

The Religious World

A Roman Catholic School Circular

A circular, issued by Roman Catholic citizens under the direction of the Cardinal Archbishop of Baltimore, has been sent to members of the City Council of Baltimore, members of the Legislature of the State, and other city and State officials; it will also be distributed generally among the citizens. The object of the circular is the creation of a sentiment favoring a division of the school funds so as to give a proportionate share to the parochial schools of the Roman Catholic Church. It is understood that these circulars will be distributed in all the States, especially among the members of the Legislature; that the Roman Catholic leaders will carefully observe the effects; and that, if they are favorable, bills will be introduced into various State Legislatures favoring the proposed action.

It must be understood [reads the circular] that we Catholics are not opposed to the public schools so far as they impart a good secular education; but we believe that education, to be complete, must rest on religion as the basis of all practical morality. Man, created in the image of God, has a longing after immortality and aspirations to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice. The religious and secular education of the rising generation is an object of the greatest importance. It will be a barrier to impiety and a most effectual means of inculcating obedience to the laws and of promoting peace and order in society. The system of education in England, Ireland, and in the Canadas combines State and denominational schools, supported by the public purse. . . .

Since it is considered by all that religion is an essential element of civilization and the bulwark of civil government, we consider that the State in its educational system should have regard for the right of parents to accord to them the religious freedom guaranteed to them by the Constitution. As the law now stands, parents who prefer parochial schools as places of education for their children are deprived of the benefit of their taxes as far as educating their own offspring is helped by them. They are also led, from motives of charity, to educate the poor of their denomination. This threefold tax is very onerous. Furthermore, the system of education which the State adopts presents, to our minds, a grievance very much to be deplored—the absence of religion in the public schools. We wish it to be understood that it is not our purpose to interfere with the public schools. We only desire a modification of the present common-school system, so that the conscience of parents be respected, that even-handed justice be done to all citizens, that none be taxed without deriving therefrom a corresponding benefit, and that public blessings may be commensurate with public burdens.

Simultaneously with the publication of this circular comes an address from Monsignor Satolli, which, though in more guarded language, indorses the same policy. We quote from this address, also, a paragraph:

I will say that whoever seriously meditates on the principles of the American Constitution, whoever is acquainted with the present conditions of the American Republic, should be persuaded and agree with us that the action of the Catholic faith and morality is favorable in every way to the direction in which the Constitution turns. The more public opinion and the Government favor the Catholic schools, more and more will the welfare of the Commonwealth be advanced. The Catholic education is the surest safeguard of the permanence throughout the centuries of the Constitution, and the best guide of the Republic in civil progress. From this source the Constitution will gather that assimilation so necessary for the perfect organization of that progressive body which is the American Republic.

We comment on these utterances elsewhere.

Mozoomdar in Boston and New York Babu Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, head of the Brahmo-Somaj, who made such a profound impression at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and whose address at the Congregational Club in New York in October is fresh in many minds, has been spending some time in Boston preaching in Unitarian churches, and also giving the Lowell Lectures. Those lectures are being published in the "Christian Register" of Boston, and are most stimulating and delightful reading. Recently the eloquent Indian has been in New York speaking at the Unitarian Club and also preaching in Unitarian churches. His faith is distinctly eclectic. Those whom he represents aim to find the good and to reject the bad in all religions. His position is well indicated in an extract from his address as given in New York on Sunday, November 26. We quote him as reported in the New York "Tribune":

Humanity [said he, among other remarks] finds its center in the Son of God. We do not repudiate any Scripture or any prophet. They are not all of the same order. We all work for the one object of saving mankind. Ceremonious decorations and rites are but different means to the same end. It matters not how these forms differ, so long as the outward part has not a tendency to obscure the end. But all religious followers are prone to pay such attention to outward form that the inner truth is lost. This was so when Buddha arose, and with him the spirit of India rose high above controversy and rites, and Buddhism was supreme. And then the time came when the principles that Buddha taught were forgotten in the outward show, and after 1,200 years Buddhism was no more. Just so shall it be with all religions—it is the spirit that

shall live and the forms shall die. It is therefore the duty of followers of all religions to examine themselves to see if the mediums of their creed are carrying out the objects originally intended. If they do not, and if by change of forms the spirit may be perpetuated, let not the forms be a stumbling-block.

The Free and Open Church Association

We must own to having been sadly ignorant concerning what we believe to be a most interesting and important work. We never heard or read of the Free and Open Church Association until we saw a brief account of its eighteenth anniversary in St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, West Philadelphia, and now we have a desire to see and learn more of it. The sermon was preached by the Rev. A. B. Sharp, on the most suggestive topic, "The Unity of Christians in the Church." Of course, there must be the unity of Christians in the Church before there can be any church unity in the world. The general object of this Association, we judge from its name and the few facts which are given, is the promotion of the free-seat system in the churches, and also the habit of keeping the doors open from one week's end to another—for all who may desire to rest or pray. The importance of both of these movements can hardly be exaggerated. A prominent Christian worker was lately heard to say that if our churches were kept open, and the people encouraged to enter them at all hours for meditation and prayer, she believed there would be fewer suicides; and we are perfectly sure that if the free-seat system were adopted, far more people would attend church than now do. We are amazed and delighted at the report of the progress which has been made in this direction in the Episcopal Church in the United States. The report shows that there are 4,338 churches and chapels in 53 dioceses, of which 3,450 are free—a percentage of 79¾ free churches. In the missionary jurisdictions the percentage is 98½, making an average of 80¾ per cent. in both dioceses and missionary districts. In the Diocese of Quincy all the 33 churches are free. These are, certainly, most remarkable facts, and we commend them especially to the attention of those who have the direction of affairs in Congregational and Presbyterian churches, who imagine that churches cannot be supported and do aggressive work except on the basis of rented pews. We have taken these facts from "The Churchman" of November 25. We notice in its columns that the publications of this Society may be secured by addressing its Secretary, the Rev. John A. Goodfellow, 2217 East Cumberland Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Death of Dr. Nevius

For many years the Rev. Dr. John L. Nevius has been one of the most prominent and useful of all the missionaries to China. In denomination he was a Presbyterian, but his spirit was broad and catholic; and he may be said to have belonged to the Church universal rather than to any distinct section of it. News has just been received of his death in China on October 18. He was born at Ovid, N. Y., March 4, 1829, studied at Union College and at Princeton Theological Seminary, and in May, 1853, was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry, going the following year as a missionary to China, and settling at Ningpo. He visited the United States in 1865 and again in 1890, remaining the first time about three years. He is well known as an author and translator, and was peculiarly gifted in presenting the work in which he was engaged so as to interest and enlist the support of the churches at home. By far the most eminent of all the missionaries in China, without doubt, is the Rev. Griffith John, of the London Missionary Society; after him we doubt if any man has been more justly honored or more widely known for his consecrated service, ripe scholarship, large ability, and exalted character than John L. Nevius.

Children's Aid Society

One of the most valuable of all charities in the United States is the Children's Aid Society in New York. It is almost too well known to require any characterization. It aims to take children from the streets of the metropolis and provide for them good homes in various parts of the country. It is said that over one hundred thousand have thus been provided with homes, while the vice and crime of the great city have been perceptibly diminished by its invaluable work. The Secretary of this Society for many years was Mr. Charles L. Brace, widely

known both as philanthropist and author. After his death his position was taken by his son, bearing the same name. The annual report of this Society has recently been published. All interested in the amelioration of humanity ought to give it a careful examination. We give a few of its more significant facts. It now maintains twenty-one industrial schools, thirteen night schools, and six lodging-houses in New York. A new school, intended to reach Polish, Bohemian, and Russian immigrants, has recently been started in Rivington Street. It is known as the Lord Memorial, and has now enrolled three hundred and fifty children, nine-tenths of whom never attended any school. In addition to the schools are the evening classes, combining instruction and recreation for girls who have gone to work in shops and factories. A farm school has been established and endowed at Kensico, Westchester County, which is regarded as of great promise in helping to solve the problem of vagrant boys. The five lodging-houses for boys, and the Elizabeth Home for girls, have sheltered thousands during the year, with a nightly average of 464. Good beds and meals are provided at a charge of six cents for a lodging and six for a meal. The Society also maintains a Children's Home at Bath Beach, and a Health Home for mothers with sick children at Coney Island. The receipts of the Society for the last year were \$396,210.30. The officers for the ensuing year are: President, D. Willis James; Vice-President, Charles E. Whitehead; Secretary, Charles Loring Brace; Treasurer, George S. Coe.

Theological Controversy Among the Quakers

Action was taken at the recent gathering of the Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends which exemplifies some present tendencies of Western Quakerism. It seems that certain ministers of the Society of Friends had been deposed for holding unsound doctrine, and their case was considered before the Iowa Meeting. Those who were charged with heresy were asked to give direct answers, "without qualifying words," to certain questions which are addressed to ministers in the Book of Discipline. The questions are too many for us to quote here. They relate to the doctrine of God, the depravity of man, the deity and manhood of Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice, to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, to the New Birth, to the spirituality of worship, to the headship of Jesus Christ over his Church, to the inspiration of the Scriptures, and to eternal punishment. These questions were all answered in the affirmative, but to them a note was appended saying that those who answered them did not believe that any would be condemned to endless punishment "until the resources of God's infinite compassion and the means of his redeeming grace and power in Jesus Christ for their salvation have been exhausted without avail." This note not being satisfactory, a further letter was sent out, which brought out the fact that those who were charged with heresy were committed to a belief in the possibility of repentance after death for those who have not had a clear vision of Christ in this world. The final action on this statement recommended that "Joel and Hannah Bean and Benjamin Jones be deposed from the position of ministers for entertaining and advocating doctrines which, according to their own statement to us in writing, are contrary to the fundamental principles held by our Church as expressed in our Declaration of Faith." It will be seen by this action that all the Quakers are by no means liberal in their theology. No more limited interpretation would be given to these doctrines even by the strictest school of Calvinists.

Several items of great interest come to us from the churches on the other side of the water. The first of these announces the death of the Rev. Dr. James Morison, the founder and great leader of the denomination which in Scotland is known as the Evangelical Union. He was one of the most conspicuous characters in the religious life of Great Britain, and a Biblical scholar unsurpassed on either side of the water. He died at his home in Glasgow on Monday, November 13, aged about seventy-seven years. He was the son of an honored minister of the Presbyterian Church, educated in the older Calvinism, and at first loyal to it; but the study of the Scriptures and the influence of the Spirit led him at last to what seemed to him a larger interpreta-

tion of truth, and finally to sever his relations with the Church of his fathers. He was essentially a great spiritual leader, loyal to the New Testament in a time when loyalty meant exclusion from so-called orthodox circles. Although he had been branded as a heretic, he founded the Church of which he has since been not only the leader but the father. He was a man of saintly character, and of "such eminent scholarship and ability as placed him in the front rank of modern theologians. His commentaries are of unique value, and the more closely they are examined the more they are prized." His commentary on St. Mark is perhaps the finest in the English language. The Church which he founded is essentially Congregational, and it is probable that it will ultimately join that fellowship. Dr. Morison and his gifted colleague, the Rev. George Gladstone, were both conspicuous at the International Congregational Council which was held in London in 1891. He had outlived all the fierce contentions which raged around him for years, and when he passed away was as highly honored and deeply loved in the Church of his fathers as among the churches which he founded.

Baptist Church Extension in England

The last meeting of the Baptist Union in England, which was held at Reading, gave a great impetus to the cause of Church Extension. Three thousand six hundred pounds were subscribed at that time, and the amount, we believe, has steadily increased. The Baptist denomination in England has not kept pace with the growth of population, nor, indeed, with that of any other denomination. We are told that within the last thirty years the population of forty-seven of the largest towns in England, excluding London, increased sixty-seven per cent., while the sitting accommodation in Baptist chapels increased only ten per cent. In 1861 the Baptists provided in each town a sitting for one in every thirty-five of the population; in 1891, for one in every fifty-three only. In four of the large towns there are districts, the populations varying from 57,000 to 79,000, without a Baptist chapel. It is proposed to raise a national fund of £100,000, to be used, two-thirds (in loans free of interest) in church extension, the remaining one-third in the purchase of sites and making grants and in the sustentation of the first pastor of the new cause. This movement will undoubtedly result in a decided increase in the number of Baptist churches. There are those in this country who think that the reason that the Baptist churches do not grow more rapidly in England is because they are not loyal to principles which American Baptists emphasize—namely, immersion and close communion. We do not believe that they are correct. The conditions of life are very different in England from what they are here. In most of the towns Baptists and Wesleyans work the same field, and there has been no diminution in growth among Christians, although more of it has been among Wesleyans than Baptists, probably because of the closer organization of the Wesleyan body. Even such men as Dr. MacLaren and Mr. Spurgeon have always stood for open communion, and the opposite belief would make little headway in England. There has been, however, need of a great and enthusiastic denominational leader; that want seems now to have been met in the person of the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, of Norwich, and the cause of Church Extension will now, no doubt, be enthusiastically carried forward.

Missions in the English Churches

One thing which especially interests us is the growing tendency among the English churches for eminent and honored pastors to devote themselves to what we in this country would call revival work. Men like Drs. Parker, Dale, Horton, and Berry have for several years been more than mere pastors of churches. Their people have recognized that they had duties to the community as well as to the local church. The number of those who are peculiarly gifted as preachers is not so large that any one church has a right to monopolize them. It is all very well, but it is very selfish, for a church to be willing to do so. Dr. Parker and Dr. Horton have both recently been holding successful "missions," the first in Birmingham and the second in Plymouth. Churches combine, Bible readings are held at one service, conferences concerning