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Straight Talk

—TO—

Non-Catholics


IS
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
INTOLERANT?


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Straight Talk to Non-Catholics

You are not a Catholic. Neither am I. You may be an anti-Catholic. If you are, there is a reason. What is it?

This little magazine is opposed to religious prejudice and all movements inspired by the evil spirit of Bigotry, that has time and again deluged the earth with blood.

Bigotry is a two-edged sword. It cuts both ways. It not only harms the object of the prejudice existing, but does severe injury to the bigot himself.

No human can harbor in his heart and brain the virus of intolerance toward his fellow men without injuring himself. Bigotry warps the vision, inspires petty meanness, destroys impartial judgment, throttles Reason, drives out the gentle spirit of good will, and breaks down the mental machinery.

As a non-Catholic who has lived in strongly Protestant communities, I have been in a position to note the evil influence of anti-Catholic prejudice, not upon Catholics, but upon the prejudiced persons themselves.

I have known supposedly intelligent men to believe the most absurd statements regarding the Catholic Church, when the slightest investigation would have shown the fallacious character of the charges. All of us have inherited to some extent the tendency toward intolerance from our ancestors who lived in less enlightened ages. The non-Catholic is born into an environment or atmosphere that is distinctly prejudiced against Catholics. His mind is soon cluttered with the intellectual rubbish of ages.

He is in a continual state of mind that makes it easy to impose upon him tales about Catholics that normally Reason would reject as utterly impossible. Benevolent old ladies have gone to their graves believing horrible lies and nursing in their hearts what they considered a righteous hatred of all things Catholic instead of the Christian spirit of tolerance and love of humanity that would more become their general character.

There are many forms of bigotry. Religious prejudice is the one that has done the most harm. It is an unmitigated evil whether it dwells in the breast of Catholic, Protestant or Jew.

In this heart to heart talk we are discussing one kind—the kind that is setting neighbor against neighbor, arousing hatred, interfering with harmony—the kind that makes possible the anti-Catholic crusade which is a movement to abridge

the rights of Catholic citizens on account of religion.

If you are antagonistic to Catholicity, you have reasons for your prejudice that you may not have analyzed.

For your own sake, we ask you to take inventory of your feelings and the reasons for your prejudice. If they are valid reasons, you ought to confirm them, but if your prejudice is founded upon fallacies, it is time for you to know it.

We think you will find that most anti-Catholic sentiment rests upon the following reasons:

1. Stories of priests who have gone wrong, charges of immorality in convents, and tales of the confessional box being a medium for debauching Catholic womanhood.

2. Charges that priests absolve the sins of Catholics for money, that they frequently refuse burial of Catholics in sacred ground unless large gifts are made to them, and that the money collected for Church purposes is exorbitantly high constituting an oppressive burden on their people.

3. Statements that the Church does not permit Catholics to read the Bible.

4. Belief that Catholic doctrine does not recognize the validity of marriages of non-Catholics and that the Church teaches that the children of Protestants are illegitimate.

5. Persecution of Protestants during the Reformation, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the Spanish Inquisition.

6. Charges that the Pope is trying to make America Catholic.

7. Belief that the Pope is scheming to establish temporal supremacy in America.

8. Accusations that Rome is active in politics and has a large measure of control over the American Government which she is trying to make absolute.

9. Belief that Catholics are bound to accept the dictum of the Church in temporal matters as well as spiritual.

10. Charges that the Pope claims to be infallible in all things.

11. Belief that Catholics and especially Knights of Columbus are oath-bound to make a secret war of extermination upon Protestants.

12. Allegations that Catholics would revert to the practices of past ages and persecute Protestants if they would ever get control of this country.

13. Belief that the Church is intolerant and teaches that eternal damnation is the lot of all non-Catholics regardless of the honesty of their religious convictions or the sanctity of their lives.

If you are the victim of religious prejudice directed against Catholics, it is because you believe in one or more of these charges or ramifications of them.

In the interest of Truth, Tolerance and religious liberty, we propose to demonstrate that these charges are fallacious.

In the first place you must bear in mind that the "information" upon which they are based comes from the enemies of the Church. It is not impartial and unbiased, but prejudiced and often perjured testimony.

In order to cover the ground as clearly and effectively as possible, our comments on these main thirteen reasons for anti-Catholic bigotry will be numbered in order.

1. Stories of priests who have gone wrong and tales of immorality in Catholic institutions usually originate in the fertile brains of agitators whose livelihood depends upon their arousing anti-Catholic sentiment. They are usually unreliable regarding names, dates, and places. Many of them are pure fiction. It is true that some priests have gone wrong, but there is no class of men who have contributed less to our criminal records in proportion to their numbers. Protestant preachers also err, but this is no just reason to condemn Protestantism. The Truth Seeker published a book on the CRIMES OF PREACHERS. Of the 5,000 crimes listed less than 200 were committed by priests. We cannot vouch for the authenticity of the records, but it is evident that no crime of a priest was overlooked by the publishers, who hate Catholicity.

If a Church is to be held responsible for every misdeed of its clergymen, none would escape condemnation.

The infernal charges against Catholic sisters are almost wholly built upon imagination. No class of women in the world have nobler thoughts, higher ideals, or lead purer lives than these human angels who have dedicated their lives to the service of their God and to raise fallen womanhood, nurse the sick, feed the poor, and care for motherless and fatherless children. If they were the type of women who would lead immoral lives, the convent would be the last place on earth they would go to. To assail their character is the act of a fiend. Only a diseased mind, revelling in filth, could doubt the purity of their motives in donning the veil. Some few may have fallen. Even among the twelve disciples chosen by Christ one was untrue, but to assert that convents are the scene of gross immorality is to reverse the Truth. Tom Watson pretended to doubt the virtue of Catholic sisters, but his sincerity can be questioned from the fact that he sent his

daughter to be educated in a Catholic institution by Catholic sisters.

All the sacrifices made by Catholic sisters in giving up worldly pleasures would be in vain, if these charges against them were true. Reason, common sense, fact and logic condemn these stories as false, absurd, brutal and vicious.

Criticisms of the confessional are based upon ignorance. Non-Catholics ought not to be concerned with it. They do not have to confess their sins. The confessional is a safeguard of virtue, and the medium by which tens of thousands have been saved from evil deeds and lives of sin. While penance is not merely designed to relieve the strain on troubled souls, nevertheless the act of confessing one's sins is a relief to the mind, and apart from its spiritual significance, is beneficial in the highest degree in a purely physical way.

Charges that the confessional is an aid to immorality are the acme of idiocy. The very nature of the occasion of confession, a sacrament of the Church, precludes the idea of either the priest or the penitent, relaxing into immoral thoughts or deeds. The penitent's mind is filled with the sole idea of remorse and regret for his sins and to have them absolved. Any misuse of the act of confession would not only be a sin, but, in the eyes of Catholics, sacrilege of the worst kind. People go to confession to get rid of old sins, not to take on new ones. Catholics know their priests, and they know what goes on in the confessional. If charges of immorality among priests and nuns and through the medium of the confessional were true, Catholics would know it, and the hypocrisy of the whole thing would be so great and self-evident that the Church would go out of existence for lack of members.

To correct erroneous impressions of the confessional that seem to bother many non-Catholics, we quote from the Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, page 619.

"It is not true that for the Catholic the mere 'telling of one's sins' suffices to obtain their forgiveness. Without sincere sorrow and purpose of amendment, confession avails nothing, the pronouncement of absolution is of no effect, and the guilt of the sinner is greater than before."

"In paying ordinary debts, as e. g., by monthly settlements, the intention of contracting new debts with the same creditor is perfectly legitimate; a similar intention on the part of him who confesses his sins would not only be wrong in itself, but would nullify the sacrament and prevent the forgiveness of sins then and there confessed."

Thus we see that the frequently repeated statement that

Catholics can sin as often as they please, and be absolved of their sins without sincere repentance and regret and desire to do right in the future is not according to Catholic doctrine.

The idea that the paid enemies of the Church can know more about what goes on in Catholic institutions, schools, convents and Churches than Catholics themselves know, is the unsound foundation upon which the anti-Catholic Crusade largely rests.

2. Charges that priests absolve sins for money are believed only by those who are totally ignorant of all things Catholic. There is no charge made for hearing confession. Father Noll, editor of "OUR SUNDAY VISITOR," has offered \$1,000 for proof that priests forgive sins for money. His money is safe. The accusation that priests refuse burial in sacred ground to Catholics unless huge donations are made to the Church is pure buncombe. The story has been going around in anti-Catholic papers of a case where a poor Mexican died, and the priest wouldn't bury him in the Catholic cemetery until half of all his earthly possessions, including land, horses, cattle, and sheep had been turned over to the priest. The story doesn't explain how a poverty-stricken Mexican could have so much property, but a lot of ignorant non-Catholics fell strong for this self-evident falsehood. If the burden of supporting the Church were oppressive to Catholics in general, they would be the ones to protest, not people who carry no part of that burden. It costs a lot of money to do all the good that the Church does in a material way with its charitable work, its schools, hospitals, and orphan asylums, but the money coming from Catholics is cheerfully given. They do not have to bear the burden one minute longer than they want to. There is no law forcing them to pay money to the Church. It is contributed in the same manner as in other Churches, and the matter is one purely for Catholics to decide for themselves.

The parish priest is a great friend of the poor. His door is always open to the needy and helpless. His deeds of charity are not advertised from the housetops, but hardly a day goes by in the life of a parish priest that he doesn't give assistance to some one. The priest is the friend and benefactor of his people rather than the recipient of favors. In real service he gives much more than he receives.

3. The Church not only gives the laity permission to read the Bible, but encourages such reading in every way possible. It is true that unauthorized versions have been proscribed, but not the Catholic Bible.

In 1778 Pope Pius VI wrote to the Archbishop of Florence:

“At a time that a vast number of bad books which grossly attack the Catholic religion are circulated even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures; for these are the abundant sources, which ought to be left open to everyone, to draw from them purity of morals and doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times.”

This letter can be found on the title page of many English Catholic Bibles.

Leo XIII said in his encyclical of 1893 on the Bible:

“The solicitude of the apostolic office naturally urges, and even compels us, not only to desire that this great source of Catholic revelation should be made safely and abundantly accessible to the flock of Jesus Christ, but also not to suffer any attempt to defile or corrupt it.”

On December 3, 1898, Pope Leo granted an indulgence to all Catholics who will spend fifteen minutes daily in the devout reading of the Gospels of Jesus Christ.

4. The Catholic Church recognizes the validity of marriages of Protestants just as fully as she recognizes the validity of the marriage of Catholics. She holds that marriage is a sacrament, that it binds for life, and that if the contracting parties are both baptized the marriage of Protestants is just as valid as that of Catholics.

5. The Church has never defended the persecution of anyone for opinion's sake, but in the middle ages, when Church and State were united, heresy to the Church was treason to the State. The Church could only pass sentence of heresy. No ecclesiastic could sit on a tribunal with the power of passing the sentence of death. The State would pass sentence of treason and carry out the punishment it set. Catholics were no more guilty of persecution than were Protestants. It was the infernal spirit of the times, the spirit of bigotry and prejudice, responsible for these acts of superlative cruelty.

The Presbyterian Inquisition at Geneva paralleled the Spanish Inquisition. John Calvin expressed the spirit of the age when he wrote to a friend:

“If Servetus shall come to Geneva, I shall never permit him to depart alive.” Letters of Calvin by J. Bonnet, Vol. 2, page 19.

Calvin kept his word and Michael Servetus was put to death by the Protestants for denying the doctrine of the Trinity, although he had not been harmed while in Spain.

The bigot is prone to remember the martyrdom of Protestants, but overlooks the martyrdom of Catholics. He forgets the period of terror and religious prosecution under Queen Elizabeth, the Protestant, while remembering every detail of Queen Mary's reign. He ignores the putting to death of Sir Thomas Moore and Bishop Fisher at the command of Henry Eighth, and seems to have skipped history's blood-stained pages that record the wholesale massacres of the Irish Catholics under the grim Protestant, Cromwell. The massacre of St. Bartholomew was but a drop in the bucket compared to what Cromwell did in Ireland. The massacre of St. Bartholomew was due more to political than religious reasons. The Huguenots were plotting the overthrow of the King, and had burned hundreds of Catholic Churches. The Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, planned the massacre and persuaded the weak Charles XI that his life and crown were both threatened. As in most of the persecutions in those bloody ages, religion furnished the excuse and politics the reason for the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Both Catholics and Protestants were guilty of these persecutions. The Puritans of New England were moved by the same intolerant spirit, and no Catholic was safe in their territory. The Diet of Upsala in 1593 tried to protect Lutheranism in Sweden by making the immigration of Catholics a crime punishable by death, but anti-Catholic orators and editors do not mention this fact.

If you want to be fair, remember that for every Protestant put to death by Catholics, there is a record of a Catholic put to death by Protestants. You cannot honestly condemn present-day Catholics for persecutions in the past, without condemning modern Protestants for the same reason.

6. It is true that Catholics want to make America Catholic, but it is equally true that Baptists are trying to make it Baptist, and the Methodists are trying to make America Methodist. Each Church is naturally trying to win as many converts as possible. If the Pope can make America Catholic by winning us all to the Church, there is nothing wrong about that. He cannot hope to make America Catholic without making Americans Catholic.

7. The idea of the Pope establishing temporal supremacy in this country is a fabrication of enemies of the Church. The nature of our population is such, with its many diverse races and creeds, that union of Church and State is unthinkable and impossible. It would violate the fundamental principle of Americanism.

The late Cardinal Gibbons, the greatest Catholic produced in America and one of the greatest men who ever lived, pointed out clearly in his book, FAITH OF OUR FATHERS, that separation of Church and State is an American principle which Catholics do not oppose. He showed that under this principle the Church possessed greater freedom and secured better development than would have been possible with a union between Church and State. Such a union has its disadvantages. Where such union exists, there is state interference in the affairs of the Church. Catholics generally would oppose such a union in America as strongly as non-Catholics. While the ideal Catholic State would be one in which all the people were Catholics and the Church and State would aid each other, such a union is not desired in countries where conditions exist as in America.

The Catholic position on this question can be accurately judged by the following paragraphs from the Catholic Encyclopedia in the article on "Toleration," Vol. 14, pages 769 and 770:

"The State is under obligation to make external conditions subserve the public good, and to protect against arbitrariness or molestation all individuals and corporations within its territory in the enjoyment of their personal, civic, political and religious rights. This, in an especial manner, is the function of the Constitutional State."

"The intimate connexion of both powers (Church and State) during the Middle Ages was only a passing and temporary phenomenon, arising neither from the essential nature of the State nor from that of the Church."

"For the State certain conditions may prevail which render a close union with the Church inadvisable or indeed quite impossible. When, for example, several religions have firmly established themselves and taken root in the same territory, nothing else remains for the State than either to exercise tolerance towards them all, or, as conditions exist today, to make complete religious liberty for individuals and religious bodies a principle of government."

"Since the requisite conditions for the erection of new theocratic States, whether Catholic or Protestant, are lacking today, and will probably not be realized in the future, it is evident on the basis of hard facts that religious liberty is the only possible, and thus the only reasonable, state principle."

"The priceless asset of religious peace compels the modern State to concede tolerance and religious freedom."

"Whenever separate religious parties live on the same land,

they must work together in harmony for the public weal. But this would be impossible, if the State, instead of remaining above party, were to prefer or oppress one denomination as compared with the others. Consequently, freedom of religion and conscience is an indispensable necessity for the State."

8. The Catholic Church is active in politics only because her enemies have carried religion into politics. When she enters politics it is in self-defense. When her right to have parochial schools is challenged by the introduction of laws abolishing them, naturally she opposes such measures.

As to Rome's activities in politics, one can best judge by results. Although the 20,000,000 Catholics in this country would be entitled to close to 20 per cent of all public offices, the actual facts are that Catholics hold but a small fraction of the offices to which their numbers would ordinarily entitle them. Congress can be taken as an example. If the Catholic Church were in politics, she would concentrate on getting as many of her people in Congress as possible. What are the facts? Less than five per cent of the members of Congress are Catholics—only 28 out of a total of 531. These figures are supplied by Board of Methodists. Not a Catholic is on the President's cabinet. No political party would dare nominate a Catholic for the Presidency. These facts prove conclusively that the Church is not in politics, that Catholics do not vote as a unit even for Catholic candidates, and that there is not the slightest danger, if danger it would be, of Catholics getting control of our government. Two-thirds of our Congressmen belong to Masonry. A large percentage of Congressmen are Methodists, more than 25 per cent in fact. Those figures tell a tale, and prove conclusively that the Bogey of Catholic domination of the American Government is merely a fabric of the imagination conceived by agitators to scare non-Catholics into coughing up dough to run the anti-Catholic newspapers and political machines and incidentally line the pockets of such men as Walker, Clark and Nations with gold.

Although the number of Protestants in America is but slightly larger than the number of Catholics, there are 367 Protestants and but 24 Catholics in Congress. If the figures were reversed, the enemies of Catholicity might have something to rave about, but all the facts show that if there is any religion in politics, the Protestant Churches are there with both feet.

9. Catholics would be the first to protest against dictation from their priests in political matters. Catholics can be found in every political party that is not anarchistic. They differ

in politics just as Protestants do. If Catholics voted as a unit, as they would do if this charge were true, Bob Sweitzer would have been elected Mayor of Chicago instead of Bill Thompson, and there would be a lot more Catholics in Congress than the negligible 24 that are now in Washington.

10. The Catholic doctrine of infallibility extends only to the Pope when he is making an ex-cathedra ruling on matters of faith or morals. It is in line with the Catholic claim that Christ established their Church and provided safeguards against false doctrines. In other matters the Pope is not considered infallible. Trouble-making agitators try to make non-Catholics believe that the Pope can do no wrong—that is, that Catholics believe anything he does, right or wrong, is all right. They believe no such thing. If the Pope does sin, he occupies exactly the same position as that of the humblest Catholic.

11. The ridiculous charge that Catholics are plotting the extermination of Protestants is based mainly on the idiotic, fake oath attributed to the Knights of Columbus. We have time and again exposed the spurious nature of this document, and presented the real Knights of Columbus obligation that bears no more relation to the forged oath than patriotism does to treason.

The fake K. of C. oath is directly opposed to Catholic doctrines. The Catholic Church holds that it is sinful to force people into the Church or to punish people for heresy or religious error outside of her fold.

Even in medieval times, the Church was opposed to forcible conversions. Leo XIII emphasized this in his Encyclical "Immortale Dei" of November 1, 1885:

"The Church has always taken great care that no one should be compelled against his will to embrace the Catholic Faith, because, as Augustine wisely declares: except he be willing, man cannot believe."

12. Anti-Catholics are prone to forget that Catholics established the first place in the world where the freedom of worship was granted to all others, when Lord Baltimore colonized Maryland. Catholic doctrine forbids compulsion in matters of religion. Non-Catholics usually know little of what the Church really teaches. They derive their information or misinformation from her enemies. In answering charges of intolerance on the part of the Church in the following paragraphs, we expose the fallacy of the teachings of the A. P. A.'s:

13. Is the Catholic Church intolerant? You can best judge that by reading what she teaches on the matter of salvation. Many non-Catholics will be surprised to learn that, while the

Church is intolerant of religious error, the intolerance is not directed against the individual.

Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV, page 766:

"The foolish and un-Christian maxim that those who are outside the Church must for that very reason be eternally lost is no legitimate conclusion from Catholic dogma. The infliction of eternal damnation pertains not to the Church, but to God, Who alone can scrutinize the conscience."

Pope Pius IX wrote:

"It is known to us and to you that those who are in invincible ignorance of our most holy religion, but who observe carefully the natural law and the precepts graven by God upon the hearts of all men, and who being disposed to obey God lead an honest and upright life, may, aided by the light of divine grace, attain to eternal life; for God, Who sees clearly, searches and knows the heart, the disposition, the thoughts and intentions of each, in His supreme mercy and goodness by no means permits that anyone suffer eternal punishment who has not of his own free will fallen into sin."

Thus we see that instead of being the most intolerant of Churches on the matter of the saving of souls, the Catholic Church is the most liberal.

It merely defines and points out the way to salvation as provided for by Christ according to Catholic dogma.

The Church holds that it was established by Christ, and that the only safe route to take to salvation is through the Church.

Her position on this question is misunderstood by most non-Catholics who secure their information not from the authorities of the Church, but from her enemies who have a direct interest in arousing prejudice and hatred against Catholics.

Dogmatically the Church is intolerant—that is, she is intolerant of error. Dogmatic intolerance is necessary if the Church is to be consistent. The Church holds that she is the only true Church, and she must, as a matter of course, be intolerant of the claims of others.

She is intolerant in her attitude toward error, but not toward persons whom she looks upon as honestly erring. On page 364 of the Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV, this point is clearly brought out:

"Since innocent error may attain to the firmest and sincerest conviction, the person's salvation does not seem to be greatly imperilled until good faith turns into bad. * * * The good faith of the heterodox person must, as a rule, be presumed, until the contrary is clearly established. But even in

the extremest cases, Christian charity must never be wounded, since the final judgment on the individual conscience rests with Him who 'searches the heart and the reins.' **THE SAME MEASURE OF RESPECT WHICH A CATHOLIC CLAIMS FOR HIS RELIGION MUST BE SHOWN BY HIM TO THE RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS OF NON-CATHOLICS."**

The Church holds out little hope of salvation for those who, having been graced with the light of faith, reject the Church for personal, social, political or business reasons. Only those who wilfully disobey the voice of conscience does she look upon as eternally damned.

We have shown that the main reasons for prejudice against Catholicity are based upon assertion, assumption, falsehood and ignorance.

We have not space in this article to deal adequately with all the points raised, but we do want to arouse in our non-Catholic readers an intense desire to investigate for themselves. No statement in anti-Catholic papers can be accepted at face value. There is too much invention, fraud, exaggeration in them for anyone to place credence in sheets like the *Menace*, *The Searchlight* and like publications.

If you are prejudiced against Catholics for any of the reasons stated, you are basing your prejudice upon false information and ignorance.

Learn the Truth! Bigotry is a terrible thing to harbor in one's head. It is the mother of injustice and corroding hate.

You do not wish to go through life with your mind poisoned against your neighbors unjustly. God gave you your head for some other purpose than to hang a hat on, or to fill up with the half-baked ideas of ignorant agitators. Use your reason! Investigate for yourself.

If your prejudice against Catholicity is based upon sound ground, investigation will not remove it. If it is based upon falsehood, ignorance and inherent bigotry, you want to get rid of it.

It is not our mission to uphold Catholic doctrine, nor to attempt to win converts to the Church.

We are concerned only with fighting the un-American spirit of bigotry that is rapidly being translated into active interference with the rights of Catholic citizens.

We have no interests that can be furthered by deception or advanced by falsehood. Bigotry is an enemy of American principles. It constitutes a menace to American institutions. It strikes a death blow at religious freedom

Bigotry is a wedge being driven between two great factions of our people. It tends to divide them into hostile camps, destroying harmony of action, and unless checked will do almost irreparable harm.

Our forefathers established the first real home for religious tolerance in the wide world. If we permit prejudice to flourish, if we deprive any of our citizens of their equal rights on account of religion, we will undo the work they did, starting insidious forces into action that will destroy the temple of liberty in America.

In closing we wish to call attention to the words of the late Cardinal Gibbons, as staunch a patriot as ever lived under the flag of freedom. On page 287 of his *FAITH OF OUR FATHERS*, the Cardinal wrote:

"I heartily pray that religious intolerance may never take root in our favored land. May the only king to force our conscience be the King of kings; may the only prison erected among us for the sin of unbelief or mischief be the prison of a troubled conscience; and may our only motive for embracing truth be not the fear of man, but the love of truth and of God."

These noble words express the true principle of religious tolerance, Christian charity and Americanism.

What Others Think

A word of explanation may well be in order.

The article, "A Straight Talk to Non-Catholics," was published originally in the January, 1923, issue of *TRUTH AND LIGHT*, a monthly magazine dedicated to the cause of religious liberty.

The article was written by C. Pliny Windle, associate editor.

TRUTH AND LIGHT is edited by C. A. Windle, who is also editor of *BRANN'S ICONOCLAST*, a magazine of general interest.

The demand for this article was so great that it was necessary to reprint a number of editions and tens of thousands of extra copies were circulated.

As the demand for it shows no sign of falling off, we decided to print "A Straight Talk to Non-Catholics" as a separate pamphlet.

Our purpose in publishing *TRUTH AND LIGHT* is to help do away with religious prejudice that warps the mind and blights the lives of millions of our fellow citizens. In doing this we feel that we are helping to preserve religious liberty in America.

How effective our work in this field has been is evidenced by the thousands of letters received from both Catholics and Protestants.

Bigotry rests mainly upon misunderstanding. What we are striving to do is to clear up this misunderstanding so that suspicion, hatred and prejudice engendered by bigotry will lose its power to turn neighbor against neighbor on account of religion.

Here are excerpts from a few of the thousands of letters received which make us feel that we are making some headway against the tidal wave of religious prejudice.

OPINIONS OF PROTESTANTS

P. D. FERGUSON, Buffalo, N. Y.—I come of a strict Protestant family, and in my early youth absorbed much anti-Catholic prejudice. I have been reading your articles ever since I came across a copy of your splendid reply to Tom Watson some years ago, and I really believe you are doing a splendid work in fighting bigotry. You have at least convinced me that being a Protestant is no sound reason for hating Catholics.

ROBERT MAC DONALD, Seattle.—I am a Protestant and all my life I have looked upon the Catholic Church as bigoted and narrow. A friend of mine, a Catholic, gave me a copy of the January number of TRUTH AND LIGHT.

I realize for the first time that it is true that practically all I knew about the Church I got from her enemies, as you pointed out. That this would form in my mind a biased and distorted picture of Catholicity was inevitable.

JOHN C. LEHEIGH, Pitts, Pa.—While not a Catholic, I wish to congratulate you for the position taken. There is altogether too much enmity aroused over religious difference. Your articles prove to me that no reliance can be placed in the statements of agitators whose minds are warped and sense of justice blunted by prejudice, fanaticism and bitterness against Catholics.

B. J. SMYTHE, New York City.—I am a Protestant, and was reared in a very anti-Catholic district. Your articles have proven an eye-opener to me. I find it hard to get rid of many of the impressions I have received from people who were not friendly to Catholics. I am afraid that, like many others, I have accepted the statements made about Catholics without sufficient consideration. Since reading your first reply to Watson, I have tried to investigate anti-Catholic charges that I hear. I ask for proof, and I must confess that in practically every case in which I could get at the facts, no serious charge made by anti-Catholic agitators has been substantiated.

H. WAGNER, New York City.—I am sorry to say that all my life I have looked upon Catholics with more or less prejudice. Your little magazine has opened my eyes to the fact that most of my prejudice has been founded upon base lies and ridiculous inventions. I thank you for removing from my mind the horrid taint of bigotry that I know has oppressed me in many ways.

JOHN BOWEN, Chicago, Ill.—Your "STRAIGHT TALK TO NON-CATHOLICS" in the January issue should be placed in every home in America. No reasonable person who wants to be fair-minded can read it and retain any respect for bigoted agitators.

JOSEPH P. WORTHINGTON, New York City.—I have read with a great deal of interest the last two issues of TRUTH AND LIGHT. Someone mailed me a copy of the January issue containing the article, "A STRAIGHT TALK TO NON-CATHOLICS." As I am not a Catholic, I became interested at once. The statements you made in this article were astounding to me. I had been taught to believe from infancy that the Catholic Church arbitrarily consigned to perdition all non-Catholics. I also understood that Catholics who went to the confessional had to pay the priest for absolution, the payment depending upon the quality or quantity of the sins confessed.

I am frank to admit that my belief along these lines has been responsible for no little antagonism on my part toward the Catholic Church.

Since reading your article I have obtained your ANTI-CATHOLIC CRUSADE and your REPLY TO WATSON. The latter is the best written booklet I have ever read. It explains your position admirably, and clears up a world of misunderstanding.

I had heard of your defense of Catholic rights some years ago, but did not believe you were not a Catholic. After reading a number of your articles I can understand how you look upon this question, and fully appreciate the high motives that inspire you to fight against bigotry.

One thing I am at a loss to understand. For years I have received at different times anti-Catholic literature, making statements which you expose as fallacious. In all that time, until recently, I have never read an explanation and refutation of these charges, and if someone had not sent me a copy of the January TRUTH AND LIGHT I would have had no reason to doubt that these charges were unanswerable.

Can you explain why practically everything I have read up to now on this question has been predominantly anti-Catholic, and if these lies could be so easily disposed of, how is it that I and doubtlessly most other non-Catholics have been reached only with one side of the case?

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TRUTH AND LIGHT

A Monthly Magazine Edited by C. A. Windle

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