

in this institution of proselytising tactics that are neither fair nor honorable. All this constitutes an indictment which is neither 'vague' nor 'unsubstantiated,' and we will wait with interest to see what the *Spectator* will have to say in reply to charges of the truth of which such specific and apparently conclusive evidence has been adduced.

The Origin of Sunday Schools.

It is a universally accepted belief amongst Protestants that what are known as 'Sunday schools' date their existence from a period subsequent to the Reformation, and that they are entirely due to Protestant enlightenment and activity. The evidence and influence of this belief come out very strikingly in the following entertaining paragraph quoted by our contemporary, the *Sacred Heart Review*, from a recent number of the *Baptist Standard of Chicago*. The paragraph runs thus:—

'Roman Catholic progress in New York almost takes one's breath away. And it is not all material, either. It is in the line of Sunday schools. Protestant influence is nowhere greater than here. The youth are being taught in all Catholic parishes, save a few Jesuit ones, and even Sunday school rooms, after the Protestant pattern, are being constructed. The instruction is not, as might be expected, confined to the Church, its history and its saints, but is in large measure evangelical. Conduct of many of the schools is following Protestant methods, and even laymen and laywomen are brought in as teachers of classes.'

That voices quite accurately the common non-Catholic view of the Sunday school as an essentially Protestant institution. It is claimed that Robert Raikes, the English printer, who established his first Sunday school in Gloucester in 1780, was the original founder of the institution, and that before his time systematic instruction to the young on Sundays was unknown.

In his preface to *Spirago's Method of Christian Doctrine* the learned Bishop Messmer gives an interesting account of the origin and history of Sunday schools, and shows how utterly baseless is the idea that the institution owes its origin to Protestantism or is in any way a product or outcome of the Reformation. The honor of opening the first Sunday school, in the modern sense of the expression, belongs, it appears, to St. John La Salle, who opened his 'Ecole Dominicale' at Paris in 1669, over a hundred years before Raikes. Bishop Messmer gives the following full account of the institution:—

'Seeing that so many boys engaged at work all the week received no instruction, either religious or secular, La Salle resolved to gather them on Sundays, their only free day. With his brethren he taught those boys from 12 to 3 o'clock the various secular branches, among them geography, drawing, geometry and book-keeping, and always closed the class with religious instruction or the catechism. This was really the first Sunday school of this kind in Europe. Later on the secular instruction as a feature of the Sunday school disappeared, just as it happened with the Protestant system, and we now understand by Sunday school "a school for religious instruction on Sunday, more particularly the instruction of children and youth." Taken in this sense, the first notice of a formal school class in Christian doctrine on Sunday is the programme published in May, 1557, for the Jesuit College at Cologne, which orders the pupils of the higher classes to attend instruction on the larger catechism of Canisius every Sunday afternoon at four o'clock, while the lower classes had to learn the smaller catechism of the same author every Saturday at 4 p.m.

'If by Sunday school is simply meant the special catechetical instruction given to children on Sundays and feast days, it is surprising indeed to hear from our latest encyclopaedias that Sunday schools began only with the Protestant Reformation. It betrays a stupendous ignorance of the history of Christian doctrine in the Catholic Church, when M'Clintock's Cyclopaedia says in regard to the Middle Ages that hundreds of years then went by without any general effort on the part of the Church for the religious instruction of children. Several synods of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Hungary, France, and Italy ordain that on Sundays and feast days parents shall bring their children of from seven to fourteen years of age to church, in order to be instructed in the Catholic faith. A similar ignorance is shown by the same writer when he says of the times following the Reformation that, "although in numerous instances previous catechisation had been practised on the Lord's Day . . . yet nothing like a general system of teaching the young on Sundays, whether in secular or religious learning, was known prior to 1780." This in the face of the Council of Trent, St. Charles Borromeo, Popes Clement VIII., Benedict XIII. and XIV., and the numerous sodalities of Christian doctrine, and the many provincial councils east and west, who all repeated with one voice the old Catholic rule: "Teach the children the Christian doctrine on Sundays and feast days." The Sunday school as a school of religious instruction belongs, name and all, to the Catholic Church.'

The Next Presidential Election.

The election for President in the United States is still a long way off, but already party programmes are being formulated, and the names of probable candidates are being discussed. President Roosevelt has already intimated his intention of seeking nomination as the Republican candidate. It seems to be generally understood, though it has not been explicitly stated, that Mr. Bryan will not be a candidate on this occasion, and the likelihood is that Mr. Grover Cleveland, who was President prior to the first election of the late President McKinley, will receive the nomination of the Democratic party. Mr. Bryan is a man of great eloquence and of fascinating personality, but his refusal to modify the views which he holds on the Silver question has always handicapped him, and it is probable that Mr. Cleveland, who is certainly a less brilliant man, would, by reason of his adherence to the gold standard, command a more general support.

*

So far as policy goes there are indications that the election will turn very largely on the attitude of the respective parties towards the Trusts system. The evil of this system is becoming daily more and more apparent and recent American papers are full of sketches and cartoons describing the tremendous hold which the various monopolies have on the trade and commerce of the country. The Democratic party are already in the field with a programme which pledges them to destroy the Trusts by removing the tariff provisions on which they depend. Here is the programme as formulated at a recent important meeting of the party: 'We are opposed, as the permanent policy of the Government, to the maintenance of dependent colonies to be governed outside the pale of the Constitution: We are agreed that the civil should always be superior to the military power. We all favor freedom of commerce and genuine reciprocity with foreign nations. We stand for free trade in all articles controlled by the Trusts. There is no justification of the exercise of the power of legislation to make millionaires of one class of people and paupers of another. The whole system of Government favoritism which has been used to build up one man's business at the expense of another's, by discriminating in favor of one industry as against another, is a vicious system which has long afflicted the country, and has grown more and more intolerable with years. Democracy will now stand for peace, free trade, and commerce, and honest friendliness with all nations, and entangling alliances with none.' The Republican party will probably reply with a platform in which regulation of the Trusts evil, which however is naturally fostered by the Republican policy of protection, will be a prominent plank. It is too soon to prophesy, but it is certain that in the present state of public feeling the party that is bold enough to declare 'war to the knife' on the Trusts system will command a very large measure of popular support.

The Cause of Prosperity.

PREACHING recently in the Catholic Church, Stroud Green, London, the Rev. Gilbert Higgins said that Englishmen had been told till they believed the tale that their material prosperity was a clear evidence that the Protestant religion was true and approved of by God. Yet the theory was an absurd one. If material prosperity was, as Protestants were told, a trustworthy sign of Divine sanction and of the truth of a religion, then it must follow that paganism was a true religion when Egypt, Greece and Rome were so mighty and so prosperous. 'Romanism' was a true religion 400 years ago when, as Dr. Horton told them, 'Spain, this great Catholic country was the leading power in Europe,' and Buddhism, the religion of our new allies, the clever, progressive, and prosperous Japanese must be a true religion and approved of by God. The prosperity theory had to face other problems and very disagreeable facts. If England is prosperous because she is Protestant, what makes our commercial rival, Catholic, priest-ridden Belgium so prosperous? If Italy languishes because she is Catholic, how is the decadence of Protestant Sweden to be explained? The conclusion they were compelled by reason, common sense, and facts to arrive at was stated by the *Spectator* years ago in the following words: 'We see little or no connection between national success and Christianity.' Sir Michael Hicks Beach hit the nail on the head when he said the other day that what made England prosperous was not the 'Reformation,' but her coal. If what he (Father Higgins) had said was not enough to dispel this unrea-onable fear of Rome which possessed so many ill-informed minds he would show in a few words taken from a book which he held in his hand, 'National Decay and Romanism,' by Mgr. John Vaughan, how little 'this England of ours' might suffer if she were 'handed back to the priest and the Pope.' England in her Catholic days was known throughout the world as 'Merrie England.' England when under the priests and the Pope saw rise: (1) Her glorious Constitution, (2) her representative form of government, (3) her two House of Parliament, (4) her trial by jury, (5) the Charter of her liberties, Magna Charta, (6) her noble universities, (7) her splendid cathedrals and churches! That is what England has received 'from Romanism,' which the Nonconformist champion, Dr. Clifford, dogmatically brands 'a paganned form of Christianity.'