

# Northwest Review.

"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

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## PEACE RIVER MISSIONS.

**Roman Catholics Have Befriended Many a Weary Wanderer—Reply to Charges Made by a Smoky River Correspondent.**

The Free Press has received the following letter addressed to Father Lacombe and received by the well known missionary just previous to his departure from Edmonton with the half-breed and Indian commissioners:

South Edmonton, March 27th, 1899.

Rev. Father Lacombe, O.M.I.,  
Calgary, Alberta:

Rev. Sir,—I am taking the liberty of writing you regarding a letter published in the Free Press by a correspondent who signs himself W. C. S., and to which you have very rightly replied, in which this individual attacks the good missionaries of "Smoky" or properly Peace River district. I regret I have not had the privilege of perusing this copy of the Free Press in which this letter of W. C. S. appeared, so I am replying on the basis of quotations which you make from his letter. In the first place I want to say that I am not a Roman Catholic, nor a member of the English Church (as these are the only two Christian bodies having missionaries on the Peace river west of Smoky river), but I am a Presbyterian and as such have always been educated to be tolerant, and to demand fairness for those of other Christian bodies.

During last year I formed one of the many gold prospectors who left Edmonton in quest of riches, and my route lay via Slave lake and Peace river, and like many others I had occasion to meet the Roman Catholic fathers and brothers of those two missions, and I can truthfully say that, irrespective of any one's religion, we were treated kindly and every information given us of the country, they never tiring to answer, as best they could, the many questions asked them by hundreds of people who were anxious to get all the information possible about this (to them) new country.

At Slave Lake his lordship the bishop, who had travelled those almost unknown lands for many years, and who had grown old in the service of the church and in the interest of the poor Indian, was to everyone as gracious and kind as if he were living in comfort in the east in his palace. The brothers also of the above mission sold us hay and feed for our horses, although at the time they were running the risk of depriving their own stock of fodder sufficient for the winter, and had it not been for this very hay, which we got from the mission, many of us would have had to turn back to Edmonton, as we could not procure feed for our stock from any other source. At Peace River the good father gave to every one who came along permission to use the corals of the mission, and all the straw we wanted free. They even divided amongst us any milk which they had daily more than the requirements of the house, without any charge; also tendered us their outbuildings to store our goods in, and although the "father" in charge did not require the horses, he actually gave food to some peo-

ple, who could do without horses, but had to have provisions in exchange.

I could name up into the hundreds people who were benefitted by the kindness of the mission fathers and brothers, and really I do not know how many of us would have got along without the assistance of these kind people. Personally I will never forget their goodness in providing my partner and myself with food on our return from Fort Nelson to Peace River, having gone without food for two days previous to reaching the mission on our return, and also having to subsist on moose meat and a small amount of flour for 30 days previous.

I can get several good people now in Edmonton to confirm what I have written and add a great deal more in favor of the good people of the Roman Catholic mission at Peace River. I really do not know what the Indians and half-breeds would do without the assistance of the several missions in this lonely country. As regards the mill at the mission, it is really a blessing to everyone living in that region. When I was there I noticed a Protestant taking away the threshing machine, and making use of it free of charge, and I could go on for a long time enumerating the many good turns that the rev. gentleman in charge of this mission grants to the people there irrespective of their religion. This individual, W. C. S., also attacks the clergyman in charge of the Anglican mission. How any man with a spark of manhood in him could criticize this poor clergyman, I fail to understand. I know of several who sympathized with this gentleman in his poor circumstances, and I really cannot understand why the wealthy people of the latter church do not help this hard-working good man to be a little more comfortable at least in his lonely work.

W. C. S. speaks about the distrust which the Indians have for the white man, and blames innocent people of course for this, but I can tell him a different story. The cause of distrust came about when men from an alien country went into the Peace River district and shot down the poor Indians' horses and also stole many horses and took them away for their own use. I can prove this by Mr. Gunn, the Hudson's Bay factor at St. John's, last spring, and other respectable people. No doubt W. C. S. belongs to the class of people, who were the sole cause of the Indians' distrust. I met quite a few people like W. C. S. when travelling in this north country last year, who never ceased cursing the country, the people and the government, and found fault with everybody and everything they met. I would advise this unfortunate individual to read Lord Somerset's book on travelling in Slave Lake and Peace River district, and he will find how different his impressions are to what this English gentleman had to write about the Roman Catholic and English missions on Peace River, also about the confidence he had in the Indians

and half-breeds of the above locality. W. J. CLUFF.  
South Edmonton, March 27.

### ROMAN EVENTS.

(From the London Catholic Times correspondent.)

#### THE VATICAN AND THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

The only persons here who take serious interest in the Peace Conference are the Holy Father and those immediately around him. His Holiness has from the first been anxious to aid the object in view as far as lies in his power. Of course he could not fail to see that the meeting has been used by Italy as a means for trying to slight him, and on that account Mgr. Tarnassi got orders to leave the Hague; but the fact is quite apparent to his Holiness that none of the leading Governments were anxious that the greatest moral power in the world should be represented. The delegates have no authority to deal with questions of moral law and the rights of suffering peoples. Their commission is to indulge in some empty rhetoric, whilst the Cabinets for whom they profess to speak are hatching plots for the dismemberment of weaker nations and the hoodwinking of one another. So far as the public here are concerned this is fully recognised, and the general feeling with regard to the Conference is one of the utmost indifference. But the Holy Father looks upon the proceeding in as favorable a light as possible, and hopes even against hope that some good may come from the meeting of the diplomatists.

#### THE HOLY YEAR.

The proclamation of the Holy Year has led to a marked increase of devotion in the Eternal City. Already the numbers visiting the three prescribed churches are far larger than usual. St. John Lateran's is the Cathedral of Rome. Its greatest treasure is the Holy Table of the Last Supper. This relic is kept above the altar of the Blessed Sacrament. It is exposed on Holy Thursday and December the 21st, the Feast of St. Thomas. In St. John Lateran are the heads of SS. Peter and Paul and a number of other remarkable relics, including a wooden altar on which St. Peter is said to have celebrated Mass. This relic is exposed on November 9th, the feast of the dedication. The basilica of St. Mary Major, at which jubilee visits are also prescribed, is dedicated to "Our Lady of the Snow." There is an ancient tradition to the effect that the position in which the church was erected was specially indicated by a shower of snow, which only fell on that spot. The church contains a portion of Our Lord's Crib called "The Great Relic." The body of St. Mathias rests here, and here likewise are the remains of Pope St. Pius V. In the Lady-chapel, also called "the Borghese," because it was built by the Princely family of that name, is a picture of Our Lady, supposed to have been painted by St. Luke.

#### THE CHURCH IN CHINA.

The news of the publication of a decree by the Emperor of China granting to the Catholic clergy of that country equal rights with the natives has been received at the Vatican with considerable satisfaction. That the concessions in the present state of affairs do not mean any

very important change is admitted. The Chinese authorities, even if they had the will, can scarcely do much to ensure an effective protectorate. But all the same the influence of the decree must count for something in the social work of the Catholic clergy. The natives still look with reverence to the Emperor and the Queen-Dowager, and they will show in their conduct a friendliness of disposition which has hitherto in too many instances been wanting. At the same time the action of the French Ambassador at Peking has raised suspicions against the other Powers closely interested in Chinese affairs, and I understand that it has been intimated on the part of Germany at least, that the German Catholics in China are to look for protection to their own Emperor. No doubt the Vatican will take care that everything possible shall be done to bring about a *modus vivendi*.

#### THE CASE OF PROFESSOR SCHELL.

The placing of Professor Schell's recent work on the Index led to controversies which are still engaging some attention at Rome. The Professor recently appeared before Mgr. Lorenzelli at Monaco, and in the course of a conversation with the prelate stated that he desired to see the special passages in his works to which exception had been taken. I understand that these passages have been marked and brought to his notice, and it is well to say that they concern not only mere questions of social or political progress but fundamental doctrines of the Church, such as the Professor's speculations with regard to God, the Trinity, mortal sin, and the pains of hell.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF ARCHBISHOP IRELAND.

The visit of Archbishop Ireland has evidently had a remarkable influence upon Catholic life upon the Continent. One of the Italian papers seems both surprised and delighted at the frankness and boldness with which in his address at St. Clotilde's, Paris, he called upon the French Catholics, clerical and lay, to be up and doing. It dwells upon his words, "Let them not be ashamed to be soldiers of Jesus Christ," and says: "It would be a good thing if the Archbishop repeated this beautiful discourse everywhere he goes, because there is need for the application of his words not only in Paris, but in every land. Public indifference to religion is the bane of our times."

#### THE SPREAD OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER.

(Extract from the Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart.)

Let us bravely face the problem. Of the 250 millions of Catholics, who ought to be our first care, more than one third are necessarily excluded by infancy, mental or physical weakness and decrepitude, from active participation in the Apostleship of Prayer. This leaves about 160 millions that might be enrolled in our holy League. Thus, our first duty should be to multiply our members by eight. If each Associate could enroll seven new members, a great advance of Christ's kingdom would be

ensured. Then, as Catholics form about one-sixth of the entire population of the globe, if they were all fervent, the conversion of the remaining five-sixths would be far from impossible. As it is at present, what most retards the conversion of non-Catholics is the bad example of Catholics. But, if all our Associates were to pray with redoubled fervour, that obstacle would, to a great extent, disappear.

To those matter-of-fact people who look upon this project as a wild dream we would say: Every time you say the Lord's prayer and repeat those words He Himself taught us, "Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven," you indulge in a dream as wild as was that of the faithful Hebrews of the Old Testament, when they prayed for the advent of the Redeemer. Never did that dream seem wilder than when Christ Jesus hung between two thieves on Mount Calvary, and yet fifty years later the Gospel had penetrated to the ends of the earth. The signs of the times are much more hopeful now than then. True, there is much indifference, much practical atheism; but there is also much real earnestness, much dispelling of prejudice, much turning to God with deepest yearning.

Pessimism never was right. "As sight goes for nothing in the world of faith, in nothing does it go for less than in the seeming evil of the world. Everywhere evil is undermined by good. It is only that good is undermost; and this is one of the supernatural conditions of God's presence. As much evil as we see, so much good or more, we do know assuredly lies under it, which, if not equal to the evil in extent, is far greater in weight, and power, and worth, and substance. Evil makes more show, and thus has a look of victory; while good is daily outwitting evil by simulating defeat. We must never think of the Church without allowing largely for the extent of obscure piety, the sphere of hidden souls. We can form no intellectual judgment of the abundance of grace, of the number of the saved, or of the inward beauty of individual souls, which judgment even intellectually is worth anything, unless we form our estimate in the light of prayer. Charity is the truest truth, and the judgments of charity are large..... Faith has a sort of vision of its own; but there is no light in which it can distinguish objects, except the light of prayer." (Father, Bethlehem, p. 189.)

Why should not Zachariah's prophetic vision begin to be realized soon? "I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers; and they shall look upon Me, Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son, and they shall grieve over Him as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born..... In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner." (Zach. xii, 10; xiii, 1.)

Rev. Father Blain, S. J., preached on Devotion to the Sacred Heart last Friday in the chapel of the Grey Nuns' Mother House.