

THE
THIRTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
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It must now be evident to all minds interested in the history of religious developments, that the Roman Catholic world is agitated in no ordinary manner. Politically, its clerical leaders have lost the control they had for centuries over many a country. In the struggle of our day the very loud assumptions of the party betray the weakness inherent to the system, and despite antiquated pretensions, the Roman Catholic religion is fast becoming a sect by the side of other sects, and will remain the most numerous only so long as there are ignorant masses to be satisfied with her coarse and superstitious representations of Christianity, and cultivated classes chiefly infidels, and consequently indifferent to religious questions, but remaining nominal Catholics from an aesthetic preference to its form of worship, and still more, on account of the greater liberty they enjoy in being without the restraint of a religion, while still bearing the name of Catholics. The clerical leaders have no scruples in encouraging that kind of hypocrisy in men who do not deny the name they have given them, provided they occasionally go to church on days of great ceremonies and of superior musical entertainments.

When the masses are better educated, and when a purer and more rational Christianity has pervaded the hearts and minds of humanity, Roman Catholicism will have become one of the smallest sects in Christendom. In the meantime, nothing but the knowledge of a pure Gospel will effectually bring about the much needed reform below and above. The Gospel Missionary among Roman Catholics has always this two-fold aspect of the work before him, ignorance, superstition and bigotry on the one hand, infidel and worldly indifference on the other, both being found at the same time, in the same church, and sometimes in the same