

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

On Monday, the 8th inst., the Catholic Church celebrates the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the ever-blessed Mary, the Mother of God.

By this is meant that, by a special grace or favor from God, Mary was preserved from the first moment of her conception from the stain of original sin which passed down upon the children of Adam in general.

As Mary was descended by the ordinary mode of generation from Adam, she was by nature subject to the common lot of mankind; but by the special will of God, and by virtue of the atonement which Christ was born to offer for the sins of the human race, it was as much within the power of God to preserve Mary entirely from falling into original sin as to blot out the stain and guilt after it had been incurred.

By the definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Church declares that God has done this, and that Mary never incurred the guilt of original sin, being preserved from it, not from any merit of her own, but by a special grace from God.

No son ever loved His mother as Jesus loved Mary, for He was the model Son whom all sons should imitate.

As a necessary consequence of this love, the graces and prerogatives of Mary must have exceeded those conferred upon every other creature. Ingrate she was the queen of all who ever enjoyed the favor of God; Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs, Apostles and Martyrs, and of all Saints. Homage and love are therefore due to her beyond all the Saints of God, for, according to the Apostle St. Paul, "honor, and glory, and peace" are due "to every one that worketh good." (Rom. ii, 10.)

Mary stands pre-eminent among those who have done good, and she must, therefore, be pre-eminent among those who are deserving of glory, honor and peace, from God as well as from man.

Therefore, also, an angel was sent as a messenger from the adorable Trinity to express the high honor in which God holds her, and to announce to her the new dignity which was to be conferred upon her, that of Mother to God made Man, the Saviour of His people. And because of this dignity the angel addresses Mary by a title not hitherto given to any creature, which we translate into English, "full of grace."

It is true that we have in our English version of the Holy Scripture the expression "full of grace and truth" in St. John i, 14, applied to Jesus, and in Acts vi, 8 "full of grace and fortitude" to St. Stephen the first martyr; but the Greek word used by the Evangelist in the address to Mary is different from that employed in the other instances. It is *kecharitomena*, the perfect passive participle of the verb signifying "to make gracious." It implies, therefore, that long before Mary had received the fulness of sanctifying grace from God, she was most beloved of God. Hence the Bull of Pope Pius IX, which promulgates the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception declares the traditional sense of these words to be that

"This special (singularis) and solemn salutation which is not elsewhere heard, shows that the Mother of God was the seat of all divine graces, adorned with all gifts of the Divine Spirit, almost the unbounded treasury and inexhaustible abyss of these same graces, so that she was never subject to the curse, but was with her Son a sharer in perpetual benediction, and deserved to be addressed by Elizabeth who, under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, said: 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.'"

The love of our Lord Jesus Christ for

THE VIRGINITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD.

C. R. Alberta, enquires whether there is proof of the perpetual virginity and the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and whether the statement of some Protestants can be sustained that the Blessed Virgin had other children before or after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our correspondent further informs us that some proselytizers, who have been endeavoring to propagate this heresy among their young hired girls in the North-West, have likewise drawn the inference that, having had these other children, the Blessed Virgin could not have conceived and born without sin, and that therefore the Catholic doctrine of her immaculate conception is an error. Thus they endeavor to draw the girls from their faith.

Answer. 1. It cannot be maintained that the Blessed Virgin had other children beside Christ, whether before or after His birth. The constant faith of the Catholic Church against such a teaching is sufficient proof of this, for the Church cannot err in matters of faith. St. Paul in his first epistle to Timothy, (iii, 15) says that the "Church of the living God" is "the pillar and ground of truth;" and in St. Matthew's Gospel (xvi, 18) we are assured by Christ Himself that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, (the Church). The following decisions of the Church, and declarations of the creeds approved by the Church, are, therefore, decisive on this point. Note here also that most Protestants admit the authority of these creeds.

The Council of Lateran in A. D. 649 says: "Whosoever does not confess, in accordance with the Fathers that the blessed and immaculate Mary, Mother of God, was always a virgin, permanent and after child-birth, let him be condemned."

The Apostles' Creed declares that Jesus Christ . . . our Lord was . . . born of the Virgin Mary."

The Nicene Creed has the same doctrine; and it should be noted that virginity herein mentioned is implied to be perpetual.

The Fathers of the Church constantly taught the same, showing that this was the constant belief of the Church. St. Ambrose declares frequently that the contradictory teaching is sacrilegious, thus (on the institution of virginity c. 5-9): "Some denied that she (Mary) persevered as a virgin. We have preferred to pass over in silence so great a sacrilege. Mary did not cease to be the mistress of virginity, and it could not be that she who gave birth to God should also give birth to a man."

Hence Mary was named by the Fathers *aei-parthenos*, which is the Greek of "ever-virgin."

St. Basil the Great, a Greek Father, says: "The ears of those who love Christ do not endure to hear that the Mother of God should ever cease to be a virgin." (Homily 25.)

C. R. seems to intend to state that persons have endeavored to pervert young Catholics in his neighborhood by representing to them that the Bible proves that Mary had other children after the birth of Christ.

We presume that the chief passage of the Bible which has been quoted as proving this as the one to which Protestants frequently appeal as if it favored this notion—St. Matt. (i, 18-15): "Before they (Mary and Joseph) came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost . . . and he (Joseph) knew her not till she brought forth her first born Son (Jesus)."

From this it is inferred that she had other children from Joseph.

It was a common mode of speaking among the Hebrews by such expressions as "before they came together," or "till she brought forth" to indicate events which had happened, without implying that something of the same kind would follow or had followed afterward. Thus we have in Genesis viii, 6, 7, "Noe sent forth a raven which went forth and did not return till the waters were dried upon earth." This does not imply that the raven returned when the waters were dried up, but that it never returned.

In Isaiah (xli, 4) God says: "I am till you grow old." This does not signify that God will then cease to exist, but that He is for ever and ever, and the same is meant of the intercourse of Mary and Joseph, that she remained a virgin after, as well as before the birth of Christ.

There is another example of this in I Maccabees v, 54, which must be admitted as an evidence of the Hebrew usage, independently of the question of the divine authority of this book, which Protestants call apocryphal. The passage is:

"And they (the Hebrew army) went up to Mount Zion with joy and gladness, and offered holocausts, because not one of them was slain till they had returned in peace."

This means that they were not slain either before their victory at Ebron, or before or after their triumphant return to their own country.

THE DOUKHOBORS.

The latest report from the land of the Doukhobors is to the effect that the recent pilgrims are tired of the folly which led them on their aimless march to Winnipeg. The sufferings endured through privation of the comforts of home were great, notwithstanding that the bounty of the people was freely extended in supplying them with the necessaries of life and in alleviating the discomforts they would have endured had they been left to their own resources.

Having been compelled to return to their homes, they have now settled down quietly to their business. They are convinced of the folly of their recent escapade, and notwithstanding the religious scruples they have hitherto entertained against the cruelty of employing animal labor for the cultivation of their farms, or of using animal food, they are now buying horses and cattle to replace those which they let loose on the prairies only a few months ago.

The leaders under whose persuasions they went forth from their homes to convert the world to the Doukhobor creed are still exhorting them to follow the supposedly divine impulse of going forth *en masse* on their mission of teaching their doctrines to the unregenerate population by whom they are surrounded; but the Doukhobors have lost faith in their preaching, and now pay no attention to them.

It is not to be supposed that the whole Doukhobor population partook of the craze of letting loose their domestic animals and going forth to preach the Doukhobor gospel, as only about 1800 out of the 8,000 entered upon this wild scheme. But, after all, being now freed from their curious delusion, they may turn out to be good and industrious citizens. We have no doubt that a few years contact with the Canadian people will change their strange ways, and that, to some extent, they will become assimilated to the Canadian population.

The pilgrimage escapade has shown the people and press of Canada that they were too precipitate in extending so cordial an invitation to these people to settle on Canadian soil, and the conviction has gained ground in this country that the Russian Government may not have been so much to blame in their treatment of the Doukhobors as was in the first instance represented to be the case. Canadians themselves were obliged to use compulsion in order to restrain Doukhobor fanaticism, though our Government has certainly not meant to persecute them on account of their religious belief. The Doukhobors, however, have thought themselves persecuted when measures were taken to force them to get upon the railway trains which were to carry them back to their homes.

We do not doubt now that any treatment which they experienced from the Russian Government was intended only to wean them from some foolish notions they had got into their heads, and which would be of serious injury to themselves and their families and to the more peaceful and less fantastic people who were settled in their neighborhood on and near the mountains of the Caucasus.

While the pilgrimage craze was on, and when it was discovered that the Canadian Government was determined to put an end to the mania, the leaders of the movement made formal application to the United States Government for a territory where they might enjoy liberty to put into practice their religious principles without any interference on the part of the authorities. The religious liberty they demanded was that they should govern themselves after their own fashion and according to their notion of the law of God, without being amenable to the laws of the United States.

An answer has been given by the United States Government informing the petitioners that their request cannot be acceded to under any considera-

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS.

We notice by the Toronto Globe that the special committee of the Anglican Synod of the Diocese of Toronto appointed to consider the question of religious instruction in the schools has forwarded a letter to Premier Ross in which it is represented that parents should have greater facilities in the public schools for securing religious instruction for their children. The reforms desired in the public school system are included in the following propositions:

"1. Freedom and facility for every child to be taught the religion of its parents, or that which the parent desires it to be taught.

"2. The actual average cost of the secular education of every child in every Public elementary school to be defrayed out of public funds.

"3. Voluntary schools equipped as Public schools to be admitted and recognized as an integral part of our Public school system.

"4. Religious instruction to be imparted in every Public school during the first half-hour of each day—such religious instruction to be non-denominational in all common Public schools, and the managers of voluntary Public schools to be free to provide whatever religious instruction they may desire in the schools under their control. A proper conscience clause to be acceptable in all schools."

The Canadian Church of England in its synods, or at least the synod of Toronto, has very constantly advocated religious instructions in the schools, and it very properly follows the example of the Church in England, but the imparting of religious instruction in the public schools of Ontario is impracticable on account of the diversity of sects among the Protestants.

The question would naturally arise, who shall be the teacher? If a Presbyterian, he might teach predestination and reject the necessity of Bishops.

If a Baptist, he might teach the necessity of baptism by immersion and reject infant baptism, and so on for the rest. Thoughtful men among the Anglicans admit the impossibility of teaching religion in the Public school. Rev. Dr. Langtry of the Church of England, Toronto, said in a sermon, which appeared in the Toronto Globe of Oct. 21st, 1901:

"It is one of the results of our accursed sectarianism that where the teachers are permitted, may be required to teach all the truths of literature and history and science, they are not permitted in this Christian land to teach the truths of the Christian religion, and no attempt has been made by our legislature to get over this great sin upon this Christian land."

This is as true now as it was in 1901.

The world has not, I believe, a better of men, who are more contented, better satisfied with their lot in life and the work they are doing than the priests of the Catholic Church.—Bishop Spalding.

A SAD LOSS.

It is a long time since the Catholics of Canada have been called upon to mourn the loss of a layman of more prominence than Dr. John A. MacCabe, LL. D., Principal of the Normal School, Ottawa. We received the news in London on Sunday last in time to have the prayers of the faithful attending Vespers in St. Peter's Cathedral asked for the repose of his soul. The deceased was not only a prominent Catholic layman, but a man in every regard deserving the name. In every phrase of life he was admired for his rectitude of character, for sterling honesty, and for his sincerity. He was a friend whose friendship was of value because it came from the heart and was never prompted by expediency. The publisher of the CATHOLIC RECORD feels that he has lost one of his most valued acquaintances. It was a pleasure to know Dr. MacCabe, for he had a brilliant mind, admirably cultured and one felt all the better and happier after social intercourse with him. Such men are rare and we cannot help feeling that the hand of death takes them from us all too soon. In another column we publish the press despatch giving particulars of his death.

May heaven's light shine perpetually upon his soul!

SHAKER WOMEN VISIT.

Pittsfield, Mass., Nov. 15.—The black-gowned Sisters of the Church and the sisters of the Shaker order dined last week. The meeting was a most interesting one.

Six miles to the west of the largest and most prosperous Shaker settlement, United Mount Lebanon, Shakers have known as the best-managed of farms and their medical has gone far and wide.

The numbers are growing now outside workers in their mills and the decline has been in the management of the farm.

For the first time, this year, the Shakers have sent to New York and given of their cloaks and garments and other handwork. This is a new era in the life of the Shakers at Mount Lebanon.

This brought about the meeting of the Shaker and Shaker Sisters of the Church.

Last week while on a visit to Pittsfield the Shaker women they had some time to spend made the proposition that they should visit the convent of Joseph's Convent and they were received by the superior of the convent warmly. The quarters of their chapel, dormitory, and refectory were shown to the Sisters before leaving, the invited to dine with them and they accepted the invitation.

The Shakers were so pleased with their reception at St. Joseph's that they have written a letter expressing their thanks for the friendship which women bestowed on their order.

TO INCREASE THE PAY.

An application is now being presented to the Canadian Bank for an increase in the rate of interest on deposits.

The bank has been in operation since 1854, and when the current rate of interest was fixed at 4 per cent, it was under the impression that the rate of interest would be 4 per cent for the remainder of the century.

The bank has now accumulated a surplus of \$1,000,000, and it is proposed to increase the rate of interest on deposits to 5 per cent.

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A GOOD PRIEST IS AWAY.

Father George Bromhead, the sad message that was sent to the Toronto Globe on Thursday morning by the Toronto College, St. Jerome, Ontario, that their beloved Bishop, the Right Rev. John J. Lynch, had died, is a sad one.

It is needless to say that the loss of the Bishop is a great one to the people of the diocese, and that the news of his death was received with deep sorrow and grief.

The Bishop was a man of high character and of great ability, and his death is a great loss to the Church and to the people.

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