The Catholic Record.

Published Weekly at 484 and 486 Richmond street, London, Ontario.
Price of subscription—$2.00 per annum.

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Messrs. Luke King, John Nigh, P. J. Neven and Miss Sarah Hanley are fully authorized to receive subscriptions and transact all other business for THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

Agent for Newfoundland, Mr. T. J. Wall St. Johns.

Rates of Advertising—Ten cents per line each insertion, agate measurement.

Approved and recommended by the Archbishops of Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa and St. Boniface, the Bishops of London, Hamilton, Peterborough, and Ogdensburg, N. Y., and the clergy throughout the Dominion.

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.

When subscribers change their residence it is important that the old as well as the new address be sent us.

Agents or collectors have no authority to stop your paper unless the amount due is paid.

Matter intended for publication should be mailed in time to reach London not later than Monday morning. Please do not send us poetry. Obituary and marriage notices sent by subscribers must be in a condensed form, to insure insertion.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION.

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA,
Ottawa, Canada, March 7th, 1903.

To the Editor of THE CATHOLIC RECORD, London, Ont.:

Dear Sir: For some time past I have read our estimable paper, THE CATHOLIC RECORD, and congratulate you upon the manner in which it is published.

Its matter and form are both good: and a truly Catholic spirit pervades the whole.

Therefore, with pleasure, I can recommend it to the faithful.

Blessing you, and wishing you success.

Believe me, to remain,
Yours faithfully in Jesus Christ,
† D. FALCONIO, Arch. of Larissa,
Apost. Deleg.

LONDON, SATURDAY, MAY 21, 1904.

CLERICAL CHANGES.

The Bishop of London has made the following changes in the diocese:

Owing to the illness and resignation of Father Tobin, Stratford becomes vacant, and the Rev. Father McGee of Maidstone is appointed Pastor of Stratford, and will build the new church for the new parish in that city.

Father McCabe is transferred from La Salette to Maidstone, and Father John Gnam from Hesson to La Salette.

Father Forster of Bothwell is appointed to Mount Carmel, which parish became vacant by the death of the late lamented Father Tiernan; and Father O'Neil, assistant at St. Thomas, is made Administrator of the parish of Bothwell.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

A meeting was held last week in Toronto at which representatives were present from the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches of Canada, for the purpose of furthering the cause of union between these denominations, the result of which was the unanimous adoption of the following resolution:

"While recognizing the limitations of our authority as to any action that would commit our respective churches in regard to a proposal that is yet in the initial stage, we feel free, nevertheless, to say that we are of one mind, that organic union is both desirable and practicable, and we commend the whole subject to the sympathetic and favorable consideration of the chief assemblies of the churches concerned for such further action as they may deem wise and expedient."

It must be admitted, and we freely admit that this resolution, adopted by leading clergymen of the various denominations represented, shows the strength of the union feeling existing among the Churches which were represented at the Conference, and that the result arrived at brings the question of unity to a stage which makes it very likely that a union may be brought about before very long, at least in this Dominion, between the sects represented.

Canada has hitherto taken the lead in the question of union between the various denominations or sects, and unions have actually been brought about in this Dominion in the past to an extent which half a century ago could not have been anticipated. The Methodist body, consisting of a number of minor sects has been made practically one by compromise, and there is now but one extensive Methodist Church in Canada. It is true that there still exists a so-called "Free Methodist Church" which has over forty ministers and twenty-two female evangelists who do ministerial work, and there is a Church called "the Christian Church of Ontario," which, we understand, bears some intimate relation to the Methodists, but notwithstanding this, the Methodist Church proper is so overwhelmingly numerous that we may regard Methodism as practically one.

In England and the United States, however, all movement towards unity even among Methodists appears to have collapsed, as the most recent reports relate that the differences between Wesleyan and Episcopal Methodists are too strongly marked to give any present hope that they can be smoothed over. Besides the Methodists, the Canadian Presbyterians have also been united for many years.

At the Toronto meeting, Principal Caven of Knox College was the most decisive speaker. On behalf of the Presbyterian body he declared that secession and disruption has served a high purpose in preserving the life of the Church in times of crisis, even as amputation of a limb sometimes saves a life. The rev. gentleman seems to have overlooked the fact that the amputated limb ceases to be part of the living body, and can never again become part of the living body, at least till the day of the general resurrection of the dead.

The Rev. Principal continues:

"But denominationalism is not the ideal condition of the Church. If things are right within the Church there should be no divisions or schisms. Many excellent persons do, indeed, hold that denominationalism is better than organic union, and that spiritual unity is all that is needed either for efficient service or in order to the fulfilment of Christ's prayer "that they may be one." For myself, I do not so think. Union, real organic union, such as we desire, would not only enable us to deal more economically with our resources, but what is much more important, would represent in a far truer and more perfect way the body of Christ. Spiritual unity, if complete and unhampered, must seek adequately to represent itself in outward organic unity."

It is, of course, a matter pertaining directly solely to the Protestant denominations whether they unite or not, and whether when they do unite, their union shall be Federal or organic. Nevertheless, as the question concerns the essential characteristics and constitution of the Church of Christ, it must indirectly concern all Christians, and we have the right to point out the truth that the very fact that the present proposition is seriously entertained is demonstrative evidence that each and all of the denominations taking part in the negotiations admit thereby that they have hitherto been in error in maintaining a principle which is the basis of all Protestantism, that the Bible was given to mankind as the sole basis of Faith from which each individual is to frame his own creed according to the light which is in him, or which is given him by God.

It has hitherto been the boast of Protestantism that it is a "free faith," the details of which every man is to work out for himself. Now nothing can be more foreign to the conception of the Church which Christ established. The Church of Christ is one, having its sacred ruling body of "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the perfection of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, unto the edification of the body of Christ till we all meet in the unity of Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . . that we may not now be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, in the wickedness of men, etc." (Eph. iv. 11-14.)

There is, therefore, in the Church of Christ a supreme tribunal to teach unhesitatingly and authoritatively the saving truths which Christ has revealed, and to preserve us from error. This Church alone is the "Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of truth," and Christ adds daily to it "such as should be saved." (1 Tim. iii. 15. Acts, ii, 47.)

Immeasurable are the passages of Holy Scripture in which the Church is described; but nowhere do we find that it is an organization in which every one is to construct his own creed. Yet this is what the divers denominations of Protestants have done, refusing obedience to the one Church which is undoubtedly that which has brought down the truths revealed originally by Christ to the knowledge of every one of us.

And now it is acknowledged that the time has come when the sects should form an organic union! This means a return to one faith. And what is to be that one faith? Alas! It is not to be the one "Faith once delivered to the Saints," but a Faith to be constructed by compromise between all the errors which human imagination has been able to invent since the year 1517, and the Church so constructed by man will claim to be the real Church of God which Christ commanded His Apostles to establish everywhere by their preaching!

And how is this agreement to be brought about? The Rev. Principal Caven has given us the recipe. He says:

"The formulating of a doctrinal basis for a union of these Churches is perhaps the most important and most difficult question involved. Each Church has its history, and has taken up a definite doctrinal position. Those positions are, from a variety of causes, not identical, and in considering union there must be no unworthy compromise. An honest man can make no compromise when dealing with truth. He must continue to think what he thinks. He must hold to the very end of the tentacles his own well considered opinions. Compromise is an ill-favored word in this connection, and can refer not to essentials, but only to details. . . . . There has been abundance of discussion of Arminianism and of Calvinism, but very little discussion of the possibility of finding a sufficient doctrinal basis common to both these great systems of theology."

Here is, indeed, the key to the position. The United States Presbyterians have in a way removed the obstacle by a foot-note to the Westminster Confession, explaining that the ultra Calvinism which condemns the sinner to hell for doing what he could not avoid doing, is not to be taken in the sense which the words imply. But the Canadian Presbyterians retain this article of their creed in all its odiousness, without even a foot-note to explain that it may be left out of their actual belief without any scruple, and without impairing their standing as good Presbyterians; and the Methodists and Congregationalists must swallow this pill, for the sake of the economy of union, and the more captivating appearance of a united Protestant Church, which teaches all creeds in detail, but none in particular as absolutely necessary.

And must we call a new Church thus constituted "the pillar and ground of truth?"

With due respect to the rev. gentlemen who adopted the union resolution we have given above, we must still proclaim it to be our conviction that there can be no successful or even plausible union of sects, unless those who have gone astray give up their errors and return to the unity of faith by acknowledging the authority of the one Church which recognizes for its head the successor of St. Peter whom Christ authorized to feed His lambs and His sheep.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA AND ELSEWHERE.

While there is so much jubilation in the anti-Catholic press on account of the persecution to which the Religious Orders, and especially the teaching Orders, are undergoing in France, and while we are told that these Orders are not apace with the age in teaching, it is interesting to learn of the phenomenal success of the schools of the Marist Brothers in Australia in comparison with the Public schools.

At the school examinations held recently in Sydney the Brothers sent up sixteen pupils, and all passed, five of the number receiving medals for proficiency.

The Sydney Freeman's Journal says that "at this examination, St. Mary's High School gained the great distinction of having passed more students and gained more medals than any other school or college in the State. The Sydney Grammar school came to a close second with fifteen passes, and the rest 'nowhere.'"

The total number of passes for the whole state was eighty-one, and St. Mary's High School alone gained nearly 20 per cent. of these, though the Public and High Schools received the enormous endowment of $813,513 in 1902.

The success of the schools of the Religious Orders is not confined to Australia, but have been very marked also on this continent, as it has occurred year after year that the schools taught by Religious have stood at the head in all the public competitions at which the pupils of all schools were admitted to compete.

There is no reason why the Catholic schools of Ontario should be inferior to the Public schools. The teachers pass the same examinations, and the curriculum of studies is the same, with the exception that in the Catholic schools religious instruction is given, which is not the case in the Public schools. In fact the results of the High School Entrance examinations all over the Province show conclusively that the Catholic Separate schools are in no way behind, as we have frequently published figures which prove that here as well as in Australia, the Catholic schools are as a rule thoroughly efficient. If sometimes they fall behind it is usually the fault of the trustees who are too often elected rather with the view to keep the expense low, instead of to make the schools efficient. But this occurs in some of the Public as well as in the Catholic school sections.

The schools taught by the religious orders are among the best in the Province.

It is admitted even by non-Catholics generally that in Catholic girls' schools taught by religious, that is to say in Conventual Academies and primary Schools, a training is given which infuses into the pupils the graces of manner which must adorn a young lady, and especially that species of politeness which is founded upon the golden rule of charity—to do to others as we would have them do to us. This is the true basis of any system of etiquette which is worth acquiring.

For this reason we find in all our Convent Academies, in great numbers, the daughters of Protestant parents of the highest rank in society, so that these frequently outnumber the Catholic pupils. Why, then, does it sometimes occur that Catholic parents send their daughters to Protestant schools? It is usually because they have themselves been educated amid non-Catholic surroundings, and they wrongly imagine that their daughters must attend non-Catholic schools to acquire the graces which are necessary for them in order to hold a position in good society. This is, undoubtedly, a great mistake. The children so brought up are not taught anything in regard to the spiritual life, their duties to God and to their neighbor, and their ultimate end, which is to know and love and serve God on earth that they may see and enjoy Him in His infinite perfections for ever.

There are many such convent schools in Ontario as well as in the other provinces of the Dominion in which young girls can obtain the highest education, while their Christian training, both moral and doctrinal, will be properly attended to. There is no excuse for those parents who send them to schools wherein religion is neglected, or a false religion taught.

MATRIMONIAL IMPEDIMENTS AND DISPENSATIONS.

A subscriber enquires whether a Catholic man may under any circumstances marry his first wife's sister, and by what authority a priest celebrates such a marriage.

Answer. It is forbidden by the general law of the Church to contract such a marriage, and a marriage of this nature is null and void before God, unless the impediment be previously removed, inasmuch as the Church has power to decree impediments which void marriage, and has pronounced this relationship to be such an impediment. But our correspondent will observe that it is by a law of the Church, and not by the law of God Himself, that this impediment exists; for the Levitical law on this matter does not oblige Christians.

The law being a law of the Church, the same authority can dispense therefrom where there are just reasons for so doing; and such reasons may exist. In this case, the impediment is removed, and a priest may celebrate the marriage. The authority under which he acts is that of the Church of God, which has the legislative power to change or modify its own laws. The Pope, as Head of the Church, exercises this power when good reasons exist. The Holy Father has constituted an ecclesiastical court called the Datary for the purpose of examining into the value of the reasons alleged in each instance when permission is asked to contract such a marriage, and when they are found to be urgent, this court, acting with the Holy Father's approval, may remove the impediment.

FRANCE, ITALY AND THE POPE.

A special cable despatch to the Mail and Empire from London makes the statement that "President Loubet's visit to Italy has demonstrated that there is a strong popular basis for the new Franco-Italian entente. The public welcome to the French President has been distinctly more friendly and more enthusiastic than the recent greetings to the Kaiser. Otherwise the visit does not carry special political significance."

Notwithstanding the fact that within the last few years there have been manifestations of hostile sentiment between French and Italian workmen, we have never believed otherwise than that there was at bottom a cordial feeling between the people of the two nations, and the heartiness of the welcome given to the President of the French Republic confirms our view of the situation. Whatever ill-feeling may have appeared to exist arose out of the fact of the alliance brought about between Austria and Italy and Germany, while Germany was still regarded as being hostile to France, and while the memory of Sedan still rankled in the bosoms of Frenchmen, causing a desire for revenge on account of the humiliation endured by France in the Franco-German war. Another cause which operated in intensifying the feeling of hostility was the rivalry between French and Italian workmen on various public works.

A fellow-feeling between the two countries has perhaps also arisen out of the fact that the Governments of both have taken a similar attitude toward religion, the ultimate end aimed at being to crush out whatever respect for religion was still in the hearts of the people.

We are still convinced that the wisdom and forbearance of Pope Pius X. will yet bring about a better state of affairs in both countries, though the prospect is still gloomy in regard to this matter.

Even though the better feeling between the two peoples may have arisen from causes which we deplore, we are glad to notice that there is good reason to believe that it is sincere, and that this is a guarantee that there will be a peaceful situation between France and Italy, whatever complications may arise in other quarters threatening the peace of Europe.

The special despatch states also that President Loubet's visit to Rome has forced the Pope into a more difficult position in regard to France, and that the relations of Church to State in that country have become more critical than ever, so that it will be impossible to retreat therefrom, and that it "seems inevitable that the Pope must take some important action in the near future." The correspondent does not predict what this action will be.

We are not of opinion that the Holy Father will take any special action to increase the strain in the relations between Church and State in France. There has, undoubtedly, been great provocation given by the French Government in its savage attitude assumed toward religion and the religious orders. The Pope will never approve or praise this attitude, but we have no doubt that with a change in the personnel of the Government the relations with the Holy Father will be greatly improved. The history of the past century shows that the relations between France and the Holy See have gone through similar vicissitudes before now, and that the Church has emerged from them satisfactorily. We have no doubt that history will repeat itself in this respect, and the prudence of Pope Pius X. may bring about better relations sooner than worldly wisdom can expect such an outcome from the present situation. It is highly probable also that better relations, or at least a *modus vivendi* may be established between Italy and the Holy See.

HON. JOHN COSTIGAN.

By the death of the late lamented Senator Dever of St. John, N. B., another seat becomes vacant in the Red Chamber. There seems to be an almost unanimous desire on the part of the Irish Catholics throughout the Dominion that this honor should be bestowed upon the Hon. John Costigan. To our mind a better choice could not be made. Few men in public life have such a long record as a parliamentarian. John Costigan has always been a manly man and a true friend. Hypocrisy was a thing against which his whole nature rebelled. In the various honorable posts which he has so creditably filled, both as a member of the House and a Minister of the Crown, no one can truthfully say that selfishness was ever a guiding motive of his character. He is now advanced in years, and his garnered wealth of knowledge of public affairs would prove to be most useful in the Upper House. We feel sure his appointment would give satisfaction in every part of the country, and that the members of the Senate would gladly welcome to their midst "Honest John Costigan."

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NORWAY.

A writer in the Revue Generale, of Brussels, states that in Norway there is a real revival of Catholic faith going on among the people. At present the number of Catholics is very small, as only 2,000 people out of 2,300,000 profess the Catholic religion, and of these between 800 and 900 are in Christiana, the capital. Nevertheless, there are conversions every year, and the number of conversions has been increasing constantly since the conversion of Dr. Sperdrup, former Minister of Education, who was a man of great learning and piety.

The Reformation was imposed on Norway by the Danish kings in 1536, the country being then subject to Denmark, and the kings having the design to reduce Norway to be a Danish province.

The property of the Churches and the Monasteries was confiscated and given to the Danish nobles and courtiers of the king; but though Lutheran pastors were introduced, and the authority of the Pope rejected, and the new religion was called Lutheranism, the faith retained was substantially all that the Catholic Church teaches, including the Mass, transubstantiation, the sacraments with their rites, the vestments used in the Catholic Church, and even the honor and invocation of the Mother of God and the Saints of God.

This fidelity of the Norwegians to their ancient faith is now resulting, according to the writer already quoted in a revival of Catholicism, and the actual return of more converts than ever before to the Catholic Church.

ASSUMPTION COLLEGE.

Tuesday, May the 24th, will be Field Day in Assumption College Sandwich. All friends are invited. Dinner at 12.30 p. m.

James J. Hill, President of the Northern Securities Company and the Great Northern Railroad, will supplement his many gifts to the Catholic Church at St. Paul by a donation of $1,500,000 given jointly by himself and Mrs. Hill toward the erection of the new $3,000,000 cathedral. Two of the wealthiest parishes of St. Paul will join in its construction. Announcement of the gift was made to day by the clergy in connection with further statements of the progress of the cathedral movement. The remaining $1,500,000 is already in sight, and will be given by other wealthy citizens.

THE SPIRIT'S TWOFOLD OFFICE.

In considering the office of the Holy Spirit in the Church divinely founded by Jesus Christ on Peter, His chosen cornerstone, we must remember that the vital and life-giving action of that all-powerful Spirit is twofold. There is the magnificent, open, visible influence whereby He guides majestically the Church through her supreme pontiffs, her councils and her episcopate; and there is the constant, interior, but just as mighty and divine an influence, whereby He turns the hearts of the faithful to a ready, obedient and glad acceptance of the truths and commands which they receive from the appointed authorities in the Church.

This second point of view is of a nature that requires clear presentation to the minds of those who are outside the Catholic fold. Faith is a gift of God; and when He gives it, that priceless gift is found to be of an intrinsic quality that is high above reason, different from reason, and employing reason somewhat as the soul makes use of the body, its sister, its lifelong companion, but not its equal.

Faith is to the Catholic as the air that a man breathes, as the food he eats as the sunshine in which he rejoices. Few men stop to analyze into chemical elements either air or food; few stop to reason on the processes by which the sunlight comes to us. So, too, generally speaking, we lead our home life, our social life, our school life, without profound speculation on the relation of parents to children, teachers to scholars, the rulers to the governed. In a Catholic's spiritual life we find a similar condition of things. One must *live* that life, in order to realize with what joyous and childlike simplicity it is lived.

For instance, a non-Catholic exclaims in wonder at our devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the names we give her, as Queen of Heaven, Health of the Sick, Refuge of Sinners; they turn to ponderous volumes of theology to discover our reasons for all this; they stand amazed at her statues in our churches, her Rosary in our fingers, her name on our dying lips. Meanwhile, the devout Catholic is spending very little time over wonderous treatises or learned disquisitions; he is simply and solely believing, and acting on his belief in, the article of his old Creed, "the Communion of Saints;" and he is following, peacefully and quite intuitively, the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church of God.

To the Catholic, the Church is his family, the actual household of the saints. Mary is his Mother, our Mother, everybody's Mother; and he is no more reasoning about the "wherefore" of keeping her statue in his churches than of keeping his earthly mother's picture close to his most precious things in his room at home. Mary is the Refuge of Sinners and she is everything else our loving hearts name her, just as surely and in as everyday a fashion as our earthly mothers are our refuge, our comfort, our comfort, our hope, our blessing and our trust.

Love does not stop to analyze; and perfect love casteth out fear. Heaven is to the Catholic his future home, God's kingdom; it is supernaturally naturally to us to believe that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, holds place in heaven as Queen where He is King. Where else should she be? What other position should she have? We certainly have no idea that we are going to rank above her. We delight to think that we shall kneel before her, and thank her for everything she has done for us for whom her Divine Son died, and whom she loves for His sake. We are asking no explanations, we are seeking no help from the learned, we are deterred by no scoffer. The life of faith raises us higher than things like these; it is a divine life, all on flame with the Holy Spirit's fires; and they who do His will shall understand His teaching.

PRACTICAL CATHOLICS.

Every member of the Catholic Church is thoroughly familiar with the Easter requirement. All well understand that compliance with it is absolutely necessary to entitle them to be considered practical Catholics. It is the one thing they know which measures their very coldest affiliation with the Church. One of the six general laws of the Church which all must meet or be cut off from her communion.

Yet notwithstanding this fact there are some who do not meet the requirement. This is, indeed, regretable, both on their own account and because of the evil influence it works in others. Surely it is no fault of the Church, for the law itself shows her exceeding generosity to her children. To receive Holy Communion at Easter or thereabouts is the law. That is, the Church commands all her children to receive the Body and Blood of Christ at least once a year.

No one will deny that the task the Church imposes in the latitude of the law is most easy. But it does not disclose the fullness of her generosity, for the time within which she prescribes the law may be met extends from the first Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday—a period, it will be observed, of three months, that is, one-fourth of the year.

This time will expire on the twenty-first of the present month. Hence only a brief period remains for those who have not done their duty in meeting the law. Hence also the necessity of thinking seriously of the matter. The law bears upon all equally, and neglect of it means severe penalties. No man has assurance when he retires at night that he will open his eyes on another day. No Catholic certainly can hope to open his on a happy eternity if God should call him when under the dreadful penalties of this law. He, therefore, who hopes to enjoy God forever will not jeopardize that hope by failing to comply with this law of His Church.
—Church Progress.

—Mgr. Fenton, who has been appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, is of Irish descent, his parents being natives of Cork. He is sixty seven years old, and has been Vicar-General of the diocese for four years. He was made a Domestic Prelate in 1886.