

according to the Church, is the way of salvation and how to follow it. In a word Catholicity looks to eternity for the reward of her labors here. Protestantism would have us close accounts at once. The Catholic Church is careless as to which side shows a balance at present, for even were it hers, it would be only accidental.

We are far from denying that, at least indirectly, the religion of a people affects its national prosperity. On the contrary the pages of history show no fact more prominently than this, that every great agitation and every project that has been successfully executed, has borne the impress of religion. Religion, though not the efficient cause, nor even the prime mover, has nevertheless manifested traces of its influence, sometimes easily apparent, at other times visible only with difficulty, but nevertheless always present. For this reason a religious people that is sober, honest, chaste and orderly, and withal fairly industrious, will as a rule be in a more prosperous condition than an irreligious people placed in the same external circumstances. It is hard to be more definite than this and for a very good reason : It is well-nigh impossible to find two peoples in precisely the same condition from a material point of view ; with the same powers to thrive, and similarly endowed by nature. Consequently the work of reducing to practice what is theoretically true is by no means an easy one. But one thing at least is certain, and that is, allowing similar material circumstances, and adding the factors of prosperity coming from the moral order, Catholic nations must hold a higher place than non-Catholic nations. But here the cardinal error of the Protestant argument again shows itself. Its conclusions are based on purely material evidence. Because a country is possessed of greater riches than another, whether in stores or in ships or in the treasures of the earth ; or because it has attained to a higher pitch of social development ; or perhaps because its army has won a greater number of battles, or its navy is more extensive than that of its neighbor, because of any one of these reasons or of all of them, it by no means follows that the religion of the one country is better than that of the other. Who has ever heard the proverbial success of the Jew advanced to prove the superiority of Judaism : neither has

Buddhism been ennobled to any extent by reason of Japan's rapid strides in the direction of mere worldly progress. Yet both are vastly superior to Protestantism on the assumption of our opponents. It is bad logic and what is worse, it is pitiful weakness to adduce an argument that is false, if we substitute Judaism or Buddhism for Protestantism.

Many of the slanders against the Catholic Church would never have found utterance, had men preserved in its entirety the true idea of civilization already laid down. On a question of such vital importance, to expose ourselves to delusion is criminal. Hence in estimating the condition of nations we must guard against setting down to their credit what is, in reality, a clear proof of retrogression. Unless, then, man's ultimate end be kept constantly in view and all his actions be directed, at least remotely, to the attainment of that end, his condition in the purely material order may perhaps advance, but that very advance is the forerunner of his speedy destruction. To be plain, the truest civilization is the one that guarantees salvation through eternity, to the greatest number of souls. We think that the history of past ages, as well as the present condition of the world, leaves no room to doubt that the Catholic Church is without a rival in the work of diffusing this kind of civilization. The triumphs of wealth and of mental culture are of such a kind that they hide from our view their attendant evils :—

" Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

We can never afford to reject the lesson they teach :—to be rich is not to be happy, and material prosperity is an insecure foundation for national greatness.

But what nations of the world to-day, are able to stand the test which we have set up as the true measure of greatness or of happiness? The material condition of Catholic France places her among the first nations of Europe. Her credit in the money markets of the world is well known, and in the amount of wealth actually possessed, she stands first. Yet this is not enough, she must be morally great in order to be nationally great, and on this point we have the testimony of a writer who cannot be credited with tenderness of feeling on matters Catholic. Laing, a Scotch Presbyterian, in his " Notes of a