

What Use Is Faith?

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PART I.

WHAT USE IS FAITH?

WHEN THE CHRISTIAN missionaries first came to England, they sought permission of the Saxon King, Ethelbert, to preach Christ to his people. While the king was hesitating what answer to give the missionaries, a strange bird, having entered by an opening flew across the council chamber and out into the open on the opposite side. As the king stood in deliberation, a bard arose and said: "Sire, you have seen this bird of passage as it winged its way across the room. Whence it came we know not, nor do we know whither it has gone. We, like that bird of passage, are here for a brief space. Whence we came, or whither we go, we know not. If, therefore, these strangers can tell us, as they affirm whence we have come and whither we are going, I say that we should welcome them and their message." On hearing this, Ethelbert permitted the missionaries from Rome to begin the preaching of the faith which eventually made Britain a Catholic land.

Definite Knowledge.

The importance of faith is that it gives us definite knowledge of our origin and our destiny, and of the way to our destiny. It tells us, moreover, much about God and heavenly things, of which we should otherwise be in ignorance. As we look up into the sky in daytime, we see a canopy of blue. It is only with the coming of night that we perceive the countless stars that fill the firmament. If it were perpetual day, we should never know of the myriads of heavenly bodies which stud the sky, and which only the darkness of night reveals. Likewise, faith reveals to us ever so many consoling and valuable truths which we should never be able certainly to know otherwise.

Faith is concerned with spiritual or heavenly things. It does not deal with agriculture or commerce or geography or with any earthly matters, except incidentally when it employs these things by way of parable or illustration in order to explain supernatural truths.

A Conversion.

The late Cecil Chesterton said, in a public lecture, that concerning what was vital to man there was more knowledge in the first page of the penny catechism than in all the books of philosophy ever published. And he had read more widely than most men. As a young man, he had renounced Protestantism, the religion in which he was brought up, because of its inconsistencies. As Protestantism was the only Christianity he was acquainted with, he thought that in rejecting it he was rejecting Christianity. He became an agnostic, but a restless one, ever seeking a solution to the

great problems which concern the origin, condition, and destiny of man. He ran the gamut of religious belief, taking up one system after another, only to reject each one of them in turn. He finally came to the stage where he concluded that it was useless to try to get an answer to not a few paramount problems of life. He remained in this condition for some years, but never at rest.

Meeting a Catholic priest while travelling in a railway coach, he casually touched upon one of his subjects which was uppermost in his mind, the existence of moral evil. The priest gave him the answer of faith. It was like a flash of light in a dark cave. It revealed what was hitherto a mystery. The priest told him that faith taught that God in creating man made him free. In order to be free, man must have the power of choice between good and evil, otherwise he would be necessarily good. If there were no evil in the world, there would be no choice between virtue and vice. God allows moral evil but does not approve of it. He permits the good and the bad to exist alongside each other, and to go on to the end, when he will reward the good and punish the wicked. This was the first time that Chesterton received a satisfactory solution of the problem of evil. It led him into further investigation of the Catholic faith with the result that he became an ardent Catholic. It was after this and similar experiences that he declared that the penny catechism contained more philosophy than all the merely philosophic books of the world.

What Faith Teaches.

The existence of evil is, it is true, a mystery, even with the light of faith thrown on it. But it is a mystery of God's providence, not of the existence of evil as such. God could, if He wished, give us the explanation of His dealings with mankind. But He has not seen fit to do so. Because He does not reveal everything about Himself is no reason why we should not be grateful for what He does reveal. He tells us, by faith, that He is the Creator of the world; that He made all things out of nothing; that He made man like unto Himself, immortal and free; that He gives man the period of this life in order to test his allegiance; that He does this by permitting good and evil, commanding him to do good and avoid evil; that man's destiny is to share the life of God Himself if he prove faithful to God; that He so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son as our Redeemer and example; that to as many as proved true to the precepts and example of His Son, Jesus Christ, He will give the power to become the children of God; that in order to help us if we fall through weakness, or even malice, He has instituted the Sacraments to restore us to spiritual life and His friendship.

All these and other truths, not acquirable by human study, faith teaches us. Faith thus gives the solution to the problem of life. It tells us that we have not here a lasting city but that we seek one which is to come. It proclaims that this life is not solely enjoyment but probation, and that this life is not the goal but the starting point of man. Not to mention other truths of faith, what we have enumerated show us the great value of faith. It explains life, which is otherwise a despairing problem. It gives a motive for patiently bearing the vicissitudes of life, which otherwise might crush us. It is a light guiding our steps unerringly to our home beyond, where our destiny is to become members of the divine family.

Certainty of Faith.

The most consoling and valuable thing about faith is its certainty. It is based on God's veracity. God can neither deceive nor be deceived. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His word will never fail. Consequently, people of faith never doubt about what faith teaches. They may not understand the mysteries of faith but they believe them on God's word. We do not understand how it is that the

world rotates, and whirls through space with incalculable speed, but we believe it on the word of astronomers. Not one person in a million understands the processes of higher mathematics which convince astronomers of what they teach us. But though we do not understand these matters, we have faith in men of science and on their word believe their teaching. We believe that the earth is round, yet most people do not understand how it is that those on the opposite side do not fall off, nor how it is that they stand toward us feet foremost. Scientists, of course, give the explanation, or what they call the explanation, namely gravity, but what gravity is neither they, nor we understand. There are incomprehensible things in our own selves. We do not know how the bread we eat becomes our flesh and blood. All the chemists in the world cannot change bread into living flesh. But it is done by the marvellous chemistry of our own human laboratory, by a process all unknown to ourselves, and without our being aware of the transformation that is taking place.

If nature presents difficulties, we should not be surprised that nature's God should also disclose mysteries. If we do not understand our own bodies, and what is going on in them, we should not be surprised that we do not understand Him who made us. Hence, when God reveals to us something about Himself, the fact that we do not understand it should not concern us. If God only required of us to believe what we understood, He would be asking of us no more than what one man may expect of another. But He is God. He is the Author of truth. He is truth itself. He is also our Creator. He gave us our love of truth, and our reason by which we discern the truth. He wants us, therefore, to show Him the respect and consideration and reverence and trust of believing Him, simply because He declares a thing to be so.

Why God Wants Faith.

It may be asked, why does God want our faith. He wants it because it is the highest homage we can pay Him. By faith, we sacrifice on the altar of God's veracity our noblest faculty, our judgment. By sacrificing what is our most precious possession, we show homage to God. Hence, it is that God says: "I will espouse you to Me in faith." Faith thus becomes the close bond of union and love between Creator and the creature.

It is the wonderful connection between God and man by which, as the Apostle Peter tells us, "we may become partakers of the divine nature." Of course, the faith that thus lovingly unites us to divinity is not mere believing, but the living in accordance with the belief.

Faith without work is dead. The truths of faith are so beautiful and consoling that every one would believe in them if it were not that belief implied conduct in accord with belief. People readily believe what Plato and Aristotle and other sages teach, because belief in these men entails no obligation to live as they prescribe. But if we believe in Christ, we acknowledge Him to be God, and that we must obey Him as God. That makes people apply a rule of belief with regard to Christ which they do not use with any other personage of history.

Comforting Truths.

Everything about Christ and His claims is better attested than are the facts concerning any other historical person. But since faith in Christ means to acknowledge Him as Lord and Master, many reject the grounds of belief regarding Him which they accept for everything else. By faith, the most comforting and sustaining truths are conveyed to man. What, for instance, could mean more to mortals than this truth, "To as many as receive Him He gives the power to become the Sons of God"? What a wonderful destiny that is! To reflect that in the warfare of life, and life is warfare, we may, by being true soldiers of Christ, win a divine inheritance, which will make us children of God!

There are some people who enthuse over those truths of faith which tell of the goodness and love of God, but reject those which tell of His justice. They are willing to believe in a Christ who would let them live as they like, but not in Him who says, "If you will enter into eternal life, keep my commandments." In other words, these people have a wrong idea of faith. They are willing to believe in themselves, not in God. They would believe in God if He would serve them, but they reject Him because they must serve Him if they believe in Him.

That is why Christ is judged by the world by a different standard from that applied to others. But to those who in sincerity seek the truth, Christ is indeed Truth itself. Hence, when He says, "Amen, amen I say unto you, he that believes in Me has life everlasting," we of the faith know that by living as He directs we shall share in His blessed and eternal life.

Immortality.

It is a wonderful comfort for us to know from the very mouth of God that this life is not all of our existence, but only the first stage of it. Without revelation, man might have attained a knowledge of immortality, but the fact is that it was a hazy and unsatisfactory notion of the future life which prevailed outside the sphere of revelation. By faith, we know that our destiny is to share in the glorious life of God. "That we may become partakers of the divine nature." By faith we also know that God is not merely a distant Creator, the First Cause of all that exists, omnipotent and omniscient, but that He is our Father, that He loves us, and that He manifested His love for us by giving His Only-Begotten Son, for our eternal welfare.

The Life of Faith.

The Only-Begotten Son manifested His love for us by giving His life for us after enduring privation and suffering for us from the manger to the cross. Beholding how Christ suffered for us we are prepared if need be, to suffer for Him. Hence, when for the sake of keeping His law we must put up with inconvenience, hardship, or downright suffering, we are strengthened by His example, and for love of Him to do manfully, and to bear with patience, if not joy, whatever the following of Christ entails. That is the life of faith. It is not academic belief in an abstract truth, nor an acceptance of some fact of history which does not personally affect us, but the firm conviction that what Christ, or His accredited Church, teaches, is a living truth which has a bearing on the conduct of life. It is thus that faith not only tells us that in God there are three persons, but that the Second Person became man for our salvation. It shows us the infinite love of God the Father Who gave His Son for us, and also the immeasurable love of God the Son, Who died for us, and that of the Holy Ghost Who sanctifies us by grace, and enables us to attain a share in the blessed life of the Trinity. Faith manifests Christ to us as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the way to eternal life, by His precepts and example; He declares the truth about ourselves and our destiny; and He is the life, the very life of God, which He desires us to share in. It will thus be seen that faith gives us that incentive to virtue which is so necessary in a sinful world, and that certainty about life, which is so comforting in a doubting world. Catholics never doubt about the truths of revelation. They are as certain with regard to them as they are of their own existence.

Difficulties.

Difficulties they may have. But as [Blessed] Cardinal Newman said, ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt. We have difficulties about the nature of electricity and radio and other natural phenomena; but we have no doubts as to the reality of those things. If there were no difficulties about faith, if everything that faith reveals were clear and agreeable to us, what merit would there

be in believing? If a soldier has faith in a general only when the general demonstrates the wisdom of his orders it is hardly faith at all. Soldiers show faith in a commanding officer when they follow him because of the confidence they have in him that he is worthy of their trust, no matter how incomprehensible to them his orders may be.

God is the Commander-in-Chief of mankind. He can neither deceive nor be deceived. He wants us to trust Him and to obey Him because He is God. He does not explain Himself or His ways to us, because to do so would be to act not as Creator but as creature. Faith in Him, therefore, means the firm conviction that in being guided by Him we are being directed aright. It is not opinion, no matter how strong, or persuasion, or the highest probability that constitutes faith, but a conviction which is stronger than anything that reason can give, which constitutes faith. Hence, it was that the martyrs laid down their lives in torments rather than prove false to their faith. It was the same conviction that inspired myriads of Christians in every generation to forego the most imperative cravings of nature and to consecrate their lives to heroic service for God in the cloister or on missionary fields.

It is the same faith today which is the incentive for so many to live honestly and purely in a dishonest and impure world. If faith were not necessary, God would not have enjoined it. But the Apostle tells us that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Living faith, of course, is meant, according to the same Apostle, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor Uncircumcision: but faith that works by charity.”

Faith and Conduct.

There are some persons who are known to profess the faith, but whose lives are a contradiction to all that faith teaches. These do real harm to religion. Their account is with God, who will hold them directly responsible for the great harm they do. Quite often, this class of people make use of their faith as a means to attain some worldly object. In proportion as they proclaim their faith, they live unworthy of it. The worst enemy of the true faith is that person who is known to profess it, but whose conduct belies it. Many a seeker after truth has been repelled from investigating the true faith because some of its adherents have given him a false notion of it by their lives.

Christ has said, “Not they who say Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but they who do the will of My Father.” Faith, unless lived up to, will not avail unto salvation. Faith is all important, but an active faith which manifests itself in right living. For, after all, faith is not the end but only the means. Saint Augustine said, “God who made us without our co-operation, will not save us without our co-operation.” We must do our part. If we do, we shall receive the reward of faith, which is so expressly great that “eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the mind of man to conceive what God has prepared for them that love Him.” It is no less than companionship with God Himself, a share in His immortal blessedness. “But they that shall be accounted worthy shall die no more, for they shall be as angels and are the children of God.”

Obligations.

Sometimes one hears a person say that it is undesirable to have the faith because it imposes so many obligations. As well say that it is undesirable to have the expert prescription of a medical specialist in a serious malady because it imposes certain restrictions and remedies. Christ is the Physician of the soul. By faith, He has prescribed for eternal welfare. Blessed are they who trust Him and live by Him, for He conducts all who follow Him to the blessed end of life and joy everlasting.

PART II.

THE PRACTICE OF FAITH.

The Pearl of Great Price.

ALMOST EVERYONE knows of some individuals who have gone through fire and water in order to become Catholics. Recently a book was published by a non-Catholic inquiring why it was that so many men distinguished for intelligence and culture had gone over to the Church of Rome. Chesterton, Ronald Knox, Benson, Frederick Kinsman and others such, men of altogether superior mind and cultivation have renounced the affiliations of a lifetime in order to embrace the Faith which some Catholics lightly discard. That Faith which has the soundest intellectual and ethical basis of any creed in the world, has from the beginning won the allegiance of the best thinkers and the loftiest characters of mankind. Yet today we see some Catholics give up that Faith as if it were of little or no account. The religion of Christ has given to the world all that is really worthwhile in it. The greatest scholars have been and are attracted to it. The noblest men of history have sacrificed their very lives for it. Many of our forefathers became impoverished or exiled for it. Yet we sometimes see it discarded by the descendants of these very people who so heroically suffered for it. What causes a Catholic to lose the Faith? Several reasons may be assigned why this pearl of great price is thrown away.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. A superficially educated man is a detriment to any profession or creed. Thorough knowledge of any subject makes one careful: partial knowledge tends to rashness. It sometimes happens that a superficially educated Catholic is persuaded by the false logic or data of a superficial opponent. Josh Billings once said, "The trouble with most facts is that they ain't so." It is safe to say that ninety per cent of the statements made so positively against religion, and particularly against the Catholic religion are not true.

Superficial Education.

A superficially educated Catholic might be led astray by such mis-statements, whereas if well-educated he would know how to refute them. The average man would pay no attention to them, because his common-sense would tell him that the Church numbers among her adherents some of the greatest philosophers and scientists in the world, and that he is safe in their company. Moreover, he knows that the Church has Christ's guarantee, and that is sufficient for him. Take the matter of Evolution for instance.

Many of the positive pronouncements of evolutionists during the past quarter of a century are being gradually refuted by scientists themselves. No scientists of distinction today believes that evolution (in the form proposed by Darwin) is a fact, and yet it was given out as a scientific dogma until very recently. (After all, it remains a mere 'Theory of Evolution'.) At most, it is now held to be a theory, and even as a theory many former evolutionists have discarded it. However, that does not prevent a lot of superficial scientists from teaching it as a fact in college halls, and affirming it as such in popular magazines. The pity of it is that some Catholics who wish to be considered learned swallow whole what these shallow dogmatists proclaim, and refuse to listen to the Church guaranteed by Christ to teach the truth and truth only.

Faith and Science.

Great scholars and scientists like Louis Pasteur, Jean Henri Fabre, Gregory Mendel, and Eric Wasmann find no opposition between Faith and Science. But the superficial mind is carried away

by every specious argument of a so-called scientist. Recently France was asked to proclaim who was its greatest man in the entire history of the nation. Its answer was Pasteur. He was a great scientist and a devout Catholic. When men of his type find it no surrender of intelligence to be guided by the Church, surely the average man is wise in being so guided. General Foch, the outstanding military genius of the [First] World War, was as distinguished for his Faith as for his soldierly qualities. The average man shows more wisdom by thinking with these sincere learned men, than does the superficial man who, trusting to his own mediocrity, is led astray by the glamour of false science.

It is well for the superficial man to reflect that the greatest intellects of all time have been faithful children of the Catholic Church. If there have been greater intellects than those of Augustine and Aquinas history does not record them. Both these intellectual giants are canonized saints. Enough has been said on this matter to show that anyone who loses the Faith because of intellectual difficulties, does so, not because of intelligence, but rather because of the misapplication or the lack of it. A religion which can attract to itself from a hostile camp such men of intelligence as [Blessed John Henry] Newman, Manning, Ward, Chesterton, Knox and Benson, surely should satisfy the most exacting test of intelligence.

Loss of the Faith, therefore, which purports to come from intelligent inquiry, is rather a reflection on the inquirer than a judgment on Faith. It has been said by non-Catholics that the Catholic Faith, if granted its first principles, is the most logical and consistent system of thought known to mankind. The first principles are true. The first principles are those of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Away with all religion if Christ was wrong! But Christ was right. And the world was right when it was guided by His truth and wrong when not so guided. Soviet Russia today is proof. The World War of 1914-1918 is proof. The present lawlessness in our own country of the United States is proof. It is back to Christ or on to ruin.

Religious Indifference.

Another reason for the loss of Faith is the prevailing atmosphere of religious indifference with which we are surrounded. Unless one faithfully keeps up the practices of Faith, it will weaken and die in the poisonous environment of present day worldliness.

Faith teaches us that although we must live in the world we must not live for it. This world is not the goal of man but the starting point. We have not here a lasting city, Scripture assures us. The world, however, proclaims that it, and it alone, is man's concern. "Let us eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die," has been the motto of worldlings from the beginning. But the Bible tells us that after death comes judgment. Hence, it is that there is bound always to be opposition between the world and Christ. Christ stands for the spiritual and the eternal, the world for the material and the temporal. What we see, feel and touch makes a strong impression on us. If we see a man shot down by an assassin it makes more impression on us than to read of ten men so assassinated. Yet the assassination of ten is in itself just as real, and much more serious. It is because the world is always near at hand alluring us, and deceiving us that unless we keep faithful to the practices of Faith we shall be seduced by the world. Religious practices make us think in our heart, not superficially.

Neglect of the Practices of Faith.

Religion, if practised, keeps our last end before us and holds us to the right way. Neglect, therefore, of the practices of Faith is a cause why some lose Faith. Faith needs nourishment as well as anything else. Faith may die of neglect just as a child may. Some people starve the Faith and then

wonder that they have lost it. It was a wise Church that, under God's guidance, established so many means of keeping vigorous the life of Faith. Rather, it was the wisdom of God, who entrusted to His Church the Sacraments and other divine helps for the nourishment and well-being of the faithful. If a man drops Sunday Mass, and regular Confession, and Communion, it is only natural that soon he should lose the Faith. "Neither cast ye your pearls before swine," said Our Saviour. God is not going to force Faith in those who do not think it worth while to take care of it. Hence, the neglect of the practices of Faith is religious suicide. Nowadays too many, alas, are taking their own spiritual life.

In the present condition of the world, it is hard even with fidelity to religious duty to live right. Without this fidelity, it is an impossibility. And when one does not live right, Faith is not long vanishing. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" So spoke Jesus Christ who gave His life that we might have life, not this present life, a share in His own blessed life for ever. The Catholic who thinks he can hold the Faith and neglect the practices of Faith is like a man who fancies he can cross the Atlantic without a ship or food.

Human passion.

A third reason why some lose the Faith is human passion. Dante graphically describes man's pilgrimage on earth as beset by three beasts, the lion of pride, the leopard of lust, and the panther of greed. One of these beasts attacks every man on the road from time to eternity. The journey from earth to heaven is not made in a train. Life is probation. We are here to demonstrate by deed not by word whether or not we are worthy to associate with the all-holy God as members of the divine family in that home He has prepared for them that love Him. Only God's lovers will be of His eternal household. This life is the period given to us in order that we may show if we are lovers of God. Our Lord has specified what constitutes love for Him. It is not doing extraordinary things but doing His will in all things, little and great. Hence, He bids us in the "Our Father" to say, "Thy Will be done." Man likes to do His own will, to be a law unto Himself. God wants us to do His will, to obey His law. Hence, He makes doing His will the proof of our love for Him. "If you love Me keep My Commandments."

Eternal Life.

God did not become man to make us rich or famous or to live comfortably or long, or to give us anything acquirable by human effort, but to give us eternal life. "If you will enter into life keep the commandments." He was referring to the life which is real life, the life which knows no end, no sorrow, no pain; that life which is unending joy, immeasurable happiness, inexpressible peace.

"Eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has it entered into the mind of man to conceive what God has prepared for them that love Him." God's estimate of our love is based on our fidelity to His Commandments: "If you love Me, keep my commandments." God commands us to be chaste, to be just, to be truthful. If loving God consisted in desires, or professions of piety, or in doing only what we found profitable, He would have countless lovers. But the test He has adopted for our love is doing His will. At times our pleasure conflicts with duty. His will is that we discharge our duty. Passion may tempt us into forbidden fields of lust. God's will declares, "You shall not commit adultery." Confronted by the leopard of lust we must put it to flight or be its victim. Wealth may beckon us on to its embrace even though in acquiring it we may have to be dishonest, unjust, cruel. It is the panther of greed challenging us in the ascent up the mountain of God and unless we slay it, we shall be slain by it. And then there is the lion of pride, that majestic beast that has so many

victims among the exalted. Pride of place, pride of power, pride of intellect. The highway of life is strewn with the victims of this pretentious beast.

Man's Enemies.

Human passion, human weakness, human vanity, human greed, these are some of the enemies of man which occasion the loss of Faith. Once a person has made himself the slave to any vice, he not only loses balance but also vision. He does not see things in perspective. He over-emphasizes whatever serves his desires. Consequently, the things of the spirit lose their value for him. Eternity is clouded by the mist of vice, and the vile things of earth alone appear desirable. By degrees, the victim of sin worships himself instead of God. It is "My will be done," not "Thy will be done." One's dominant vice becomes a deity and the victim worships at its shrine. Whether it be pride, greed, or lust that grips a man, he is, while in its grip, a subject of Satan's, not of Christ's.

Sinful indulgence.

The Church of God knows man's weakness. It was because Christ realized the strength of passion that He instituted the sacrament of Penance. But if man turns aside from the sacraments how can he free himself of sin? And if a man abide in sin, it is almost impossible not to lose the Faith. Hence, it is that some lose the Faith because they have given themselves over to a career of sinful indulgence. The man whose wealth is ill-gotten will find it comfortable to persuade himself that Faith is a figment of a weak imagination. The man who disregards chastity will find it desirable to crowd the chastisements of sin out of his mind, and to persuade himself that Faith is a myth. The man who holds power unjustly will not relinquish it readily, and because Faith condemns him, he persuades himself that Faith is not the thing for successful and strong men. Faith has never been abandoned because it is not sublime, but because it is too sublime.

They who lose the Faith do not replace it with anything higher, better, more efficacious for virtue, or more consoling in the vicissitudes of life. No one ever lost the Faith because his ideals were too high, but rather because they were too low. No one ever lost the Faith whose life was made more virtuous by the loss. The saints are the heroes of Christianity. They were the children of the Faith. The world was better for their presence in it. No man who lived up to the Faith was ever an evil influence in the world. Rather in proportion as he lived according to the Faith was he a source of light and strength to all those who came within the circle of his influence. So, if it be asked why some people lost the Faith the answer is that Faith is a divine gift which, if not treasured and cared for, will be seized by the lion of pride or the panther of greed or the leopard of lust. Superficial knowledge, human weakness, and finally vice are reasons which may be assigned for the loss of Faith.

Wealth and Respectability.

Another reason may be given for casting aside the pearl of great price. It is the respectability and numbers of those outside the Faith. This reason is really included under that of superficial knowledge or of pride. However, as it is a subtle temptation it may be advisable to give it separate consideration. When one sees the wealth, distinction, influence, and social standing of a large part of those who are outside the Faith, one wonders if all those people can be in error. Doubtless, the same question arose when the Apostles and their handful of followers preached the Gospel in Rome. Everybody who was anybody there was a pagan. The aristocracy and wealth of Rome were arrayed against the lowly Christians. Yet the lowly Christians were right and the lordly Romans wrong. In Jerusalem Christ was opposed by the leaders of the people and the society of that day. They

represented the wealth and the aristocracy of Israel. They were many, whereas Christ and His disciples were few. The humble Christ was right and the haughty Jews were wrong. A majority is not always right. Christ was a minority.

The respectability and numbers of Protestants are doubtless a temptation to those of the Faith. But Faith, like every virtue, is subject to temptation. If there were no temptation regarding Faith, there would be little merit in believing. In fact if our Faith were not tried by temptation, it might not be manifest whether or not we had Faith. Everyone may pass as brave if no danger threatens. One's honesty is not evident if one has never had an opportunity of stealing. Temptation does not make but shows the thief. Danger does not make but marks the coward. So Faith, if there were no temptations regarding it, would not be put to the test. Our chastity is tempted, our honesty is tempted, our honour is tempted. Our Faith also is tempted. But temptation only serves to make our Faith glorious and meritorious. Faith is God's most precious gift to man. It has for its purpose to raise us up to companionship with Him. "I will espouse you to me in faith." By it, we may become partakers of the divine nature. The millions of martyrs realized the value of Faith by dying for it. We may show our appreciation of it by living by it, and if need be by dying for it.
