

"In Mr. James A. McMaster," said the *New York Star*, "the Catholic church has lost its foremost American lay writer. Since the death of Orestes A. Brownson there has been no Catholic editor to claim the palm in controversy over the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*. The incisiveness of his style and the force of his invective rarely swerved him from a straight line of logical thought. It will be hard to fill his place in the ranks of the lay defenders of the faith to which, with the characteristic ardor of a convert, he devoted his whole energies during forty years."

Such are the praises bestowed by Catholics as well as by Protestants upon McMaster as a Catholic journalist. He was very worthy of them, for he was the pioneer in the fight for Catholic schools and Christian education, a defender of religious liberty under all circumstances, an unshaken supporter of papal infallibility and the temporal independence of the Pope, the opponent of know-nothingism and bigotry, the upholder of liberty of the country, a friend of every movement for the true benefit of society.

Bishop Salford has said:

"We are now in the age of the apostolate of the press. It can penetrate where no Catholic can enter. It can do its work as surely for God as for the devil. It is an instrument in our hands.

"All should take part in this apostolate. For ten who can write, ten thousand can subscribe, and a hundred thousand can scatter the seed. We need writers, a multitude of subscribers, and a numberless body of men and women sowing and scattering the truth wherever English is read and spoken. This means zeal, time, labor, and, we may add, humility; for the work has not apparent dignity of debates on public questions and passing resolutions, though it will be as certain of its spiritual results."

For this reason also Leo XIII says concerning the Catholic press, in his apostolic letter to the Austrian archbishops and bishops, 3rd of March, 1891:

"Concerning the faithful, who are exposed to so many perils and snares, it would be of the greatest interest to search out varied methods of coming to their aid; sermons and catechisms upon sacred subjects, appropriate to the men, to the ages, to the places; pious and divers confraternities of the laity, approved and recommended by the church; absolute observation and respect of feast days; also establishments to preserve the faithful, the young above all, from perversity and corruption, and to increase the very salutary frequenting of the sacraments; lastly, books, journals, and other publications to

labor for the defence of the faith and the safeguarding of morals.

"In this matter, it imports well to recommend to the bishops what we have had a long while at heart, and what we shall insist upon frequently, namely, that the labor of Catholic writers, well regulated and well ordered, be encouraged and developed.

"Certainly, those excellent writings, whether daily or periodical, should be recognized in all countries as being of great utility to religious and civil interests. They repulse the attacks of adversaries who seek to import an inure contagion. But in the Austrian Empire an extreme utility should be attributed to them. A crowd of journals are there, in fact, in the service of the enemies of the church, who propagate them most easily and in the greatest numbers. It is then absolutely necessary, in order to fight with equal arms, to oppose writers to writers; they should be able to repulse attacks, to uncover the perfidious, to pierce the contagion of errors, and to win men to duty and virtue.

"This is why it would be well and salutary for each country to possess its particular journals, that should be the champions of the altar and the fireside, conducted in accordance with the judgment of the bishops, with whom they should study to walk in just and wise harmony; the clergy should favor them by their benevolence and all true Catholics should hold them in high esteem and consequently aid them with all their forces and resources."

If Catholics will not thorough Catholic papers they will take periodicals that are not Catholic. To have even one good paper through which we can give expression to our thoughts is a great blessing and a great gain, but that certainly does not enable us to give our voice that weight in the questions of the day to which it is entitled. A great deal has of late years been accomplished for the establishment of Catholic journals, and much good has been effected by them. But far more might have been achieved had the Catholic press received a generous support both from the clergy and laity. It is so easy for the clergy to give this support by encouraging the faithful in general, but especially the members of so many excellent Catholic associations, to subscribe to Catholic periodicals. One word from the priest on the usefulness of having a good Catholic paper and magazine in the family will have a hundred weight more influence to secure subscribers than the lengthiest appeal from the editor. The stronger the Catholic press becomes, the more the attention of the nation is called