

The Catholic Record

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 Publisher & Proprietor, Thomas Coffey, L.L.D., Rev. James T. Foley, D. D., Editors (Thomas Coffey, L.L.D., Associate Editor—H. P. Mackintosh, Manager—Robert M. Burns, Address business letters to the Manager.
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 LONDON, SATURDAY, DEC 27, 1924

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Pervading the festival and the season of Christmas is the glorious message sung by angelic choirs the first Christmas night: Glory to God on high and on earth peace to men of good will.

Heaven and earth meet; the Son of God, born of a virgin, becomes also the Son of Man. It could never have entered into the heart of man to conceive of a love so stupendous; only God Who is Infinite Love could conceive of the amazing manifestation of the Creator's love for his creatures that the Incarnation reveals. The first impulse of faith in this transcendent mystery is to join the angelic choirs in that outburst of praise: "Glory to God in the highest"; and in profound humility and gratitude endeavor to grasp the deep significance of His wondrous message: "On earth peace to men of good will."

For that peace, the peace of God which passeth understanding, peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with all men, there is a condition. Peace to men of good will.

Not good will but envy, distrust, hate greeted the birth of the Prince of Peace. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Hate and distrust and unbelief still reign in the hearts of men. Not to them is the Christmas message of Peace to men of good will. Peace will come to the world only when the condition is fulfilled.

The peace of Christ will come to the world, as His Vicar has pointed out, only through the reign of Christ.

But our great concern on this holy anniversary is not the lack of good will in the world but that each one of us prepare his own soul for that peace which is the special grace of the feast of Christmas. If each one of us extends the reign of Christ in his own heart, in his own soul, he will have done more for the peace of the world, for the reign of Christ in the world, than all the peace plans ever devised by man.

Each succeeding Christmas should find us with a deeper realization of the tremendous significance of the great event commemorated; and should find our souls more closely united to the angels in their glorious hymn; Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will.

And yet there is a fitness in the old greeting that has come down to us through many generations. For it is not the Christian faith but materialism, hard, cold and calculating, that kills the joy of living. Only where the great fundamental truth that Christmas commemorates possesses the hearts and minds and souls of men that life has a joyous meaning; only then that the festive celebration of Christmas is entered into with a whole-hearted zest entirely in keeping with the religious significance of the feast.

The CATHOLIC RECORD will reach its readers this year on Christmas Day. It will carry for each and every one of them a fervent prayer for all graces and blessings of this great and holy feast; and with the handclasp of sincere and grateful Christian friendship it wishes each and all, A Merry Christmas!

"BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY"

"And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him

the throne of David his Father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? and the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." (St. Luke I, 26-39.)

"Now the generation of Christ was in this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost. Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins. Now this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying:

"Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us." (St. Matthew I, 18-23.)

Seven centuries and more before the birth of Christ the great prophet Isaiah foretold that He should be born of a virgin. The Evangelists Matthew and Luke tell of the fulfillment of that prophecy in language so plain that it is impossible to misunderstand. The Creed that carries down through the ages the Apostolic tradition and teaching asserts the fact that Christ was "born of the Virgin Mary."

That is and always has been a dogmatic fact that no Catholic ever thinks of calling into question. No more can the Protestant Christian without destroying the very foundation on which he bases his religion—the authority of the Bible. If the virgin birth be denied nothing is certain.

And yet we cannot read the newspapers without becoming aware that every Protestant denomination is rent asunder over this fundamental doctrine of Christianity. And those who deny as well as those who uphold the traditional belief claim equally to be Christians. That is giving to the term "Christian" a new meaning. A well read pagan of the first centuries of the Christian era who had come across the gospels and who admired the teaching of Jesus, comparing His philosophy favorably with that of other great teachers, no one would think of calling a Christian; least of all would he, himself, claim to be one. Indeed he might still share to the full the pagan contempt and hatred that inspired the ruthless persecutions and enjoy the spectacle of Christians torn by wild beasts in the Coliseum.

Our modernist Christians are something better than that. They live in a Christian atmosphere and are imbued with the Christian spirit. They would propagate the fragrance of the rose but uproot the rose-tree. They are not Christians unless we degrade the meaning of that glorious name. Father Edward Bergin, S. J., in the current Ecclesiastical Review depicts these neo-Christians with rare insight and sympathy:

"The Jesus of the parables, Jesus the moralist, the vindicator of the dignity of human nature, the seer of noble ideals, the hero facing undaunted the plots of the Pharisees and the might of Rome—this is a character with whom the new type of Christian is quite at home; but he is ill at ease with the Christ foretold by the prophets, announced by Gabriel, heralded by the angels, transfigured on Thabor, risen from the tomb. The Son of Man he is quite at home with; the Son of God makes him lose his bearings. Whatever lifts Jesus above humanity at large is for him a stumbling-block. He is willing

to give Jesus the superlative degree of every adjective to which a man can aspire; but anything divine is balked, glossed over, or even denied outright. Hence it is like parting with the Jesus he knows and loves and needs, to think of Him as having come into the world in any other way than as the rest of mankind.

"With the old-fashioned it is all the reverse. He does not close his eyes to the least of Christ's human traits. On the contrary he observes them with an insight at least as keen, and venerates every one of them with an affection every bit as warm. But the stronger the faith within him the greater is his astonishment that such a thing should be. What amazes him is not that Christ should be born of a virgin but that He should be born at all. Once he has taken in the meaning of the Word made Flesh, everything else follows as a matter of course—the Annunciation, the Magnificat, the Gloria in Excelsis, and all the rest. How wonderful it is that there should be birds and a spring-time, but, given these, what more natural than that the thrush should welcome in the spring? The burden laid upon the intellect of the Christian is the Emptying, of which St. Paul speaks; the stupendous condescension that God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.

"This belief, far from obliterating his view of the humanity of Christ, makes it enlarge into proportions grander far. He bends over the manger of Bethlehem, or gazes at the cross of Calvary with feelings far other than those of one who can see there the beginning and the end of nothing more than the wisest and best life ever lived on earth. . . . But does more than enlarge his view of the humanity of Christ; it enlarges his view of humanity itself. . . . The Christian who looks upon Christ in this light has in him the seminal principle of a Father Damien, who had a way of showing that he loved even the outcasts of humanity, more than if he had founded an institute to exterminate the microbe of leprosy."

The illustration is an admirable one. Not less to the point would be the early Jesuit who gave their lives to the Indian missions and died martyrs to the cause of Christ. Their heroism, their zeal, compels recognition and admiration; but few really understand what they praise. It is the same "enlarged view of humanity," the unwavering conviction in the inmost soul of the Christian that Christ, the Eternal Son of the Eternal God, died for all men, that made it a joy for men of culture and refinement to live and die for savages; makes it a joy for devoted women to consecrate their lives to the care of lepers in China or incurable cancer patients in America.

The neo-Christian's Christ is not the Christ of these heroic Christian souls. The modernist's Christ is a human Christ. Him he loves and praises and calls Master; but he cannot bring himself to acknowledge Him as the only-begotten of the Father who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary.

"The true Christian will not part with either boon which he possesses in Christ, neither with his humanity nor with his divinity. One without the other would be of little avail. To lose the humanity would be to lose the Son of Man, and Christ would not be one of ourselves; to lose the divinity would be to lose the Son of God, and Christ would be no more than one of ourselves. Herein lay the struggle of the infant Church, in which she had to fight every step of the way in establishing the Kingdom of God upon earth. For all these difficulties of the Modern Man had to be met fifteen centuries, and more, ago. She was told to let go of the hand to which she clung, because it was not a human hand. But she kept on clinging to it and found it a hand of flesh which met her own with a grasp that was tender and warm. She was told to let go of it because it was only a hand of flesh. She clung to it still and found in it the strength of God."

The wrangling of fundamentalists and modernists is but a phase in the process of disruption begun when the authority of God's Church was rejected. But that Church is now as it has been for two millenniums and will be to the end of time the unfailing witness to the stupendous truth that Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is both God and man.

WHERE DID THEY GET THE BIBLE?

By THE OBSERVER

In a discussion which is going on in a Nova Scotia paper, to which we have already alluded, the time-worn Protestant formula has been used in reference to Saint Peter's residence and his bishopric at Rome: "Show it to us in the Bible." It is altogether incomprehensible how and why Protestants have so long deluded themselves with the notion that four brief accounts of the life and sayings and doings of our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and a few letters written by some of the Apostles from time to time as occasion seemed fit, to some of their converts here and there, and a very brief account of a small portion of the travels and work of the Apostles—principally Saint Paul—and a few other writings, bound up into a book called the New Testament, are an exhaustive statement of the teachings of Christ and His Apostles, and that outside of them no Christian truth exists.

Can any reasonable man take the Acts of the Apostles in his hand and suppose that they are an exhaustive account of what the Apostles of Christ did and said? Can such a man take into his hand the few letters that have been preserved from the pen of Saint Paul, and say that they are a full and complete record of the teachings and the preaching of a great Apostle who worked in several countries for the conversion of the people for about thirty years. Can any man say that the two Epistles of Saint Peter exhaust his teachings during thirty-five years? What of the Apostles who never wrote a word? Did they contribute nothing to the instruction of the world to which Christ sent them to preach?

The nature of St. Paul's epistles is plain on their face. They are letters written for special reasons and for the purpose of advising and directing certain bodies of Christians, the Ephesians, the Romans, the Corinthians, &c., as occasion arose, and when the Saint was necessarily absent from them. Not only do they not purport to be exhaustive summaries of Christian doctrine, but Saint Paul expressly said that they were nothing of the sort. More than that, such as they are, and of course they are inspired truth as far as they go—we have not the whole of Saint Paul's letters. In two places he refers to previous letters which are not in the Bible and are not to be found.

The only wonder is that so much of the sacred writings has been preserved. The repositories where manuscripts were preserved were raided and looted by barbarians many times in the course of the wars and tribal and racial movements of which so much of the early history of Christian Europe is made up. There was no printing press then; and the labor of copying thirty thousand verses of the Bible out by hand was an appalling thing to face. Who kept the Bible in existence? From whom did the Protestants get it? How do they know that they have it and not a substitute for it? Luther rejected some books of it. How does any Protestant know that he rejected enough? Or, that he was justified in rejecting any?

By the end of the fourth century, a matter of a thousand years before Luther was born, the last of the original Scriptures was gone from the earth. Nothing was left but copies. Moreover, Europe was full of writings which were considered by many people to be inspired writings. Who, finally, and centuries before Luther was born, decided what scriptures were inspired and what were not? The Church did that, and if she did so many things wrongly and wrongfully, how do Protestants know that she did not do this wrongly too? The question of what books and writings were to be admitted into the Bible as inspired writings and what were not, was settled by a general Council of the Catholic Church, held under the authority of the Pope and acknowledging that authority. On that decision Protestants depend for their belief that they have the Sacred Scriptures, and on nothing else. They were unable to go back to the original documents, which had disappeared off the earth centuries before Luther was born. Nor would they have been able, on their principles, to decide such questions even had they been able to see the original documents; for on the face of them many of the

uninspired epistles and other writings which were rejected by the Church had every appearance of being inspired writings; at least they did not carry the distinction from inspired writings on their face. The Church decided in each case by principles and by authority which Protestants reject; namely, the traditional belief of the Church, and upon the Promise of Christ that in such cases He would enable her to decide infallibly. And yet Protestants rely on that decision and on that alone for their belief that they have the Bible.

Moreover, there is this to be said. If the Catholic Church had admitted the claim made later by the "Reformers," that all men are free to spell out a religion from the Bible according to their own interpretation, there would have been no Church for Luther to try his hand on as a reformer, for it would have been gone out of the world a long time—centuries indeed—before he was born. Half of the doctrines that Luther taught and believed were saved from destruction and rejection, by the Church, centuries before he was born. Luther rejected the teachings of Arius and Pelagius and Nestorius; but on his principles how could he be sure they were wrong?

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE EXTRAORDINARY development of Catholic missionary effort in China, with special reference to the work of the Salesian Fathers, occupied our attention briefly last week. Following upon that, some reference to the first Council of the Church in China seems in order. This event, though held last May, has such an important bearing upon the future of Catholic missionary operations as to render apology for this belated reference unnecessary. We are indebted to the *Osservatore Romano* for the few particulars we have. These details were communicated by an eye-witness, the Shanghai correspondent of the Roman journal.

THE COUNCIL was opened by the Papal Legate, Mgr. Constantini, who presided throughout, and the assembled prelates were the Bishop of Macao, and the Vicars Apostolic and Prefects Apostolic of seventy mission districts spread over the entire Chinese Empire. This fact alone—that is the existence of no less than seventy distinct districts—speaks volumes for the thoroughness of the effort toward the conversion of this pagan people. Some of these prelates had to travel a distance of over fifteen hundred miles from the very heart of Asia to participate in the deliberations of the Council and representing as they did in race or language almost every nation in Europe, the assemblage was truly pentecostal in character. From Italy, France, Spain, Belgium, England, Ireland, Scotland, Holland, Portugal, Germany they originally came, as well as from the United States and Canada, and within council sat many native Chinese, representative of the large and increasing body of native clergy. Among the latter the two newly-appointed Prefects, Mgr. Teheng and Mgr. Ou. Of the assistant clergy, we read, half of these present were native Chinese.

THE MEMBERS of the Council assembled at the old mission church of Zi-ka-wei, in the suburbs of Shanghai, and went in procession through the streets to the great church attached to the Jesuit College, where the sessions were held. The *Osservatore* correspondent remarks that the contrast between the two churches was in itself an object lesson in the progress of the Faith in China. The old mission church which dates back to the days of struggle for existence has room for but a few hundred worshippers—the new would accommodate several thousand. The procession from the one to the other was the first spectacle of the kind ever seen in China, and may be said to mark the advent of a new day for the Church in that vast empire.

IN REGARD to the native clergy, the elevation for the first time of two of their number to higher office of bishop is significant. The first, Odoric Cheng, is a Franciscan, and the second, Melchior Sun, a Vincentian. The latter has been appointed Prefect Apostolic of Li-tsen, a new district detached from the Vincentian mission of Chi-li in Northern

China. The territory assigned to the new Prefect contains a population of about one million, 80,000 only of whom are Catholics. Father Melchior Sun is a native of Pekin, of a family that has been Christian and Catholic for several generations. He is about fifty-three years of age, made his studies for the priesthood in the Seminary at Pekin, and after his ordination taught Latin for some years in the same institution. Later he took up active missionary duty, and for some years has been in charge of a large centre.

FURTHER EVIDENCE of progress appears in the project of a Catholic University for China, which has now taken definite form. It is to be in the United States that China is indebted for this great step in advance, and to the generosity of the American Benedictines that its realization becomes possible. As is well-known, the Abbot of St. Vincent's Abbey, Pennsylvania, has consented to open a monastery in Pekin, and to found the desired University, from which so much may be hoped for the future progress of the Faith. The ultimate conversion of the teeming multitudes of China may seem to some a visionary hope, but everything is possible to God, and all signs tend to show that Catholics in other and more favored lands are awaking to the opportunity that lies before them in that land.

THE DUBLIN Freeman's Journal which, it is announced by cable is to cease publication, after an honorable career of a century and a half, had in a recent issue an amusing allusion to the humors and curiosities of advertising posters and newspaper headings. Under the latter head the following were cited as genuine examples: During an election in St. Stephen's Green Division of Dublin City, owing to the curious juxtaposition of some bills on a hoarding, the constituents found themselves confronted with the cryptic combination, "St. Anthony of Padua, Vote for James McCann." On a contents bill of a London daily one day was read: "Another Exhibition Fire: Absence of English Visitors Much Regretted." Yet another poster read, "Heavy Gale. Magnificent Spectacle on the River. Three Men Drowned." Other public announcements that need not be forgotten were "Unveiling of the Robinson Memorial. The Mavor on the Bust." "Opening of Parliament. Great Rise in the Price of Gas," and "Daring Theft of an Actress's Diamonds. Strike at Simpkins' Glassworks."

APPRECIATE WORK OF CONGRESSWOMAN

New York, Dec. 15.—If the first convention of the New York Archdiocesan Council had not opened with Pontifical High Mass, the new Congresswoman, Mrs. Norton of New Jersey, might never have possessed a silver rosary blessed by His Eminence Cardinal Hayes. Mrs. Norton, who has been active in welfare work in New Jersey for many years, is president of the Day Nursery maintained by the Queen's Daughters of that State. As a token of appreciation of her splendid work for this institution, the members decided to give her a parting gift before she left for Washington. A silver rosary was the unanimous choice of the gift committee. The Catholic women of New Jersey, who are among the most active workers in the National Council of Catholic women, sent a delegation to New York to attend the first convention of their sister Council, and just before leaving, Mrs. Vogel conceived the idea of taking the rosary intended for the new Congresswoman, "just in case" there might be a chance to ask Cardinal Hayes to bless it. "I don't suppose there is a chance," she said, "but then it always pays to try."

After the Mass, during which St. Patrick's Cathedral was filled to overflowing, Mrs. Vogel found her way to the Sacristy, where she met Bishop Dunn. In a few words she explained her mission, and asked him if he would not bless the beads. "Now, wouldn't you really prefer to have His Eminence bless them?" Bishop Dunn asked.

"Why, of course, if the Vatican were not so far away I should like to have the Pope bless them," Mrs. Vogel answered, "but if His Eminence would be good enough to bless them, we would appreciate it very much. You see, Mrs. Norton is the first Congresswoman from the East, she is a Catholic and has done so much for the people of her State that we want to show her this evidence of our appreciation."

Cardinal Hayes was greatly interested in the story, and willingly gave his blessing to the rosary which the new Congresswoman will take to Washington.

NOT INDECENT

New York.—A picture representing William J. Bryan, Andrew Volstead, and William H. Anderson protesting and attempting to prevent Christ from working the miracle of converting water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana, is not "indecent" is the unanimous opinion of the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court. This Court has reversed the conviction of Abraham S. Baylison, Secretary of the Society of Independent Artists, found guilty by the Court of Special Sessions last year of "outraging public decency" because he permitted the hanging of the painting at the Society's exhibition.

The picture shows the Saviour performing the miracle while William J. Bryan with an air of sanctimonious disgust is pouring a jug of the water made wine on the floor. Andrew Volstead is shown expostulating with Christ, and Will H. Anderson, former State Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League and more recently of Sing Sing, is depicted standing in the door with his hat on. The caption of the picture was "Father Forgive Them, For They Know Not What They Do."

The decision of the Appellate Division reads in part: "We are unable to see anything in the picture which, through any strain of imagination, could even tend to outrage public decency. Undoubtedly the picture may be said to be sacrilegious, in that present-day mortals are portrayed as venturing to oppose their judgment as to what is right against that of Christ, but the defendant is not convicted of sacrilege or blasphemy, nor is either made a crime under any law of the State." A fine of \$100 collected from Baylison by order of the lower court, was ordered returned.

AUSTRIA'S MORAL UPBUILDING

EX-CHANCELLOR SPEAKS ON CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES

By Dr. Frederick Funder (Vienna Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Vienna, Dec. 8.—Monsignor Seipel, former Federal Chancellor of Austria, is now busily engaged in his self-imposed task of insuring the moral as well as the material regeneration of his nation. The latter he accomplished as Chancellor with the backing of the civil power of that high office. The former he hopes to accomplish as leader of the Catholic party in Austria dominated by his own magnetic personality and inspired by his faith in his fellow countrymen.

Although not yet entirely recovered from the effects of the wound inflicted by his Socialist assailant several months ago, the former Chancellor makes frequent addresses in Vienna. The largest halls of the city are too small to accommodate the audiences that flock to hear him. There is no doubt but that his influence today is as potent—if not so—as it ever was. The crowds listen attentively to what he has to say and applaud his appeals for a return to the spirit of Christian solidarity and the application of Christian principles in the conduct of the affairs of Austria.

After his resignation as Chancellor, Monsignor Seipel made a statement to representatives of the press in which he said:

"Something can be done with mankind; at the very moment in which I think it proper to resign the powers of government into other hands, I do not see any reason to be shaken in my conviction that, after all, all men or at least the greater number of our own people and the people of all Europe, can be united in cooperation in the great task of general reconstruction. Although my remarks concerning spiritual relief and the curing of souls, have met with ridicule and have been mocked many times by many men, I stick to them and it shall be my task in the immediate future to influence people wherever and whenever I can to collaborate in the reconstruction of the world and the consolidation of peace."

Editorial tributes to the achievements of the former Chancellor have been voiced by papers of the most diverse political opinions and from many nations outside of Austria. One particularly interesting tribute was that voiced by the Swiss Catholic daily the *Hochwacht* which declared that the former Chancellor of Austria was the greatest statesman of post-war times and drew a comparison between his achievements and those of Mussolini. The *Hochwacht* quoted Mussolini's statement shortly after he assumed office that "Our tradition, our Faith, is the great nation which we want to make a concrete reality" and then commented as follows:

"Monsignor Seipel too must have been possessed of such a belief. But the great difference between Seipel and Mussolini was that the latter found his belief backed and supported by the political reality of an army and a hopeful nation, whereas any such reality was missing in the case of Seipel. However, Seipel had greater things to throw into the scales; a personality of perfect integrity and an absolutely open-hearted, truthful character. Mussolini is a pure Machiavelian. Seipel a pure anti-Machiavelian. A whole political philosophy separates these two men. It seems as though,