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CHRISTMAS.

"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will!" Such was the strain in which the multitude of the heavenly host announced to the shepherds who were keeping watch on the mountains of Judea while guarding their flocks from danger, on the first Christmas day, the day when our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was born; and to this date the Catholic Church chants in sweet music the same sentiment, which is the beginning of the grand hymn of praise and joy which forms part of the Mass on all festivals.

The time of man's Redemption was at hand. Four thousand years had elapsed since the fall of our first parents, whereby man, who was created by God pure and upright, became subject to sin, sorrow and death. Sin had deprived mankind of that fulness of grace in which they were created, and the whole earth was plunged into darkness and error of superstition, yet Almighty God was pleased to cause that one small nation should retain the knowledge of Him which He had in the beginning revealed.

But now "when the fullness of time was come, God sent His Son . . . that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv., 4.)

In this is explained the object for which our Lord comes to the world on Christmas day. It is for the purpose of accomplishing our salvation, as explained in other words by the apostle St. John: "That was the true light which enlightened every man that cometh into the world . . . He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them He gave power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His Name." (St. John, 9, 1, 12.)

It is chiefly for this reason that the festival of Christmas is one of great rejoicing. It is not on account of the humiliation to which the Eternal God subjects Himself in becoming man; "who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself becoming obedient unto death: even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii., 6, 11.)

When God the Father decreed the punishment of sin against our first parents, as it was impossible for man to redeem himself or pay the penalty, it was necessary that God should take that penalty upon Himself, otherwise redemption would have been impossible. Jesus, therefore, offered Himself as our substitute. "He appeared to take away our sins; and in Him there is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: and whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him nor known Him." (1 Jno. iii., 5, 6.) "He gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present wicked world, according to the will of God and our Father, to whom is glory for ever and ever: Amen." (Gal. i., 4.)

St. Paul "glorified in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The reason of this is that through the death of Christ on the cross our salvation was effected. We may therefore glory in everything in the life of our Lord which tends to our salvation; and His birth being the first manifestation towards the attainment of so important an end is a special occasion in which we should glory and rejoice: So the Angel of God which announced to the shepherds the news of Christ's birth declares it to be "good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people: For this day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David."

The city here spoken of is Bethlehem, where David was born, and in which he was anointed by Samuel as the future king of Israel. To this city "Joseph went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth to the city of David which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife;" and there Christ was born.

The reason of this journey to Bethlehem was to obey the decree of Caesar Augustus, who had ordered a general enrolment of the whole world under his rule, and every one was obliged to be enrolled in his own city. But there was another reason in the designs of Divine Providence why Mary and Joseph should go to Bethlehem at this time. It had been foretold by the prophets that the Christ whom the Jewish people expected, and who had been promised to our first parents, and to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as a Redeemer, should be born in Bethlehem, so that the Chief Priests and the Scribes had no difficulty to inform the wise men of the East who came to Jerusalem seeking the Christ, of whose birth they had been miraculously informed, that He should be born in Bethlehem; for the prophet had said: "And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, are not least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel." (St. Matt. ii., 6, Micah, v., 2.)

From all this it is clear that the sentiments we should entertain in celebrating the nativity of our Lord are those of joy, gratitude and thanksgiving; joy that a Saviour is born to us, gratitude for the mercy He extends to mankind from the first moment of His birth, and thanksgiving, because we must not neglect to return thanks for favors received, especially for those received from God, which being for our eternal welfare, are the greatest benefits we can possibly enjoy. They exceed the honors and dignities of the world, as heaven is above earth; and since the purpose of Christ's birth is to save us from our sins, our thanks should be rendered, and our joy and gratitude manifested with the same purpose in view.

The hymn of the Mass, the "Gloria in Excelsis," admirably expresses these sentiments:

"We praise Thee (O God), we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory. O Lord God, O Heavenly King. O Lord God, O Lamb of God, O Son of the Father, O Thou who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us and hear our prayer. For Thou alone art Holy, Thou alone art Most High, O Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father. Amen."

To put these sentiments into practice every Catholic should prepare for the worthy reception of the sacraments of penance and Holy Communion during the Christmas time. The object of our Divine Saviour's coming to earth is to reconcile us to God, which cannot be done without casting off sin, and leaving the occasions which lead us to fall into sin. To cast off sin the sacrament of penance is needful, and among the dispositions necessary for the preparation for this sacrament, besides sorrow for past sin, we must firmly resolve to sin no more; and we cannot have this disposition unless we are determined to avoid all things which lead us to its commission. These are the occasions of sin we have referred to.

The Holy Eucharist was instituted for the life and nourishment of our soul. We cannot preserve true life, which is sanctifying grace, unless we receive worthily this most sublime and precious of all God's gifts; for our Blessed Lord tells us: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you cannot have life in you." It is therefore by means of this sacrament that true life, the life of the soul, must be obtained. It is to be hoped, therefore, that all our readers will duly prepare themselves for the great festival of Christmas by receiving the two sacraments we have named—penance and Holy Communion: the former for our reconciliation with God, and to render us worthy of receiving Holy Communion, and the latter that our souls may not be lacking in that nourishment which they need that we may abide in Christ, and Christ in us.

Christmas is also a time of good-will to all, as Christ came to bring peace to men of good will, that is, to all who welcome Him in the spirit of love for God. But we cannot love God whom we see not, unless for the love of God we love our neighbors, whom we see. Christmas is therefore a time when we should extend the olive branch of peace

to those who have given offence. We must not only show friendship to friends, but we must forgive our enemies, and do good to those who have injured us, after the example of our Lord who prayed for those even who crucified Him.

At this inclement season of the year, in acknowledgment of Christ's mercy to all, we must be especially merciful to the poor, and kind to those in distress. It is to those who practice the works of mercy that Christ declares He will at the last day utter that look-for invitation, "Come ye blessed of my Father possess the kingdom prepared for you." Let all therefore during this Christmas time practice the virtuous actions we have enumerated—love, gratitude and thanksgiving to God, and mercy towards our neighbors, especially to those in need of our kind offices.

A TORONTO PUBLIC SCHOOL QUESTION.

According to the Mail, the Toronto Public school trustees are once more afflicted with the Separate-School-phobia, which is a very exasperating disease to them. Their bile is agitated periodically by the thought that the Catholic schools are doing their work quietly and well; and they can no more attend to their own business, under such circumstances, than can an enraged bull when it gets sight of a red cloak a hundred yards away.

The Board, we are told, has "frequently listened to complaints of ratepayers and others who have been wrongfully classed as Separate school supporters, but who desired their children to be taught at the Public schools."

There is little need of listening to long complaints on this score, and if the Board has wasted its time in doing so, they must have very little to occupy their minds. The school law provides fully for the case. Ratepayers are not classed as Separate school supporters until they have once, at least, declared themselves to be so; and if they have a very strong desire to become Public school supporters, the way is very easy for them. They have only to notify the city clerk in good time of their desire, and the thing is done. It is, therefore, with some surprise that we read that the Management Committee are asking the Board to petition the Ontario Legislative Assembly for "necessary legislation" to protect Public school interests in reference to the rating of Public and Separate school supporters, and appealing therefrom. Perhaps there is a nigger in the fence. We strongly suspect this to be the case.

To carry out their design of procuring such legislation they propose to appoint a committee to draft a petition, and to ask all other Public school Boards in the Province "to assist in obtaining such legislation." Similar complaints to this have been made before now; and though it was discovered that a very few errors had been made whereby by some mistake Protestant Public school supporters had been placed upon the Separate school lists, it was found that many Separate school supporters are placed every year on the Public school list; so that it is really the Separate School Board which has the grievance in the case. It seems, however, that the Public school trustees have the desire to draw a herring over the trail; and this is what occurs always when they get the Separate-School-phobia.

The law is framed for the express purpose of giving the Public schools the advantage, and if it is to be amended, the amendments should be in the direction of facilitating the work of the Separate school trustees; but in these P. P. A. times it is very possible the Toronto trustees desire to throw some new obstacles in the way of Catholic School Boards, just as it was desired to do during the last no-Popery agitation. It behooves Catholic trustees to be on the alert to protest against such action, if this be the intention.

It is not likely that other school Boards will join in the Toronto petition, except in localities which are prompted solely by anti-Catholic motives. Wherever Separate schools actually exist there is now little or no friction between the Catholic and Public school Boards. Time and experience in the operation of the law have convinced the latter that the Catholics have less than their real rights, and the Public School Boards have generally now no desire to interfere to the injury of their Catholic fellow-citizens. But it is possible that School Boards which have no direct concern in the matter, that is to say, where there are no Separate schools, and where they, therefore, are not

acquainted with their working, may be moved by the spirit of P. P. Aism to co-operate with the Toronto School Board, and thus make a show of a popular movement. But we are satisfied that no retrograde movement in the direction of hampering the Separate schools by obnoxious legislation will succeed.

As to the frequent complaints made by persons rated as Separate school supporters, we confess we do not believe the statement if it refers to Catholics. We know by experience that Catholics throughout the Province are glad to support their Catholic schools. There are here and there some crooked people who are never satisfied unless they are in opposition to the general sentiment, or that they themselves be allowed the supreme management of all affairs; and such people now and then withdraw their names from the Separate school rolls. There may be a few in Toronto who belong to this class, but we do not believe they are numerous enough to make "frequent" complaints.

There is another point in connection with the rabies manifested by the Toronto trustees. The Catholics have no Separate night schools, and it is said that some Catholics found their way into the Public night schools. A committee was appointed to investigate the matter, and it has reported that thirty-one Catholic children were thus attending. We are of course aware that they have not the legal right of so doing; yet when the fact is taken into consideration that the Public Board always contrives, owing to the state of the law, to secure a considerable portion of the taxes of Catholics, they have little reason to complain loudly if thirty-one Catholic children—a very small number for a city like Toronto—received some return. But even if there were reason for complaint, the law gives them their remedy, which they might apply without making so much noise about the matter. They have the right to impose a ratebill on pupils who do not belong to their school: all they have determined, however, to shut the doors against these thirty-one children unless their parents become Public school supporters in January.

We know of many instances where Protestant children are admitted into Separate schools, though the law does not allow their parents to be Separate school supporters; and in every instance the Catholic trustees permit the Protestant children to attend gratuitously. This is a new fact to the members of the P. P. A. might pay some attention, if they wish to know whether Catholic or Protestant school Boards show most liberality.

CLASS MEETINGS.

As a convention of the Toronto Methodist Class Leaders' Association held in Carlton street Methodist church, on the 8th inst., the question was debated "Has the Class meeting become unpopular? If so, Why?"

In the absence, through illness, of Mr. J. Henderson, who was to have read a paper on this subject, the Rev. E. E. Scott was called upon to state his views, and in doing so he declared that in his opinion it is not so popular as formerly, the chief reason being "the stereotyped phraseology used by those who recount their experiences." The meaning of this appears to be that the public have grown weary of the evidently imaginary accounts of their conversion in which the classes are wont to indulge. If there were more inventive genius displayed by those who represent themselves as having been suddenly converted and become justified, "at the wash tub," or while in the act of "cooking the dinner," there might be more variety in the stories and they might prove to be interesting and attractive; but as they are "stereotyped" they have become monotonous, and every one knows that the oft told tale is repeated without regard to truth, only for the purpose of creating a sensation.

A young lady who followed Mr. Scott confirmed his view of the case and related many illustrative incidents from the lives of many of her own class which confirmed Rev. Mr. Scott's view. She recommended that the stereotyped phrases referred to by Mr. Scott should be done away with, and that members should learn to talk simply of their religious experience. In other words, they should become more truthful. We are afraid that if this truthfulness became a characteristic of the tales told, and that they were stripped of cant, there would be very few of the confident expressions of self-laudation which have been the prominent feature at these class meetings.

worthy of love or hatred," are words of holy Scripture which should make men and women cautious of boasting of their justification, and it is a sign of advancement that members of the Church have grown tired of such talk.

Some other reasons were given for the decline of class-meetings, such as the attachment of young people to more lively amusements than these assemblages afford, as socials, entertainments, concerts, lectures, etc.; but the most serious cause brought forward by Mr. Scott was that "Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregationalist and Anglican members of the Methodist Church who, while they attend church regularly, cease to take an interest in the class meetings." In fact it appears to be this gentleman's conviction that so close a connection between Methodists and those of other denominations is a serious obstacle to Methodist spiritual life.

We cannot say what view may be taken by the other denominations referred to; but it is rather cruel for those who claim to be substantially of the same religion, and who are supposed to aspire after corporate union with these various forms of belief, to hold them up as real obstacles to progress in spirituality.

For our own part, though we may perhaps presume that these meetings tend, humanly speaking, towards animating Methodists with a certain esprit de corps which tends in the direction of a propagandism of their peculiar tenets, we are of opinion that real spirituality would not suffer by their discontinuance altogether. They serve rather to disseminate a love for gossiping than to produce any improvement in spiritual life; and such will continue to be the case until the methods adopted are radically changed. The change should be more thorough than the mere abolition of "stereotyped phrases." But in the absence of real sacraments, without which the means of gaining the grace of God are seriously lacking, it may be presumed, perhaps, that some such substitute as these meetings must be employed to galvanize the members into a fictitious kind of spiritual life.

MORE P. P. A. FALSEHOODS.

One Mr. Jno. Smith, of Toronto, has a communication in the Mail of the 7th inst., under the title, "The P. P. A. Association," giving some "excellent reasons" for its existence; after which we are treated with the further sensational head-lines: "The Universal Catholic League—Its Policy and Object Defined—A Huge Conspiracy Against Civil and Religious Liberty—Everything and Everybody to be made Subservient to Rome."

It is scarcely necessary to say that under these blood-curdling headings there is a tissue of just such nonsense as we might expect from a member of the P. P. A., an association which before now propagated falsehoods even more fear-inspiring than those which Mr. Smith here propagates.

It is but a short time since that association professed to have discovered an Encyclical letter from Pope Leo XIII., ordering the Catholics of the United States—about nine millions of the population—scattered over half a continent, to rise in arms to subdue and massacre the other fifty-five millions in the midst of whom they live, and to seize upon the Government of the country.

The absurdity of this invention was more creditable to the vivid imaginations of its concoctors than to their good sense: but at all events the month of September came—the period when this terrible mandate was to be put into execution—and it passed away without anything unusual occurring, except that during that very month the Catholic loyalty to the free country in which they live was made more manifest than ever by the notable assemblage of thousands of representative Catholics who assembled at the Catholic Congress of Chicago and declared among their other acts their unwavering allegiance to the flag under which they live, and manifested their brotherhood with the whole population of their country.

The fact that the bogus encyclical had been issued broadcast attracted all the more attention to the meeting of the Congress, and impressed the Protestants of America with the fact that to Catholics, equally with their Protestant fellow-citizens, the wonderful progress of their great country has been due; and we may justly say that this A. P. A. falsehood contributed as much as anything which Catholics themselves had done towards the great triumph which the Catholic Church achieved at the Columbian Fair. It helped to call the attention of the

American people to the wonderful Catholic Educational Exhibit, which proved that Catholic education stands in the foremost place in the United States. It helped also to emphasize the appeal of Mgr. Satolli, the Pope's representative, to the Catholics of the country to remain faithful to the laws under which they live, and to cling firmly to their religion and country at the same time, holding in one hand the Word of God, the Bible, and in the other the Constitution of the United States.

This event, so unexpected to the A. P. A., has greatly angered that society, and there is no end to the dastardly tricks to which they have recourse to undo what has been achieved.

Forgeries of documents and the slandering of priests and nuns are favorite devices of theirs, and of their sister society in Canada. So Mr. Smith has recourse to vile falsehoods in his "excellent reasons" for the existence of the P. P. A., and of course he finds ample space for them in that receptacle of slander, the newspaper which publishes his lucubrations.

Here is some of this knavery by Mr. Smith:

"If the P. P. A. is a secret society with known objects, what is the Church of Rome? Is it not the greatest secret society in the world? Has it not its passwords and its signs by which the initiated recognize each other?"

Of course there is not the least proof advanced that there is anything of the kind, and every one who knows the Catholic Church knows the absurdity of such language. But writers like Mr. Smith know and play upon the gullibility and ignorance of those whom they expect to convince.

Passwords and signs whereby Catholics recognize each other! Who ever heard of them? Yet it is not merely the passwords and signs for recognition used by secret societies like Orangemen and P. P. Aism which make these objectionable, but rather their evil purposes, and the means whereby they endeavor to attain them.

We are next told that there is now "a Universal Catholic League" with headquarters at Rome, and with divisions, first, to unite Catholic jurists; 2, Catholic workmen's societies; 3, Central committees; 4, Catholic regions; 5, diocesan functionaries; 6, general depot; 7, the learned.

The objects of this League are said to be: 1, The defence of the Church and the Pope; 2, the suppression of liberty, falsely so-called; 3, to combat individualism; 4, to countermeint the press; 5, to unite all civilized forces in favor of the Church; 6, to institute a Catholic Central Press; 7, to unite all classes for the good of the Church; 8, to establish Catholic telegraphic bureaus for the attainment of these same ends.

Every one with an ounce of common sense in his cranium can see that this is merely a huge fable. Yet after all there is little which is worthy of condemnation in all this if it were true, except in objects 2, 3 and 4; and even these might be understood in a sense in which they would be quite legitimate.

To suppress all liberty would certainly be bad—but not the suppression of "liberty falsely so-called"—which is license to do evil, and to inflict injury on others. Individualism may be good, but there is also an evil individualism, the rabies of lying, for example, and of endeavoring to create discord in the community, a rabies with which the Mail and its correspondent are infected. When this rabies develops itself too far, to the injury of others, even the civil law steps in for its suppression: and why not Religion do so likewise? The countermingling of the press in its entirety would be going too far; but we see nothing wrong in counteracting and countermingling the falsehoods propagated by a lying press like that which the P. P. A. has established in our midst. We plead guilty to having done this ourselves at times.

But why dwell upon such farcical accusations? We have no doubt that a phrenologist would declare that Mr. Smith's organ of wonder is very largely developed, and conscientiousness and casualty to an infinitesimal degree. With minds constituted like his it is useless to reason. They cannot appreciate solid argument.

But what of the authority on which he bases his assertions? He says the London Daily News defines the objects of this (fabulous) organization. Even this does not divest the statement of its fabulous character. We are not informed by Mr. Smith of what issue of the Daily News contains this Munchausen story, otherwise we might probably procure it in order to see what

that journal really says neither time nor disposal London to search its coils last fifty years or so to about it.

We know, however, the correspondents of the have often curious flights and that they are accurate strange tales with regard of the Church in Rome. In this case that which deserve no credit whatsoever dealing with this subject story is evidently a copy of pleasing the fact Popery associations of and this continent. Still serious doubts about the Mr. Smith's quotations.

While treating of the but fair we should give Mr. J. D. Edgar, M. P. tario, for his fearless posture of the hurtful P. A. in a letter which Mail and Globe on the liberal treatment of Catholics in Canada in contrast with the oaths bers of the P. P. A., no version of Papists, or their souls," but "to acc the temporal injury that good of the two million that Church among us ing "to keep them out in business, and to c from being eligible fo positions."

Mr. Edgar remarks: "Surely such a de could only be approve felt that the political tant citizens were being by Roman Catholics have a majority. I ca the contrary, the polit Protestants where the clear majority is far than the latter receive who have control. T census again, and the returns and we will find four constituencies with majorities send Pro House of Commons, ar Roman Catholic is elc ing with a Protestant take Quebec, and we seven Catholic riding M. P.'s, not one ridi tant majority sends to Parliament. Wou tell these honest truth (to A. P. A. ship) be to take so shocking an oath? I am sorr looks as if to day the ities are far less ge treatment of Roman C than they should be."

Mr. Edgar concludes A. members are the of a foreign political desires to drive Queb adian Confederacy th gust at Ontario bigot would break up the leave it an easy p desiring to feed upon the pivotal Province graphical position, a the Confederation n serve Canada on the

The P. P. A. are of traitors, if they a matter of fact it is w association was in neighboring Repub stated by United S it was instituted the adian Orangemen. are not at all irrec believe that both s rect.

This is another of the P. P. A. who forgot to mention under this heading

EDITORIAL.

OUR readers will the demise of La Douglas, sister of Douglas. She died Joseph's Convent, on the 25th Novem lady was the autho story, "Linked Li being published RECORD. The ma family in this cou offer up a fervent

ONE Protestant Hobbs, of Brant courage to anou member of the P. thing that may b that he has the co the rat hole and broad light of de most eminent Prot Dominion have against joining course which he taken will lead se conclusions as to his not be at all flatt