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CATHOLIC CHURCH.

A Glance at its Past and Present
Position in the World, With a
Look Into the Future.

Address by Mr. F. W. Russell
to the Members of the Catho-
lic Truth Society.

Last week we were compelled to hold
over our report of the excellent lecture
delivered by Mr. F. W. Russell before
the members of St. Joseph and Catholic
Truth society at their meeting on the
first Monday in this month. We have
now much pleasure in producing it in
full, and recommend it to our readers as
well deserving their careful perusal.

Mr. Russell said:—Mr. President and
members of the Truth society—

A couple of weeks ago our talented
and learned Brother Powell entertained
us with an eloquent and inspiring ad-
dress on the present head of the church
Catholic—Leo XIII. As one who had
spent upwards of five years in Rome,
and had had the privilege of more than
one audience with His Holiness, Mr.
Powell, was in a marked degree pecu-
liarly at home on the subject he dealt
with. Now I cannot claim to possess
any such fitness to treat the topic I have
chosen, but it has struck me it might be
appropriate if I were to endeavour to lay
before you a few reflections on the past
and present position in the world of that
magnificent organization over which our
Holy Father presides and of which we
are all humble, but I hope and am con-
vinced devoted members. It seems to
me that in these days, the closing of
what we are so fond of calling the en-
lightened nineteenth century, when
every creed and every Christianity itself
is summoned to answer at the bar of
reason for its right to be, and when
those who consider themselves the best
exponents of our present day civilization
are crying out that the old creeds have
passed away for ever and that the religion
of the future if religion there be
must be something very different to that
taught by the church of Christ, I say in
these days it is profitable and encourag-
ing to us to sometimes take a retro-
spective glance at the history of the
Church. We live in a time
when the Church and Christianity
are assailed with a universal
criticism which lays faith and reverence
totally on one side; when countless
agencies are at work to undermine the
faith of our people and to destroy the
religion of Christ, and in view of this it
is not to be wondered at, if we sometimes
grow a little despondent, even in spite
of the consoling promise in which we
have such implicit faith. "Behold I am
with you all days even to the end of the
world." It is refreshing therefore at
times to dwell on the realization of this
promise as it is presented to us and to
the world at large, in

THE PERMANENCE OF THE CHURCH

amidst the changes of the centuries.
Not once only but many times as we all
know have come great upheavals which
have seemed about to overwhelm the
barack of Peter, and on each and every
occasion has the church come forth glo-
rious and triumphant. In the earliest
ages it was persecution during which
men, women, and even little children,
every position in life, rather than bow
down to false Gods and idols smiled at
the tortures of the boiling cauldron, at
the burning of the gridiron, at the
wild beasts. Pope after gave
up his life, but no sooner was
the Papal throne vacant than another
was found to occupy it. For centuries
we read the church was compelled by
edict after edict that went out against it
to remain underground, but in God's
good time, and just when the great ones
of the earth were congratulating them-
selves upon the fact that this dangerous
rival of the Caesars would not be heard
of any more, it emerged from its obscu-
rity and it was the Empire which disap-
peared. Then came the wave of schism,
during which we are told the Arian
heresy prevailed so far that only a
remnant of the faithful was left, and men
said the church's time was ended. Yet
Arianism passed away, and it is now
centuries since the majority of the men
knew the meaning of the name. Many
heresies and schisms followed, were
condemned, and are now most of them
almost unknown and forgotten, and then
came that great upheaval the so-called
Reformation, from out of which conflict
as the Protestant historian puts it the
church finally emerged "bearing the
marks of cruel wounds but with the
principal of life still strong within her,"
and the work of the Council of Trent,
the early labors of the Jesuit order, and
some real inner reformation, soon made
the Papacy not weaker but stronger than
before. When we consider all this may
we not well call the very existence of
the church at the present day a fulfill-
ment of that prophecy of the Divine
founder, and may we not also derive
from it the very greatest consolation and
assurance for the future. Now let us
consider for a few moments the present
position in the world of this Divine
organization. There are those who call
it dead, yet it is not too much to claim
for it that it has even to-day more to
do with the moulding of humanity than
any other influence. Some tell us it
belongs to a forgotten past, but surely
the signs of the times are that the future
is its very inheritance. Not long ago I
read in a leading London newspaper the
deliberate statement that there are
only two great powers in Europe—the
Catholic church and socialism, and that
the Catholic church is the only power
that can hold socialism and irreligion

in check. Mr. Stead, the well known
English journalist, has returned home
from America more than ever impressed
not only with the future of the church
on this continent but attaching the very
greatest importance to the relations be-
tween the Catholic church and modern
democracy which relations he believes
will be the ultimate salvation of society
and good government. And again we
have the admissions of the most noted
infidels of the day that infidelity can
never advance whilst the Catholic church
blocks the way. To be thus acknow-
ledged by those outside it

THE GREATEST MORAL POWER

existing in the world is surely a glo-
rious testimony to this great Catholic
Christian church. In point of numbers
the members of her communion were
never so numerous as they are to-day,
and her ascendancy never before in her
history extended over such vast terri-
tory as it at present covers. Critics if
they wish to be just in their criticism
are forced to admit that never so much
as at the present time did a Pontiff of
the church occupy so unique a position
as does our Holy Father in the devel-
opment of the world's history, and that
in no other century has the Catholic
church stood out more prominently as
the one grand majestic body in the
world. As the lord supplies the blood to
every member of the human body, so
in like manner we see to-day the
heart of the Catholic church, Rome,
feeding and comforting every member
of the church in every part of the world,
first through her Bishops, then to her
priests, and from them to her people,—
a living refutation of those who wish
her dead would vainly minimize her in-
fluence as far as they are able, by trying
to persuade their dupes that she is only a
slight imitation of what she once was.
We see now, as in every age of the
church's history her loyal bishops, priests
and people, tasting throughout the uni-
verse of that deep peaceful joy, so easy
to feel by those who have the gift of true
Catholic faith, but so hard to describe,
which comes of the consciousness that
we are partakers in a worship, a minis-
try and a liturgy, that transcends the
limits of generation and nationhood, and
makes us feel our oneness with the
church throughout the world, the church
throughout the centuries, and the church
above where time and distance are lost
in the eternal. We can point to the
fact that the church is still sending forth
missionaries as zealous in the cause of
their master as were those who first
went forth to convert the world, mis-
sionaries great in the interests of their
holy calling, finding no sacrifice too
great in the interests of their holy call-
ing are winning numberless hosts who
shall be found fighting the battle of life
beneath the banner of the cross, and in
union with the successor of St. Peter.
We cannot go to any part of the world
without finding countless works of char-
ity which the church has everywhere
inaugurated, making herculean efforts
to mitigate the sufferings of the poor and
the afflicted. In our own country, in
the mother land, and in the great repub-
lic to the south of us, we can trace the
history of the Catholic laity from an
early period during the days of obscu-
rity and persecution down to what we
may fairly call the magnificent present
with its millions of energetic, progressive,
and highly educated Catholics, who re-
flect honor alike on themselves, the land
that gave them birth, and on the altar
before which they so fervently worship.
We may proudly point to our bishops
and priests—the former men worthy to
walk in the footsteps of the most illus-
trious and fearless prelates who have
ever had a part in guiding the destinies
of the church; and the latter a body
second to none in the history of the
world, in their wisdom, their ability,
their learning, devotion to their duty,
and in all the best qualities of mind and
of heart. This, Mr. President and Broth-
ers, is but a mere cursory glance at the
present position of the church in the
world as seen by each and everyone of
us, but it is surely sufficient to strength-
en us in the belief that the promise and
prophecy of the Lord is in course of
being fulfilled even in our day; and our
faith that we are members of the one
only true church, which Christ promised
to preserve and remain with until the
end of time will certainly suffer in no
way if we pass on to consider for a short
time the present state of Christianity
outside the church and its bearing on
the probabilities of the future. Al-
though it is never our desire to regale
ourselves on the spectacle which Pro-
testantism presents to us fighting for its
life with organic disintegration and
intellectual doubt, we cannot come to
any conclusion but one viz. that the
world is rapidly dividing into two
camps, and that when that division is
complete it will be seen that the camp
of the believers is but the fold of the
church. The search light of sound judg-
ment and critically accurate knowledge
which so many Catholic and other
haze and mist in which misrepresenta-
tion and prejudice has so long enveloped
the history of the church during its
early and the middle ages is having
its effect, for such misrepresentation and
prejudice cannot stand the derision of
true scholarship and the scorn of honest
minds. It is not too much to say that
in many Protestant circles

HISTORICAL FALSEHOODS AND SLANDERS

have for a long time past formed the
staple theological controversy, and noth-
ing will more quickly pave the way for
the return to the Catholic church of the
masses in Protestant countries than to
lay before them the simple truths of
history unattended by the personal judg-
ment and theories of the historian. Un-
til very recently we have had in a
strict chronicle of events as they have
really happened, and the lies of history
have often resulted from the habit of
historians giving their own impressions
of the characters of men whose calibre

they have not understood. Then, too,
there are the numberless fables which
the general reader is bound to come
across, such as St. Cyril's murder of
Hypatia, the secret crimes of the Venetian
Council of Ten, the darkness of the
middle ages, the injustice of the Crus-
ades, and the rest of them, in view of
which we cannot wonder at the mass of
prejudice, almost amounting to horror,
which has filled the minds of our sepa-
rated brethren for as a matter of fact our
Catholics can hardly avoid falling into
error on such subjects. It is only of
comparatively recent date that litera-
ture exposing and refuting these false-
hoods and misrepresentations has been
within reach of the bulk of the people,
and what is the result? The system
which has been thus bolstered up is
rapidly crumbling away. The masses
are leaving that system on the one side,
and the leaders of opinion are leaving it
on the other. The present generation
we should always bear in mind had no
part in the great religious uproar and
confusion of the sixteenth century.
Many reject it is true what has been
put before them as the Catholic faith,
but in rejecting that they are rejecting
not the truth but a monstrous misrep-
sentation. Our separated brethren of
today are innocent of any participation
in the religious divisions and heresies
which at this day prevail, their fore-
fathers sowed the wind and the present
generation is reaping the whirlwind,
and, as one who knows them well hav-
ing spent the greater part of my life
amongst them and in intimate associa-
tion with them, I can say that many of
them if they knew how those divisions
could be healed would undoubtedly
make any sacrifice to heal them. The
time is therefore surely at hand when
the jangling contentions which have
distracted their minds is in a consider-
able part of them to die out. They are
gradually being made to realize that
what they have so long been accepting
as the Gospel truth regarding the church
is nothing but a tissue of slanders, and
with regard to matters of faith they are
beginning in large numbers to under-
stand that they have been to a great
extent led astray as to what the church
really does teach, and have been attrib-
uting to the church practices which she
repudiates and which she detests and
abhors. The thinking and reading
Protestants readily admit that they have
in the past been repelled not so much
by what they now see are the defined
doctrines of the church as by the teach-
ings of which she has been falsely
accused. For instance we shall not find
many Protestants at the present day
with any claim to intelligence who be-
lieve that Catholic theology teaches or
has ever taught that it is lawful to tell a
lie even for the good of the church or in
other words that the end justifies the
means; or the awful doctrine that unbap-
tized infants are condemned to eternal
torments; or that there is any mediator
of redemption other than our Blessed
Lord; or that the church can add in any
way to "the faith once delivered to the
saints"; or that it decries the authority
and the inspiration of the Holy Scrip-
tures; or that it makes no distinction
between the reverence to be given the
Blessed Virgin and that due to God
Himself. For centuries these and many
other teachings have been falsely attrib-
uted to the church, but we live in an
age when such fallacies have been ex-
ploded and are no longer believed by
the intellectual portion of Protestantism.
We daily see the effect of the light which
is now being thrown on these matters in
the number of intellectual Protestants
who are attracted to the Church. It is
true there are many means by which
these good people are first led to take
the step which finally draws them into
the fold. Some are first attracted to the
church by its music, some by its ritual,
some by its architecture, some by its
eloquence, some by its art, some by its
consolations, some by its charity, some
by its history, but above all what most
attracts those who commence a study of
our Holy Religion is the discovery which
they quickly make, and which is so con-
trary to what they have expected, that
Catholicism is after all, and in spite of
the spirit of authority, the most intelli-
gential of all forms of Christianity. Men
of letters will agree that John Henry
Newman was one of the most intellectual
Christians of this century, and must
therefore give due weight to the wish he
expressed that he might have at least
one-tenth part as much faith as he had

INTELLECTUAL CONVICTION

where the truth lay. This great change
in popular sentiment regarding the
history and teachings of the church is very
consoling, and must be to all of us an
incentive to work hard and pray fer-
vently that more and more of those
who are not yet of our faith may be led
into the fold. In many other ways as
we glance around the world we see the
silver lining of the cloud which for so
long has seemed to hang over Cathol-
icism. It is true that in many countries
the church is persecuted and hampered
in her work, but this must ever be so as
suffering persecution must for all time
be one of the marks of this Divine or-
ganization. But there are signs that in
some places the state of affairs will in
the future not be of that acute nature
that it has been. In Italy, as we were
told by Mr. Powell, our Holy Father al-
though the greatest living ruler of men
is still "the prisoner of the Vatican," but
at the same time there is reason to
believe that the Italian radicals are be-
ginning to discover how strong is the
enemy they attack when they assail the
Catholic church. They are being made
to see that the interests of the Head
of the church in Rome are the same as
those of the Catholics throughout the
world. The veneration and love which
his spiritual children entertain for the
Holy Father is finding expression in
continual protests against the position
in which he is placed, and the power

(Continued on page 3).