

The Catholic Record.

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

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London, Saturday, March 2, 1901

A WORD OF CAUTION.

One word to our readers. Be slow to accept the statements of Churchmen, on no other authority save that of the secular press. The ubiquitous reporter is sometimes at a loss for "copy," and has no hesitation in testing the resources of a trained imagination.

INCONSISTENT PHILOSOPHERS.

There is probably no man more contentions in dogmatism than a scientist with a seeming case against religion. Not only does he become unscientific in method when he abandons the study of phenomena and their laws for the domain of metaphysics, but he exacts and receives blind obedience from his adherents. We are not alluding to quacks and charlatans, but to men who have acquired a reputation either as investigators who have given us new points of view or as formulators of opinions that have more or less vogue. Once let a man as Huxley or Darwin proclaim that the Church is opposed to science and the assertion takes root in the minds of his followers. Wherein the opposition lies need not be stated. The word of the scientific sage is enough for those who tender him homage as slavish as was ever given to Eastern potentates. This, however, is called emancipation of the intellect, and is regarded as conducive to a manly and independent mode of existence.

It strikes us that the ancient pagans were a deal more decent than their modern brethren. The old philosophers blundering along in the dark were not unwilling to confess their inability to solve the problems that lay thick around them. The light of reason, they felt, was not enough for their guidance, and hence we see the noblest of them looking heavenwards for a teacher and leader. But that spirit is not visible in the mental equipment of their descendants. These are, to all seeming, convinced that unfettered by faith they have come into the possession of truth—that is all truth worth knowing. And their adherents yield them unwavering allegiance, prating about the brotherhood of man whilst ignoring the Fatherhood of God, and spinning wondrous theories for the enlightenment of mankind. One can scarcely pick up a magazine without happening upon the blasphemous vagaries of untrained intellects. If they approach the question of a Supreme Being it is only, so to speak, for the purpose of taking measurements. Instead of being on their knees with a prayer for light, they stand erect with the line and plummet of reason to measure infidelity. Though they are encompassed by mysteries and the most familiar facts of nature, they are, as they would fain assure us, "gifted with vision that can penetrate the secrets of the things that exceed nature. In view of this one cannot help thinking there was much truth in the Shakespearean adage: "Put a beggar on horseback, and he is sure to ride to the devil." With human reason as the steed, its driver is bound to go in that direction. It has been going that way ever since reason threw off the authority of faith that alone can guide and ennoble and strengthen it.

RELIGION AND FREE THOUGHT

Professor Goldwin Smith is out with an article entitled *The Present Attitude of Free Thought*. The professor deprecates all irreverence and scepticism in ancient religion, and asks the Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of robust mind, to give him fresh assurance of faith in what he styles the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Now this, on the face of it, is rather astonishing. Why should a man of Prof. Smith's attainments be willing to sit down as a pupil at the feet of the Archbishop of Canterbury? If he cannot succeed in piercing the darkness, with what show of reason can he expect light to come to him from the English prelate? Perhaps he is becoming convinced that authority of some kind is requisite for the stability and unity of religion; and if so why not look for it where its credentials can

be established beyond cavil or doubt? We are very much afraid that the professor's perplexities will not be solved by any pronouncement from the Anglican body, which has been, and is, the sheltering ground of conflicting and contradictory opinions, and which has not withheld the claim of orthodoxy from men of such widely dissenting views as Mathew Arnold, Rev. C. Gorham and Frederic Danousson Maurice.

And though quite willing to admit that, outside Catholicism, the churches are filled with strife, still we do not think that fact alone should encourage Dr. Smith in indulging in walls pestilent. That Prof. Jowett ceased to believe in miracles is certainly no proof that miracles have never taken place. Miracles are usually occurrences of a sensible nature and are therefore subjected, as fact of that kind, to the rules of evidence. If it can be proved that miraculous events have happened we should, as reasonable individuals, acquiesce in the verdict. If, again, it can be proved that miracles are signs that God has given to man a divine revelation, then that revelation and all that it entails must be accepted.

If we take the word of a fellow man in matters of earthly moment, why not take the word of God, in questions that concern the soul? If God has spoken, and there is nothing clearer than this in the records of history, then it behooves a creature to listen to it, not to gaily say or discuss it, but to embrace it with all the fervor of his being.

To all honest searchers after truth Cardinal Newman left the following prayer: "O my God, I confess that Thou canst enlighten my darkness. I confess that Thou alone canst I wish my darkness to be enlightened. I do not know whether Thou wilt; but that Thou canst, and that I wish are sufficient reasons for me to ask, what Thou at least hast not forbidden me asking. I hereby promise that by Thy grace, that which I am asking, I will embrace whatever I at length feel certain is the truth. If ever I come to be certain. And by Thy grace I will guard against all self-deceit which may lead me to take what nature would have rather than what reason approves."

The man who is convinced that the longings of his being cannot be satisfied by unbelief and that of himself he cannot keep the whole law of nature is forced to conclude that either God has left him without means of attaining perfection here and hereafter or that there must be some way of arriving at his end.

We know that much stress is laid upon the lives of unbelievers in contradistinction to those that are burdened with dogma. Free-thinkers are, we are told, moral, good husbands and fathers, whilst believers are, sometimes, exactly the reverse. With our going into the question of how far morality depends upon dogma, exception of course being made to the dogma of the existence of a Supreme Being, we fall to see how good or bad works may be attributed to either infidelity or faith. In the case of the unbeliever, must not the actions which arouse the enthusiasm of his admirers, be regarded as the outcome of some good habit or doctrine which survives, despite the loss of faith. Just as some of the old pagans when under the influence of primitive revelation rose superior to their surroundings so also their descendants give in their lives now and then evidences of the working of forces external to infidelity.

When M. Rnan attempted in his discourse at the installation of the celebrated Pasteur as member of the French Academy, to explain the phenomenon of infidels living good lives, he ascribed it—and he is a very impartial witness in this matter—to the fact of their early training. "These men," he said, "are living under the shadow of a strenuous faith." What will be the character of their children who shall live under the shadow of a shadow?

A COSTLY PICTURE

The Anselm Madonna, by Raphael, now holds the distinction of being the most expensive picture in the world. It was purchased out of Parliamentary grants from the Duke of Marlborough for \$350,000, which is equal to \$60 per square inch.

In repose, coloring, drawing and technical achievement it is one of the finest of Raphael's paintings, but there was much dispute concerning the availability of the English nation paying for it such an unprecedented sum.

PASTORAL LETTER

Addressed to the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Halifax, by the Most Rev. Cornelius O'Brien, D. D., Archbishop of Halifax

CORNELIUS BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND FAVOR OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, ARCHBISHOP OF HALIFAX: To the Clergy, Religious Orders, and Laity of the Diocese of Halifax and Benediton in the Lord.

Dear Beloved—At the dawn of the Christian era wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, asking—"Where is He who is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and we are come to adore Him." (Matt. ii, 2) The hope of a Redeemer, given by God to our first parents immediately after their transgression and fall from primal innocence and grace, lived in the traditions of their descendants, and gave color to the Religious history of all early nations. Thoughtful men realized that the conditions of life, such as actually existed, could not be the ones intended by a beneficent Creator. They felt that human nature had been born to a nobler destiny socially than that of slavery to the passions, and intellectually, than that of perpetually crying in the darkness for light. They were sensible of the existence of a superior Power, and were convinced that only in a closer union with It lay their hope of betterment. But this closer union could not be effected by any effort of man lifting himself up; they felt incapable of that: it must be brought about by God descending to man. Later on came the explicit promise of God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of a Deliverer, a Ruler, a King, Moses and the Prophets gave testimony to this promise—a testimony which was not confined to the Jewish people, but which became known to the nations around about. Referring to the period when Christ was born, Sostolius, a pagan author, writing in the first years of the second century, says: "An old and unvarying belief was noted abroad through the whole East, that it was to come to pass at this time that persons sprung from Jewish stock should obtain supreme power." (Vespas. Cap. IV) Previously, Tacitus in words which are almost identical, bears witness to the prevalence of this belief, adding that it was contained in the "Sacred Books of the Priests," that is, in the Old Testament (Hist. v, Cap. xlii). Putarch, too, discussing the existence of good and evil in the world, refers to the general conviction of the coming of a Mediator who should restore order between God and the human race, and calls it—"a most ancient belief which has descended from theologians and legislators to the poets and philosophers, which does not take rise from any clearly defined author, but is, however, a firm and indelible conviction, propagated in many places not by treatises only, or traditions, but in sacred rites and sacrifices, both amongst barbarians and Greeks." (D. I. de Ordiride)

The belief, then, in the coming of a Supernatural Being, who should reconcile man to his Maker, restore order and harmony in human conduct, cure the lawless, uphold the weak, and renew the face of the earth, was old, unchanging and widespread. It was the one hope of humanity tossed about like a rudderless ship, on the seething sea of its own uncontrolled passions. The plaintive prayer of the Prophet, "Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, and let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour; and let justice spring up together." (Isaiah xlv, 8) was the burden of the cry sent up from weary hearts. He, and He only, could cure the ills of the nations. For thousands of years men had been at work. A literature which has never been surpassed existed both in Greece and Rome. Painting, Sculpture and Architecture had reached a state of perfection unequalled to this day. All the highest intellectual faculties had been developed to their culminating point. It is only the less noble ones we are developing to day. Notwithstanding these achievements the moral and social condition of mankind was most lamentable, its degradation unspeakable. Apart from what may be gathered relative to this, from the writings of pagan poets and historians, we have the very vivid description given by St. Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, of the pagan world. The picture of shameful debasement is rather underdrawn; the reality was too revolting to be set down by the Apostle pen. And the evil was caused because men had "changed the truth of God into a lie," and because "they liked not to have God in their knowledge." If we be honest with ourselves, we shall confess that human nature, unaided by supernatural intervention, is incapable of rising to the higher and more noble plane of life, for which it instinctively feels it was born. That intervention was promised, and as we have seen, man was expecting it in the days of Cæsar Augustus.

The long expected Redeemer and Mediator had come to break the bonds of sin, to conquer death, and to renew the face of the earth. The Creator had come down to His creatures, to lift them up from the mire of iniquity, to dispel the darkness of error, and to offer a balm for every wound, a cure for every spiritual disease, and to subvert all things to Himself. Yet He came in lowliness, in meekness, in poverty. His Virgin Mother was poor; His most intimate associates during life, His chosen disciples even, were unlettered fishermen; He was despised by the more learned classes, and finally died as a Malefactor on a Cross. All the ordinary means of success were lacking in His case; and yet what conqueror ever gained such victories, or so firmly established his kingdom? What school of philosophy has ever disseminated its teachings so widely as our Lord has propagated His? Maxims and rules of conduct proposed by learned men have, indeed, exercised a certain influence over the minds of their pupils, but only within a restricted area, and for a short time. But the Gospel of Christ changed the habits of thought of mankind, opened up new fields of intellectual activity, shed light on many obscure subjects, and emancipated human reason from the slavery of error, by proclaiming the truth. And this action has not been transitory: it has dominated the intellect of all that has been born in the world for the past nineteen centuries, and shaped the course of all moral, social and political reform. Even those who to day reject, or rebel against that Gospel, are influenced by it in a thousand ways. Their self-respect, which leads them to avoid disgraceful actions, as well as the philanthropy of which they boast, are results, distorted, indeed—yet the results of the impalpable action of the Gospel in the region of thought. To that same action are to be ascribed all the nobler and more humanizing sentiments, works and theories which distinguish them from the pagans of St. Paul's time. For conduct can never rise higher than its principle. If men are less gross, less cruel, less shameless than in pagan Greece, or Rome, it is because they are informed by a higher principle. Who taught that new and higher principle? Who but the Lord Jesus Christ; He who was "born King of the Jews,"—whose star the wise men had seen in the East; and whom they came to adore.

No serious student of history will gainsay this, so full and clear are the evidences of the renewing and transforming action of the Gospel, on the wild tiger nature of the pagan nations that were gradually brought under its influence. In the remote confines of Caesarea Philippi, at the base of Mount Hermon, and near one of the sources of the Jordan, our Lord spoke solemn words which are a prophecy and a promise, a pledge of hope for mankind, and at the same time created in the beginning, as those spoken "Let there be light." After Peter had proclaimed that, "Thou art

Christ, the son of the living God, our Lord said—"Blissed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father Who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. xvi, 16-19)

By these words Christ's spiritual kingdom was created, its head on earth designated, its indefectibility both foretold and guaranteed. Subsequently its scope and mission were more fully defined when our Lord addressing His Apostles said: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii, 18-20) This teaching body, consisting of a few Galilean fishermen, thus chartered and commissioned, began its work judged by human standards, it must be pronounced totally inadequate to propagate and make popular doctrines opposed to the passions and prejudices of mankind. Yet history tells how great, and widespread and enduring its success has been. Every effect must have a cause potentially proportionate to itself. If we deny a divine power to that teaching body, common to all called the Church, how shall we explain the incontrovertible fact of the humanizing, civilizing and christianizing of so many hundreds of millions through its ministry? How explain the triumphs of the ignominy of the Crucifixion over the pride of the Roman patrician, of His code of purity over the degraded masses, of His meekness over the fierce Goth, and Vandal, and Hun? Our intelligence, when brought face to face with the facts of history, must either stultify itself by admitting effects without a cause, or it must recognize a divine power in the Church, and, consequently, the divinity of its Founder.

And this Divine Founder, Who in the beginning was with God, and was Himself God, through no compulsion, but moved by infinite love for us, descended to our weakness so that we should be made partakers of His strength, uniting to Himself a human body and soul through which He might bear our sins, and teach us by word and example.

What does He ask in return for all the benefits conferred upon us in the social, intellectual and spiritual orders? Only our love, our adoration, our service. He is our Brother Who has labored and suffered much for us; therefore we should cherish for Him an intense personal love. He is our God, and as such merits our adoration. He is our King—our King by right of creation and by the right of purchase through the shedding of His blood for us, hence our best service is His due, hence our love for us, and the consequence of man, fear and restlessness find no place. In families and communities where His laws are observed peace and happiness abound. If we obey Him we shall find that rest of soul after which we all sigh, even in the midst of thoughtless gaiety, for so He has promised: "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls." (Matt. xi, 28-29)

But the victories of the Gospel were not won without many struggles. The evil one who seduced our first parents, and who for several thousand years had held us in futile love for us, could not so easily be overcome. The intellects of so many, fought to maintain His mastery. All through the centuries we see the opposing forces at work: side by side we see their effects in all the relations of life. In the same kingdom, often in the same community, and sometimes in the same family, we find examples of the loftiest virtue, as well as of the lowest vice. The Gospel message calls man to follow virtue; it does not drive him; the grace of God entreats to good, it does not force. The awful responsibility of freedom of will is ours: good and evil are before us, constituting the touchstone by which souls are proved. If the senses exert an influence to drag us down to material things, the words of Christ, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. viii, 36), tend to lift us up to the spiritual; temptations are strong to lure us to sinful pleasures, the grace of God is no less potent to strengthen us to seek the unending joys promised to the pure of heart. The devil, who is no figment of the imagination, but a real personal being, once a noble spirit, but having fallen through pride, is ever seeking to draw others down, makes use of men individually and collectively, to thwart, or mar the designs of God through a misuse of their free will. Let no one wonder at this. Does not one man frequently control and shape the actions of a number? He does not, and cannot force

their will; nevertheless, by cajolery, or astuteness, or imperious determination, he bends it to his own purpose. The men may be merely puppets without personal malice, yet they become the effective tools of the one master mind. In this way the devil stirred up persecutions against the Church; he played on national feelings to create divisions; he led the unwary into profitless sentimental speculations, and eventually into intellectual pride and heresy; he engendered a love of wealth and honors at another period; then he appealed to the lower passions so as to strike at the root of the Christian home through the effective instrument of divorce. Finally, in our day, he is re-awakening the faculties which served his purpose so well during the period of decadence of all the dead kingdoms of the past. Then, as now, pride of heart and luxury of life had turned the thoughts of men from God. The religious sense had been blunted by self-indulgence, and the spiritual instinct deadened by an eager pursuit after the material. Gods they, indeed, had, but gods who neither cared for, nor took any interest in the affairs of the world. It was not difficult for the wily foe to persuade such men that, after all, it was the only god they should adore. It flattered their pride, it drove out fear, it reduced morality to a mere sanitary law. Every thoughtful person can see with what startling similarity the conditions of decadence are being verified in our day. The fight for possession of the sources of wealth is fierce and unrelenting. Justice, charity, honor, are all trampled upon in the mad pursuit after money. The sense of common honesty has become so dulled that the successful thief, who has stolen and defrauded under cover of status purchased by his gold from corrupt legislators, is favored upon by society, and held up in the press as an example to our school children. The multiplication of the conveniences and luxuries of life has begotten a silly pride in the material progress of our time which would be laughable to the reflecting mind were not its consequences so regrettable. Men thus affected may yet speak of God, but it is no longer the just and loving Father adored by their sires. The dry rot of unbelief, born not of intellectual advancement, but of mental decadence, is sapping the religious spirit of the children of the world. The spiritual instinct is no longer quickened by prayer at home or by the study of metaphysics at school. Physical phenomena are investigated not for the purpose of finding a God behind them, but in order that some cheaper method may be found of applying their constituent forces to the production of wealth. The way is thus prepared for the enemy. He will no longer persecute; he is satisfied with having God ignored in business, in the press, and in politics, knowing that this must lead to a negation of Him in the home and in the human heart. It has led to this already in many cases. To realize and proclaim the presence of danger is not, as it is frequently called by those already overtaken by disaster, pessimism; it is the truest form of patriotism. Has Christianity, then, been a failure? God forbid the thought. If the careless and carnal minded abound, the fervent and pure of heart abound. Straw, and chaff, and grain, are on the threshing floor of God's Church; there is no winnowing of the husks to separate them; the husks appear on the surface and the straw hides the grain from view. The children of the world are always in evidence; after the acquisition of wealth the attainment of notoriety is their passion. Even their deeds of philanthropy must be performed in the full glare of publicity, accompanied by the blowing of trumpets, and the tooting of tin horns. On the other hand the children of God do their work quietly, effacing themselves and glorying in the humility of the Cross. As an illustration of this we might point out the marvellous increase of Educational and Charitable Institutions during the past century. Yet how little has been heard of the pious and silent workers. If Christianity has not subjected all hearts to God it is not through any failure on its part; it is because men choose to misuse their free will, as they did when St. Paul complained: "But not all obey the Gospel" (Rom. x, 16). In these few words we have a full explanation of the existence of all social, moral and political evils. "All do not obey the Gospel." Our dear Lord brought to earth a cure for all human misery, a remedy more potent to scold "strikes" and labor disputes than boards of arbitration, a preventative of crime more efficacious than police regulations, viz., His Gospel. But all do not obey it, and so men suffer; the tears of the weak still flow; brute force has its admirers; and the cries of the oppressed are ascending in judgment against the doers of evil.

No new Gospel, no revised code of morality, no fresh standard of conduct is required to heal the ills of our time, and to guide men aright. "Jesus Christ yesterday, and to day, and the same forever." (Heb. xiii, 8) Acknowledge His Kingship in the family, in the school, in public life, let Him reign over the hearts and the intelligence of His creatures, and peace and justice will enfold the earth. R. Ject

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Christ, the son of the living God, our Lord said—"Blissed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father Who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. xvi, 16-19)

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