

VOLUME XXVII.

The Catholic Record.

LONDON, SATURDAY, DEC. 30, 1905.

A GOOD THING.

We are glad to learn that many of our young people are ranging themselves under the banner of Total Abstinence. They believe that conviviality can be had without alcohol. They accept the ruling of scientific men that there is practically no physiologic or therapeutic excuse for the use of alcohol...

WHAT "THE THUNDERER" SAYS. "It may be stated," says the London Times, "as an opinion upon which most, if not all, physiologists are agreed, that alcohol contributes nothing to the permanent powers of the healthy organism, whether physical or intellectual. No man, it is said, is the stronger for taking it; and no man is the wiser. The experience, now very extensive, of insurance offices, seems to place it beyond doubt that even the moderate regular use of alcohol in any form is on the whole contributory to the shortening of life. When these views come to be fairly balanced against temporary gratification of the palate, or temporary stimulation of the brain, they will be likely to lead to a gradual change in the habits of the more intelligent portion of mankind."

The pledge, supported by sacra mental help, is indispensable for success here and hereafter. The drinking man is out of date, and the saloon-keeper may be compelled to "adopt a more decent method of gaining a livelihood."

DO NOT SIGN THEM.

The gentlemen who solicit signatures for an application for liquor licenses are inclined to wax eloquent over the virtues and benefactions of some saloon-keepers. For our part we confess that we have no pride in such benefactions, and when evidence of the generosity of the knights of the bar comes across our path of vision we study other parts of the landscape. These benefactions represent nothing that can be admired by any self-respecting Canadian. But they do represent what is detestable and detested—sin and poverty, broken and dishonored lives.

Why then should we sign applications for liquor licenses? Is the saloon necessary? Are we obliged to help any man who is not willing to contribute his share to the betterment of our community? Has any individual, merely because he wishes to sell rum, a right to our support? Does not the saloon

as it exists to-day trade in and batter upon intemperance? Have our wives and mothers no rights? Do not be ejected or bullied into establishing the saloon, "the personification of the vilest elements in our modern civilization."

WHICH IS THE TRUE RELIGION?

REASON POINTS UNMISTAKABLY THAT THERE IS BUT ONE RELIGION, WHICH ALL MUST EMBRACE. Rev. B. J. Otten, S. J. In the first lecture of this present course, it has been shown that of several religions, which are opposed to one another in doctrine, as they needs must be, only one can be true. And as a false religion is necessarily evil, because diametrically opposed to God's essential truthfulness, reason points unmistakably to the fact that there can be but one religion which all are obliged to embrace. What reason thus demonstrates as a logical necessity, Christ Himself, as was proved in the last lecture, taught as a moral duty. When He said: "He that believeth not, all things whatsoever I have commanded, shall be condemned." Hence there rests upon every reasonable being the strict obligation to ascertain as far as he can, which is the true religion established by Christ; and the further duty to embrace the same, notwithstanding the greatest difficulties that may bar the way. Consequently the vital question that now presents itself for solution is: Which is the true religion?

This question, as is manifest, presupposes that the one true religion established by Christ still exists somewhere upon earth. Nor is there any need of proving the correctness of this supposition. For the very fact that Christ built His Church upon a rock, so that the powers of hell should not prevail against it; the fact that He commanded the Gospel to be preached to all nations and to every creature; and the further fact that He promised those who were to announce the Gospel His own divine assistance and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit till the very end of time, places the indefectibility and the perpetuity of the Church, and therefore of the one true religion, beyond all reasonable doubt. As it would be against reason and Revelation to hold that Christ came to redeem only the men who were contemporaneous with His stay upon earth, so also would it be both against the one and the other to maintain that His Church, or the one true religion established for the salvation of souls, was intended only for the contemporaries of the Apostles. Hence the religion which Christ established nearly two thousand years ago exists to-day, and exists in all the fullness of unadorned truth with which it was endowed by Him as its divine founder.

Nor yet is its mere existence a certain and indisputable fact, but it must needs exist as a visible religion, which can be recognized by all. For those terrible words of Christ, "He that believeth not shall be condemned," bear reference to the men of our day, as well to the contemporaries of the Apostles. Consequently the one true religion, which no soever it be, must be distinguishable from all others in such a way that any sincere and earnest searcher after the truth can satisfy himself that it is the religion, which was established by Christ, and which laws and their successors. This is quite in harmony with Christ's own teaching on the matter, for He calls His Church a city built upon a mountain, which any man may behold if he will but open his eyes and look.

From what has been shown in the last lecture, I think all will agree that the most essential mark of Christ's religion, whereby it may with certainty be recognized as His own, is absolute unity of faith among all believers. Upon this He insisted in season and out of season; He not only prayed for it, and urged it upon all his followers, but He made it so essential that He threatened eternal damnation to everyone who should in the slightest interfere therewith by refusing to believe the whole Gospel as preached by the Apostles and their successors. Nay, He made that unity a proof of His own divine mission, saying: "Holy Father . . . I pray . . . that they all may be one . . . so that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." Hence it is quite obvious that a religious system which has not this unity cannot possibly be the true religion. And on the other hand, if it can be shown that there exists to-day but one religion that has, and always had, and always will have this unity of faith, the same must be admitted to be the one true religion acknowledged by Christ as His own. The question, therefore, which is the true religion? is identical with this one: Which of the existing Christian religions is the only one that has this absolute unity of faith?

Now, I think, you will concede that I answer this question fully, if I show that there exists to-day just one religion that contains within itself the principle of unity; just one religion that actually possesses this unity; and lastly that there is but one religion that even claims to have this unity. A religion which these three points can simultaneously be predicated must certainly have unity of faith, and on the other hand, a religion of which not one of these same points can be affirmed can certainly have no unity of faith. Which religion has this unity, and which religions have not, I shall now proceed to show.

LONDON, ONTARIO, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1905

at present about seven hundred different religious denominations differ profess to prove their system of theology from the Bible, and, therefore, in one way or another, claim Christ as the founder of their religion. In view of this multiplicity of professedly true religions, our present inquiry would seem to be about as hopeless as the proverbial search after a needle in a haystack. However, we can facilitate this matter very considerably by following the time-honored custom of dividing all these systems into two general classes, represented respectively by the Catholic Church as one class, and by the Protestant churches as the other. The reason for this division lies primarily in the fact that the Protestant churches, though at variance among themselves as regards many points of doctrine, admit one and the same rule of faith, and this rule is rejected in its entirety by the Catholic Church. It is, therefore, not an arbitrary division, made to bias judgment in solving the proposed difficulty, but flows spontaneously from the very essence of the religions in question, and, this being the case, it must be acceptable to all. Nor can anyone reasonably object that the schismatic or so-called orthodox churches of Greece and Russia are thus left out of count; for in as much as they have no initiatory judge in matters of faith, they naturally belong to the same category as the numerous progeny of the Protestant Reformation. Hence the question: Which is the true religion? is narrowed down to this: In which of these classes, in the Catholic Church or in Protestant Churches, is found that unity of faith which is an essential mark of the true religion established by Christ?

If we now examine into the matter with a view to answer this question we find first of all that the Protestant churches, whether taken as a collection or considered singly, do not possess a principle of unity. For the principle of unity must be identical with the rule of faith, and in order to be a unifying principle, it must of its own nature tend to unite individual judgments in regard to revealed truths. Yet such a rule of faith none of the Protestant churches admit. In one and all the decision as to what is of faith rests ultimately with the Bible as interpreted by each individual. In other words, the Bible as interpreted by the individual means neither more nor less than the individual's interpretation of the Bible, or his own private judgment concerning the truth said to be contained in the Bible, and, therefore, the rule of faith common to all Protestant churches, and in practice followed by every one of them, is Private Judgment. Now private judgment, so far from being a principle of unity, is rather a source of discord. The old saying, "let sentiment be quiet," as many opinions as there are heads—is applicable in matters of religion as well as in other affairs of life when left to the decision of many. If every doctrine contained in the Bible were as clear as the fact that two and two make four, private judgment might possibly be compatible with unity in faith, but as there are very many biblical truths that are anything but clear the inevitable result of applying private judgment to them is the veriest Babel of conflicting opinions. Nay, this diversity of opinion is apt to arise even in cases where the truth is quite self-evident and obvious. What could be simpler or clearer than this short sentence, spoken by our Lord at the last Supper: "This is my body"? It is a direct and positive statement, containing just four words—the simplest proposition that can possibly be uttered by man; yet hardly a quarter of a century had elapsed since the introduction of the same sentence as a rule of faith when six hundred different ways. Surely a principle that can give rise to such a variety of opinions in regard to the meaning of the simplest of propositions cannot be considered a source of unity in the faith. Yet every rule of faith that the different Protestant churches make use of is ultimately reducible to this one; consequently not one of these churches has the principle of unity.

And as Protestant churches have no unifying principle, so neither have they actual unity. Division, dissension and discord have been the distinguishing marks of Protestantism from its very birth; so much so that it alarmed the reformers themselves. "It is of great importance," wrote Calvin to his fellow reformer, Melancton, "that the division which subsist among us should not be known to future ages; for nothing can be more ridiculous than that we, who have been compelled to make a separation from the whole world, should have agreed so ill among ourselves from the very beginning of the Reformation." To this Melancton replied that "The Elbe, with all its waters, could not furnish tears enough to weep over the miseries of the distracted Reformation." The same note of alarm is sounded by Theodore Beza, another reformer. "Our people," he says, "are carried away by every wind of doctrine. If you know what their religion is to-day, you cannot tell what it may be to-morrow. There is not one point which is not held by some of them as an article of faith, and by other rejected as an impiety."

Nor are the different denominations united at variance with one another, as might be expected, but there exists the greatest diversity of opinion even among the members of one and the same denomination. This is especially the case where successive unity comes in question. What yesterday was held

as an article of faith is to-day rejected as rank heresy. The course of Protestantism through the four centuries of its existence is strewn with the wrecks of cast-off doctrines, which were at the outset restrained, then called in question, then modified and finally abandoned. The eternity of hell, the necessity of faith, the efficacy of the sacraments, the virgin birth of Christ, the divine personality of the Saviour, and scores of other doctrines, upon which the very existence of Christianity depends, have either wholly or in part been relegated to the limbo of half-forgotten fables, so that in many churches little remains save the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man which even a pagan of Nero's time might have professed without running the slightest risk of ever being called upon to seal his faith with the sacrifice of his life. If Luther, or Calvin, or Zwingli, or any other so-called reformer were allowed to visit to-day the sects which he originated some three hundred years ago, they would recognize little in them as their own beside the name.

And as there is no bond of union with the past, so neither is there unity of faith among present members. It is the hardest thing in the world to find even a small number of Protestants of the same denomination that agree on all points of doctrine. Each one has his own opinion in the matter, and as often as not these opinions are irreconcilable one with the other. Hence there is a continual splitting up of older denominations into new ones, the oddity of whose names is not more striking than the strangeness of their doctrine. As an instance, take the Baptist Church, which is said to number some four million communicants in this country. Internal dissension has been so active that it has given rise to thirteen new denominations, each one of which contends that it possesses the pure gospel. Hence we have the Regular North Baptists, the Regular South Baptists, the Regular Colored Baptists, the Six Principles Baptists, the Seventh Day Baptists, the Free Will Baptists, the Original Free-Will Baptists, the General Baptists, the United Baptists, the Separate Baptists, the Baptist Church of Christ, the Primitive Baptists and lastly, the Old Two Seed in the Spirit; Predestinarian Baptist. A similar condition of things obtains in other denominations. Thus the Presbyterian Church comprises twelve separate religious bodies differing in doctrine, the Methodist Church seven, and the Lutheran twenty-two. Nay, even when this continual splitting up of older sects into new ones does not seem to occur, there is unity only in so far as all agree to disagree. What Dr. Ryle, the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, said some years ago of his own church, is wholly or in part applicable to every Protestant denomination existing to-day. "The English Church," he said, "is in such a state of chaotic anarchy and in a rhesness that it does not appear to matter a jot what a clergyman holds and believes." The same point was strikingly illustrated a few months ago in our country, in the case of Dr. Carter, of the Nassau Presbyterian, Long Island. He absolutely refused to believe in the fall of man, the Redemption, and the Westminster Confession, yet the Presbytery decided that Brother Carter might, his heretical views notwithstanding, continue his honored connection with the Presbyterian communion. Surely where such things happen it were idle to look for unity of faith.

But what is worse still, not only is there no actual unity of faith anywhere in these churches, but not a single one of them lays claim to such unity. This may seem strange, yet it is an undeniable fact admitted by eminent Protestant divines. As early as 1838 the Protestant bishops of England, gathered in Convocation, announced this openly to the world. His Lordship of Winchester maintained that "disorder in doctrine in a thing as inevitable as that different men should have different faces." His Lordship of Salisbury opined that "if any attempt were made to enforce a uniform creed it would break up the church." His Lordship of Ely volunteered the information "that at all times since the Reformation people had been allowed to hold extreme doctrines on one side and on the other." Whilst the Archbishop of Canterbury remarked: "As to divergencies of opinion among the clergy, I do not wish to restrain and curb the liberty of the clergy." Statements like these do not only prove the absence of all unity in the faith, but they are a positive renunciation of the same. And the condition of England that obtains in conservative Protestant churches wherever found, freedom of opinion in matters of faith is the water-work of one and all. Can this be reconciled with the statement of Christ: "He that believeth not all things whatsoever I have commanded, you shall be damned." If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and publican"? Does it agree with the declaration of St. Paul, "If we, nay if an angel from heaven, preach to you a gospel other than that which you have received, let him be anathema"? If it does, then one contradictory is as true as the other, then black is white and white is black. Hence whatever may be said of Protestant religion, they certainly are not the religion that Christ acknowledges as His own; for they one and all lack the essential mark which Christ impressed upon His Church for all times—they lack unity of faith and oneness of doctrine. And this applies with equal force to the Eastern schismatic churches, because in the absence of an

infallible and universal rule of faith, sects are forming with such rapidity within these same churches that years ago Czar Nicholas I did not hesitate to predict that Russia would perish by her religious divisions.

From this we might safely infer that the one true religion established by Christ is found in the Catholic Church. Because, as I pointed out in the first part of this lecture, the true religion must and does exist to-day, and since it does not exist in any one of the non-Catholic churches, it follows unavoidably that it must and does exist in the Catholic Church. This argument is conclusive, even as it stands; but to make assurance doubly sure, I shall now proceed to show that the Catholic Church has that unity of faith which is an essential mark of the true religion.

And first of all, the Catholic Church possesses most certainly the principle of unity. The oneness of faith admitted and accepted by all Catholics is the inflexible Church, handing down and interpreting the truths of revelation; and this is a principle necessarily directed to bring all men's minds into oneness of thought. It is a principle that begets in every mind absolute certainty, for in its last analysis it is the inflexible voice of God, independent of human wisdom, though manifested through human agency. The Christ Who said to His Apostles: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," abides to-day in the Church which He has built upon the rock, so that the gates of hell, the powers of error and of falsehood may not prevail against it. No individual Catholic ever takes it upon himself to decide finally what is, and what is not, revealed truth; that belongs either to a general council presided over by the Pope, or to the Pope himself, when he acts as supreme teacher of all the faithful in matters of faith and morals. For yet does the Pope, whether in union with the council, or acting by himself, speak in these matters simply as a human being, but as the Vicar of Christ, under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, who places the seal of his own essential truthfulness upon all doctrinal definitions. Hence the Catholic rule of faith is one and indivisible, the same for all times and for all nations. What is proposed to be the belief of one, is proposed to be the belief of all: what is once defined as an article of the faith forever. And as each and every one of the faithful is obliged, under pain of immediate separation from the Church, to give his full and unconditioned assent to the truth thus defined, and proposed, the accepted rule of faith of the very nature productive of the most perfect unity of belief and oneness of doctrine.

As in principle so also in fact is there found in the Catholic Church the most perfect unity of faith, both successive and simultaneous. There is not a single doctrine, which was accepted by the Apostles and their successors, that is not accepted to-day by every Catholic. Neither is there a single truth now held as revealed which was not also firmly, though perhaps only implicitly, believed in the days of the Apostles. Change of extrinsic conditions has in the lapse of ages called for a fuller declaration and authoritative definition of many truths; but the truths themselves were thus explicitly defined were contained in the Gospel preached to the first Christians, and were implicitly accepted by them on the infallible authority of the Apostolic Church. The deposit of faith was complete at the death of the last Apostle, and from that deposit not an iota has ever been removed, nor has an iota ever been added thereto. The present and the past are one in faith, identical in doctrine.

Nor is this unity of faith less perfect as it exists among the faithful of the present day. Go where you will, visit what lands you please; roam from continent to continent, sail to islands most remote; wherever you will find children of this one Church, you will find them among all peoples and tribes and nations, the most diverse in language and customs and conditions of life; yet everywhere, and under all conditions, you will find them one in faith, accepting without a moment's hesitation whatsoever the Christ upon earth proposes to their belief, so that from the hearts and lips of two hundred and seventy million men and women lies heavenward this one sublime act of faith: "O my God, I believe all the sacred truths which Thy Holy Church believes and teaches, because Thou hast revealed them. Who canst not deceive nor be deceived." It is a unity such as Church prayed for on the eve of his death, when He said: "Holy Father . . . for them also do I pray who shall believe in me . . . that they may be one even as we are one."

Lastly the Catholic Church lays the most absolute claim to this unity of faith. On matters of revealed truth she grants no liberty of opinion. Any one of her children, be he rich or poor, lay or cleric, bishop or cardinal who refuses to say with his whole heart, "I believe all the sacred truths which the Catholic Church believes and teaches," is cut off from her communion and cast aside as a dead member. She carries out to the letter her Divine Founder's behest; "If any man will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." She follows the advice of St. Paul to Titus: "If a man be a heretic, admonish him once or twice, and then avoid the man." She says with the same great Apostle to every one of her children: "Though an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than that which I have preached unto you. I say let

him be anathema. Protestants call this bigotry; yet why do they not fling that term of reproach into the face of St. Paul? Why do they not urge it against Christ? They call it bigotry and yet can they not see that by doing so they renounce their own claim to unity of faith, and concede that of their rival? Truly they stand condemned out of their own mouth.

Hence, whatever way we look at it, the Catholic Church has certainly unity of faith; its presence is most conspicuous. And again whatever way we look at it, Protestant churches have certainly no unity of faith; its absence is most notorious. Yet Christ says in explicit terms that unity of faith is an essential mark of the one true religion which He has established; consequently it follows as a logical necessity that the true religion, of which we are in quest is none other than that which is found in the Catholic Church.

IT IS ONLY INFIDELITY DISGUISED

I had a conversation with a man on the train one day lately. We spoke of the religious principles and prejudices of the people of the old world and of the commercialism and religious indifference of the people of the United States, or the "liberal views," as he called it, of our people. "But," he concluded, with a kind of boastful satisfaction, "it's all right; we are all striving for the same end." "Are we?" I said, "What is your end?" "Well," he said, "I try to live a good life, attend to my affairs, and deal honestly with all men." "This is very good," I said, "but there are thousands striving for that same end who do not succeed half as well as you, and there are millions who are seeking an end far different from yours, and your end and mine are certainly not the same. You do not travel half way with me, I too, try to do as you do, but not as an end; only as a means to an end. I try to live an honest, good life, and by that life gain eternal life and heaven promised to me by faith in God and His Church. So you see while you stop off at the border line of the natural—lose all—I go on into the supernatural to the higher end by higher motives. That is your end, I say, but you are careless of the one means of attaining it. You should not be indifferent on a point so important." Then the real trouble manifested itself when he said: "Well, that is all very dubious anyway. You can't be certain on religious matters. It is only a matter of education; one Church is as good as another; you may be all wrong and I am as right as they. I would like to see all this theoretical wrangling stopped and a platform of broad principles adopted free enough to suit all parties. Then we would have no creeds or excommunications, no religious bickerings, and all would be at peace." This declaration opened the way to a condition of things very different from which my companion was only an exponent. I was speaking with an infidel masquerading under the guise of a free and easy infidelity—"a goodly apple rotten in the core. Indifference is but a form of infidelity or the very next step to it. It is this dry rot that is ruining the very vitals of the nation. His religion and morality, makes the millions churchless."—The Missionary.

EPISCOPALIANS DO NOT WANT THEM.

The Episcopal church does not want the Catholics who have been thrown out of their Church for rebellion against ecclesiastical authority. The Living Church of Milwaukee, in its current number, makes this plainly apparent in discussing the Omaha affair. The paper says: "We hope it may not be true that the Episcopal Church has become the dumping ground for those persons who have been excommunicated in Omaha by the Roman Catholic bishop for participating in a divorce, the marriage of a divorced woman, the excommunicated parson, and the given to understand that they might be tolerated? It is not wanted as communion in the Episcopal Church. When our pastors and all priests become so impervious to considerations of wealth and social position as the part of sinners that the discipline of the Church becomes a thing to be respected by them, there will be less cause to deplore the vast gulf between the professions of the Christian Church and the actions of the Christian people."

How to Have God's Grace in Our Hearts.

"The divinely appointed means for making our peace with God is the Sacrament of Penance," says the Rosary. "Let us then see to it that the days of Advent pass not by unheeded but let them be to us days of prayer and preparation for the coming of the Blessed Babe of Bethlehem, the 'Word made flesh,' because God so loved the world." Let each of us receive at Christmas morning the Most adorable Eucharist Bread of Life, the Body and Blood of Christ; then indeed shall we be partakers of that holy joy that passeth understanding, and we shall experience a foretaste of that heavenly peace which God's angels proclaimed from on high to 'men of good will on earth.'"

To-day the children of the Church number two hundred and sixty five million. They are found in every quarter of the world, thus showing that our Lord's injunction to preach the gospel to all men has been well heeded.