The Catholic Record. Published Weekly at 484 and 486 Richm street, London, Ontario.

Price of subscription—\$2.00 per annum.
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Rates of Advertising—Ten cents per line each magnitude of the public agate measurement. ttes of Advertising Territion, agate measurement. by the Archproved and recommended by the Archpops of Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, and St.
fface, and the Bishops of Hamilton and
fface, and the clergy throughout the

dence intended for publication, as that having reference to business, should cted to the proprietor, and must reach not later than Tuesday morning. rs must be paid in full before the paper

London, Saturday, Dec, 28, 1895

## CHRISTMASTIDE

With the words: "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be unto all the people, for this day is born to you a Saviour," did an angel announce to some shepherds who were watching their sleeping sheep flocks en the hills of Galilee, the news of the birth of Jesus Christ. They were men of simple minds and of pure hearts, caring little for wealth and knowing nothing of the world, to whose habits and thoughts they were utter strangers. And as they keep their lonely vigil appears in the heavens and sheds its radiance at their feet, and music such as they had never heard before falls upon their wondering ears. Down from heaven clad in robes of dazzling whiteness descends on angel in rapid flight, and the brightness of God shines round about them and they fear with a great fear. "Fear not," said the angel, "for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." After the long waiting, the Christ had come !

They were, indeed, good tidings that thrilled the heart of humanity, announcing that the reign of death was over, that love reigned in place of fear, that the compassionate heart of a God man was ours forever for our solace and consolation, that the hope of a lasting city where joy and eternal peace abide could re-animate the courage of the sons of men and render insignificant the sorrows and miseries of this earthly pilgrimage and that faith banished ignorance and made them cognizant of their duties to themselves, to their neighbors, and to God.

Were they not good tidings? Humanity, like the poor prodigal of the Gospel, had gone out from its father's house of truth and in the far-off country doubt and despair had squandered the noble gifts of intellect and will in the pursuit of error and in the satisfaction spirit it waited in sullen courage for the only-begotten Son to search out the jation crouch near His cradle. poor wanderer, to bind up his wounds But the angels are present in that sin had made, so that we who strengthened and made to live unto God.

We who bask in the sunshine of truth cannot well imagine the holy joy conveyed by the angel unless we understand the condition of the world at that time.

When our first parents, endowed grace, flung them away at the suggestion of the tempter, and thereby bereft themselves and their posterity of all grace and hope of glory, the darkness of death overshadowed the world. The curse wrung from the justice of God by original sin was fast blighting the face of creation. The shadow of the first sin enveloped mankind, obscuring the intellect, perverting the will, and proving, if proof be needed, what must be the condition of men who live without the kingdom of God.

They knew they had immortal souls and that above them was a God who could reward and punish them; but passion had dimmed the remembrance of these teachings, and blended them with so many errors and superstitions that the fair form of truth could scarce be recognized in the monstrous systems of idolatry that infested the earth. The world of sense was around them, and to extract from it every pleasure, no matter how vile and deistence. The scene of degradation of individuals and of nations before the very indefinite phrase. coming of Christ show well to what depths men without supernatural aid in abject fear before senseless idols of mortal souls with every species of sen-

strength, dragged into slavery and put his trust and confidence in His the support of the Irish members, and political squabbles.

sold like cattle in the marts of commerce

Still, amidst all this gloom and sin, there were men who rose superior to the common ideas, and who, feeling that within them was a being that clamored for happiness and immutability, strove with all the power and energy of their nature to lay their hands upon the truth. "What am I?" "Whence have I come?" "Whither am I going?" These are the questions that you have heard is not Mine, but the hearts and minds. We see them in spirit grappling with those problems, and in all the world's history there is nothing more interesting or more unutterably sad than their varying answers. The best and brightest grasp but half the truth. Acute and subtle, earnest and energetic, they were; and yet, despite these advantages, they were groping in the dark; and again and again do we hear them confessing their doubts and ignorance, and declaring that there was no hope for man but from a Redeemer.

And the Redeemer was to come. Adown the centuries, from father to son, from generation to generation, was handed the promise that was the only gleam of light during forty centuries of darkness. Prophets saw Him afar that December night a bright star and re-animated the courage of hearts weary of waiting, by proclaiming the glory of His coming. "Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for the light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen tially (Cor. xiii., 1) that with all these upon thee." "A Child is born to us and a Son is given to us and His name shall be called Wonderful, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace." And as the years went by, and the time foretold by the prophets was at hand, men longed with an intense longing for the God who was to lead them from out the slavery of sin to the kingdom of

And as they discussed the question of the mode of God's visitation, He came quietly, without pomp and without ostentation.

Mary and Joseph in the cold dark time of midwinter go in obedience to the Roman Emperor, who was enumerating his subjects and taking the census of his provinces, to the little town of Bethlebem. Timidly they go from house to house seeking a shelter, but there was no room for such way worn and poverty-clad travellers Homeless and desolate they wander until they find a bleak, unsheltered stable, and there was born the longexpected of nations, the Saviour of the world.

It is unspeakably sad-that birth of passion. Enfeebled in body and No ministering attendants bow the knee before that puny, speechless end. But God had mercy upon it, and Babe, and yet the uncreated eternal with an inconceivable love sent His God; nothing save poverty and humil-

myriad bands singing in strains of died in Adam might be raised up and divinest triumph the love of God for man. Out over the sleeping city'rings the jubilee of praise and glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will - announcing the good tidings that the Word was made Flesh, and the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world shone forth from out that stable upon with wondrous gifts of nature and of the face of the earth and all the myriads that sat in darkness, and proclaimed : "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me walketh not in darkness but shall have the light of life."

## ANOTHER UNION SCHEME.

The Unitarians of the United States have brought out a new basis for Christian Unity. At their recent annua convention "Love of God and love of our neighbor" was proclaimed to be the platform on which all Christians should unite into one Christian Church.

There is nothing more certain than that all this is prescribed as a Christian's duty, and not only should every Christian fulfil it, but our Blessed Lord declares that " On these two command ments dependeth the whole law and the prophets." But there is great danger that the true meaning underlying these words is very apt not to be seen by those who advocate this as the sole principle on which a Christian union is basing, became the chief object of ex- to be accomplished; and if misunderstood or misinterpreted it becomes a

When our Lord makes His pronouncement, does He mean that it is may descend. We see them crouching enough for a man to say "I love God: I love my neighbor," if he do nothing gold and silver, and defiling their im- to please God, or to benefit his neighbor in distress?

He who loves God really will obey We behold woman shorn of her dig- His law, and will accept the teachings schools. The trouble is that the bers is more honorable, patriotic, and nity and purity; and myriads of and precepts of the Church He has measure is promised by the sound, than is that of the Speaker, human beings made to God's image established. He who loves God will Government, and the Liberals hoped to which would make of the education of These days may have been long periods implying vindictiveness, and the colnuman beings made to does image and the col-

He that loveth me not keepeth Speaker is so indignant. It says: not My words. And the word which ring out in a hundred to ses from their Father's who sent me." (St. Jno. xiv. on a purely English question, they will 21.24)

Particularly applicable to the case of

the Unitarians are these words: "He that believeth in Him is not judged but he that doth not believe is already judged." (iii, 18.) Again "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God . . for this is the charity (love) of God that we keep His commandments . . Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the

Son of God?" Unitarians do not believe in the divinity of Christ, and hence even the other sects of Protestants do not acknowledge them as Christians. They may be men of intelligence, successful in their business, honorable in their dealings through a natural instinct, kind and affectionate in their family relations, even benevolent toward the poor, but we cannot ignore the fact that the holy Apostle declares substan-

or other merely natural virtues, with-

out charity it profiteth nothing. We wish well to our neighbors whether Unitarian or otherwise; but the best we can wish to them is that they may come to the knowledge of the truth. We are satisfied that any man invented schemes of Church unity will not avail. The only basis of union which can be laid down is that of the Divine Founder of our religion, through unity of faith. There is but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, all of which must be accepted heartily, and schemes of union through any other mode must be a failure.

## THE EDUCATION QUESTION IN ENGLAND.

Late cablegrams report that the British Liberals are dissatisfied with the position which the Irish Parliamentary party have taken in reference to school legislation, and that they have threatened in consequence to abandon their support of Home Rule for Ireland, and to break up the alliance which the two parties had formed.

We cannot conceive that men of William V. Harcourt, John Morley and the other leaders of the Liberals should break up the alliance on any any authorized to make it. The ection of the Liberals to be so readily the Government side of the House.

The question at issue is precisely that of the religious education of the children. It is a question on which Cath olics are a unit, and it affects equally the Catholic children of England, Ireland and Scotland. It is to be exwill stand for the rights of Catholics in the three kingdoms, and will support measure which will place Catholic schools in a satisfactory condition, even though the Liberals should manifest some discontent; and the Libwhich they differ be a momentous one.

condemnation of Mr. Justin McCarthy, the schools supported by more than twoa few days ago, that the party of which worse condition than those which are he is leader will support a proper maintained for the benefit of a small measure providing more satisfactorily minority. for religious education in the The position taken by the Irish mem-

ship and by obeying His precepts. might leave the Government ranks on Times, the organ of the Liberals of eral days successively, or they may Hence the duties of Faith, Hope, Char- its school policy, in accordance with its denomination, that it lends itself to ity, and worship interior and exterior the expressed wish of the Baptist and the same purpose, threatening the of twenty-four hours. In either case are obligatory on all. It is another some other conferences which have desaying of Christ: "He that hath my clared against denominational teachcommandments and keepeth them: he ing. But with the Irish party supportit is that loveth Me. . . . if any ing the Government, the measure is of practical politics." one love Me he will keep my word. very sure to pass, and this is why the

> "Do the Irish realize the fact that by thus attacking their English allies the breach?"

It is asserted also that a distinguished Radical member of the late Parliament, a most ardent and pronounced Home Ruler," has retired from an important honorary post held by him in the English Home Rule Union, owing to his disgust with the Irish members for going over bodily to the enemy, not on in Irish, but on an English, question.

As the name of the retiring member s not given, which would most probably have been the case if it were strictly true, we may reasonably doubt the accuracy of this statement. However, the peculiarities of individuals are generally exhibited in an unexpected manner, and the statement may be correct, though the person who sends the telegram in the name of the United Press Association is evidently inspired by the deadliest hostiliity to Ireland, which peeps out in every clause of his despatch, which may therefore be taken with more than a single "grain of salt." At all events if the gentleman referred to imagines that his sole dictum is to govern the universe he is very much nistaken. There are others to be considered, and other principles in existence than his, which are just as dear and just as sacred as those he holds are to himself. As regards the education question

being "an English, and not an Irish question," it is required only that we cast our eyes upon what is going on all over the world to see that it is a universal question; and it is even asserted in the despatch that Mr. McCarthy expects a pact with the Government under which a Roman Catholic university will be established in Ireland, "in addition to the gratification of assisting to pass a measure which the Roman Catholics of England have long desired." Is not this sufficient to show that it is more than a merely English question? The measure referred to is one whereby the voluntary or denominational schools are to be placed on an equal footing with the Public schools such weight and sound thought as Sir in regard to Government aid for their maintenance, though not in regard to establishing them. This will be under the condition that they attain the standsuch pretext, and we doubt very much ard of efficiency which the Governthat such a threat has been issued by ment demands. The measure is a fair one, and it would be more fair if it Irish members constitute too strong a went further; and it gives that conrol to parents over the character thrown overboard, and the latter would of the education given which belongs be very foolish to threaten them after to them by the natural and divine law. such a manner. The question of edu | This is a parental right of which no cation is too serious a matter that the Government should deprive parents, Irish members should be expected to though we have the example of Manigive up their most cherished and toba to prove to us that some endeavor sacred convictions on account of the to do so. It is only hostility to Catho alliance, the more especially while in lics that induces opposition to denomi-Opposition, for it is always understood national schools in America, and that the party in Opposition has a hostility to Catholics and Anglicans much freer hand than if they were on alike that arouses it in England now.

But even if it were purely an English question the Irish members of Par which is occupying so much attention liament are quite justified in voting on in Canada and the United States, that it according to their conscience. If the people of England do not wish the Irish people to vote on English questions, let them give Home Rule, and they will have their way; but it is a very one-sided way of dealing that there pected, therefore, that the Irish party should be an overwhelming English vote whereby every measure acceptable created six thousand or six million to Ireland is to be voted down, while the Irish are told that they must not cast their limited vote on English questions, for fear of passing measures against the will of a majority of the erals, who bear with and humor the English people. But on this particular idiosyncracies of Mr. Labouchere and question it does not appear that the the Radicals, and the notions of the English people are against denomina-Labor party, in order to retain their tional education. The vast majority general support, must also bear with of the children now attend denominapeople, even though the question on may be regarded simply as supplementary to the denominational The London Speaker, on behalf of system, which is the system of the Liberals, is very outspoken in its, of the country. It is an anomaly that who, in a speech at Walworth, declared, thirds of the people should be kept in a

following the Archbishop of Canterbury, Home Rule will 'pass out of the range

If there was ever a sentence penned which deserved to be characterized by the epithet contemptible, this is one. If a Catholic had used such a line of reasoning, we presume the Times would stigmatize it as "Jesuitical;" but Jesuits do not follow such a line. It is not their doctrine that the endand an iniquitous end in this casejustifies the means.

We are gratified to learn that the Irish members are not to be deterred from the straightforward course either by coaxing or by threats.

## COL. INGERSOLL LECTURING

The editorial columns of a newspaper are not a suitable medium for the conducting of a theological controversy, or for the full elucidation of theological matters which require lengthy treatment. But our attention has been called to a lecture recently delivered by Col. Ingersoll in New York city under the title "The Foundations of Faith," in which the noted atheist once more attacks the Bible as the foundation of Christianity. As the points raised by the colonel are constantly in the mouths of infidels, who are at the present day both numerous and aggressive, and as an answer to the difficulties raised by them will be of interest to our readers, we will here give such an answer to the principal objections found in the lecture, though the subject treated is somewhat out of our usual course.

The author of the book entitled Some Mistakes of Moses" makes the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses found at the beginning of the Bible, once more the object of his attack. He savs:

"One of the foundation stones of our faith is the Old Testament. If that book is not true, if its authors were unaided men, if it contains blunders and falsehoods, then that stone crumbles to dust. The geologists demonstrated that the author of Genesis was mistaken as to the age of the world, and that the story of the universe having been created in six days about six thousand years ago could not be

The colonel's argument is not by any means a new one. He professes a great depth of original thought, but nearly all his difficulties against the truth of Holy Scripture are derived chiefly from Voltaire, Tom Paine and other flippant writers who are more remarkable for their profane wit than for depth of thought or learning.

If the book of Genesis really asserted that the universe was created within the period of six days, we should beieve it, because it is the word of God as revealed to men through Moses, and on the other hand, geology can never demonstrate that God could not create the universe with all the marks of antiquity which have been observed in the investigations of geologists into the character of the earth's surface. It must be admitted, however, that there are evidences which lead to the conclusion that the earth is much older than six thousand, or even than six hundred thousand, years, but if Col. Ingersoll had read fairly and carefully the words of Holy Scripture, he would have found that Genesis does not enter further into the question of this very great antiquity of the earth than to say, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." These are the first words of Genesis, and there is nothing in them to show whether the earth was vears ago.

The main fact set forth in the first words of Genesis is that matter is not eternal but was created by God. After this creation the earth may have passed through many changes which may have occupied hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of years, before we come to the events recorded called the light day and the darkness night and there was evening and morning one day."

It would require a longer essay than would be suitable to our editorial forgiveness of injuries: "Blessed are columns to enter upon a discussion as the merciful for they shall obtain to the nature of the six days during which God prepared the world for the good to them that hate you : Bless them habitation of men. It will suffice to say here that there are at least three opinions on this subject, any one of which may be reasonably held.

promises, and will serve Him by wor- such non Conformist dissentients as It is not creditable to the Methodist in Genesis as being done on the sevvestigation are fully met, as the period which preceded these days is ample to account for all the mutations through which the science of geology shows the earth to have passed, even if the days of Genesis were days of ordinary length.

There is still a third opinion accord-

ing to which the account of creation given in the first chapter of Genesis is to be taken liturgically rather than literally, and that the intention of the sacred writer is that as God is the Creator of all things, and that He brought all things forth from nothingness, He is to be honored and adored on all days of the week, each day being devoted to the consideration of His infinite bounty in the bestowal of some particular benefit on mankind. Thus, according to this view, on the first day of the week we are to regard Him as the Creator of light, and of the succession of day and night, which is of such great importance to mankind. On the second day He is to be honored as the Creator of the firmament and of the atmosphere of the earth, with all its changes of temperature and moisture, whereby there is established a circulation of the waters, so that on the surface of the earth they flow to the ocean by means of lakes and rivers, and return by means of clouds and vapors to their original sources, and thus keep up the constant circulation without which neither life nor growth could be maintained.

We might thus go through each day of the week, but we content ourselves with saying that any one of these three opinions is a sufficient answer to Col. Ingersoll's assertion that "the story of the universe having been created in six days, about six thousand years ago, could not be true." It can only be said that the design of God in revealing the fact of creation, with such details as are given in the first chapter of Genesis, is to elevate mankind morally, and to point out the great first cause of all existence, not chance, or any imaginary law which came into operation by the fortuitous concurrence of atoms, but the will of the infinitely wise and infinitely powerful Being who rules and controls all things created. This is the lesson which the Prophet David draws from the fact of creation : "Let all the earth fear the Lord, and let all the inhabitants of the world be in awe of Him. For He spoke and they were made : He commanded and they were created." (Ps. xxxii., 8, 9.)

How the universe came into existence is an event which has always been a mystery to philosophers who attempted to account for it in any other way than by the creative power of God. The sublime words with which Moses begins the book of Genesis give us at once the truth, and make clear what to th Pagan philosophers, the Pantheists and Infidels is enveloped in an impenetrable mist. Pagan philosophy and the cosmogonies of the Pagan sacred books could not discover the truth or explain the secret which Moses tells us so plainly: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." Here we have the origin of earth and the whole universe, and we are led to render homage and adoration to Him who is the author of our existence, and the source of all the blessings we enjoy.

We cannot in this article enumerate all the objections brought forward by Mr. Ingersoll against both the Old and the New Testament, but we will mention one more the answer to which will suggest the answer to be made to his misinterpretation of several other expressions of our Blessed Lord.

In St. Luke, xix., 27, we find these words of Christ: "But as for those my enemies who would not have me reign over them, bring them hither; and kill them before me.' From this the colonel infers that

Christ was animated with the spirit of vengeance and hatred. It is almost needless to say that this is a misreprein the subsequent verses of Genesis sentation of our Blessed Lord's meanthe settled convictions of the Irish tional schools, and the Public schools until we read in verse 5: "And He ing. He lived on earth the model of He prayed for His persecutors: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. " He inculcated mercy. . . Love your enemies : do that curse you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. " It is not likely that with such sentiments as these He would utter an expression other meaning than imply apart from th speaks prophetically happen at the last ju enemies will be pu judgment on accou severance in sin. slain, as it is the cus put to death traitors rule. It is a mercifu to abandon their evil the gospel of salvation We shall have me

DECEMBER 28.

Ingersoll's objection issue.

ONTARIO SE

Mr. Hugo H. Ross, county, called a me tuents for the 4th ins of obtaining their vischool question of result is interesting siderable light on t opinion in the Prothis important matte Only about one-te tion of this count

that we may draw clusion from the meeting, as to the among the Protesta more especially as equally divided bet tive and Reform pa The meeting wa was called indeper It was well attended tives and Reforme

plained his views v declared that he ac " not as Grits or constituents with their proclivities, cal. He felt it secure the correct views on the scho giving his vote measure to be bro ment at the coming He explained th ligion should not schools at all. He especially the case

the children have miles to the school only six months i he inferred that afford time for spe tion while there.' In regard to thi we consider the f Ross to be rather ion should be ta than that it should ever, we do not f ized to speak for t tion in this regar maintained that Protestants would they would provi

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has necessari we do not necessary for will interfere tion necessar this to be the repeatedly th elsewhere, Ca efficient wit given in the wherein the secular.

Mr. Ross a of ordained instruction.