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LONDON, SATURDAY, NOV. 30, 1918

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

We pointed out last week that ordinarily the first logical step of a non-Catholic—especially a non-Catholic who already believes in the divinity and mission of Jesus Christ—should take is to examine the claim of the Catholic Church to have been founded by the Redeemer to carry on His mission, to teach the truths of revelation, and to apply the effects of the Redemption to mankind even to the consummation of the world.

On the 8th of December, 1854, Pius IX. set at rest all controversy on the matter by proclaiming and solemnly defining that the Blessed Virgin Mary "in the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin."

Clear as the terms are in which this doctrinal truth is defined there is misapprehension of its meaning amongst those who condemn anything distinctively Catholic without taking the trouble of knowing whereof they speak. The doctrine of original sin was taught in the old dispensation and is accepted by all Christians. We need not here trouble ourselves with so-called Christians who think themselves advanced and liberal and progressive when they deny all doctrinal truth; who would propagate the fragrance of the rose but destroy the rose-bush. No doctrine is more clearly taught or more repeatedly emphasized throughout the whole Bible than that of original sin. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception teaches that Mary through whom the Son of the Eternal God assumed our human nature was preserved from original sin which is inherited by every other member of the human race; and for this reason she is "our stained nature's solitary boast." Original sin was not removed or washed away from Mary's soul as it is removed from others by baptism; it was excluded, it was never in her soul. The immunity from original sin was given to Mary through the same merits of Jesus Christ by which others are cleansed from the sin by baptism. The person of Mary, in consequence of her origin from Adam, should have been subject to original sin, but, being the new Eve who was to be the mother of the new Adam, she was, by the eternal counsel of God and by the merits of Christ, withdrawn from the general law of original sin. Catholics do not place Mary outside the redeemed, as not needing a Redeemer. As Bishop Ullathorne says, Mary's redemption was the very masterpiece of Christ's redeeming power and wisdom. He is the greater redeemer who pays the debt that it may not be incurred, than he who pays after it has fallen on the debtor.

Holy Scripture does not directly and categorically teach the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. But the first scriptural pas-

sage which contains the promise of redemption mentions also the Mother of the Redeemer. The sentence against the first parents was accompanied by what is called the Proto-evangelium—the Earliest Gospel—which put enmity between the serpent and the woman: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; she (he) shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her (his) heel." (Genesis III., 15.) It matters not whether the pronoun refers to the woman or her seed. God puts enmity between the woman and Satan in the same manner and measure as there is enmity between Christ and the seed of the serpent. Only the continuous union of Mary with God by grace, the complete absence of Satan's dominion over her soul through sin actual, or original, explains sufficiently this mighty promise of God to put enmity between her and Satan. The very first promise of the Redeemer implies the manifestation of the masterpiece of His Redemption, the perfect preservation of His Virgin Mother from original sin.

The immortal words in which God's angelic messenger announced the most stupendous message that has ever passed or ever can pass from heaven to earth begin with the greeting from the Most High God to Mary: "Hail full of grace." We who are born to the great heritage of the Catholic Faith, recalling that great event, repeating again and again the words of the angelic salutation realize that after a life time of devotion and meditation we can but taste their inexhaustible sweetness, but glimpse their boundless significance. To indicate to whom these unique words were addressed we add the name of Mary; but the angel Gabriel charged with the wondrous message addressed Mary as if "full of grace" were her own proper title: "Hail, full of grace." There is no limit to the fullness, the completeness with which grace filled Mary's soul; the limit, the hindrance, the obstacle to grace is sin, whether actual or original. So that the unique abundance, the unrestricted plenitude of grace indicated by the angel finds its adequate explanation only in the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

The objection is sometimes urged that this is a novel and recent doctrine, and to superficial minds its definition by Pius IX. in 1854 seems to prove the charge; but such an objection could be urged against all development of doctrine. When Peter acknowledged and professed his belief that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God he had no thought of two persons in Christ. That was the conclusion of subtler minds of a later generation. When the Church defined that in Christ there is only one person it was not a novel doctrine but an assertion and defence of the truth contained in the deposit of faith and implied in Peter's words.

From the earliest times the Fathers insist on Mary's absolute purity and her position as the second Eve. This celebrated comparison between Eve, while yet immaculate and incorrupt—that is to say not subject to original sin—and the Blessed Virgin is developed in innumerable passages. Origin calls her "worthy of God, immaculate of the immaculate." Ambrose, "a virgin immune through grace from every stain of sin;" in refuting Pelagius St. Augustine declares that all the just have truly known of sin "except the Holy Virgin Mary, of whom, for the honor of the Lord, I will have no question whatever where sin is concerned." There was no controversy over the Immaculate Conception in Europe before the twelfth century. In 1439 the dispute was brought before the Council of Basle where after it had been discussed for two years the bishops declared the Immaculate Conception to be a doctrine which was pious, consonant with Catholic faith, right reason and Holy Scripture. After this the controversy practically ceased and the feast which had been celebrated in many monasteries and cathedrals for centuries was adopted for the entire Latin Church in 1476 by Pope Sixtus IV.

So that the definition fifty odd years ago did not create a new doctrine but set at rest forever all controversy by the solemn definition of a truth held explicitly or implicitly throughout the ages. To day throughout the Church the belief is universal that after death Mary's body was assumed into heaven, though this is not defined as an article of faith. If or when it is so defined it will obviously be not a new or novel doctrine, but an author-

itative statement of an ancient and universal belief. The feast of the Assumption is one of obligation in the United States.

To those who believe that Jesus is the Eternal Son of the Most High God in whose sight the very heavens are not clean, who meditate on the mystery of the Incarnation, who think of Mary as His mother, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, even had it never been defined, declares itself as the necessary and only fitting preparation of her who is the Mother of God made man.

REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING

The Mass of Thanksgiving for victory in the Great War and the Requiem Mass for the soldiers who gave their lives to make that victory possible were an event in many respects notable in the history of this city. The local members of Parliament and Legislature, the County Judge, the Mayor and Board of Control, the General Officer Commanding this military district, the President and Board of Governors of Western University, the Public Utilities Commission, the City Council, the Board of Education, the Chamber of Commerce and the Red Cross organizations were all either present or largely represented.

The khaki of soldiers in training and the Great War Veterans was noticeable in the great congregation that thronged the Cathedral beyond its seating capacity.

His Lordship Bishop Fallon pontificated and the students of St. Peter's Seminary sang the impressive Gregorian chant on both occasions.

Without attempting to give a summary of the Bishop's sermon which quite evidently gripped the interest of the vast congregation we may be permitted to call attention to one or two points which seem to merit special consideration.

Briefly tracing the idea of sacrifice from that of the sons of Adam down through the scriptural sacrifices of the Old Law, and amongst all branches of the human family, the preacher explained that the service just concluded was not merely a prayer or a series of prayers but a great sacrificial action at once typifying, reproducing and applying the dread Sacrifice of Calvary. It is the self-same supreme act of worship which in ages past was the inspiration and the cause of the artistic and architectural glory of those cathedrals whose destruction has filled the world with sorrow.

And here we may permit ourselves to interpolate a reflection. Newman has written: "Christianity has been long enough in the world to justify us in dealing with it as a fact in the world's history. Its genius and character, its doctrines, precepts and objects cannot be treated as matters of private opinion or deduction, unless we may reasonably so regard the Spartan institutions or the religion of Mahomet. . . . It has from the first had an objective existence, and has thrown itself upon the great concourse of men. Its home is in the world; and to know what it is, we must seek it in the world, and hear the world's witness of it. . . . And this one thing at least is certain; whatever history teaches, whatever it omits, whatever it exaggerates or extenuates, what ever it says or unsays, at least the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there was a safe truth it is this. And Protestantism has ever felt it so. . . . This is shown in the determination of dispensing with historical Christianity altogether and forming a Christianity from the Bible alone; men never would have put it aside, unless they had despaired of it. It is shown by the long neglect of ecclesiastical history in England which prevails even in the English Church. Our popular religion scarcely recognizes the fact of the twelve long ages which lie between the Councils of Nicea and Trent. . . . It is melancholy to say it, but the chief, perhaps the only English writer who has any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian, is the unbeliever Gibbon. To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant."

One of the incidental effects of the Great War was to bring millions of Protestants thus ignorant of history into close and intimate contact with historical Christianity typified and expressed not alone in the glory of immortal cathedrals but in the lives of the Catholic nations of Belgium, France and Italy. This is not perhaps "to be deep in history;" but it is a marvellously graphic lesson in

history. Peoples formed, individually and nationally, by the Catholic Church whom they had been taught to distrust and despise they found shoulder to shoulder with them in the life and death struggle with that giant power which was the very embodiment of historic Protestantism and of Protestant political principles.

The full effect of this mighty lesson in history will not be measured by the conversions of this generation; but rather by the new orientation of non-Catholic views of historic Christianity.

Another striking passage in Bishop Fallon's sermon was this: We humbly thank God who gave us victory over the military power of Germany. We had been blind to the growth and menace of that power. But we have reason, far and away deeper reason, to thank God for the overthrow of Germany's intellectual domination of the world by means of which she was disseminating principles subversive of the rights of God as well as the rights of man. The principle of the absolute supremacy of the State over the conscience of men was carried to its logical conclusion in the ideals and largely in the practices of the German Empire. Her scholarship denied the inspiration of the Bible and enthroned human reason over against faith in God and belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. And principles good or bad, true or false, once accepted always work their way into inevitable though unforeseen application. The military power and ambition of Germany manœuvred the political freedom of the world, the work of Christian civilization; her intellectual supremacy in pre-war times threatened to subvert, wherever her influence extended, the very foundations of Christianity itself.

Now that the world has seen whether the principles of German scholarship led the intellectual domination of Germany is overturned as completely as her military power.

And this is the greatest and most profound reason for thanksgiving to the God of Justice and Mercy and Truth.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PEACE CELEBRATION

After four years of gloom Canada has seen a day of unrestrained rejoicing. People, even intelligent adults, acted foolishly; but who could blame them? As tears are a safety valve for great sorrow, so the glad emotions that were aroused by the tidings of peace found vent in childish pranks that perhaps in many instances prevented hysteria. It is significant that the first impulse of the people was to do two things that the Church has ever sanctioned, one of which Protestants in normal times never think of doing while they have condemned and ridiculed the other. They visited their churches to pray silently on a week day and they held a procession.

Some local papers announced that Protestant ministers had opened their churches in order to give the people an opportunity to satisfy their desire to unburden their joyful hearts to God in the place dedicated to His worship. During the day organists played soulful melodies to create, we presume, a suitable atmosphere. Many, impelled by the solemnity of the occasion and prompted by the impulse of religion, did betake themselves to their places of worship. But they will not continue to do so. Why? Because while there is the subjective impulse there is no objective attraction. There is nothing in the cold, empty conventicle to draw the worshipper. The men of four centuries ago, who were responsible for the primal cause of this War, banished God from His dwelling place in the midst of His children, and the people, who would gladly bring their joys and sorrows to the feet of their Saviour, can only cry out with Magdalen at the door of the empty tomb: "They have stolen away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him."

In days of sorrow and in days of rejoicing, it has been the custom of the Church from time immemorial to hold processions. In this she has but given a religious impulse and lent a religious setting to the natural demonstration of emotion. The Church is the most skillful of all artists, whether it be in the matter of sculpture, painting, architecture or ceremonial display. Moreover, her ritual arranges for and furnishes such unity of design, such solemnity of action, such wealth and beauty of color, such sweet and majestic

melody as no other institution can command. What an abortive attempt to give expression to a Nation's joy were those callithumpian parades that were staged in almost every Canadian town and city on that eventful anniversary of the feast of St. Martin, the great patron of the Church in France, that marked the advent of peace! They exactly conformed to the following definition of a callithump that is found in the dictionary: "a noisy parade, in which horn-blowing, the beating of tin pans, and the use of other discordant instruments are the principle feature, done in rough play to express hostility to someone." They were as lacking in unity and harmony as are the religious views of those who planned them; they were as devoid of beauty and good taste as are the decorations of an Orange lodge. They certainly gave point to Father Garesche's contention that this country is suffering from an epidemic of vulgarity. Making due allowance for thoughtlessness and youthful indiscretions, a little more consideration for the feelings of the sorrowing relatives of the boys who will not come back would have been indicative of a more Christian spirit and of a more refined temperament.

No section of the community had so much reason to rejoice in the victory as Catholics, not only because it meant the downfall of the very home and stronghold of Protestantism but because the great majority of those entrusted with the command of the Allied army and navy, since the victorious drive began, were members of the Church. But there has been such a persistent attempt on the part of the press to associate the Pope with the Kaiser that no wonder Guy Fawkes and the German War Lord were burned in effigy together, and that hilarious youths terminated the peace celebration by playing "The Protestant Boys." We attach very little importance to this for the element in question knew perhaps nothing of the history of the Gunpowder Plot and could play no tune that was not associated with the Boyne. What was much more significant was the studied elimination on the part of prominent speakers of any reference to the one man above all others to whom, humanly speaking, victory was due.

Quite in line with this was an editorial in the Globe in which the writer expressed the hope that General Foch, having covered himself with glory as a military genius, would not tarnish his laurels by any interference with French politics. Did Washington, we may ask, retire from public life after the surrender at Yorktown? Was any fault found with Wellington for entering political life after his victorious return from the continent; notwithstanding that he used his political influence to prevent the emancipation of the very men who helped him to win at Waterloo? What is back of the Globe's great solicitude for the honor of General Foch? It is simply this: The Globe, and those whose sympathies are with the masonic coteries of infidels that would drive religion from France, know that Foch, the hero of the French people and the idol of his soldiers, is really the uncrowned king of that country. Knowing that he is a devout Catholic they fear that he would use his influence to restore the Catholic religion to its rightful ascendancy in the land of Charlemagne and St. Louis. Every true Christian will breathe a prayer that Foch may finish his work, that having freed France from the ruthless invader he may liberate it from domestic thralldom.

THE GRANER

NOTES AND COMMENTS

It was noted in these columns some months ago that the long talked of project of making Rome a seaport was in a fair way to be realized. We now learn from Corriere d'Italia that the Government has completed the scheme for the construction of the new port of Ostia, and the railway connecting it with the Eternal City. The State will construct the port, and the cost of building the railway will be borne jointly by the Commune, the Province and the Italian Government. While this will not make Rome precisely a seaport in this generation, it will give it direct access to the sea, with all the benefits that may result therefrom, and the building up of the intervening territory will almost certainly in time result in the extension of Rome's civil boundaries to the sea itself.

THE PLAN FOR THE BUILDING OF OSTIA PROVIDES FOR TWO ZONES: ONE FOR THE CIVIL CONSTRUCTION, INCLUDING HOUSES,

villas, baths, hotels, etc., and the other for the construction of the industrial quarter situated by the port, and the new canal which will join up the port with the capital. The Commune of Rome has purchased vast tracts of land on the site of the new port, so as to prevent speculation, and will sell in small lots to purchasers who are in a position to build without delay and according to plans agreed upon. And with the return of peace and the buoyancy of young Italy immediate development along these lines may be looked for.

THE WORLD has heard much of the "New Rome" since 1870, and the vision of a still newer Rome is conjured up by these projects. But to the world of religion, of art, and of classical learning no growth or modernization of the Imperial City can wholly compensate for the loss of so much that made Rome what it was under the Popes. There was, as John Henry Newman wrote eighty years or more ago, a majesty and glory about Old Rome in comparison with which the material greatness of London and Paris, and even of his own Oxford were but dust and ashes. But as we know too well on this new continent, nothing can withstand the mad passion for material wealth and greatness, nor can anything that is merely venerable hope long to survive.

ONE of the melancholy incidents of the War in the East was the destruction of the celebrated Carmelite Library at Bagdad, and the incident is all the more regrettable since it was an act of pure vandalism on the part of the Turk. The surmise is that upon the entry of General Maude into Bagdad, on 11th March, 1917, the Turks made an end of the library so that its precious contents might not fall into the hands of the British. The collection, it is said, consisted of more than 20,000 volumes, including an array of 2,758 Arabic manuscripts which it is impossible to replace. These were purchased in the course of the past century by the Carmelite monks, assisted by friends in Europe, and while, from a monetary point of view they represented a large figure this does not weigh in the balance with the loss to the world of science and letters.

UNHAPPILY, this sort of vandalism is not rare among the Turks or other Asiatic tribes. The destruction of the great Alexandrian Library by the Saracens under Caliph Omar is a case in point. That worthy was responsible for other similar acts of vandalism under the plea that "if the books agree with the Book of God they are superfluous; if they differ from it they are impious. In either case let them be destroyed." In the case of the Carmelite Library, however, there was not even that justification. Pure lust for destruction, whether of human life or of the works of man, has ever been the Turk's master passion. Perhaps, in the present instance he was inspired by his European prototype's ruthless holocaust of Louvain. In any case it is well that the happy termination of the War has put an end forever, let us hope, to his domination over Christian peoples and Christian sanctuaries.

FRENCH PRELATES

GREET RETURN OF PEACE IN CHICAGO

The French ecclesiastical mission, which came to America to do honor to Cardinal Gibbons, left Chicago Tuesday after a three-day visit, the guests of Archbishop Mundelein. The members of the party were quartered at the University Club.

"We are extremely pleased with our reception," said Abbe Patrick Flynn, speaking for Bishop Eugene Julien, of Arras. "We made a great effort to get here, and the Bishop and monsignori must rush away east today on their way home. But they did not wish to leave America without coming to this great Catholic centre of the middle west. It has been most delightful, and especially as it was here we received the great news of victory."

The party spent a busy three days, having been the guests of honor at a number of affairs. One of the most interesting of their experiences was the visit they paid Monday morning to the institutions at Desplaines, where 1,200 orphan children are cared for. It was very interesting to the Bishop of Arras, who has more little children orphaned by the War in his diocese than there are in any similar territory in the world.

"One of my purposes in inviting the French mission to come so far out of their way," said Archbishop Mundelein, "was to show the Bishop how we care for the orphans. We

have the most successful institution of the kind in the country, and I should be very happy if our ideas could be used to help the French people in their great problem."

The prelates were delighted with the great school, and declared that they had learned much that they could take back with them. The return of peace, the Bishop of Arras said, while it aided, did not solve their problems. Peace could not bring back the millions of French heroes to their orphaned little ones.

Peace Day was one of triumph to these churchmen who had been in the thick of War so long. It began when the racket in the loop aroused them early, and closed at a reception at Orchestra hall, after they had fought their astonished way through the mob from the Blackstone Hotel, where they had been entertained at a dinner, at which were many Chicago leaders in finance, education, industry, church and public life. David Shanahan presided at the banquet, and Abbe Felix Klein, for years chaplain at the American Red Cross headquarters at Neuilly, France, spoke.

At Orchestra hall there was a most distinguished audience, when Bishop Julian said the invocation, following which the Paulist choir sang. M. Berthelemy presided, and in a pretty tribute introduced Archbishop Mundelein.

It is only eighteen months since Chicago welcomed a mission of French men, headed by Marshal Joffre, which came to us to sound the clarion cry of war. Tonight we welcome another mission, which comes with a message of peace. It is the work of these men of peace that strengthened the hearts and the arms of the men of war and it is fitting that they are here on this great day. Many times during the address by the Archbishop was he interrupted by storms of applause. More than once did the audience spring to its feet with cheers as the prelate paid tribute to LaFayette, Pershing, Wilson and Foch.

"Today," he resumed, "after years of suffering, the dazzling smile of happiness is breaking through the tears of France. Today's event binds closer than ever the friendship of the nations of LaFayette and America. Today also ends for another people the nightmare of world power for which they were neither intended nor were they capable."

Abbe Flynn had his hearers alternately weeping softly, and laughing with glee at his address, which while without a title on the program might be named "The Soul of France." With the true spirit of the Frenchman, Abbe Flynn told little of what France suffered. He told some things, but these were but a tiny fragment of what he might have told. But like France, the abbe preferred to counsel the suffering and dwell upon the spiritual aspect of the world tragedy.

"I was in Paris when France declared war. It was a wonderful memory. France is an old nation, and like old families we had our little differences. But on the day of the declaration and from that day until this great day of triumph France has forgotten her differences. Catholic, Protestant, Jew, monarchist, republican, clerical and anti-clerical have known only one purpose, and that is the saving of France. We have not let down the bars, but have united in a common cause. I trust the spirit of unity that is the soul of France will live forever and that the unity which we have had with great America will never be broken."—Chicago New World, Nov. 15.

"FAITH IN GOD WON THE WAR"

CARDINAL GIBBONS ADDRESSES MEN AT FIELD MASS IN CAMP MEADE

Camp Meade, Admiral, Md., Nov. 13.—An address by Cardinal Gibbons, in which he expressed thanks to God for the victory of American arms in France, was the feature of an open-air Mass here Sunday morning in memory of the men of this camp who have died in battle and of disease.

With the sunlight flashing on the unheated bayonets, thousands of men in olive drab stood forming a hollow square as the Cardinal spoke and gave his blessing as the Mass ended. The sight was one of the most impressive that has been witnessed at Camp Meade.

Cardinal Gibbons said: "Before I give you my blessing there are a few words I wish to say to you. First of all, let me exhort you to have absolute confidence in the Lord of Hosts, the God of Battle. 'We have conquered because we had faith in God; because we fought for and had faith in justice, righteousness and truth. We commenced this War bowing down and worshipping the overruled providence of God who has created all by His wisdom, governs all through Divine Providence and watches over nations as well as men. 'Now love God; trust God. Be men of prayer. 'We have conquered because we believed righteousness excited a nation. You have been obedient to those in authority—every corporal, sergeant, major and the general himself commands your obedience. These in authority have been clothed with the mantle of authority, and when you obey it is not only obedience to them, but to God Himself. This will sanctify and ennoble your obedience. Your obedience is not an act of servility, but obedience to God Himself.