

The Catholic Record.

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

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THE CONDITION OF FRANCE.

Says the Presbyterian Review of Toronto: "The religious condition of France has been receiving the serious attention of thoughtful men these few years past. It is evident that the Roman Catholic Church has been gradually losing its hold over the nation," etc.

All this may be very evident to a Presbyterian editor who takes his opinions second-hand and is prepared to accept anything that may redound to the discredit of Catholicism. We admit that unrest and discontent and infidelity exist in the great centres; but to conclude from that, that France as a nation is alienating herself from the Church, requires a very thoughtless man with a very illogical mind. He sees in the struggle concerning the management and curriculum of the Public Schools "so long under priestly control" further proofs for his statement.

Most people would infer from that phase of the situation that Catholics have still some faith and vitality. Would the editor contend that because the Catholics of Manitoba provoked the hostility of the government they were drifting into infidelity or longing for the ministrations of Protestantism?

He then quotes an extract from a Mr. Guyot who advises France to give a kindly ear to Protestantism, because it is so conducive to national prosperity. Rather a queer quotation to be used by a learned editor. Is wealth of a people any evidence of Divine favor: and would the editor, were he the richest man in Toronto, be looked upon as its holiest citizen?

"If," as Bishop Spalding says, "England's wealth to day comes from the Reformation, how shall we account for that of Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? And if the decline of Spain has been brought about by the Catholic faith, to what cause shall we assign that of Holland, who in the seventeenth century ruled the seas, and did the carrying trade of Europe?"

PROTESTANTISM DECLINING.

Dr. Jutphen, pastor of the second Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, has joined the ranks of those who believe that the fortunes of Protestantism are in this country on the wane. Abundant statistics give color to the statement and warrant us in hoping that the perfect realization of Bossuet's prophecy may take place in the near future. In Europe it is a parasite on the tree of state; in this country it strives by means of positive creeds to maintain its prestige. The much-vaunted right of private judgment is now but a plaything to beguile the unthinking.

In calling attention to the decline of membership in the various churches, the minister admitted that Protestantism has no inherent strength or vitality. If it had had what could have prevented it from being the paramount religion of the United States?

Take for example New England, that was a hundred years ago the stronghold of Congregationalism. Anyone conversant with the history of that period will grant that it had a free field. Its leaders were earnest and scholarly men: its adherents, if narrow minded and intolerant, were tenacious of truth as they saw it, and imbued with the ideas they were the chosen people of America. Everything humanly speaking tended to give it a vitality that would withstand the corroding touch of time. And yet, it is now in ruins, covered over with the mildew of neglect and indifference: its conventicles ring with doctrines that held no place in the lives of the first Congregationalists, and its power and influence have gone, leaving it only the shadow of a great name. What Emerson said some years ago may be applied with greater truth to our own times. "I think," he said, "no man can go with his thoughts about him into one of our churches without feeling that what hold the public worship had on men is gone or going. It has lost its grasp on the affections of the good and the fear of the bad." Emotional religion, that is religion based on feeling, visitations of the Holy Spirit,

and kept alive by amen corners, camp-meetings and revivals, is also in the throes of dissolution. It goes without saying that a sect that made Christianity an experience dependent on the fervid imagination could not have a protracted existence. It is very consoling to believe that in a moment of fervor or nervous excitement one's sins are cancelled, but it is consolation for which we have no warranty in Holy Writ. It is needless to say that Episcopalianism is retrograding. The one strange thing, to our mind, is that it has ever received a hearing from intelligent men and women. Purporting to be a teacher, it does not know what it believes in: and we venture to say that a confession of faith that would be accepted by the Anglican divines in this country would be a theological curiosity.

"PRACTICAL."

If there is one word we cordially detest it is practical. We hear *ad nauseam* of a practical man—a practical education—a practical turn of mind etc. You may be a tiresome bore—a few removes from an idiot, but if you are honored with the title of Practical you have an assured place among the sons of men. When a young man steps out of the ordinary groove, the practical wisecracker deems him light-headed. If a brave, manly word is spoken, even at the risk of causing a discussion, we hear old saws about letting sleeping dogs alone. We do not, of course, like to have much to do with the self-opinionated individual. He is inclined to be dogmatic and becomes wearisome. But he is a man who dares to consult himself and to have his own opinions, and is therefore infinitely preferable to those whose conduct is regulated by the maxims of antediluvian times. We were forcibly reminded that practical people have no love for what they term a new departure by an incident that occurred some time since at an entertainment cycloped musical and literary.

After the leading soprano had paid her respects to the moon and a clear night, and other things to which she referred in a language unknown to us, a young gentleman came bravely forth and delivered an address. It was thoroughly commonplace, devoid of fancy and humor, but it made up for these deficiencies by a goodly store of preternatural wisdom. Toward the end of the concert there was another speech and we nerved ourselves for a second dose of being good and doing always what we are told. But we were disappointed. The orator spoke briefly on the dignity of labor, and the scanty respect accorded to it by the capitalist. It was an honest speech, with a flavor of originality and unadorned in its diction by writhings and facial contortions. A few local hits made the chairman, one of the magnates who are from time to time referred to in public prints as having attained a commanding position in the commercial world, look uncomfortable. He evidently thought the remarks too personal. But he had his revenge. In his tribute of gratitude to the various entertainers he decanted ponderously and plattitudinously on the able and eloquent harangue of the first speaker. He would be an ornament to the community.

Certainly. And if he lives long enough and makes no mistakes he may have a large house—filled with pictures of which he knows nothing, heaped up with useless bric-a-brac, and be the proud possessor of a cheque book. We have long since come to the conclusion that your practical man is very often either an arrant coward or a confirmed sluggard.

JOTTINGS.

What a pretty story is that of Gyrone Courtois! He was first in the field and in tournament: skilled above all in knightly arts, and as gentle and humble as a recluse. The chroniclers have many a glowing passage anent his warlike accomplishments, but his gracious courtesy receives their best eulogence.

No doubt there are Gyrons to-day, but we meet them but rarely. Times have changed: the old methods of speech and action would seem extravagant to us; and the spirit that gave their life and beauty has passed away with the trappings of chivalry. Many there were in the old days who trailed

Knighthood's fame in the mire of cruelty, but when true to its principles they were Christian gentlemen, without fear and without reproach. They were courteous, because they were taught to see the Lord in all—to know that in befriending the helpless and the poor they were ministering unto Him. We never read the old chronicles that are fragrant with the odour of Catholic teaching without feeling sorry that a new order of things has supplanted them. Then we were appraised according to Catholic standards. Chandos, du Guesclin, Bayard and others, whose swords flamed all ways in the forefront of the fight, were as gentle as they were brave: quick indeed to loosen blade in scabbard to punish the wrong, but always, whether in peace or war, giving evidence of the courtesy described by their panegyrist.

The chroniclers assure us that their countenances mirrored the beauty of their souls, so that they were beloved by all, and especially by the poor and the children.

We might go on and narrate many an incident to show what honor was accorded to a gentleman; but our readers mayhap have read them and besides our space will not permit their telling.

We must not, however, forget our lesson. We must be gentlemen—that is, we must be truly charitable. Mere politeness will not do. Courtesy that springs from conventionalality is a very variable quantity. There are persons and causes that want the aid of the Samaritan, and unless we do what we can to assist them we have not commenced our lesson. You have read how saints have kissed the leprous sores. Perhaps they shuddered when their lips touched the putrid mass: but their eyes were upon the Crucified and what they did was for Him. We shall also meet with things repellent to human nature, and our willingness to help, whether we like it or not, will enable us to ascertain from what source our courtesy flows.

It is not only, as a writer says, the oil for life's wheels: it is the very essence of right living. High thoughts sited in a heart of courtesy is not due to birth, or to learning, or to wealth, but to the Christian spirit. With it we are gentlemen in the highest sense of the term: and without it we are sordid and vulgar, whatever be our standing in the world.

A man of mean character has usually to resort to pomposity of manner to extort the respect to which he has no natural claim: he is abject before superiors and brutal to inferiors; but the soul of a true man bows before God only and recognizes that his vocation is to be a helper—to be, as a Turkish proverb has it, a dispenser of light. He helps not only his contemporaries but those also who come after him.

The number of lives that have been beautified and ennobled by the examples of the saints cannot be stated by us. We may say, however, that the devotion of St. Camillus de Sillis to the poor and sick of Rome; of St. Peter Claver to the negro; the unselfish and heroic deeds of holy men and women whose hearts were an asylum for every human woe and misery, have been, and will be forever, a source of noble resolve and endeavor.

THE CHURCH AND SECRET SOCIETIES.

Rev. David H. Buehl, S. J., writes as follows to the New York Sun: In the "Questions and Answers," January 11, 1900, there is a query about the attitude of the Catholic Church towards Old Fellows, to which the correct answer may be found in "Theologia Moralis," A Sabatini, S. J. New York, 1898, p. 782 "Query 6th. What is to be said about the three societies recently condemned among us? Reply: From an inspection of the two decrees given January 20, 1895, and January 18, 1896, it seems that the followings points can be held as certain: First. The three societies called the Knights of Pythias, the Old Fellows and the Sons of Temperance, are not condemned under censure, but only because they are pernicious. Second. This perniciousness is intrinsic, because it springs from the rituals which are used, the secret which is exacted, the perils which they give rise to, and from other circumstances. Third. When the four conditions enumerated in the decree given January 18, 1896, occur, namely, that there was good faith, that scandal be lacking, that from the renunciation there would follow serious temporal loss, and that there is no danger of loss of faith,

especially when death is near, this perniciousness seems to be wanting, and hence it can then be permitted that there should be no renunciation (*ut non mittatur nuncius*). Fourth. Judgment about the verification of these four conditions, in each individual case, should be passed not by the confessor, but by the Apostolic Delegate, otherwise desirable uniformity would not be had." The practice in this country is to refer doubtful cases to the Apostolic Delegate at Washington, as stated in the above reply.

A MISSION COMEDY.

"The Evangelization of France," by the McAll Troupe.—Just a Touch of Tragedy, too.

Shakespeare has well said that "all the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players." This thought was deeply impressed on a spectator at the meeting of the Philadelphia Auxiliary of the American McAll Association, which has for its object the furtherance of the "evangelization" of France. The characters in the play included those who pursue foreign missions as a fad, those who follow it as a profession and some who are thoroughly in earnest, but evidently pitifully misinformed. The scene presented was one which, when viewed in the light of its comparatively barren results to Protestantism, might well have been called a comedy. Looked at from the standpoint of the sincere Christian who bewails the divisions among believers in Christ, it was tragic, and the poor, benighted "Romanists" of France were not the ones most deserving of pity.

The meeting began with the singing of a hymn, in which the hope was expressed that Christ's kingdom (not kingdoms) should stretch from shore to shore. Then the Scripture narrative which tells of our Saviour's instruction to the eleven to preach the Gospel to every creature was read, concluding with the text: "confirming the word with the signs which followed."

At this juncture the spectator could not help but think of the absence of miracles in the annals of Protestantism and of the innumerable supernatural manifestations ("the signs which followed") in the history of the land of Lourdes—the land selected for "evangelization" by the nineteenth century apostles.

A prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Rosster, in which he gave first place to the weather. The reason for this is plain when one recalls the similarity of the effects produced upon wool and Protestant assemblages by bad weather.

The corresponding secretary, a prepossessing young lady, read her annual report, which was a model of elegant diction, if we except the ignorance and bad taste displayed in the use of the words "Romanism" and "Romanist." The report showed that \$3,636 had been received, of which \$1,600 had been expended in rent and \$950 in salary. Other entries showed that there is a balance of less than \$10. This expenditure was in the cause of "an open Bible" and the maintenance of places where "many hear the first word of Christ." The report of such services can never be accurate, and the good done "can only be known in the Lamb's Book of Life."

The young lady, evidently sincere, but no doubt misled, was right in saying that the report of such services can never be accurate, and she might have added that in general the reports of Protestant missionaries in Catholic countries never are accurate. Did she or her hearers think it possible that in these days there are many French people who have never heard of Christ? The McAll Auxiliary members would do well to read the lives of St. Denis, who died in 272, and St. Remi, who died in 535, not to speak of many others, to learn that the Gospel of Christ was preached in France centuries before Protestantism was born and at a salary much less than \$950 per annum.

The secretary went on to show "how important it is that boys and girls should be trained in the service of God." Of course, she was not referring to the boys and girls in the parochial or Public schools of America, but to those in the mission schools in France. A falling off in the contributions from America was noted as an incident which "made the heart heavy." Besides those in France who are infidels, there are "others who are held in the bonds of Roman Catholicism," and she pleaded for aid for these. The workers meet with many discouragements and are somewhat disheartened.

THE LIBERAL REV. FLOYD W. TOMPKINS.

Rev. Floyd W. Tompkins, rector of Holy Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church, evidently doesn't believe in the branch theory of the Church, and a casual listener might have been led to think that he doesn't believe in the Creed. Many good Episcopalians would have been shocked to hear him. But he is a firm believer in Christian unity—that is with the oldest and largest body of Christians left out. He spoke of those who are nominally Christians, but don't understand the love of Jesus Christ. This of the Cath-

olics of the country where the devotion to the Sacred Heart began. Roman Catholics are ignorant of the truth and simplicity of the Bible, said Mr. Tompkins, and then he cited how God had opened the nations to "us"—Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines. (Catholic American soldiers are just learning that they were advance missionaries of Protestantism.) With a liberality that will astonish some of his Protestant Episcopal brethren, he said that the people of this age are hungry for the "simple Gospel of Christ." They are awfully tired of theory and theology. The poor people in the rescue missions, "the poor people in mission churches" and the people of the wealthy congregations are all hungering for the Gospel of Christ after years of controversy between the different branches of the Church. (Here he was getting back to the branch theory and extending it.) He deprecated trying to make a man a Presbyterian Christian or an Episcopalian Christian, and said that it did not make much difference what Church he joined as long as he was helped forward. "Never let any denomination or any prejudice blind us to the great truth which burns away all else—the love of God in Jesus Christ!"

Catholics can well unite in Mr. Tompkins' prayer for the removal of prejudice. Once secured, Christian unity would come in a manner he little now suspects. Not by a surrender of the doctrines Christ taught, but by a general acceptance of them. All other plans for so-called Christian unity can result only in an abandonment of Christianity to secure a semblance of unity.

Mr. Tompkins spoke of the golden opportunities of this year because of the Exposition in Paris, though he could not understand why people should want to go to that wicked city. The last time he was there a bomb was exploded in front of the Madeleine, and it was taken as a matter of course, only a couple of lines appearing in the papers about it. Before the speaker concluded he said he was going to England, and supposed he would have to go to Paris, as his daughter would be with him, and would not doubt insist on going. Perhaps she won't when she learns that her father can't see why people should wish to go there.

TOUCHING "TALES."
Rev. S. D. Rosster, who has been in the city in the interest of the McAll Mission, was in a hurry to catch a train and gave but a few rambling remarks, during which he spoke of contributions for specific work, but the thanked Lord for "the good people who put their money into the treasury and don't ask where it goes."

The speaker told how a Catholic club had threatened to break up a meeting in France, and how two priests went to question the preacher, but as the latter only said "God Almighty loves you," there was no more ado. Several "touching" stories were related, one of a priest's converted niece, whose New Testament had been burned, and another of a former priest who was about to be engaged as a preacher, if deemed advisable after consideration. (Evidently they are learning something of real or alleged ex-priests.)

The concluding feature of the exercises was a collection—Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times.

ADMONITION AS TO READING THE SCRIPTURES.

Taken From an old Catholic Edition of the New Testament.

The Scriptures, in which are contained the revealed Mysteries of Divine Faith, are undoubtedly the most excellent of all writings: they were written by men divinely inspired, and are not the words of men, but the Word of God, which can save our souls (1 Thess. ii. 13 and James 1:21); but then they ought to be read, even by the learned, with the spirit of humility, and with a fear of mistaking the true sense, as many have done. This we learn from the Scripture itself, where St. Peter says, that in the Epistles of St. Paul, there are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own perdition (2 Peter iii. 16).

To prevent and remedy this abuse and to guard against error, it was necessary to forbid the reading of the Scriptures in vulgar languages without the advice and permission of the pastors and spiritual guides whom God has appointed to govern His Church (Acts xx. 28). Christ Himself declaring: He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican (Mat. xviii. 17).

Nor is this due submission to the Catholic Church "The pillar and ground of truth," (1 Tim. iii. 15) to be understood of the ignorant and unlearned only, but also of men accomplished in all kind of learning. The ignorant fall into errors for want of knowledge, and the learned through pride and self-sufficiency.

Therefore let every reader of the Sacred Writing, who pretends to be a competent judge of the sense, and of the truths revealed in them, reflect on the words which he finds in Isaiah (chap. lv. verses 8, 9): "My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are exalted above the earth, even so are my ways exalted

above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts. How then shall anyone, by his private reason, pretend to judge, to know, to demonstrate the incomprehensible and unsearchable ways of God?"

DECLINE IN CHURCH GOING

The Rev. J. A. Mills (in the Church Eclectic) says: "One of the apparent facts the historian of the nineteenth century will record is the decline of church going. One of the surprising things in connection with this decline is that it established itself coincidentally with the ascendancy of preaching. Ever since Protestantism has held its empire over the Anglo-Saxon the sermon has been the chief point of church going, and still in the great majority of cases holds the first place in Protestant worship. But it does not draw the congregation of old times."

Rev. Mr. Mills thinks this failure to draw is mostly due to the subjects treated of in the sermons. The questions of election, reprobation and justification by faith only, that were once such live issues, are now dead. "In their place social questions, reforms in politics, party policies, are the subjects of a large and increasing number of sermons. It would appear that here, too, interest is not satisfactory, since the drift away from the churches is sure and steady."

Adverting to sensational, *fin de siècle* methods to stem the tide that is emptying the churches, Mr. Mills thinks they are evidence of the decline of church going among men. "Time was when they were not necessary. If they are necessary now it must be because people are losing interest in the churches and church-going. It is not too much to say that Protestantism has a hand-to-hand fight on its hands to keep its adherents in Church, and has not a choice of weapons. On the other hand, Roman Catholics are having no such fight. Whenever their churches are open they are crowded to the doors. The sermon adds none to the congregation, and probably takes none away. It is an incident of the service if one is delivered; it is sure not to be sensational; usually it is extremely practical and direct."

Rev. Mr. Mills asks a startling question, and gives an answer no less startling to the Protestant. "Are Americans tired of Protestantism? Yes, they are worn out with sectarianism, division and strife over doctrine. They are sick of indefiniteness, of creeds and formulas that feed controversy and are failures in raising the moral standard of life and duty. The practical condition of American Christianity has discouraged them. They are tired of wasting time, money, energy, on five or six struggling, half-filled churches in one town when two good, strong ones, working together, would, if they could only speak the same things, do infinitely more good."

One of the most striking reasons for decline of church-going given by Rev. Mr. Mills, an Episcopalian clergyman, is the following: "The decline of church-going has always followed the decline in the belief of the Real Presence. With the decline of that doctrine came in the undue ascendancy of preaching. And when people lost the idea of worship, which is bound up with the doctrine of the Real Presence, they stopped going to church."

Here the Rev. Mr. Mills has found and pointed out the true reason for the decline of church-going among Protestants.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

THE INVISIBLE CHURCH.

Our ideas of the Church should be broad, not narrow, Catholic not sectarian. There is the Church triumphant—in heaven: the Church suffering—in the probationary stage of purgatory, and the Church militant on earth. And the Church militant may be a broader and larger communion than the visible Church. When we believe that outside of the Church there is no salvation, we do not express a despairing judgment as to the eternal future of the millions who are not counted as Catholics. The fervor of Christianity is the warmth of charity, not the warmth of hell fire. How many will be damned, we do not know. It is no pleasure to us to think that any considerable number will.

We gain no access of spiritual life in convincing ourselves of the total depravity of the majority. Without detracting in the least from the duty of seeking the truth and finding it; without any disposition to fall into the indolent moral feeling that a man's life, not his faith determines his salvation, we realize nevertheless that there are many who are living right according to their lights "outside of the visible communion of the Catholic Church." They are of "the invisible Church." They are of "the number may be we cannot judge. We hope it is large. Some members of the visible Church may not be saved; many members of the invisible Church will be. But as all right living is based on right principles, the faith in which men live and die, should ever be made a matter of supreme importance. It will not be an easy matter for even a good man to excuse himself for cherishing a life-long error and leading others to maintain it when the truth is so accessible.—Catholic Citizen.