PROOF, PROOF!

Thomas A. Edison is quoted in the Truth Seeker, a free thought and agnostic newspaper: "The theories of the theologians cannot be proven. Proof, proof! that is what I have always been after; that is what my mind requires before it can accept a theory as a fact." Proceeding, Mr. Edison further declares that "all problems which perplex us now will, soon or late, be solved, and solved beyond a question through scientific investigation."

Now, it may be asked whether this last declaration discloses a fact, or merely propounds a theory. If only a theory, it does not differ in respect to positiveness of statement from that of the hoteest of theologians.

Do the problems which are to be solved through scientific investigation include that concerning the infinity, or otherwise, of space? If the promised solution be to the effect that space is really infinite, shall it be found that matter, likewise, is infinite, or, on the other hand, that vast areas of space are filled with nothingness.

Mr. Edison gives utterance to his convictions that his readers may become more enlightened and therefore more rational and truth-inspired beings. Some of his declarations in reference to the future may be accepted because of their evident reasonableness, just as many find reasons to accept the conclusions of expounders of theology. But some of his proclamations are so improbable that many will refuse to accept them, either as facts, or even as reasonable theories, without proof. Profoundly impressed with him as a man of genius and mechanical inventiveness and discovery, they will hardly pay him homage in the role of prophet or expounder of theology. It would be well, therefore, for Mr. Edison to confine his incomparable capabilities to the field wherein they have proved so fruitful, and to eschew one for which he is so lamentably unfitted.

It may be doubted if a single individual has been influenced in the least in his views concerning the problems which Mr. Edison essays to elucidate. The fact that several men of high standing, among whom may be mentioned Cardinal Gibbons, and Dr. William Hanna Thompson, have entered the arena to contute Mr. Edison's contentions, is probably due to their desire to defend the masses against the man's sophistry. On no other supposition is their serious consideration explicable.

Mr. Edison should be advised that no theologian has ever demanded the acceptance of his conclusions as palpable facts. He has, in all times, contented himself with proposing his deductions to the reason, the faith, of mankind as metaphysical propositions which should appeal to the rational consciousness of all.

The scientist is to be commended for stubbornly demanding demonstration of all things proposed as facts, pertaining to the physical order, but it is unreasonable to demand physical demonstration of a purely metaphysical proposition. It is a matter to marvel over that Mr. Edison should deem it worth his while thus to attempt to bedarkenthe minds and pervert the hearts of the people. It would be much better if he could be persuaded once more to devote his talents to the solution of material problems, in relation to which he is obviously a master mind. There is much significance in the homely injunction: "Shoemaker, stick to your last."—Intermountain Catholic.

THE BIGOTRY OF "NON-SECTARIANISM"

Certain American Protestants in the city of Mexico, proposing to establish there a young women's Christian Association, induced some Catholics of prominence to lend the weight of their names and influence to the project. The "non-sectarianism" of the Association was of course the bait held out to these Catholics. But the authorities of the Church forbade any participation by Catholics in the founding, under the pretence of "non-sectarianism," of what is as Protestant an institution as anyone can well conceive. This action gave occasion for an avalanche of letters in the Mexican Herald on the subject, and the "injustice" and "intolerance" of the local Catholic Church authorities and of the Catholic Church in general were freely condemned. The "non-sectarianism" of the Y. W. C. A. and of the Y. M. C. A. was, of course, insisted on again and again in most of those letters. Among the communications which appeared in the press was one whose temperate tone was in marked contrast to the acrimony of many of the champions of the Y. W. C. A. This was written by William H. Sloan, formerly a Baptist missionary to Mexico, but now for several years a convert to the Catholic Church. Mr. Sloan said in his letter:

The writer has been a member of a number of Y. M. C. A.'s. He has always found them to be anti-Catholic in character. The atmosphere that pervaded them was always Protestant. The discourses delivered on Sunday, if not Protestant in doctrine, have always been pervaded by the Protestant tone and Protestant lessons were the ones drawn from them. The directors of the Bible-classes are always Protestants, and use the Protestant Bible; the prayer-meetings are directed by Protestants, and the trend of thought in both the relation of "Christian experience" and the prayer utterances, are Protestant. The Bible is constantly referred to in all the religious gatherings, as the source of comfort, instruction and guidance. Personally, I would have no fault whatever to find with this prevailing Protestant tone, if it only were set forth in its true colors. The Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A. are both Protestant organizations, notwithstanding the occasional presence of a Catholic on their boards or in their membership, and they should unfurl boldly their Protestant flag, and let the world know just what banner they are fighting under.

The placing of a long list of names of excellent Catholic gentlemen as officers, or members of the organization proves nothing. There are various good reasons why the influence of such men should be sought, but the fact remains that they are not the executive force that directs the movements of the two organizations mentioned. The controlling power is vested in the president and secretaries, and these are always Protestants. No Catholic is allowed there. Back of them are the Protestant women (whose influence is by no means small) and the Protestant pastors and missionaries, all of whom are anti-Catholic. Protestant ministers and laymen address the assemblies almost constantly during the year, and Protestant women hold meetings on Sunday afternoons and at other times to help along a work of Protestant propaganda. It is useless to deny these facts. A series of discourses has been delivered during the year on "The Great Religions of the World," but it seems that no place was found for the greatest of religions: the Roman Catholic.

The Catholic Church in this city has a number of institutions that are helping young women. If the Y. W. C. A. people want something different on which to expend their efforts and money, let them have it. But let them not blame our good Archbishop if he prefers to maintain the standards of his Church. He has attacked nobody; he would not do that. But he is the divinely appointed human shepherd of a large flock of young people; he prefers to keep them within the fold that our Blessed Lord has marked out for them.

The true spirit of the "non-sectarianism" of the Y. W. C. A. proposed to be established for the good of the Catholic Young Women of Mexico came out in the letters written by partisans of the project. For example, the Rev. E. R. Brown, who is a Protestant minister in Mexico, declared that the reason for the Catholic opposition was that "a young woman who once tasted of the freedom of spirit and mind which is the inevitable atmosphere of the Y. W. C. A. could never be held under the thumb of priest or prelate, nor could be compelled to whisper her secrets to the confessor."

Such expressions as these let the cat out of the bag. They show better than long arguments the bigotry of "non-sectarianism."—Sacred Heart Review.

MISSION AT STRATFORD

From a Stratford paper, dated March 15, we take the following interesting account of a mission recently held in that city.

The closing exercises of the mission which was given during the past week at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, by Rev. Fathers McEloy and Reynolds of the Oblate Order, were held last Sunday evening. The Church was packed to the doors, every available space being utilized, but quite a number went away on account of not being able to get into the church. Rev. Father Reynolds delivered the sermon.

He based his remarks upon St. John in the Apocalypse, (II chapter, 10 verse:) "Be thou faithful until the end and I will give thee a crown of glory." In the book of the Apocalypse heaven is described as the city of Jerusalem, whose streets are of the purest gold, like running water; whose walls are of jasper stone and whose gates are as so many pearls. A great writer of the Catholic Church says that in the kingdom of heaven there are a million seats for which we have neither the name nor the idea. He tells us that Jesus Christ did not say much about the kingdom of heaven while He was on earth because we would have served God in order to gain the prize. Our Divine Lord, however, would rather we should serve Him for Himself and at the end receive this crown. If we want to come to these graces we must persevere, we must continue to be in the state of grace. The speaker then gave a few means of perseverance. Firstly, we must be men and women of the spirit of prayer, because Christ says: "Without Me you can do nothing." St. Thomas says that man who is in mortal sin does not need a devil to tempt him. In order to persevere we must call upon God in daily prayers, which we must use in order to have strength for the battle that is before us. Secondly, that we be faithful in attendance at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We are obliged to pray, but the most important prayer is the sacrifice of the Mass. When we have fallen into sin, let us, like the prodigal son, arise and go back to our father's house and make a humble confession.

Thirdly, the great devotion which the Catholic Church gives to the Blessed Virgin. The Catholic Church does not look upon the Blessed Virgin as a divine person. There is a great difference in the worship which we give to God and the honor we give to the Blessed Virgin. No person can give the Blessed Virgin more honor than did God Himself, when He chose her to be the mother of His divine Son. It is a tradition in the Catholic Church that a man who is devoted to the mother of Christ, would never be lost. The speaker said we should always turn to Mary in the time of crisis and sufferings and she will lead us safely into the haven of salvation. If we go to Mary as we would to our mother the crown of glory shall one day be ours and we will be able to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith," and Jesus Christ shall give you the crown of glory.

The sermon was followed by the Promulgation of the Law, and presented a most striking appearance. The pastor, Rev. D. J. Egan, stood at the altar in white robes, surrounded by the sanctuary boys with lighted candles. The members of the congregation also held a lighted candle in their right hands. Each of the ten commandments was read in turn by the pastor, and our duty by each explained by Father Reynolds. This was followed by the renewal of the baptismal vows, and the Papal benediction. The service closed with the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament by Very Rev. Dean McGee.

IN MISSION FIELDS

From America

The grotto of Lourdes is not the only sacred spot in the world where the frequency of miraculous cures recalls the wonders of the apostolic age, serving to the Christian at least as a reminder that the hand of the Lord is not shortened and that he is ever wonderful in His saints. The following impression of the exposition of the body of St. Francis Xavier, which closed recently in Goa, is well worth reproducing from the Times of India for our readers:

"A silver sarcophagus in a dimly lighted church with slanting rays of light from high windows picking out the gold ornamentation and here and there reflecting themselves in set gems, emerald, ruby, turquoise and topaz. A long line of people of every caste and creed, the well-dressed side by side with the rag-clad, moving in a gigantic sinuous file towards the shrine, devoutly, silently, passing around the glass paneled coffin, gazing with eyes of desire at the sleeping saint, some with curiosity, others with wonder, all with faith pulsating in every gesture, every glance. Not the shrine in its gorgeous gold and gems is the lodestone, they need it not, but the shrunken mummy-like figure of the man who three hundred and sixty years ago was hardly more than 'a voice crying in the wilderness,' and now in the grimness of death draws this multitude from the furthest parts of India. To them he is a healer, gifted with divine power, the mere touch of whose garment can make them whole, and as the sick, the maimed and the halt are held up to kiss his feet, eager hands hold up handkerchiefs, ribbons, rags and even pieces of bread to be sanctified by a touch.

"Here a native woman, clad in nun-like white draperies, lays her babe by the coffin, presenting the tiny wizened fingers against the glass in mute appeal to the dead to aid the living, a strange meeting of the life that was so many years ago and the life just at the dawn; there an old man tottering with palsy, upheld by the hands of a son or daughter, kisses with ecstasy the feet of the saint, lingering with looks of love and reverence, grasping to his breast the rag that has touched the dead body, until he is gently pushed along by the kindly priests to make room for others. Amongst the most eager is an old Brahmin leaning on his stick, who finding his own gods deaf to his prayers, or perchance asleep like Baal, comes to invoke the aid of the Apostle of the Great White God, a Deity who recognizes no limitation of creed or caste, but gives unsparingly His gifts to all alike, even to the sweeper woman who passes along with a brood of brown bare little children to get her share of the Guru's blessing. So pass the young and old, the strong and feeble, the sick and infirm, some with faces of ecstasy, some with bowed head and tears, all certain of answered appeals, before the dead who sees them not, hears them not, but sleeps on in immutable calm.

"Every quarter of an hour the big doors are flung open and a surging multitude enters amid a Babel of tongues and the vociferous cries of the order-keeping military officials; then the doors are closed again on the greater crowd without, awaiting their turn to enter, and all subsides into a buzzing as of a hive of bees, broken only by the wail of an infant and the crooning sound of the mother hushing it to sleep. One by one all are marshalled into a never-ending serpentine line, passing the bier at about twenty per minute, the priests with infinite patience, aiding the lame and infirm, lifting little ones up for the devotional kiss, bringing wee babes in their arms out of the crowd, placing the rare cloth on eyes, brow and mouth of each supplicant in sign of the Cross, touching the saint with innumerable rosaries, crucifixes and other mementoes held out by the faith-inspired devotees. As the twilight comes, deepening the mysterious gloom of the church, the bier lighted by flickering wax tapers in silver candelabra—symbols of the life around which burns out its short allotted time blown about by breaths of circumstances—the long line of shadowy figures kneeling or in procession, are the only points that catch the eye until the doors are closed and night adds silence to the silence of death, and one goes away realizing the simple faith and reverence that evoked the words 'Great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.'

"The final day ends with a pan of praise, a long procession of priests, seminarists and acolytes fills the church and the Patriarch entering in state kneels in prayer before the shrine in his robe and train of rose silk with a rose skull cap on the bearded dignified head, kneeling before the high altar with hands outstretched to the gorgeous symbolism and golden statue of St. Ignatius Loyola. He looks like a Pope or Doge of mediaeval days, the emblem of a faith that has ruled the world for nearly two thousand years.

"High Pontifical Mass with choirs chanting in alternation, followed by the locking up of the coffin with triple keys, and the crowd pours out into the sunshine amid the green glades and shimmering white churches, leaving nature to her sway over long deserted Goa and the Saint to his long, long vigil in the church of Bom Jesus."

Burning a Mortgage

We send our congratulations to Rev. Father Gnam, the respected parish priest of Ingersoll, on the fact that his church in that place is now free from debt. On the 17th March in St. John's Hall, there gathered a happy assemblage of the Catholic people, headed by the pastor. The most interesting event of the evening was the burning of the mortgage, which had for so long hung over the sacred edifice. Father Gnam handed the mortgage over the genial Sheriff Brady, for public execution, and Mrs. Murdock, a lady of ninety-seven years of age, scion of the best Catholic families of Scotland, applied the match. Father Gnam has reason to rejoice in the possession of a faithful and truly Catholic congregation, and the congregation may rejoice that they have in their midst a priest after God's own heart.

There is an optimistic view of life that helps us to joy. The world is not forever to lie under shadows. "Looking on the bright side" is a fine philosophy we all have a right to adopt. It is the only sane view of life. The ground for all true optimism is the prophetic vision of the Master, who saw satan fall as lightning from heaven, and the powers that reached him in his high place of spiritual wickedness were the faithful seventy who went forth to declare a better day through the redemptive quality of holiness. Truth will destroy sin and all wrongs will be righted. This is the heart of optimism. The sun never sets, but is forever rising.—Rev. L. A. Abbot.

DIED

GOLLOGLY.—At Wallaceburg, Ont., on Wednesday, March 15, 1911, Mrs. M. Gollogly. May her soul rest in peace!

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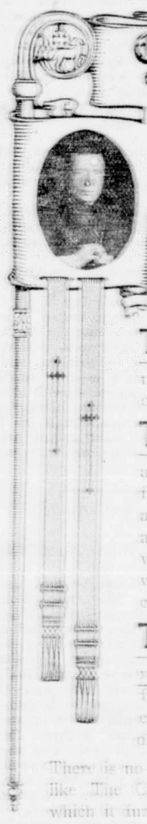

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