

out of the Catholic Church; and this furnishes them with supernatural authority, making them be believed no longer with a human, but with a divine faith. The one makes them credible, the other infallible; the one true, the other certain.

But the surest proof that the first character pervades the gospel history is, the appeal made by the writers themselves to the usual grounds of credibility. These are of two classes. St. John claims the rights of the first,—that of an eye and ear witness. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; (for the Life was manifested, and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the Life eternal, which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us,) that which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you."—1 John i. 1. Again, of the mysterious flow of blood and water from Christ's side. "And he that saw it hath given testimony; and his testimony is true."—John xix. 33. And at the close of the gospel: "This is the disciple that giveth testimony of these things, and hath written these things."—John xxi. 24. St. Luke contents himself with being evidence of the second class, as the accurate recorder of events carefully collected from first witnesses. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand, to set forth in order a narration of the things which have been accomplished among us, according as they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus."—Luke i. 1-3.

And, in fact, if we diligently peruse the gospels, we shall perhaps be surprised to find, how few events are recorded, of which the knowledge could not have come from human testimony. The prayer in the garden, which was unwitnessed by man, and the first moments of the Resurrection, perhaps form the only exceptions; but they can, and may, be supposed to have been communicated by Him, whose testimony infinitely transcends that of man.

We may seem to have made a long digression, or to have taken a circuitous path to our purpose. It is indeed so. But we have gained these two points: first, that the chain of evidence, whereby the great christian system is mainly sustained, must be unexceptionable as to strength, decision, and completeness, without a flaw or imperfection; and secondly, that the divine inspiration confirms and sanctions the solidity and fitness of every link. Hence arises the high position of evangelist in the order of saints. St. John is styled the "Evangelist," in preference to "the Apostle," because the first title is a distinctive beyond the second. And no small portion of the Apostles' glory consists in their having been chosen witnesses of our Blessed Lord's actions, to manifest them to the world; whence St. Paul hesitates not to say, that we are of God's household, because we are "built upon the foundation" (that is, the testimony) "of the Apostles and prophets."—Ephes. ii. 20.

But whatever may have been the importance of the facts or events to which they were called to be witnesses, there was one of more importance than them all, one which is the very ground-work of the christian dispensation, without the certainty of which the entire system falls to pieces. This is the mystery of the Incarnation, as accomplished upon earth. To this God willed that there should be only one witness; of all its holiest details one sole evidence. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand."—Matt. xviii. 16.—except the Word of words, the Incarnate Word. This must stand attested to the world for ever by only one witness,—and that was Mary the ever blessed. Who could tell that Gabriel came from heaven, and brought her, from the Eternal Father, message? Who, that she was alarmed at his greeting? Who, that she hesitated to accept the proposed prerogative of a divine maternity at its imagined price? Who, that he manifested the fulness of the gift, and the miraculous agency by which it had to be accomplished? Who, her virginal consent, and its concurrent effect, the Mystery of life, the Emanuel in existence, a God-man in being? Only she, the chosen, exclusive partaker on earth, of the most hidden counsels of the Almighty.

Now, first take away her contribution to the gospel testimony, efface her testimony to christianity, and you find not simply a link broken, but the very fastening of the whole chain wanting; not merely a gap, or a break, made in the structure, but the foundation gone. In the laws of belief on testimony, what elsewhere appears unnatural is true. If you want to make a structure look unsafe, you represent it as a pyramid resting on its point. Yet where the number of believers increases at each generation, from the first source of evidence, it is clear that a diagram representing this fact, and the unity of derivation of the truth believed, would present this very form. Now here the belief in the wonders wrought in the Incarnation, of ages and of the world, rests upon one point of testimony, a unit, a single voice,—that of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Again we say, cancel her testimony, and what becomes of all other witnesses? Had she not let out the secrets of her breast, or in higher truth, had not God's Spirit moved her, as He moved the Evangelists, not to collect indeed, but to scatter, not to enquire but to teach; had He not thus made her the Evangelist of the Evangelists, and the Apostle to Apostles; had not that same divine influence, which overcame her first reluctance of purity, prevailed over her second unwillingness, from humility, (of which we shall treat later) and compelled her to speak; the whole tale of love, which fills the holiest of histories, would have wanted, not only its tenderest and most affecting beginning, but the very root from which its loveliness and beauty spring, to circulate through it all. We should have read with wonder the account of miracles most amazing, and discourses most admirable, and

virtues most divine; but it would have been difficult for us to separate, in our minds, this narrative from what we attribute to prophets and patriarchs, had not the clear, and most sweet, and consoling record of our Lord's appearance on earth been preserved for us, so as totally to segregate Him from the very highest orders of holiness, and make Him, even here, "higher than the heavens." And let it be remarked too, that even the principal circumstances of our Saviour's Nativity and early life rest exclusively upon the same evidence. When St. Luke collected his narrative from those who had been witnesses from the beginning, Joseph was long departed, and so were Zachary and Elizabeth, as well as Simeon and Anna. She only who laid up all that happened in her mother's heart, survived, witness of the journey to Bethlehem, and of the flight into Egypt, of the angelic messages which accompanied these events, and of the presentation in the temple. Who else had retained in memory the words so admirable, and so important to us, of Elizabeth and of Zachary; above all, that canticle of dearest interest to the Church for ever, her unending evening hymn, the *Magnificat*? It is a treasury, the mother's bosom, at once capacious and retentive, in which can be secured words and deeds that have passed from every other mind. And so when, after forty years, the early life of our Redeemer is enquired into, there remains one faithful and most loving witness, to give proof of what ennobled, ratified, and stamped with divine evidence, every action and every word of His after life. Mary alone supplied the testimony to His miraculous conception and birth, and to the fulfilment of the prophecies in her pure virginal being.

But we may go further. So completely had these wonderful occurrences been concealed, so well had "the secret of the King been hidden," that when our Lord came before the public, its uncontradicted opinion pronounced Him to be Joseph's son, "being, as it was supposed, the son of Joseph." And the people hesitated not to say in His own very country, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude; and his sisters are they not all with us?" And again they said, "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?"—How then, saith he, I came down from heaven?" Here were valid elements of human evidence, a strong foundation for historical assertion. Had any one gone into the very country and neighborhood where Jesus had lived, to enquire into His early history, he would have found concurrent testimony that He was "the carpenter's son." The espousals of Mary with him, would have been quoted, as well as their enrolment in Augustus's census. Public repute,—that is, the testimony of thousands, might have been powerfully alleged. And against all its authority what have we to oppose? The simple assertion of Mary. So high, so sacred, so undoubted is her word, that to the Christians of all ages it has sufficed to counterbalance every other source of information. Surely then, her place is the very first in the order of Gospel evidences, and so in the economy of faith.

Let us again consider, what gives her this position. When an apologist, as writers on the evidences are most unbecomingly called, wishes to establish the claims of the evangelists to our credit, antecedent to the proof of inspiration, he justly insists upon what they did and suffered, to demonstrate their sincerity. We are most rightly shown, how every interest was surrendered, every dearest affection sacrificed, prospects, comfort, home, friends, family; how every suffering was incurred, every hardship courted, from the discomfort of an uncertain life, to the extremity of certain death; and who, it is powerfully asked, would act thus without firm conviction, and on behalf of anything but truth? And further appeal is justly made to the wonders which they themselves wrought, and the supernatural gifts which they displayed, in attestation of their truthfulness. Now, all this being most true, let us see how it influences our idea of the character of God's blessed Mother. Long before the three first gospels were written, very long before the last of them was penned, the Apostles had given their testimony, to the whole world, "their sound had gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world."—Ps. xviii. 5. Some of them had even sealed their doctrine with their blood. And there may have been some who, like Thomas in India, or Bartholomew in Armenia, never used the written word, to teach christianity. And no doubt each of them spoke as a witness of the Resurrection, and other miracles. But they were just as ready to die for the truth of much which they had not seen; for the certainty of the virginal conception of Mary, and the marvels of the Nativity. They indeed had divine internal conviction of all these facts; but they preached them to the Heathen and Jewish world, as witnesses. They would claim therefore the same credit and authority, for what they taught on Mary's testimony, as for what they had witnessed with their own eyes. And if any one asked them what motives of credibility they could give for her witnessing, they would indeed necessarily be of a nature totally different from any other. To her were granted no miraculous power, no supernatural gifts. To her was not accorded the rougher evidence of apostolic trial and suffering. No prison, no rack, no sword, save that of grief, is her appointed lot. How could it have been otherwise? She lives in quiet; she dies in peace. What then was the corroboration of her testimony, which an apostle would allege? Her spotless innocence, her heroic fortitude, her unflinching sweetness, her peerless holiness; in one word her matchless virtue. But further, her participation in all the evidences of her Son's mission. Every prophecy which He uttered, every heavenly doctrine which he preached, every miracle which he wrought, every grace which he displayed, was witnessing to her, every time he called her His mother. Whatever proved to the world who He was, showed it equally what she was. Every work which demonstrated Him to be the Son of God, proved her irrefragably to be the Mother of God. "Beatus venter qui te portavit, et ubera que suxisti."—Luke xi. 27.—was the natural expression of feeling regarding both. It was a contradiction of reason, and a blasphemy against God, to suppose that she was not worthy of her high dignity, her awful relationship, or rather her appointed office, in the scheme of man's Redemption.

Such was the ground of credibility accorded to her testimony; one superior far to what was given to any of the Apostles. Let us then imagine the "glorious choir" of these holy men, about to spread over the whole earth to preach the Gospel, and collecting together the great facts, which they must proclaim, as the basis of their doctrine, and to which they must

bear witness, even by the shedding of their blood.—There is as yet no written word of the New Law; and this is therefore the very first source of universal teaching. Each one comes to pour into the common fountain his jealously-guarded store, thence to well forth, and flow unfeignedly, as the stream of tradition thro' the Church—the life-bearing river of the earthly paradise. Some bring less, and some more; while those who have been born after time, into the faith, receive almost with jealousy what into their eager ears, by the more favored ones, is poured. John and his brother and Peter attest the anticipation of celestial glory on Thabor. The first of these alone can recount, while others hang down their heads and blush, what took place on Calvary, and on its rood; and the last bears witness against himself, of his triple denial in the high priest's hall. Nicodemus has a hidden treasure, which he brings out, in the mysterious conference that he held with Jesus; and Magdalen may be the only one to tell the history of her forgiveness. But when each one has contributed his all, miracles, and parables, and gracious words, and wisest discourse, and splendid acts, they have but furnished materials for a history of three years of a life of three-and-thirty. Where do the remaining thirty lie hidden? Who holds their annals? Who is the rich treasurer of that golden heap, of blessed words and acts divine? One, only one. Let her be entreated to enrich the world by participation of her recondite knowledge. She comes to pour, into the bright waters that flow from the apostolic fount, the virginal cruse which, Queen of wise virgins, she treasures in her bosom. Yea truly, and the lamp which it feeds cannot be extinguished. A few drops indeed only will she give; for by those thirty years it may be said, that she mainly was intended to profit; they were her school of perfection. But every single drop is most precious—is as a peerless and priceless pearl. "Oleum effusum nomen tuum." The very name of Jesus, that name of blessing and salvation, she makes known as a divine revelation to her, and with it all the promises of what He should, under it, accomplish, and the proclamation of what, by it, He was declared. While Apostles surrounded Him to witness His wonderful works, while multitudes pressed in admiration to listen to Him, she hung, at times, on the skirt of the crowd, or stood outside the door, the solicitous, because loving, mother. But the maternal heart naturally flies back to the days of infancy, which are there laid up in vivid recollection. The woman will most gladly remember the hour of her purest joy; when she rejoiced that a man was born into the world.—What then, if He was, the "Wonderful, God the Mighty."—Is. ix., 6. And such are the precious, and most soothing manifestations which Mary will make, for the comfort of devout souls, even to the end of the world. She will lay the very groundwork of the evangelical narrative. Whatever gratitude the Church bears towards the collectors and preservers of our first sacred records, is due in a signal manner to her. Whatever of credibility, authority, and truthfulness is warranted by Christian belief, to the witnesses of what constitutes the basis of faith, must be peculiarly extended to her. Nor may we doubt the justness of her title in the Church—*REGINA APOSTOLORUM*.

(To be continued.)

CATHOLIC INTELLIGENCE.

His Holiness the Pope has been pleased to appoint by an apostolic brief, the Very Rev. J. O'Connell, provincial of the Capuchin order in Ireland. This intelligence will afford much satisfaction to our fellow-citizens, to whom the zealous exertions of the Very Rev. gentleman in the sacred ministry are well known.—*Cork Examiner*.

Belfast has paid £300 to the Irish Catholic University fund.

The Rev. Mr. McKinnon, P.P., of St. Andrews, Sydney, Cape Breton, is elevated to the mitre of Arichat, vacant by the death of Bishop Fraser. The see of Fredericton is vacant since the death of Bishop Dollard.

A letter from Rome of the 25th ult., in the *Messaggero* of Modena, mentions a rumor that his Holiness intends conferring the Cardinal's hat upon two Prelates of the Church of France in the next consistory. One of these Prelates, it is confidently asserted, will be the Archbishop of Bordeaux.

The Rev. H. L. Richards, an Episcopalian clergyman of Ohio, has resigned the ministry with the intention, it is said, of entering the Catholic Church.—*Catholic Herald*.

CONSECRATION OF MGR. TACHÉ.—A correspondent of the *Paris Univers*, gives the following details on the consecration of Mgr. Taché, Bishop of Arath, which took place on the 23rd November last, in the Cathedral of Viviers:—

"The consecration of Mgr. Taché possessed a peculiar interest. The prelate is a missionary, an apostle of the New World, and this antique church of Viviers, whither Providence had conducted him from such a great distance, to receive the pontifical unction, had not witnessed the consecration of a Bishop for more than a century, that is, since the consecration of Mgr. de Launoy, the pious and illustrious Bishop of Amiens, which occurred on the 4th July, 1734.

"Mgr. Taché belongs to the society of Oblats, one of the apostolic works of Père Laverlochère, whose preaching had some time ago so profoundly moved the Catholics of France. He is a Canadian, and scarcely 28 years of age. He preached the Gospel during six years, to the Indian tribes of Upper Canada and the Hudson's Bay territory, when the Bishops of the Province, just appreciators of the merits and virtues of the young missionary, judged him worthy of being associated with them in the sublime ranks of the Episcopacy, and nominated him to the choice of the Sovereign Pontiff, as Coadjutor of the venerable Bishop of St. Boniface, whose diocese extends from the shores of Lake Superior to the Frozen Ocean.

"When Le Père Taché had learned that he was nominated Bishop of Arath, in *partibus*, his humility was so alarmed, that he made every effort for during a year, to decline the sublime honor of the Episcopacy. The Bishop of Marseilles, as his superior,

was obliged to lay his injunction upon him, to submit to the yoke which the Vicar of Christ on earth had been pleased to impose on him. He at the same time announced to him the sweet consolation he himself would feel, as Bishop and spiritual father, could he himself confer the Episcopal consecration on a well-beloved son, whom the Lord had given into his hands beyond the Atlantic, and whom he loved without being acquainted with him. At this venerable voice, which to him was the organ of the will of heaven, Père Taché did not hesitate to depart from his dear Indians of the Red River, promising to return to them ere long, and embarked for France.

"The Consecrating Bishop was Mgr. de Mazenod, Bishop of Marseilles, and Founder of the Society of Oblats; the two Assistant Prelates were Mgr. Guibert, Bishop of Viviers, also of the Society of Oblats, and Mgr. Prince, Bishop of Martropolis, Coadjutor of his Lordship the Bishop of Montreal, and former tutor of Mgr. Taché, and to whom he has never ceased to be a sincere friend and faithful adviser. Thus was the Church of Canada represented at this august ceremony, which so directly interests it, by one of its most illustrious Prelates, and some of the most distinguished members of the Clergy of Montreal.

"His Lordship the Bishop of Arath is at present in Rome, with his Lordship the Coadjutor Bishop of Montreal, who had been deputed by the other Bishops of Canada, to present for the approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff, the decrees of the last Provincial Council of Quebec."

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

CATHOLIC SYMPATHY IN FRANCE FOR IRELAND.

The following letter from the Archbishop of Tuam appeared in the *Univers* of Jan. 12:—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE UNIVERS.

"Tuam, Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord, 1852.

"My Dear Sir—Permit me to avail myself of your excellent journal to convey to the venerable Bishop of Nantes our thanks, and the expression of my gratitude, for having transmitted to me the sum of three thousand one hundred francs (£124) destined to succor the poor of my diocese, and of other dioceses of the south of Ireland. I am also charged by the other Bishops who have participated in the gift to convey to him their thanks for so opportune an aid at a time so full of dangers and trials for the poor of Ireland. Among the various offerings which have been made from time to time by the Clergy and Faithful of France for the purpose of alleviating the misery of the poor of this country, none has been more opportune or more beneficial than this last alms. Its distribution among the Clergy of the parishes in which the enemies of religion endeavor, by gifts of money and clothing, to seduce the young, has furnished them with means of augmenting the number of Catholic schools; and during the last few weeks several families who had been the hypocritical victims of Protestant proselytism have diffused joy among the Faithful by their return to the flock of Jesus Christ, as well as by their public acknowledgment of the detestable means employed to induce them to send their children to schools which are the cradle of infidelity and vice.

"Not content with these efforts, made in the more remote parts of the diocese, the agents of imposture have attempted to carry the war into the heart of the city; but, thanks to the zeal of the Clergy, and to the fidelity of the people, they have experienced a signal defeat. Disturbers of the public peace, with Bible in hand, sometimes stealthily, sometimes by open violence, have gone everywhere into the houses of the poor to induce them, with their usual offerings of food, clothing, and money, to apostatize from the Faith of their fathers. One of these impostors, exercising his impious trade in spite of the resistance of the poor but faithful inhabitants of a small house in Tuam, exhibited a monstrous weapon, consisting of a leaden ball enveloped in a thong, and one blow of which would be sufficient to kill the strongest man. With this persuasive argument he endeavored to enforce his Biblical reasoning, when a young girl of heroic courage wrested from him this novel kind of weapon, hitherto unknown even among the most ferocious reformers. The ball and its covering were lately shown before the bench of magistrates, and although they have been accustomed to the infamous acts of these agents of seduction and blasphemy, the exhibition of the instrument filled them with horror and indignation. Unwilling to trespass too much on your courtesy, I abstain from relating and commenting on other similar facts.

"What I have just stated is sufficient to show how much we have to endure from the Protestant Church, whose Ministers in this town, from the highest to the lowest, evince the utmost bitterness in this infernal war waged against the Catholic religion.

"The active sympathy, of which we daily experience the effects, on the part of the illustrious Hierarchy of France, which combats for the liberty of Catholic education with a zeal and energy worthy of its predecessors in the most flourishing epoch of the Church, obliges me to offer it the most earnest expression of my gratitude, and to assure you that I remain your very humble servant,

"J. JOHN, Archbishop of Tuam."

CHARITABLE BEQUESTS.—Columbus O'Flanagan, late of Hardwicke-street, in the city of Dublin, has bequeathed to the Most Rev. the Archbishop of Dublin, the Rev. Mr. Bourke, Catholic Curate, Marlborough-street, James O'Farrell, and John R. Corballis, both of Lower Baggot-street, Esqrs., the reversion of all his property, real and personal, expectant on the determination of the life estate of his niece, Eliza Dowell, to apply the produce in promoting the education of the poor in Ireland, and especially in promoting the religious instruction of the Catholic poor children attending the National Poor Schools within the city of Dublin, and also for such other charitable and pious purposes within the city of Dublin as they, in their discretion, always acting with the advice of Archbishop Murray, or the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, for the time being, shall think fit; and should such charitable bequest be illegal, and incapable of being carried into effect, then to said trustees, absolutely for their own use.

Letters from Wexford state that the loss to the cattle jobbers and butchers of that town, by the shipwreck of the steamer Town of Wexford, amounts to about £3,000. Very little, if any, of her cargo was insured.