

The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

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POWER TO INGRESS.

James Gibbons on Doubt.

In a New Year's sermon Cardinal Gibbons referred to the weight of attacks on the Christian religion. The discourse was the more interesting inasmuch as Robert C. Ingersoll,

who have the capacity of pulling down, but they are unable to build again.

"Let us transport ourselves to the dawn of the Christian era, and let us stand in imagination on one of the Pagan Rome's seven hills. We see at our feet that immense city teeming with a population of about three millions of inhabitants. We observe that city dotted here and there with idolatrous temples, and niches to false gods are erected in the corners of the streets. These people are given up to every species of idolatry. They worship the sun, moon and stars of Heaven, the seas and rivers, the mountains and groves had their tutelary divinities. They worshipped every striking object in nature, they worshipped every living being except God, to whom only divine homage is due.

"In the language of the apostle of the Gentiles, 'They have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image and likeness of corruptible man and of birds and beasts and creeping things, and they worshipped the created instead of the Creator, who is blessed forever more.' Such was the condition of society when the Lord appeared in the theatre of public life. He calls around him twelve insignificant men—men without human learning, men without prestige and fame, men without any of those elements which are considered essential for the success of any great enterprise. He commands them to effect the most mighty moral revolution that has ever occurred in the history of the world. He commands them to uproot idolatry from the face of the earth and to establish in its stead the worship of the one true and living God.

"When we contrast the weakness of the apostles with the colossal task marked out for them well may we exclaim in the language of the apostle of the Gentiles, 'The foolish things of this world hath God chosen that He might confound the wise; the weak things He hath chosen that He might confound the strong, and the things that are contemptible and the things that are not hath He chosen that He might confound the things that are that no flesh shall glory in His sight.

"No thoughtful man can fail to admire the wisdom of God in employing inadequate means, humanly speaking, in the propagation of the gospel, for if Christ had appeared as a temporary sovereign, with all the majesty and pomp of royalty, if He had used the influence of the Caesars, and if He had impressed into his service the imperial armies, the world would justly exclaim; 'There is no miracle here, for it is not by the finger of God, but by the arm of the flesh that it was propagated.'

"Or if the gospel had been advocated by orators, philosophers, statesmen and poets of Pagan Rome, the world would again cry out, 'There is no

miracle here, for Christianity was developed not by the folly of the cross, but by the persuasive words of human wisdom.'

"Or if men were induced to embrace the Church by bribes and emoluments, the world would justly say, 'There is no miracle here, for men are drawn to the Church not by the pearl of great price, but by the gold that glitters.'

"It may be interesting and instructive to us to consider some of the principal causes which, under the irresistible influence of God's grace, operated so powerfully in the rapid diffusion of the Christian religion. The first and most efficacious cause may be ascribed to the sublime and beautiful teachings of Christianity. The Christian religion proclaimed truths which satisfied the highest aspiration of the human intellect and gratified the legitimate craving of the human heart. Christ proclaimed truths which had baffled the researches of the most profound philosophers of pagan antiquity.

"The Christian religion gave the pagan world a rational idea of God. It proclaimed a God essentially one and self-existing, a God existing from eternity unto eternity. It spoke of a God who created all things by His wisdom, and whose superintending providence watches over the affairs of nations as well as of men, without whom not even a bird can fall to the ground. I spoke of a God infinitely just and merciful, infinitely holy, infinitely wise. This idea of a Supreme Being, so consonant to our intellectual conception, was in striking contrast with the low and sensual characters which the pagan world ascribed to their divinity.

"The Christian religion not only gave man a sublime idea of his Creator, but gave him also a rational idea about himself. He knew not whence he came or whither he was going. He was groping in the dark; the past and the future were for him buried in impenetrable darkness. The Christian religion imparted to him a knowledge of his origin and of his destiny and of the means of attaining it. It rescued him from the frightful labyrinth of error in which paganism had involved him.

"But it will profit us nothing to be enrolled in the army of the Lord in the church militant unless we are personally clothed in the panoply of Christian righteousness. The holy virtues to be put to our credit are those that we personally achieve.

"All the works of God have striking characteristics. They all have the divine stamp of individuality. There are no two stars alike in magnitude and splendor, there are no two leaves in the forest alike, there are no two grains of sand absolutely identical, there are no two faces alike in this vast congregation before me, there are no two dispositions in all respects identical.

"Every one of you is a world to yourself. Every one of you has a separate existence and a special destiny. Each of you were created alone. You have a separate growth, a separate sanctification, a separate death. You are judged alone, you are punished alone, you are rewarded alone. There is no such thing as vicarious birth, a vicarious growth, a vicarious sanctity, a vicarious death and judgment. Each one of you stands on

his own foundation. What a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

"But above all God loves each one of you personally. He does not contemplate the human family in the mass as we view a heap of sand. He has loved each of you with an eternal love. He calls each of you by your name and knows your individual disposition better than the most tender mother before me knows the name and disposition of each of her children. His love beams on each of you as offensively as if you alone existed in the world.

"I always loved that utterance of St. Paul, 'Christ loved me and delivered Himself up for me.' He did not say 'Christ loved us, but me,' as if to remind us that Christ's love for himself was as strong as if it was concentrated in himself. We all can say the same, and, if God's love is centered in us, so should we centre our love to Him.

"The Christian religion gave not only life to his understanding, but peace as well to his heart. It brought him that peace of God which surpasseth all understanding and which springs from a conscious possession of the truth. It brought him a triple peace—the Communion, peace with his neighbors, by enjoying the virtues of justice and charity, peace with himself, by instructing him to keep his passions subject to reason and reason subject to the law of God.

"And for the honest sons of toil the Christian religion has a message of love and consolation. She holds up to you Jesus Christ the model of workmen. Ever since our blessed Redeemer worked at the carpenter's bench He has shed a halo around the workshop.

"The Christian religion has now, as it ever has, a message for the capitalist and the workmen. It admonishes the employer to compensate the laborer by fair and just wages, and, what is more, to bestow upon him kind and considerate treatment and to keep in view the golden maxim of Christ, 'Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye to them.'

Our Lady of Lourdes.

On last Sunday the beautiful chant known as Sile's Mass in C was rendered for the first time in this city at the church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Sherbourne street. Miss Fannie Sullivan conducted the choir, and those who were present could not have failed to appreciate her efforts which were undoubtedly crowned with success. This mass is one of the noisiest productions of modern christian art. It combines all the pleasing solemnity of the "Messe Royale" with the power and effect of Mozart's Grand Mass. Such a combination sustained by the well known artistic skill of the choir and orchestra entranced those who had the pleasure to assist at its production. After the Communion His Grace the Archbishop addressed the congregation on the relation which the Church bears to Christian art.

Winkelman's salary as operatic tenor in Vienna is \$10,000 a year for about sixty appearances. Reichmann gets \$8,000 for eight months; Fri. Renard, \$7,300; Frau Schlager, who fifteen years ago received \$10 a month as chorus girl, now has \$8,000 a year at the Imperial Opera.

JAMES, CARL JAL GIBBONS.

and lectured in Baltimore a few days previously. His Eminence said:

"It is fashionable, as well as profitable to cast odium as well as ridicule on Christianity and the Sacred Scriptures, which are the bases of the Christian religion. A man of limited capacity, but of fluency of speech and shafts of wit, can propose objections and difficulties in a half hour which may take a learned man a month to answer.

"I would ask you, my brethren, to have three answers ready in your mind when you are confronted by any difficulties against Christianity.

"First—Ten thousand difficulties do not make a single doubt, and ten thousand doubts do not destroy a single fact of Revelation; ten thousand layers of fog and cloud, such as hung over the earth this morning, do not blot out the sun in the heavens nor diminish its splendor.

"Second—The Christian religion has been in existence for two thousand years and has been cherished by the wisest and best of men in every age and country, and it is stronger to-day than it was ever before.

"Third—All the civilizations of the past and all existing civilizations to-day worthy of the name have been based on the doctrinal and moral principles of the Bible.

"It is time enough to surrender our Christianity when some better system is brought forward to supplant it.

"The venerable Peter Cooper gave his son when a child a watch. The next morning the boy had taken the watch apart and returned it to its primitive elements. But he found it impossible to reconstruct it. The father, on seeing the wreck, remarked to the child: 'My son, there are many