

THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

The Catholic Record.

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LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.

Apostolic Delegation.
Ottawa, June 18th, 1905.
To the Editor of THE CATHOLIC RECORD,
London, Ont.

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. It strenuously defends Catholic principles and rights, and stands firmly by the teachings and authority of the Church, at the same time promoting the best interests of the country.

Following these lines it has done a great deal of good for the welfare of religion and country, and it will do more and more, as its wholesome influence reaches more Catholic homes.

I therefore, earnestly recommend it to Catholic families.
With my blessing on your work, and best wishes for its continued success,
Yours very sincerely in Christ,
DONATUS, Archbishop of Ephesus,
Apostolic Delegate.

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA,
Ottawa, Canada, March 7th, 1906.
To the Editor of THE CATHOLIC RECORD,
London, Ont.

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.
The matter and form are both good; and a truly Catholic spirit pervades the whole.
Therefore, with pleasure, I can recommend it to the faithful.
Blessing you and wishing you success,
Believe me to remain,
Yours faithfully in Jesus Christ,
J. D. FALCONIO, Arch. of Larissa,
Apostolic Delegate.

LONDON, SATURDAY, JAN. 27, 1906.

SUPERNATURAL CHRISTIANITY.

In the January number of The Catholic World the Rev. William Sullivan, C. S. P., gives a few lessons to those who may have been impressed by Mr. W. H. Mallock's recent article on the naturalness of Christianity. Christianity, argues Mr. Mallock, regarded under one of these aspects, must necessarily present itself even to the most orthodox Christian as a purely natural religion, competing with many others, and not generically distinguishable so far as its origins are concerned from the religions of Zoroaster, of Gautama, of the new Platonists or of Mahomet, to which every element of the supernatural is by Christians indignantly denied.

This method of attack—to expose the resemblances between Christianity and other religions with a view of disparaging the Christian claim of unique character and supernatural origin—has been in favor with infidels from the time of Celsus.

Rev. Father Sullivan contends that the pagan religions which flourished for a while and then disappeared, without leaving an enduring impress upon human character, are not the same level as Christianity, which reorganized the chaotic society of paganism on a new basis. The assertions that pagan religions exhibit as much of divine purpose as Christianity is examined in the light of history. Its Founder gathered about Him twelve Hebrews and told them to convert the world. He died on a cross. And the twelve chosen ones, armed with nothing but a cross, succeeded in implanting in the world the faith which appears to the throne of God the hopes and prayers of millions. Christ was scarcely dead when His cross was enshrined in the hearts of many. Men and women die for Him, and for Him also do mothers bid their children to flinch not from torture. Christ, says Pascal, wished to be loved; he has been loved; he is God.

Father Sullivan calls attention to the fact that certain circumstances and consequences of Christianity's survival drive us to the supernatural for not only a reasonable, but in any sense an adequate explanation. Christ steps forth upon the scene of the world's history from the door of a carpenter shop. Why should He have conquered the civilized world. A Jew, and to all appearance with no equipment of deep learning, yet He has won the hearts of men of all races.

How explain that Christ suffered not from the extravagant claims made for Him by His first disciples. Yet He Who died in infancy, a malefactor, is acknowledged by millions as the Light of the World, the Saviour of men, the Image of the Father, and again, how, if our judgment have a purely natural basis, can we explain that, despite the progress since Calvary, He has not dimmed?

The writer also might have referred

to the hatred which has tracked Christ across the centuries. How explain it, that phenomenon? Why should men still pursue with relentless rage Him Who was hooted centuries ago by a mob? Mankind has but contempt for the criminals—the tyrants and persecutors of the past—but for Christ some humans beings reserve unapproachable hatred. Why, if not God?

Let our Lord be studied fairly, says Father Sullivan, let the course of his influence be impartially traced in the ideals and institutions of Christian history; and it will be seen not only that He is supreme among men but that human standards fail when applied to Him, and human calculations are baffled in measuring Him: for the reason that He is the divine Teacher of ultimate truth, of absolute goodness, and of final salvation.

HOME RULE IN BOSTON.

Mr. Chas. Devlin, M. P. for Galway, met with unbounded success at a recent Home Rule meeting in Boston. The Boston Daily Globe states that since the days of the old Land League no such enthusiasm in favor of Home Rule has been seen in that great city. The collection taken up was a very large one, showing the practical interest which the Irish people of Boston take in the welfare of their countrymen in the old land. We are not surprised at Mr. Devlin's great success, for the reason that he is one of a family who have in Canada always reflected the very greatest honor on the land of their ancestors. Besides this he has rare oratorical powers. As a platform speaker he is earnest, convincing and fluent. Canadians have reason to be proud of Blake and Devlin. May their days be lengthy and may the winter of their lives be spent in a magnificent Irish parliament, built on the site where the Bank of Ireland now stands in Dublin; that historic spot where a century ago was heard speeches that will be read with interest and pleasure as long as the English language is spoken.

SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION.

Our readers in general are aware that during the last half century High churchism has made great progress in the church of England, and with it the practice of what is called "Sacramental Confession" is now a very common practice, though previously to the time we have indicated it was scarcely if at all known in that church.

The Right Rev. Edward T. Churton, formerly Bishop of Nassau, the Anglican church, issued toward the close of last year a volume "on the use of Penitence" in which he deals on the manner in which a penitent should prepare himself for sacramental confession, and a reviewer writing for the Church Times, of London, a High church organ, had this to say about the book:

"It says much for the gentle persistence with which the truth has made its way, that such a book as this from the pen of a Bishop should be possible. Fifty, forty, thirty years ago it would have roused the Protestant mind to fury. To-day it is taken as a matter of course."

The reviewer declares that by this book, "Bishop Churton has laid ascetic theology in England under a great debt."

He adds, however, that the Bishop does not dwell sufficiently on the sacramental grace of absolution. . . . Every one who goes to confession knows the strength which is received in absolution to overcome one's besetting sins."

This sort of language which insists upon the necessity of confession and of priestly absolution is common at the present day, but, as the reviewer indicates, it was not heard fifty forty and hardly ever even thirty years ago among members of the church of England, and the wonderful change shows us how greatly that church has changed within a remarkably short time.

Concerning the frequency of confession, the Bishop says: "Although our English Prayer Book has determined nothing on the subject, its tone may be taken as in favor of long intervals between the times of coming."

We believe the Bishop has hit the target in this remark. Anglicans of Low church or so called Evangelical sentiment are very much opposed to confession at all, and for the most part we have ourselves found that they are not even aware that the Book of Common Prayer teaches positively both the utility of confession and the efficacy of priestly absolution.

1. In the ordination or "Ordering of Priests" the Bishop is directed to say:

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained, etc."

2. In the form of administering Communion the minister is ordered in the Sunday or holy day preceding to announce:

"If there be any of you who by this means (already mentioned) of quiet

his own conscience, but require further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's Word and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution together with ghostly counsel and advice, etc."

3. When visiting the sick, the minister is directed:

"Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort."

The form of absolution to be here used does not differ substantially from that employed by a Catholic priest. It is clear, therefore, from all these passages that it is the doctrine of the church of England, and not of a mere party in that church, that the priests have the power and authority to forgive sins, and, if this be the case, it is a power which ought to be used whenever a sinner is truly penitent and makes an humble confession of his sins, and not merely "at long intervals," as Bishop Churton states.

It will be seen from this that the Evangelicals, who claim to be the exponents of the true Protestantism of the church of England, are entirely astray on this point.

ROMAN CORRESPONDENTS TO THE PRESS.

The boldness of newspaper liars who send sensational false news from Rome appears to be growing greater as time wears on. There was a time when they were under some restraint, being under the consciousness that when a sufficient time should elapse their stories would certainly be proved to be false, a contingency which might not be pleasant for them; but now they do not seem to be restrained even by this consciousness, and lies regarding the administration of the Catholic church are wired to this continent without any restraining influence. It would seem that the press are glad to have any kind of sensational items having reference to the church, provided only that it can be construed directly or indirectly as a reproach.

Such a lie as this was cabled to the New York World early in December, being founded professedly upon a statement of the Vatican correspondent of the Stampa, a Turin paper.

The statement was to the effect that when Mgr. Thomas S. Byrne, Bishop of Nashville, Tennessee, was received in private audience by the Pope, the Holy Father spoke very strongly against certain serious abuses which are said to exist in the church in the United States, and which he was determined to suppress at any cost.

The Pope, it is said, disapproved of the custom allowed in many American dioceses to exact an entrance fee on Sundays and holidays from the people attending Mass in the churches. Such a practice, it was said, must be abolished, as it constitutes a hindrance to poor people attending the church.

We mentioned in our columns at the time the above appeared the whole statement of the World's correspondent; but we added that we did not believe in its truth, as there is no exclusion of poor people from the Catholic churches of America for want of the money to pay a small entrance fee.

There are city parishes where an entrance fee is paid for the reason that there is no other means of maintaining the churches where there is a constantly fluctuating population, but this fee is not exacted from any who are unable to pay it; and there is, besides, usually an extra Mass celebrated in such cases where no fee at all is exacted, so that even the poorest may have the means of assisting at Mass.

We stated, however, that if the Pope had really expressed himself as represented, and should issue any command on the subject, he should be obeyed.

But our prognostication on the matter has proved to be quite correct. Bishop Byrne has returned to his diocese, and he states that no such utterances as those attributed to Pope Pius X. were made to him, so that they are the mere creations of the brain of an anti-Catholic newspaper correspondent.

Other statements coming from the same correspondent in reference to the same interview with Bishop Byrne are equally without any foundation of truth. It was stated that the Pope said that American Bishops had surrounded themselves with more luxuries than even the Pope thought himself entitled to, and that he would take steps soon to put an end to these abuses, and in other respects to reform the church in the United States. It was added that he would send members of some of the religious orders as Apostolic visitors to investigate and report upon actual conditions, so that the needed reforms might be vigorously carried out.

All these stories are absolute fabrications, and our chief surprise is that any newspaper correspondent could have the brazenfacedness to concoct them.

Our readers will understand from these events that reports from Rome or other parts of Europe in regard to Catholic church matters, which are derogatory to the Catholic religion, should be regarded with suspicion, and even as false, until the truth of the matters related or referred to be ascertained by mail, which will necessarily require some time to elapse before a decisive judgment be passed upon them.

A THREATENED DESECRATION OF CHURCHES IN FRANCE.

A despatch from Paris of the 14th inst. states that the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris has addressed a circular letter to the priests of the city, declaring that he will not permit the tabernacles of the churches to be opened for the agents of the Government who are charged with making inventories of church goods. He instructs the clergy to declare on their words of honor as priests the number and value of the sacred vessels, but on no account to open the tabernacles.

"Nearly all the Bishops," the despatch adds, "including the most moderate of them, have issued letters similar to that of Cardinal Richier." The order issued recently by the Government to make an inventory of church goods is the immediate cause of this order given by the Bishops to the clergy, as it is understood that the directions given to the state officials give them the authority, so far as the State can confer it, to open and to rummage in the sacred tabernacles, in order to discover what sacred vessels are contained therein.

By the "most moderate Bishops" are here evidently understood those who are least unwilling to oppose the extreme measures which the Government is taking to oppress the church, as a sequel to the passing of the law separating church from State. Even these Bishops could not possibly tolerate this last horrible sacrilege attempted by the Government.

The despatch adds that the Government order to make an inventory of church goods is looked upon as a mistake by all parties in France, except the most violent of the anti-clericals, and that some believe it will precipitate a real conflict between church and State.

Considering the incomprehensible apathy which has been hitherto shown by the Catholic people of France in allowing an anti-Catholic and anti-Christian minority of the people to rule them, it is difficult to predict what may be the result of the present conditions. We should not be surprised if in many places there should be popular risings against the officials who attempt to desecrate the churches after the manner indicated by the monstrous order issued by the Government, but as matters must soon come to a head, we shall not attempt to predict what may happen under the circumstances.

We are still of the belief that if the Catholics of the nation were to be really stirred up to action at the polls, the infidel Government would be swept out of existence; but, from past experience, we cannot venture on the prediction that this result will soon come to pass.

THE ELKS.

We have received from W. W., a Catholic gentleman of Los Angeles, California, a letter objecting to our mention of the secret society of the Elks advertising a marriage on their picnic grounds. Our statement was made incidentally while refuting the charge of Mrs. Chisholm at the W. C. T. U. convention held in Hamilton in December, to the effect that Protestant ministers refused to celebrate the marriages of Gallician, Polish and German girls of thirteen or fourteen years of age in the Canadian Northwest, who had been sold to men against their will to be married, whereas the Catholic priests celebrated these marriages without raising any difficulty.

In the reference to the Elks we had only in view to prove the fact that Protestant ministers are not so very particular as regards the sacred character of marriage as are Catholic priests, and that Mrs. Chisholm's story is entirely a fabrication, as it proved to be. This was one of our refutations of Mrs. Chisholm's story.

The reference to the "Elks," incidental as it was, is true. We chanced to be in the city of Detroit when the marriage referred to was taking place, though we did witness it. It was nevertheless advertised largely in the papers some five or six years ago, and the picnic itself took place in the northern part of the city, lasting several days.

We may add to the above fact that during the last summer, on the occasion of the celebration of the Elk's jubilee, one of the attractions of the jubilee held at Benet Park, Detroit, was the christening or parody of the baptism of a baby, which was no less a desecration of a sacred Christian rite than was the marriage referred to above. The Elks are notable for such desecrations.

We sincerely regret that a Catholic

gentleman should so lightly regard the prohibitions of the church against secret societies, as to proclaim himself a member of such an association, when he must know that it stands condemned as one of the secret societies aimed at in the bulls of many Popes, including Gregory XVI., Pius IX. and Leo XIII. Loyalty to the Catholic church, which prohibits these societies, and to the Pope, should be of itself a sufficient reason why Catholics should keep aloof from them, under whatever guise they parade, or whatever name they assume.

THE PROGRESS OF PROTESTANTISM.

University statistics from Germany, of which a summary has been sent by cable despatch to the press, have revealed some facts which are as unexpected as they are significant.

There has been a remarkable increase in the number of students attending the twenty-one universities of the empire during the last decade. The total number of matriculated students in these institutions is now 42,360, whereas ten years ago there were 29,117. This is an increase of 45.5 per cent.

The University of Berlin has the largest total, the number there being 8,081. Bonn has 2,968, and Heidelberg 1,443.

The number studying law is 12,139 as compared with 4,975 a decade ago. This shows an increase of 141 per cent.

The most remarkable fact in connection with these figures is the decrease of students of Protestant theology, who have dwindled from 4,437 to 2,186, a decrease of 50.8 per cent, while the Catholic theological students have risen from 1,079 to 1,680, the increase being 55.7 per cent.

We do not interpret these figures as signifying that the number of Protestants in Germany has suffered a diminution, for they have undoubtedly increased almost, if not quite, in equal pace with the increase in population; but there is some general cause or causes for the anomalous fact, and it is our belief that the chief cause operating is the rapid decline of religious faith among Protestants in Germany. It is naturally to be expected that, where the doctrines of Christianity cease to be believed, the number of persons willing to devote themselves to teaching them will decrease in about the same ratio, unless they should be induced to take up a theological calling for the sake of the means afforded of earning a livelihood through that calling. We cannot suppose that so base a motive as this leads the majority of these young students to devote themselves to the ministry, and the only alternative we can conceive is the one we mention, the gradual loss of Christian faith.

We have not before us the latest statistics on this point in relation to the Protestant churches on this continent, but we have some statistics which come nearly to the present date. The Rev. W. H. Roberts, clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church of the United States, reported in 1901 that, for the year ending on May 1st of that year, out of 7,000 Presbyterian churches, 2,000 had no increase in membership, 4,919 had increases up to 50 members, while only 81 had a larger increase than 50.

Special reports were asked in regard to the causes of these increases, and 53 answers were returned, most of which were from the large cities. Twenty-seven attributed their increases to "continued effort," and 8 to "special revivals." In most of the remaining instances the new membership came from "the Sunday school." The progress of American Presbyterianism seems certainly not to keep pace with that of the nation.

In regard to Methodism, it was stated very enthusiastically by Mr. C. D. D. Thompson, editor of the North-Western Christian Advocate of Chicago, at a meeting of ministers held in New York a couple of years ago, that the denomination had gained a million and a half of converts during four years. The Rev. Dr. J. H. Buckley, editor of the Christian Advocate of New York, said that these figures were totally inaccurate. He asserted that actual statistics show that Methodism is declining, at least in the Eastern Conferences. He declared that it would be a grave mistake to take an optimistic view on this matter.

We are not prepared to decide the dispute between the different gentlemen who took part in it, but we are inclined to the belief that the statements of Rev. Mr. Buckley were based upon more accurate information and statistics. We believe that the same causes which are operating in Germany are at work in America, though not so great an extent.

It is but fair to say that the reports of the principal Protestant churches in Canada and the Canadian census returns do not indicate that they are falling behind, as is the case in the other countries above spoken of; and one reason for this may well be the fact

that they have not reached the downward grade towards Rationalism by which the same or similar churches are sliding downward in the United States and Germany. Nevertheless there are unmistakable signs that this downward grade will be reached in time, after which similar results may be expected.

"A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY."

For ages the Catholic church has regarded women as specially susceptible to sentiments of piety, and in one of her best known public offices the words occur: "Intercede for the devout female sex." But an incident occurred at the Toronto revival meeting of women on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 14th, which would seem to show that the character of women is changing considerably under Reformation teaching, and to such an extent that the adjective preceding the word female should be changed to some attributive less laudatory, if that office were to be recited in any of the Protestant churches.

It was announced by the Rev. Mr. Hyde at one of the revival meetings on Monday, 15th inst., that at the Sunday afternoon meeting, for women only, of the one thousand hymns loaned to the audience, with the request that they should not be taken out of the hall, six hundred and forty-seven, or nearly two thirds, had been carried away by the ladies! It has been said by the Toronto Mail and Empire, in commenting on this fact, that "evidently Rev. Dr. Torrey's sermon on the awfulness of sin did not strike home to many in the audience." Rev. Mr. Hyde intimated that there was a golden opportunity offered them to make restitution by returning other people's property.

The ladies and ministers, who are so earnestly engaged in converting the French-Canadians from the error of their ways, might find some suitable occupation if they would apply themselves more earnestly still to the reformation of the Anglo-Saxon ladies of "Toronto the Good."

THE BRITISH ELECTIONS.

The British Parliamentary elections are drawing towards a finish while we go to press, and though it was generally expected that they would result favorably to the Liberal party now in power, no one anticipated the great landslide which has actually taken place. To the moment of our going to press the summary of the situation is as follows:

Total seats.....	670
Elections held.....	384
Liberals elected.....	202
Unionists elected.....	87
Laborites elected.....	35
Irish Nationalists elected.....	60

It will be seen that the new Government is so far sustained to such an extent that it has a majority over all other parties combined, and it is likely that this will be the case to the end of the battle.

Mr. Balfour has been defeated in his constituency, and half his Cabinet have met the same fate. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain has shown an unexpected strength in Birmingham, as not only he has been re-elected by an increased majority, but his personal followers have carried their seats also by majorities unprecedented in the history of the nation. Mr. Chamberlain's majority is 5,079. The combined majorities of himself and his Birmingham followers, constituting a phalanx of seven, is 25,017.

It was supposed at first that Mr. Balfour would obtain another seat, but some doubt is now thrown upon the matter, as the successful Conservative, who, it was supposed, would certainly yield his seat to him, has positively refused to do so. However, we may presume that he will readily enough find a seat should he desire to enter Parliament again after his present utter rout. Whether or not he may do so, it is confidently stated that the leadership of the Conservative party will now be transferred to Mr. Chamberlain. The latter, however, has chivalrously said: "Whether in or out of Parliament, Mr. Balfour will still be our leader." It is thought, however, that Mr. Chamberlain will not have it within his power to make Mr. Balfour leader, even should he desire to do so, after this complete disaster, which is attributed to Mr. Balfour's half-heartedness in regard to the tariff reform advocated by Mr. Chamberlain.

What the policy of the new Government will be on the question of Home Rule for Ireland has not been announced, nor was the question brought prominently forward during the short and sharp campaign. This much, however, may be said, that but a very short time before he was called upon to form a Government, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman declared at Stirling that Home Rule for Ireland is the unchangeable policy of the Liberal party; and there are, besides the Liberal leader himself, many staunch friends of Ireland in the Government, so that the Nationalists must surely have strong hope that the condition of Ireland will be