of witnesses to the ordination who was of kin to their priestly son. These two incidents may appear trivial, but they are characteristic of Thomas Coffey, the man.

It is for other pens to write of Senator Coffey as Citizen, Senator and Journalist. In all three capacities his name is honored throughout this province and the Dominion. But it is to his wonderful gift of sympathetic human kindness as illustrated by the above incidents, that we would pay humble tribute. The cares of his extensive business, the duties of his high position, left his heart as fresh as the waters of his native Shannon. His spirit never grew old. The hair was white above the noble forehead, but the soul was as young as when he heard the lilt of the thrush and the blackbird amid the hedgerows of Limerick.

True Canadian as he was he never forgot the motherland over the waters. His love for Ireland grew with the passing years, and it was his delight to recall the memories of olden days, the while he made the minutest enquiries about present-day conditions, places and persons. He was an enthusiastic believer in the cause of Home Rule, and advocated this debt of justice to Ireland in the pages of the RECORD. Many a time he expressed the wish to be in Dublin for the re-opening of the new Irish Parliament. Like many another stalwart this privilege has been denied him, but before he passed to the great beyond he had the pleasure of knowing that the cause had triumphed.

In the sweet month of the Sacred Heart his great, big, generous heart was stilled in death. The Church that he loved and the country that he served pay tribute to his memory. Nor will the Ireland of his affectionate memory deny him a requiescat.

COLUMBA.

**GLEANEER'S APPRECIATION**

In the passing of Senator Coffey Catholic journalism in Canada has lost a prudent, zealous friend and worthy representative. While a writer of no mean ability himself, his forte lay rather in careful scrutiny of editorial comment and judicious selection of instructive matter from various sources. This made the RECORD, what it has been for generations, a source of enlightenment and trusted guide in all matters pertaining to faith and practice. For over a third of a century it has been a perpetual mission especially in the small towns and country parishes of Ontario and the Eastern Provinces. Wherever it has been a constant and welcome visitor to the home, there we find a virile, enlightened faith. In this connection I recall an old neighbor, who invariably in the course of his conversation remarked: "I see by the CATHOLIC RECORD". . . . Needless to say he was able to give a reason for the faith that was in him and that he had an enthusiastic love for his religion, for he knew its history. Unfortunately the type is becoming rare and giving place to the loud applauder of eloquent panegyrics, whose ardor soon cools, for it is not sustained by the habit of good reading and personal study.

But perhaps this is sarcastic, and sarcasm would be out of place in connection with the memory of a man who never "cracked the satiric thong." I have had occasion to know that he often had provocation, but he always chose to keep the even tenor of his way and wait for time to vindicate him. Time has indeed vindicated him. If the RECORD holds to day the place that it occupies among Catholic journals and yields the influence that it does, even outside the fold, it is due to its impersonal character, to its dignity as becomes the servant of that Church that is the greatest school of reverence in the world and to the

truly Christian, charitable spirit that breathes from its pages. These qualities have been but the outward expression of the faith, humility and noble nature of the man, who has so long directed its destinies. "Those who instruct others unto justice," says Holy Writ, "shall shine as stars for all eternity," and surely the late Senator Coffey deserves to be numbered among them.

THE GLEANEER.

**CHURCH UNION**

"Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom thou hast given me; that they may be one, as we also are."

"And as Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. . . ."

"And not for them only do I pray but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me;

"That they all may be one as Thou Father in Me, and I in Thee;

"That they all may be one in us that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

To some it may appear that the effort of several Protestant denominations to effect organic union amongst themselves is a matter of indifference to Catholics. It is far from such to thoughtful Catholics. We glory in the unity of God's visible Church on earth. We deplore sincerely a divided Christianity outside the Church.

Christ prayed for unity—a strikingly visible unity which should convince the world of His own divine mission: "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Instead of a unity that should irresistibly draw the world to faith in Christ's mission we see the endless sects of a divided Christianity driving men to infidelity.

That Protestantism begins to realize the evils of division is in itself a deeply significant and hopeful sign. It may indeed be the spirit of God moving over the waters. There is no question of the good faith of sincere Protestants, nor is there question of their love for Jesus Christ. If organic union of several of their churches will make for more effective work in leading their own people to be more religious according to their lights, if it will conduce to the preservation of their hold on the Christian truths and ideals they now possess, Catholics can feel nothing but joy in its accomplishment.

The very strenuous opposition of a strong minority at the recent Presbyterian assembly at Woodstock may well beget a doubt as to the wisdom of attempting a union that entails a sacrifice of all now goes to make up the *esprit de corps* of existing denominations. Wilfrid Ward pointed out that no denomination with any force in it is content with professing the common measure of Christian beliefs. Each holds them in its own way, with the associations and in the forms to which its history has given birth. Rightly or wrongly, on true lines, or on lines only partly true, or in false lines. Each has developed into an organic system with a distinctive character. On this depends its *esprit de corps*. "In point of fact, the very beliefs held in common have their edge and force in individual believers as parts of the living systems in which they are found." Thus undenominationalism necessarily lacks vitality and effectiveness. It may be that those who most bitterly oppose organic union instinctively feel that the force and effectiveness of the old historic denomination will be lost in a new organization which, lacking such inspiration, will be comparatively weak and lifeless.

It would seem to an outsider that if there be sufficient good-will and mutual esteem to make amalgamation at all possible it should not be nearly so difficult to obviate the loss of misdirected energy caused by overlapping; and it is just this overlapping, this multiplicity of weak churches that makes Union appeal to the average Protestant.

Some strong advocates of Union indulge in the unthinking gibe at creed. There must be some creed. Reduce it to its simplest form, belief in God. This creed would be comprehensive enough to include Jews and Mahomedans. But such a collection of theists would probably be ineffective apostles. Add to this creed belief in Jesus Christ, as Divine Redeemer and Mediator between God and man, and you limit membership in the new organization to Christians. But would this common Christian belief prove to a miscellaneous aggregation

life and zeal, force and effectiveness? One can hardly help sympathizing with Rev. Mr. Brown's view that such a mechanical and unnatural union would never bring about the ends which its advocates were seeking. And this without aspersing the purity of motive of the Unionists.

Our belief is that Union will be effected in this and in many other cases; that it will fail utterly as all attempts at Unity, outside the divine plan which makes Peter's successor the centre of Unity, must fail. But we regard it all as the working out of the plan of divine Providence, which will ultimately lead all sincerely Christian souls into the full fruition of Christ's prayer "that they all may be one that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

**OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP**

The Redemptorist Fathers of St. Patrick's Church, London East, will formally erect the miraculous picture of our Lady of Perpetual Help on Sunday, June 21st. His Lordship will preside at the ceremony which will take place at 10:00 o'clock. The Fathers are distributing gratis a little book which gives in detail a history of this wonderful picture to which so many miracles have been attributed. Devout clients of Our Lady will consider it a privilege to assist at this ceremony which will no doubt be the occasion of increasing the beautiful devotion to the Mother of God.

**CATHOLIC FORBEARANCE**

Catholics throughout the world may well be proud of the conduct of their Irish co-religionists in their hour of victory. After long years of sacrifice, after weary decades of disappointed hopes, one would naturally expect that the victorious crowning of their struggle would be celebrated with unbounded enthusiasm. When, moreover, one remembers the terrible provocation to which they have been subjected by Carson, the Covenanters, and the lying Tory agents in Great Britain, their marvellous self-restraint is all the more praiseworthy. Of course the people demonstrated their joy at the passing of the infamous Union, but in the excitement of that glad hour not a word was said that could give offence to that section of their fellow-countrymen to whom Home Rule meant defeat.

Northern Nationalists are especially to be complimented upon their truly Irish and Christian forbearance. As everyone knows, the Unionist counties have ever been notoriously unjust in their treatment of the Catholic and Nationalist minority. The streets of Belfast have run with the blood of defenceless Catholic women and girls. The northern factories have witnessed scenes that would disgrace a mob of naked savages. Ascendancy, in its most bigoted form, lorded it over the despised Papist. The passing of the Home Rule Bill marked the passing of this Ascendancy, and heralded an era of equal rights for Catholic and Protestant. The temptation was strong to bring this fact home to the denizens of Sandy Row. But in that hour the victors only remembered that their bigoted opponents were brother Irishmen, and therefore restrained themselves from adding to the bitterness of defeat.

"We do not regard our victory in the light of a triumph over any section of our fellow-countrymen," declared the Irish leader. This has been the keynote of his action throughout the long drawn struggle. Never did a single expression of bitterness against his opponents cross his lips. Slander and abuse was directed at his head, but throughout it all he carried himself as a Christian gentleman and an Irish patriot. "Ulster disowns Ireland," he said at Waterford, "but Ireland will not disown Ulster." Speaking at Reading, Sir John Simon, English attorney-general, paid public tribute to Mr. Redmond's magnanimity. And Mr. Birrell, Irish secretary, declared that the forbearance of Ulster Nationalists was unequalled in history. And it is to a people such as this that Sir Edward Carson is unwilling to trust the lives and liberties of the gentle lambs of Sandy Row.

In striking contrast to the un-Christian diatribes of the responsible heads of Irish Protestantism is this appeal by the Catholic Bishop of Derry, read in the churches of his diocese on the Sunday preceding the passage of the Home Rule Bill. "Unless something very unexpected happens the Home Rule Bill

will have passed its third reading on next Tuesday, 26th inst. Owing to the keen and deep interest taken by our people in what they consider an event fraught with untold good for Ireland it is possible that they might be inclined to indulge in jubilation, because the strain of uncertainty has passed and the fulfillment of their long cherished hopes is so near realization. They should not, however, forget that there are others who hold different opinions in regard to the recent political situation, and that it would be highly reprehensible for them to knowingly give cause for offence by outward demonstrations of joy that can serve no good purpose, but may carry in their train much evil. While perfectly justified in striving manfully within the law for the attainment of their rights, there could be no justification for doing anything that could create ill-feeling, or develop into disturbance and riot. You will be good enough to convey to the Catholic people at all the Masses my urgent request that they abstain from everything during the coming week that, though harmless in itself, could be construed as an act of provocation by any member of the community."

Success has never found the Irish people tyrannical. History is witness that they have ever borne themselves magnanimously in the moment of victory. One historic instance may be cited. Bedell, a Protestant Bishop and determined opponent of the Irish Confederates, died in the midst of hostilities in 1641. The Irish "enemy" buried him with all military honors, fired a salute above his grave, and their leader paid eloquent tribute to his character by declaring that after his death he only wished his soul would be with that of Bedell. As everyone knows Irish Catholics refrained from persecution during the brief reign of Mary, and the first Act of the Patriot Parliament of 1689 was a bill guaranteeing liberty of worship and conscience. It is safe to prophecy that under Home Rule Protestant Irishmen will be the spoiled pets of the national government, for the Irish Catholic detests the very suspicion of intolerance, and is usually ready to go out of his way to make it clear that he is actuated by no such motive.

COLUMBA.

**NOTES AND COMMENTS**

A significant tribute to the ancient character of prayers for the dead and to their usage in the Synagogue before the coming of Christ was forthcoming as a result of the founding of the Empress of Ireland. As announced in the daily papers, special services embracing prayers for the victims of the great disaster in the St. Lawrence were held in the Jewish synagogues in the several cities of Canada. In the University Avenue synagogue, Toronto, we are told, on the Jewish feast of Shevuot, a special service was held for this purpose, great stress being laid upon their utility and necessity for the welfare of those who had thus summarily been called to their account. This was but conforming to the traditional belief and practice of the Jews from the earliest ages. From such a source is voiced anew a rebuke to the "reforming" zealots, who in the dark days of the sixteenth century essayed to trample out of existence one of the truest instincts of the human heart.

THAT THE Church is making substantial progress in the Orient is evidenced by the constant accession to her ranks from the schismatic bodies of ecclesiastics of name and position amongst them. Among recent examples (that is, within the past twelve months) are Mar Halli, Jacobite (Monophysite) Archbishop of Jerusalem, and Mar Abraham David, Archbishop of Apomea, who were reconciled to the Church by the Latin Patriarch of Antioch. The conversion of His Beatitude, Msgr. Abdul Messiah, Jacobite Patriarch, was consummated at the same time. The latter, previous to his reception, sent a letter to His Holiness, Pius X, confirming his profession of faith and his obedience to the Supreme Head of the Church. All three prelates made a preparatory retreat under the direction of a Jesuit missionary, Father Sulhani, who is of Syrian origin. Conversions of this character must have a far-reaching effect upon the various schismatical churches of the East.

THAT THE Presbyterian church of Canada (not, we are persuaded, the Presbyterian rank and file) is still unrepentant of the duplicity and dishonesty of its dealings with the Ruthenians is evident from the Presbyterian's (the official organ) account of the opening of a new mission hall in Toronto a few weeks ago. Relating how so many of these people