The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

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PROTESTANT FICTIONS AND CATHOLIC FACTS.

Full Report of the Lecture Delivered by the Most Rev. Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Toronto, at St. Patrick's Church.

On Thursday evening last His Grace the Most Rev. John Walsh, Archbishop of Toronto, lectured in St. Patrick's Church, William street, under the auspices of the Catholic Truth Society, on Some Things which Catholics do not Believe." The church was filled. Among the priests present in the sanctuary were Father Hayden, C.SS.R., Father Grogan, C.SS.R., Father Dodsworth, C.SS.R., Father Cruise and Father James Walsh. There were also present Provincial Brother Edward and Brothers Theobald, Patrick and Pius. After the lecture Father Grogan read satisfactory reports from the Truth Societies all over the province, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given by Father Walsh. The Archbishop, whose voice has seldom been heard to better advantage, spoke as follows:—

"Return to judgment for they have borne false testimony against her."—Daniel xiii. 49.

When the chaste Susanna was condemned to death through the false testimony of wicked men, and was being led to execution, the Prophet Daniel cried out to the assembled multitude: "Ye men of Israel, why are you so foolish that without examination or knowledge of the truth, you have condemned a daughter of Israel?" The case was reopened, the condemned woman was adjudged innocent, and her virtue and honor were vindicated.

Now, this historic incident has a very appropriate application to the case of the Catholic Church. Without knowledge or examination of the truth, the Church of Christ is condemned as fallen, corrupt, and apostate on false testimony; and unthinking multitudes believe her guilty when on honest examination of her real teachings they would find her innocent of the wicked charges of error in doctrine, and corruption in moral teaching made against her. I say to these men: "Why are you so foolish that without examination or knowledge of the truth you condemn a great historic Church. Return to judgment for they have borne false witness against her."

The Church Catholic, Apostolic and Roman, is a great and world-wide institution that challenges the attention and the study of mankind. It exists in the world since the days when the Son of God Incarnate dwelt, and toiled, and taught amongst men, and revealed to their wondering minds the eternal and saving truths which constitute His holy religion, and which have since illumined the whole firmament of time. It was instituted by Christ to represent Him, and to do His work in the world when He should have returned to His eternal throne, that is to say, to teach the whole doctrine of Christ with authority and inerrancy, and to apply through His ordinances, the merits of His atonement to immortal souls. It bears upon its brow the marks, and characteristics that distinguish and differentiate it from all false churches. It is One in doctrine, in worship, and in government. It is Holy in its Founder, in its teachings and ministrations, and in the number of its children who have been eminent for holiness of life in all ages. It is Catholic or universal in time and space; and fills the whole world with the majesty of its presence, and it is Apostolic in its doctrines and in its ministry. It holds Christ's commission to be in His stead the official teacher of His revelation to the world. It was to it, in the person of the Apostles, Christ said: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth, Go teach all nations, and behold, I am with you all days down to the consummation of the world." Matt. xxviii-19.

It is the mother of Christian civilization. It converted the pagan world, and when the Roman empire was broken into fragments by the barbarian hosts that, like an irresistable and destructive avalanche, rushed down upon it from the northern forests, it converted, and civilized those iron men, and bowed down their stubborn necks to the sweet yoke of Christ. There is no Christian nation in existence that does not owe to the Church its Christianity, and its civilization. It is the most ancient and venerable institution that exists on earth. It carries the mind back to the times when the Apostles of Christ preached in Jerusalem and Athens and Rome and Antioch, when her children were denounced by pagan writers as the enemies of the human race—"hostes humani generis"—and when they were worried and torn by wild beasts in the Colisseum for the amusement of Roman citizens. It has come down through all the ages doing the Divine Master's work, teaching civilizing, and saving mankind. There is no human sorrow for which the Church has not a consolation, no deep wound of the broken heart for which she has not a healing balm. There is no questioning of the troubled soul for which she has not a satisfying answer, no dark problem of human life, for which she holds not the solution. Veronica-like, she has wiped the sweat and blood and tears from the face of suffering humanity. Into every Gethsemane of human suffering she has entered like an angel of consolation. In every centre of population her hospitals have sprung up like blessed prohetices for the healing and comfort of the sick and suffering, whilst her institutions of higher learning and her primary schools dot the civilized world. The Hon. William Ewart Gladstone has this to say of the Catholic Church: "She has marched for fifteen hundred years at the head of human civilization and has harnessed to her chariot, as the horses of a triumphal car, the chief intellectual and material forces of the world; her art the art of the world; her genius the genius of the world; her greatness, glory, grandeur and majesty have been almost, though not absolutely, all that in these respects the world has had to boast of." "Her children are more numerous than all the members of the sects combined; she is every day enlarging the boundaries of her vast empire; her altars are raised in every clime, and her missionaries are to be found wherever there are men to be taught the Evangel of immortality, and souls are to be saved. And this wondrous church, which is as old as Christianity and as universal as mankind, is to day after its twenty centuries of age as fresh and as vigorous and as fruitful as on that day when the Pentecostal fires were showered upon the earth. Surely such an institution challenges the attention and demands and deserves the most serious examination of those outside its pale.

But nevertheless this great historic Church is denied a hearing by the Protestant world. She is shunned as though she were some ferocious wild beast that it would be fatal to approach. She is denounced as a corrupt, fallen, and apostate church. Like her Divine Founder her face is besmeared with the spittle of unreasoning crowds. Her great history is unread and unknown, her doctrines are misrepresented, and in the estimation of many well-meaning people she is everything that is false, wicked and absurd. She is the enemy of God's revealed Word. She hates the Scriptures and shuts them up as a sealed book from her deceived and deluded followers. These followers she keeps in utter darkness and in spiritual slavery, and in order to hold them fast in spiritual blindness and thraldom, she uses an unknown tongue in her public worship and devotions. She is a shameless and wicked idolater, substituting for divine honors and worship the creature instead of the Creator, and placing the Virgin Mary in the place of the Redeemer of mankind.

She practically denies the atonement of the Cross and has more faith in the prayers of saints than in the merits of our Crucified Redeemer. She tries to rob God of a power which essentially and inalienably belongs to Him alone, the God-power of forgiving sins—by pretending and claiming that she also can forgive sins, and that what she looses on earth shall be loosed in heaven, and what she binds on earth shall be bound also in heaven. These are some of the charges made against the Catholic Church, and they are made so authoritatively and persistently that multitudes of well-meaning people believe them as though they were Gospel truths, instead of being utter falsehoods, and would think it the height of absurdity and the acme of brazen effrontery to deny them. And so, thousands of good religious and well-meaning people turn away their faces from the Catholic Church, refuse her a hearing, contemptously decline to examine her teachings, and look upon her with fear, hatred and loathing. Now is this fair? Is it right and just? Is it in this way that men act in social and political life? Is this mode of conduct in harmony with the intelligence of the age, in conformity with justice and fair play, and in consistency with that spirit of impartial inquiry and investigation which in other respects is characteristic of this nineteenth century? If you wish to know the truth about the character and standing of citizens, do you go to their enemies to learn it? If you wish to know the merits of the Liberal Party or policy do you go to the Tories for information, and vice versa, if you desire accurate information about the merits of the National Policy is it to the leaders of the Liberal Party you go for such information?

Now dear Brethren, if such a mode of action would be considered as foolish, meaningless, and absurd where there is question of seeking and obtaining correct information respecting the character of neighbors, or the merits of the respective policies of the Liberals and Tories, surely it is more absurd to go to professed enemies of the Catholic Church for correct knowledge regarding her tenets, regarding the doctrines which she holds believes and teaches to her children. In order to acquire such information, common sense and justice require that men should go to her authoritative expositions of her doctrines, that they should go to her official teachers to learn what the Catholic Church really and truly holds and teaches. The Catholic Church demands investigation, she claims a hearing. She claims she is the oracle of God and the Spouse of Christ, and the legitimate mother of his children, and their tore in the words of Macaulay, a Protestant historian, there never was, and there is not now, on earth an institution so well deserving of examination as the Catholic Church. But you must go to the true sources of information regarding her claims and her doctrine, you must read and study her books, you must hear and consult her bishops and her priests and then form your judgment and draw your conclusions instead of basing your opinions on the misstatements and misrepresentations of her adversaries and traducers. Now I contend that the church is most grossly misrepresented and misunderstood, that her teachings are falsified and that there are doctrines and practices imputed to her which she not only does not hold or observe, but which from her whole soul she abhors, condemns and anathematizes. I will refer to some of these just now, and in doing so I shall say to our separated brethren what Daniel said to the accusers of the chaste Susanna: "Are ye so foolish ye children of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth ye have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return to judgment for they have borne false witness against her." Daniel XIII. 48, 49.

First then, it is false to affirm that the Catholic Church is the enemy of God's revealed word, or that she forbids the reading of the Scriptures to her children. She teaches that the Scripture is the revealed word of God, that every tittle of it was written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that in the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove to correct, to instruct in justice." 2. Tim. iii-v-16.

With a mother's care she protected and saved the written word during the bloody persecutions which the Roman Empire for three hundred years carried on against her and everything that belonged to her, including the Scriptures. She protected and saved them during the ages when the fierce northern pagan barbarians swept in a tide of destruction over Europe burning pillaging, and wasting everything in their path. It was she that settled the canon of the Scripture and authoratively decided what books were canonical and true Scripture and what must be considered as spurious. For centuries she kept hundreds and thousands of children employed in translating and transcribing the Word of God, aye, and in letters of gold and on parchment of purple to show veneration and love for God's word She causes it to be read in her public services and to be expounded to her people. The priests are bound under the most solemn obligation to read daily for an hour the Scriptures and commentaries on the Scripture. Her commentaries on it are the best and most learned ever written. Catholic kings and emperors in the middle ages whom wishing to testify their regard and reverence to friends or to religious men could find nothing more expressive of their esteem than copies of the Scriptures, and these copies were not unfrequently written in letters of gold and covered with purple, and ivory, and precious stones. And when printing was invented the church made use of this new art which was about to revolutionize the world, to disseminate the word of God in the vernacular among the people. Thus in Germany a Catholic version was printed nearly sixty years before Luther's translation, in fact five different Catholic versions of Scripture in the vulgar tongue were published in Germany before Luther's bible appeared. The very same thing occurred in Spain, Italy and France. See letter of Pope Pius VI to the Archbishop of Florence on the popular use of the Bible in first page of the Douay Bible. From these facts it is evident that it is false and unjust to accuse the Catholic Church of being opposed to the Scriptures. On the contrary it is her child and she is its mother, and she has ever protected, guarded and fostered it with a mother's loving care. But the Church is not only the friend and guardian of Scripture, she is also its divinely appointed official interpreter and teacher. The Bible as a mere inspired book is each individual for himself was never intended by Christ to be the rule of faith and of morals. There are overwhelming arguments and irrefragable facts against this Protestant theory. 1st. Christ never wrote a word of the Bible. 2nd. He never commissioned his Apostles to write it. 3rd. The Bible was not entirely written and completed until about sixty-five years after the Ascension of Our Lord. 4th. Until the time of the invention of printing nearly fifteen hundred years of the Christian era, it was a physical impossibility to disseminate the Bible so as to bring it within the reach of all, and lastly the vast majority of the people could not read it even though they had copies of it. The unlearned and unstable wrest it to their own destruction. Christ Our Lord appointed his Church to be the guardian and teacher of his revealed word to his people. Just as the civil society and the governing power makes laws and appoints judges to expound their true meaning, so Christ the Divine Lawgiver appointed and commissioned his Church to interpret and teach the true meaning of his revealed word to his people." All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." "Go teach the Gospel to every creature. He that heareth you heareth me. He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." Christ gave some Apostles &c. Faith cometh by hearing, it would not come by hearing but by reading if the Protestant theory were true. (Romans x-17.)

This is the relation the Church Catholic towards Holy Scripture. She is its divinely appointed guardian and its unerring teacher. She is not guilty of the absurdity of telling every man woman and child to read the Bible and to make out their religion from its pages. We see what the result of this theory has been in the innumerable sects that now exist outside the church all pretending to read and to understand the true meaning of the Bible and all differing in their understanding of it. Such endless divisions and such multitudes of warring sects generated by the principle of Protestantism have filled the world with doubts regarding the divinity of Christianity, have supplied the infidel with powerful arguments and have served to bring the religion of Christ into contempt. There is but one God and one true Faith, and that Faith is kept in its unity, purity, and integrity by the Church Catholic which interprets God's word by virtue of a divine commission and divine authority.

Again it is charged that the Catholic Church uses an unknown tongue in her services in order to keep her children in ignorance and to clothe her worship with the cloak of mystery. The Catholic Church makes use of the Latin tongue in her public worship, in the western church and of the Greek in the eastern for the following reasons. The Church is universal, her mission is to all mankind Were she a mere national church, an English church or French or Italian, she would doubtless employ in her services the language of the nation of which she was the Church But the Catholic Church being a universal Church makes use of one unvarying language in her public worship in all the nations to at once typify her unity, and her universality, her worship being the same, and in the same tongue in every country under the sun. The doctrines of the church are definite precise and unchanging. She therefore makes use of a dead tongue the meaning of whose words is fixed and unchanging, to enunciate and crystalize her doctrines and creeds. The meaning of words of living languages changes very frequently and could not fittingly express unalterable and unchanging dogmas. Besides Latin was the language of the civilized world when the church began her mission, and continued so to be during the first five centuries of the Christian era. It was the language in which she evangelized and Christianized the great Roman world. But when that world became divided into various nationalities speaking divers tongues, the church still retained her primitive language and thus remained unchanged in her speech as well as in her constitution. This language therefore connects her with the Apostolic age, and she still continues to speak and use it because she is one, Apostolic, unchanging and Catholic. But not on that account are her people ignorant of her worship and her liturgical devotions. They are taught from their infancy the meaning of the worship and public devotions of the Church. Their prayer books contain translations of her Latin services, the Epistles and Gospels are read in the vulgar tongue by the pastor and sermons are regularly preached in English and her doctrines are taught and explained in the vernacular tongues of her children. Besides many of the public devotions, such as the Way of the Cross and the Rosary, and the Litanies, are conducted in English.

Again it is said that the Church ignores our Saviour and depreciates the work of the Redemption, and robs the atonement of its all sufficient value. The accusation is utterly false, unjust, and calumnious. The Catholic Church teaches that Christ is the Incarnate Son of God, that he is the Redeemer and Saviour and teacher of mankind, that He is very God and very Man having one divine personality, that he is our only Mediator of Redemption, that there is no salvation in any other name under Heaven given to men whereby they can be saved. She teaches that one drop of the blood of Christ would have been sufficient to redeem ten thousand guilty worlds, and that in shedding His Blood for us He purchased us with a great price, that that Blood shed on Calvary ascended up through all the ages to the very gates of Paradise in its power and that it in principle and potency it washed away the guilt of all the ages, that no child of Adam ever could enter Heaven or ever can enter Heaven save through the merits of the Atonement of Christ. All her prayers are offered up in the name of Christ Jesus, and her children bow the head in loving reverence and adoration at the very sound of that name, thus carrying out in spirit the words of St. Paul, that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bend of those that are in Heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus is the glory of the Father; and they believe the same Apostle that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor might nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans VIII. 38.39.

She at all times defended the Divinity of Christ against unbelievers. For three hundred years she defended the Divinity of Christ against the Arians. She assembled councils and condemned their destructive heresy. She endured the anger of kings and emperors in defence of this fundamental doctrine of Christian faith, and her bishops, priests and children, suffered persecution, exile and death to uphold it. And yet we are confidently and impudently, but most falsely told that the Church ignores Christ and His Redemption. Millions of her children, bishops, priests, monks and nuns have consecrated themselves to lives of voluntary poverty chastity and obedience in imitation of Christ their Redeemer, and for His dear sake have given up the world and its pleasures, allurements, and seductions to consecrate themselves to the service of the poor, the ignorant, the sick, the suffering and afflicted. The Catholic Church opposed to Christ! Why if it were not for her it is most doubtful if Faith in Christ would exist in any corner of the earth to day.

The Catholic Church is accused of adoring the Blessed Virgin and of giving her divine honor and of placing her before and above her Redeemer in the work of man's Redemption, and salvation. In other words the Church is charged with being guilty of the heinous and abominable crime of idolatry. This accusation is false wicked and cruelly unjust. The Church abhors the sin of idolatry and has labored for centuries to destroy it from the face of the earth, and she teaches that the Blessed Virgin is a mere creature and that Christ is her Redeemer as well as of all the other children of Adam; that she, being a creature it would be a damnable sin to adore her or give her divine honors; that there is an infinite distance between God the Creator and a mere creature: that God is infinite perfection and that the creature is finite, and that to God alone should be reserved supreme worship and divine honor and adoration. And hence of God alone we ask grace and mercy, but of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints we only ask the assistance of their prayers. But we honor the Blessed Virgin, because she is the Mother of Christ our God and Redeemer, because as such she is the most perfect creature that ever issued from the hands of God. But the honor we pay to her is not the supreme honor due to God, but the inferior and infinitely different honor which is due to a creature even the most perfect We call her blessed because she herself, inspired by the Holy Ghost, prophesied that all generations should call her blessed. God honored her by choosing her for his mother, and the archangel honored her when he hailed and greeted her with being "full of grace," and as having God with her in an especial manner. And surely it is but right and proper to honor her whom God himself so much honored. Besides in honoring her we but honor the gifts and graces which God so abundantly bestowed upon her and which crowned her with honor and glory. We also pay an inferior honor to the saints because they are the friends of God, and thus do we in accordance with the injunction of the Psalmist praise God in His saints. As the moon shines by the reflected light of the sun, but does not dim His glory, nor rob Him of the effulgence of his rays, so the Blessed Virgin and the Saints shine by the reflected light of God's beauties and perfections, that is by His graces and His gifts. But instead of diminishing the honor and the glory which are essentially His, they but serve to increase and intensify it. Of God we ask mercy and pardon, but we only ask the saints to pray for us. Is there any harm in this? Was it wrong for St. Paul to ask the prayers of his disciples, and if not how can it be wrong for us, to ask the prayers of the saints reigning with God in glory? It is on this principle of invocation and intercession that we act in daily life. Witness persons wanting Government appointments asking the influence of respected friends of the government.

It is of her the inspired writer spoke when he exclaimed: "Who is she that cometh forth like the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible like an army in battle array." (Canticles. vi.-9).

St. John in the Apocalypse (xii., c. 1) describes her as clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."

Even Protestant poets inspired by faith as well as poetic genius paid her the highest tributes of reverence and honor. Thus Wordsworth sings:

Woman whose virgin bosom was uncrost
By the least shade of thought to sin allied,
Woman above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast,
Purer than foam on central ocean tost,
Fairer than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
With fancied roses; than the unblemished moon
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast;
Thy image falls to earth, yet some I ween
The suppliant knees might bend
As to a visible power in which doth blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in thee:
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with love, celestial with terrene.

But the priests say they can forgive sins and they charge money for doing so. That priests can forgive sins on certain conditions is true, but that they charge money for doing so, is a wicked falsehood. Christ could forgive sins He gave the same Godlike power to His Church for all time when He said to His Apostles: "As the Father hath sent Me I send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." (John xx., 22-31). Now, what are the conditions on which the priests of the Church are empowered to absolve from sin? The conditions on the part of the penitent are, Contrition, Confession and Satisfaction, that is to say, the penitent must be truly and really sorry for his sins, because they offend God, and must be firmly resolved not to sin again. He must confess all his grievous sins to the priest and lay before him his naked heart, must confess to the priest his sins of thought, his sins of act, his sins of omission. The penitent must in addition perform the works of penance prescribed by the confessor in satisfaction for his sins. He must also repair injury done his neighbor in goods or character These and these alone, are ordinarily the conditions on which actual grievous sin can be forgiven in the Catholic Church. Is this an easy process? Is this ordeal calculated to encourage the commission of sin or is it not? It has proved to be an efficient deterrent from the commission of sin. How much easier is the Protestant doctrine and practice on this point The Protestant says "Believe in Christ and all grievous sins will be forgiven." An easy system, truly. It is indeed salvation made easy, and the narrow road to heaven broadened and made smooth.

But is not your doctrine and practice of indulgences calculated to debase and corrupt? Your Indulgences are not only a pardon for past sins but a permission to commit future sins, and all this for a pecuniary consideration. This is a wicked Protestant misrepresentation and calumny.

An Indulgence is not a pardon for sin or a permission to commit it. An Indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment due for sin after the guilt and the eternal punishment due for it have been forgiven. We have several proofs in Holy Writ that after the guilt of sin has been forgiven there still remains due for it a temporal punishment. Thus Adam was forgiven the guilt of his sin and yet what fearful temporal punishment had to be endured by him for it. He was banished from Paradise and was condemned to death. Famine, pestilence, wars, sickness and death and numberless other temporal chastisements have followed on the original sin of Adam. David was forgiven his double sin of adultery and murder. And yet he was punished for it by the death of his child. Moses was forgiven his sin of doubt; yet as a temporal punishment of it he was not allowed to enter the land of promise. It is therefore certain that a temporal punishment remains due for sin after the guilt of it has been forgiven. Now the Church by virtue of the power of loosing and binding left to her by Christ, can remit this temporal punishment on certain prescribed conditions—such as the worthy reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, the recitation of certain prayers, acts of mortification, alms, deeds and other works of mercy. There is nothing in all this to show that an Indulgence is the pardon of sin or permission to commit. This is, of course, another Protestant misrepresentation, another false accusation against God's Church. On the contrary the Catholic doctrine of Indulgences shows the enormity and heinousness of sin, it illustrates the infinite merits and efficacy of Christ's atonement, and shows forth the tender mercy and goodness of God and the mutual union and charity that bind the members of the Church in one great brotherhood.

In the Catholic theory an Indulgence is not so indulgent a thing after all, and is not at all so easy as the simple plenary indulgence given by Protestantism, which has abolished fasting and abstinence, done away with self-denial and mortification, which has a horror of confession and has stigmatized all penitential works as not only useless but derogatory to the merits of Christ's atonement. Thus Protestantism is a vast plenary indulgence which has sought to make broad and smooth the narrow road that alone, by Christ's appointment, leads to eternal life. The Protestant broad way is not the narrow way of Christ.

Time will not allow me to refer to the popular misrepresentations that pervail of other teachings and practices of the Catholic Church The points touched on we have shown how utterly false are the misrepresentations that are held as unquestionably true without knowledge or examination of the truth. We have shown that on these points the doctrines of the church are in harmony with right reason, and are sanctioned and upheld by God's revealed word and on proper examination all her other teachings would be found to stand the same test of truth. The Church could not teach error because she is the pillar and ground of truth and the oracle of the Holy Ghost in the world. God created the sun to light and warm the material creation, and since it was first launched into space it has never failed in its office and never shall until the end of the world. God instituted His Church as the sun of the moral world and by his appointment it will continue to enlighten human intelligence, to warm into religious life human hearts until the consummation of time. "Go" said Christ to the Church "teach all nations teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." My dear brethren let us hold on to the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church because they are the teachings of Christ himself. He that heareth you hears Me and he that despiseth you despiseth Me. Let us follow faithfully and trustingly her guidance, which is as a pillar of fire to the people of God, leading them on through the darkness of life's journey, even to the promised land. Let us practice the virtues which she enforces, let us make use of the means of grace with which she so abundantly supplies us, and thus shall we befound true and faithful members of the church militant upon earth, and merit through the goodness of God, to be one day enrolled amongst the glorified members in the church triumphant in Heaven. Amen.