

The Catholic Journal.

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BIBLE READING.

Why Catholics Should Carefully Study the Sacred Writings.

The Practice Will Confirm Our Faith and Increase Our Devotion—How Every Catholic Doctrine is Vindicated in the Holy Scriptures.

The old, persistent, hereditary prejudice, which so long was made to do duty among our Protestant friends when assailing the Catholic Church, viz., that that church was opposed to the reading of the Bible by the common people, is much less active in these days than it used to be, says the Catholic Review. This result, we take it,

source of error, heresy and schism. The Apostle well describes the result of such a principle when he says to the Corinthians: "How is this then brethren? When you come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation." Of course, if the Bible is the only rule of faith and every man is bound to read and interpret it for himself what else can you expect? We need not speculate on the subject, we have the practical result before our own eyes. Two hundred and forty-eight Protestant religious sects in this country according to the testimony of the United States census and the leading sects divided into families of from seven to seventeen divisions, all under a common name,

ing. The nature and constitution of the Church; the sacramental system; the doctrine of Baptism and Holy Eucharist and the other Sacraments; the office of bishops; the supremacy of Peter; the unity of the Church, above all the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ which glows from almost every page of the New Testament, these great fundamental doctrines of the Church, not to mention others, will be found by the unsophisticated mind clearly revealed and abundantly inculcated; though the Catholic does not really need this direct confirmation of the teaching of his Church, yet it is certainly a great satisfaction to read the testimony in its original source, especially that he may be able to quote it in defence of the teaching of the

seem more nighly the inestimable blessing of having a Bible to read? It is the Word of God. In it Christ our Lord speaks to us as man to man. And what a wonderful message it is. Every day the true Christian reads it with increasing wonder and delight. The simplicity and naturalness of the language; the beauty and sublimity of thought are really captivating. He has no doubt about the truth of what he reads. There is a verisimilitude about it that speaks in unmistakable terms of its genuineness. The writers are evidently no enthusiasts or wilful deceivers, but honest, sincere, earnest men. There is not the slightest appearance of deceit in the whole narrative. The few "obiter dicta," the slight apparent discrepancies which the

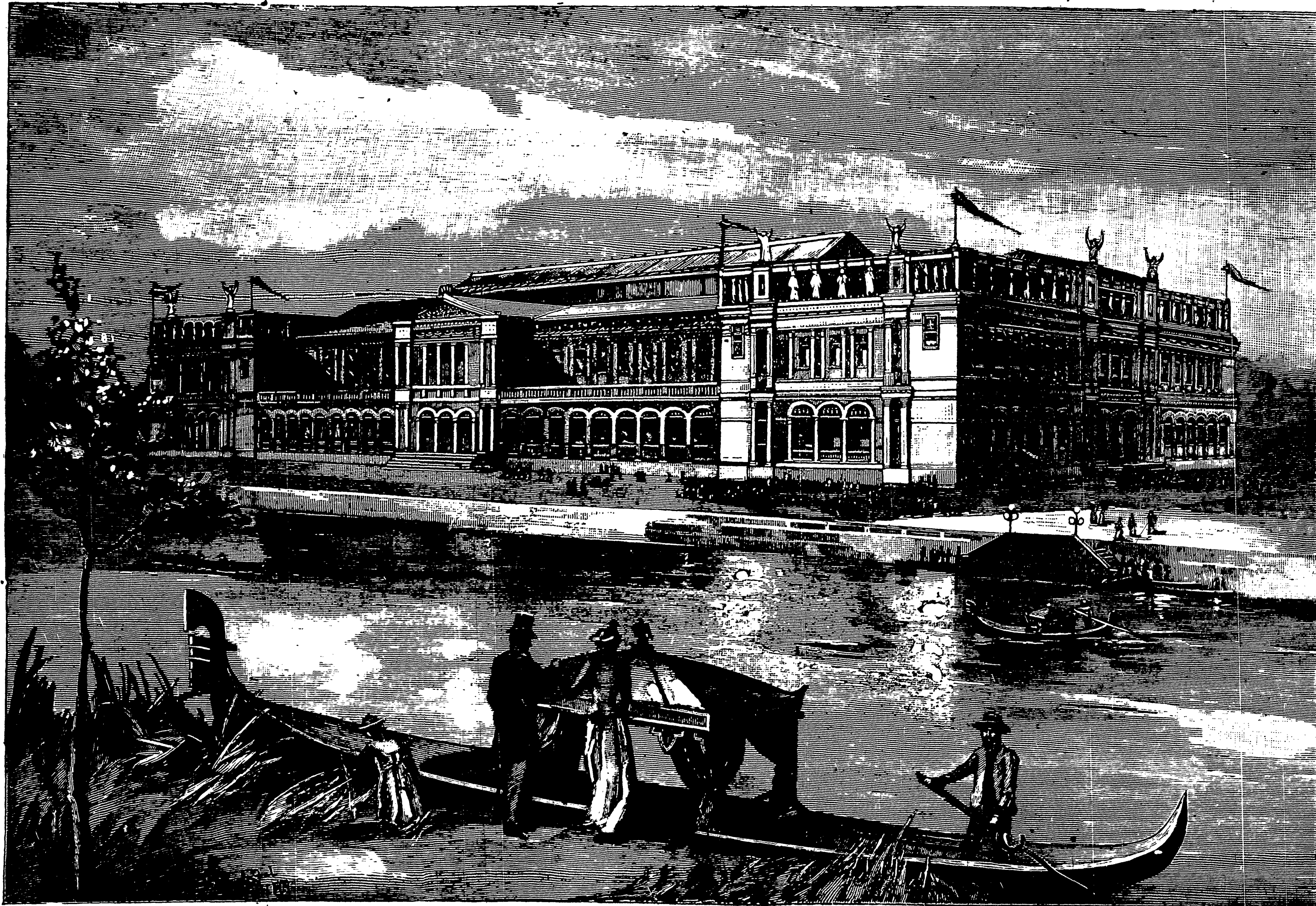
Natural Versus Unnatural Discipline.

A great advantage of natural discipline is, that it is a discipline of pure justice, and will be recognized as such by every child. Whoso suffers more than the evil which in the order of nature results from his own misbehavior, is much less likely to think himself wrongly treated than if he suffers an artificially inflicted evil. Take the case of a boy who is habitually careless of his clothes, scrambles through hedges without caution and is utterly regardless of mud. If he is beaten or sent to bed he is apt to consider himself ill-used; and is more likely to brood over his injuries than to repent of his transgressions. But suppose he is compelled to rectify so far as possible the harm he has done, to clean

The Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minn., have purchased a handsome residence in a beautiful location at Rock Island, Ill., for \$5,000, and will establish a mercy hospital at once.

Archbishop Navary, the head of the missions in New Guinea, has issued an appeal for missionaries to spread the faith. He states that there are fifty centres in the country to receive it. There are 4,000,000 natives to be converted.

Antonio Franchi, once one of the leading promoters of irreligion and atheism in Italy, and the editor of a paper, the "Difesa," which was notorious for its fierce hostility to everything Christian, is now a lay-brother novice in the Carmelite House at Genoa.



THE WORLD'S FAIR COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION. WOMEN'S BUILDING.

has been brought about partly by the progress of light and a better knowledge of Catholic teaching and practice and partly by a general weakening of faith in the Bible on the part of Protestants themselves. The so-called "higher criticism" seems to be playing fearful havoc among our Protestant friends so far as faith in Christianity is concerned, and we have now the curious spectacle presented of Protestantism, which once swore by the Bible and the Bible alone and accused the Catholic Church of wishing to destroy it now, itself laboring to destroy faith in the Bible while the maligned Catholic Church is laboring earnestly for its defense and preservation.

Perhaps we should have mentioned another cause of failure to appreciate the Bible and that is the very general neglect among Protestants to read the Sacred Book. There was a time when every Protestant who made any pretension to practical Christianity felt it to be a conscientious duty to read a portion of Holy Scripture at least once every day. At the same time the Bible was made, as it is now indeed to a considerable extent, the chief text-book in Sunday School and Bible class instruction. When the children graduated from the Sunday School they entered the Bible class which was taught by the pastor and embraced young and old members of his flock. An excellent plan, certainly.

If it be said that Catholics are not exempt from the charges of neglect in the general reading of the Bible it may be said in reply that one reason is that we do not take the Bible alone for our guide. "To Catholics the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth." The Church is the living interpreter of Holy Scripture. In their view the Bible and Bible alone theory is a most prolific

yet all differing from each other in some minor particulars yet esteemed of sufficient importance to justify separation.

It would not be strange if the Catholic Church had actually put some restriction upon the reading of the Scriptures if for nothing else but to avoid the possibility of such a sad state of things as exists among our Protestant friends. But she has not done it. There is actually no rule or law of the Church restricting the reading of the Bible. Bibles and Testament are for sale in all our Catholic book stores in great variety of style and price, as low as fifteen cents for a New Testament, and anybody can possess and read them as much as he pleases. Of course Catholics do not read the Bible with the idea of finding out the truth. They have the truth already, taught them by the Church, and if they are in any doubt on any subject, they go to their pastor or spiritual director to be instructed. This is on the scriptural principle that, "the priest's lips should keep knowledge and the people should seek the law at his mouth."

Still, the people, especially intelligent Catholics, should read the Bible. They are not restricted but encouraged to do so, and we do not hesitate to say that great advantages may be derived from doing so. First, the reading, especially of the New Testament, and the devotional portions of the Old, will have a tendency to confirm our faith and increase our devotion. Instead of Catholics having reason to be afraid of the Bible on account of its alleged opposition to Catholic doctrine, (than which there could not be a greater mistake) it is surprising how completely they will discover every Catholic doctrine vindicated; and how forced the construction of numerous passages in order to establish Protestant teach-

Church when assailed by Protestant objectors.

This, by the way, is a very important matter, especially for our children and young people. We cannot be too careful in storing their minds with the very language of Holy Scripture especially on all mooted points of Catholic doctrine. Otherwise, they are sure to be taken at a disadvantage when confronted with a Protestant whose mind has been stored with favorite proof-texts and who is infallibly certain that the Bible is on his side.

But the Bible should be read especially for devotion and edification. We all need to have our spiritual taste cultivated and developed. Somehow the great majority of people seem to have a natural repugnance to spiritual reading, especially to reading the Bible. In most cases no doubt it is because they have not been educated to it. Blessed is that child whose father or mother has been accustomed even from infancy to teach him not only to reverence but to love the Bible. We are creatures of habit, and if we have been accustomed to hear beautiful Bible stories, either from our parents or our teachers in childhood and youth, we shall naturally have learned to love the Bible, and, if encouraged to do so, to read the Bible for ourselves. Our Bible histories such as are used in our Sunday and day schools, as also in our colleges and high schools are admirable helps in the cultivation of a taste for Bible reading, the great danger being the making of them a mere textbook like the common studies—a necessary part of the curriculum indeed—but too often inculcated and recited in a perfunctory manner, without realizing its sacredness and entering fully into the moral beauty and touching pathos and sublimity of the lessons. Why, indeed, should we not all be

"higher criticism" is so busy in pointing out do not disturb the Catholic. On the contrary, they furnish convincing evidence that there was no collusion—no intention to deceive in the writers.

Above all is the devout reader charmed with the beautiful ideal of the Christian life; the elevated motives and incitements to virtue; the touching pathos of many of the lessons; the disinterested benevolence; the holy charity; above all the glowing hopes of the reward of perseverance in the life beyond the grave.

O, it is indeed beautiful; it is grand and glorious beyond description. The only wonder is that even Catholics are so slow to appreciate and enter into the spirit of their glorious privileges. Surely the best cure for coldness and distrust toward the Bible is the constant and devout study of the Bible itself.

Oh, souls, whose only desire is repose and pleasure, did you but know how advantageous it is to suffer, you would no longer seek your consolation in anything whatsoever.

A careful education is a great importance, for the mind is easily formed in youth. Habit becomes nature, and after a while we conform with pleasure to that we at first did with repugnance. —Seneca.

That is nature which we come to by culture, not that which we come to before we are unfolded. It is absurd to look for nature in youth or in barbarism. Nature is to be looked for in civilization and ripe manhood. —Ward Beecher.

There is no saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, "That a man does not know how to pass his time." It would have been but ill-spoken by Methuselah in the nine hundred and sixty-ninth year of his life. —Cowley.

off the mud with which he has covered himself, and to mend the tear as well as he can, will he not feel that the evil is one of his own producing? Will he not in spite of his irritation, recognize more or less clearly the justice of the arrangement? Moreover, the tempers both of parents and children are much less liable to be ruffled under this system than under the ordinary system. —Spencer's "Education."

Drifting.
The most hopeless man in the world is the man who is drifting. If he fell into a great error, he might almost startle himself into reformation. But he goes with the current, simply because to go against it would require a strong, sturdy, manly fight, and of that he is incapable. Be sure of this—the man who drifts will drift towards evil. No man ever drifted into goodness by chance. To become good means battling, working, enduring, tramping, and a long, severe fight. But any old wreck can drift along aimlessly towards the frowning rocks of destruction. Are you drifting? Are you on a rudderless vessel?

Ecclesiastical Notes.
The Sisters of Notre Dame have accepted a mission in the Congo Free State in Africa.

Bulgaria is to have two Catholic Bishops soon erected. Negotiations to this end are under headway.

Steps are now being taken for the beatification of the Irish Dominican martyr under Elizabeth. The names of 106 are presented and their cause is being introduced.

Bishop McNairy of Albany, N. Y., has been nominated to the vacancy in the board of regents of the State University, made vacant by the death of the late Francis Kernan.

The Stream of Time.

A child sits in a little skiff on the Mississippi river when it is swollen by a freshet, and plies the oar, and glides swiftly on his course; and, as he looks upon the banks, and sees them fly rapidly past him, he fondly thinks that it is he that is making such headway. He is doing something towards it; but if he wants to know how much, let him turn his skiff around and try to row up stream. What gives him his speed? The dip of his oar? A little of it. But the vast sweep of the Mississippi current is that which makes the dip of his oar so like an eagle's wing for speed. We are borne down the stream of time by an irresistible Divine power; and though we are weak and ignorant, and unskilled, and though our efforts are intermittent, we are under a Divine constitution by which abundantly more will come from our labor than we have reason to think. —Beecher.

Prayer is the only dormitive I take to bedward, and I need no other lullaby than this to make me sleep; after which I close mine eyes in security, content to take my leave of the sun, and sleep until the resurrection.—Sir T. Browne.

The gems of God's thought broke and kindled into stars; its rhythm into their great cycles; its perseverance into their unerring punctuality; the glow of His meditation into sunshine, and flooded heaven and earth with streams of color and of warmth.

The Catholic Club, of Louisville, Ky., has purchased a large house, which will be entirely remodeled to suit the need of the club. A lecture hall and gymnasium are to be provided. The organization is very prosperous, and has a membership of 250.