

The Catholic Record.

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

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THE FREE LIBRARY.

Reading some of the notices about the Carnegie benefactions of libraries to different places, one is at a loss to account for their eulogistic strain. They fairly bubble over with superlatives, and we imagine that the editors who are responsible for them must have a paid up subscription list or a chance of securing a Government contract.

However, we do not quarrel with them for singing the praises of the retired iron master. We are getting accustomed to it and even to his wondrous photographs bearing the legend "Taken by our own correspondent." Besides, it is a much better business than fabricating political opponents and furnishing campaign jokes that were in use before the war. But we cannot for our part be so jubilant as our friends over the free library. It may be that our vision is not keen enough to discern its benefits, or that we see no reason why citizens should begin to cackle because Mr. Carnegie has seen fit to put us on his list. But we should like to think that this generation is on the tip-toe of expectancy for the time when it can seat itself down and sate itself with knowledge. We should like to imagine that the "world's best literature" in twelve volumes and a miscellaneous assortment of "chestnuts" doing duty as the "world's eloquence" are just the very things to make us move along a little more swiftly. But we cannot do it. Again, it may be that our taste and imagination are undeveloped, but nevertheless we confess to a feeling of wonder whenever we happen upon the very complimentary references to the fast multiplying free library. We are unable to see any grounds for them. If all or one half of the books taken from public libraries were calculated to improve the moral and intellectual tone of the community we should not be slow to give them our tribute of eulogy. But librarians tell us that most of the books read are worthless. The budding youth and maiden can get anything in the shape of fiction, and become soft-brained and out of elbows spiritually. They begin to love the trivial and paltry, and join the ranks of those who read without aim, without attention, and without profit.

Reading, as we understand it, is rather hard work. It takes toll and both eyes wide open to see why a book written in the long ago is still a part of the world's literature. Days may go by before we understand the meaning of a passage, but when we do we take a step towards learning how, as Ruskin phrases it, to form conceptions of proper dignity and worthiness. But a desultory reader will never do this. He has no sense to understand that novel-sucking is befuddling work. A work that would help him, by taking him out of his lazy and shiftless methods of thought, is passed over as dry or uninteresting. Reading confining itself to books which deal with the paltry, if not debasing, is death to good taste and to concentration of mind. We might say something about taste, but we hurry on. Suffice it to remark that desultory readers are generally the ones who, because they are ignorant and undisciplined, patronize worthless shows, aim at having and not being, and play at life. But what shall we say of concentration of mind? This is one of the age's watchwords. But will a youth who is allowed to roam through the shelves of a library gain or lose in power of attention? Would it not be much better for him to be out playing ball than lounging around a reading room or dawdling over some effusion of Hall Caine? Would it not be a greater blessing to a community to have strong-muscled athletes than weak-brained fiction guzzlers? Suppose we build a gymnasium in every town. Then we might not hear so much "nonsense" about our culture, and our representative citizens might desist from emitting dreary platitudes on the advantages of libraries.

A writer in Blackwood's says that something else than ink and paper is needed for the vague quality called culture, and not even the champions of free libraries are wholly satisfied with their achievement. They are obliged to confess that the number of real students is small indeed. They complain bitterly that the vast majority of readers demand no more than the trumpy novel, which, as an anodyne, is a formidable rival to the gin palace.

Yet, how should it be otherwise? It is a fruitless task to thrust intelligence upon an unwilling populace, and it is doubtful whether the gift of a building and the sudden imposition of an unwelcome rate are the wisest possible encouragements of learning.

We go further and say that the free library does much to foster shallowness and self-conceit and to render us incapable of appreciating good work. And we believe that if they were few and far between we should have sounder heads and hearts—a generation that might not talk glibly about literature, but that would be sincere and honest and anxious to learn something. Then we might meet again the man of one book, and the indulgent tax-payer would be freed from the necessity of providing novels for those who can afford to buy them at a book-store.

It has been said that the "free library" is a great "educative power." The phrase has been thrown around so often, and recklessly, by speakers throughout Canada that we are beginning to believe there is something in it. And so there is, but we must have a good microscope to see it. We may be quite sure that the young, if allowed to use their own judgment in the selection of reading matter, will blunder upon what is unprofitable and hurtful. Even with the best of intentions, they are liable to go wrong in this direction.

Says Tolstoi, in "The Peasant": "If in our day a bright young man from the common people, desirous of educating himself, should be given access to all the extant books and papers and left to his own efforts, it is highly probable that for ten years he would read nothing but trivial and immoral things. It would be as hard for him to run up against a good book as to find the proverbial needle in the haystack. The worst of it is that, reading bad books constantly, his understanding and taste would be continuously perverted so that if he ever found a meritorious work he would have no capacity to comprehend it."

We may be told that the opinions of critics serve to guide us in our choice of reading. But criticism is a lost art. Mr. Birrell does a little of it on the other side of the water, but with us—and we have it upon the authority of Prof. Brandt Mathew—every one is his own critic. Moreover, the gentlemen who pronounce upon books are often like puppets pulled hither and thither by a publisher who is not troubled with a sense of responsibility to the public. We have heard praise bestowed in generous measure on works saturated with immorality and infidelity. The wise parent should be the "critic" for his household. If his children patronize the library he will see that they do not befall mind and soul with literature of the trashy and sensational character. Keep the family book shelf pure and wholesome. Put among your books The Imitation of Christ and the Introduction to a Devout Life by St. Francis de Sales. These are rather old-fashioned, but never out of date. A dose of them now and then will serve as an excellent tonic.

ANOTHER NATIONALIST SPLIT REPORTED.

It is stated in a despatch from Dublin that a split has been created in the Irish party by the secession of nine members under the leadership of Mr. Timothy Healy and Mr. Tully, who are dissatisfied with the leadership of Mr. J. E. Redmond for the reason that the boisterous acts of members of the party in Parliament are not restrained under the present leadership.

Whether or not the cause of the split is correctly reported, there seems to be some foundation for the statement that some split has really taken place, as a later despatch says that Mr. J. E. Redmond denounced the reported formation of a new party as a disloyal attempt to disrupt a united party.

Mr. Redmond was given a grand reception on his arrival in Dublin on Nov. 19th, a torchlight procession being held in his honor. He declared that with the party united the hope of gaining the cause of Ireland is growing bright.

It will be remembered by our readers that on a former occasion some years ago a very regrettable split arose in the Nationalist party owing to a serious disgrace which threw a dark cloud over the moral character of Mr. Charles Parnell. Afterward there occurred another split whereby the party became divided into three warring factions, and the dissension lasted for years.

We hope that this dark page of Irish history is not to be reproduced, as such a disaster would delay the attainment of Home Rule for years to come.

THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Apoc. Letter of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. Approbating the Commission for Promoting the Study of the Sacred Scriptures.

LEO XIII.

FOR PERPETUAL MEMORY OF THIS MATTER.

Freeman's Journal.

Mindful of the vigilance and zeal which we of all others are bound to put forth for the proper custody of the deposit of faith. We published in 1893 the Encyclical letter "Providentissimus Deus," in which We dilated upon many points concerning the study of the Sacred Scriptures. The importance and utility of this great subject demanded that We should devote the utmost attention in our power to this matter, now especially when the progress of modern scholarship has opened the door to so many new, and at times temerarious questions. We, therefore, set forth what all Catholics, and especially what those in sacred orders, might do in their respective spheres on behalf of the sacred studies; and We described minutely the mode and manner in which these studies might be advanced in harmony with the present time. Nor was Our document without fruit. It is pleasant for Us to remember the many expressions of obedience on the part of Bishops and other learned men which followed as a result, in emphasizing the necessity and importance of Our injunctions, and in promising their aid to have them put into effect. And it is equally pleasing for Us to remember the efforts made in this direction by Catholics who gave themselves with enthusiasm to these studies.

But it is clear to Us that the causes which impelled Us to write that letter still exist and even increase in urgency. Our previous instructions with still greater force, commending the same again and again to the zeal of Our Venerable Brothers of the Episcopate.

And in order that Our purpose may be more easily and abundantly realized, We have now determined upon adding a new and authoritative aid for this end. For, in view of the complexity of modern studies, it has become impossible for individual interpreters of the Sacred Books to explain and defend them as the needs of the hour require. It has therefore become necessary that their common studies should receive assistance and direction under the auspices and guidance of the Apostolic See. We think this can be done by adopting in this matter the same plan We have followed in promoting other studies. We are, then, pleased to establish a species of Council or Commission, as it is commonly called, of serious men whose duty it will be to devote their entire energy to ensure that the Divine words may receive that more minute explanation of them demanded by the time, and may be of service and profit to the whole body of the Christian Republic. In order that the members composing this Council may collectively fulfill this most serious and honorable duty, they will have for their special guidance the following principles:

First of all they will carefully investigate the modern trend of thought in this branch of study, and regard nothing discovered by modern research as of the utmost importance and promissory to public use whatever may from day to day be discovered useful for Biblical exegesis. Thus they will pay great attention to philology with its kindred sciences, and carefully follow their developments. For immediately attacks on the Scriptures are ready to prevent work of care and diligence. They must work especially to prevent among Catholics the prevalence of that objectionable mode of thinking and acting which attributes undue weight to the opinions of the heterodox, almost as though the true knowledge of Scripture were to be sought principally in the writings of those who do not belong to us. For no Catholic can have any doubt about the truth which we have already dwelt upon at greater length, that God did not deliver up the Scriptures to the private judgment of doctors, but gave them to be interpreted by the teaching authority of the Church: "in matters of faith and morals, relating to the formation of Christian doctrine, the true sense of Sacred Scripture which has been and is held by Holy Mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; and so no one may lawfully interpret Holy Scripture contrary to this sense or even in opposition to the unanimous consensus of the Fathers" (Conc. Vatic. Sess. III cap. II) that the Divine Books

are of such a nature the laws of hermeneutics do not avail to dispel the religious obscurity in which they are wrapped, but for this a guide and teacher has been divinely given in the Church; and, finally, that the legitimate sense of Divine Scripture is not by any means to be found outside the Church, nor can it be handed down by those who have repudiated the Church's teaching power and authority.

The men who form the Council will therefore, have to be sedulous in the guardianship of those principles and endeavor to win over by persuasion all those who are prone to an excessive admiration for the heterodox, in order that they may more studiously hear and obey the true teacher, the Church. And although it has now become an established Catholic practice to take advantage of the writings of others especially in criticism, this must be done always with caution and a judicious spirit. Our own workers will, with the sanction of the Council, cultivate the art of criticism as being of prime importance for the understanding of the opinion of theologians. We have no objection that in this branch they make use of aid furnished by the heterodox. They must be on their guard, however, not to be led thereby to intemperance of judgment, for this is frequently the result of the system known as the higher criticism, the dangerous tenority of which We have more than once denounced.

In the third place, with regard to that branch of the study directly concerned with the exposition of the Scriptures, seeing that this is a subject of the greatest utility for the faithful, the Council will have to devote special care to it. It is hardly necessary to say that in this, the sense of which has been determined either by the sacred authors or has been authentically declared by the Church, men must be convinced that this is the only interpretation that can be approved according to sound hermeneutics. On the other hand, there are quite a number of texts on which there has hitherto been given a certain and definite exposition by the Church and here private doctors may follow and defend that opinion which seems to them individually to be the most reasonable, but in these cases the analogy of faith and Catholic teaching are to be followed as a guiding principle. When the questions of this kind come under discussion great care must be taken not to allow the heat of argument to outstep the bounds of Christian charity, and the revealed truths and divine traditions themselves to seem to be made a matter of doubt. For it would be idle to hope for great results from the diverse studies of many individuals without a certain principle of agreement and the frank recognition of fundamental principles. Wherefore it will also form a part of the work of the Council to ensure a due and dignified treatment of the principal questions discussed between Catholic doctors, and to afford all the light and authority of which they are possessed to the attainment of a decision. One important result of this policy will be that it will afford the Apostolic See to declare with proper moment what is to be inviolably held by Catholics, what is to be reserved for further investigation, and what is to be left to the judgment of private individuals.

We therefore by these letters institute in this "alma Urbs" a Council or Commission for promoting the study of the Sacred Scriptures according to the laws above defined, in the hope that it may conduce to the preservation of Christian truth and the recognition of it. It is Our wish that the Council be composed of a number of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church to be named by Our authority, and it is Our intention to add to these with the title and office of "Consultors," as in other sacred Councils a number of distinguished men of different nationalities, noted for their piety, and especially for their knowledge. It will be the duty of this Council to hold regular meetings, to publish reports either on certain days or as opportunity may require to reply to those who may ask its opinion, and finally to promote in every way possible the defense and the increase of those studies in question. It is Our wish, too, that all matters referred to the Council in general be referred to the Pontiff by that one of the Consultors whom the Pontiff shall have appointed for this purpose.

In order to afford a timely aid for these labors in common, we have now set apart a certain portion of Our Vatican Library; and We shall see to it shortly that a large collection of codices and volumes dealing with Biblical subjects be here placed so as to be at hand for consultation. To carry out this plan it would be very desirable that Catholics of means should render their assistance by contributing funds or by forwarding useful books—so doing they will be co-operating by timely service with God, the Author of the Scriptures, and with the Church.

We have, indeed, full confidence that this undertaking of Ours, inasmuch as it concerns the preservation of the faith and the eternal salvation of souls, will be abundantly favored by the Divine goodness, and that through it all Catholics who have devoted themselves to the Sacred Books will respond with full and unlimited obedience to these prescriptions of the Apostolic See.

All the provisions that it has seemed good to Us to make in this matter, We hereby ordain and decree to have the full force of statutes and decrees, all other provisions to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome at St. Peter's, under the Ring of the Fisherman, on October 30, in the year 1902, the twenty-fifth of Our Pontificate. A. CARB. MACCHI.

THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE.

INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE DISCOURSE.

On a recent Sunday Rev. William O'Brien Pardon, S. J., the renowned orator, occupied the pulpit of Our Lady of Grace Church, Hoboken, N. J. His subject was "The Catholic Church and the Bible." Among the audience were many Protestants, attracted by the speaker's fame, and probably eager to learn what defense would be made to the oft-repeated charge that the Church was opposed to the circulation of the Bible. In the course of his sermon Father Pardon said:

"The old and untrue claim that the Catholic Church has kept the Bible from the people is still heard from Protestants despite the fact that history as it is beginning to be written in the twentieth century is giving us some of the truth so long withheld. Catholic scholarship has been underrated in the past, and some of the arguments that have been used against the Church's relation to the Bible now appear to be so ridiculous that Catholics are content to ignore them and permit Protestants to do all the refutation. Atheists and agnostics of the present day are doing some good in the world. The history they are writing is free from Protestant prejudices, and the Catholic Church is beginning to come into its own."

"To begin with the Church's relation to the Bible it is necessary to go back to the fifteenth century. Printing was not invented until 1438, and prior to that time the number of Bibles in the world was necessarily small. The Church was doing its utmost, however, to increase the number. The earliest work in the scriptorium of the early monasteries testifies to this fact. Men and women were kept copying Bibles from morning till night, the beautiful story being told of a German nun whose feat of writing out two whole Bibles was regarded with such veneration that it was inscribed on her tombstone. If the Church in the beginning were opposed to the Bible, why did it take such pains to have it preserved?"

"The Bible, however, has never been regarded by the Church as the only source of truth, and it is on this point that it differs with the teachings of Martin Luther. When Christ came to earth He came to teach a message from the Father, and the early Christians received the faith long before the New Testament was written. If Christ wanted the Bible to be made the foundation of the faith He would have been forced to invent printing several centuries earlier than it was. This was clearly not His desire, yet Luther ordained to his followers that if they wanted to know what Christ taught they would have to have recourse to the Bible. "A stage and melodramatic story of Luther's discovery of the Bible—how he came upon it hid away among dusty tomes in the library of his monastery; how he exclaimed fervently, 'This is the word of God, and it is being kept from the people,' and how finally he launched his Reformation with the principal object in view of disseminating the word of God among the people. That this story is pure fiction I will attempt to prove to you by the following prospectus sent out by the firm which published Jacob's Life of Luther—a firm which has always been regarded as eminently a partisan in a Protestant way."

Father Pardon here read the prospectus, which said that the work would have none of the eulogistic narrative of Luther which figured in D'Aubigne's history (the one the preacher referred to), but would be a critical biography. He continued by quoting from a statue erected during the reign of Henry VIII. "As a stage and melodramatic story forbidding 'any woman, excepting gentlemen, journeymen, artificers, or apprentices' from reading the Bible. He also quoted from Buckingham's 'People in the Middle Ages,' telling how St. Dunstan, as penance for an offense committed by King Edgar, made him distribute 198 copies of the Bible in the vernacular among his people."

"History, as I said before," he said, "is beginning to tell the truth, and the most interesting affair in some time was the recent sermon of a Protestant clergyman of Brooklyn who quoted the Pope's opinion in support of Bible. Imagine a Protestant clergyman holding up the Pope of Rome as an authority on the Bible—the book that the Church has hitherto always been accused of suppressing! It is enough to make Martin Luther turn in his grave."

"As a matter of fact, it is the Protestant Church that is daily becoming more hostile to the Bible. Indifferent sects are tearing it apart, page by page, and if they keep on little will be left between the covers. The Rev. Dr. DeCosta made this his principal reason for renouncing Protestantism. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, while it has never accepted the Bible as the foundation of faith, has ever been ready to defend it. Christ told His disciples to go forth and preach, and there was no St. Peter's Printing Co. organized when they began the propagation of the faith. The clergy of the Catholic Church, as the lawful successors of these disciples, are carrying on the same propagation."

"Poverty is uncomfortable, as I can testify," said James A. Garfield, "but nine times out of ten the best thing that can happen to a young man is to be tossed overboard and compelled to sink or swim. In all my acquaintance, I have never known a man to be drowned who was worth the saving."—Success.

THE CARDINAL TURNS THE FIRST SOD.

Special to THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

Wednesday afternoon, November 13,

was a time of unusual interest in the history of the Missionary Movement in this country, for at that time His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons turned the first sod on the site of the new Apostolic Mission House that has been set aside for missionary purposes by the Hierarchy of the Church in the United States. The institution of this home was first broached at the Winchester Conference of Missionaries to non-Catholics. It readily assumed definite shape until a month ago a beginning was made in a most modest way in the upper story of Keane Hall at the Catholic University. An application was made to the trustees of the University for a site on which to build a college worthy of the Missionary Movement represented by this Mission House.

The trustees readily and gladly acceded to the petition of the Catholic Missionary Union and assigned a parcel of land, 200x200, close to the Eastern gate of the University grounds, and executed a lease giving the Catholic Missionary Union control of the aforesaid property for a long term of years at a nominal rent. The following day all the Archbishops who had gathered at the University for their annual meeting assembled at the site selected, for the ceremony of turning the first sod. Together with the Archbishops there were the members of the various religious orders who are located at the University—the Marists, the Franciscans, the Sulpicians, the Paulists and the Fathers of the Holy Cross, Father Elliott, the present Rector of the Apostolic Mission House, Father A. P. Doyle, C. S. P., the Treasurer and Secretary of the Catholic Missionary Union, and Mgr. Kennedy, the Rector of the American College at Rome. At the appointed moment Cardinal Gibbons stepped forward and in a vigorous way dug the sod into the soil and turned up a sod, and as he did so a rousing cheer was sent up from the hundreds of ecclesiastics who were present. Archbishop Ryan could not resist the opportunity of saying a good thing, so, pointing to a bit of sod that was lying close at hand, he remarked that "it would be well for us to cling to the old sod," and another cheer rent the air.

This short and simple ceremony is pregnant with great meaning for the Church in the United States. The new Apostolic Mission House will be begun soon. When completed it will be the cradle of the Missionary movement in the United States. Its immediate purpose will be the training of diocesan priests for the Apostolate abroad. Their work, while missionary, will be purely diocesan. They will provide for every Bishop a company of high infantry, as it were, who may be deputed to do special diocesan work, particularly for the non-Catholics. The non-Catholic Mission Movement hopes that before long will be established in every diocese such a band of missionaries. The Apostolic Mission House will be devoted primarily to the training of these missionaries. But in the growth of the work there is no part in the missionary field that it will not take in. The foreign missionary field in the far East is at present open to American priests but very few have entered it. In the course of time the Apostolic Mission House will provide for this important branch of the work. At any rate the ceremony of last week means that the Church in the United States has taken hold of the work. She has placed the little plant in the soil at her own nursery at the Catholic University, and under her fostering protection it will be a great, powerful tree in which the birds of every clime will find rest.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY.

ITS PRINCIPLES PUT INTO PRACTICE AT MURARO, ITALY.

Don Cerutti, a parish priest in the little town of Muraro, in Northern Italy has become thoroughly imbued with the principles of Christian Democracy, laid down by the Holy Father in his now famous Encyclical of January 18, 1901. He has been industriously engaged in putting those principles into practice, and his success is truly marvelous.

He proposed first a savings bank for his people. The idea gained favor, and there are now 257 associates, with a fund of 29,876 lire (about \$4,000). Then he thought of erecting houses which would assure comfort and moral safeguards. Nineteen were opened towards the middle of August, making twenty-six in all. The houses are of different styles and surrounded by garlands with flower-pots. After awhile the tenants became owners. "For every laborer a home and garden," is the motto adopted by this priest economist. Don Cerutti has had the houses insured and the lives of the tenants in such a way that, if they die before having paid the full value of the home, the children come to possess it absolutely, without further payment.

Public attention has been awakened by this undertaking. Signor Luzzati, author of a law now before Parliament to provide similar houses on a large scale, wrote a flattering letter to the zealous pastor. So did Professor Toniolo, the great Catholic leader. The opening of the homes was made a religious ceremony, presided over by the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice. A large number of persons received Holy Communion.

When we pray to God with entire assurance, it is Himself who has given us the spirit of prayer.—St. Cyprian.

FLATU-RTURN, PEPSIA, NIGHT CURER