

The Catholic Record

Published Weekly at 454 and 456 Richmond street, London, Ontario. Price of Subscription—\$1.00 per annum.

REV. GEORGE B. NORTHGRAVE, Author of "Mistakes of Modern Infidels," THOMAS COFFEY.

Publisher and Proprietor, Thomas Coffey, 454 and 456 Richmond Street, London, Ontario.

Correspondence intended for publication, as well as that having reference to business, should be directed to the proprietor and must reach London not later than Monday morning. Approved and recommended by the Archbishops of Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa and St. Charles, the Bishops of London, Hamilton, Peterborough, and Oshawa, N. Y., and the clergy throughout the Dominion.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION. Apostolic Delegation, Ottawa, Canada, March 7th, 1906. To the Editor of THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

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.

LONDON, SATURDAY, JAN 26, 1907.

A POLICY OF LIES.

The French Government is still slow about actually closing the churches of the nation, and the priests are still for the most part allowed to say Mass in them without hindrance, though the doing so is against the law, and has been unlawful since December 12th.

Before Dec. 11th it was expected that immediately after that all the churches would be closed, but this step the Government did not take. Instead of this, a new law was passed whereby the Government retreats from its former position. The clergy and laity would not walk into the trap set by the Government for the purpose of creating a schism, and except in a few parishes, there were no associations of worship formed to satisfy the conditions of the law.

ary of St. Sulpice at Montreal, in which most of the priests of Canada, and very many of those of the United States have made their theological studies.

It will be remembered by our readers that the Government made an attempt at the beginning of the present crisis to throw upon the Pope and the French hierarchy the blame of this quarrel between France and the Church, but it failed most completely in establishing this absurd accusation at any point.

The barbarous way in which Mgr. Montagnini was hustled out of France under a police escort was another outrage, the like of which has never been heard of since modern civilization has prevailed over Europe.

Technically, Mgr. Montagnini was not the Pope's Nuncio to Paris. There has been no nunciature there since M. Nisard, the French Ambassador, was recalled from the Vatican, and Mgr. Martinelli, the Nuncio at Paris, was requested or ordered to leave France.

No such treatment would be given to the representative of any Government in the world without a universal cry of indignation being raised by the press, and even the Governments of all nations; but France as a republic, acts, and has always acted, uniquely.

"If the Church elects to have war it will have it, but the world will bear witness that the Vatican is like a foreign power trying to dispute the authority of the French Government."

The fact of the matter is that the Government desires to appear moderate and just in the eyes of the outside world, but in France itself where the Atheists who have put it into power, have been trained to hate all religion,

its members are obliged to follow the dictates of the Jacobin madmen who already told M. Briand over a month ago:

"Let there be no compromise. You must go ahead against the Church before December 11, or all the forces of the Bloc will get after you."

By the "Bloc" is here meant the combination of Atheistic parties which constitute the Government's majority in the Chamber of Deputies.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

A CATHOLIC requests us to answer certain questions on the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary." The questions are briefly:

- (a) What does the Immaculate Conception mean? (b) What are the Scriptural proofs of the doctrine? (c) What relations has this doctrine with belief of the Church on original sin? (d) What was the belief of the Fathers of the Church on this question? (e) Give a short history of the feast? (f) When was this doctrine formally promulgated, and by what Pope? (g) What is meant by the terms active and passive used by theologians when speaking of this doctrine?

ANSWER. 1. The meaning of the Church's doctrine on this subject is very clearly stated in the dogmatical decree promulgated by Pope Pius IX. in his Bull Ineffabilis, on 8 December, 1854, which says:

"The doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in the first moment of her conception, by the force of the merits of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the human race was preserved free from every stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and, therefore, is to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."

The terms "active" and "passive" are applied by theologians to different stages of conception, but the dogmatic decree has reference to the moment when a rational soul was united to the Blessed Virgin's body; which is the moment of complete conception, for it is only at this moment that a human being becomes capable of receiving the grace of God, or of being affected by sin, and it is of this moment that the prophet speaks (Is. 1.7): "for behold, I was conceived in iniquities; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

It is admitted by theologians that because of the Blessed Virgin's descent from Adam, she was by nature liable to contract the sin which he transmitted to his posterity generally. This liability is called the remote debt of sin, and this remote debt the Blessed Virgin contracted. That is to say, she would have contracted the sin itself if she had not been saved therefrom by a special grace and privilege. She was, therefore, as much in need of a Redeemer as any child of Adam's. But this redemption was given to her specially, so that she was exempted from the general law by grace though not by nature.

"By this unique and solemn salutation never applied to another, it is shown that the mother of God is the seat of all divine graces, decked with the special graces of the divine Spirit, and even almost the infinite treasure and inexhaustible abyss of these graces, so that she was never subject to malédiction, but was with her Son, a sharer in the perpetual blessing which she merited to hear pronounced by Elizabeth who was inspired by the divine spirit to say: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." (St. Lnk. 1. 42)

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle." The Fathers apply to Christ and His ever blessed mother, the words of God in Genesis 1.15, which are a portion of what is called the Protévangélion or first gospel, because they contain the first announcement of the coming of a Redeemer to save mankind:

"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

Concerning this passage, it is to be noted that the word found in the Hebrew is *hava*, which in the later books of the Old Testament is masculine signifying he or it. But in the Pentateuch, *hava* is used both in the masculine and feminine, and is, therefore, indefinite in gender, being in English, either he, she, or it. But St. Jerome in translating it *she*, has given expression to the teaching of

the Fathers of the Church that the Blessed Virgin Mary is here referred to. However, whatever gender may be given to this word, the meaning of the whole passage will not be readily changed, as the text unites the woman and her seed in the battle against the serpent (thee) who is the devil. The meaning is, therefore, that the woman and her seed, that is Mary and her Son Jesus Christ, shall together fight against the devil and the hosts of fallen angels and shall conquer them, crushing the head of their leader, the serpent, who was the cause of the fall of our first father, Adam, whereby sin came into the world, and by sin death.

A complete victory is foretold for the woman and her Son: but this victory would not be complete if even for a single moment the Blessed Virgin Mary had been subject to original sin. We have said that in the Hebrew of the Pentateuch, the pronoun *hava* is used for both genders, there being in Hebrew but two grammatical genders, just as in the case in the modern language, French. In the later Hebrew *hava* is used for the feminine *she*, and this form is found nine or perhaps eleven times in the Pentateuch, though *hava* is nearly always used.

From this it follows that we must rely upon the sense for the proper translation of this pronoun, and as the woman is the principal logical subject of the whole sentence, the pronoun is naturally to be referred to her, as St. Jerome translates the passage: and this is the reading followed by Sts. Augustine, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Gregory and many others of the Fathers of the Church.

To these testimonies we may add that Josephus, the celebrated Jewish High Priest, in giving an account of the promise or command of God translated this passage: "He (God) commanded the woman to sin blows at his (the serpent's) head;" though Whiston's translation of Josephus has they (mankind) instead of *she* or the woman. Josephus, therefore, understood this passage as did St. Jerome and the erroneous translation was no doubt intended to obscure the passage.

3. The vision of the woman which is described by the Evangelist St. John as "a great sign which appeared in heaven," is also to be applied to Mary, and the hatred manifested by the great red dragon towards her and her Son when she was about to "give birth to a Man-Child Who was to rule all nations with an iron rod" is the fulfillment of God's prophecy in Genesis.

The Immaculate Conception of Mary is not absolutely declared in this passage (Apoc. xiii.), but her spotless purity is suggested by the fact that the sun, moon and stars unite in paying homage to her, which is to say, that she is honored most highly by Christ our Redeemer, the Sun of Justice, by all minor beings, and even the Apostolic body which is suggested by the twelve stars which form her crown.

4. Another proof is derived from the salutation of Mary by the Angel Gabriel, "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee." That plenitude of grace is found in Mary which cannot be found in any other creature. But there would not be a plenitude or perfection of grace if it did not extend to the first moment of her conception.

The Greek word translated "full of grace" is *kecharitomena*, which means, made gracious in the far past as in the perfect passive participle. The sense of this word as understood by the Church is thus explained in the dogmatic bull of Pius IX:

"By this unique and solemn salutation never applied to another, it is shown that the mother of God is the seat of all divine graces, decked with the special graces of the divine Spirit, and even almost the infinite treasure and inexhaustible abyss of these graces, so that she was never subject to malédiction, but was with her Son, a sharer in the perpetual blessing which she merited to hear pronounced by Elizabeth who was inspired by the divine spirit to say: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." (St. Lnk. 1. 42)

5. The words "blessed art thou among women" used both by the angel Gabriel as God's messenger and by Elizabeth when inspired by the Holy Ghost, are also a usual form of the Hebrew superlative indicating that she is the most blessed of all females of the human race. Eve was free from original sin when she was created by God, and so continued till she disobeyed God by yielding to the persuasion of the devil. We must, therefore, say also of the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was created free from sin, that is, that she had no sin at the moment of her conception, which is precisely what we mean by her immaculate conception.

6. The next question of our respected correspondent is answered in the remarks we have made above. The relation of this doctrine to that of the Church on original sin is that Mary was never contaminated with that sin, like the rest of the human race.

7. The testimonies of the Fathers regarding the perfect purity of the

Blessed Virgin Mary are very numerous. They frequently state that she was most pure, perfectly immaculate, pure, at all times, holy in the highest degree, (*supersanctis supersanctis*, etc.) Thus St. Gregory of Neocesarea says on the festival of the Annunciation: "Gabriel, an incorporeal minister was sent to a Virgin who knew no stain: *labia nesciam*: He who was free from sin was sent to one incapable of corruption.

Here we may remark that it has been said that Sts. Thomas and Bernard were opposed to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Even if such were the case, their authority would not avail against the clear tradition of the great body of Fathers of the Church, and especially against the plain definition of the dogma made in 1854.

But the fact is, these two great doctors merely fell into obscurities and imperfect notions on the subject arising out of controversies on the active and passive conception. Their obscurity would have disappeared if they had written after the definition of the doctrine, for it is almost certain that they did not mean to deny the dogma as Pope Pius IX. has defined it.

8. The feast of Mary's Conception was kept in the Eastern Church in the seventh century as St. Andrew of Crete attests.

John of Enboa states that it was observed in many churches in his day. (8th century.) Peter Bishops of Argos says that in his time it was kept in Sicily, and there is extant a Neapolitan Calendar of the same period (9th century) on which the feast is mentioned. It is found in the Calendar of the Church of England, which fact proves that it was kept in England long before the Reformation.

The title of the feast was changed to the "Immaculate Conception" when it was deemed advisable to call special attention to the doctrine, which was during the last century. 9. The doctrine was definitely promulgated by Pope Pius IX. on 8 December, 1854, after consultation with the Bishops of the world. About two hundred Bishops were present at this promulgation, though there was no general Council held at that time.

ANOTHER CHURCH UNION MOVEMENT.

According to a despatch received by the London Chronicle, (England) a movement having Church union in view between the Anglican and Presbyterian denominations in Australia is reported to have a good prospect of being successful. A conference between Anglicans and Presbyterians took place recently at which it was agreed to "side-track" the crucial difficulties connected with the historic episcopate and the recognition of non-episcopal ordinations.

Nothing is said of the treatment of the Calvinistic teachings of Presbyterianism in case the union should take place. We may infer from this that as an equivalent to the concessions made by the Anglicans, the Presbyterians will also engage in the pleasant pastime of side-tracking. These teachings of the Westminster Confession of Faith are known to have become distasteful to Presbyterians in general, and they are now not believed in even by those who still cling to that Confession. This is true especially of the Presbyterian doctrines of Predestination or Preterition, and the Reprobation of the infant children of the non-elect. These doctrines have for years been quietly dropped, even from the accepted creeds of the Free Kirks in England and the United States, though in divergent ways.

The Free Church in England has for long had a new and short creed which practically supplants the Westminster Confession. The American Church dropped these objectionable doctrines by an explanatory note which sets them aside by explaining that they are not to be received in the sense which has always been put upon them.

In Canada, the Confession is still nominally regarded as the Standard of Faith; but the readiness with which it was side-tracked during the negotiations which have been carried on looking to a union with the Methodists and Congregationalists, shows that it has but a slender respect from either Presbyterians or Congregationalists, both of whom have outwardly appeared to accept it at the present time.

The Free Kirk in Scotland though at first adhering strongly to the Calvinistic teachings of the Confession, is known to have repudiated it in practice since its union with the United Presbyterian Church, "and only the Old Established Church of Scotland, together with the noted "We Frees" remain as staunch upholders of the five points. Perhaps also these points are held by the Japanese Presbyterians who have insisted upon forming a united Church in spite of the divers Presbyterian Mission Boards who converted them. But practically the Presbyterian churches

have abandoned the moorings which attached them to their old love, John Calvin.

It is but fair to add that presently Presbyterians are not unanimous in the readiness to give up the distinctive doctrines of Presbyterianism for the sake of union with sects which they have hitherto denounced as teaching unscripural doctrine. Some of the most respected Presbyterian ministers in Canada have protested vigorously against the giving up of doctrines which God has revealed for the sake of becoming members of a larger and more influential church, and of making a saving in church finances. These reverend gentlemen say with reason, that such action will be an admission that their Church has been teaching false doctrine for three hundred years, and more. But it appears that in Australia as well as Canada those who thus contend will be overwhelmed by the strong parties which favor union.

How the action of the Australian Episcopalians in admitting Presbyterian ministers to become "priests" of the Anglican Church will be received by the authorities of the Church of England in other parts of the British Empire, it is difficult to say, and we are not prepared to predict. All admit that the Presbyterians have no Apostolic succession, and they do not claim it. The lack of this succession is, indeed, admitted in the Presbyterian Directory of ordination. We are told there, that it is

"Manifest by the word of God that no man ought to take upon him the office of a minister of the Gospel until he be lawfully called and ordained thereto."

Nevertheless we are told immediately before the above quoted passage that, "In extraordinary cases, something extraordinary may be done."

We wonder where in Holy Scripture such an exceptional case is to be discovered.

THE ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL BILL.

Our readers are already aware that the English Education Bill, known as the Birell Bill, which was passed by the British House of Commons, but was so much amended by the House of Lords that its character was completely changed, has been finally withdrawn by the Government, as it was considered impossible for these two branches of Parliament to come to any agreement on the subject, the fundamental principles on which the two houses based their action being entirely opposite. In a word, the House of Commons composed of several different parties seeking different objects, has, nevertheless, a solid majority of straight supporters of the Government, of whom the non-Conformists constitute a larger percentage than ever they gained before, and it might be presumed that this now large party of legislators would be inclined to favor the non-Conformist views on the Education question which have been a subject for agitation ever since the Education Bills of 1902 and 1903 passed through Parliament under the auspices of the Balfour Government.

The Church of England and the Catholics were of one mind on the question of giving religious education in the schools; and for this reason they demanded that the Voluntary schools, which were under the control of these two religious bodies should be placed upon as favorable a footing in regard to Government aid as the Board schools supported by non-Conformists in which no religious teaching was permitted.

It is a fact that a large majority of the children of the nation have attended the Voluntary or religious schools, some of which were under Methodist control. But the non-Conformists held that under this system they were obliged to pay for the instruction in two religions in which they do not believe. Strange to say, even the Methodists, whose schools would be equally benefited with those of the Catholics and Anglicans by the change demanded, took the side of the general non-Conformist body, being willing to forego the advantage they received, that they might not in union with other non-Conformists against Catholics and Anglicans.

It was very properly maintained by the supporters of the Balfour Government that even if those who desired to have religious teaching in the schools were a minority of the people, their conscientious convictions should be respected. Much more should this be the case whereas it was shown that the advocates of religious teaching constituted a large majority.

The bills were passed by Parliament, and for the first time since 1870, when the Board schools were established, the Voluntary schools were placed as nearly as possible on the same plane with the Board school, so far as Government aid was concerned.

The non-Conformists were thus beaten for the time being, but they did not

give up the fight. A passive resistance was spread throughout England which the malcontents rebeld taxes, and tried refusing were obliged, to pay the taxes imp their goods being sold amount, and in some cases resistance to the tax given, the parties often were in prison.

The triumph of the last election gave the late an opportunity to upon the Government, which we have referred Bill was prepared and of Commons. Its defeat of Lords, however, brook which could not compromise, and the and buried. It was the Government had the people to pass issues at stake during campaign were of such a nature that the tion was completely in.

As originally proposed bill was very objectionable and Catholics, exposed to confiscate the turning them into B out even granting con was provided in the wishes of the n But after the rejection Lords, the Governmen able, and we are info been agreed between and the Irish Nationa the bill be brought will provide for the oment of religious scho of the religious to wh belong. This will be a veto on the appoin in the schools, and teaching will be given are not of the relig shall be taught in the exempt from attendan instruction which sh may suppose that on acceptable both to Catholics may be pre at the next session o

MARIE O. We published over what extensive review Secret's books, with Temporal Power, Christian and anti that authores was that review at the several corresponden know why such a b read by Catholics, o who has respect for ion, against who director for the pro anarchy, in the causi fully maligns the pro Popes who have memorics, but who lence and Christian the reach of the v modern unbelievers on the world under action.

We presume that offended because have not joined in tion with which I have been received delights to encoura attacks the very throwing a glance the personality of the evil principles anarchists.

We admit that in book "The treat no longer openly e Athelstan, as her spark of religio quenched however. But it is not on to review this book of a multi-millions several counties c as a "trap whether there is true love and this deceitful w among the poor, a potted, rewards f and unexpected m

But the feature We wish to call at the lady authores sity whatever r be sole purpose o arrows at it. Out is introduced into press purpose of of the greatest kir rlay to the High Church of Englan respected, truly sincere body am men, and devote the spiritual nec

We do not pres selves the spol Church clergy, w take care of them test against the