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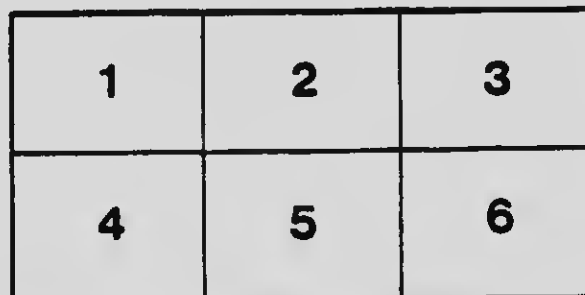
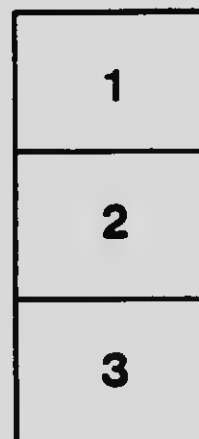
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The
Catholic Truth Society

Its History and Objects

By

Hugh Fraser Mackintosh



The Catholic Truth Society of Canada
Incorporated

Head Office — 67 Bond St., Toronto

Branches:

Saskatchewan: Catholic Rectory, Regina *Vancouver:* 646 Richards St. *Montreal:* 316 LaGauchetiere St. W.

1919

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“Among the means best adapted to the defence of religion there is none, in Our opinion, more efficacious and more suited to the present time, than that which consists in meeting the Press by the Press, and thus frustrating the schemes of the enemies of religion.”

Pope Leo XIII.

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PART I.

Twenty-five years is a period ordinarily sufficient to test the endurance of an organization. If, after that, it comes to naught, it is either because the occasion for its existence has passed, or it has failed to live up to its opportunities, or, on the other hand, those for whose benefit it was designed have grown careless or indifferent in regard to it. Judged by this standard the Catholic Truth Society may be considered to have now established its right to be regarded as a permanent institution. With a continuous history of thirty-five years to look back upon it may surely face the future with a reasonable degree of confidence. It is with the object of illustrating by its past vicissitudes, the work which in spite of them it has been able to accomplish, and by reason thereof, its title to future support, that this sketch has been prepared. If so competent an authority as Cardinal Gasquet can say of it that "since we have seen the C.T.S. at work and have learnt what it can do, we have come to see that we cannot do without it", Catholics generally who have at heart the good of humanity need surely not be backward in lending to it their enthusiastic adhesion and co-operation.

It is a famous saying of De Maistre's that "history is but one long conspiracy against the truth." Especially true is this of English history during the past three hundred years. Cardinal Newman tells us plainly that to maintain the English Protestant tradition in regard to Catholics it is absolutely necessary to lie. "If you would have some direct downright proof that Catholicism is what Protestants make it to be, something which will come up to the mark, you must lie, else you will not get beyond feeble suspicions, which may be right or may be wrong. Hence Protestants are obliged to put their ninth Commandment out of the Decalogue. 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor' must go, must disappear; their position requires the sacrifice. The substance, the force, the edge of their tradition is slan-

der." This was particularly true at the time these words were written—the year of the Restoration of the Hierarchy, and the passing of Lord John Russell's "Ecclesiastical Titles Bill"—an ill-starred measure, designed to prevent Catholic Bishops from taking the titles of their newly established Sees. The bill became law but was never enforced, perhaps because the common-sense of the nation intervened. It served, however, the purpose of calling once more into active life the old latent animus against Catholics which the Oxford Movement had in some measure allayed. That it is not dead, however, and still from time to time stalks into the open, we in Canada have reason to know. The words just quoted have certainly their application to present conditions.

During the long period of two and a half centuries, from the accession of Elizabeth to the dawning of Emancipation, the Catholics of England, Ireland and Scotland led the most precarious of existences. Needless here to recount their tribulations during the protracted night of the Penal Laws, that code of cruel enactments which in their completeness Edmund Burke has characterized as the "masterpiece of human malevolence." Throughout, Catholics, out of the instinct of self-preservation, were content to keep out of the public eye, and to refrain from agitation in their own behalf. Such writings as were produced in their defence or vindication were, for the most part, printed on the Continent, and circulated in England by stealth. To have in one's possession, for example, a Rheims and Douay version of the Scriptures was an offence punishable by fine and imprisonment. Yet, the Truth was never without a champion, or the printed word without an apostle. In the latter half of the eighteenth century especially, as if in anticipation of freedom's dawn, Catholic writers and publishers were not wanting to the great task of uncovering the heritage of truth which since the reign of Henry VIII, had lain hidden beneath a mountain of falsehood. Bishop Challoner by his manifold labors in this direction paved the way for the brighter age to come.

The effort to obtain a hearing for the Church and to put before the non-Catholic public the truth about the Catholic Faith took on new life with the passing of the Emancipation Act in 1829. Prior to that time the long-standing prejudice against Catholics, born of the unexamined traditions of three centuries and the remnants of the Penal Laws still in force, necessarily limited their activities in that direction. Yet the period produced a group of writers whose work must ever occupy an honorable place in English no less than in Catholic literature. It is not necessary to name Chalmers, Gough, Milner, Walsh, Waterton, Lingard, "Dodd," Berrington, Kirk, Charles Butler, and, as a pioneer in fiction, Jane Porter, whose glowing romances, "The Scottish Chiefs" and "Thuddeus of Wursow", retain their popularity to this day. These writers, and many others that might be named, did their part in their day and generation in keeping the lamp of faith burning, and in vindicating the Catholic cause from the countless aspersions cast upon it. With Emancipation, however, the Church in England, as in Ireland and Scotland, emerged from her hiding place, and Catholics individually began once more to occupy their legitimate place in the public life of the nation. The edifying example of the Emigré clergy who, driven from France by the Reign of Terror, sought asylum in England, and were received with every token of respect and hospitality, had gone far to disabuse the minds of Protestant Englishmen of centuries of misconception.

The rise of the Oxford or Tractarian Movement, with its appeal to antiquity, had also done much to convince Englishmen of their religious insularity. When, therefore, Emancipation had become an actuality, a disposition had been created in the public mind to listen and to deliberate.

A "Catholic Society for the Distribution of Prayer Books, Catechisms", etc., existed in 1832. This, however, was not the first organized effort of the kind, for, as early as 1813, a "Catholic Bible Society" was set on foot in London for the express purpose of counteracting the

insidious proselytizing propaganda of sectarian bodies in Ireland, by the publication and gratuitous distribution of the authorized Catholic version of the Scriptures. The result was an edition of the New Testament (based on Bishop Challoner's revision of the Rheims and Douay translation) which was issued from the press in 1815 and ran through three editions.

In 1826, mainly through the exertions of William Eusebius Andrews, founder of the "Orthodox Journal", was established the society of "The Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty", which in little more than a year circulated nearly half-a-million tracts at the small expense of £450, owing principally to Mr. Andrews' gratuitous management of its agencies and correspondence. Andrews, the son of convert parents, was, indeed, a host in himself, and the Catholics of that period were deeply his debtors. Not only did he, alone and practically unaided, and in the face of much opposition from some even of his own brethren, found and conduct the "Orthodox Journal" for many years, but he also maintained at one time or another during his troublous life, "The Catholic Vindicator," "The Catholic Advocate," "The Miscellany" and "The Truthteller," all in support of Catholic Truth. He was also the parent of the Metropolitan Tract Society, and of other kindred organizations which had each a part in the great work of bringing about the repeal of the Penal Laws, and the vindication of Catholic rights. His death in 1837 deprived the Catholics of both England and Ireland of a vigorous and fearless champion, and the Church of a devoted son. "He was", says Mr. Joseph Gillow, "a true Christian, humble and earnest in his piety, faithful and unswerving in his belief." It is fitting that this tribute to his memory should be repeated here.

A rather more ambitious effort along these lines, however, was the Catholic Tract Society, organized in 1834, with perhaps a greater display of enthusiasm than has ordinarily accompanied the inception of such movements. For, as we read in a contemporary account, the inaugural

meeting was "so numerously attended that many were unable to gain entrance." This Society continued a separate existence for four years, during which time, as we are further told, branches were opened throughout the entire kingdom, and a variety of valuable tracts published which greatly aided in stimulating religious enquiry. It was the age of the Oxford Movement in its earlier stages, and men and women everywhere, but especially within the Anglican Establishment, were scrutinizing their religious credentials and asking themselves if the great upheaval of the sixteenth century, miscalled the "Reformation", was indeed as they had been taught to believe, a spiritual rebirth, and a return to the Christianity of the Apostolic age.

In 1838 the above named Catholic Tract Society was amalgamated with the Catholic Institute, which took up the work of printing and distributing literature on an extensive scale. No details are to hand as to the operations of this federated body, but that it did good service in keeping aloft the Catholic standard through another trying period—the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1851 and the storm of bigotry to which that momentous event gave rise—we have abundant contemporary testimony.

The first Catholic Truth Society in England under that name and with kindred objects, was a foundation of the late Cardinal Vaughan's, at the time President of St. Joseph's Missionary College, Mill Hill. This was in the year 1868. It continued useful work for several years and, among other timely publications, has to its credit Lady Herbert's "Wayside Tales", which in their extended form are still among the most popular issued by the present Society. And this seems the fitting place to say that from the beginning of the present Society an effort has been made to supply the Catholic reading public with fiction of a wholesome and elevating character, as a foil to the pernicious novels which in ever increasing proportions issue from the press. This was a fixed principle with Cardinal Vaughan, who, austere churchman as he was, had nevertheless the widest of sympathies and

the keenest appreciation of the difficulties which beset Catholics in the world in which their lot is cast—a world so inimical in its principles and actions to the cultivation of the spirit of faith.

Following the discontinuance of what we may call the Mill Hill Society, the necessity for its revival and establishment upon a permanent basis became more and more apparent as the years went by. "Every covert from Anglicanism", writes Mr. James Britten, co-founder and honorary secretary of the revived Society, "will remember how largely that movement has been propagated by means of cheap dogmatic and devotional literature. A movement which began with the 'Tracts for the Times' was not likely to abandon what had proved so successful a method of propaganda; and the cheap devotional publications 'edited by a Committee of Clergy' which appeared in the late sixties, must have helped many through Catholic teaching into the Catholic Church. . . . Some at least of them were struck by the absence of any such organized output of literature on the part of the Church they had joined, and this view met with sympathy on the part of the clergy to whom it was expressed." This, as Mr. Britten has further explained, led to the first practical steps towards attainment of the much-to-be-desired end. A few gentlemen interested got together and, contributing a pound each to a fund, had printed and circulated three small publications: two cards of "Morning and Evening Prayers for Those Having Little Time," "Prayers for Confession for Little Children," and "A Little Rosary Book"—the latter printed in Belgium. This venture excited immediate interest: it was brought to the notice of some of the Bishops, and finally, at the suggestion of Dr. Vaughan, now become Bishop of Salford, a meeting was held at Herbert House, London, and the new Society then formally established, Bishop Vaughan, who presided, becoming President, with Father W. H. Colgan and Mr. James Britten, as Honorary Secretaries.

Thus it was that Cardinal Vaughan became in a two-fold sense the founder of the Catholic Truth Society.

Whether as President of St. Joseph's Foreign Missionary College, Mill Hill, or as Bishop of Salford, or, later, as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, he ever had the dissemination of the Truth, whether by the spoken or the printed word, at heart, and left nothing that was within his power undone to further that end. It was undoubtedly to his support as President that the Society is indebted for the general recognition it has since received. It was he who first obtained for it the blessing of the Holy Father and the Indulgences which are granted to all who participate in its work. And to him, too, is due in a very special manner, the institution of the Annual Conference, which has become so important a part of the work in England, and, we may be permitted to hope, is destined in due time to become a feature of the Catholic Truth Society of Canada.

After Cardinal Vaughan, the success of the Catholic Truth Society in England is undoubtedly due to the zeal and painstaking efforts of Mr. James Britten. Himself a convert from Anglicanism, he has throughout his Catholic life sought with all his might to bring the blessing of faith to his fellow-countrymen. Mr. Britten is a botanist of European reputation, and at the time of his conversion, and for many years thereafter, held an important post in the Botanical Section of the British Museum. Since 1909, however, his entire time and energies have been given to the Catholic Truth Society. He has been a voluminous contributor to its publications, and his activity in refuting slanders and exploding falsehoods against the Faith have made him a force to be reckoned with by the purveyors of this unsavory type of literature.

To recount the results achieved by the English Society in the thirty-five years that have intervened, is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that the movement has spread through the whole English-speaking world. In Ireland there is a Catholic Truth Society with a long list of publications of its own. The same is true of Scotland, special attention in each of these countries being given to their own national needs and

difficulties. The work of the International Truth Society in the United States is well known. What, however, is not so well known is that the Society has had a very successful career in Australia and South Africa, and that even in far-off India the work is now in process of organization. The Catholic Truth Society of Canada is, as shall presently be related, one of the earliest offshoots from the parent stem.

The work of the Society has received the very highest commendation from not only the Holy See itself, but from leading churchmen everywhere. Cardinal Newman once said that it had been the dream of his life to see established for Catholics a society on the lines of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and that he saw the fulfilment of his dream in the Catholic Truth Society. It may be added that by the issue in pamphlet form of many of the Cardinal's luminous writings, the C.T.S. has had no small share in making them better known, and thus necessarily extending their sphere of influence.

As illustrating the urgency in Cardinal Newman's judgment of the printed word, the following may be cited from his "Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England":

"Oblige men to know you; persuade them, importune them into knowing you. Make it so clear what you are that they cannot affect not to see you, nor refuse to justify you. . . . Wherever Catholicism is known it is respected, or at least endured by the people. . . . A religion which comes from God approves itself to the conscience of the people wherever it is really known.

"I want you to rouse yourselves to understand where you are, to know yourselves. I would aim primarily at organization, edification, cultivation of mind, growth of the reason. It is a moral force, not a material, which will vindicate your profession and will secure your triumph. . . . What I desire of Catholics is **the bringing out what their religion is.**"

How can this twofold object of knowing ourselves and

being known by others be better achieved than through the publications of the C.T.S.?

To this testimony of the great Oratorian may be added that of the Benedictine, Cardinal Gasquet. At one of the Annual Conferences alluded to he thus expressed himself:—

“In my opinion the need of some such society is so obvious that if the Catholic Truth Society did not already exist and flourish it would have to be forthwith established and fostered by every means in our power. Since we have seen it at work and have learnt what it can do, and has done, we have come to see that we could not do without it.” Then, after outlining the two special functions of the Society, i.e., of furnishing Catholics with useful information and sound instruction, and of correcting mistakes and refuting calumnies against the Church, the Cardinal continued:

“Both of these functions of the Catholic Truth Society are obviously of the greatest possible service to the Catholic Church in England—so great a good, indeed, do these works appear to me to do for us that it is impossible to exaggerate their utility, and for this reason the Catholic Truth Society should receive the support of every one who loves his religion and desires to defend its honour as he would his own against the unceasing calumnies and scurrilous attacks of its enemies and detractors.”

PART II.

The Canadian Society dates its existence from the year 1889. The project had been under consideration for two or three years previously, and during the winter of 1888-9 was the subject of discussion at two or three informal gatherings assembled for the purpose. Finally, on May 13th of the latter year, a meeting was held in the Church Street rooms of Mr. W. J. Macdonell, Vice-Consul of France, and preliminary organization effected. Mr. Macdonell acted as chairman of that meeting, and Mr. H. F.

Mackintosh as secretary, and the latter was requested to communicate with the parent Society in England, and to call another meeting at the earliest opportunity. During the summer months this was not practicable, but on September 7th of the same year, a second meeting was held in Mr. Maedonell's rooms, and steps taken to effect permanent organization. It was proposed that Mr. Maedonell, whose life-long devotion to the Catholic cause and interest in good literature were well-known, should accept the office of President, but the venerable gentleman demurred on the score of age and increasing infirmity, and suggested the appointment of Dr. D. A. O'Sullivan. It was resolved that the governing body of the Society should consist of two Honorary Presidents, a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Council of four members, and upon a vote being taken these offices were filled as follows:

Hon. Presidents: W. J. Maedonell, K.H.S., and Rev. L. Brennan, C.S.B.; President: D. A. O'Sullivan, D.C.L.; Vice-President: E. F. Wheaton; Hon. Secretary: H. F. Mackintosh; Hon. Treasurer: C. F. Larkin; Council: Rev. P. O'Donohoe, C.S.B., J. J. Murphy, J. C. Walsh, W. McBrady, B.A.

At this meeting also it was resolved that a circular announcing the beginning of the work in Canada and setting forth its objects, should be issued, and a committee of three was drafted for this purpose. In accordance therewith the following circular letter was addressed to the leading Catholic clergy and laity, which, taken in conjunction with letters from Mr. James Britten, Hon. Secretary of the English Society, may be regarded as the original charter of the Catholic Truth Society of Canada:

Toronto, Oct. 7, 1889.

"We have the honor to inform you that a Catholic Truth Society has just been established in this city. With this Society and its objects you are no doubt familiar, as its work, which has been very vigorously and successfully prosecuted in England, has obtained wide publicity in the press of Great Britain, America and Australia. Its

origin and much of its success is due to the zeal and devotion of Right Rev. Dr. Vaughan, Bishop of Salford, and it has from its inception been under the distinguished patronage of the highest ecclesiastical authorities of three continents. It is, moreover, richly indulgenced by the Holy See. Its importance at the present day cannot be over-estimated. The press has become a great and universal educating power in the world, either for good or for evil, and since the enemies of morality and religion have made it the great channel of their false and pernicious principles, it is incumbent upon Catholics and all who have at heart the well-being of mankind, to be no less zealous in making it a power for good.

“In establishing the Catholic Truth Society in Canada, its promoters earnestly invite your co-operation. The accompanying pamphlets, issued by the Society in England, explain in detail the work already accomplished and the objects it has in view. A perusal of these will make it evident to you that there is a wide field for its operations in Canada, a truth which is very forcibly enunciated in the accompanying letter from His Grace, the Archbishop of Toronto. Further particulars may be had upon application to the Honorary Secretary.”

The letter of the Archbishop of Toronto referred to herein is dated October 11, 1889. Most Rev. Dr. Walsh, formerly Bishop of London, who by brief of the Holy See, dated August 27, 1889, had been elevated to the Archiepiscopal See of Toronto, in succession to Archbishop Lynch of revered memory, had not yet taken possession of the Diocese. This happy event was to take place on November 29th. Meantime, from the episcopal residence at London he extended his archiepiscopal blessing to the new Society in the following terms:

“I am exceedingly glad to learn that a branch of the Catholic Truth Society has been established in Toronto. This Society has done, and is doing a great deal of good in England, and it is calculated to do a great and noble work amongst ourselves. One of the chief obstacles to the mission of the Catholic Church in Ontario is the fact

that she is refused a hearing, and is simply ruled out of court. Her doctrines are systematically and persistently misrepresented and travestied, teachings are attributed to her which she loathes and abhors, and, in a word, she is so spit upon, disfigured and defiled with all manner of calumny, hatred and vituperation, that even honest, well-meaning people turn away from her in disgust, convinced that, instead of being what she claims to be, the Bride of Christ and the Mother of His children, she is fallen, corrupt and apostate.

"It is our duty to remove such obstacles as far as we may be able, from the pathway of the Church in this country: it is our duty to strive to enlighten ignorance, to correct misrepresentations, to expose calumnies and to bring the doctrines of the Church in all their native truth and beauty before the minds of honest enquirers. All this the publications of the Catholic Truth Society are admirably calculated to effect. I, therefore, earnestly wish your Toronto branch of this Society the greatest measure of success, and I pray God to bless and reward its friends and patrons.

JOHN WALSH,

Archbishop of Toronto."

Letters of like character were received from Most Rev. Archbishop Cleary of Kingston, and the Right Rev. Bishops Dowling of Hamilton, and O'Connor of Peterborough. Under these favorable auspices the Catholic Truth Society began the work which, despite occasional temporary periods of inaction, has continued practically uninterruptedly down to the present time.

The above circular was the first publication of the Catholic Truth Society of Canada. This was followed by Dr. O'Sullivan's "Essays on the Church in Canada", reprinted, with additions, from the "American Catholic Quarterly Review." During the course of the succeeding winter the Society threshed out a Constitution and By-laws, which were printed in a small booklet. In June, 1890, this was followed by a "List of Publications," an eight-page pamphlet, which was widely circulated. This,

necessarily, was for the most part made up of publications of the English Society, but included five Canadian items, of which, however, Dr. C'Sullivan's Essays alone bore the imprint of the Catholic Truth Society.

Another work which was initiated during this first year of the Society's existence in Canada was that of the church-vestibule rack. At the instance of the Executive, a suitable stand, inscribed with the Society's name and objects, and filled with publications procured from England, was placed in position at St. Basil's church. This proved the means of bringing the Society immediately before the public and of circulating its literature. The proportions to which the work has since grown need not here be enlarged upon. Suffice it to say that upwards of sixty stands of an improved pattern are now in position in as many different churches throughout Canada, and that interest in them is steadily growing.

In May, 1890, authorization was received from England, through Mr. James Britten, Honorary Secretary, to use the name "Catholic Truth Society of Canada." Mr. Britten at the same time conveyed the felicitations of our English brethren on the inception of the work here, and promised every assistance and support.

The Society as thus constituted continued in active operation until 1892, when, as if repeating the history of the English organization, it languished for a time. Through the indefatigable efforts, however, of Mr. Joseph J. Murphy, the publications were kept in circulation through St. Basil's Parish Library and through the mails. About 1899 a new start was made in the west end of Toronto, and a very active and efficient organization sprang into existence in St. Mary's parish. Meetings were held regularly and a great deal of literature circulated at the church door, through the mails, and by personal distribution. A new work also was ventured upon in the publication of a weekly newspaper called "The Impartial Witness", which during its few years' existence rendered important service in removing misconceptions of Catholic doctrine and offsetting hereditary pre-

judices against the Church by simple statements of the truth in a manner which could not be effected in any other way. Among other publications issued by this branch was Dr. Benjamin de Costa's "Reasons for Becoming a Catholic", which appeared in 1900. Dr. de Costa had been a prominent Episcopal clergyman of New York, was a man of established literary reputation, and a contributor to Justin Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America."

When Archbishop McEvay came to Toronto in 1908 one of his first cares was to stimulate the work of the Society. Under his direction re-organization was speedily effected and a new career of activity and expansion entered upon which has continued without interruption to the present time.

In the spring of 1913 a room in the chancellery of St. Michael's Palace was placed at the disposal of the Society by His Grace, Archbishop McNeil, and here its belongings were located and meetings held regularly for nearly two years. On completion of the Catholic Office Building, 67 Bond Street, in 1915, quarters were allotted to the Catholic Truth Society which have since been its home. Here, under the management of the last four years, there has been steady and continuous advance, until now the work extends from Newfoundland in the east to Vancouver Island in the west, and far north into the snowy steppes of the Yukon.

Under the Companies Act of the Dominion of Canada, articles of incorporation were, on 18th June, 1918, issued to the Catholic Truth Society of Canada. This charter, signed by Hon. Martin Burrell, Secretary of State, constitute the several gentlemen named in the application for said charter a body corporate and politic for the purposes and with the powers therein mentioned. These chiefly are:

1. To spread information about Catholic truth and to make better known the faith, practice and history of the Catholic Church;

2. To assist mankind to a better knowledge of the Catholic religion, and with that object, and generally to promote the circulation of and to disseminate books and publications inculcating and advancing Catholic truth and teachings;
3. To promote information on religious, historical and controversial subjects by conferences, public and private meetings, lectures, discussions, books, correspondence with public bodies and individuals, or otherwise;
4. To print, publish, circulate and sell books, newspapers and publications of all kinds, including musical and art productions, and in connection therewith to acquire and become registered proprietors of copyrights and trade marks.

While the Toronto organization, dating back, as we have seen, to the year 1889, is the first in point of priority of existence in Canada, the work of spreading Catholic truth by means of the printed page has been taken up vigorously in other cities. There are Catholic Truth Societies in Halifax, Bathurst, N.B., Vancouver, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, and Edmonton, and in Montreal the Catholic Literature League, devoted to the same cause, has been vigorously and successfully prosecuted for some years. Some progress has been made in co-ordinating the work of these several organizations, so that being affiliated with the incorporated body, there may be concentration of resources and unity of effort in the one great aim which all have so much at heart.



**Presidents of The Catholic Truth Society of Canada
since organization in 1889.**

D. . O'SULLIVAN, D.C.L.

A. J. McDONAGH, L.D.S.

H. F. MACKINTOSH.

W. E. BLAKE.

J. D. WARDE.

JAMES P. MURRAY.

PAMPHLETS

Pamphlets on subjects appropriate for feasts devotions, practices, teachings, etc., of the Catholic Church, are to be had at the office of the Society.

These pamphlets are suitable for the Church vestibule rack, from 5 to 25 cents.

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There are no catalogues of them.

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Each Church should have a supply for the use of non-Catholics who attend a funeral mass.

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THE CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY OF CANADA

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67 BOND ST., TORONTO

Acme Press, Toronto.

