

It is not a new thing in the world to hear opinions like these. The Ebionites and Corinthians, in the first and second centuries, professed similar views regarding the Virgin birth, and the Arians, in the third century, denied the Divinity of Christ. But all these were deemed heretics, and were cut off from the body of Christian believers. What is new in the history of Christianity is to see men teaching such doctrines, and thereafter continuing to be the accredited ministers of a Christian Church. St. John said: 'Every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God; and this is Anti-Christ' (I. Epist. 4, 3); and we may take it as certain that, if that vigorous opponent of heresy were to describe the new Arians among our separated brethren, he would not hesitate to apply to them the words of the prophet: 'In the temple the abomination of desolation' (Dan. 9, 27).

The Present Attitude

of many Protestants towards the Bible is strangely inconsistent with the old cry of 'The Bible and the Bible only' as a rule of faith, and with their boasted championship of the sacred volume against the supposed opposition to it of the Catholic Church. In view of later developments among Bible Christians, it does not seem very far to the time when Protestants shall have thrown the Bible aside as an out-of-date collection of doubtful documents, no longer claiming their belief or reverence. It will then be seen that the Church which received from the synagogues the Sacred Writings of the Law and the prophets, and witnessed within its own fold the birth of the New Testament, which presented the whole Bible thus composed to the successive centuries that have passed over her, and interpreted it through them all to Christian believers—it will then be seen that she has been the true protector of God's written word, and by keeping it as a document of His Revelation in its due place in the divine organism of religion, she will stand before the world, it is to be feared, as the only defender of Christianity.

To you, reverend brethren of the clergy, we commend most earnestly a renewed zeal in the constant diligent study of the Sacred Scripture. 'Eat this Book, and go speak to the Children of Israel,' was God's expressive command to the Prophet of old, and it is still the daily prayerful reading of the Divine Word that best prepares the priest for his most necessary and most divine work of preaching. It will serve us priests to reflect how have we kept the resolution made in seminary days, to read at least one chapter of the Bible daily, and how easily we might do it, and how much we lose by not doing it. Those of the clergy who can do so, should keep themselves acquainted with the progress in Biblical studies made by the learned, and especially with the investigations of the Pontifical Commission on these studies, recently organised by the Holy See.

To the faithful laity we commend the devout reading of the New Testament, especially of the Gospels, and we hope that a reverent familiarity with the Sacred Text will become amongst our people more frequent than it has been. The children in our schools should be familiarised with the beautiful stories of Bible history and the important lessons they were intended to convey, and wherever possible, classes of the grown-up children who have just left school should be established for the study of Bible History.

Popular Catholic Literature

We live in an age that is by many considered an age of light, but is certainly an age of reading. The widespread facilities of popular education leave few amongst our people who do not read; and a quick commercial instinct keeps them plentifully supplied with cheap reading, in book and booklets, magazines, journals, and daily newspapers; but, under the guidance of that commercial instinct, the supply of reading matter is ordered to suit the tastes of the millions, who, as a rule, care little for serious knowledge, and run chiefly in their reading after diversion and frivolity. Never before have St. Paul's words been so fully verified: 'There shall be a time when they shall not endure sound doctrine; but according to their own desires they will heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables (II. Tim. 4, 3-1). The multitude of the itching ears have indeed heaped to themselves teachers; and to these teachers their mandate is: 'Behold not for us those things that are right: speak unto us pleasant things: see errors for us' (Isai. 30, 10). The writers who cater for the people's reading are, no doubt, largely influenced by the commercial instinct, but this instinct does not explain fully their marvellous capacity, for 'seeing errors,' and their singular ingenuity in set-

ting forth vice in the most attractive garb. To understand the almost universal animosity of popular writers against the Church, and their glorification of paganism, one would suppose them to be led by the instinct of that Spirit who is the enemy of truth, and to have as their motto, 'let the Holy One of Israel cease from before us' (Isai. 30, 11). This hostility of writers towards Revealed Religion, and especially towards its divinely appointed guardian, the Catholic Church, coupled with the widespread popular taste for reading, makes it necessary to supply an antidote to check the evil of rationalistic literature by the spread of cheap Catholic literature, and to withstand the influence of anti-Catholic newspapers by newspapers that will publish the truth about Catholic affairs, and enable Catholics to 'convince the gainsayers' (Tit. 1, 9). We have to thank God that His Providence has raised up, to meet the needs of religion in these times, numerous writers of ability and literary merit; and that in their hands the cause of Christianity has been vindicated against infidelity and heresy of every kind. But the great need of the times is to put the work of these writers in the hands of the people, in other words, to publish them cheaply.

(To be concluded next week.)

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

September 30.

The Rev. Father Hickson, S.M., is at present in town for the purpose of collecting funds for the Cathedral.

Miss Mary Bourke, daughter of Mr. James Bourke, of Kilmuirie, is to be married on Tuesday next to Mr. Allan Vickers, of Feilding.

The local University College debating society will be represented at the next inter-University College debating contest by two members of the Catholic Young Men's Club, Messrs. Kelly and Fitzgibbon.

There is, I believe, a movement on foot in the city to organise some method of bringing under the notice of the public the question of Home Rule for Ireland. This question is receiving considerable attention in Australia, and the present time seems opportune for its discussion by the people of this Colony. It is possible that a conference of the Hibernian and Catholic Young Men's Societies will be convened at an early date to consider what initial steps should be taken in the matter.

On Wednesday last at St. Anne's, Wellington South, the marriage of Miss Lizzie Stacey to Mr. James Stratford was celebrated by the Rev. Father Moloney, assisted by the Rev. Father Venning. The bride was given away by her father and was attended by Miss Austin as bridesmaid. Mr. W. Stratford acted as groomsmen. A Nuptial Mass was celebrated, at which a large number of the relatives and friends of the parties were present. A reception was afterwards held at the Victoria Hall, where the usual toasts were duly honored. Mr. and Mrs. Stratford are spending their honeymoon in the Wairarapa.

(From an occasional correspondent.)

September 30.

The art of debate and public speaking receives much encouragement at the local University College Debating Society. In addition to the Plunket Medal, which caused such keen rivalry this year, the students had also a chance of winning what has been named the Union Prize. This prize, which was offered for the first time this year, is to be an annual one to the value of four guineas, to be awarded to the student who gains most points at the various debates during the term. The points are allotted by a judge appointed for each debate. On Saturday evening last the final debate of the series took place, and the result of the contest was announced. The prize was awarded to Mr. E. J. Fitzgibbon, who gained the first place in each of three debates and secured a total of twenty-four points for the term. The competitor next on the list gained sixteen points. Mr. Fitzgibbon has thus won the two prizes offered at the University this year. The election of the representatives of the College for the annual inter-university college debate next Easter was held, during the evening, and resulted in the election of Messrs. Fitzgibbon and Kelly to uphold the honor of the College at the tournament.