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TRACTS FOR THE MILLION.

THE BENEDICTION OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT; OR, WHAT CATHOLICS DO WHEN THE CANDLES ARE LIGHTED.

It is evening, and the church is full of people. Vespers are just over, but the congregation do not depart; on the contrary, they seem composing themselves more devoutly to prayer. Already many are on their knees, and all eyes are looking one way. Lights are breaking forth on the altar, amidst the flowers, like stars coming out in the heavens on a clear night. Soon it will be one blaze of splendor.

The Priest appears in his vestments with his attendants; he goes up to the altar; an increase of awe and happiness is visible on the countenances of the people; he opens the door of the tabernacle, and instantly sinks upon his knees; then rising, he descends the altar-steps, and again kneels, and bows himself almost to the ground. And see, upon the altar is a bright object, shining in gold and precious stones; the priest is reverently swinging the censers towards it, and the sweet clouds of incense rise, and envelop every thing around, and float into the body of the church. Meanwhile the organ is playing, and the people, as with one accord, are singing, and as they sing they keep their eyes intently fixed on the bright object before them. It would seem as if they could not pay it honor enough; for now the Priest has taken the holy thing, and solemnly placed it on high above the altar; and there it stands, like a king enthroned to receive the homage of his people.

But the music changes, and the notes become sweeter and more joyous; the people continue singing and praying, and seem to be addressing some one whom they love very much, and who they are sure is listening to them. And again, the music changes, and then follows a more subdued and solemn song. When this is finished, the Priest stands up, sings a prayer, and then a veil is put over his shoulders, and he ascends the altar-steps, and reaches up and takes the glittering object in his hands from amidst the candlesticks; and all is hushed, save the silvery sound of a little bell, and the people bow their heads, he holds up the holy thing, and makes with it the sign of the cross over the kneeling multitudes. Then there bursts forth a hymn of thanks and praise, and all is over.

Now what—who is this that has been the object of such fervent adoration? Why were the people so still, and why did they bow their heads, and what took place during that solemn silence?

My friend, you have been present at the Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. Jesus Christ Himself has been lifted up and set on high to be worshipped and adored; and during that solemn silence, when the sign of the cross was made over us, it was He that blessed us. We prayed that He would bless us, and He did. Benediction is but another name for blessing; and the Object on which every eye, and (we will hope) every heart was fixed, was the Most Holy Sacrament,—Jesus Himself present in His Most Holy Sacrament; Jesus under the form of bread. He was in the centre of that golden vessel, and to Him, not to it, our prayers and homage were directed. The lights, and the flowers, and the incense, and the vestments, and the music, and the singing, were all in His honor. It is true that we called upon the Blessed Virgin* to pray and intercede with her Divine Son, whom she beholds in His glory, while we see nothing but the sacramental signs; but He was the one object of our worship; we look to Him; we never took our eyes off Him; while we begged Him, by the love He bears His holy Mother, to cast a gracious eye upon us.

You will not say that what you saw was mere form and empty ceremony; there was something in it too much like reality for that. You will not say it was idolatry; you saw enough to feel that they who worshipped were worshippers in spirit and truth. Their very looks and postures, their very voices, showed that God was in their hearts, and almost, as if were, before their eyes. And, indeed, how can they be idolaters who believe that Christ is present, and therefore worship Him? But will you say, it is so hard to believe that Jesus Christ is really present? Surely not, if you believe that Jesus Christ is really God incarnate—God made man. If you believe that Jesus Christ is really God; that he was really God when He lay for nine months in Mary's womb, hidden from the world; or when He lay a helpless infant in Mary's lap; or when He was seized by the soldiers, and scourged, and crowned with thorns, and nailed to a cross, and was left to hang and to die thereon in agony; surely, I say, if you believe all

this—if you believe that God so humbled Himself as to become a little child, and be crucified as a malefactor,—it cannot be difficult to believe that He should so humble Himself as to take upon Himself the appearance of bread in the Most Holy Sacrament. Yes, take this fact of Christ's humiliation and dwell upon:—God becoming man; God a little child; God a boy of twelve years old, asking questions of the doctors in the Temple; God walking among men unknown; looking like other men, treated like other men; crucified, raised aloft upon a cross at the top of a hill, in the face of all the world; denied, despised, laughed to scorn; surely after this, there is nothing strange in His humbling Himself, and hiding Himself, and remaining hidden from the world's eyes in the Blessed Sacrament; nothing strange in His being still denied, despised, and laughed to scorn of men.

Or take the simple fact of the Incarnation, and see whether it does not imply a further mystery. That the great God of heaven and earth should become man, and live three-and-thirty years on earth, and then go away into heaven, and never visit us again for hundreds and thousands of years, and remain at as remote a distance from us as if He had never taken our nature upon Him,—this indeed it would be difficult to believe, unless He told us so. But so far from being difficult to believe, it seems to follow as a necessary consequence, that having once become man, having once dwelt among men, and having so loved us as to die for us, He should never cease to be present with us in some real way, though still, as before, a hidden way. We should in a manner expect that, as He is still clothed with our nature, as He is still man, and will never cease to be through all eternity, so in His Almighty power, He would contrive some way by which, while reigning in heaven, adored by all His Saints, He might continue nevertheless to dwell with us, and be adored by us, His brethren, still living on earth.

Or again; can you suppose that God would be less present to us Christians than to the Jews under the old law? And yet, in some mysterious way, He dwelt with them. We read of His going before the Israelites in their departure from Egypt (Exodus, xiii. 21;) of His coming down on Mount Sinai and talking with Moses, and of His glory dwelling upon the mountain (xv. 16); and again, repeatedly, of His glory filling the tabernacle, and of all the people falling down and worshipping (Levit. ix. 24; Num. xvi. 19.) And afterwards, on occasion of the dedication of the Temple by King Solomon, we read of the Lord coming to take possession of his dwelling; and of a cloud of glory appearing and filling the house of the Lord, so that the Priests could not stand to minister (1 Kings, viii. 10, 11.) Can you suppose that we Christians are less favored than were the Jews?—we to whom heaven has been opened by the resurrection and ascension of our Incarnate Lord; for whom He sent down the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the eternal Trinity, on the day of Pentecost (Acts, ii.) that He might abide with us for ever in His Church? (John, xiv. 16, 17.) No; our blessed Lord promised never to leave us; He said He would come again and dwell with us (John, xiv. 18, xvi. 22;) and St. Paul assures us (Heb. xii. 22-4) that all that the Jews had in figure we enjoy in reality.

But if you still doubt, and find it hard to believe so blessed a truth, let us go together to the stable of Bethlehem, and behold the wonder that has come to pass; and then see whether you will not find it easier to believe in this other great mystery of love. You sleeping infant, lying so still, and seemingly so careless of us, is the eternal Son of God, by whom the worlds were made; He is the very wisdom and power of God; he knows all things, and can do all things. Around Him, kneeling and absorbed in prayer and adoration to Him, are Mary His mother, Joseph His foster-father, and the shepherds. And now, if your faith in Him is a true faith—if you really believe not only that He is the infant you see He is, but also, that He is the God you cannot see He is, but know He is, you will also sink on your knees, and humbly adore Him, and pray to Him. And should He wake and smile upon you, or stretch out His little hand as if to welcome you, with what delight would you regard Him, and how blessed you would feel it to be noticed by Him! But suppose, while your heart was thus full of love and joy, an unbelieving Jew were to come into the stable, and instead of kneeling down, or making any sign of reverence, were rather to take pains to show that he looked upon you as a foolish idolater for worshipping a child, and one too so meanly housed, and so poorly attended, how should you feel towards him, and what would you do? Would you not deeply pity the man who had not the consolations of your faith, and whose reason was so proud that he would not humble it to acknowledge as his God one who, so far as he could see, was only a

little child? Would you not take him aside, and in the fullness of your heart tell him of the love of God in taking our nature upon Him; that the Infant he beheld was really God made manifest in the flesh; that although he could not see His godhead,—although His godhead was disguised, hidden under His human nature, yet there it really was; and so would try to teach him that the very humiliation which had excited his scorn deserved his deepest love and gratitude?

And now, my friend, whatever you would have said to the Jew who would not worship our infant Saviour, I now say in all earnest affection to you.—You have been told what Benediction is; you have seen how Catholics worship Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; how fervently they pray to Him, how humbly they bow down before Him, and adore Him, and pay Him all the honor that they can. You have been told, as Mary and Joseph and the Shepherds might have told you, that, though you knew it not at the time, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was as truly present on the altar in the church as He was in the manger of the stable at Bethlehem. He that lay in the stable, He that hung upon the cross, was our Saviour and our God, although the Jew would not believe it; and so now He is truly in the Sacrament of the Altar, although you may not believe it. It required faith to know that Jesus the little child was God, and Jesus hanging on the cross was God; and so now it requires faith to know that the Blessed Sacrament is not what it appears, but is Jesus Christ our Saviour and our God. This is no less true because you do not believe it; but great indeed will be your loss if, now that you have the means of learning the truth, you still continue in your unbelief.

Come, dear reader, if you have listened to me thus far, you must let me tell you that you are responsible to Almighty God for what I have said to you; for one of the questions you will be asked at the judgment-day will be why you did not believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. If you say, that you do not understand how it can be; I reply, that you are not required to understand it; but neither do you understand how Jesus could be at once both God and man, and yet you believe that so it is. If you say, that you cannot see Jesus present under the form of bread, and therefore cannot believe that He is present, I ask you whether you do not believe that He is in heaven, because you cannot lift up your eyes and, like St. Stephen, behold Him there; and whether you have forgotten that Jesus Himself said, "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed?" (John, xx. 29.) We cannot tell how Jesus, whole and entire, could pass through His rocky sepulchre at His resurrection, or could enter the room where His disciples were assembled when the doors were shut; neither can we tell how He is present, whole and entire, in each particle of the Blessed Sacrament. But as surely as God cannot lie, so surely shall we not be deceived in believing both these mysteries. Could Jesus have spoken more plainly than He has spoken? "This is My Body." "This is My Blood" (Matt. xxvi. 26, &c.) "I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give, is My flesh for the life of the world" (John, vi. 51.) And when the Jews, like Protestants now-a-days, "strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" He did but repeat what He said in plainer words: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you" (ver. 54.) He did not answer the question of the Jews, How is it so? but repeated once more His divine doctrine, that it is so.

Oh, be not you of the number of those who cry, "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" (ver. 61), lest Jesus include you also among the unbelievers. "There are some of you," He said, "that believe not" (ver. 65). Go not back, as did many of those who heard His words (ver. 67); but hasten on to know the truth more and more, now that you have learnt this little about it. Why will you not believe? Why will you not join those happy worshippers whom you have seen to-night? Many of them, perhaps, were once as ignorant as you, but God has enlightened them. Now they know that which they adore (John, iv. 22). They have the infallible testimony of the Church of Christ to the truth of their belief. The Church of Christ, from the very first, believed this blessed doctrine. All England believed it three hundred years ago, and had believed it ever since it became a Christian nation. The Catholic Church all over the world believes it to this day. Jesus will also teach you the true faith, if you will ask Him. Oh, then, before you leave this holy place, beg Him to give you grace to know His will and to do it.

ADDRESS OF THE REV. FATHER TELLIER, DELIVERED BEFORE THE CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF TORONTO.

(Abridged from the Mirror.)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Education and Schools—Schools and Education—these are the watchwords of the day: this the rallying cry, which flies from mouth to mouth, from country to country, as quick and ardent as the electric fluid along the wires of our dear telegraphic lines. As one day a good-natured king, the father of his people, said he would feel at the height of his wishes, could he see every house in his kingdom boiling its fowl upon Sunday; so now every sensible man says he would feel quite happy and rejoiced, could he see read in every house some weekly popular useful paper; could he see circulated abroad periodicals, pamphlets, practical manuals on domestic economy, on agriculture, on social, religious principles and the like. When I consider the whole generation so greedy of learning, and especially the leading men of every opinion, accelerating the movement, I cannot help remembering the beautiful imagery of an Italian poet, the delight of my younger days (Metastasio): "The aromatic plant discloses on the hill its gracious and fragrant cup. The snake and the bee soon approach, and both suck over and over therein. But the snake imbibes bitter poison, the bee luscious honey." Education likewise must needs turn into a blessing or into a curse.

Your platform, gentlemen of the Catholic Institute, is this: "Not only shall the Catholics of Upper Canada have their own separate schools, when deemed necessary, but they must be authorised by law to have their own board of examiners, such as the Protestants of Lower Canada have, and to receive their proper share of the taxes levied for the purpose, to aid them in building School-houses and furnishing them with the necessary apparatus." So I read in one of the many able articles emanating weekly from your, I would suppose, semi-official organ, the *Toronto Mirror*, (Sept. 18, 1851.) This same resolution you gave as a partial standard in your *Address to the Catholic Electors*, bearing date November 24th. So that if I mistake not, you claim 1st, separate Boards of Education; 2nd, separate Schools, when deemed necessary or possible; 3rd—non-interference in the religious belief of the pupils attending the common schools; 4th—Your proper share of the school-fund, according to the principle of equal right. And you claim these four points, because the minority of Catholics in the Upper Province must be on the same footing with the minority of Protestants in the Lower Province. That's it, I think. Well, gentlemen, if after having done me the honor of calling on me to address this highly intelligent and select audience, you are so kind as to depend upon me, and not to decline my offer, I will cheerfully enter the list on behalf of your principles, but on condition that I shall fight with raised visor, or rather that I shall play a fair play, and if I may judge by the nature of the subject and the readiness of your dispositions, I confidently hope it will not be an unsuccessful one.

In debating such a question as this, you must take a view of your ground. Countries may differ one from another in geographical position and industrial pursuits and natural staples, as well as in ethnographic, and political, and social condition. We heard a few weeks ago of a solemn concordat passed between the Queen of Spain and the Holy See. (*New York Freeman's Journal*, Oct. 25, 1851.) "Provision has been made," says the immortal Pius the IX. to the Cardinals, (5th day of Sept.) "provision has been made that the system of discipline and instruction in all Universities, Colleges, and Seminaries, and in public and private Schools, shall plainly agree with the doctrine of the Catholic religion: and the Bishops and other Diocesan Prelates, who, by the duty of their ministerial office, are bound to apply themselves with all their might, to maintain and propagate the purity of the Catholic doctrine, and to secure the Christian education of youth, shall never be hindered by any impediment whatever from jealously watching over even the public schools, and from freely exercising over them the duties of their pastoral office." And look at the end contemplated by the Vicar of Christ, responsible, as it is evident, to the Eternal High Priest, whose vicarship he bears on earth. "Therefore, says he, you will perceive that the Catholic religion, with all its rights which it enjoys by its divine institution, and the sanction of the sacred canons, is so singly as heretofore to flourish and be dominant in that kingdom, that every other worship is altogether removed and interdicted." It will be long, I am afraid, before such a concordat may take place between the Holy See and the "Defender of the Faith," our most gracious Queen of England. Spain is a land of the ancient faith, over which truth alone is to sway: a land, over which the clouds of error have

* The Litany of the Blessed Virgin is commonly, though not always sung at Benediction.