25, 1904.

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THE ONE TRUE WITNESS. WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN. Rev. E. A. Higgins, S. J.

of our belief. Why am I? Christian? I answer briefly, for the very same reasons which produced conviction and, begot faith in the souls of those who heard the preaching of Jesus, saw His life, witnessed His works, beheld Him put to death on Calvary and rejoiced with the astonished disciples in the triumph of the risen Saviour. I am a Christian for the same reason as Paul and Stephen; or, I am a Christian for the same reasons that induced the five thousand to embrace the Christian Faith on the day of Pentecost, converted by the preaching of Peter, who appealed to the death and resurrection of Jesus in their own city.

Like all sovereign powers in the world—our own government for instance—she accredits herself. Men have but to look at her. See what she has done, to recognize her divine origin. This is the witness that infidelity must deal with; and all its puerile talk about the myths and fables of the Gospel is beside the issue. The Church belougs to the Period of history, not of myths, and any one who cannot trace the history of the Church back to Pentecost and the Resurrection, to Calvary and Nazareth and Bethlehem, must be wilfully blind.

This is the position which Catholics assume on the question of competent I answer briefly, for the very same rea-sons which produced conviction and, begot faith in the souls of those who Peter, who appealed to the death and resurrection of Jesus in their own city. What made them all Christians? What did they believe Christ to be? "The Son of the living God:" "The way, the Truth and the Life." "The way, the Truth and the Life." "The way, the Bruth and the Life." In other words they became disciples of Christ and of His apostles, because they believed that Christ, the Author and Finisher of the Christian faith, was God. On what Christian faith, was God. On what evidence did they believe His divinity? On the evidence of His words and His works, of His Life and Death and Resur-rection, of which they were themselves

rection, of which they were themselves eye witnesses, or which they learnt from trustworthy witnesses. Now we are Christian: for precisely the same reasons. We believe that Christ is the Son of God, that He is true God as well as true man, that He is literally God Incarnate, and that the religion He founded must be the one, only true religion, and the Church He established must be a divine institution. On what grounds do we believe in the divinity of Christ? We are convinced of it by the character of His words and works, by the facts of His Birth, Life, Teaching, Death and Resur-rection. True, we are farther removed from the eye witnesses, of Christ's earthly career than were the first Chris-tians, the converts of the apostles. We are farther off in time, but the light of evidence is no weaker for us than it was for them. True, we are not ourselves eye witnesses of the facts, but we have them from the witnesses whom Christ left in the world to give testimony of Him. Who are these witnesses? They are the Church and the Gospels, or, to speak more correctly, there is but one sufficient witness, that is the Church who has in her possession the precious treasurer of the Gospels. The one competent and sufficient witness

This Church was complete in every part and fully equipped for her work, and was successfully accomplishing her mission before one word of the New Testament was written. She was therefore in no wise dependent for her existence or her jurisdiction on the written gospels. On the contrary, the gospels were to derive from her testimony all their authority as the inspired word of God. For this reason St. Augustine exclaimed: "I would not receive the Gospels except on the word of the Catholic Church." Not from the Those records or memoirs were only the written expression of truth, fully known to her and freely preached by her since the day of Pentecost. She welcomed them and cherished them as a most precious treasure, and reverenced them as the inspired word of God, intended to be a powerful aid in spreading the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ in the hearts of men. by an impossible supposition, the Gospels had never been written, the Church would have been the same divine institution as now, built on a rock, which the gates of hell should assail in vain. In other words, the mission of Christ, the power to teach, to legislate, to administer the sacraments, to bear the tidings of redemption to mankind, was given to the Church and not to a book, and the promise of a divine and permanent assistance in bearing witness to Jesus Christ and making Him known, was given to the Church, not to any collec-New Testament records, and to pick flaws in the simple narrative of the evangelists! How can their carping criticism affect the question of Christ's fiction. To call the Gospel a myth on the ground that all supernatural religions competent and sufficient witness to the divinity of Christ, to His life, But the Gospel is something more to petent witness. She is Christ's own handiwork and she displays His attributes in her own life and career. She fills the world with her presence. No man who pretends to be even half

educated can ignore her presence and her history. She is not of to-day or

was forced to come to terms with her. Here, then, is the witness that infidelity must dispose of before it can shake our belief in the reality of Christ's divinity. True, she bears in her hands the Gospel records, and she vouches for their truth and accuracy. She herself stands in need of no voucher. She needs no certificate or letters patent to accredit her. Her Gospels give her not one jot or tittle of authority: they only record her institution and her commission. She needs no authority beyond what she received from Christ. The lecturer resumed the subject begun the preceding Sunday, namely, the evidences of Christianity. The infidelity, which we encounter on every side, said the speaker, challenges our faith and forces us, for our own sake as well as for the sake of fair minded inquirers, to review and understand the reasons of our belief. Why am I P. Christian? I answer briefly, for the very same readure.

we are willing for argument's sake to regard them merely in the light of history, and examine their accuracy and truthfulness as we would consider the trustworthiness of any other his-torical document. As the accusations of the Jews against Jesus were not consistent, so the attack of infidels on the Gospels are contradictory and they might be left to refute one another.

The latest school of infidelity pro The latest school of infidelity professes to see in the Gospel only a myth or fable, useful perhaps to those who can read the enigma. This theory is the most childish and groundless of all the speculations that skepticism has ventured to put forth. Was the age of Augustus and of Tiberius an age of myths? Were Herod and Pilate, Anagas and Caiphas mythical personage? nas and Caiphas, mythical personages?
Are not the rise of the Christian society, the Church and its rapid spread and its first persecution under Nero, historical facts? Listen to Niebuhr, the German historian, a man of some authority in questions of history: "Whoever does not hold Christ's earthly life with all its miracles, to be strictly historical, does not know what history is.'

Are the Gospels, then, and tory? and are they truthful? What is meant by authentic? Let us define what is meant by authentic. A work is said to be authentic. A work is said to be authentic. A work is said to be authentic when it belongs to the author whose name it bears. How can the authenticity of any work be proved? Chiefly by the testimony of proved? Chiefly by the testimony of the proved in the proved Are the Gospels, then, authentic his-The one competent and sufficient witness of all that Christ was and all that He did, is the Church. She was instituted to be His witness and bear His name before all nations. He made her the pillar and ground of truth. Christ put into her care the whole deposit of divine revelation, of which she was to be the guardian and the interpreter. He made her a living organic body, whose very life and soul was to be the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, dwelling in her to teach her all truth and preserve her from every error. tion who bear witness to the belief and tradition of this age, and prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Gospels were known in the first century and were universally believed to be the

were universally believed to be the work of the four evangelists.

Here the lecturer traced the history of the Gospels back from Eusebius in the fourth century, through Origen, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Papias, Polycarp, Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Rome, and Barnabas, all of whom in their works, or the fragments of their works etill extant mention the Gospels works still extant, mention the Gospels written Gospels except on the work of the Catcholic Church." Not from the written Gospel, but from the mouth of Christ did the Church receive her mission, her power, her jurisdiction, her sacraments. When the gospels were written they were no novelties to the of evidence, every link perfect, which written they were no novelties to the of evidence, every link perfect, which Church. All that they contained was already in her intellect and in her Even the Infidel Renan admits that the four Gospels are authentic and belong to the first century. Then the lecturer adduced the evidence of their truthfulness and sincerity. The evargelists were competent witnesses, well informed and deeply concerned to know the facts they undertook to relate. As to their sincerity, transparent candor, artless and direct simplicity, and their own profound convictions, what narrative can compare with the Gospel? What can compare with the Gospel? What work of literature is equal to it, or like it? It is perfectly unique, and every statement is signed with the red seal of a martyr's blood. This point the speaker developed and illustrated in a most convincing way. There is no fact of history, he said, which rests on stronger evidence than the authorship and the reliability of the Gospels. No historical work that we possess, such as Caesar's Commentaries or the Annals of Tacitus, can offer half the evidence of veracity that the Gospels offer.

given to the Church, not to any collection of writings. How futile then for infidels to quibble about the dates of New Testament records, and to pick flaws in the simple narrative of the know the difference between fact and

the divinity of Christ, to His life, teaching, death and resurrection, to His words and to His works. This witness is the Church which He founded to be His witness and to continue His work. She is a living witness, a permanent witness, a competent witness. She is Christ's own petent witness. She is Christ's own handiwork and she displays His arbitraging the most precious priceless blessing, the most precious portion of the sacred deposit of revelation com-

mitted to her care.

In the pages of that record we shall study the character of the Saviour and learn from His Words and Works the her history. She is not of to-day or yesterday. She has been the great rower in the world since before Constantine. The Roman Empire in its proudest days had to take account of her, and after ten bloody persecutions

Queen of Heaven, pray for us.

It was morning in fertile Gallilee. White clouds of mist, filmy as angels' robes, floated upwards from every streamlet and rill, that sung its matin song twixt Jordan and the sea; wrapping a snowy fleece about every twig and blush, and leaf and blossom in all the fruitful land of Zebulon. Tabor and Mermon, Gilboa and the lesser hills were like green islands in the mystic ocean—whilst Carmel far over in the west, litted his rugged head prophet-wise towards Heaven as the prophet-wise towards Heaven as tho' perpetuating forever the prayer of Elias, the Thesbite: Hear me, O Lord God, hear me! that this people may learn that thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart

As the first sun spears shot upwards behind the eastern mountains, to fall in reflected sheafs of rose-hued splendor on the cloud-like world of mist—a tair, young girl issued from an humble house that chung, like a bird's nest, to the steep sides of a hill, in the despised city of Nazareth-to stand with clasped hands and meditative eyes, reveling in the mystic beauty of the morning.

How lovely it was !- as tho' beneath ing to her feet in graceful for the whiteness there was not sin and horror in the souls of men, and hate and anger in their hearts! How glorious was this rugged Galilee, robed in its wondrous, biessed raiment of Mist that was ever a mystic benison to the country of Judah! Glorious and beautiful; as if, in chosen israel, faith was not an outlived thing, and the Lord of Hosts once more forgotten by His under the souls are the souls ar Hosts once more forgotten by His ungrateful people!
"Israel, O Israel! Ungrateful,

faithless Israel! thou hast worn out the patience of God and thy inheritance shall pass from thee forever! The Gentile and the stranger shall be gathered together from the uttermost bounds of the earth, and they shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God—and thou, O faithiess one! shalt be east out forevermore, forevermore." Thus refrained the old prophecies in the mind of the Girl as she stood among the lilies of the garden and awaited the rising of the sun; her yearning eyes turned towards Jerusulem, the Golden. Her heart longed for the courts of the Temple and her soul exalted itself in unspeakable yearning for the Promised One of Israel. How like the departed Shekinah of the Temple was this wondrous white vapor covering all the ounds of the earth, and they shall sit drous white vapor covering all the land—as tho' God's presence filled it as of yore. It filled the Holy of Holies when He visited the people! She sighed, remembering the glories of ancient days and the marvels wrought for her nation; sighed that once more

"O that this tarrying Redeemer would come and save His people!—His proud and obstinate people that ever needed the rod of His justice to make them bend their stubborn necks under

the yoke of His discipline.

"How long, O Lord, how long before Thou dost come to save, yet once again, Thy faithless Israel?" Such perhaps, was the yearning cry of Mary's heart as the sun began to rise majestically, gloriously, behind the humble crown of Tabor, and flooded the land of Galilee with a splendor of radiance that must have dazzled the world.

In mental vision she sees its rays strike athwart the Eastern facade of the Temple, making it gleam and glow. the yoke of His discipline.

the Temple, making it gleam and glow, like another sun as its beams touch the like another sun as its beams touch the flashing gold of that glorious building; and then in imagination, she hears the sacrifical trumpets shake out their silver melody—again, she listens to the musical tinkle of the golden pomegranate bells, fringing the High Priest's garments, as he moves towards the Altar of Sacrifice. Then with all Israel, she extends her arms, lifts supplicating eyes towards Heaven and utters the Kaddisch or universal prayer for the coming of the Messias: "May

thers the Maddisch of universal prayer for the coming of the Messias: "May Thy Kingdom come!" Israel tho' proud and faithless, pre-served the old customs; and now, that Rome had set her iron heel on Judah's humbled neck, that imploring petition went up more insistently than ever: "May Messias come! May His king-

dom reign!"
"Ah, yes; may that Conqueror come
who will set them above all the world who will set them above all the world—
in national greatness—and lay in the
dust these pagan Romans who treat
them so contemptuously and oppress
them so cruelly. Let King Messias
come clad in splendid raiment and
hedged about with all the panoply of
earthly pomp and power—that these
Gentile dogs may grovel at the spurning feet of victorious Israel!"
But such was not the tone of Mary's
prayer as she stood among the tall white

prayer as she stood among the tall white lilies of her humble home garden, with arms outspread and pleading eyes uplifted to the Throne of Grace. Ah, no! Her Temple education had not exalted her humble spirit nor blinded her capititus agrees at the the prophesied alted her humble spirit nor blinded her spiritual sense as to the prophesied mission of the world's Redeemer. She had meditated daily upon the Prophecies; her great natural, intellectual gifts aided by the wondrous infused light of her sinless soul, making it as clear as daylight that the Messias would be a spiritual King, come to reign over souls and not over empires. The one thought of her heart—that dear heart to be for ever filled with "kept" thoughts!— was upon that lowly King, whose advent days were not accomplished, and upon that Blessed Virgin who was to be His chosen Mother. Her heart yearned over the wondrous

Her heart yearned over the wondrous woman selected by the All Holy from among all of Eve's daughters for the aw-ful mission of being the Mother of the Redeemer of mankind—the Mother of God! Awful thought! The humble soul of the Girl well nigh swooned at reasons why we are Christians. This shall be the subject of the next lecture.

THE ANNUNCIATION—A MEDITA- this sweet woman that Scripture had pictured in such tender beauty: to this sweet woman that Scripture had pictured in such tender beauty; to know her and to love her! Love her? Sne would kneel at her feet, thinking it the greatest honor just to kiss them—the feet which would crush Satan's power forevermore; the stainless feet for whose gentle tread a waiting world had been listentening four thousand years. Ave. she would be content to

years. Aye, she would be content to kiss the ground hallowed by the touch of holiness so great.

The silvery mists floating upwards, the splendor of the sunrise, reminds her of that glorious woman of whom the prophets wang. It have as the more Prophets sung: "Fair as the morning, bright as the sun is She." Mary's soul, silent in the ecstacy of the thoughts which filled it, wrapped in the yast humility of her heart, never for a moment dreams that she, herself, is that "blessed one," selected by the All Wise, the Omniscient, the All Holy All Wise, the Omniscient, the All Holy God to be the earthly mother of Him-self. Mater mea! Mother dear! How passing sweet and fair thou must have

sees that a a giance, without realizing other kind she permits and in whatsoit—the strange words and the wondrous figure have disturbed her. Whatdid it mean? Was she dreaming still? No, surely not. There was Tabor, over in must confine ourselves to one full meal ourselves to one full meal must confine ourselves to one full meal. her green garments southward. No, 16
was no dream. But who is this shining Visitant? and what mean these
wondrous words: "Hail, full of Grace!
The Lord is with thee."

human soul tremble—a lear that was prayer as well as terror. . . . But, again, that voice of mingled majesty and sweetness falls upon her ears, soothingly, reassuringly, filling her heart and soul with a new and wondrous peace: "Fear not, Mary," it said, "for thou hast found grace with God. And behold! thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call.

surpassing, enrapturing joy of it!
Messias, for Whom she had longed and
prayed all her years! Messias, the
Redeemer, for whom a lost world had
waited forty centuries. And she. She
was to be His Mother? Her amazed humility ponders over this wondrous thought; and then a sudden remembrance of a solemn vow comes to her — a vow not uncommon to the consecrated almas of the temple services. vice. She turns to the angel and asks her simple, direct question, which

the Holy, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." No more questioning from the humble heart of Mary: It was God's will unto me according to His word!" Such was the characteristic reply of her who had been His handmaiden from infancy : nad been His nandmatted from maney serving in the Temple as did the youthful Samuel, in meekness and simplicity, ever ready to say: "Behold Thy servant." And then the Lord called her forth to be His own spotless temple the one sinless, resting place, which the myriad upon myraid of creatures whom He had created, could afford Him

during His earthly life.
"And the Angel departed from her." So runs the mysteriously simple Gospel narrative. But Messias had come! The Promised One of Israel, the De-The Promised One of Israel, the Detired of Nations, the Redeemer of Mankind had come!" "He was in the world; and the world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not." But Mary knew; Mary, who was His mother—Mary, who stood among the lilies, the fairest lily of them all.—Katherine F. Mullany in St. John's Constrolly. Quarterly.

A Sunshiny Disposition.

There is a charm which compensates o much for the lack of good looks that they are never missed, and, when com-bined with good looks, it doubly enhances them. The name of this charm is a sunshiny disposition. If things go wrong, as they will go once in a while, does it mend matters to cry over them? Sensible women will say no, but women who do not know how to control themselves will say: "Yes, it does me good to cry; I feel better atter it."
There are times when tears must come, but these are beautiful, holy tears. Quite the contrary are the tears shed over selfish petty annoyances "to re-lieve nerves." The grandest quality of the human mind is self-control. Why? Because it is the mastery of the soul's divine nature over the body's be called upon to bear. How holy she must be! How pure! how beautiful! how every way lovely! Ah, to know

nothing but

THE SECOND PRECEPT.

By the second precept of the Church we are required to abstain from the use of flesh meat on all prescribed days of fasting and abstinence, and on the days of fasting to eat but one full meal. The law, while exacting, is one concerning which confusion sometimes exists as to its precise requirements. It is also one, we fear, concerning which many of the laity rely too largely upon the an-nouncements from the pulpits for a knowledge of the occasions calling for its enforcement.

This is not as it should be. It is any-

passing sweet and fair thou must have been to have satisfied, in thy complete loveliness of soul and body, Him Who is the Ali Perfect I Passing sweet and fair, indeed; passing fair and sweet.

Framed in the delicate greenery of Spring, her robe of hyacinth blue, talling to her feet in graceful folds, her slender, girlish figure girdled with the spotless white cincture of the Temple is but recently returned — she was, truly, a woman full of grace.

A flash of light, rivaling the sunbeams, shone about her with such dazzling splendor that her entranced spirit

boams, shone about her with such dazzling splendor that her entranced spirit is recalled to itself by the brightness thereof, even before a voice of music, surpassing the biended harmonies of lutes and lyres, falls upon her ears, and these strange words smite her wondering senses: "Hail, full of Grace! The Lord is with thee."

Amazed, startled, bewildered, she turns to behold a glorious vision of manly beauty, and yet—no man! Ste sees that a a glance, without realizing a day with a small colation. This is the distinction.

Before proceeding to a consideration

of the law in particular a few words on the antiquity of fasting and its purpose might be considered quite opportune. As to its antiquity. That may be traceable back to the Garden of Eden The Lord is with thee."

A great fear falls upon her—for the nearness of God's Presence makes every human soul tremble—a fear that was prayer as well as terror. . . But, again, that voice of mingled majesty and sweetness falls upon her ears. ness our Saviour Himself setting us the

example.

Next as to the purpose of fasting. heart and soul with a new and wondrous peace: "Fear not, Mary," it said, "for thou hast found grace with God. And beheld! thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great among men and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of David, his father: and he shall reign in the his father; and he shall reign in the House of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end."

ways more solicitous for us than we are for ourselves has prescribed certain times throughout the year when we are Kingdom there shall be no end."

It was Messias then—the Long Desired of Israel! Oh, the joy of it, the meritorious aid to salvation.—Church Progress.

Patience is bitter, but its fruit is

BANISH THE WRINKLES.

IN MANY CASES THEY ARE MERELY SIGNS

A woman's face plainly indicates the state of her health. Wrinkles, which yvery woman dreads, are not record sks her simple, direct question, which asks her simple, direct question, which Gabriel answered to the satisfaction of every one—but the most carnal minded—that the Virgin Mother of Christ was Immaculate in her purity, and remained so. "The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee—and therefore, the Holy, which shall be hope of thee." often suffers in uncomplaining silence, rather than consult a doctor. In this condition Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are women's best friend. They actually make new, rich, red blood, and this blood acting upon the nerves and all and despondent women. Mrs. John McKerr, Chickney, N. W. T., tells for the benefit of other suffering women how she found now health through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. "For some years," says Mrs. McKerr, "I was greatly afflicted with the aliments that make the lives of so many of my sex miserable. The suffering I endured can only be understood by those my sex miscrable. The suffering I can dured can only be understood by those who are similarly afflicted. I tried many medicines, but found that none that helped me until I began the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. These have actually made me feel like a new per son, and the suffering I had endured almost continuously has passed away, and life is no longer the burden it once seemed. I think these pills worth their weight in gold to all who suffer from female complaints or general pros-tration."

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sweetness! What perviousness to the e ideal; let women their lives by it, safe.—Archbishop