

The Catholic Record.

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

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The Catholic Record.

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A BLASPHEMOUS ATTEMPT.

The journalistic world is awaiting the outcome of Rev. Mr. Sheldon's attempt to conduct a newspaper "on Christ like lines." We are so optimistic, however, as to believe that he will not persuade many to follow in his steps. And we may say, also, that to advance one's own views, and to publish them under the title "How Christ Would Run a Modern Newspaper," requires an amount of blasphemous assurance that is bewildering.

CHANGE OF RELIGION.

"We will live and did as did our forefathers; we will not unchurch ourselves by embracing Catholicity," say many Protestants. Werner, the celebrated convert, was once told by friends that he never thought much of a man who had changed his religion. "Nor I either," replied Werner; "and this is the very reason why I have always despised Luther."

THE CHURCH AND NON-CATHOLICS.

The good news from non-Catholic missions is certainly a sign of the times. The missionaries are full of zeal that is tempered with charity. They restrict themselves to expositions of Catholic faith and practice, which are listened to with the greatest attention by large audiences. The traditional fictions, sophisms, calumnies, and mockeries with which it is customary to assail Catholicity, are, much to the amazement and instruction of our separated brethren, given their true value.

The Church, as represented by the ordinary preacher, and as she is, are two very different things. We know that the up-bringing and constant recital of nursery tales invented centuries ago have woven into the texture and fibre of the Protestant brain the idea that Catholicity is inimical to all that is holy and true.

The wonder is that educated men and women have so long accepted so unsubstantiating the fanciful creations of diseased minds and neglected to give to the all important affair of religion the attention they devote to the most ordinary business affair. And it is all the more astonishing when we read their own writers have told them that "forgery seems to have been the peculiar disease of Protestantism." Whittaker, from whom we have taken the above quotation, declares that forgery—though he blushes to say it—"is peculiar to the reformed." But our friends are beginning to find that the old stories have not the same interest for them and are beginning to enquire. That is exactly what we want. The man who sees that he has been living in the dark—and he will see that after a few moments with a little catechism—and prays honestly for light, will not remain long outside the fold.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE BIBLE.

The editor of the Presbyterian Review is, judging from his comments on non-Catholic missions, in a glad state of mind. The Paulist Fathers, many of them with "all the advantage of an inner knowledge of the system," are given a few gracious words of praise, but are reminded that while not without plausible arguments to sustain their claims, they are, on a free appeal to reason and Scripture, bound to lose.

He then goes on to beat the ecclesiastical drum to the tune of the old hoary charge about the Bible—its dissemination, etc.

The editor, despite his pretended good humor, is one of the theological partisans who, according to Canon Farrar, are the most unscrupulously bitter and most conspicuously unfair. What boots it to prefer charges that have not a scintilla of evidence to support them? He should know, as every man with any semblance of education does know, what value is set on the Bible by the Catholic Church, and how she has, in stress and storm, preserved it and guarded it from the defacing fingers of both fanatic and rationalist.

Let the editor attend the lectures,

and he will find out that the Bible—the only infallible rule of faith and practice, as runs a clause in his Confession of Faith—is the most unscriptural thing in the world, and has been regarded as such by most eminent Protestants.

The Bible, says Dr. Navin, is not the principle of Christianity, nor yet the rock on which the Church is built. It never claims this character, and it can be no better than idolatry and superstition to worship it with any such view.

Dr. Delbouck is no less emphatic in his teaching when he declares that "He who will take the Scriptures of the New Testament as the highest source of a knowledge of faith, he declares it to be something which in its very nature it cannot be; which is not in consonance with the intentions of the Lord; and which, from its own evidence, it does not wish to be; and I add, which in the first centuries, when Christianity arose in its primitive vigor and strength, it was not."

We might go on, but we hope that the above quotations will convince the editor that there have been sincere Protestants who could not swallow the fable that the Bible has no authoritative interpreter.

Then follow some incoherent remarks about freedom of thought, and perfect freedom of thought—the last kind labeled dangerous. Dr. Briggs must have been guilty of "perfect freedom." And yet the minister, despite the breadth of mind and wise toleration, must down on his knees before the man made Westminster Confession or be adjudged a heretic.

OUR SOCIETIES.

Why do not our societies exercise more influence? is a question that seems to go begging an answer. We do not deny they are doing good work, and that their existence in some instances are evidences of sterling pluck and courage; but that they are capable of doing much more will not be denied by their staunchest friends. Now, why isn't it done? It may be of course in some favored localities, but in regions we wot of the average society is simply an organization of young men who pay their dues, more or less regularly, play billiards and have a strong conviction they belong to the greatest show on earth.

It is perfectly right to feel that our particular organization is superior to all others, provided we may be able to adduce proofs that may convince outsiders that our claim, boastful perchance, rests nevertheless upon a certain modicum of truth. We must confess, and without any wish to be captious, that, so far, we have not happened upon any aggregation of young men that realizes our ideal of a Catholic society.

One obstacle to their progress is that too often they are left severely alone by what are termed "influential Catholics." Our separated brethren are ahead of us in this respect. We have been edited time and again by the earnest and hearty assistance they give to their organizations. They render, it with gloves off—ungrudgingly—not money only, but time, counsel, everything that can shape and strengthen character. Here and there, we admit, we, too, have big-souled men who throw in their lot with our struggling societies, and who labor to energize and to direct the human activity that is either wasted on trifles or directed to ignoble ends, but they are so few as to give us just cause for shame.

We do not expect every individual who spells culture with a big C, to consort habitually with the young fellows who are tussling with the world for a livelihood. In the old Catholic times, when the brotherhood of humanity was a fact and not a fad, the poor were linked to the rich by the golden chains of charity, but in our days of utilitarianism, of sham and pretence and naturalism, believed in by those who have not courage to either deny Christ or to follow Him, this mode of action is looked upon with contempt. A corner in soap, a rise in what or an income derived mayhap from the sale of much and sundry liquors bring oftentimes intense yearning to get above the sordid aims of the moneyless—to whine and to cringe before people who have more money than themselves and above all to never be guilty of enthusiasm on the subject of Catholic interests. They

profess a great respect, for which the societies we were are deeply grateful; but co-operation and cash, which would be a good deal more to the point, are lavished on movements started by the Hon. Miss—or My Lord Mogul for the purpose of teaching the Hottentots the value of Pears' soap.

Home Hottentots are overlooked because they are not so picturesque-looking as their foreign brethren. But they must not despair. Some day a scheme will be hatched for their uplifting and improvement, and they will have an opportunity of participating in the delights of ple-socials and of assisting at concerts, patriotic and otherwise, eucure parties and various other functions indicative of culture and a high state of civilization.

Admitting the fact that the lukewarmness of Catholics make the way stony for our societies, yet we must not assign that as the chief and only cause of their slow advancement.

In every society there are liable to be elements, such as the kicker, the orator and deadhead, which are as drags on the wheels of its progress. The kicker, with his continual Mr. Chairman; the orator, with his everlasting harangues, and the deadhead, who contributes nothing but criticism; are not only a nuisance but a menace also to the stability of any organization. Organization means business, and business does not thrive on rhetoric. Another difficulty to contend with is the apathy of the average member. Keen in athletics and past master in billiards, he is a veritable "sleepy hollow" when anything demanding mental exertion is thrust before him. He gets into a lazy out of elbows way of living. Rest no trouble are his watchwords—and the red blood is drained from his brains—and he becomes a milk-sop—a thing destitute of ambition, and craving for nothing save sleep and provender. You meet him everywhere. He has no backbone and he doesn't want any. That is what makes his disease a very difficult one to grapple with. He is a negative quantity not to be reckoned with in computing the good done by the society. Then the cliques that spring up, either through negligence of officials or through ambition of a shrewd wire puller who is a member solely for his own interests, are a fruitful source of disunion and discord.

RUSKIN AND THE CHURCH

Cardinal Manning and Ruskin were warm friends. On one occasion the great Art Critic describing a luncheon with the Cardinal says: "He gave me lovely soup, roast beef, hare and currant jelly, puffed pastry, like Papal pretensions—you had but to breathe on it and it was nowhere—and those lovely preserved cherries, like kisses preserved in amber."

In his earlier writings, Ruskin evinced much anti-Catholic bigotry which he inherited from his Scotch mother. But his travels and sojourns in Catholic lands while pursuing his art studies broadened his mind in this respect and caused his religious prejudices to vanish. We have always held that it is almost impossible for the true poet or artist to be other than Catholic at least in spirit. They are irresistibly drawn to the sanctuary—their paintings, statues, music and architecture—there they feel at home and find inspiration for their noblest achievements. All the poets have sung of Christ's Virgin Mother in loftiest strain; and what could be more tenderly Catholic than Longfellow's sweetest of domestic stories—Evangeline? It would therefore be a matter of large surprise if Ruskin, with his poetic temperament and artistic genius, were not attracted to the Church, as the mistress, inspiration and patroness of all that is noblest in all the arts.

And so we find him dreaming dreams of exquisite beauty and indulging in meditations of a profoundly religious nature as he gazes upon the marvellous mosaics and other works which adorned the roof and walls of the storied sacred structures of Italy. "They were before the eyes of the devotee," he exclaims, "at every interval of his worship; vast shadowings forth of scenes to whose realization he looked forward, or of spirits whose presence he invoked." And the man, he adds, "must be little capable of receiving a religious impression of any kind who to this day does acknowledge some feeling of awe as he looks up to the pale countenances and ghostly forms which haunt the dark roofs of the baptistries of Parma and Florence, or remains altogether untouched by the majesty of the colossal images of apostles and of Him Who sent apostles that look down from the darkening gold of the domes of Venice and Pisa."

Ruskin saw also the utter fitness of Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin, for in "Fors Clavigera" he asserts that "after the most careful examination" he finds that this devotion "has never been otherwise than productive of true holiness of life and purity of character."

And thus, as the mellowing years gathered over him, his mind and heart daily grew more Catholic. Indeed, some years ago, as we learn from the London Catholic Times, Ruskin's neighbor, the venerable Father Laverly, between whom and the great Art Critic the warmest friendship existed, was able to announce that Ruskin accepted all the doctrines of the Catholic Church. It is sad to think that men like Ruskin—and there are many such—thoroughly convinced of the truth of her doctrines, go up to the very door of the Church, but never enter. Why? Because faith is a supernatural gift, which, in the inscrutable decrees of Providence, it is not always vouchsafed as a supplement to intellectual culture.—Buffalo Union and Times.

NO HOODLUMS THERE.

Writing from San Angel, D. F., Mexico, Mr. Frederick R. Guernsey said in last Sunday's Boston Herald: "A contrasting point of Mexican and American's all towns is that here we have no hoodlums or toughs. People are too polite to be so disagreeable. The insolent swaggerers of the pavement, the tobacco-spitting brutes of the street corners, and the bad small boys, old in devilry, are not in evidence in the Mexican small town. Even the poorest peon you meet answers a salute with the grace of an old Hidalgo. We wear out hat brims in a continual salutation. Very bad boys disappear; it is rumored that they have been sent to work on hot country plantations, or, if big enough, have gone into the army. All the new fellows are sought out by the town authorities and turned over to the recruiting officers. After a few years in the 'crops' they come out, usually, better men, for they have been thoroughly disciplined. But the active, arrogant, insolent and menacing hoodlum, we have him not.

"And so there are peace and pleasant walks for the ladies and young girls. Women are well treated here, and are sweet and gracious. But they are not clubbable. They are by trade house-keepers, mothers of families, and not reformers, intellectual leaders or faddists. The Mexican woman is respectful of the home, and useful as the ornament of the home, and useful as well. For her the great stone houses, the wide and inner sunny corridors, the gardens and the fountains and the birds. And she is happy in her quiet way. I have written much of the Mexican woman, but have never been able to depict her worth as it should be related. She is a home goddess, still believes in her ancient faith, and is the cheerer and counsellor of the men. People who regard the Mexican woman as sorely oppressed do not know her. She rules often by a sweet influence, and is honored in her old age, for here it is still proper to regard elderly people as the chief persons in the community. Old age is honored.

"The women go to Mass in the morning at various hours, according to their habits of early or late rising; their social status or their piety. But they all go. The church is their second home, and they love it with a deep and abiding love.

"Many of the men, even of the upper class, are diligent in church attendance, and, as a rule, the strongly religious men are the solid citizens, humane masters, and pay their bills. On Sunday mornings the town turns out to Mass, and the church at every Mass is full of men, women and children.

"Church life here has no special 'social' side; people do not have to be lured to church by any entertainment or device outside of the religious functions. There are no 'Eucaveors' or 'King's Daughters.' There is no Sunday-school (religious instruction is given in the day schools.—E. I. Review) but just plain sermons (always brief), the rites of the Church and its invincible attraction for the mass of the people. The clergy are apart: they live in the parish houses, and, with the exception of the senior priest, or cura, they do not visit the homes of the people. It is not 'good form' for the clergy to be intimate with the members of the flock. 'The soldier in his barracks, the friar in the convent,' runs the popular proverb. Yet the clergy are profoundly respected. A mystic light of reverence crowns them, and everybody is courteous to them. The young priests are hard workers, abstemious and self-denying men. They give rise to no evil report.

"So the intercourse of clergy and people is on a different basis than in the United States. Here the clergyman is a being set apart in a high and holy calling, and commands reverence for his office. He is not a manager of popular entertainments, and rarely hustles. He looks after the poor in his parish, and acquiesces the well-to-do with the necessities of the humble sufferers. Beggars are well treated and are of our town family. They are de-

serving, and get aid every day. It is a virtue, in these lands of the South, to bestow alms, and to do it yourself.

"So intimate is the connection of the family and the Church that the clergy come to occupy a place of affectionate regard in the people's mind. They bear the confessions of the faithful, they baptize, marry and bury the people. They are as essential as food and drink, and stand, in a way, as between feeble humanity and the celestial powers. That is the scheme, and it works out well in practice. Nobody in these parts is 'curious about God,' as Whitman said, nobody talks metaphysics or enunciates novel theories about life and destiny. It is all supposed to be well understood, and, if you go to hell, you must have made up your mind pretty deliberately to reach that place. But the Church does not abandon the sinner; he is watched and visited in sickness, sometimes counselled with, and in the hour of death he is the subject of affectionate care to win him back from the evil one even at the last moment. So rarely does anyone feel abandoned. The big old Church broods over humanity with great and abounding kindness. Elderly priests get to be indulgent and regard humanity as a father does his naughty children. But they do not abate a whit of their dignity or lower their priestly standard. They feel that they stand for the celestial powers, and are often plain spoken when necessary.

"Governor Rollins of New Hampshire would find no lack of religious interest in these little Mexican towns. They compare well in morality, home comfort and happiness and in every essential of human well-being, with small American towns. They lack the aggressive, inquiring spirit of our race, and do not share our irreverence. I was struck with some articles in the Atlantic Monthly on New England country town life, and it seemed to me that Mexico could make a good showing in comparison. Religion is not decadent here, and there is a general courtesy worth imitating. And yet we read of the lack of true civilization in Mexico's rubbish. That will do to talk to ocean cavalrymen, not to men who know Mexico as it really is."

AN ALTAR MADE OF ICE.

Outdoor Russian church services, with the altar made of ice, are common all over the dominions ruled by the Czar. They begin at the season of Whitsuntide, in May, and are held at intervals during the month that follows.

The altar of ice is supposed to be typical of Whit (or White) Sunday, and the services are held by the priests of the Russian Church to induce the people to give up their evil habits and live a pure and holy life. The sight of one of these gatherings, with the priests and choir arrayed in spotless white garments, is indeed an impressive one, and the singing and chanting which accompany the kneeling of the congregation before the altar are never forgotten by those who have been present.

Many people attend this service who do not go to church as a rule. They are anxious to let the world know that they believe in religion, and they imagine by thus publicly attending the open-air service of this kind they prove their love for God and their church. The services often last for several hours owing to the large congregations.

Some of the altars look a great deal more beautiful than others, for some men are masters of the art of ice cutting and are able to model the altar just as they please. In the villages it generally consists of a rule block of ice surmounted by a cross.

The decorations of some of these altars of ice are as beautiful as those which appear in the church. Russian churches are famous for their great beauty, and the costly ornaments and vessels in ordinary use look very striking as they rest upon this remarkable altar of ice.

THE INCHICORE CRIB.

Each Christmas the Church of the Oblate Fathers at Inchicore has, within the memory of the vast majority of the present generation, been the scene of the visits of innumerable gatherings of the Catholic people of Dublin, for all of whom the centre of attraction has been the beautiful "Crib." Last Christmas Day the Crib was visited during the morning and all through the afternoon by many people. St. Stephen's Day, a public holiday, has always been the special day of pilgrimage on the part of the citizens. The Crib has been constructed in a fine spacious building which formerly served as a chapel before the handsome church, of which the people of the district are so justly proud, had been erected. On entering the Crib, the visitor's attention is at once attracted to a large building on his left representing the Inn at Bethlehem. In one of the windows of the hostelry is the innkeeper repelling the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. Through the archway of the Inn one gets a view of Bethlehem, with a rugged road leading to it. In the centre of the building is the grotto stable, in which are the wonderful figures of the Divine Infant in a rough manger, of the Virgin Mother, of St. Joseph, and the adoring Shepherds. To the right

of the cave are the Kings or Wise Men, clothed in gorgeous eastern robes, and all in attitudes of prayer and adoration. Behind them are their attendants, appropriately robed, and bearing gifts. A little further on there is a striking life-like figure of a shepherd pointing in the direction of the stable, and in the act of calling to his fellow-shepherds, who are represented in a fine scene-painting witnessing the apparition of the angels, and listening to their tidings of great joy. At the extreme end of the building there is a representation of the City of Nazareth in Galilee, from which, as recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke, the foster-father of the Divine Saviour set out on the journey to Bethlehem. Great care has been bestowed upon the grouping of the figures, and the scene by the roadside is elaborated with palms and oriental vegetation, producing a very beautiful effect. The general effect is most life-like and forms a strikingly realistic representation of the first great scene in the stupendous miracle of man's Redemption.—Missionary Record, O. M. I.

A GREAT EVIL.

William J. Phipps recently spoke as follows upon "Obscene Story Telling" at a meeting of the Holy Name Society in Albany, N. Y.

"A companion evil to the evil of profanity is the practice of obscene story telling. The man or woman who is profane is generally fond of stories that are immoral, indecent and filthy. As cursing and swearing is excused because it is a habit, this evil is tolerated because it is so common. It invades every station of life and is so prevalent that we lose sight of its enormity.

"Will any one question that the inventors of these obscene stories are governed by the baser instincts of their nature and degrade their talents that might be used for nobler purposes? The wit or the humorist is the sunshine of life, and when he is clean in speech he appeals to the best and highest qualities of our nature; but when he wallows in the filthy slime of indecent story telling, he seeks to gratify the lowest and basest passions of mankind.

There are men so given to the practice that they do not hesitate to reel off their vile stuff at any time or place, and without the slightest regard for the feelings of those who are obliged to hear them. They become so habituated in the evil that they lose all notion of propriety, and do not consider whether they are pleasing to their auditors or whether they are regarded as foul mouthed bores. Any man, unless he is absolutely devoid of all gentlemanly qualities, would hesitate to say anything personally displeasing to any one in his company on any subject; but still men who call themselves gentlemen will insult another's intelligence and sense of decency without the slightest hesitancy. He knows that if he did offend another by saying anything displeasing or insulting on other lines, the person so offended would resent the insult; and why, when we are thus insulted by a positively vile creature—aye, I may say best—do we not resent the insult? St. Francis de Sales, writing on this subject, says: 'If some fool should address himself to you in a lascivious manner, convince him that your ears are offended, either by turning immediately away or by some other mark of resentment, as your discretion may direct.'

"Everywhere is the evil to be found. Nor is the evil found among men alone. What a shame that it contaminates the gentler sex! It is indulged in by the learned men as well as the unlearned. It puts the loafer who practices it on a par with the so-called gentleman in whom it is found. Nor is station in life a barrier to its influence: it is found with the rich and with the poor. The boy full of life and energy, whose mind should be bent upon the highest and noblest sentiments of human life, is tainted with the evil; and the gray-beard, with life ebbing from him and with energies wasted, standing upon the brink of the grave, whose waning days should be spent in prayer, will shake his feeble old frame with laughter at a filthy story."

OF INTEREST TO 'ESCAPES.'

The news dispatches announce that a corporation has been formed in Wisconsin for the purpose of building "a refuge for priests, monks, and nuns who have been converted from the Roman Catholic Church." As Catholics, we appreciate the efforts of our Protestant friends to care for these brands snatched for the burning, and we hope the best and most modern methods will be adopted in the management of the refuge. It need not be a spacious building. So far as we know, the Keely Cure is still the most effective method of treatment when a real desire for improvement exists in the patient. Where this last factor exists, the Cure will reconstruct the general health of the average convert, "brace him with tonics, quiet his nerves, regulate his diet, and tell him how to keep well." But no remedy has been discovered that will cure a drunkard against his will.—Ave Maria.