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"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

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A Prevalent Fallacy—One Objective Truth—Assistance of the Holy Spirit.

I am a Catholic through the grace of God, because I was baptized and thus received the gift of faith the day after my birth. This priceless gift, without which true allegiance to the Catholic Church is impossible, grows with the growth of reason, lifts reason itself to a higher plane, and sets in their proper perspective the things of time as viewed in relation to eternity. Owing to this elevation of reason the whole aspect of history and of human knowledge is one thing for the man of faith and quite another for the man that has no super-natural gift of faith. The two men differ in first principles. Hence arises the difficulty of giving such a reason for the faith that is in me as may approve itself to those who have not the same ineffable blessing. I am at a loss how to choose, out of a thousand reasons that satisfy my soul, a few that may enable other minds to understand the Catholic point of view. I will first take

CONTEMPORARY FACTS.

About one-half of the civilized world is Catholic. Of the other half, a good third—Greeks, Russians, and Orientals—profess almost all the distinctively Catholic doctrines, such as the necessity of tradition, the Real Presence, the seven sacraments, intercession of the saints and angels, the doctrine of purgatory, great esteem of celibacy practised by their monks, though not by their secular clergy.

Catholics are in all parts of the world and in all ranks of society. The prince and the working man, the millionaire and the pauper, the genius and the ignorant man, the learned Pope and the child just beginning to use his reason, all hold the same belief, though with the trained theologian the explicit development of that belief is immeasurably greater than with the unlearned and inexperienced multitude.

The nations that are most remarkable for thrift, natural cleverness, thoughtfulness and love of the fine arts, the nations that are the sprightliest and most lovable in character and the most susceptible to ridicule—for instance, France, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Bavaria, Belgium, and Austria-Hungary—glory in being largely Catholic.

Where Catholics are the minority, they are, generally, noted for their steadfastness in the faith despite great disadvantages. All the news comes to them through untidy channels. Seldom is a fact stated to their credit without some gratuitous explanation or insinuation that destroys all the beauty of it. But if any Catholic commits a crime or gives occasion for scandal, the story is sure to be trumpeted abroad with many a triumphant flourish. Men who pride themselves on their spirit of fairplay, and who really live up to it in all other matters are constantly swerving from it at the mere mention of things Catholic. What to Catholics are ridiculously false views of history and religion are thrust upon them all the year round in newspapers, in magazines and reviews, in social intercourse, in most of the books they must read, whereas non-Catholics hardly ever read Catholic books or newspapers, and when they do, it is mostly for purposes of adverse criticism.

In such surroundings, Catholics, not being Buddhists hidden away in semi-barbarous quarters of the world, but mingling with all the pursuits and contributing to all the true knowledge and activity of their civilized fellow-men, are keenly alive to the temptations that beset their faith. They suffer from social and political ostracism; they are often handicapped by the occult antagonism of secret societies; they chafe under that conspiracy of silence which ignores whatever good deeds are due to their religion; they are frequently offered wealth and preferment in return for apostasy. Though they know that they possess a higher education than what mere secular training can give, they resent the imputation of ignorance. They are fully aware of the relief their lower nature would experience from a change of religion. No more obligatory attendance at Mass, no absolute impossibility of divorce, no inevitable duties of maternity, no necessity of restoring ill-gotten gains, no fasts nor abstinence days, no celibacy for the clergy, no early communion before breakfast, above all, no sacramental confession. An assertion of conversion from the lips outward, and they would be welcomed as brands plucked out of the fire.

Occasionally some Catholics yield to these temptations. Others, having come to us from without, and never having really received or properly fostered the gift of faith, go back. However, those who leave us are not, for the most part, paragons of intellect or virtue. At any rate no one ever leaves the Catholic Church in order to practise greater self-denial. Taking all in all, despite sneers,

gibes, slanders, and contempt, despite allurements without number, our people in Protestant countries are the most faithful Catholics in the world. It is a common saying amongst us that there are no better Catholics than those who live in the North of Ireland, Scotland, England, the United States, Germany and Holland, except perhaps the indomitable Poles and other Catholics under Russian despotism, who are still hounded to death; as Irish Catholics were for more than two hundred years.

On the other hand, the Catholic Church is continually winning the allegiance of many men of great minds and noble hearts, who give up every comfort and break every tie in order to join her fold. She makes no special effort to attract them, she simply lets her light shine, and they follow its lead. Within the present generation hundreds of Protestant clergymen have entered the Church in the wake of intellectual and moral giants like Newman, Manning, Faber, Allies, and W. G. Ward. This Romeward tendency, though more noticeable in England, shows itself everywhere, in our own Canada and the United States, in Germany and Denmark, even to the uttermost ends of the earth. And for one convert whose name appears in non-Catholic papers, a hundred come to us unheralded, unadvertised. Many, in doing so, have to face the shifts of poverty after a life of ease and wealth; many more have still to undergo dire domestic persecution. This proves that flesh and blood, ambition and cupidity had nothing to do with their change; it had no human motives; all human motives were against it; therefore, think we, its motive was divine. This also explains why the world hates them. Nothing so stings it as the unutilized truth. Had they become agnostics or free-thinkers, they would have escaped any but the mildest reproach; because they have joined the church of their forefathers, they are visited with scorn and spurned with horror. Not thus do we treat those who depart from our communion. We pity them and pray for them.

For we are not intolerant. Hating error, we yet commiserate the erring. No Catholic majority would ever treat a Protestant minority as we have been treated in New Brunswick and in this Province. We have too much sense of justice and charity to rob our fellow-citizens of their right to use their school taxes as they choose. We never hesitate to elect Protestant representatives, provided they are otherwise qualified. In the province of Quebec seven counties with large Catholic majorities elect Protestant members of Parliament; not one Protestant constituency elects a Catholic.

Our methods and doctrines are gradually leavening the Protestant world. The liturgy of the Church of England is all borrowed, with characteristic omissions, from our liturgical books. The High Church movement in Anglicanism is becoming more pronounced every year. Ritualists are accounting every people to Catholic forms, though they have not the substance of the faith nor the reality of the priesthood. They strive to share in our beautiful prerogative of Catholicism; but, however near they come to us in doctrine, the establishment to which they belong cannot be styled Catholic except in a Pick-wickian sense. While too many ignorant fanatics still swallow awful disclosures of the Maria Monk type, the chosen spirits of the church of England stand together in sisterhood and brotherhood, and thus witness to the Catholic doctrine that virginity is not only possible with prayer and watchfulness, but preferable to the holy state of wedlock (1 Cor., vii., 25-40). Other Protestant bodies imitate them by instituting deaconesses. All Christians have of late years imitated our daily Mass and ever open churches by more frequent prayer meetings. It is no longer idolatry to have a picture of the crucifixion in one's home. To wear, if not to bear, the cross of Christ is becoming fashionable.

These are a few of many contemporary facts showing, in this age of servile worship of majorities, that, even from this view-point, we may say of our faith what St. Augustine said: Securus judicat orbis terrarum; the testimony of mankind in its best representatives on matters that clash with natural inclinations is a safe criterion. Now let us look at

HISTORICAL FACTS.

One of the prominent Protestant clergymen of Montreal, in the course of a lecture delivered there in the beginning of last month, gave his audience to understand that the Church existed before the New Testament, and that the Word of God was preached before it was written. To his hearers this may have seemed a discovery; to us it is a truth as old as the Church itself, an undoubted historical fact which proves that the Bible cannot be the sole rule of faith. Two generations of Christians lived and died, many of them martyrs, before the last book of the New Testament was published. And they were the very fairest fruitage of the Gospel.

As in the old dispensation, religious disputes were to be settled, not by private interpretation of the Sacred Book, but by decision of the priests (Deut. xvii., 8-13), so did our Lord command His disciples to obey their constituted teachers, how contemptible soever might be their hypocrisy: "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." (Matth. xxiii., 2-3).

The Master Himself never wrote a line of Scripture. Except in the case of St. John (Rev. or Apoc. I, 11). He never commanded His Apostles to write a word; He distinctly never told them to circulate the Scriptures. What He did tell them was to 'preach' the gospel to every creature (Mark xvi., 15). "And they went forth and 'preached' every-where, the Lord working with them,"

(Ib. 20). In point of fact, no nation was ever converted to Christianity by the mere reading of the Bible, and many nations have been converted without knowing how to read.

Formerly the passage of the Authorized Version beginning "Search the Scriptures," John v., 39, used to be triumphantly quoted in favor of private interpretation, but the Revised Version adopts the reading, "Ye search the Scriptures," and relegates the old text to the margin. In fact the Greek admits of both translations. The Revised Version is better suited to the context. Our Lord is reproaching the Jews for not receiving Him who was announced by their scriptures. He refers them to the Scriptures for proof of His divinity, not as to a source to which each one is to go in order to find for himself what religion he should adopt.

For several centuries the Bible was not, as it is now, a compact book in one volume; it was scattered in fragments here and there. Many doubted as to which were the inspired books of the Old Testament; and many spurious books, under the name of the Scriptures, such as the spurious gospel of St. Peter, were handed round among the faithful. In 397 the Catholic Church, voicing the tradition of the Fathers, separated the chaff from the wheat, and declared what books are inspired and what are not inspired. This canon of the Scriptures was confirmed by Pope Gelasius in 476, by Leo III. in the eighth century, by Eugenius IV. in the sixteenth, by the Council of Trent in the sixteenth. This canon contains the whole of the Bible, over which the Church has watched these nineteen centuries with loving care. No Protestant body possesses the whole of the Bible. Various sects have cut away the books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Maccabees I and II and some portions of those books which they have preserved. All their authorities for thus mutilating the Holy Scriptures were handed down to them by the Catholic Church. She not only saved and copied the Bible during the middle ages, but preserved to the world the masterpieces of classic literature and all the European works of the first ten centuries of our era; nay, it is to her that all western nations owe it that they can read at all and were not swept into barbarism by its invading hordes of Saxon and Dane, Hun and Norman. Surely, from the vantage-ground of her history, she has a better right than any of her enemies to judge of the inspiration of Biblical writings.

We Catholics yield to none in our reverence and love for the written Word of God. In fact, we consider it too sacred to be made a jest of by flinging the interpretation of it to the curiosity and impertinence of any and every fool. A man may read into a book such as the Bible almost any fad with which he is himself smitten. Newman read the Fathers four times, and it was not till the fourth time that he ceased reading Protestantism into them. That is why the Church forbids us to interpret the Scriptures against the common opinion of the Fathers. But, provided we "hold the traditions we were taught" (2 Thess. ii., 15), we, whether clergy or laity, are encouraged by the Church to read the Word of God, and we are told, what we find by experience, that it distils a hidden manna of life-giving sweetness. Leo XIII. has just issued a masterly encyclical on the study of the Scriptures, in which, while acknowledging all that Rationalists and Protestants have done for the technicalities and verbal criticism of the Bible, he exhorts us to the deepest research into the spirit and sense of the Scriptures under the guidance of Catholic tradition. How intelligently the Church has fulfilled her mission of delivering the Scriptures pure and undefiled to the laity is apparent from the way the Revised Version frequently reverts to the translation of our Douay Bible in preference to the old Authorized Version. A case in point is Luke ii., 14, where the Douay has: "Peace to men of good will;" the A.V.: "Good will to men;" and the R.V.: "Peace among men in whom he is well pleased."

As all Protestants have received their Bible from the Catholic Church, so from the same source alone do most of them (except Seventh Day Baptists, etc.) take the observance of the Sunday, instead of Saturday, which is the only day of rest enjoined by Scripture; the practice of praying to the Holy Ghost, which is nowhere mentioned in the Bible; and, not to enumerate all such contradictions to the shibboleth, "the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible," the baptizing of infants; for, though the fact that Lydia (Ib. xvi., 15), and that in the case of Paul's jailer "he and all his" were baptized (Acts xvi., 33) seems to imply that there must have been babies in those families, still Catholic theologians generally admit that these texts are not evident proofs, and that the doctrine of the necessity of infant baptism is chiefly a deduction from Scripture principles supported by an overwhelming tradition.

OUR FIRST PRINCIPLES

differ from those of all the Protestant sects. Yet these principles are eminently consonant with logic and common sense, and, with Catholics, common sense and logic always go hand in hand. Our theology is based on a rational system of philosophy that is unknown to all but the most learned Protestants. In this we have the whip hand of them, for their philosophic systems are known to every Catholic philosopher. And, as Catholic colleges, even where there are no degrees, complete their curriculum by a thorough training in mental science, the average graduate of any college in Canada or the United States, or Spain or Mexico or South America, is intellectually better equipped than the average