

1920

CSR-2

THE CATHOLIC LADDER AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITY
IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

by

Philip M. HANLEY

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Theology of the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts (Theology).



OTTAWA

1965

Facultés Eccl. U.O.
Bibliothèque - Library
233 Main Ottawa, Canada

UMI Number: EC55468

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform EC55468
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	i
PART ONE: CREATION OF THE PREACHING AID.....	26
I. The Sahale Stick of the Stick from Heaven.....	29
II. The Sahale Stick becomes the Catholic Ladder...	46
PART TWO: NINE EDITIONS OF THE BLANCHET LADDER	68
III. Nisqually Ladder.....	71
IV. Quebec Ladder.....	92
V. Cowichan Ladder.....	101
VI. Namur Ladder.....	114
VII. St. Paul Ladder.....	119
VIII. Brussels Ladder.....	124
IX. Paris Ladder.....	131
X. Spanish Ladder.....	146
XI. New York Ladder.....	160
PART THREE: OTHERS USE BLANCHET'S IDEA.....	169
XII. First Protestant Ladder.....	170
XIII. De Smet Ladder.....	179
XIV. Second Protestant Ladder.....	204
XV. Lacombe Ladder.....	224

TABLE OF CONTENTS

iii

CONCLUSION.....	247
APPENDIX "A" - Note attached to Nisqually Ladder	251
APPENDIX "B" - Blanchet's letter 1842.....	253
APPENDIX "C" - Explanations on Spanish Ladder.	257
APPENDIX "D" - De Smet's Ladder explained.....	264
APPENDIX "E" - Facsimile of original Sahale Stick.....	271
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	273

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS RESEARCH

A.A.C.L.	Archives of the American College, Louvain, Belgium.
A.A.M.	Archives of the Archdiocese of Montreal, Canada.
A.A.P.	Archives of the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.
A.A.Q.	Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec, Canada.
A.A.S.B.	Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, Canada.
A.D.V.	Archives of the Diocese of Victoria, Canada.
A.Mt.A.	Archives of Mt. Angel Abbey (rare book room), Mt. Angel, Oregon, U.S.A.
A.P.F.L.	Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon, France (now Paris).
A.S.S.A.	Archives of the Sisters of St. Ann, Victoria, Canada.
B.S.H.B.	Bulletin de la Société historique de St. Boniface, St. Boniface, Canada.
L.	Letter (correspondence).
R.M.D.Q.	Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec qui sont secourues par l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi, Québec.

INTRODUCTION

For 20 centuries the Church has proclaimed the Gospel of Christ. Yet, in the 20th century theologians are asking the question: what is preaching?

A general disaffection towards preaching, both on the part of the hearer and preacher, alike, coupled with the problems of a de-christianized Europe, focused the attention of Europe's pastors and theologians upon this essential function of the Church. And what began in Europe soon caught the attention of the world. The question facing the theologian resolved itself to this: if preaching has lost its savour wherewith will it be salted?

The breakthrough came by way of exegetical research. New insights into the origins of the New Testament opened up a new vision of the nature of preaching. The apostles had first preached the Gospel to non-believers, and only later addressed the New Testament books to the already-existing Christian communities. In the Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse, one theme kept re-appearing. It was the kerygma,¹ the message which had been preached commonly by all the apostles before the first word of the New

¹ C.H. DODD is credited with making a particular contribution with the appearance of his small but impressive little book in 1936, The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1963.

Testament had been written. This was the Christian message, the announcement of a sacred history, of the events in which God revealed His plan to raise men to participation in His divine life. From Pentecost to the year 50 the apostles preached this saving history. With the Epistle to the Thessalonians, and in the succeeding New Testament Books, the sacred writers amplified, explained and applied this message.

If the apostles preached a saving history and the 20th century preacher proclaimed a doctrine whose religious capital consisted, in large part, in a complex exposition of dogmatic and moral truths, it became readily apparent that preaching could regain its savour by a return to its sources, to the central message preached by the apostles, a return to the proclamation of the saving events in which God entered into human history. A new understanding of the nature of preaching was to be found in a re-examination of the traditional preaching of the Church.²

² For a study of the theology of preaching in the light of the apostolic preaching, see: Domenico GRASSO, Il kerigma e la predicazione, in Gregorianum, 41 (1960), pp. 424-450, which includes an extensive bibliography. This work is available to the English-speaking reader, in The Word Readings in Theology, New York, P.J. Kennedy & Sons, [1964], pp. 220-248, under the title: Kerygma and Preaching.

The actuality of the problem of preaching gives rise to a host of questions which remain to be studied, among which is the apostolic kerygma in its primitive and its later forms, as it is conditional upon its historical setting and in its permanent significance.³ This phase of preaching introduces the question of the Church's consciousness through the centuries of her traditional preaching, of the continuity of the apostolic tradition, the proclamation of salvation-history. The actuality of theological interest in preaching explains the merit of research into the question of preaching in its historical development. The study of preaching in one historical moment but of universal interest forms the basis of this present study.

Two missionaries, Frs. Blanchet and Demers, arrived in North America's Pacific Northwest one hundred years ago. Confronting Indian tribes who had not yet heard the message of the Gospel, the missionaries rejected the structured format of the "traditional" catechism in favour of the historico-biblical approach of the Bible.

Their approach to preaching the Gospel is epitomized in the creation of the Catholic ladder. This preaching aid

³ See: Rudolf SCHNACKENBURG, New Testament Theology Today, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1963, p. 51.

is more than just an aid to preaching. It encompasses the missionaries' concept of the nature of preaching, both in regard to their first proclamation of the Gospel to non-believers, as well as their preaching to those already of the faith. In Oregon they encountered the Indians (non-believers), as well as the settlers (believers). Because of the very nature of the Catholic ladder, which implemented and interpreted their concept of preaching, this preaching aid deserves attention.

Interest in the Catholic ladder, which is the subject of this research, is shared by the theologian, the catechist and the historian. The Catholic ladder, although by no means unknown to the historian, is shrouded in misconceptions as to its origin, its development and the influence which it exerted on later preaching aids. This study will attempt to throw some light upon its creation and evolution. The manner in which the missionaries presented the Christian message offers the catechist a sound approach to religious education. The theologian will discover valuable insights which gave birth to and underlie the Catholic ladder. This subject permits of two distinct approaches in a study of the missionaries' preaching. One centres upon the Catholic ladder itself. The other seeks to understand the missionaries' concept of preaching in the light of the apostolic preaching, as evidenced in this

preaching aid. Each approach complements the other. In this thesis we will follow the first approach. We will not, therefore, concern ourselves directly with the missionaries' clear distinction between the content of the Gospel preached to non-believers (missionary preaching), as distinct from the content preached to those already of the faith (catechetical preaching), of the core or central theme of their preaching, of the end of missionary preaching (first proclamation of the Gospel) as distinct from the end of catechetical preaching (preaching directed to those already of the faith), nor their attempt to dispose the non-believer to the Christian message. These questions are of interest to the second approach and have been treated by the writer in another work.⁴ In this present thesis we will direct our attention to the Catholic ladder, its creation, evolution, and its influence on later preaching aids. This approach might appear to favour the historian. But it will

⁴ Frs. Blanchet and Demers and Missionary Preaching in Oregon, a doctoral thesis submitted to the faculty of theology at the Gregorian University, Rome, April, 1965. This thesis centres upon the missionaries' concept of the content, core or central theme, and end of missionary preaching, (the first proclamation of the message of the Gospel to non-believers), the signs by which the Gospel is recognized as of divine origin, and the disposition of the non-believers to the acceptance of the message of salvation (pre-evangelization). Although its presentation pre-dates this present work, this thesis grew out of the writer's interest in the Catholic ladder.

become apparent that this study offers both to the theologian and the catechist insights into the nature of preaching which are inherent in the Catholic ladder and in tune with the renewal of the 20th century. It should be pointed out that no attempt will be made to distinguish between missionary and catechetical preaching, and the Catholic ladder will be described in the course of this study either as a 'preaching aid' or a 'catechetical aid'. What is said of preaching has direct application to catechetics. In this research catechetical preaching or catechesis enjoys the wide interpretation of the presentation of the Christian message, whether it be to non-believers or to those already of the faith.

The writer's interest in the subject of the Catholic ladder arose out of a realization that Frs. Blanchet and Demers in creating their preaching aid had hit upon an approach to preaching which was not only most effective, but distinct from the catechetical tradition maintaining in their day. Further research convinced the writer that much of what was being said about salvation-history, the kerygma, and the nature of preaching found an echo in the missionaries' approach. But the more the writer attempted to learn about this preaching aid, the more confusion abounded about its creation, its evolution and its influence upon later

preaching aids. This study became an attempt to clarify these problems.

Sources

The confusion that reigns as to the significance of the bars, marks and symbols appearing on the Catholic ladders arose from the attempt to explain their significance without recourse to the missionaries' writings. The essential document (see Appendix "B") was to be found in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec. It consists of a letter written by Fr. Blanchet in 1842. In this letter the missionary sets out for his bishop the use of this new preaching aid in Oregon and then proceeds to explain in detail the manner in which the Catholic ladder is used in preaching to the Indians and in the instruction of the Indian wives and the children of the settlers. In great detail Fr. Blanchet explains the significance of the bars, marks and symbols. Further, he explains how they have altered the catechism to fit the requirements of a catechesis which is presented within the context of salvation-history. This document opened up the whole question of the missionaries' approach to preaching and provided the key to an understanding of their ladders which were constantly being reformed.

The letters of the missionaries will be used extensively in this research. The sum of the documents, rich as

they are in the history of Oregon, have remained to date little known. Individual archives have been consulted but few studies have attempted to gather together the letters of the missionaries.

The Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec, which See held jurisdiction over the Pacific Northwest in the early days, is an important source for this study. The Archives of the Archdiocese of Portland, U.S.A., contains a wealth of documentation, particularly the correspondence received by the missionaries from their bishops, their correspondence among themselves, as well as second copies of many letters written by the missionaries. The second copies will be recognized in the course of this study by the fact that they are to be found in Portland and not in the place to which they were sent. They are manuscript copies. The Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, Canada, and the Archives of the Sisters of St. Ann, Victoria, Canada, contain source material. The Archives of the Diocese of Victoria, the Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon, France (now Paris), and the Archives of the American College, Louvain, Belgium, will be cited in this research. The Archives of the Archdiocese of Montreal provides much historical data, relative to the establishment of the Church in Oregon.

Valuable also are the Reports of the Propagation of the Faith, published in Quebec, and based upon the letters of the missionaries. Their value lies in making available letters that are now lost. Less important to this study but of interest are the Report of the Propagation of the Faith, at Lyon, France.

Some attempt has been made to locate as many extant Catholic ladders as possible. The writer is very much aware that the very appearance of this study will prove his findings incomplete. But it is hoped that those extant copies hidden away will come to light, for they represent a valuable part of Americana and Canadiana.

One book enjoys a special mention: the "Historical Sketches of the Catholic Church in Oregon." This work is essential for any student of the missionaries' writings, for it alone can put order into the vast amount of source material. It should be noted that in this research the second edition is being used. The "Sketches" first appeared in the Portland, Oregon, "Catholic Sentinel", from February 7th, 1878, to September 12th of that same year. A limited edition in book form was issued which represents the first edition. Fr. J.B. Boulet, Ferndale, Washington, republished it in the "Glad Tidings," a monthly magazine which ran to 100 copies. The second edition owes its appearance to Fr. Boulet. This edition "will be more

correct than the original edition because the copy I have has been thoroughly corrected by the author."⁵

Much valuable information appearing in this study owes its source to personal interviews and correspondence with informed persons. Other sources will appear in the bibliography, and in the course of this research.

The writer has taken the liberty to make one change, consistently, in translating all documents in French. The missionaries, as others of the period, spoke of the Indians as 'Savages'. This would be most offensive to the Indian of our day, and therefore, 'sauvage' is translated 'Indian'.

Throughout the documents cited proper names of places, Indian tribes, and Indians, have undergone considerable change. However, the missionaries used phonetic spellings and proper names will be readily recognized. Updating of proper names is done wherever called for.

On occasion throughout this study reference will be made to both missionaries, Frs. Blanchet and Demers, when it might appear that Fr. Blanchet, alone, should be credited. Fr. Blanchet, as Vicar General, did most of the writing, but it would be imprudent to suggest that he, alone,

⁵ Clarence B. BAGLEY, Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon, Seattle, Lowman & Hanford Company, 1939, vol. 1, preface.

was the author of any given idea. Exceptions will be made where it is clearly set out that he deserves the credit, as for example, in the creation of the Sahale stick, the primitive Catholic ladder.

Historical background

The nature of this research suggests that it would be helpful to situate our study within the context of the establishment of the Catholic Church in Oregon. This addition to our introduction will obviate unnecessary reference in the body of the thesis.

The chronicle of Catholic history in the Pacific Northwest opens with January 1, 1743. On this date two Catholic explorers from Lower Canada, the brothers Pierre and François La Vérendrye,⁶ in search of the western sea, discovered the Rocky Mountains.⁷ Beyond that range lay the Pacific Northwest.

6 Charles E. DELAND, The Verendrye Explorations and Discoveries, in The South Dakota Historical Collections, vol. VII, 1914, pp. 114-125. See also: Wilfred P. SCHOENBERG, A Chronicle of the Catholic History of the Pacific Northwest 1743-1960, Portland, Catholic Sentinel Printery, 1962, p. 1; afterwards referred to as: SCHOENBERG, Chronicle.

7 Journal of the Voyage made by Chevalier de la Verendrye with one of his brothers in search of the Western Sea addressed to Marguis de Beauharnois, translated from the French (Margry Papers) by Anne E. Elegen, in Oregon Historical Quarterly, vol. XXVI, 1925, no. 2, p. 121.

To the Franciscan Friars goes the honour of being the first missionaries in this land beyond the Rockies. In the month of June, 1774, Fathers Juan Crespi and Thomas de la Pena, Chaplains aboard the frigate Santiago, sailed from California into Northern Pacific waters, arriving in July of that year off the coast of Queen Charlotte Islands at about the fifty-third degree of latitude north.⁸ Fr. Benito Sierra came ashore with the Spanish party who first set foot on the Northwest coast, July 14, 1775. They planted a cross at forty-seven degrees and twenty minutes latitude north.⁹ The first Mass in the Pacific Northwest was celebrated, June 24, 1789, at Nootka on Vancouver Island.¹⁰ In the summer of 1793 Fr. Magin Catala, also a Franciscan Friar, arrived at the Spanish post in Nootka Sound, as

8 Zephyrin ENGELHARDT, The Missions and Missionaries of California, second edition, Santa Barbara, Mission Santa Barbara, 1930, vol. II, pp. 173, 342; afterwards referred to as: ENGELHARDT, Missions of California. See also: Diary of the Sea Expedition made by the Frigate Santiago in which went the Father Preachers Fray Juan Crespi and Fray Tomas de la Pena, in Herbert Eugene BOLTON, Fray Juan Crespi, Missionary Explorer on the Pacific Coast, 1769-1774, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1927, pp. 307-366.

9 ENGELHARDT, Missions of California, p. 180.

10 E. O. S. SCHOLEFIELD, British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present, Vancouver, S. J. Clarke, [n.d.], vol. I, p. 142.

resident priest. He remained in this area for thirteen months.¹¹ As the British Flag was raised at Nootka, March 28, 1794, the Spanish missionary chapter came to a close.¹²

The lure of the fur trade in the early years of the nineteenth century opened up the Oregon Territory¹³ to the trapper and the settler and prefaced the permanent establishment of the Catholic Church in this territory to

¹¹ Zephyrin ENGELHARDT, The Holy Man of Santa Clara or Life, Virtues, and Miracles of Fr. Magin Catala, O.F.M., San Francisco, James H. Barry Company, 1909, pp. 19-20.

¹² William Ray MANNING, The Nootka Sound Controversy, in Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1904, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1905, pp. 281-478. A commentary on this Spanish chapter of the Church in the Pacific Northwest is given by Fr. A.J. Brabant, a priest of the Diocese of Victoria and a missionary on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, 1875-1908. "Beyond these indifferent signs of religious practices [some stories passed on of two stout, baldheaded priests, a Spanish hymn, a prayer and a special celebration of Christmas] which may have had their origin at the time of settlement by the Spaniards at Nootka, I have never been able to detect any signs of a Spanish religious influence" (A. J. BRABANT, Vancouver Island and its Missions, in Charles MOSER, Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island, Kekawis, Acme Press, [c1926], pp. 10-12).

¹³ In the early days this term had a very general connotation: "The territory of Oregon, both American and English, is that part of North America situated beyond the Rocky-Mountains between the 42° and 54° 40' parallel. It is bounded on the North by the possessions of the Russians, on the East by the Rocky Mountains, in the South by California and West by the Pacific Ocean" (P. J. DE SMET, Missions de l'Orégon & Voyages aux montagnes Rocheuses l'Athabasca et du Saskatchewan en 1845-46, Gand, Ve Vander Schelden, [1848], pp. 9-10).

the west of the Rocky Mountains. Already, in 1808, the North West Fur Company had posts on the Fraser River,¹⁴ the Pacific Fur Company under John Jacob Astor of New York set up a post at the mouth of the Columbia in 1811,¹⁵ and by 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company had absorbed its rivals and controlled all trading in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁶ The great waterways of the Oregon territory became the highways of a rich commerce.

Many of the early 'voyageurs',¹⁷ impressed with the possibilities of this new land, decided to take up permanent

¹⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica A New Survey of Universal Knowledge, Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., [c1929-1952], vol. 16, p. 884; hereafter referred to as: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 884.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 884.

¹⁷ Although the fur trade and exploring expeditions engaged men wherever they could be found, they relied in large part upon French Canadians (F.N. BLANCHET, Historical Sketches of the Catholic Church in Oregon During the Past Forty Years 1838-1878, second edition, Ferndale, 1910, p. 2); these Sketches originally appeared in the Portland, Oregon, 'Catholic Sentinel' in 1878 and were corrected by the author before his death in 1883; afterwards referred to as: BLANCHET, Sketches. See also: Charles WILKES, Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the years, 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, Philadelphia, Lea & Blanchard, 1845, vol. IV, p. 379; afterwards referred to as: WILKES, Narrative. A number of Iroquois Indians were also engaged (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 2; see also: WILKES, Narrative, p. 379).

residence in the Oregon Territory.¹⁸ In the fertile Willamette¹⁹ Valley, on what became known as French Prairie,²⁰ the nucleus of a prosperous agricultural community settled along the Willamette River. Father Blanchet explains how the settlement began:

There remained in the country three French Canadians, remnants of the old expedition of Hunt and Astor, viz: Stephen Lucier, one of the former, and Joseph Gervais and Louis Labonté of the latter. S. Lucier being tired of leading a wandering life began in 1829 to cultivate the land near Fort Vancouver, and getting dissatisfied with his first choice, he left it in 1830, and, removing to the Willamette Valley, settled a few miles above Champoeg, then called by the Canadians 'Campement de Sable'. Following his example the two others, J. Gervais and L. Labonté followed him in 1831 and settled some distance south, one on the right and the other on the left side of the river. Some old servants of the Hudson Bay Co., being discharged from further services, went over to them and increased

18 Employees of the Hudson's Bay Company were engaged for five years and after their service expired the Company was obliged to send them back to England or Canada, if they desired it (WILKES, Narrative, pp. 329-330).

19 Fr. Blanchet used the spelling 'Wallamette' and explains that 'Wallamet' or 'Willamette' are corruptions of the Indian name for the river (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 30).

20 Ibid., p. 2. See also: Encyclopaedia Britannica, p. 884. Small settlements could be found at the 28 Hudson's Bay Posts, also at Cowlitz and a few south of the Columbia River, other than French Prairie (Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec qui sont secourues par l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi, Québec, Fréchette & Cie, 1840, no. 2, pp. 30-31; afterwards referred to as: R.M.D.Q.).

their number. The good and generous Dr. McLaughlin²¹ encouraged the colony and helped it with all his power. It continued to grow [...].²²

Forsaking the roaming life of 'voyageurs', the pioneer Catholic colonists, true to their early religious upbringing, longed to have priests among them to minister to the spiritual needs of their children²³ and themselves. With the regular overland brigades from Oregon to Montreal passing through the Canadian Prairies, the settlers knew that a bishop resided at St. Boniface on the Red River.

21 Dr. John McLaughlin, a medical doctor, known as the 'Father of Oregon' was born in Rivière du Loup, Quebec. A partner in the North West Company, he joined the Hudson's Bay Company in the merger of 1821. Appointed Chief Factor, he established his headquarters at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River and governed the vast empire beyond the Rockies for 22 years. Reared in the Anglican faith by maternal grandparents, although born of Catholic parents, he was received into the Catholic Church by Fr. Blanchet, November 18, 1842. A great benefactor to both settlers and missionaries, he resigned his post and became an American citizen when the country came under American jurisdiction. In August, 1847, Pope Gregory XVI created Dr. McLaughlin a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great (Edwin V. O'HARA, Catholic History of Oregon, third edition, Portland, Catholic Book Company, 1925, pp. 5-8; afterwards referred to as: O'HARA, History of Oregon). See also: McLaughlin documents, (A.A.P.); BLANCHET, Sketches, pp. 2, 26; SCHOENBERG, Chronicle, p. 30.

22 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 28.

23 The settlers in the Willamette Valley had married Indian women (WILKES, Narrative, p. 349). A condition of employment with the Hudson's Bay Company was not to marry during the term of service (R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 46).

It was to Bishop Provencher²⁴ of St. Boniface that a request for priests was first directed, July 3rd, 1834, and again, February 23rd, 1835.²⁵

Understanding the justifiable concern of the settlers for priests and aware that a great apostolate was opened to the numberless Indian tribes inhabiting this vast wilderness, Bishop Provencher lost no time in initiating the arrangements necessary for such an undertaking.²⁶ In

24 In 1818, Bishop Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, in response to petitions for priests drawn up at the suggestion of Lord Selkirk, from Catholic settlers in the Red River country, sent Frs. Provencher and Dumoulin. The missionaries established at St. Boniface, on the Red River, now St. Boniface, Manitoba. In 1822, Fr. Joseph Norbert Provencher was consecrated bishop with the title, Bishop of Juliopolis in partibus, auxiliary to the Bishop of Quebec and Vicar Apostolic for the Northwest (O'HARA, History of Oregon, p. 16).

25 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 6. See also: L. of Provencher to Lartigue, St. Boniface, 5 June, 1835 (Archives of the Archdiocese of Montreal, pp. 109-110; hereafter referred to as: A.A.M.). It appears that the request for priests forwarded to Bishop Provencher in 1834 was preceded by a request to Bishop Dubourg in St. Louis. The Bishop received the petition from some unknown English woman October 21, 1822 (John P. O'HARA, A Letter from the Columbia in 1821: Who Was the English Woman Who Wrote from Oregon to the Bishop of St. Louis?, Portland, 1943). The question of the establishment of the Church in Oregon is substantially covered in: Letitia M. LYONS, Francis Norbert Blanchet and the Founding of the Oregon Missions 1838-1848, Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 1940, pp. 1-17; afterwards referred to as: LYONS, F.N. Blanchet. See also: Emilien LAMIRANDE, L'Implantation de l'Eglise Catholique en Colombie-Britannique 1838-48, in Revue de l'Universite d'Ottawa, 28 (1958), pp. 323-342.

26 The correspondence of Bishop Provencher in this period shows his sincere and constant concern for the new

spite of the many problems yet to be resolved,²⁷ the Bishop in a pastoral letter dated June 8th, 1835, assured the settlers that they would have a priest in their midst at

mission territory. His spirit is summed up in one sentence: "[...] I beg Your Excellency to think about the mission to the Columbia" (L. of Provencher to Signay [Bishop of Quebec], Liverpool, 27 December, 1835, in Bulletin de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface, Saint-Boniface, Imprimerie du Manitoba, 1913, vol. III, p. 146; afterwards referred to as: B.S.H.B.).

27 Three basic questions had to be resolved: 1. The question of jurisdiction: Bishop Provencher considered Oregon to be the responsibility of Bishop Signay of Quebec (L. of Provencher to Lartigue, St. Boniface, 5 June, 1835, A.A.M., pp. 109-110). Bishop Signay was not convinced that Oregon was his responsibility but submitted the question to Rome suggesting that the new territory be attached to Quebec but be placed under the jurisdiction of St. Boniface (L. of Provencher to Lartigue, Quebec Seminary, 23 October, 1835, A.A.M., pp. 112-113). This was approved by Rome (L. of Provencher to Lartigue, Rome, 30 March, 1836, A.A.M., p. 141). 2. The question of priests: Bishop Provencher wanted a priest of experience to head the mission and a younger priest to accompany him (L. of Provencher to Lartigue, Quebec Seminary, 23 October, 1835, A.A.M., pp. 112-113). The requirements for such priests charged with the founding of a new mission, separated from all contact with brother priests, and thrust into a mission field of such magnitude, demanded men of singular zeal, of apostolic spirit and many talents (L. of Provencher to Signay, Yamachiche, 23 November, 1836, B.S.H.B., vol. III, p. 159); see also Notes on the trip for the priest who leaves this year, written by Bishop Provencher, Quebec, 2 March, 1837 (B.S.H.B., vol. III, pp. 160-161). 3. Passage to Oregon had to be arranged with the Hudson's Bay Company: arrangements apparently had been finalized (L. of Provencher to Signay, London, 19 January, 1836 (B.S.H.B., pp. 147-148) when Governor Simpson advised that fear of strife between religious groups moved the Company in London to refuse passage (L. of Provencher to Signay, Montreal, 17 April, 1837 (B.S.H.B., pp. 163-164). Finally Governor Simpson resolved the problem by offering passage if the Catholic priests would establish at Cowlitz and not at Willamette (L. of Provencher to Signay, Red River, 13 October, 1837 (A.A.M., pp. 170-171). See also: BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 7.

the very first opportunity.²⁸ The letter read in part:

The Bishop of Juliopolis to all the families settled in the Willamette Valley and other Catholics beyond the Rocky Mountains, Greeting:-

I have received, most beloved brethren, your two petitions [...]. Both call for missionaries to instruct your children and yourselves. Such a request from persons deprived of all religious attendance, could not fail to touch my heart, and if it was in my power, I would send you some this very year. But I have no priest disposable at Red River; they must be obtained from Canada or elsewhere, which requires time. I will make it my business in a journey which I am going to make this year in Canada and in Europe [...].

My intention is not to procure the knowledge of God to you and your children only, but also to the numerous Indian tribes among which you live [...].²⁹

Bishop Provencher's pledge to the settlers of the Willamette Valley was fulfilled when Fr. Francis Norbert Blanchet³⁰ received 'Letters of Appointment'³¹ designating

28 BLANCHET, Sketches, pp. 6-7.

29 Ibid., p. 6.

30 Francis Norbert Blanchet was born September 30th, 1795, near St. Pierre, Rivière du Sud, Province of Quebec, Canada. After completing his studies at the Seminary of Quebec, he was ordained a priest July 18th, 1819. After a year's service at the cathedral in Quebec City, he was appointed pastor at Richibucto, New Brunswick. His charge included Micmac Indians and Acadian settlers. In 1827, he was recalled to Montreal and appointed pastor of Soulanges (ibid., p. 70).

31 Josephus Signay *miseratione divina et Stae [Sanctae] Apostolicae gratis Episcopus Quebecensis, Dilecto nobis in Christo, Franciscus Norbertus Blanchet, ad territorium huius diocesis quod comprehenditur inter Montes*

him as Vicar General of the Oregon Territory and, in effect, the founder of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest. The official acts, which were executed by Bishop Signay, Bishop of Quebec, on the 16th day of April, 1838,³² were dispatched to Fr. Blanchet with an accompanying letter:

You receive with these presents letters which constitute you my Vicar General to whom we communicate all powers which we ourselves exercise, with the exception of those which require episcopal orders.³³

Lapideos (Montagnes de Roches) et Pacificum Oceanum, Missionario, Salutem et benedictionem in Domine [...] te dilectum nostrum Franciscum Norbertum Blanchet, dioecesis nostrae presbyterum, ex certa nostra scientia plenaque libertate, omnibus melioribus forma, via, causa, modo, jure, quibus melius et efficacius possumus, in nostra Sede et Episcopatu Quebecensi in spiritualibus et temporalibus Vicarium nostrum, Generalem et specialem (ita tamen ut specialitas generalitati non derogat, nec a contra) fecimus, constitui-mus, creavimus et ordinavimus, tenoreque praesentium facimus, constituimus, creamus et ordinamus: dantes tibi et concedente plenam et omnimodam, generalem et liberam auctoritatem et potestatem diocesim nostram universam regendi et gubernandi, [...]. Datum Quebece in Seminario nostro episcopali, sub signo sigilloque nostris testiumque [...] die decima sexta aprilis anno millesimo-octingentesimo-trigesimo-octavo. + Jos. Epus. Quebecensis (A.A.P., B. I, 25, p. 1-4)

32 In the Sketches the date is given as April 17, 1838 (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 7). This does not concur with the document just quoted (31) which reads "die decima sexta Aprilis", the 16th of April.

33 L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 19 April, 1838 (A.A.P., B.I 25, p. 1).

Bishop Provencher was to decide which priest would accompany Fr. Blanchet to the new mission field:

I am writing to the Bishop of Juliopolis and I leave with him the charge of deciding if Fr. Maynard³⁴ accompanies you to the Cowlitz River as your colleague, or Fr. Demers,³⁵ or one of the other priests who are under his orders.³⁶

34 Fr. Maynard who was sent to St. Boniface, presumably in the company of Fr. Blanchet, carried the official papers for the Vicar General from Quebec to Montreal (L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 19 April, 1838, A.A.P., B.I 25, p. 3). But he did not arrive with Fr. Blanchet at Red River, June 5, 1838, but only on the 22nd of June, 1838 (L. of Provencher to Signay, Red River, 27 June, 1838, B.S.H.B., Vol. III, p. 170).

35 Fr. Modeste Demers was born at St. Nicholas, Quebec, October 11, 1809. Completing his studies at the Quebec Seminary, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Signay, February 7th, 1836. He spent 14 months as assistant priest at Trois-Pistoles, Quebec, before volunteering for the missions of Oregon (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 71).

36 L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 19 April, 1838 (A.A.P., B. I 25, p. 1). Bishop Signay enclosed a letter of appointment which read: "I authorize by these presents Fr. _____ missionary of the Cowlitz River & all the territory of the diocese of Quebec which lies west of the Rocky Mts. together with Fr. Francis Norbert Blanchet my Vicar General, to exercise all powers contained in the different indults which with the approval of my Vicar General you are empowered to use" (L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 19 April, 1838, A.A.P., B. I 25, one page). Fr. Blanchet's assistant would be empowered to act in the capacity of Vicar General in the event of Fr. Blanchet's death or incapacity (L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 22 October, 1838, A.A.P., B. I 24, p. 2). Fr. Demers arrived in St. Boniface one year in advance of Fr. Blanchet. He was to work in this area pending the opening of the Oregon Mission (L. of Provencher to Signay, Montreal, 25 April, 1837, B.S.H.B., vol. III, p. 166); (L. of Provencher to Signay, Red River, 27 June 1838, B.S.H.B., vol. III, p. 170). While at St. Boniface, Fr. Demers harboured the fear that, once he had learned the Indian language of the country, he

After many frustrating delays, the mission to the Columbia was a reality. Fr. Blanchet, in the company of Chief Trader Hargrave, left Montreal, May 3rd, 1838, aboard a light bark canoe carrying the express for the Hudson's Bay Company.³⁷ With a 35 day stopover at St. Boniface, Fr. Blanchet joined his colleague, Fr. Demers, and left the Red River, July 10th for Oregon. Leaving the boats behind, the brigade used horses to make the ascent of the Rocky Mountains. Nine days of travel brought them to the western base of the Rockies and to the Big Bend on the Columbia River. Here on Sunday, October 14th, Fr. Demers offered

would not be allowed to go to Oregon (L. of Demers to Cazeau, Vancouver, Oregon, March 1st, 1839, A.A.P., D. III 6, p. 1).

37 The comments on the trip across Canada are taken from Fr. Blanchet's diary which is entitled: Notes on Journey from Montreal to Fort Vancouver 1838 (A.A.P., B.II 1). See also: R.M.D.Q., 1840, no. 2, pp. ; BLANCHET, Sketches, pp. 8-20. In BLANCHET, Sketches, pp. 11-18, a letter of Fr. Blanchet to Bishop Signay, which contains an abridgment of the journal of the voyage across Canada, is reprinted under the title, Fort Vancouver, March 17th, 1839. This date conflicts with the date of the first mission to Cowlitz (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 31). The letter was written not on the 17th of March but earlier in the month: "The first packet by the mountains in the beginning of March, 1839, contains an abridgment of the journal of the missionaries going to the Columbia" (L. of Blanchet to Signay, Fort Vancouver, 19 March, 1840, A.A.Q., C.A. 1-153, 154, p. 2). Also "I received in September last your letters of October 10th, 1838 and those of the 1st, 3rd & 4th days of March, 1839" (L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 10 April, 1840, A.A.P., B.I 24, p. 1).

Mass—their first Mass in Oregon territory. After a long and hazardous journey,³⁸ and for Fr. Blanchet, more than six months from the day of departure, the missionaries stepped ashore at Fort Vancouver, November 24th, 1838.³⁹

The long-awaited priests had arrived. This date marks the permanent establishment of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest.

The prime concern of this work is the Catholic ladder. In view of this it will be helpful to quote the document which explains, in part, the missionaries' search for an effective, yet simple approach to the preaching of the Gospel. This document presented to the missionaries by their bishop, Bishop Signay, was to be the guide for Frs. Blanchet and Demers in their missionary apostolate:

38 Bishop Signay wrote: "[...] I read and reread with great interest the journal as also the accompanying notes. I bless divine providence that you finally arrived with your colleague, after such a long voyage, so full of dangers — I would never have thought that the crossing of Canada to the Columbia was so difficult & so perilous" (L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 10 April, 1840, A.A.P., B.I 24, p. 1).

39 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 18. It is rather interesting that there is no entry in the Journal (A.A.P., B. II 1) about the arrival. The diary stops abruptly, as the brigade neared Fort Vancouver.

You must consider as the first object of your Mission to withdraw from barbarity and the disorders which it produces, the Indians scattered in that country.

Your second object is, to tender your services to the wicked Christians who have adopted there the vices of Indians, and live in licentiousness and the forgetfulness of their duties.

Persuaded that the preaching of the Gospel is the surest means of obtaining these happy results, you will lose no opportunity of inculcating its principles and maxims, either in your private conversations or public instructions.

In order to make yourselves sooner useful to the natives of the country where you are sent, you will apply yourselves, as soon as you arrive to study of the Indian languages, and will endeavour to reduce them to regular principles, so as to be able to publish a grammar after some years of residence there.

You will prepare for baptism, with all possible expedition, the infidel women who live in concubinage with Christians, in order to substitute lawful marriages for these irregular unions.

You will take a particular care of the Christian education of children, establishing for that purpose, schools and catechism classes in all the villages which you will have the occasion to visit.

In all the places remarkable either for their position or the passage of the voyagers, or the gathering of Indians, you will plant crosses, so as to take possession of those various places in the name of the Catholic religion.

Given at Quebec on the 17th of April, 1838.

+ Joseph Signay,
Bishop of Quebec.⁴⁰

The instructions, as we will note in succeeding pages, provide us with an insight into the missionaries' approach to the whole problem of preaching. In attempting to implement these recommendations the missionaries created the Catholic ladder. Their new approach to preaching, an approach which was effective, yet simple, gave the Sahale stick to Oregon, and the Catholic ladder to the world.

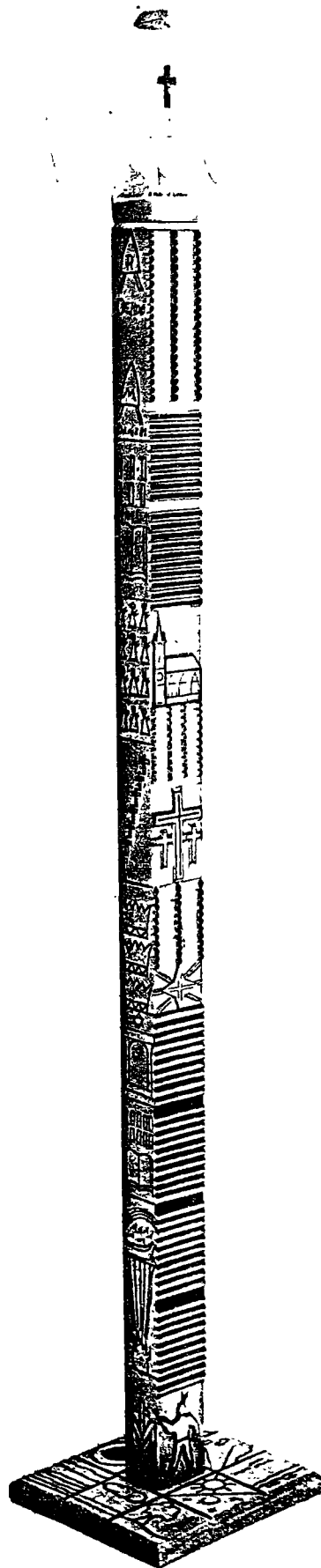
Acknowledgments

The writer takes this occasion to acknowledge his thanks to Rev. Emilien Lamirande, O.M.I., under whose direction this thesis has been written, also the many individuals whose generous co-operation made it possible to obtain information and sources important to this study.

PART I
CREATION OF THEIR PREACHING AID

Confronting the untutored Indians of the Pacific Northwest, the missionaries found the need for an effective, yet simple, preaching aid. Chapter I deals with the creation of the Sahale stick, the primitive form of the Catholic ladder.

Although the Sahale stick was a success, it had limitations. Fr. Blanchet improved upon his first creation with a more refined device which he called the Catholic ladder. This improved preaching aid will be discussed in Chapter II.



Facsimile of the original
Sahale stick created by
Fr. Blanchet in 1839.

(See Appendix "E")

CHAPTER I

THE SAHALE STICK OR THE STICK FROM HEAVEN

The missionaries, after their arrival at Fort Vancouver, lost no time in throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the apostolate which faced them. The first mission¹ at Fort Vancouver lasted four months, from November 24th, 1838, until April 15th, 1839, with the Vicar General instructing the Canadians and Fr. Demers attending to the Indians.² Fr. Demers set himself to the task of learning the Chinook jargon³ and within three or four weeks could

1 The term 'mission' has a dual connotation for our purposes. It is used in the sense of a residence or station for missionaries or in the sense of a course of sermons and services for the special purpose of quickening the faith and zeal of the participants and of converting unbelievers (Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language being the authentic edition of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary comprising the issues of 1864, 1879 and 1884, Springfield, G. & C. Merriam Company, 1894, p. 931).

2 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 24. See also: BLANCHET, General notes on the Indians 1838-48 (A.A.P., B. I 22, p. 6); General notes afterwards referred to as: BLANCHET, General notes.

3 The Chinook jargon was a language used by the Hudson's Bay Company in its commerce with the Indians, and which Indians of diverse languages used among themselves. It was composed of about 400 words. Although taken in part from the language of the Chinook Indians living near Port George at the mouth of the Columbia, it was made up of an assortment of languages. It was a spoken language with little grammar and one word could have several meanings, such as: 'Wawa', to speak, to learn, to tell, to answer, to ask (L. of Demers to Cazeau, Vancouver, March 1st, 1839, A.A.P., D.III 6, pp. 4-5; R.M.D.Q., 1840, no. 2, pp. 35-36; 1845, no. 6, pp. 11-12; WILKES, Narrative, p. 418).

use the language.⁴ The prayers and hymns were translated into the jargon and the Indians near Fort Vancouver were instructed in this language.

Fr. Blanchet deemed it necessary to concentrate upon the Canadians who, although instructed in their youth, had grown lax in their faith.⁵ He attempted to instruct the Indian wives of the settlers in French but "the task could not be completed but by a long and tedious repetition [...] for weeks and months."⁶ As to the children of the settlers the burden was lightened by reason of the fact that educational facilities already existed at Fort Vancouver.⁷

4 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 25. Fr. Demers was a gifted linguist: "The good priest has a particular talent for languages, French, Latin, English, I counted no less than 7 Indian languages which he speaks almost perfectly, and 8 others of which he knows a great number of words" (Peter DE ROO, Varia, Ecclesiastical Hierarch in Oregon, in De Roo Correspondence 1861-1886, A.Mt.A., Rare Book Room). See also: L. of Blanchet to Demers, St. Paul, 28 December, 1840 (A.A.P., D. III 3, p. 12).

5 L. of Blanchet to Demers, St. Paul, 2 March, 1840 (A.A.Q., C.A., vol. I, p. 136).

6 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 25.

7 Charles Wilkes writes: "the half breed and Indian children that the Company have taken to bring up and educate. Of these there are now twenty-three boys and fifteen girls, who claim the particular attention of Dr. McLaughlin and Mrs. Douglass [sic]. A teacher is employed for the boys [...]. During my stay an examination took place, and although the pupils did not prove very expert at their reading and writing, yet we had sufficient evidence that they had made some improvement [...] they are also instructed in religious exercises, in which I thought they appeared more proficient than in their other studies [...] The girls are equally cared for [...]" (WILKES, Narrative, vol. IV, p. 332).

But if problems existed at Fort Vancouver where some semblance of parochial life could be envisioned, what of the numerous Indian tribes who inhabited for the most part a primeval forest? It was the missionaries' attempt to resolve this problem that inspired the creation of the Sahale stick.

By mid-March, 1839, Fr. Blanchet had taken leave of Fr. Demers and had arrived at Cowlitz⁸ to undertake a mission for the Canadians and the Indians who lived near this post which Governor Simpson had designated as the headquarters for the Catholic missionaries in the Oregon Territory.⁹ The Vicar General had regular instructions underway

8 The Vicar General left Fort Vancouver, March 14th, arriving at Cowlitz in the evening of March 16th. During the mission he lodged in the home of Simon Plamondon (Journal 8, p. 36, A.A.P.). Fr. Blanchet had already made one visit to Cowlitz, December 12-20, 1838, and had conducted a 30 day mission for the Canadians of the Willamette, January to February 4th, 1839 (BLANCHET, Sketches, pp. 27-28).

9 Cowlitz, near the present town of Toledo, Washington, was the site of a Hudson Bay Company farm when Fr. Blanchet arrived at this mission. A rich and fertile prairie stretching six miles long and two miles wide borders the Cowlitz River which empties into the Columbia near present day Longview, Washington. Fr. Blanchet chose a claim of some 640 acres and placed the mission holdings in the charge of Augustine Rochon, a Canadian who accompanied the missionaries to the Columbia (L. of Signay to Planchet, Quebec, 27 April, 1838, A.A.P., B. I 16, p. 2; BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 27; WILKES, Narrative, p. 315).

for the French speaking inhabitants of the district¹⁰ and was meeting the vexing problem of giving some instruction to the local Indian tribe with the usual assistance of interpreters.¹¹

¹⁰ Notes of Archbishop Blanchet, from 1838 to 1844 (A.A.P., Journal 3, p. 5).

¹¹ Fr. Demers comments on the need for interpreters: "Among the obstacles which oppose their conversion, one must put first the problem of language, which is such that the missionaries often must use three interpreters at a time, and even then their words cannot be understood by all without the aid of a fourth" (R.M.D.Q., 1841 no 3, p. 72). Fr. Blanchet tells us that during his mission at the Willamette in 1838 "[...] the women did not all understand French, and there were among them a variety of tongues, some being of the Chinook, others of the Colville and Flathead tribes, the difficulty was overcome by using different interpreters to convey to them the words of the priest" (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 29; R.M.D.Q., 1840, no. 2, p. 24; 1841, no. 3, pp. 55-60). Fr. Bolduc describes the problem: "As for the Indian languages, they are truly a confusion, there are as many languages as tribes. From the mouth of the Columbia as far as the Wallamette, six entirely different can be counted. The Cowlitz also have their separate idiom; and more than twenty can be counted north of Nesqually. All these languages are difficult to understand, if one excepts the Tchinouc [sic] jargon which I now know well. All are difficult to pronounce on account of the gutturals. It is impossible to write it with the letters that are known to us [...]. Nearly all the nations scattered about the neighborhood of Vancouver, Walamette and Cowlitz, speak a little Tchinouc" (R.M.D.Q., 1845, no. 6, pp. 11-12; BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 22). Even the gifted linguist, Fr. Demers, found the Indian languages difficult. During the winter of 1839 which he spent at Cowlitz he gave three days a week to learning the language of the Klackatack or Cowlitz Indians: "[...] the study of the language presents almost insurmountable difficulties" (L. of Demers to Cazeau, Cowlitz, 5 February, 1840, A.A.P., D. III 2, p. 2; R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 71). And it was not likely that the missionaries would often have the services of such gifted interpreters as Mrs. Kitson, wife of the trader in charge of the fort at Misqually. A convert of Fr. Demers: "[...]"

But news of the missionary's arrival at Cowlitz reached northward. A delegation of Indians arrived from Whidbey Island in Puget Sound, 150 miles from Cowlitz.¹² With eleven tribesmen Chief Tsalalakum¹³ travelled by canoe two days to Fort Nisqually¹⁴ and on foot three days to Cowlitz to see and hear the "black robe."¹⁵

she could express herself with ease in all the different languages, also English and French. [...] gifted with a remarkable intelligence, a lively faith and outstanding piety, she served her role as interpreter with admirable patience" (R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, pp. 60-61). And this was an exceptional ability when we learn that on one occasion at Fort Nisqually "there were counted twenty-two different nations of them" (R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 52).

12 BLANCHET, General notes, p. 8.

13 The modern rendition of his name is Steilacoom (Clarence B. BAGLEY, In the Beginning, Seattle, Lowman & Hanford Co., 1905, p. 26; afterwards referred to as: BAGLEY, In the Beginning).

14 Fort Nisqually was located on Puget Sound between present day Tacoma and Olympia, Washington. This fort was established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1833 in the area now occupied by the Du Pont Company. "The earliest structure was erected on a bluff overlooking the Sound about two miles north of the mouth of the Nisqually River and just south of Sequelatchew creek, with a road leading downhill to a warehouse on the beach" (Lucile McDONALD, First Fort on Puget Sound, in Seattle Times, April 21, 1946, cited in: J.S. WHITING, Forts of the State of Washington a Record of Military and Semi-Military Establishments designated as Forts, from May 29, 1792 to November 15, 1951, second edition, Seattle, Kelley Printing Co., [1951]; hereafter referred to as: WHITING, Forts). In 1843 Fort Nisqually was moved to a new location about two miles to the north. The name of the new fort was changed from 'Nesqually' to 'Nisqually' (*ibid.*, p. 75). In footnote 11 above Fr. Bolduc uses the old spelling 'Nesqually'.

15 In R.M.D.Q. a footnote reads: "It is by this name [French Chiefs] that most of the Indians designate the priests about whom the Canadian voyageurs have often spoken

The Vicar General found himself with a very real problem. How could he give these people and the numberless Indians that he would soon meet "an idea of religion so plain and simple as to command their attention, and which they could retain in their minds and carry back with them to their tribe."¹⁶

In looking for a plan the vicar general imagined that by representing on a square stick, the forty centuries before Christ by 40 marks; the thirty-three years of our Lord by 33 points, followed by a cross; and the eighteen centuries and thirty-nine years since, by 18 marks and 39 points, would pretty well answer his purpose.¹⁷

The Indians named the wooden catechism 'the Sahale stick',¹⁸ which in Chinook jargon meant 'the stick from

to them" (R.M.D.Q., 1840, no. 2, p. 32). But they were equally known to the Indians as Black robes (R.M.D.Q., 1840, no. 2, p. 31; ibid., p. 39).

16 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 31.

17 Ibid., p. 31; BLANCHET, General notes, p. 8 (A.A.P., B. I 22); BLANCHET, Journal 3, p. 5.

18 This marked wooden ruler called 'the Sahale stick' meant 'stick from above', 'stick from God', or 'stick from heaven' (R.M.D.Q., 1842, no. 4, pp. 46-48). Fr. Blanchet uses, consistently, the spelling, 'Sahale' (L. of Blanchet to Signay, St. Paul on the Willamette, 23 February, 1841, A.A.P., B. III 5, p. 6; R.M.D.Q., 1842, no. 4, pp. 46-48; BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 31). Fr. Demers is not consistent. In a letter in which he discusses the Chinook language, he writes 'Sahalee' (L. of Demers to Cazeau, Vancouver, March 1st, 1839, A.A.P., D. III 6, p. 6). In his dictionary of Chinook he gives the word as 'Sahali', explaining that the words 'Sahali-Tai pepa' mean Bible or Catholic Ladder (The Missionary's Companion on the Pacific Coast, Chinook Dictionary, Catechism, Prayers and Hymns

heaven.¹⁹

Fr. Blanchet created the Sahale stick at Cowlitz (now in the State of Washington, U.S.A.), sometime after March 17th, 1839, and most probably during the early part of April. Fr. Blanchet arrived at Cowlitz on the evening of March 16th.²⁰ It took five days for Chief Tslalakum to travel to Cowlitz. One could presume that it must have taken at least five days for news of the arrival of the missionary to reach Whidbey Island. That would put the arrival of Chief Tslalakum at Cowlitz sometime after March 27th. This would represent the earliest date of the

composed in 1838 & 1830 by Rt. Rev. Modeste Demers, revised, corrected and completed in 1867 by Most Rev. F.N. Blanchet with modifications and additions by Rev. L.N. St. Onge, Missionary among the Yakimas and other Indian Tribes, Montreal, [n.p.], 1871, p. 20). Other Chinook dictionaries differ. Sahale is pronounced by accenting the 'Sah' and pronouncing the 'a's as in father and the 'e' as in me. (W.S. PHILLIPS, The Chinook Book, Seattle, R.L. Davis Printing, 1913, p. 87). Another author gives 'Saghalie'. The Whites pronounce it 'Sockalie', the Indians 'Saghalie' with the 'g' deep in the throat and the 'h' not aspirate (Edward H. THOMAS, Chinook a History and Dictionary, Portland, Metropolitan Press, 1935, p. 100). Bishop C.J. Seghers, Bishop of Victoria, B.C. and successor to Bishop Demers, on his first visit to the West Coast of Vancouver Island in 1874, composed a Chinook hymn for the use of the Indians. The hymn uses the spelling 'Sahale' (Joseph VAN DER HEYDEN, Life and Letters of Father Brabant a Flemish Missionary Hero, Louvain, J. Wouters, [1920], p. 46).

19 R.M.D.Q., 1842, no. 4, pp. 46-48.

20 Journal 8 (A.A.P., p. 36).

arrival of the Indians. However, it appears more likely that a few days would have elapsed before Tslalakum and his men set out for Cowlitz. This would suggest that the creation of the Sahale stick dates from the early part of April, 1839. Fr. Blanchet left Cowlitz, May 2nd, 1839,²¹ and since the instructions at which the Sahale stick was used lasted eight days, it must have been created not later than April 24th, 1839.

The missionaries provide few details on the exact dimensions of the original Sahale stick. When the Saanich Indians created a facsimile of the original preaching aid, however, (see photo), they found that a piece of wood two inches by two inches by four feet long (2" x 2" x 4") best suited the purpose. Such dimensions might well represent the size of the original Sahale stick.²²

21 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 33.

22 One author writes that "Father Demers was reported to have used a board 10 x 2 1/2 feet" (Clifford M. DRURY, First White Women Over the Rockies. Diaries, Letters and Biographical Sketches of the Six Women of the Oregon Mission who made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838, Glendale, Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963, p. 22). It appears much more likely that the report refers to Fr. Demers who "passed whole days in teaching, with a ladder 10 by 2 1/2 feet" (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 47). This ladder of Demers was not a wooden board but a paper ladder: "The Sahale stick was afterwards changed from a rule to a large chart containing the great epochs of the world, such as the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, the ten commandments of God, the twelve apostles, the seven sacraments and precepts of the Church; [...] It was called "The Catholic Ladder" (*ibid.*, p. 32). This paper chart will be discussed at length in Chapter II.

The format of later models of his preaching aid provides an insight into the structure of the original Sahale stick. Starting from the bottom of the stick he would leave a space of some inches and then carve or paint 40 bars, setting off each set of 10 bars with a space, so that the 40 bars representing the 4000 years before Christ appeared as four distinct groups of 10 bars, each representing 1000 years.²³ After the last bar he continued carving or painting a series of 33 dots in a vertical line, again separating the groups of 10 dots, so that he had 3 groups of 10 dots and one group of three dots. The dots represented the 33 years of Christ's life on earth. Above the dots he made a cross. He carved above the cross a group of 10 bars and a group of 8 bars, which represented the year 1 A.D. to the year 1000 A.D. and the year 1000 A.D. to the year 1800 A.D. Above these bars three groups of ten dots and one group of nine dots brought the Sahale stick to the year 1839. The Vicar General used the Sahale stick:

[...] to show the beginning of the world, the creation, the fall of the angels, of Adam; the promise of a Savior, the time of his birth, and his death upon the cross, as well as the mission of his apostles.²⁴

23 An examination of any of Fr. Blanchet's Catholic ladders which incorporate the original Sahale stick will show the spacing of the bars and the dots. A number of photocopies of Catholic ladders will be found in Part II.

24 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 31.

Searching for a solution to the immediate problem of presenting some notion of religion to the untutored minds of the Indians from Puget Sound, the Vicar General used what would be called today the visual approach to the art of teaching. The Sahale stick gave a new dimension to his preaching, utilizing not only the sense of hearing but also the sense of sight.

When Fr. Blanchet gathered his catechumens around the Sahale stick²⁵ and explained to them, for example, 'the creation', he began his instruction by pointing out to his neophytes the bar at the base of the Sahale stick²⁶ which in the chronological order of time represented the creation of trees and animals, et cetera. With the attention of his catechumens riveted upon this particular bar on the Sahale stick, Fr. Blanchet entered into an explanation of creation. The intention of the missionary was to associate in the mind

25 Report of Blanchet to Signay for the year 1842 (A.A.P., B. I 4, p. 18). The Report refers to a mission at Cowlitz in which Fr. Blanchet gathers his catechumens around the Catholic ladder. Since the Catholic ladder was, in effect, the Sahale stick in chart form, we presume that he would have done the same with the Sahale stick.

26 L. of Blanchet to Signay, St. Paul on the Willamette, 30 March, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A., 11-26). The Vicar General tells Bishop Signay that he usually shows his catechumens the markings on the Catholic ladder before giving his explanations. Again, we presume he did the same with the Sahale stick.

of the Indian each point of the faith with a particular bar on the Sahale stick. In reviewing the subject of creation later Fr. Blanchet would point to this bar and awaken in the mind of the neophyte the instruction which he had received earlier, and which he associated with the related bar. Using the same teaching method, Fr. Blanchet would proceed to an explanation of the beginning of the world, the fall of the angels, the fall of man, the promise of a Saviour. Next he would utilize the 33 dots and the cross to fix the hearers' attention upon the important episodes in the life of Christ. Proceeding farther up the Sahale stick, he would explain, using the same technique, the events which belong to the New Testament era.

It will be noted that Telalakum and his companions were not introduced to a series of unrelated facts about religion but to an understanding of the relationship between the events of the Old Testament, the life of Christ, and the mission of the apostles:

The Indians remained long enough at Cowlitz to learn some of the principal truths of religion, especially the explanation of the Catholic Ladder [Sahale stick]²⁷ which helped so marvelously to

27 In this quotation the words 'Catholic Ladder' appear, yet Fr. Blanchet is talking about his first mission at Cowlitz, also his meeting with the Indians of Puget Sound, and the creation of the Sahale stick. In discussing his new preaching aid Fr. Blanchet makes little distinction between the terms Catholic ladder and Sahale stick for the simple reason that the Catholic ladder was a refinement of

class in the memory the principal events, both of the old and new testament.²⁸

This primitive visual aid demonstrated the chronological development of the Christian religion and presented to the neophyte a graphic, yet simple, notion of the plan of salvation.

Fr. Blanchet was enthused with his new creation. He notes that the Sahale stick "was a great success"²⁹ and "after eight days explanation, the chief and his companions became masters of the subject."³⁰ To become 'masters of the subject' was no small feat when one is reminded that Tsalalakum and his tribesmen arrived at Cowlitz untutored in the knowledge of religion. When Fr. Blanchet remarks that the 'Indians remained long enough at Cowlitz to learn some of the principal truths of religion' he adds an important clue to an understanding of his approach to missionary preaching. The Vicar General did not think in terms of lengthy and profound instructions. In phrasing his remarks,

the Sahale stick and incorporated the features of the Sahale stick (as will be seen in Chapter II): "he [Tsalalakum] asked his wife to present to me this ruler [Sahale stick] which I later called the historic [Catholic] ladder" (R.M.D.Q., 1842, no. 4, p. 48).

28 BLANCHET, General notes, p. 8.

29 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 31.

30 Ibid.

as he did, Fr. Blanchet emphasized that it was an understanding of the essentials of the faith that he considered important. Time would seldom permit the missionaries to engage in long and weighty instructions. They had need to utilize to the fullest extent the brief visits which the care of many souls and far-flung posts would permit them.

The Sahale stick achieved the stated purpose of giving the Indians "an idea of religion so plain and simple as to command their attention [...]."³¹ But it also played a further role. It gave the Indians an idea of religion "which they could retain in their minds and carry back with them to their tribe."³² Fr. Blanchet appointed Chief Tsalalakum the catechist³³ for his people.³⁴ He presented the Chief with a Sahale stick.³⁵ He was to instruct the

31 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 31.

32 Ibid.

33 This tradition of using catechists continued throughout the Pacific Northwest and among the Indians of Southern Vancouver Island the catechist was known by the title of 'Priest' (Christopher Paul, 69 year old Saanich Indian [1963], interview with the writer, 6 August, 1963). Louis Charly, a catechist among the Saanich Indian tribe, is recorded in the Death Records as 'Priest Charly' (Death Records for the year 1923, Church of the Assumption, Saanichton, B.C.).

34 L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 23 February, 1841 (A.A.P., B. III 5, p. 6).

35 R.M.D.Q., 1842, no. 4, p. 48; BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 31.

people each Sunday and the instructions were to consist in an expose of the Sahale stick.³⁶ Fr. Blanchet records that the Chief took his responsibility seriously: "he explained the Sahale stick on Sunday following my instructions."³⁷ In fact, all twelve Indians from Puget Sound "on returning to their tribe were as 12 apostles, teaching others what they had learned."³⁸

The Sahale stick had proven itself. After eight days of instruction Tslalakum and his companions had some notion of religion. Again, the Sahale stick made it possible for the catechumens to retain in their minds and carry back to their tribe the knowledge of the Christian faith which they, themselves, had learned at Cowlitz. In a letter to Bishop Signay, after the missionary's first visit to Whidbey Island in Puget Sound, Fr. Blanchet wrote a glowing report on the success of his catechist, Chief Tslalakum:

I blessed God for the surprising progress which Chief Tslalakum made with these poor people before the arrival of the missionaries in these far-off regions.³⁹

³⁶ L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 23 February, 1841 (A.A.P., B. III 5, p. 6).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ BLANCHET, General notes, p. 6; L. of Blanchet to Provencher, St. Paul on the Willamette, 24 August, 1840 (A.A.S.B., 102, p. 2).

³⁹ L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 23 February, 1841 (A.A.P., B. III 5, p. 10); R.M.D.Q., 1842, no. 4, p. 51.

The Sahale stick was Fr. Blanchet's answer to the problem of preaching in the Pacific Northwest. Practically considered, the Sahale stick was a visual approach. In a wilderness where there were few books and fewer people who could read them, this visual approach was essential. Theologically, as even a cursory examination of the Sahale stick will show, it emphasized the essential aspects of Christianity, particularly, the Christocentric concept of the faith, and the historico-biblical approach of the Bible. Pedagogically, by pinning the important points to particular bars and dots on this chronological ruler, the Sahale stick created a graphic and lasting impression upon the mind of the neophyte. At the same time the device was simple.

It would be of interest to know exactly how many Sahale sticks were made.⁴⁰ We can surmise that Fr. Blanchet distributed at least four at Cowlitz. He would, more than likely, have made one available to each tribe present. Tsalalakum received one. The chief of the Cowlitz Indians, as host chief, must have received one. And since the

⁴⁰ In a letter to Bishop Signay in October, 1839, Fr. Blanchet mentions that during his mission at Nisqually in August-September, 1839, "8 historical and chronological sticks were distributed to the chiefs who understood them sufficiently well to explain them to their people on Sundays." Some doubt must remain as to whether the "baguettes historiques et chronologiques" mentioned here refer to Sahale sticks. This point will be discussed in Chapter II, see reference no. 26.

Indians from Cowlitz Falls attended the mission,⁴¹ he would have given one to their chief.

In addition to the Sahale sticks distributed at Cowlitz we learn that Chief Tsalalakum made a copy of his teaching aid.⁴² When the chief heard that Fr. Blanchet was at Fort Nisqually in May, 1840, he sent a deputation from Whidbey Island to ask the Vicar General to visit his people. The wife of Tsalalakum, who was a member of the party, presented Fr. Blanchet with a Sahale stick which had been carefully enclosed in the skin of a sea-lion,⁴³ trusting that the gift would be accepted by Fr. Blanchet as a token of good-will toward the missionary. Fr. Blanchet tells us that "having given to another chief the one Sahale stick which he had received from me, he had succeeded in making another which he covered with great care."⁴⁴

Like most inventions, the prototype had some limitations. The stick portrayed the skeleton of doctrine but did

41 BLANCHET, General notes, p. 8.

42 L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 23 February, 1841 (A.A.P., B. III 5, p. 6).

43 Chief Edwin Underwood of the Saanich Indians, Saanichton, B.C., believes that the "peau de loup marin" described by Fr. Blanchet refers to the sea-lion (Chief Edwin Underwood, interview with the writer, 5 July, 1963).

44 L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 23 February, 1841 (A.A.P., B. III 5, p. 6).

not lend itself to the presentation of further explanation. The Sahale stick was effective but it needed a new format. The new format was known as the Catholic ladder.

CHAPTER II

THE SAHALE STICK BECOMES THE CATHOLIC LADDER

The Sahale stick, created at Cowlitz in April, 1839, gave way to an improved preaching aid which Fr. Blanchet called the Catholic ladder:

That plan was afterwards changed from a rule to a large chart containing the great epochs of the world, such as the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, the ten commandments of God, the twelve apostles, the seven sacraments and precepts of the Church; these being very useful to enable the missionary to teach the Indians and whites. It was called "The Catholic Ladder."¹

It is quite clear, therefore, that the original wooden Sahale stick developed into a chart. It is also clear that the content of salvation-history was to be found more amplified on the chart than was possible on the wooden stick.

However, it is by no means clear, when, exactly, the Sahale stick was discarded in favour of the Catholic ladder. The explanation of this uncertainty rests upon the fact that Fr. Blanchet does not distinguish clearly in his writings between the original Sahale stick and the Catholic ladder.

¹ BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 32.

In a brochure published in 1859 in which Fr. Blanchet describes the creation of his preaching aid, he writes:

The Catholic Ladder was devised in Oregon during the month of April 1839. The idea was conceived by F.N.B. [Francis Norbert Blanchet] a few weeks after he had taken charge of the Mission of Cowlitz.²

Immediately following this citation one finds a detailed explanation of how Chief Tslalakum and his men arrived from Whidbey Island, with the details already discussed in Chapter I. The question arises as to what preaching aid Fr. Blanchet is describing. Is he referring to the original Sahale stick, or is he referring to the improved format, the Catholic ladder?

In the opinion of the writer it is not possible to state categorically which format of his preaching aid Fr.

2 [F.N. BLANCHET], The Key to the Catholic Ladder: containing a Sketch of the Christian religion and Universal History Useful to All, New York, T.W. Strong, 1859, p. 1. This citation, which sheds considerable light upon the question of both the author and the date of the creation of the preaching aid, for some unknown reason reads in the brochure: "The Catholic Ladder was devised in ... during the month of April 18... The idea was conceived by ... a few weeks after he had taken charge of the Mission of Cowlitz" (*ibid.*). In the copy of this brochure which can be found in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon, the omissions have been filled in by hand. The uniqueness of his penmanship leaves no doubt that the missing data was supplied in his personal copy of this brochure by Fr. Blanchet, himself. In view of the certitude of the writer that the additions were made by Fr. Blanchet the text quoted appears with Fr. Blanchet's additions.

Blanchet has in mind. We have already seen that the Sahale stick was created sometime between March 27th, 1839 and April 24th, 1839. This would suggest that Fr. Blanchet could very well be referring to the creation of the original Sahale stick. However, the missionary's movements during the month of May, 1839, suggest that the new format, the Catholic ladder, was also devised at Cowlitz, almost immediately after the creation of the Sahale stick.

Leaving Cowlitz May 2nd, 1839,³ the Vicar General proceeded to St. Paul's Mission on the Willamette River where he began a 30 day mission for the settlers, their wives and children, May 8th of that same year.⁴ During this mission:

The Catholic Ladder was found very useful in imparting instruction, as many of the neophytes did not understand French sufficiently to be instructed in that language. It was also exposed in the church⁵ on Sundays and fully

3 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 33.

4 Ibid., p. 34; L. of Blanchet to Signay, Fort Vancouver, 19 March, 1840 (A.A.Q., C.A. I-153, 154, p. 3). In the Sketches, p. 34, Fr. Blanchet notes that he left St. Paul's June 7th, 1839, after his mission to the Willamette. In the letter to Bishop Signay, herein referred to, he gives the date of departure as June 11.

5 As early as September, 1836, Bishop Provencher received letters from both Dr. McLoughlin and the settlers at French Prairie telling him that they had already cut wood for a church at St. Paul in anticipation of the arrival of the priests (L. of Provencher to Signay, Nicole: 26 September, 1836, B.S.H.B., III, p. 154); see also: L. of Provencher to Lartigue, [?], 13 October, 1836 (A.A.M.,

explained to the congregation who listened with the most respectful attention.⁶

Is Fr. Blanchet referring, here, to the improved format, the chart which he called the Catholic ladder? There is good reason to believe that he arrived at St. Paul with his chart, or that he fashioned his chart at St. Paul. Again, however, it seems imprudent to state categorically that Fr. Blanchet is referring to the chart, for the simple reason that his reference to the 'Catholic ladder' could refer in this instance to the original Sahale stick.

If the exact date of the appearance of the Catholic ladder remains in doubt, it is clear that the Sahale stick had been replaced by the Catholic ladder during the second mission to Cowlitz, July 20th to August 28th, 1839:⁷

The daily teaching of the women and children began as soon as the harvest was over. The Catholic Ladder was used here, for the first time, with great profit to all, on the week-days and on Sundays.⁸

It is stated clearly in this instance that the Catholic ladder was used during the second mission to

pp. 153-154). Under the direction of Dr. McLoughlin the Canadians built the Church. It was 70 feet long (BLANCHET, General notes, p. 7). This church, built in 1836, was 70 x 30 feet (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 29).

6 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 34.

7 Ibid., p. 35.

8 Ibid.

Cowlitz. Again, whether Fr. Blanchet suggests that the Catholic ladder was introduced for the first time at this mission, or whether he means that this was the first time that he used his new chart at Cowlitz, is not certain. But we can conclude this question with four possible dates for the introduction of the new format of the Sahale stick, the Catholic ladder: (1) the Catholic ladder was devised at Cowlitz shortly after the creation of the original Sahale stick, (2) it was devised sometime after leaving Cowlitz and before his arrival at St. Paul, namely, between May 2nd, 1839 and May 8th, 1839, (3) it was devised at St. Paul sometime after May 8th, 1839, or (4) it was devised at the second mission to Cowlitz, between July 20th and August 28th, 1839.

Two questions immediately arise in reference to the creation of this preaching aid, both in its original and improved format, namely, was Fr. Blanchet the author of this creation, and, if so, what inspired him to devise it?

One author suggests that Fr. Demers may have created the Catholic ladder.⁹ But Fr. Demers on one

⁹ Clifford Drury writes: "Opinions differ as to who first introduced the Catholic ladder" (DRURY, First White Women, p. 218). He advances the theory that the pictures of biblical scenes painted by Eliza Spalding and used by her husband, Rev. H.H. Spalding, in the instruction of Indians around his American Board Mission at Lapwai, near present-day Lewiston, Idaho, may be credited with inspiring the idea of the Catholic ladder. This supposition

occasion refers specifically to Fr. Blanchet as the originator. When Fr. Demers discovered that the Rev. Daniel Lee, a Methodist missionary in Oregon, had made a copy of the Catholic ladder for use in his work, he wrote to Fr. Blanchet: "... he will try to pass for the author but your's is well enough known."¹⁰ The Sahale stick, which was created at Cowlitz, as has already been seen, as well as the Catholic ladder, which was devised at St. Paul or at Cowlitz, were both the work of Fr. Blanchet and not Fr. Demers for the obvious reason that Fr. Demers was not present at these missions on the dates which correspond to the origin of these preaching aids.¹¹

would credit Fr. Demers with having initiated the idea of creating the Catholic ladder, for Clifford Drury's supposition rests upon the fact that Fr. Demers came in contact with Spalding's pictures during his visit to Fort Colville in the late summer of 1839 (*ibid.*). Drury mentions two visits made by Fr. Demers, to the Upper Columbia during this period, but, in fact, Fr. Demers made one extended visit from June 22nd, 1839, until October 1st, 1839 (BLANCHET, *Sketches*, pp. 34-36).

¹⁰ L. of Demers to Blanchet, Vancouver, 27 March, 1849 (*A.A.P.*, D. II 106, p. 3).

¹¹ Drury writes: "C.B. Bagley, *Early Catholic Missions* [...], 1932, vol. 1, p. 77, referring to Father Demers on his second mission to Cowlitz says: 'The Catholic ladder was used here, for the first time, with great profit to all [...].' The time was July, 1839. Carl LANDERHOLM (Translator), *Notices & Voyages of the Famed Quebec Mission* [...], 1956, p. 40, states that Father Blanchet followed Father Demers at Cowlitz in Aug., 1839, and then introduced the ladder for the first time" (DRURY, *First White Women*, pp. 218-221). On the basis of his interpretation of the itinerary of Fr. Demers and Fr. Blanchet as found in these

The question of what may have inspired the creation of the Catholic ladder is particularly engaging. On many occasions, when the writer has discussed this preaching aid with interested persons, the question has arisen: Did Fr. Blanchet base his Sahale stick and Catholic ladder upon some visual aid already in use in Europe or in Quebec? In the opinion of the writer Fr. Blanchet created the Catholic ladder without the aid of any visual aid serving as his inspiration.

At the First Provincial Council in Oregon, presided over by the then Archbishop Blanchet, with Bishop Demers and Bishop A.M.A. Blanchet (brother of the Archbishop) present, the use of the Catholic ladder throughout Oregon for the instruction of both Whites and Indians was encouraged. In presenting the Catholic ladder the decree reads, in part: "[this Symbolic-Historical Chart] was contrived in the year 1839, as by a divine instinct by the first missionaries of this region [...]"¹² It is important

authors, Drury suggests that opinions differ as to who first introduced the Catholic ladder. The fact is that from March to August, 1839, Fr. Demers never spent any time at Cowlitz except when passing through. His itinerary was as follows: Fort Vancouver, Fort Nisqually (April 21st-30th), Cowlitz (May 1st), Willamette (May 3-4), Fort Vancouver, Upper Columbia (BLANCHET, Sketches, pp. 26-36).

¹² Acta et Decreta Conciliorum Provinciae Oregonopolitanae annis 1848, 1881, et 1891 celebratorum, Mt. Angel, Typis Monasterii S. Benedicti, 1895, p. 15.

to note the words: "divino velut instinctu [...] excogitata fuit."¹³ The verb 'excogitata fuit' suggests the idea of thinking up, or contriving something. The missionaries infer that the idea of creating this visual aid, of contriving it, of thinking it up, came as if by a divine instinct. This way of expressing the creation of the Catholic ladder does not indicate that Fr. Blanchet based it upon some visual aid with which he was familiar. In explaining the new device to his bishop Fr. Blanchet explains that it was "discovered by the grace of God."¹⁴ Writing to Bishop Provencher he calls it "a gift, a present from heaven."¹⁵

Evidence in support of the contention that Fr. Blanchet did create the Sahale stick and the Catholic ladder without outside help can be found in an incident which took place at Quebec 202 years before Fr. Blanchet encountered Chief Tsalalakum. The situation centres upon a missionary and an Indian. Fr. LeJeune, first superior of the Jesuit Fathers in Canada, after their restoration,

¹³ Acta et Decreta Conciliorum Provinciae Oregonopolitanae..., p. 15.

¹⁴ L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, St. Paul, 30 March, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A., II-36, p. 1).

¹⁵ L. of Blanchet to Provencher, St. Paul, 24 August, 1840 (A.A.S.B., 102, p. 1).

narrates that he spent one whole night explaining the truths of the faith to Captain Makheabichtichiou, an Indian living near Quebec. The instruction began with the creation of heaven and earth, touching upon the episodes of salvation-history, the fall of the angels and of men, the consequences of sin, the flood, the prophets, the coming of Christ, his miracles, his death, resurrection, and ascension, and the mission of the apostles.¹⁶ The Indian asked Fr. LeJeune: "begin over again and review for me from the creation of the world to the present time."¹⁷ When he began to describe, again, the events of salvation-history, the Indian:

[...] took a pencil and marked upon the ground the different periods in their order, "Here is he who made all," said he; "he begins in this place to create the Angels and the world; there he created the first man and the first woman; see how the race of men, increasing, divides, and offends God; here is the deluge, here are the Prophets," — in short, he came up to our own time [...].¹⁸

Captain Makheabichtichiou, an untutored Indian, sketched a Sahale stick upon the ground. The unfolding of the events of sacred history immediately suggested to him

¹⁶ The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., New York, Fagent Book Company, 1959, vol. XI, pp. 151-159.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁸ Ibid.

the idea of marking upon the ground the different periods in their order. What this Indian did in the year 1637, Fr. Blanchet did in 1839. In the opinion of the writer the inspiration for the preaching aid created by Fr. Blanchet is to be found in the very nature of salvation-history. The progressive interventions of God in human history can be represented, graphically, and Fr. Blanchet's creation finds its inspiration in that fact.

The Vicar General explains why he chose the term 'ladder':

It has been called a ladder, from the form which it represents in its development, about the centre, as the eye runs along its plane, from the bottom to the top. It is besides, the most real image of the mysterious ladder, which the holy patriarch, Jacob, saw in his dream, resting on earth, at one extremity, and on the heavens, at the other, along which the angels ascended and descended, and on the topmost round of which the Lord leaned, addressing his speech to Jacob.¹⁹

From the missionaries' letters which were reprinted in the Reports on the Missions of Quebec,²⁰ we learn

19 BLANCHET, Key to Catholic Ladder, p. 1. On occasion Fr. Blanchet and others of the period, as will be noted in the ensuing pages, speak of the 'historic ladder' or the 'chronological ladder'.

20 The editor of the R.M.D.Q. did not publish the reports on the missions at Cowlitz, in March and July, 1839, or the mission at St. Paul's in May, 1839. When one considers the interest later shown by this publication in the new catechetical device, one must conclude that the editor failed to see the value of either the Sahale stick or the Catholic ladder when they were first mentioned. Letters

something of the new format of the Sahale stick or the Catholic ladder.

On the 28th of August, 1839, Fr. Blanchet left Cowlitz on his way to Fort Nisqually.²¹ Travelling with a mass-server by the name of Jaudoin and an Indian guide, called "Little Old Man,"²² he found himself by day's end near an Indian encampment. He accepted the hospitality of the Indians and spent the evening giving instructions to his hosts. Little Old Man acted as interpreter and translated into the native tongue the instructions given by Fr. Blanchet in Chinook. The Vicar General explained to them:

The creation of the world, the fall of the first man, the promise of a Savior, his birth, and his death, the love of Jesus Christ for the human race [...]. I spoke to them of the general judgment, and gave them an idea of the seven

were sent to Quebec covering these missions (L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Fort Vancouver, 19 March, 1840 (A.A.Q., C.A., I-53, 154, p. 2).

21 R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 54.

22 This Indian was named Little Old Man (Petit-vieux), because of his size and his age (ibid., p. 54). Fr. Bolduc tells us that Petit-vieux was a slave and that Fr. Demers bought his freedom: "the one who is with me now, and who is a good cook, cost ten blankets. Although he is free, he has never wanted to leave Fr. Demers who took him out of slavery. He is spoken of in one of Fr. Demers' reports on the mission by the name of Little Old Man. Now that he is baptized he is called Thomas, he is of great help to the missionaries as an interpreter" (R.M.D.Q., 1845, no. 6, p. 11). In a letter to the Vicar General, Fr. Demers writes that "Thomas knows the ladder fairly well" (L. of Demers to Blanchet, Cowlitz, 2 January, 1841, A.A.P., D. II 92).

medicines (sacraments), instituted to cure the maladies of man, and more particularly of baptism, to wash the spiritual stain which comes to us from our first father. I spoke to them of the twelve apostles sent to instruct men, and finally of two others to instruct the Indians of the Columbia, and teach them the way of avoiding the great fire.²³

Fr. Blanchet explained these truths of the faith with a Catholic ladder:

All this was explained with the aid of pictures and an historical, chronological chart sketched upon a piece of paper and suited to catch the attention of the Indians.²⁴

On reaching Fort Nisqually, August 30th, 1839,²⁵ Fr. Blanchet began his instructions for the people of the area,²⁶ employing his preaching aid, the Catholic ladder:

23 R.M.D.Q., 1841; no. 3, pp. 56-57.

24 Ibid., p. 56.

25 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 36; R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 60.

26 The fort contained five families numbering 36 souls. The men attended Mass at 5 A.M. and followed religious exercises in the evening. Although not a Catholic at this time, Mr. Kitson, who was in charge of this fort attended. The forenoon was devoted to the women and children of the fort, teaching them their prayers and explaining the Catholic ladder. Mrs. Kitson acted as interpreter for the women who did not speak French or English. The afternoon was devoted to the Indians who numbered at least 300. Among the chiefs present was Telalakum. The Indians also were instructed with the Catholic ladder which was hung on a pole. The points were shown with a long stick. (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 36; R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 63). In the Sketches, p. 36, Fr. Blanchet speaks of Mr. Kitson as interpreter, in the R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 63, he tells us Mrs. Kitson was interpreter. A letter written by Fr. Blanchet to Bishop Signay, in the month of

I used with great success the chronological ladder [...] on which marks were made designating the centuries, and countermarks designating the principal events of the world, corresponding to their century. This ladder in aiding the memory of these poor people, impresses upon them more easily the truths of religion.²⁷

The descriptions, though sketchy, give some idea of the format of Fr. Blanchet's new Catholic ladder. Coupled with a study of the structure of the extant copies of Fr. Blanchet's later editions of the Catholic ladder, we can arrive at a general idea of his 1839 creation. Firstly, we know from the foregoing comments that the Catholic ladder differed from the Sahale stick in this respect, that the ladder was made of paper, not of wood. Secondly, since all

October (Fort Vancouver, 5 October, 1839, A.A.P., B. III 6, p. 1) which would have been written shortly after this mission at Nisqually, creates some confusion. Fr. Blanchet refers specifically to this mission at Fort Nisqually and adds that while at the fort he made "8 baguettes historiques et chronologiques". The more obvious interpretation would lead one to believe that he made 8 wooden Sahale sticks. But both the R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, pp. 56-57 and the Sketches, p. 36, not only make no mention of the wooden sticks but explain quite clearly that the Catholic ladder was used. It would appear either that Fr. Blanchet explained the Catholic ladder to the Indians but found it more satisfactory to give the chiefs the wooden Sahale stick to take back to their tribes or that the latter could be understood to refer to the "baguettes" in a more general sense, namely, the Sahale stick in its paper format. The first possibility does not appear valid for we find that he distributed many ladders to the chiefs on this occasion (R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 64). The only other explanation would appear to be the second.

27 R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 57.

extant copies of the Catholic ladder concur in this one aspect, that they have as their vertical backbone the bars and dots of the original Sahale stick, the marks designating the centuries refer to the same marks used on his Sahale stick, namely, four groups of ten bars representing the 4000 years before Christ, 33 dots surmounted by a cross, representing the history of the Church.

The new format went one step further. Alongside of the vertical bars and dots countermarks were made to designate the principal events of the world, corresponding to their century. This description is confirmed by extant copies of the Catholic ladder. Each mark portrayed some event in sacred history and at a glance the neophyte could place the event in the century or year to which it was related. For example, two vertical bars drawn alongside of the bar at the base of the ladder referred to Adam and Eve. The catechumen looking at the ladder would associate Adam and Eve with the beginning of time and the creation of the human race. Since the extant copies of the ladder have markings both to the left and right of the vertical bars and dots, it would appear that the earliest copies of the ladder show this arrangement.

From the available information it is not possible to reconstruct a detailed picture of the 'countermarks' which appeared on the first ladders. However, in describing

the mission at Nisqually in August - September, 1839, Fr. Blanchet does give a description of some of the marks he chose to sketch on his ladder. Describing how the Indians matched wits to see who best understood the ladder, he goes on:

It was a pleasant satisfaction for each of them to know the beginning of created things, and where on it [Catholic ladder] is the world today, the point where Adam died; that of the deluge; where God gave his 10 commandments; where Jesus Christ became incarnate, died and rose again into heaven. "Just a minute, Father," an Indian said to me, "put a mark here at the year 1838, where the great master sent you to the Columbia to instruct the poor Indians."²⁸

The events in sacred history mentioned here, must have been sketched on the Catholic ladder, in view of the fact that the Indian wanted Fr. Blanchet to put another mark at the year 1838.

A Catholic ladder which could possibly date back to 1839, although the date is by no means certain, was discovered by Lieutenant Commander C. Ringgold²⁹ in command of the United States Brig, Porpoise. June 1st, 1841, found the

²⁸ R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 64.

²⁹ An officer serving under Lieutenant Charles Wilkes and a member of the Wilkes Exploring Expedition. By letter of May 13th, 1841, addressed to Lieut. Com. C. Ringgold, U.S. Brig, Porpoise, Wilkes ordered his officer to proceed to the survey of Admiralty Inlet in Puget Sound (WILKES, Narrative, pp. 522-524).

ship moving along the southern coast of Whidbey Island.

The chronicler continues:

The next point visited and surveyed was Penn's Cove, between Whidby's [sic] Island and the main. This island [...] is in the possession of the Sachet tribe [...] the chief possessed a chest of valuables, carefully preserved in a corner, the contents of which were shown by him with no small pride, and consisted of a long roll of paper, on which were many representations of European houses and churches, together with rude sketches of the heavenly bodies, and a map of America. These had been given to him and explained by the Roman Catholic priest, and he seemed to understand the explanation.³⁰

Although this ladder may date from the first mission to Whidbey Island in May, 1840, the chief could have received this ladder from Fr. Blanchet at the Nisqually mission in 1839. The representations of European houses would appear to be the houses noted in extant ladders, which portray the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The representations of churches would refer to the temple of Solomon and the Church of Constantine.³¹ The rude sketches of the heavenly bodies appear to be the markings used to explain the creation of the heavens and the earth.

³⁰ WILKES, *Narrative*, p. 480. The comment about the Map of America remains obscure. It was a map distinct from the ladder, one could presume.

³¹ The representations referred to will be discussed in the following chapters.

Our information on the earliest forms of the Catholic ladder remains incomplete but we do find some interesting facts which predate the first extant ladder. On the 7th April, 1840, Fr. Blanchet wrote from Fort Vancouver to his confrere, Fr. Demers:

The chief at Wallamette has returned the historical ladder of Daniel Lee.³² He has received my reformed one, which I would like you to make in the future.³³

In a letter to the Vicar General Fr. Demers indicates that he understands the changes in the format of the reformed Catholic ladder: "I did not have time yet to write to Fr. Walsh³⁴ and to make him a reformed

³² For the explanation of Rev. Daniel Lee's ladder see 'First Protestant Ladder,' Part III.

³³ L. of Blanchet to Demers, Vancouver, 7th April, 1840 (A.A.P., B. III 6, p. 2). With this letter the name of Fr. Demers enters into the discussion of the Catholic ladder. There is little doubt that Fr. Demers saw the original Sahale stick either on his trip to or from Nisqually in April and May of 1839 (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 32).

³⁴ An Irish missionary to the Hawaiian Islands. A long struggle occurred to secure the entrance of Catholic missionaries to the Islands. The first priests, who came out from France in 1827, were expelled. Returning in 1836, all were expelled, except Fr. Walsh, and he could stay only on condition that he did not teach the Indians. In 1839 a French Man-of-War threatened the government with a bombardment and succeeded in winning the promise of toleration for Catholics (P.J. DESMET, Letters and Sketches, 1841-1842, in R.G. THWAITES, ed., Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Cleveland, 1906, vol. 27, p. 391; afterwards referred to as: THWAITES, Early Western Travels). Mr. Pambrun, in charge of the Hudson Bay post at Walla Walla, Oregon Territory, in a letter to Fr. Blanchet mentions receiving a pamphlet from Mr. Pally the company agent

ladder."³⁵ In the same letter Fr. Demers adds: "The chief of the Snohomish came to visit me with some of his people

stationed on the Sandwich Islands which told of "how unrelentingly cruel the missionaries at the Islands have been to the Catholic priest who went there and the poor natives who had become Catholics." He mentions the French intervention, and then adds: "I suppose that after the lesson their Brothers have received at the Sandwich Islands they [ministers around Walla Walla] will be more cautious how they act and measure their expressions" (L. of Pambrun to Blanchet, Walla Walla, 6 May, 1840, A.A.P., B. I 15, p. 3). Bishop Etienne Rouchoux, a member of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart (Picpus), arrived in May, 1838, with two priests. Returning to Honolulu with 18 religious Sisters of the same congregation in the winter of 1842 in the brig, Marie-Joseph, the bishop and all hands were drowned off Cape Horn (Mary Dominica McNAMEE, Willamette Interlude, Palo Alto, Pacific Books, [1959], p. 82, 278; afterwards referred to as: McNAMEE, Willamette). See also: LYONS, F.N. Blanchet, pp. 133, 152. Fr. Blanchet had written to Bishop Rouchoux in 1840: "we rejoice to learn that Your Excellency has established his residence at Oahu. In the remoteness we find ourselves from our superiors, the Bishops of Quebec, it is no little consolation for us to know that we have a worthy successor to the Apostles" (L. of Blanchet to Rouchoux, St. Paul on the Willamette, 10 November, 1840, A.P.F.L.). Lyons archives were moved to the Bishop's palace at Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1937 for safekeeping (Henry Putney BEERS, The French in North America a bibliographical Guide to French Archives, Reproductions, and Research Missions, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, [1957], p. 35). The material is not indexed (Blaise Turck, Mt. Angel, Oregon, who microfilmed part of collection, interview with writer, 6 June, 1963). Frs. Blanchet and Demers felt a close attachment to the Hawaiian Islands as Bishop Signay had written to Fr. Blanchet in April, 1841, telling him of his intention to request the Holy See to place the territory of Columbia either under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of St. Louis or Bishop Rouchoux of Hawaii as both bishops had closer connections with the Oregon territory: "I am charging the Bishop of Montreal who soon goes to France then to Rome for the needs of his diocese, to negotiate one or other arrangement" (L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 17 April, 1841, A.A.P., B. I 24, p. 4).

³⁵ L. of Demers to Blanchet, Cowlitz, 20 August, 1840 (A.A.P., D. II 106, p. 3).

and he left with a large ladder such as you recommended in your note from the Camp de Sable."³⁶ Since Fr. Demers refers to a letter from the Camp de Sable (a few miles above Cheampoeg)³⁷ and not Vancouver, it would appear that Fr. Blanchet had written a second letter about the alterations to the Catholic ladder. Again, we have no idea of what the change to the ladder might have been. He could not be referring to the making of 'large' ladders as the large ladder was already in use.³⁸

That the ladder underwent some alterations³⁹ appears to be confirmed in letters sent to Fr. Blanchet by Mr. Pambrun,⁴⁰ the Hudson Bay Company agent at Walla Walla. An excerpt from a letter dated May 6th, 1840, reads:

36 L. of Demers to Blanchet, Cowlitz, 20 August, 1840 (A.A.P., D. II, 106, p. 3).

37 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 28.

38 At the second mission to Nisqually in 1839 Fr. Blanchet tells us: "all were looking at a large Catholic ladder" (ibid., p. 36).

39 One possible explanation of the changes may be attributable to the appearance of Lee's Protestant ladder.

40 Mr. Peter C. Pambrun, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, was in charge of Fort Walla Walla. A Catholic, he was born in the parish of Vaudreuil, district of Montreal, Canada (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 16). Fort Walla Walla was built on the east side of the Columbia River, a short distance from the mouth of the Walla Walla River (ibid.).

I have cop'd the ladder chronnic [sic] and have given each of them [Chief Cayuse and his brother Five Crows] one in your name also one to the Walla Walla Chief [...].⁴¹

A second letter is dated June 2nd, 1840:

[...] acknowledge the honour and receipt of your kind and much esteemed letter of 7th April last bearing enclosed Echelle Cath. historique. Of the latter having seen but few of the Indians since its receipt not many as yet have seen it. But the former sent I have circulated [sic] and most of the Chiefs have one.⁴²

The first letter from Mr. Pambrun was in answer to a letter from Fr. Blanchet, February 10th, 1840.⁴³ The second, in reply to a letter of April 7th. Since April 7th is the same date that Fr. Blanchet wrote to Fr. Demers advising him of the reformed ladder, it would appear that between February 10th and April 7th, 1840, Fr. Blanchet had made alterations to the ladder and felt compelled to send a copy of the reformed ladder to Mr. Pambrun. No other explanation appears reasonable when one considers that Fr. Blanchet had sent Mr. Pambrun a ladder only two months previous. We glean another fact from the Pambrun correspondence. The

⁴¹ L. of Pambrun to Blanchet, Walla Walla, 6 May, 1840 (A.A.P., B. I 15, pp. 2-3).

⁴² L. of Pambrun to Blanchet, Walla Walla, 2 June, 1840 (A.A.P., B. I 23, p. 12).

⁴³ L. of Pambrun to Blanchet, Walla Walla, 6 May, 1840 (A.A.P., B. I 23, p. 1).

reformed ladder was known by the name 'Echelle Catholique Historique.'

Although the information predating the earliest extant Catholic ladders remains sketchy, we do know that the first ladders in use throughout the Pacific Northwest were manuscript copies made either by the missionaries themselves or under the direction of the missionaries.

Fr. Blanchet tells us that in the course of his first mission to the Cascade Indians in 1841 he distributed several chronological ladders "which I had made during the night while I had a candle."⁴⁴ In a letter to Bishop Signay in February, 1842, the Vicar General complains that much of the missionaries' time is taken up making Catholic ladders.⁴⁵ In the month of November, 1842, Fr. Blanchet writes to the secretary of Bishop Signay and discusses the printing of the ladder because "they are asking for them every day; we do not have the time to finish very many."⁴⁶ During the first four years of their apostolate, from May,

44 R.M.D.Q., 1843, no. 5, p. 43.

45 L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 17 February, 1842 (A.A.P., B. III 18, p. 1).

46 L. of Blanchet to Gazeau, Vancouver, 3 November, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A. II - 50).

1839, until the end of the year 1842, the missionaries laboriously made their own Catholic ladders.

With this background on the creation, revision and production of Catholic ladders we now turn to the study of actual extant copies.

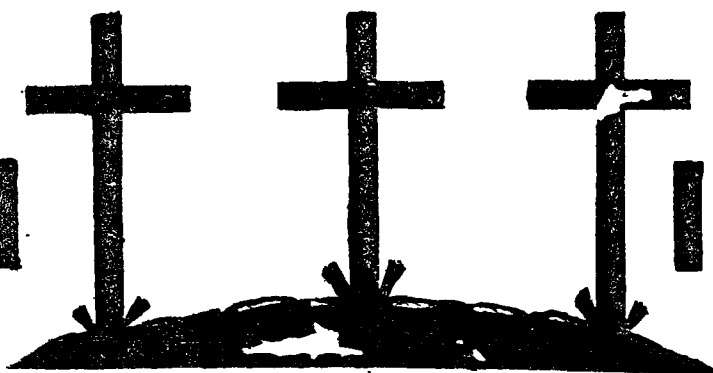
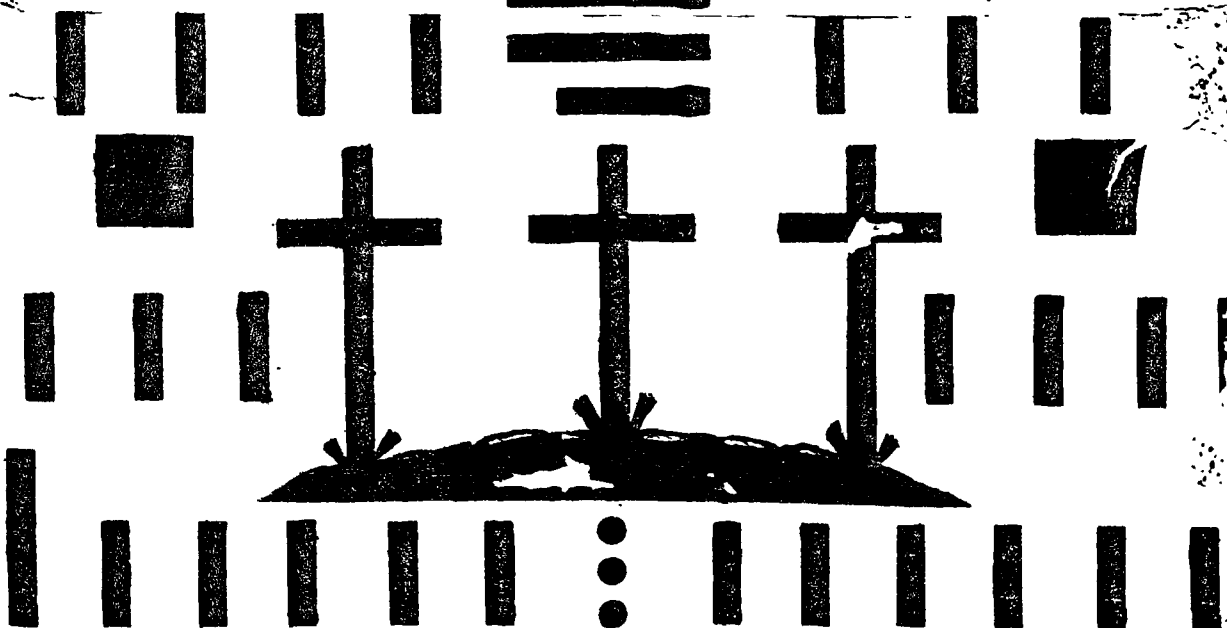
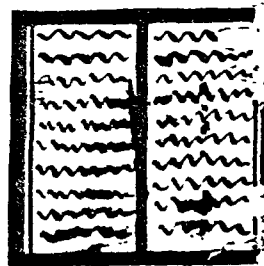
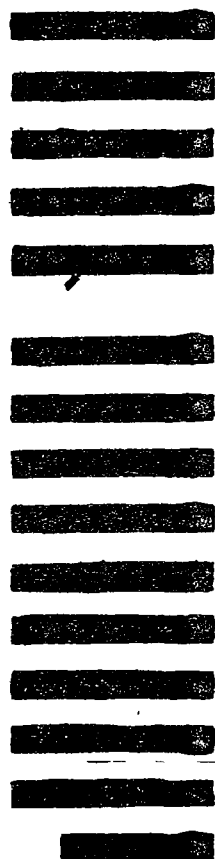
PART II

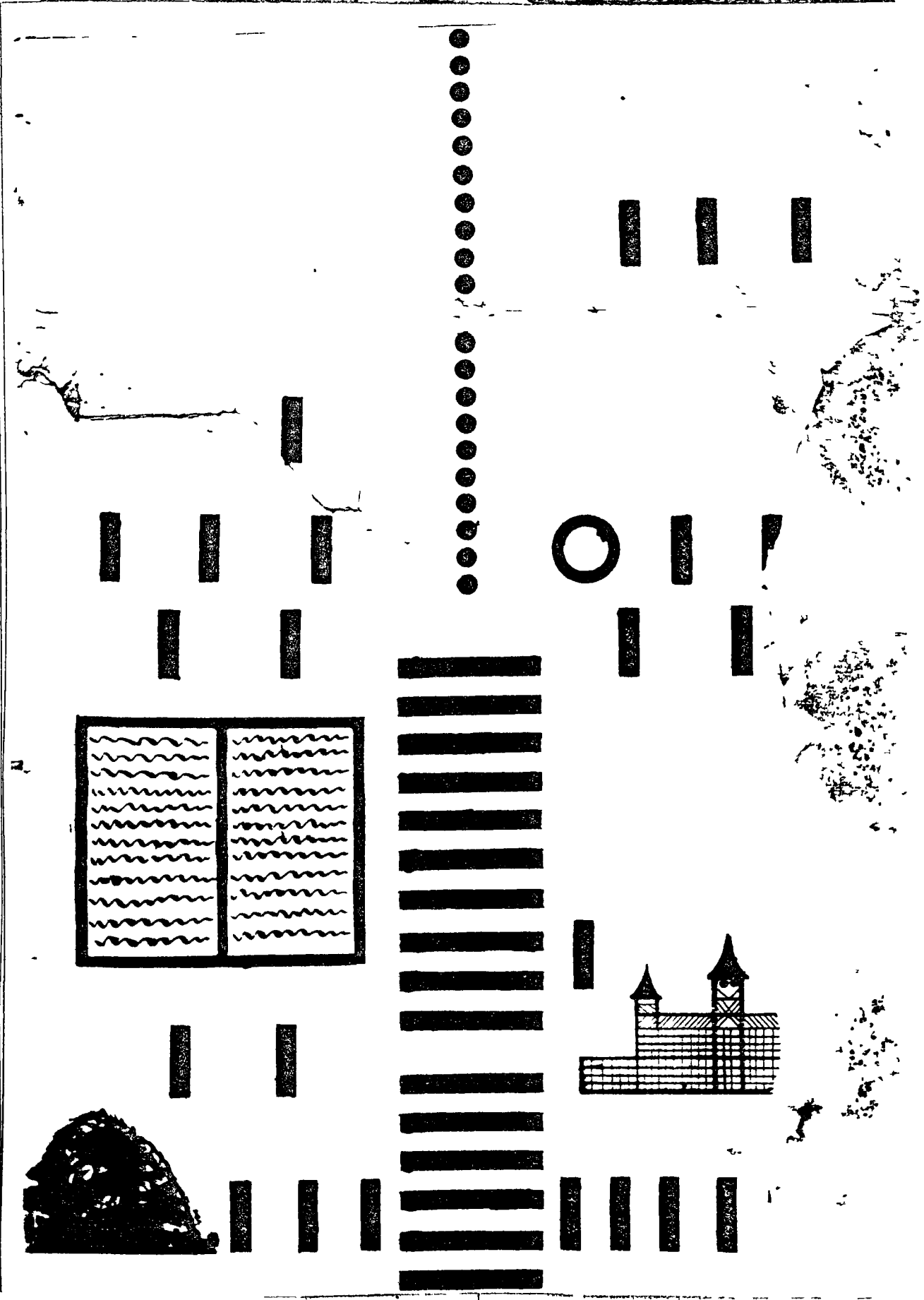
NINE EDITIONS OF THE BLANCHET LADDER

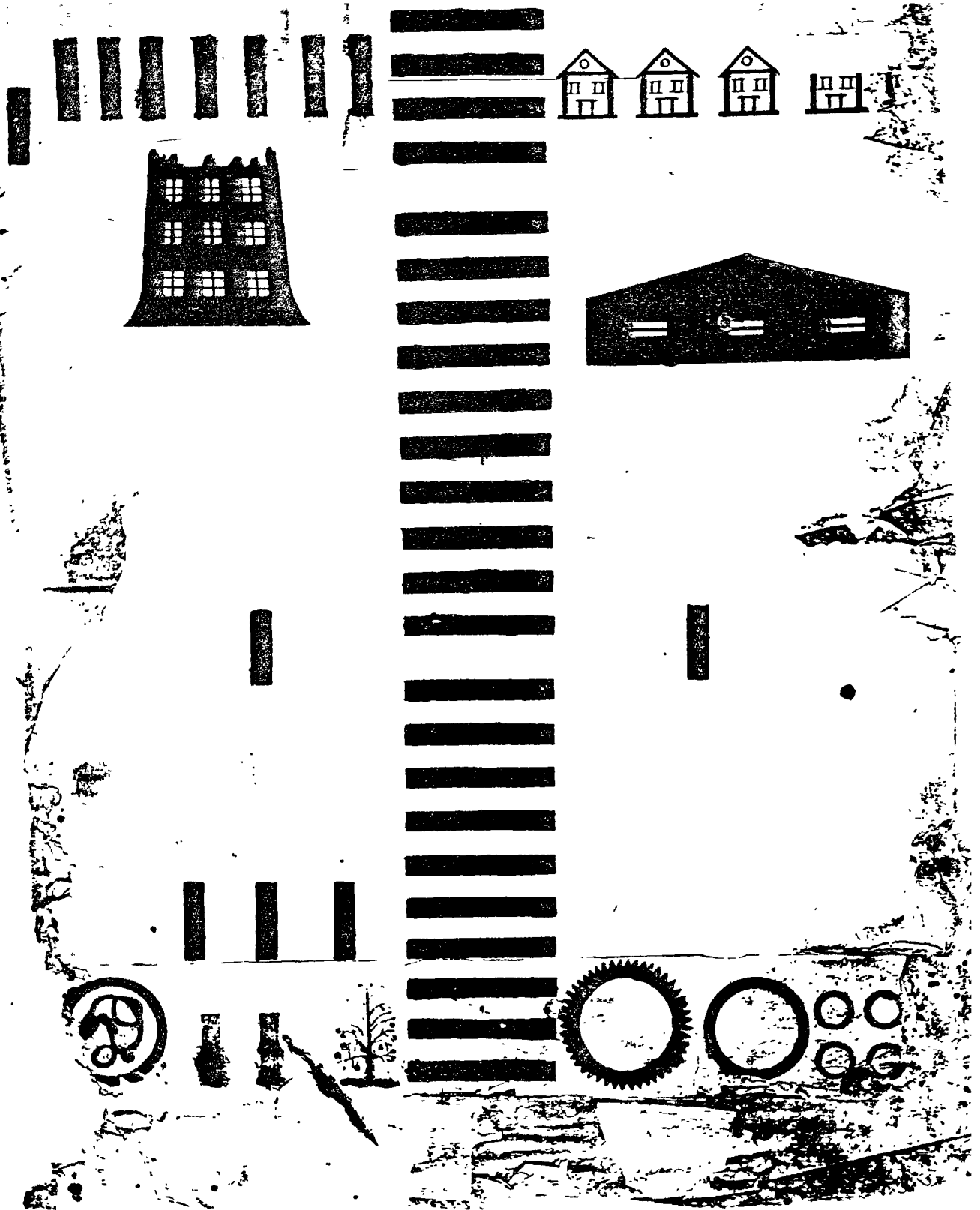
Fr. Blanchet's Catholic ladder underwent constant revision. It was published either in manuscript or printed form in three languages and in four countries. Chapter III deals with what is probably the earliest extant manuscript copy. In Chapters IV and V the first printed editions are examined. Two manuscript copies of the ladder, which post-date the printed ladders, are discussed in Chapters VI and VII. A Blanchet ladder, which had a very short existence, and which is not likely extant today, is noted in Chapter VIII. Three complex printed editions are studied; the first printed in Paris, Chapter IX, the second printed in Chile, Chapter X, and lastly, Fr. Blanchet's final creation, which was printed in New York, Chapter XI. All extant editions of the Catholic ladder, which show notable variations and are known to the writer, have been photographed and in the discussion of the various ladders the photographs should prove helpful in graphically portraying the particular ladder under examination.

This large roll was discovered by G. Thompson
in the upper floor of the store or warehouse
at Port-Angualty, St. Lawrence County, New York
of Washington having got a lot of paper, old
and apparently useless papers left by Doctor
P. J. McElroy, a man he left, probably to
take charge at Port-Angualty in 1839 - 1840
on the 14th September 1839 - 1840
After this day - 23rd April 1843 - he was again
has not succeeded in learning the meaning of
the Egyptian hieroglyphs although satisfied that
it was used by the Roman Catholic Missionaries
to aid them in teaching the natives the
Christian religion, at Port-Angualty in
the year 1841 or 1842. G. Thompson

5/1







NISQUALLY LADDER

Earliest extant Blanchet ladder

1841

Original in the Henry E. Huntington
Library and Art Gallery, San Marino,
California.

CHAPTER III

NISQUALLY LADDER

The earliest extant Catholic ladder, to the knowledge of the writer, dates from the year 1841 and was discovered at Fort Nisqually near Tacoma, Washington. This Catholic ladder is now in the possession of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California.¹

¹ Mr. Edwin H. Carpenter, Western Americana Bibliographer of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, writes: "[...] we have the original chart found at Fort Nisqually by Huggins [...] this is part of the Fort Nisqually Papers, acquired in May 1934 from George W. Soliday" (L. to the writer, 1 July, 1963). Miss Haydée Noya, Cataloguer, Department of Manuscripts of the Henry Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, writes: "[...] 41 of the dots appearing in the upper part are drawn with the same heavy India ink as the rest of the chart but the 42nd or top dot is drawn with the lighter ink used on the tree, snake, etc. [later additions to this ladder]. Moreover, there is evidence that there was also a 43rd dot, a faint impression of which is visible on the cloth backing of the chart where the paper is torn off at that point. In other words, it seems as though the chart had originally 41 dots (1841) and two years were subsequently added (L. to the writer, 9 July, 1963). Clarence C. Bagley visited Fort Nisqually some time after 1900 when the Fort was in charge of Edward Huggins and on that occasion photographed this ladder. In his book published in 1932 he infers that the original Nisqually ladder most likely lay among the treasures of some curio collector (Clarence C. BAGLEY, Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon, Seattle, Lowman & Hanford Company, 1932, vol. II, p. 119). The same Clarence Bagley writing about the Nisqually ladder states: "The first ladder was used at the Cowlitz Mission by Rev. Father Blanchet in July, 1842" (*ibid.*, p. 119; *IDEM*, In the beginning, p. 30). This error in dating the first Catholic ladder appears incredible when one considers that Bagley reprinted the Blanchet Sketches in his Early Catholic History in Old Oregon. In his book there appears at least 22 references to the Catholic ladder prior to July, 1842.

Throughout this work the Blanchet Catholic ladders will be named for their place of origin, where this is possible. This ladder discovered at Fort Nisqually will be known as the Nisqually ladder. Both photographs² and

Perhaps in referring to the Blanchet Sketches, in search of the statement of Fr. Blanchet: "The Catholic Ladder was used here [Cowlitz] for the first time" (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 35), he misread two dates, namely, the first referring to the Vicar General's arrival at Cowlitz in July, 1839 and the second, which tells of the log house which was used at Cowlitz until 1842. The two dates are found on the same page, in the Sketches, p. 35 and in Early Catholic History in Old Oregon, vol. I, p. 77. This would give Mr. Bagley the date, July, 1842. This appears to be the only valid explanation for his error. Authors quoting Mr. Bagley have repeated the erroneous dating of the first ladder: J.M., History and Use of the Catholic Ladder, Portland, Marylhurst College term paper, 1938, p. 4; Theodore J. ST. HILAIRE, Pedagogy in the Wilderness, in the Oregon Historical Quarterly, vol. LXIII, no. 1, 1962, pp. 56-57; MCNAMEE, Willamette, p. 282. Arthur D. Spearman, writing about the Catholic ladder explains that "the earliest form of it to come down to us, a photograph on sheets of paper pasted end on end. [sic] over a yard long and about seven inches wide, was recently sold to the Huntington Library of San Marino, California, by a Seattle collector, Mr. George Soliday, into whose possession it came after many years of obscurity following its discovery by a Mr. Huggins among papers in the upper office or warehouse of the old trading post at Fort Nisqually, near the present Tacoma, Washington (Arthur D. SPEARMAN, Archbishop Blanchet and Visual Education, The Story of the "Catholic Ladder", in The Dove Magazine, Los Angeles, [n.p.], 1937, vol. V, no. 2, pp. 15-19). Clarence Bagley thought the original Nisqually ladder lay buried in some curio shop and Arthur Spearman thought that the Huntington Library purchased a photograph.

2 Photocopies appear in: BAGLEY, Early Catholic Missions, p. 119; Ezra MEEKER, Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound, Seattle, Lowman & Hanford Printing, 1905, p. 493; in the St. Joseph Magazine, Oregon Supplement Edition, 1938, vol. 40, no. 1, p. 14. A broadside copy, 22" x 7 1/2", printed from a cut, 20" x 3 1/2", was found in the Archives of the Oregon Province of the Society of

facsimiles³ of the Nisqually ladder have appeared. The Nisqually ladder can be recognized from a note which is pasted on the upper left hand corner. It reads:

Jesus at the Gonzaga University Crosby Memorial Library, Spokane: afterwards referred to as: A.G.U. This A.G.U. broadside copy has not been folded which suggests that it was not extracted from a book, but was printed independently. St. Francis Xavier Mission, Cowlitz Prairie, has printed a broadside copy with explanations on 8 1/2" x 11" sheets (Cowlitz broadside), also The Catholic Book Store, Portland, Oregon, has 8 1/2" x 15" printed broadsides with explanations (Portland broadside).

3 Incorporating both the Sahale stick and the Nisqually ladder into one facsimile, several tall poles have been raised with the markings of the Nisqually ladder carved and painted on the flattened surface of the pole. Outside St. Francis Church, Cowlitz, stands a pole, approximately 24' high and 24" in diameter. The area about one foot from the top to four feet from the bottom has been flattened and in exact detail the Nisqually ladder has been painted on the flat face of the pole. The pastor of St. Francis Mission, Cowlitz writes: "[...] the Ladder was raised in May [...] 1939 during the Centenary celebrations" (L. of Fabian Gussenhoven to the writer, 17 May, 1963). A picture of this Cowlitz facsimile appears in The Northwest Progress, Second Section, September 8, 1950, p. 77 (Cowlitz facsimile). On the lawn in front of St. Edward's Seminary, Kenmore, Washington, a tall pole stands, approximately 17' high and 15" in diameter. The pole has a flattened area, one foot from the top to four feet from the bottom and markings of the ladder have been carved, then painted on this flattened area. This ladder has incomplete markings (Seattle facsimile). In front of the Gonzaga Prep School, Spokane, Washington, a pole approximately 12' high and 22" in diameter has affixed to it a 10' redwood board. The exact markings of the Nisqually ladder have been burnt into this redwood board (Gonzaga facsimile). Small, very well done facsimiles can be purchased from a distributor in the State of Washington. The Nisqually ladder about 9" x 1 1/2" is expertly reproduced on photographic paper and inset on the flattened area of a small round stick about 16" x 1 1/2". The writer procured one from Cowlitz Mission (Washington facsimile).

This large roll was discovered by E. Huggins in the upper floor of the store or warehouse at Fort Nisqually, Pierce County, Territory of Washington amongst a lot of other old and apparently useless papers left by Doctor Wm. F. Tolmie when he left Nisqually to take charge at Fort Victoria, Vancouvers [sic] Island, on the 19th September, 1859 ---[sic]. Up to this day - 23rd April 1903. [sic] The undersigned has not succeeded in learning the meaning of the Symbolical chart, although satisfied that it was used by the Roman Catholic Missionaries to aid them in teaching the Indians the Christian religion, at or near Fort Nisqually, in the year 1841 or 1842. - E. Huggins.⁴

The original Nisqually ladder measures 9' 11 3/4" in length by 20 1/2" in width.⁵ The material used was a white paper which is now mildly yellowed⁶ by the passage of time. The paper was supported by a cloth backing.⁷ The Nisqually ladder is a manuscript copy:

[...] the illustrations were evidently made with a small brush, and, judging from the long retention, undimmed, of its color, India Ink was used.⁸

4 See Appendix "A".

5 L. of Haydée Noya to the writer, 9 July, 1963. Clarence Bagley gives an incorrect description of the size: "writing from memory, it was about six feet long and eighteen inches wide" (BAGLEY, Early Catholic Missions, p. 119).

6 L. of Haydée Noya to the writer, 9 July, 1963. Clarence Bagley again, gives an incorrect description: "the material was strong yellow wrapping paper" (BAGLEY, Early Catholic Missions, p. 119).

7 L. of Haydée Noya (*idem*), BAGLEY, loc. cit.

8 BAGLEY, Early Catholic Missions, p. 119.

A study of the extant Catholic ladders show an interesting development in the number and use of marks, symbols and explanatory notes. In view of the confusion about the meaning of these symbols we will attempt to set out the significance of each mark and symbol. The most accurate basis for interpreting the Nisqually ladder will be the letter written by Fr. Blanchet to Bishop Turgeon, Co-adjutor Bishop of Quebec, March 30th, 1842.⁹ Although this letter does not describe the Nisqually ladder, which predates the letter, it does describe an early ladder:

I am sending to your Excellency a Catholic ladder such as is taught here. It is as complete as necessary to instruct in religion children and adults, too. The Indians and the Canadians understand it well as it is now composed. [...] I take the liberty to give an explanation here such as we give both among the whites and among the Indians. [...] The expressions of approval which His Grace, the Archbishop of Quebec, and Your Excellency have deigned to give to our invention, discovered by the grace of God, encourages me to send an actual ladder with explanations.¹⁰

9 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, St. Paul on the Willamette, 30 March, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-36, p. 1). The explanations of the ladder found in this letter will appear in Appendix "B".

10 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, St. Paul on the Willamette, 30 March, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A., II-36, p. 1). Fr. Blanchet sent a copy of this ladder with the explanation to Bishop Provencher of St. Boniface, telling him that he was also sending a copy to Quebec. He adds that he would like the Bishop to examine the plan but not to make too many changes (L. of Blanchet to Provencher, St. Paul on the Willamette, 22 March, 1842, A.A.P., B. III 19, p. 7).

In an attempt to explain each symbol with the minimum of confusion we will follow the method used by Fr. Blanchet in his letter to Bishop Turgeon, namely, giving each individual symbol, or wherever possible each group of symbols, a number. We will proceed from the bottom of the ladder to the top and from the left to the right. It should be noted that the basic markings of the Sahale stick appear as the central theme of the Nisqually ladder. The photograph of the original Nisqually ladder, found herein, should prove helpful in following the explanations.

A. Seven symbols at the base of the ladder:¹¹

1. The symbol enclosed in a circle is very mysterious. In a letter to Bishop Signay Fr. Blanchet narrates how after a catechetical lesson on Whidbey Island, some of the Indians took his long stick and pointed to the symbols that he had explained: "earth, Adam, Eve, [...]."¹² This would lead one to surmise that the encircled symbol should refer to the earth. But there appears to be no connection between the earth and this figure. The symbol has the configuration, in part, of a serpent. But to see a serpent in this figure

¹¹ The Seattle facsimile has only six symbols at the base of the pole.

¹² L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 23 February, 1841 (A.A.P., B. III 5, p. 11).

would require some stretch of the imagination. One explanation would be that the enclosed symbol is the manuscript letter 'D', signifying that Fr. Demers made the ladder.¹³ However, its meaning remains undecided in the opinion of the writer.

2-3. Adam and Eve.¹⁴

4. The tree of knowledge and to the left of the tree a serpent. This symbol does not appear on the original Nisqually ladder but was sketched on a piece of paper and then pasted on the ladder at a later date.¹⁵ The addition of the tree of knowledge and the serpent is confirmed by a letter written by Fr. Blanchet, June 24th, 1842:

The Rev. Fr. [DeSmet] speaks of our ladder with approval [...] on his advice I have added the tree of knowledge [...] and the serpent after Eve; and St. Paul being sent after the square of prayer, & St. Matthew before that of of works, Julien the Apostate between the cross & the new testament.¹⁶

13 Both the Cowlitz and Portland broadside copies explain this symbol as Devils.

14 Appendix "B", no. 2. It will be found that the marks here given as nos. 2 and 3 are explained in Fr. Blanchet's letter under no. 2. Future reference to Fr. Blanchet's explanation of the ladder found in his letter to Bishop Turgeon will be referred to under the number given them by Fr. Blanchet.

15 L. of Haydée Noya to the writer, 9 July, 1963.

16 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Vancouver, 24 June, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A., II - 43).

Fr. Blanchet's letter accounts for this addition to the original Nisqually ladder. After the visit of Fr. De Smet in June, 1842,¹⁷ whoever was using the Nisqually ladder added the tree of knowledge and the serpent. But it will be noted that they did not add the other points suggested

¹⁷ In a letter of April 17th, 1841, Bishop Signay advised Fr. Blanchet that he had received a letter from the Jesuit Superior in Missouri, Fr. Peter Verhaegen: "[...] about a mission in your area, one of the confreres, a Fr. DeSmet, is preparing the field" (L. of Signay to Blanchet, 17 April, 1841, A.A.P., B. I 24, pp. 2-3). But Fr. Demers had already heard of Fr. De Smet. While he was at Colville in July, 1840, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company arrived with news that "[...] word had come to the Indians that French priests were seen on the Prairies. I wrote a letter on the return of this employee 'To the French priest of the plains' - He had started back to Missouri [but] an Indian caught up with him" (Bishop Modeste Demers, Notice sur l'établissement de la Province Ecclésiastique de l'Oregon, précédée de quelques renseignements sur le Canada, Bruxelles, H. Goemaere, 1867, p. 7). Chief Skatalkopom of the Tete Plate tribe spoke to Fr. De Smet on the prairies (L. of Demers to Blanchet, Cowlitz, January 1, 1841, A.A.P., D. II 92, p. 2). Fr. De Smet wrote to Fr. Blanchet, August 10th, 1840, from the Fork of the Jefferson River "[...] after following the Beaverhead River through the present Dillon, Montana, they [De Smet and the Indians] reached, by August 10, the Jefferson River" (William N. BISHOFF, The Jesuits in Old Oregon, Caldwell, Caxton Printers, 1945, p. 22). Fr. De Smet told Fr. Blanchet of his work in the Oregon Territory and expressed the hope that he would be able to meet the Vicar General before the winter of 1841 (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 45). Fr. Demers received this letter from Fr. De Smet (ibid.) and on October 3rd, 1840, advised the Vicar General: "A Jesuit has come to the prairies. He will return to pass the winter at St. Louis & in the spring he will return with a number of priests. I received a letter from him at Colville" (L. of Demers to Blanchet, Fort Vancouver, 3 October, 1840, A.A.P., D. II 106, p. 1). Fr. De Smet arrived at Fort Vancouver, June 8th, 1842 (Gilbert J. GARRAGHAN, The Jesuits of the Middle United States, New York, America Press, 1938, vol. II, p. 277).

by Fr. De Smet. The two vertical bars (2-3) are also sketched on this added piece of paper¹⁸ but it would appear that they were to be found on the original.¹⁹

5-6-7 Sun, Moon, Stars.²⁰ The symbol of the sun has a halo of light surrounding it²¹ but the symbol of the moon does not have any distinguishing mark.²² The 4 dots marking the stars, may have been, originally, 6 dots.²³ Two dots may be missing where a piece has been torn from the ladder.²⁴ At the mission on Whidbey Island, already referred to, the catechumens pointed to the marks on the ladder which symbolized the sun, moon, and stars.

18 L. of Haydée Noya to the writer, 9 July, 1963.

19 Fr. Blanchet mentions in his letter to Bishop Turgeon that he added the tree of knowledge and the serpent after the symbol representing Eve. This would suggest that the marks for Adam and Eve already existed on the original Nisqually ladder (L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Vancouver, 24 June, 1842, A.A.Q., C.A. II-43); see also: L. of Blanchet to Signay, Williamette, 23 February, 1841 (A.A.P., B. III 5, p. 11). The Portland broadside gives the tree of good and evil without having a symbol to represent it on the chart.

20 Appendix "B", no. 2.

21 The Cowlitz and Portland broadsides give this as heaven.

22 The Cowlitz and Portland broadsides explain this symbol as the Angels.

23 See photograph of Nisqually ladder.

24 The Cowlitz and Portland broadsides give these dots as the 6 days of creation.

It will be noted that all later ladders, which picture the events of creation more graphically, have the sun, moon and stars in this sequence.

B. Three vertical bars.

8-9-10 The children of Adam: Cain, Abel, Seth.²⁵

C. Two vertical bars on either side of the central bars.

11. The death of Adam.²⁶

12. Henoch taken up to heaven will return at the end of the world.²⁷

D. Two symbols, one to the left and the other to the right of the central bars.

13. The tower of Babel built by the descendants of Noe.²⁸

14. The ark of Noe in which were saved 4 men and 4 women; all the others perished in the deluge.²⁹

25 Appendix "B", no. 3.

26 Appendix "B", no. 4.

27 Appendix "B", no. 4.

28 Appendix "B", no. 6.

29 Appendix "B", no. 5.

E. 8 vertical bars.

15. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron,
Pharaoh.³⁰

F. 5 houses.

16. Sodom, Gomorrah.³¹

G. A mountain and ten vertical bars of which the
tenth bar is indistinct.

17. Mount Sinai.³²

18. The ten commandments of God given to Moses on Mt.
Sinai.³³

H. Two vertical bars and the sketch of a building.

18-19 King David and King Solomon. Fr. Blanchet in his
letter speaks of four kings with David and Solomon taking
precedence over Saul and Roboam.³⁴ Here, where only two

³⁰ Appendix "B", no. 7. The Cowlitz and the Portland broadsides give the order as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Pharaoh, Aaron, Job.

³¹ Appendix "B", no. 8.

³² Appendix "B", no. 9.

³³ Appendix "B", no. 9. The Seattle facsimile has one tablet to the left of the centre showing 3 commandments and another tablet to the right showing 9. Except for these symbols and the six dots at the base, there are no further markings in the Old Testament section of the Seattle facsimile.

³⁴ In the simpler form of the Catholic ladder it would be expected that those personages most directly connected with the plan of salvation would take precedence over others. The Cowlitz and Portland broadsides invert the order, Solomon and David.

marks are provided, they would refer to David and Solomon.

20. The temple of Solomon.³⁵

I. A book and one vertical bar.

21. The old testament.³⁶

22. Elias is taken up into heaven, he will return at the end of the world.³⁷ It would appear likely that Fr. Blanchet in singling out Henoch would also single out Elias as both are associated in Scripture by reason of their assumption into heaven. Other events and personages of this period are noted by Fr. Blanchet in his letter to Bishop Turgeon are: Eliseus, the four major prophets, the twelve minor prophets, Jonas, the captivity of Babylon, Susanna, Tobias, Judith, Esther. Although anyone of the foregoing could be represented by the single bar, none appears distinctive enough to merit a special mention,³⁸ which leads this writer to conclude that this mark represents Elias.

35 Appendix "B", no. 11.

36 Appendix "B", no. 17.

37 Appendix "B", no. 12.

38 The Cowlitz broadside gives this bar as Daniel. The Portland broadside gives Daniel but no symbol.

J. Four vertical bars.

23-24-25-26. Zachary, Elizabeth; Mary, Joseph.³⁹

K. The symbols in the following section refer to the life of Christ. Three vertical bars, a circle, and again, three vertical bars. One of the latter three bars is barely visible. In his letter to Bishop Turgeon Fr. Blanchet makes special mention of: Jesus Christ, Son of God, became a man for us;⁴⁰ Jesus Christ is born on Christmas day;⁴¹ he remained visible on the earth about 3½ years.⁴²

27-28-29 The three magi, King Gaspar, Balthasar, Melchior, having seen the star of Bethlehem, come to adore Jesus Christ. The angel warns the three kings not to return to Herod but to take a different route home.⁴³

30. The star of Bethlehem.⁴⁴

31-33-33. Jesus, Mary, Joseph. In his letter Fr. Blanchet gives these explanations: An angel warns Joseph to

39 Appendix "B", no. 18. The Cowlitz and Portland broadsides give Zachary, Elizabeth; Anne, Joachim.

40 Appendix "B", no. 19.

41 Appendix "B", no. 28.

42 Appendix "B", no. 29.

43 Fr. Blanchet in his letter to Turgeon explains two sets of symbols which refer to the Magi. Appendix "B", nos. 21, 23.

44 Appendix "B", no. 20.

take the infant Jesus and Mary his mother and to save themselves in Egypt;⁴⁶ an angel advises Joseph to take the infant, Jesus, and Mary, his mother, and to return to his country.⁴⁷

L. One vertical bar. This bar appears shorter than the others because at this point the ladder was joined and therefore obscures part of the bar.

34. The evil King Herod wishes to kill Jesus Christ; the evil King Herod massacres all the little children in the City and around Bethlehem.⁴⁸

M. Three vertical bars.

35. Jesus, Mary, Joseph. Mary and Joseph lost the infant Jesus at the age of twelve years for three days and find him in the temple.⁴⁹

N. One vertical bar.

36. John the Baptist. John the Baptist baptizes Jesus Christ.⁵⁰

46 Appendix "B", no. 25.

47 Appendix "B", no. 27.

48 This bar has two explanatory notes, Appendix "B", nos. 22, 26.

49 Appendix "B", no. 30.

50 Appendix "B", no. 31.

O. Twelve vertical bars of which the first is about twice as tall as the others.

37. St. Peter and the eleven apostles and the twelve articles of the creed.⁵¹

P. The three Crosses.

38. The mountain of Calvary, the cross of Jesus Christ and the two crosses of the robbers. Fr. Blanchet in his letter to Bishop Turgeon lists also under this heading: Christ dies on Good Friday; rises on Easter Sunday; ascends into heaven on Ascension day; sends the Holy Spirit on Pentecost; and will return to earth at the end of time to judge the world.⁵²

⁵¹ Fr. Blanchet lists the names of the twelve apostles (Appendix "B", no. 33) and gives a special explanation for the extra long bar: "St. Peter the head of the apostles, the vicar of J.C. and the first pope" (Appendix "B", no. 34). He also gives a special explanation for the 12th bar: "Judas sells his master for 30 pieces of silver" (Appendix "B", no. 34). The twelve articles of the Creed are given in Appendix "B", no. 42. Both the Cowlitz and Portland broadsides explain these twelve bars as the twelve apostles but do not mention the twelve articles of the creed.

⁵² In his letter to Bishop Turgeon Fr. Blanchet gives the six separate explanations, all of which appear to be associated with the three crosses. It would be likely that mention of the Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost, were meant to be associated with the crosses, and the General Judgment with the space beyond the top of the ladder. In the context either arrangement seems appropriate (Appendix "B", nos. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40). The Cowlitz broadside gives the word crucifixion beneath the three crosses. The Portland broadside does not give an explanation for the three crosses.

Q. Three vertical bars to the left of the crosses and four vertical bars to the right.

39. The seven sacraments.⁵³

R. Two squares, one to the left and one to the right of the crosses.

40-41. The square to the left: prayer;⁵⁴ the square to the right: our work of every day, week and year.⁵⁵ The two squares are referred to in a letter to Bishop Signay when Fr. Blanchet mentions that he added St. Paul after the square of prayer and St. Matthias before the square of works.⁵⁶

S. Above the crosses seven vertical bars.

42. The seven precepts of the Church.⁵⁷ These seven marks would present a problem to most interpreters of the early Catholic ladders unless they were aware that at this period within the Diocese of Quebec there were seven, not

53 Appendix "B", no. 42.

54 Appendix "B", no. 43.

55 Appendix "B", no. 44.

56 The Cowlitz and Portland broadsides give these squares as the Resurrection and Ascension respectively.

57 Both the Cowlitz and Portland broadsides give these seven vertical bars as the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

six, precepts of the Church.

1. To keep holy all feast days which are commanded.
2. To hear Mass on Sunday and all holy days.
3. To confess one's sins at least once a year.
4. To receive Holy Communion at least during Easter time.
5. Ember days, Vigils and Lent are days of fast.
6. Friday is a day of abstinence, also Saturday.
7. Dues and tithes are to be paid to the Church faithfully.⁵⁸

T. The horizontal bars of the familiar Sahale stick are found in the Nisqually ladder. However, the first horizontal bar is shorter than the others. This would indicate that the 33 dots which precede this bar represent about one-third of the first century A.D.

⁵⁸ Catéchisme à l'usage du Diocèse de Québec, imprimé par l'Ordre de Monseigneur JEAN OLIVIER BRIAND, Evêque de Québec, Saint Philippe, L'Imprimerie Ecclésiastique, 1825, p. 26. The catechism carries this information: "In the future this catechism will be the official catechism in the Diocese of Quebec" (*ibid.*, p. 8). This catechism was still in use in the Diocese of Quebec during the early years of the Oregon mission. Fr. Blanchet in his explanation of the seven vertical bars quotes the opening words of Article X of the catechism: 1. Les Fêtes tu sanctifieras, qui te sont de commandement. 2. Les Dimanches Messe entendras, et les Fêtes pareillement. 3. Tous tes péchés confes-seras, à tout le moins une fois l'an. 4. Ton Créateur tu recevras, au moins à Pâques humblement. 5. Quatre-temps, Vigiles, jeûneras, et le Carême entièrement. 6. Vendredi, chair ne mangeras, ni le Samedi même. 7. Droits et Dîmes tu payeras, à l'Eglise fidèlement" (*ibid.*, p. 26). See also: Le Petit Catéchisme du Diocèse de Québec, Québec, Auguste Germain, 1818, pp. 48-52; also: An Abridgement of the Quebec Catechism, Quebec, C. Le François Printing Office, 1819, pp. 42-46.

U. The Church to the left of the horizontal bars.

43. The Church of Constantine.⁵⁹

V..A cross, one vertical bar and a book to the right of the horizontal bars.

44. The cross of Jesus Christ found on Calvary by St. Helena after a search of three years.⁶⁰

45. St. Augustine brings the faith to England.⁶¹

46. The New Testament.⁶²

W. The branch and three vertical bars.

47. The reformation. Fr. Blanchet in his letter to Bishop Turgeon does not refer specifically to the branch but mentions by name Luther, Calvin and Henry VIII.⁶³

48-49-50. Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII.⁶⁴

59 Appendix "B", no. 46. Both the Cowlitz and Portland broadsides refer to this church as St. Peter's.

60 Appendix "B", no. 47.

61 Appendix "B", no. 49. Fr. Blanchet adds an explanation: "The English walk 900 years on the way of J.C." (Appendix "B", no. 50).

62 Appendix "B", no. 48.

63 Appendix "B", no. 51.

64 Appendix "B", no. 51.

X. In the upper part of the ladder there are two bars to the left of the vertical line of dots and a single dot to the right.

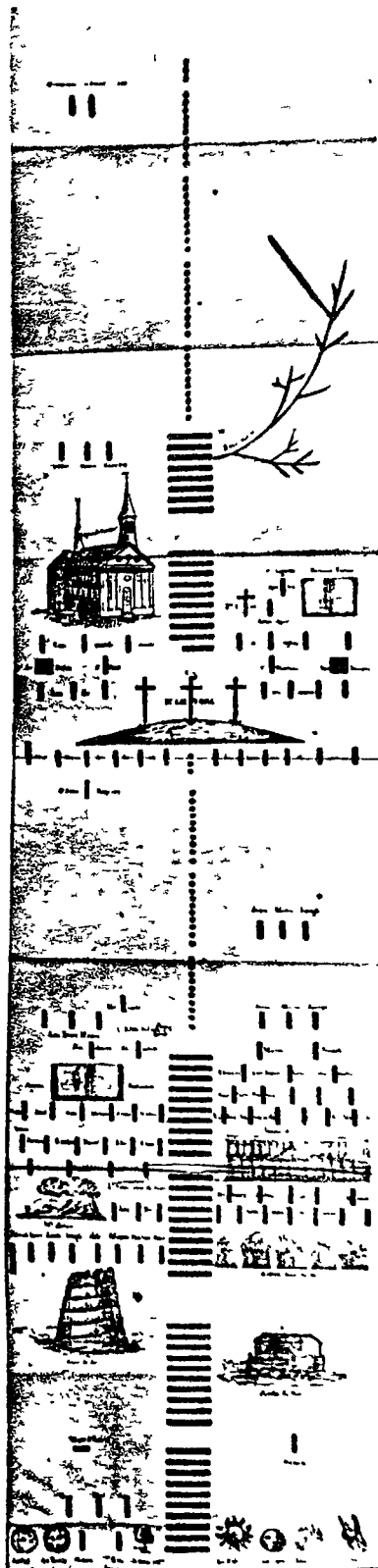
51-52. Two priests, Frs. Blanchet and Demers, arrive in the Oregon Territory.⁶⁵

53. Fr. De Smet's visit to the mountains in 1840.⁶⁶

65 Appendix "B", no. 52.

66 Fr. Blanchet's letter to Bishop Turgeon makes no mention of this dot. However, in July, 1840, Fr. Demers knew of Fr. De Smet's visit to the Oregon Territory and by October, 1840, Fr. Demers had so advised the Vicar General. It appears likely that the dot refers to the arrival of Fr. De Smet.

ÉCHELLE
Chronologique et Historique
DE LA
RELIGION.



QUEBEC LADDER

First printed Blanchet ladder

1843

Original in the R.M.D.Q., 1843, no. 5

CHAPTER IV

QUEBEC LADDER

Fr. Blanchet sent a copy of his Catholic ladder to Quebec in March, 1842, so that his superiors could see an actual copy of his new catechetical aid.¹ At that time he made no mention of having the ladder printed. However, in November of the same year he writes to Fr. Cazeau, secretary to the Bishop of Quebec:

I am sending you the catholic ladder, corrected and augmented with the explanation of the marks and countermarks. It is brought up to date as we are using it here. I think it has all the improvements which one can give it and which are sufficient, without overtaxing or confusing the Indians. For these I would like it just as it is. We need big ones and small ones, on good paper; they ask us for them every day; we do not have time to finish very many. I am requesting Rev. Mailly² to lithograph it for me with the marks for my Indians. If that is not too good, write to him and cancel the arrangement.³

The Vicar General had decided that now was the time to make his "paper catechism" available in quantity. It

1 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, St. Paul on the Willamette, 30 March, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A., II-36, pp. 1-2).

2 Canon P. Mailly, agent for the Bishop of Quebec in London, England (L. of J.M. Beauchemin, assistant archivist, Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec, to the writer, 6 June, 1963).

3 L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 3 November, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A., II-50).

would appear that Fr. Cazeau cancelled the arrangements with Canon Mailly⁴ as Bishop Signay and the Association for the Propagation of the Faith in Quebec⁵ decided to print the catechetical device not only for the use of the Columbia Missions but also for general distribution throughout the Missions under the jurisdiction of Quebec.⁶

4 The writer has found no evidence that a Catholic ladder was ever printed in England.

5 The editor of the R.M.D.Q. explains the work of the organization: "The Association of the Propagation of the Faith established in the Diocese of Quebec, by virtue of a Brief of Our Holy Father Pope Gregory XVI, dated 28 February 1836, has as its aim by prayer and alms, to spread the light of the gospel among the Indian nations who inhabit Canada [...]. The moneys allocated by the Council of the Association for the missions which are the object of its concern are used, 1. to procure, wholly or in part, for the missionaries, food, clothing, and lodging, and to underwrite the expenses of travel which they must make in the discharge of their ministry. 2. for the construction and upkeep of chapels also the furnishings of vestments, sacred vessels and other requirements necessary for religious service. 3. for the establishment of schools for the instruction of children and to obtain the necessary books. 4. for the printing of catechisms and small prayer books, for Indian nations, and the distribution of catechisms in the French language and in the English language, also other books of religion and apologetics, for our brother catholics of the Townships, and other places where they are deprived of a resident priest. 5. to make it possible for the missionaries to give small gifts to those whom they are evangelizing, especially the Indians; such as crosses, medals, rosaries, pictures, etc. We are publishing today a report on each of the missions which are helped by the Association. [...] it is our plan to publish each year the details which we receive on the state of the missions among the Indians" (R.M.D.Q., 1839, no. 1, foreword).

6 L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 17 April, 1843 (A.A.P., B. I 16, p. 3).

Bishop Signay informed Fr. Blanchet:

We have lithographed your Catholic historical & chronological ladder of Religion & you will receive a good number of copies by canoe [...]. The share for your Missions is 2000 copies. What you do not receive by canoe you will receive by sea. The 5th Report has a copy - we have made a good number of copies for the missions of the Red River, Abbitibbi and St. Maurice.⁷

This ladder, lithographed under the direction of Bishop Signay, will be known as the Quebec ladder.⁸

In the statement of expenses for June to December 1843, the accounts of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith show an expenditure of £2. 10s.⁹ This entry

7 L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 17 April, 1843 (A.A.P., B. I 16, p. 3).

8 A framed photograph of the Quebec ladder hangs in a classroom in St. Mary's Academy, Cowlitz Prairie, Toledo, Washington. This ladder was presented to St. Mary's Academy by James E. Sarsault, Chehalis, Washington, as can be seen from a note inked to the right lower corner of the ladder. It is a photo-copy reproduction of the ladder which can be found in the 1843 no 5 edition of the R.M.D.Q. A note inked in at the base of the ladder reads: "From Rapport sur les missions du diocèse de Québec [...] Janvier: 1841 no. 3 [...]" The date is incorrect. Two reproductions of the Cowlitz photocopy were made; one is now in the Archives of the Diocese of Victoria, the other in the possession of Rev. Donal Lehane, Nanaimo, B.C., Canada. In the Archives of Mt. Angel Abbey, Mt. Angel, Oregon, are found two copies of the Quebec ladder. They appear to be exact copies of the ladder found in the Reports of 1843 no. 5. One ladder is pasted on a piece of cardboard, the other is in two distinct pieces which leads one to believe that in the shipment from Quebec in 1843, the ladders arrived in two pieces and had to be pasted together. A printing mark, a thin black line about seven inches long, is noted on the Quebec ladders along the upper left hand edge, indicating a minor flaw in the printing process.

9 R.M.D.Q., 1845, no. 6, p. XI.

covers the expenses incurred by the addition of the chronological ladder to the Report of 1843. In the statement of the Society's expenses for June 1, 1842 to June 1, 1843, there is an entry for £40, the cost of lithographing the chronological and historical ladder of religion.¹⁰ The expenditure of £40 is explained in the Report:

A large number of copies of this lithograph have been made in order to distribute them to the Indians in our missions.¹¹

Introducing the copy of Fr. Blanchet's ladder, which is found in the 1843 Report, the editor gives this explanation:

We have often spoken in this report and in those which have preceded it, of a chronological ladder composed by Fr. Blanchet, head of the mission at the Columbia, to explain to the Indians the history of religion. We believe that our readers will be pleased that we have inserted a copy in our report, and that we make it possible to know this ingenious invention, which ought to be of great help to our missionaries in the instruction of Indians [...]. To understand the ladder it suffices to inform our readers that the marks — designate the centuries, and the marks • designate the years; they will understand the rest very easily.¹²

The comment of the editor of the Reports that the Quebec ladder could be easily understood when one knew that

10 R.M.D.Q., 1845, no. 6, p. VIII.

11 Ibid.

12 R.M.D.Q., 1843, no. 5, p. 136.

the bars meant centuries and the dots meant years, is understood with a cursory study of the Quebec ladder. In printing this copy of Fr. Blanchet's ladder, the printer prepared the format in such a way that each symbol which appears on the ladder has printed near it an explanation of its significance.

On examination it will be found that the text of the ladder was lithographed, whereas the heading 'Echelle Chronologique et Historique de la Religion' was not lithographed but was done on a block letter press.¹³ The ladder which appears in the Report of 1843 measures approximately 34" in length by 7 1/2" in width. It is printed on the same coarse grained paper that was used for the printing of the Reports. The quality of the paper appears to be very durable and this is confirmed by the fact that the copies of the Reports which have had reasonable care still appear in excellent condition.

Whoever had the task of preparing the Quebec ladder for the printer followed minutely the explanations of the Catholic ladder given by Fr. Blanchet to Bishop Turgeon in the letter of March 20th, 1842.¹⁴

¹³ Harry E. Lichter, Chief Curator, Oregon Historical Society Museum, interview with the writer, 5 May, 1963.

¹⁴ L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Columbia, St. Paul on the Willamette, 30 March, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A., II-36).

The only additions to be found in the Quebec ladder not mentioned in the letter of March 20th, 1842, are the symbols added on the advice of Fr. De Smet, namely: the tree of knowledge and the serpent, St. Paul, St. Matthias and Julian the Apostate. Fr. Blanchet had advised Bishop Turgeon of these additions in a letter of June 24th, 1842.¹⁵

The Quebec ladder carries 43 dots after the year 1800 which would indicate that the ladder was printed in 1843. This is confirmed by the letter of Bishop Signay, written in 1843, advising Fr. Blanchet that he had copies ready to send to Oregon.¹⁶ This letter bears the date April 17, 1843. The accounts of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith indicate that the bill for the printing of the ladders was payable in the fiscal year ending June, 1843.¹⁷

The photograph of the Quebec ladder found herein and the explanations given in the letter of Fr. Blanchet to Bishop Turgeon will provide a point by point explanation of the marks and symbols found on the Quebec ladder. It appears

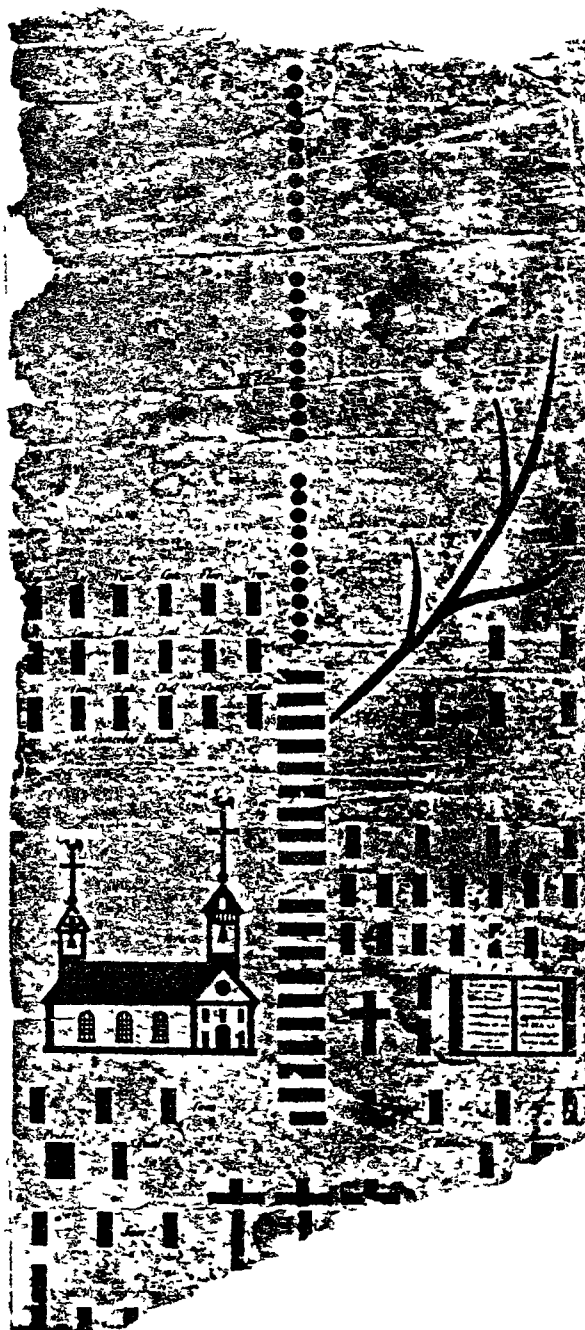
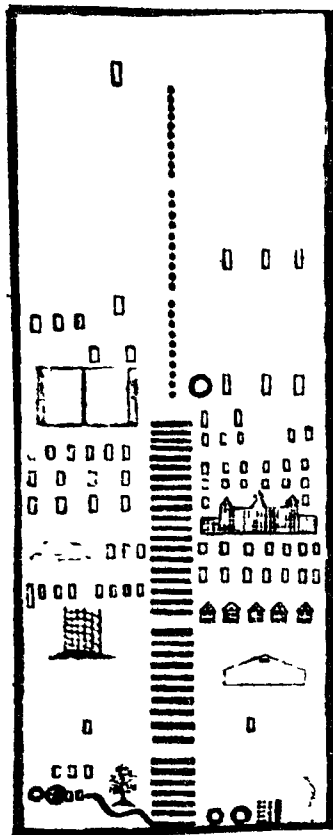
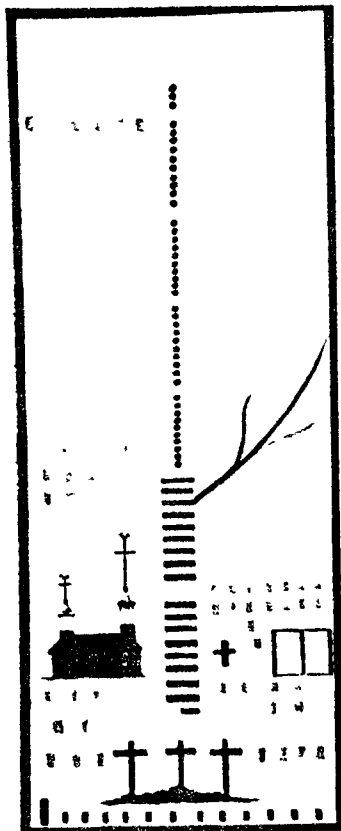
15 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Columbia, St. Paul on the Willamette, 30 March, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A., II-36).

16 L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 17 April, 1843 (A.A.P., B. I 16, p. 3).

17 R.M.D.Q., 1845, no. 6, p. XI.

unnecessary to explain this ladder in detail here, as the explanations can be found in the appendix.¹⁸

¹⁸ See Appendix "B".



COWICHAN LADDER

1843

Second printed Blanchet ladder

Original discovered in the home
of a Cowichan Indian. The sketch
of the original ladder made by a
missionary among the Cowichan
Indians.

CHAPTER V

COWICHAN LADDER

Fr. Francis Boshouwers,¹ a missionary to the Cowichan Indians² on Vancouver Island, discovered a Blanchet ladder which will be known as the Cowichan ladder. Fr. Boshouwers explains the background of this ladder:

1 Fr. Francis Boshouwers, a member of the Fathers of the Company of Mary, commonly called the Montfort Fathers, was born in Brunssum, Holland, in 1884. He died in Victoria, B.C., April 22, 1929 (Tombstone, Catholic Cemetery, Saanichton, B.C.).

2 Fr. Boshouwers began his work with the Cowichan Indians in 1910 (date of his first baptismal entry in the Baptismal Records of St. Ann's Church, Duncan, B.C.). Duncan is the home of the Cowichan tribe who live in what is known today as the Cowichan Valley. Fr. Demers spoke of the "Kawitshins who live on the lower part of the Fraser" (R.M.D.Q., 1843, no. 5, p. 56). The Cowichans had only a secondary camp on the Fraser where they lived while fishing in the Fraser River and trading otter and mink pelts at Fort Langley, the Hudson's Bay Fort 'Isaac Antoine', a 77 year old Cowichan Indian, interview with the writer, 5 April, 1963). On his trip to the Fraser River in August, 1841, Fr. Demers heard a rumour that the Cowichan Indians intended to kill him. In spite of the danger he continued his journey and, instead of being ambushed, he was escorted safely to Fort Langley by a Cowichan Chief (R.M.D.Q., 1843, no. 5, pp. 56, 61). "Many Cowichan Indians, among them Chief Loocha and Gabriel Tsulchamet [...] of the Comiakens [a band of Cowichan Indians] — as Gabriel has told me time and again, — embarked in their canoes, as soon as they heard the news of the arrival of the priest, crossed the Gulf and paddled up the Fraser to see and hear 'Mist' Demers. Some of them were baptized there" (Father Francis BOSHOUWERS, Early Cowichan History, in British Columbia Orphans' Friend, 1928, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 3; afterwards referred to as: BOSHOUWERS, Cowichan History).

A copy, probably the only copy extant today, may be seen in the house of the late Antoine, an Indian of the Somesooq reserve, near Duncan. It is a parchment scroll³ about 39 inches in length and about 7 inches wide, and marked with very distinct black characters. How did Antoine get this copy? Let us narrate what Antoine himself states: "Long, long time ago (in 1838) two Catholic priests were stationed at Fort Vancouver. They were the first priests in the West. Shortly after that, others followed. They visited all the tribes in the West, and founded missions in all big places. Still many tribes could be visited only at rare intervals. There were not enough priests and the Indians were scattered over a big country. Hence Bishop Demers appointed in each village a high chief to act as priest, and to conduct in his house religious meetings for the converted Indians. To the chiefs thus appointed, Demers gave a copy of the Saghale⁴ stick, which the chief explained day after day to his people. Among the Cowichan Chiefs appointed⁵ shortly

3 The writer examined the extant piece of the Cowichan ladder. It is a printed copy not a manuscript.

4 It will be noted that this spelling "Saghale" differs from the various spellings already noted in Chapter I. Fr. Boushouwers uses the term Saghale stick, although he is referring to the Catholic ladder.

5 Cowichan Indian catechists had been appointed during the mission at the Fraser 17 years before the visit of Bishop Demers to the Cowichan village. Fr. Boshouwers explains: "In a chat on 'early days, the late Bill Gelatso-lock told me one day: 'Long before Father Rondeault came here to live at Comiaken, the chiefs acted like priests. Yes, they did what 'Mist' Demers had told them to do. Some of the Cowichans had gone to the Fraser to listen to 'Mist' Demers, who was there two weeks, preaching all the time. And the chiefs learned what he said. The great chief of Quamichan, Tzetzazuluk was like a priest after that. Early every morning he walked from the top to the end of the village, ringing a big bell and all the Quamichans — there were several large buildings cross the river [Cowichan River] too — came to his house. Then each in turn went near the chief and the chief gave good advice [apparently he was mimicking Fr. Demers hearing confessions], and they

before Father Rondault came (1858)⁶ were Chief Jean Baptiste of the Comiakens, my father, Chief Antoine of the Somenos,⁷ also Chief Good of the Nanaimos.⁸ Now that is how I got a copy

shook hands. So they all did in turn. Then all made the sign of the cross, said the prayers, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, all the other prayers. After that, the chief explained the 'Saghale stick' [Catholic ladder], as Demers had told him to do. Then an Indian woman, who knew the Chinook well and had a nice voice, started singing the hymns they had learned on the Fraser and all joined in. That was long before Father Rondault came here to stay. I was a small boy then. The Indians were good then. What Tzetzazuluk did at Quamichan, Loocha did at Comiakem, Kakalatze at Somenos [all bands of the Cowichan tribe]" (BOSHOUWERS, Cowichan History, vol. 25, no. 7, p. 3).

6 Fr. Peter Rondeault, born at St. Norbert, Quebec, July, 1824, was a member of the staff of Terrebonne College, Terrebonne, Quebec, when Bishop Demers, in 1857, went to Eastern Canada in search of missionaries. Fr. Rondeault volunteered for Victoria Diocese and arrived in Victoria, June 1858. In that same year he was sent as first resident priest among the Cowichan Indians (M.M. RONDEN, The Cowichan, Saanich and Kuper Island Missions, in the British Columbia Orphans' Friend, Historical 1847-1914, Victoria, 1913, p. 41.

7 Chief Antoine's grandson, 77 year old Isaac Antoine (1963) who lives near his grandfather's old home, retains a vivid memory of his grandfather's role as catechist. Isaac, who was about 7 years old at the time, pointed to a slight rise of ground in the middle of the present city of Duncan, and explained that his grandfather would ring the bell and summon all the Indians to catechism. He would then hang the Catholic ladder on a tree and question the listeners on their knowledge of the marks and symbols of the ladder. An Indian woman would always lead hymns in Chinook in which all would join. These instructions were continued long after the arrival of Fr. Rondeault, the first resident missionary among the Cowichans (Isaac Antoine, interview with the writer, 5 April, 1963).

8 The Comiakens and Somenos Indians are bands belonging to the Cowichan tribe and live within the same Cowichan Valley near present day Duncan, B.C. The Nanaimos live at Nanaimo, B.C., about 30 miles north of the Cowichans. In the Spring of 1855, Bishop Demers left Victoria to visit the Indian encampments on the east coast of Vancouver

of the first Catholic ladder. We will always keep it in the family as a relic of the early days."⁹

Chief Antoine would be happy to know that his grandson, Isaac Antoine, now 77 years of age (1963), after a diligent search was able to resurrect a substantial part of the ladder which had been presented to the Chief by Bishop Demers. The find was particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that the original ladder had been in the family for 108 years and had been passed down through many hands. The old Antoine home no longer exists but the family live in a house situated near the original site. A photograph of the extant part of the Cowichan ladder can be found herein. A sketch of the Cowichan ladder was made by Fr. Boshouwers.¹⁰ This sketch completes the picture of the

Island. The Bishop was received by the Cowichan Indians with much pomp and circumstance. He had already met some of the Cowichans at his mission in 1841 at the Fraser. Bishop Demers spent a week with the Cowichans instructing them (M. THEODORE, Heralds of Christ the King, New York, P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 1939, pp. 182-186; afterwards referred to as: THEODORE, Heralds). It was on this occasion that Bishop Demers appointed the catechists named in the reference.

9 BOSHOUWERS, Cowichan History, vol. 25, no. 8, p. 3.

10 Fr. Boshouwers kept a scrap book of his articles which appeared in the British Columbia Orphans' Friend. The scrapbook shows a sketch of the Cowichan ladder done in two sections. Each section measures approximately 10 1/2" x 3 1/4". This scrapbook, which bears the title: Articles Cowichan History, can be found in the Archives of the Sisters of St. Ann, Victoria, B.C. (D. 2); hereafter referred to as: A.S.S.A.

ladder. It is to be hoped that other copies of this ladder exist.

Fr. Boshouwers gives a detailed explanation of the Cowichan ladder.¹¹ The writer records below Fr. Boshouwers' explanation almost word for word:

1. In the middle, from the bottom upwards, are forty bars and thirty-three dots to represent the forty centuries before Christ and the thirty-three years of the life of Christ on earth. Either to the left or to the right of the forty bars are various blocks or symbols to indicate the principal events recorded in the Old Testament, or the names of important people. The event or the name is put opposite the century in which the event recorded took place or the person lived.

2. At the foot of the ladder, the Creation is represented by symbols running from left to right. Heaven, earth, Adam, Eve, the tree of knowledge and the serpent,¹² the sun, the moon, the stars, the angels, the everlasting fire of hell. It will be noted that there is one addition in the Cowichan ladder, the symbol of hell. This symbol does not

11 BOSHOUEWERS, Cowichan History, vol. 25, no. 8, p.3.

12 The tree of knowledge and the serpent appear on Fr. Boshouwers' sketch. However, he omits mention of them in the description of the ladder.

appear on the Nisqually or the Quebec ladders. The symbol of hell is referred to by at least four authors.¹³

3. We find the name of Cain, Henoch, Death of Adam, Tower of Babel, the Ark, Abraham, Sodom, Mt. Sinai, the tables of stone with the Ten Commandments, Joshua, Elias, the four Major Prophets, the twelve Minor Prophets. High up at the end of the forty centuries stand two blocks representing Mary and Joseph, and directly above in a line with the marking of the first year of Christ, the birth of Christ, the flight into Egypt. After that we find the name

¹³ Dr. Marcus Whitman writes of a ladder: "[...] which represents all Protestants as the withered ends of the several branches of Papacy falling off down into infernal society & flames as represented at the bottom" (L. of Whitman to American Board, 11 November, 1841, in Nellie B. PIPES, The Protestant Ladder, in the Oregon Historical Quarterly, vol. 37, September, 1936, p. 238; afterwards referred to as: PIPES, Protestant Ladder). Rev. H.H. Spalding: "The Catholics in this country have had printed [...] small charts on which the Road to Heaven is exhibited & from which Luther is represented as branching off in a road that leads to hell" (L. of Spalding to American Board, 12 February, 1846, in PIPES, Protestant Ladder, p. 238. W.H. Gray: "[...] representing all religious sects as going up the tree, and out upon the different branches, and falling from the end of the branch into a fire under the tree" (W.H. GRAY, A History of Oregon 1792-1849, Portland, Harris & Holman, 1870, p. 184). Mr. Macfie describes a ladder and suggests that it portrayed hell: "Thence another line diverges at right angles from the main one, leading off the page into the abyss" (Mr. Matthew MACFIE, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, London, Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1865, p. 476). Macfie's explanation does not necessarily suggest that there was an actual symbol for hell, but it could bear this interpretation.

of Zacharias, King Herod, the three kings, Balthazar, Melchior, Gaspar. At the 12th year, Jesus, Mary and Joseph are depicted going to the temple. At the 30th year, the names of the twelve apostles are given; at the 33rd year the Crucifixion, the three Crosses; also the seven sacraments.

We now come to the extant part of the Cowichan ladder a photograph of which is found herein.

4. At this point we are concerned with the upper half of the ladder and the history of the Church. The nineteen bars and forty-three dots¹⁴ in the middle of the ladder indicate the nineteen centuries and forty-three years after Christ.

5. Both to the left and to the right of the ladder are recorded various events or names of persons. First, the six commandments of the Church;¹⁵ the names, St. Paul, St.

¹⁴ The precision with which Fr. Boshouwers explains each detail of the Cowichan ladder and the fact that he prepared a sketch of this ladder and that he photographed the original found in the possession of the Antoine family (BOSHOUWERS, Cowichan History, vol. 25, no. 8, p. 3) leads us to accept his statement that this ladder was, in fact, an 1843 creation.

¹⁵ One will note from the extant piece of the Cowichan ladder that seven bars are shown with the explanation, commandments of the Church. It would appear that Fr. Boshouwers skipped over this point not considering it necessary to explain the background of the change from seven to six precepts of the Church.

Matthias;¹⁶ the words, Christian duties and prayer appear. In the third century, a large church with spire and cross is represented to indicate that the Church is now free to worship in buildings set apart for the worship of God. Higher up to the left,¹⁷ the names of eighteen Councils of the Church are given. To the right,¹⁸ we find the names of twelve heretics of which two are noted, namely Arius and Mohammed, and four Schisms, Donatist, Greek, Western and English.¹⁹ At the 16th century we note a tree and the words "The Road to Protestantism"²⁰ and the names of Luther,

16 Fr. Boshouwers calls Matthias, Matthew.

17 Fr. Boshouwers explains that to the right we see the marks designating the Councils but it is to the left.

18 This time Fr. Boshouwers gives it as left.

19 Fr. Boshouwers in his description of the ladder includes the twelve heretics and the four Schisms under the general title of 'some reformers'.

20 Fr. Boshouwers gives this English translation for the French description found on the branch. Matthew Macfie in his book describes such a Catholic ladder: "It consists of a long slip of paper, on which the principal events narrated in Scripture, from the creation of the world to the founding of the Christian Church, are illustrated. The progressive development of the Church of Rome from that time up to the present is portrayed. The advantage of the arrangement is that a large amount of religious information is contained in remarkably small compass. The Hebrew version reads from right to left, but this 'self-interpreting Bible' reads from bottom upwards. At the foot of the page the globe appears emerging out of chaos, and immediately above stands a male and female with a tree between them, representing our first parents partaking of the forbidden fruit. The other details of this invention may be readily guessed at, till we reach the Protestant Reformation, up to

Calvin, Henry VIII. Fr. Boshouwers does not mention them, but after the names, Luther, Calvin and Henry VIII, there are three vertical bars. The three bars are marked, B., Jans., W. The B would likely refer to Baius, the Jans would refer to Jansenius, and the W., to Wesley.²¹

6. At the top left of the ladder on a line with the fortieth year under the words "Les Prêtres Catholiques" are seven bars indicating that by the year 1843 seven priests

which point the line of instruction is intelligible and straight. Thence another line diverges at right angles from the main one, leading off the page into the abyss. This is marked "chemin du Protestantisme." Then the straight path of the Church continues to Pio Nono, and onwards still to heaven" (MACFIE, Vancouver Island, p. 476). This explanation of a Catholic ladder given by Macfie is particularly interesting when he tells us that such a ladder was shown to him by Bishop Demers (*ibid.*). The fact remains that either Macfie took some liberty in describing this particular Catholic ladder of which he speaks, or there exists another edition of the Catholic ladder of which the writer has no knowledge. The mention of "chemin du Protestantisme" fits the description of the Cowichan ladder; the mention of Pio Nono, and the globe emerging out of chaos fits the description of the Lacombe ladder; the male and female figures with the symbol of the tree between them, coincides with the description of the Spanish ladder. The writer has no knowledge of a ladder which reflects in exact detail the description given by Macfie. It is interesting to note that Fr. Boshouwers uses Macfie's description of "a self-interpreting Bible" (BOSHOUWERS, Cowichan History, vol. 25, no. 8, p. 3). It is likely that he encountered Macfie's description in A.G. MORICE, Catholic Church in Western Canada from Lake Superior to the Pacific (1659-1895), Toronto, Musson Book Company, Vol. II, 1910, p. 290. Fr. Boshouwers refers to Morice's work in speaking of the Lacombe ladder (BOSHOUWERS, Cowichan History, *ibid.*).

21 The three bars are found on the Spanish ladder and bear these names.

had arrived in the Pacific Northwest.²²

7. Three more dots bring us to the year 1843, when the ladder was printed.²³

This account of Fr. Boshouwers describes quite minutely the Cowichan ladder. But who was responsible for printing the Cowichan ladder, where it was printed and when did the Cowichan ladder arrive in the Pacific Northwest?

A letter of Fr. Blanchet to Fr. Cazeau of Quebec dated April 6th, 1844, leads us to believe that the Cowichan ladder was the work of a priest, Fr. Aubin:

Thank Fr. Aubin, if you will, for the good taste with which he executed the Catholic ladder and the improvements which he made.²⁴

22 In his account of the Cowichan ladder Fr. Boshouwers explains that the "seven blocks indicate that there were seven priests in the West as early as 1840" (BOSHOUWERS, Cowichan History, vol. 25, no. 8, p. 3). This is incorrect. Two priests were in Oregon in 1840, Frs. Blanchet and Demers and in that year Fr. Peter De Smet, Gregory Mengarini and Nicholas Point arrived in the territory and established the first Jesuit mission, St. Mary's, in the Bitter Root Valley (SCHOENBERG, Chronicle, p. 11). In September, 1842, Frs. Anthony Langlois and John Bolduc arrived at Fort Vancouver from Quebec to assist Frs. Blanchet and Demers (Accounts of the Labours of 1842, Blanchet to Signay, A.A.P., B. III 4, p. 1).

23 Fr. Boshouwers' minute description of the Cowichan ladder and his sketch appear to the writer sufficient evidence to accept this date.

24 L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 6 April, 1844 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-91).

On the same day Fr. Blanchet wrote to Bishop Turgeon:

The Catholic ladders are much to my taste.
Fr. Aubin should be congratulated for the im-
provements which he has made.²⁵

The letters of Fr. Blanchet to Bishop Turgeon and Fr. Cazeau were written a full year after Bishop Signay's letter of 1843 in which Bishop Signay advised Fr. Blanchet that the Quebec ladders had already been printed. This fact suggests that Fr. Blanchet is referring to a ladder which postdates the Quebec ladder. We have noted that the Quebec ladder faithfully rendered Fr. Blanchet's instructions as to the format of his ladder. The letters to Bishop Turgeon and Fr. Cazeau describe a ladder which was an improvement upon Fr. Blanchet's invention. At the same time the letters suggest that some time before April, 1844, Fr. Blanchet received a quantity of these new ladders.

The Cowichan ladder would appear to be the ladder to which Fr. Blanchet refers. A study of the Cowichan ladder shows it to be an improvement on the Quebec ladder. Not only is there the addition of: hell, the heretics, the schisms, the eighteen Councils, and the five new priests in the Northwest, but the ladder is much superior in appearance.

25 L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 6 April, 1844 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-91).

Although proof is lacking which would permit positive identification of the Cowichan ladder, it remains that the Cowichan ladder is definitely a Blanchet ladder, and it is an improvement on the Quebec ladder, both in detail and in format and it was printed in 1843 (count the bars and dots). Added to this is the fact that apart from the Cowichan ladder no other Blanchet ladder carrying the date 1843, exists to the knowledge of the writer. In view of these facts it would appear that Fr. Blanchet was referring to the Cowichan ladder in his letters to Bishop Turgeon and Fr. Cazeau, dated April 6th, 1844.

Where was the Cowichan ladder printed? In a booklet published in Brussels, Belgium, in the year 1847,²⁶ there is a chapter devoted to Fr. Blanchet's Catholic ladder. The author explains how Fr. Blanchet created the Sahale stick and then expanded his creation into the Catholic ladder: "[...] later it was lithographed in the United States."²⁷ Although this may be a reference to Fr. De Smet's Catholic ladder which was lithographed in the United

²⁶ Notice sur le Territoire et sur la Mission de l'Oregon, suivie de quelques lettres des soeurs de Notre Dame établies à Saint Paul de Willamette, Bruxelles, Bureau de publication de la Bibliothèque d'Education, 1847; hereafter referred to as: Notice sur le Territoire de l'Oregon.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 173.

States,²⁸ one could not overlook the possibility that the author had in mind the Cowichan ladder. In the context of the letters of Fr. Blanchet to Bishop Turgeon and Fr. Cazeau, it would appear that Fr. Aubin was a Quebec priest. One would expect that Quebec had facilities to reproduce the excellent Cowichan copy of the Catholic ladder. It remains possible, though improbable, that Fr. Aubin prepared the Cowichan ladder and then had it lithographed in the United States.

CHAPTER VI
NAMUR LADDER

A Blanchet ladder with an interesting background will be entitled the Namur ladder.¹

The Namur ladder, a manuscript copy,² owes its existence to Sister Mary Aloysia (Jeanette Cherry), one of the original band of six Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who came to Oregon in August, 1844, in response to the appeal of Fr. Blanchet for teaching Sisters.³ Arriving in the Willamette Valley, Sister Mary Aloysia fell victim to the epidemic which took many lives in Oregon that summer:⁴

[She] would require weeks to recover fully. That early September day she was sitting up, benefiting by the warm sun, busy with brushes and India ink in making a small copy of the Vicar General's Catholic Ladder from his large original hanging, cracked and worn, on the wall beside her. Sister Mary Aloysia reproduced the Ladder in quite exact proportions, thirty-four by seven inches, on fairly heavy, light-brown

1 The original Namur ladder will be found in the Archives of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Provincial House, Saratoga, California. A photocopy may be found in the Oregon Historical Society Archives, Portland, Oregon. A reproduction appears in McNAMEE, Willamette Interlude, p. 110.

2 McNAMEE, Willamette Interlude, p. 147.

3 Ibid., pp. 23-25.

4 Ibid., pp. 144-147.

paper pasted on close woven linen [...]. With fine-pointed pen and tiny paintbrush, she produced an example of artistic perfection.⁵

At first glance, the Namur ladder appears to be a printed Quebec ladder and not a handsome copy. On closer examination, however, individual differences are noted.

1. On the Quebec ladder five vertical bars will be seen immediately under the Temple of Solomon. The Namur ladder has seven.

2. The star of Bethlehem is much better done on the Namur ladder.

3. Above the cross of Christ in the Calvary scene the Quebec ladder has a thin circular halo from left to right. The Namur ladder has a halo from right to left.

The most incredible point of likeness between the Quebec and Namur ladders is the heading. The Namur ladder, although hand done, has a printed heading. A close study of the headings, one done in Quebec and the other at St. Paul, reveals identical block-letter type.⁶

5 McNAMEE, Willamette Interlude, p. 147. Sister Mary Aloysia is described as artistic and poetic (ibid., p. 23).

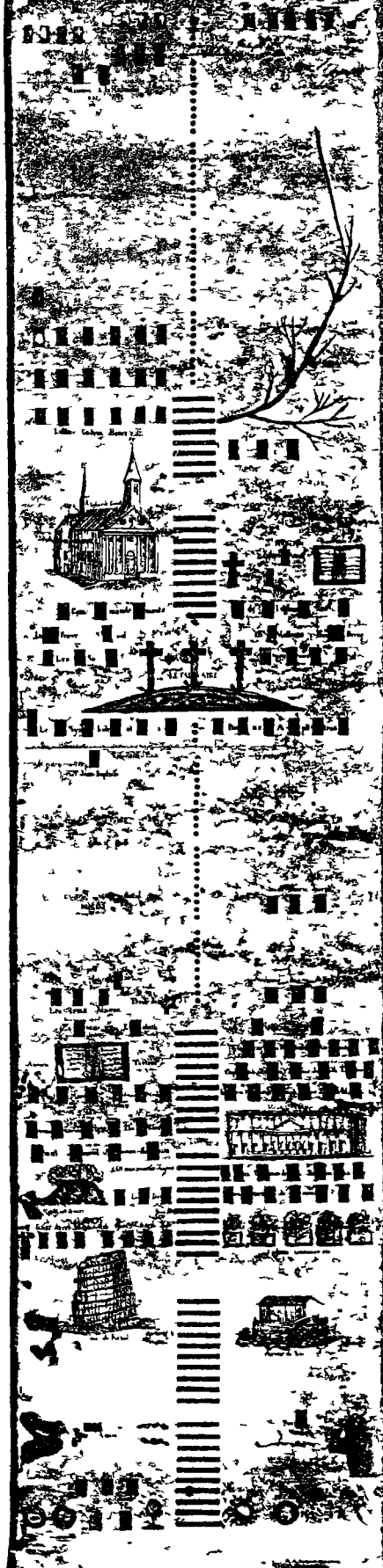
6 Mr. M.G. Foisy, a member of the first Territorial legislature, worked as a printer with the Mission Press, at Lapwai Mission, Idaho, and later moved to French Prairie. An examination of a copy of a warrant dated, Oregon City, November 28th, 1846, in the Archives of the Oregon Historical Society, suggests that it was printed on the same press that produced the heading for the Namur ladder. It is

It is to be noted that the Namur ladder has 43 dots after the bar marking the year 1800, which indicates that Sister Mary Aloysia did not add the extra dot that would have brought the ladder up to the current year, 1844,⁷ the year of the arrival of the Sisters in Oregon.

thought that Mr. Foisy did job printing using the press of the Sisters of Namur (Harry E. Lichter, Chief Curator, Oregon Historical Society Museum, interview with the writer, 5 May, 1963). The printed heading to the Namur ladder would, therefore, be explained: "It is possible that Sister Marie Catherine [one of the six Sisters of Namur] may have done this work with the large and varied type set that she inherited from her friend, Brother George [in Belgium]" (McNAMEE, Willamette Interlude, p. 284).

7 A Sister of Notre Dame de Namur writes: "After the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, three dots, indicating three completed years, date the document 1844" (McNAMEE, Willamette Interlude, p. 284). 43 dots dates the ladder as 1843. This will be confirmed by an examination of extant ladders.

NIH



ST. PAUL LADDER

1844

Work of a Sister of Notre
Dame de Namur; St. Paul, in Oregon.

Original in the Bancroft
Library of the University
of California, Berkeley.

CHAPTER VII
ST. PAUL LADDER

A manuscript ladder, which is now in the possession of the Bancroft Library,¹ was created by one of the early Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.² This ladder will be known as the St. Paul ladder, the site of the Sisters' Convent in Oregon. Mr. John Barr Tompkins, head of Public Services, University of California Library, describes the ladder:

Our ladder, is a manuscript, with a printed heading: "Echelle Chronologique et Historique de la Religion." It's call number is P-A307. It is done in ink on paper which has, in recent years been coated on both sides with a very fine chiffon to give it additional strength. It measures 87 x 18.88 cm. (approximately 34" x 7"), exclusive of one end which is wrapped around a stick which measures 1.1 cm. (just under 1/2") in diameter. It appears that the ladder was carried rolled.³

1 L. of John Barr Tompkins, Public Services, University of California Bancroft Library, to the writer, 16 May, 1963.

2 L. of Mary Dominica McNamee to the writer, 11 June, 1963. The ladder is dated 1844 (by reason of the number of dots). Although certain drawings, like the temple of Solomon and the Church of Constantine, show the same artistic touch as the Namur ladder, other symbols, particularly the tower of Babel, the star of Bethlehem and the vertical bars seem to want for the same care in execution. It is possible that the St. Paul ladder was done in part by Sister Mary Aloysia and in part by another. It may be explained by the fact that Sister Mary Aloysia did this ladder with less care than she gave to the Namur ladder.

3 L. of John Barr Tompkins to the writer, 16 May, 1963.

The ladder was presented to the Bancroft Library⁴ sometime prior to 1945 by Sister Aloyse Marie of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur from the Archives of the Sisters of Namur in Saratoga, California.⁵

The St. Paul ladder "[...] not so carefully made and far less artistic,"⁶ duplicates the Namur ladder in size and format, except for several points of difference in the section between the branch, which marks the reformation, and the top of the ladder.

1. Opposite the branch and on the upper left side of the ladder can be seen 19 vertical bars. These bars, which represent the Ecumenical Councils of the Church, do not appear on the Namur ladder. The Cowichan ladder, which has the marks representing the Ecumenical Councils, gives 18,⁷ not 19 Councils.⁸

4 John Barr Tompkins writes: this ladder "[...] was obtained by Hubert Howe Bancroft, though he does not tell us from whom he obtained it" (L. to the writer, 16 May, 1963).

5 L. of Mary Dominica McNamee to the writer, 11th June, 1963.

6 Idem.

7 See: Cowichan Ladder photo.

8 John McSorley gives 19 Councils up to the year 1844 (John McSORLEY, An Outline History of the Church by Centuries (From St. Peter to Pius XII), St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 1946, appendix II).

2. Near the top of the St. Paul ladder 13 vertical bars can be seen to the left of the line of dots. The Namur ladder shows only two vertical bars with an explanatory note, "2 Missionaries to the Columbia 1838."⁹ The St. Paul ladder with 13 bars provides for the arrival of Frs. Francis Blanchet and Modeste Demers in 1838, Fr. Peter De Smet in 1840, and again in 1841, Frs. Gregory Mengarini and Nicholas Point in 1841, Frs. Anthony Langlois and John Bolduc in 1842, Frs. Peter De Vos and Adrian Hoecken in 1843, and in 1844, aboard the ship which brought the Sisters of Namur, Frs. John Nobili, Michael Accolti, Anthony Pavelli and Louis Vercruyse.¹⁰

3. Opposite the bars which designate the arrival of 13 priests in the Pacific Northwest, can be found six bars which mark the arrival in Oregon of the six Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.¹¹

9 McNAMEE, Willamette, p.110.

10 BLANCHET, Labors of 1842 (A.A.P., B. III 4, p. 1); BISCHOFF, Jesuits, pp. 26-42. There were actually 16 priests in the Northwest by the fall of 1844. Frs. Joseph Joset, Peter Zerbinatti and Tiberius Soderini arrived at St. Mary's Mission in the Bitter Root Valley October 7th, 1844 (SCHOENBERG, Chronicle, p. 17). It would appear that word of the arrival of these priests did not reach the Willamette Valley until after the creation of the St. Paul ladder.

11 There is no mention of the five Jesuit brothers who were laboring in the Oregon Territory in 1844: Brothers Charles Huet, Joseph Specht, Peter McGean, Vincent Magri and Francis Huysbrecht (BISCHOFF, Jesuits, pp. 26-42).

After the bars designating the year 1800 there are 44 dots on the St. Paul ladder which would appear to give the accurate date of its creation, 1844. If the ladder had been created at a later date one would expect to find three more vertical bars to note the arrival of 16 priests in the Pacific Northwest. The ladder could not be an earlier creation as the Sisters did not arrive until 1844. The six vertical bars which mark the arrival of the Sisters of Namur indicate that the ladder must have been created sometime before November, 1844, when word reached the Willamette Valley that three more priests had made their way to St. Mary's Mission in the mountains.¹² A close study of the ladder will show the faint horizontal lines which the artist used to keep the symbols straight.

¹² Fr. Blanchet writing from St. Paul on the Willamette tells his brother A.M.A. Blanchet, of the arrival in Oregon of Frs. Joset, Soderin and Zerbinatti, (L. of Blanchet to A.M.A. Blanchet, St. Paul, November, 1844 (A.P.F.L.)). It is interesting to note that in this letter to his brother Fr. Blanchet lists the 16 priests in Oregon. However, in summation he adds: "[...] all told 15 priests." There appears little doubt that the 13 bars represent the arrival of the 13 priests in Oregon. An examination of the relative position of each set of bars shows Frs. Blanchet and Demers arriving in 1838. The set of three bars placed between the year 1840 and 1841 coincides with the arrival of Frs. De Smet, Mengarini and Point. The set of four bars placed between the years 1842 and 1843, Frs. Langlois and Bolduc arrival in 1842 and Frs. De Vos and Hoecken arrival in 1843. The top four bars are placed opposite the year 1844. Frs. Nobili, Accolti, Ravalli and Vercruysse arrived in August, 1844.

For some reason, unknown to the writer, the top two dots (1843, 1844) appear to have been enlarged. This copy manuscript of the St. Paul ladder "shows evidence of use."¹³

¹³ L. of John Barr Tompkins to the writer, 16 May, 1963.

CHAPTER VIII

BRUSSELS LADDER

One edition of Fr. Blanchet's ladder, which to the knowledge of the writer is not extant today, should be studied if only to record its existence.

This ladder, lithographed in Namur,¹ Belgium, will be known as the Brussels ladder.

Mention of the Brussels ladder is made in a booklet printed in Brussels in the year 1847.² Gathering his information from letters of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, who at the time were established in the Willamette Valley, Oregon,³ the author published a report on the work of the Catholic Church in the Oregon Territory along with information of general interest pertaining to the Pacific Northwest.

Ten pages of the report are devoted to a discussion of Fr. Blanchet's⁴ catechetical aid. The author mentions

1 Notice sur le Territoire de l'Oregon, p. 173.

2 Ibid., p. 173.

3 Ibid., title page.

4 When this booklet was printed the missions of the Oregon Territory had already been erected into a Vicariate Apostolic with Fr. Blanchet named first Vicar Apostolic (L. of Cardinal Fransoni to Archbishop Signay of Quebec, Rome, 16 December, 1843 (Archives of the Diocese of Victoria; hereafter referred to as: A.D.V., Correspondence with Rome, 59 E, a copy). Appointed Bishop of Philadelphia, Bishop

the creation and use of the Sahale stick and the development and printing of the Catholic ladder. Without elaborating upon the subject the author makes this comment:

[Fr. Blanchet's ladder] was lithographed again recently at Namur, but since the copies did not correspond to the views of the author, it was begun again in Paris [...]

Since the report on the Church in Oregon⁶ was published in the year 1847, it would appear from the author's remarks of the "recent printing" that the Brussels ladder was lithographed either in the year 1847 or during the year 1846.⁷ Aside from the fact of mentioning the Brussels

Blanchet's title was later changed to Bishop of Drasa (L. of Cardinal Fransoni to Bishop Blanchet, Rome, 20 May, 1844, A.D.V., Correspondence with Rome, 59F, a copy). The Vicariate Apostolic of Oregon became the Archdiocese of Oregon City in 1846 with Bishop Blanchet the first Archbishop. Bishops were appointed to Walla Walla and Vancouver Island (L. of Cardinal Fransoni to Archbishop Blanchet, Rome, 8 August, 1846, A.D.V., Correspondence with Rome, 60 A, a copy). Although for the sake of clarity we will continue throughout the work to refer to the ladders using the title "Fr. Blanchet's ladder," wherever possible in future reference we will speak of the missionary as Bishop or Archbishop Blanchet. For information regarding the dates of the erection of the Vicariate and Archdiocese, see Official Register (A.A.P.).

5 Notice sur le Territoire de l'Oregon, p. 173.

6 Ibid.

7 The author of the report indicates that the Brussels ladder was printed a short time before he wrote his report. Since his report was published in 1847 it appears likely that the Brussels ladder appeared either in the same year as his report or shortly before, namely, 1846. However, the date depends entirely upon the interpretation of the word "recently".

ladder, the author does suggest some interesting facts about this short-lived preaching aid. The context of the author's remarks suggests the possibility that Bishop Blanchet personally rejected the Brussels ladder on a visit to the city of Namur.⁸ It can be assumed that in rejecting the ladder, Bishop Blanchet found it, for one reason or another, seriously wanting. The author's comment also suggests the probability that the Brussels ladder was scrapped after its first printing. Whatever may have been the fate of the Brussels ladder, it can be assumed that, once rejected by the Bishop, the ladder was never used in the Pacific Northwest.

Since the Brussels ladder was, firstly, lithographed in Namur, secondly, mentioned in a booklet dealing with the work of the Sisters of Namur, and thirdly, rejected by Bishop Blanchet, there is a suggestion that the Brussels

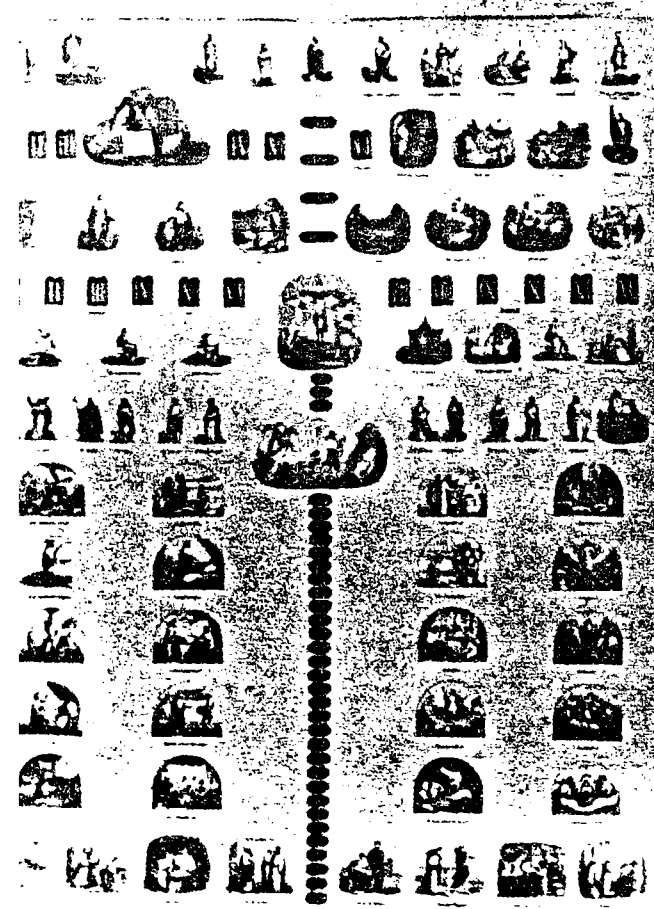
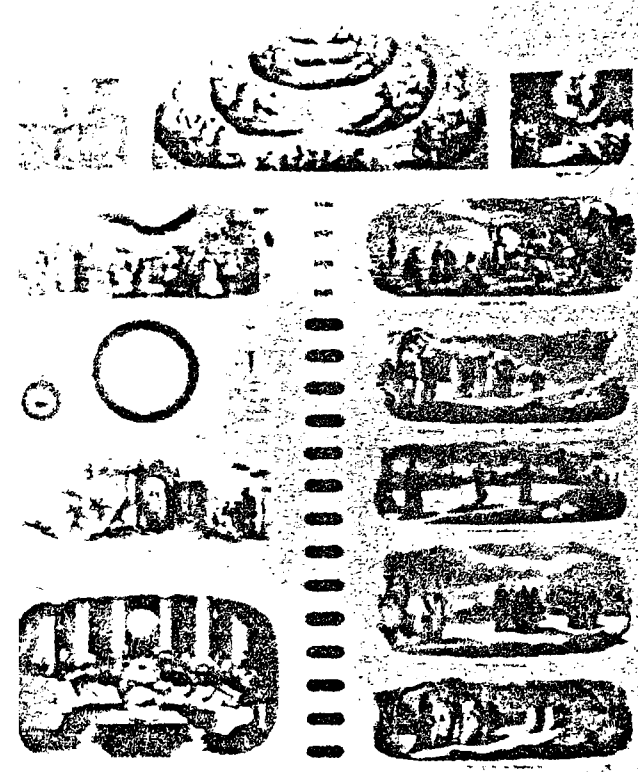
⁸ Bishop Blanchet was travelling in Europe between September, 1845 and February, 1847 (BLANCHET, Sketches, pp. 59-60). In view of the fact that the report on Oregon was published in 1847, and assuming that the author's reference to a "recently published ladder" could be interpreted as a ladder printed in the previous 15 months, there is every reason to believe that Bishop Blanchet actually saw the copy of the Brussels ladder and personally rejected it. This possibility is confirmed by the fact that Bishop Blanchet was in Namur shortly after the 8th September, 1845, and again during the month of December, 1846 (BLANCHET, Sketches, pp. 59-60). This is further confirmed by the fact that his journeys in Europe during 1845, 1846, 1847, could have brought him to Namur on several occasions.

ladder was created by the Namur Sisters. All three facts would lend credence to this possibility. If the Namur Sisters in Belgium prepared the original copy for the printer they could have made alterations to the plan which in the view of the Bishop rendered it unsuitable for use in his missionary territory. Whereas, if Bishop Blanchet had given the printer a format to follow, it would be unlikely that he would find the printed form unsuitable. Again, if the Sisters had created a ladder, the author of the reports would have learned of it since the preparation of his report on the Sisters work in Oregon must have taken him to the Motherhouse of the Sisters in Namur. And, again, if the Sisters had created the ladder they would have had it printed locally. However, the archives of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Namur sheds no light upon this possibility.⁹

The information on the Brussels ladder, although sketchy, does leave us with two possible alternatives: either the Brussels ladder was created by some unknown

⁹ The archives of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Namur, Belgium, which are to be found in the Sisters' convent in Rome, contain no records relative to the Brussels ladder (L. of Sister Maura, archivist of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, to the writer, Rome, 5 June, 1963).

person or persons, or Bishop Blanchet's instructions for the lithographing of his creation were not carried out satisfactorily by the printer. All indications point to a ladder, either ill conceived or poorly printed, which suffered a very short existence.



PARIS LADDER

1846 - 1847

Original in the
Archives of Mt. Angel Abbey,
Mt. Angel, Oregon.

CHAPTER IX

PARIS LADDER

Among the editions of Fr. Blanchet's ladder extant today, copies of the Paris ladder appear to be the most numerous.¹

¹ The Paris ladder was printed in four sections. The section which pertains to the first part of the Paris ladder, or the bottom section, will be called no. 1, the next, no. 2, etc. Mt. Angel Abbey has 15 copies of section 1, 16 copies of section 2, 17 copies of section 3 and 16 copies of section 4, i.e. 16 complete sets of the Paris ladder and one extra copy of section 3 (A.Mt.A., Rare Book Room). One Paris ladder in the Mt. Angel collection has the 4 sections pasted together. The collection of Paris ladders belonged to a pioneer Oregon priest, Msgr. A. Hillenbrand 1859-1941, for many years pastor of St. John's Church in Oregon City (Mark Schmid who collected the ladders after the death of Msgr. Hillenbrand, interview with the writer, 4 June, 1963). One set of four sections of the Paris ladder which is found in the Mt. Angel collection came from Fr. Brabant's house at Hesquiat, on Vancouver Island. They were found in 1910 by Fr. Charles Moser on his first visit to Hesquiat and were brought to Mt. Angel in 1930 (Charles MOSER, author of Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island, interview with the writer, 2 June, 1963). The Archives of the Archdiocese of Portland has one set of four sections of the Paris ladder presented to the archives by Fr. Moser. This ladder came also from Hesquiat on Vancouver Island (Charles Moser, interview with the writer, 2 June, 1963). The Oregon Historical Society Museum, Portland, has one set of the Paris ladder pasted on two pieces of cardboard. This ladder carries a stamp which notes that this ladder came into the possession of the Museum on October 31, 1903. The Archives of the Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus at the Gonzaga University Crosby Memorial Library, Spokane, has two copies of section 1. These copies were discovered at St. Andrew's Mission, Pendleton, Oregon, July 1961 (Wilfred Schoenberg, archivist, Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus, interview with the writer, 20 June, 1963). The archives of the Holy Name Sisters, Marylhurst, Oregon, has one copy of section 1 of the Paris ladder (L. of Sister Robert Mary to the writer,

This ladder which was printed in Paris² represents a new concept in Fr. Blanchet's preaching aid. Retaining the central structure of the bars and dots³ common to all Blanchet ladders, the Paris ladder makes far greater use of pictorial representations. By comparison with earlier editions, the Paris ladder appears to be a chart made up entirely of pictures.

The final date given on the Paris ladder is 1840. However, the ladder was printed after this date. The heading on the Paris ladder reads:

The Catholic, historic, and chronological ladder or the way of explaining the catechism to the Indians. Invented in Oregon in 1839⁴ by Rev. Blanchet, Archbishop of Oregon City.

Portland, 14 July, 1963). Yale University Library, Western Americana Collection, has one complete set of the Paris ladder (Archibald Hanna, curator, L. to the writer, 9 March, 1965).

2 The printer's credit at the lower right hand corner reads: "Paris, Typographie de Firmin Didot, Rue Jacob, 56."

3 The Paris ladder does not use dots as such. The years are marked by shorter bars or the actual dates. However, the term is used in the general sense of the Sahale stick structure.

4 Echelle Catholique, Historique, et Chronologique ou manière d'expliquer le catéchisme aux sauvages. Inventée dans l'Oregon en 1839 par M. Blanchet Archevêque d'Oregon City.

Bishop Blanchet received notification that he had been named Archbishop of Oregon City sometime after August 8th, 1846.⁵ Since the title of the ladder speaks of Fr. Blanchet as already appointed Archbishop of the See of Oregon City, the ladder must have been created after August 8th, 1846. Further, mention is made of the Paris ladder in a booklet printed in Brussels in 1847.⁶ Describing how Bishop Blanchet rejected the Brussels ladder, the author of the booklet writes: "[...] the printing of the ladder was begun again in Paris with much greater perfection."⁷ The Paris ladder was created, therefore, sometime after March 8th, 1846, but not later than 1847.

In view of the fact that Archbishop Blanchet arrived in Europe September 28th, 1845, but did not set sail for Oregon until February 22nd, 1847,⁸ there appears little doubt that in the course of his visits to Paris⁹ he took

5 See reference no. 4, Chapter VIII, p. 124.

6 Notice sur le Territoire de l'Oregon, p. 173.

7 Ibid., p. 173.

8 BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 60.

9 Ibid., pp. 59-60.

the occasion to arrange for the publication of his Paris ladder.¹⁰

The Paris ladder, which measures 9'4" x 1'10", was printed in four sections. Each section of the ladder measures 2'4" x 1'10". Although most extant copies known to the writer are found in the four individual sections, they could be pasted together to make one continuous ladder.¹¹ The photocopy found herein was photographed by

¹⁰ One author suggests that Fr. Blanchet may have had ladders printed in Europe in 1844 when he was in Europe (DRURY, First White Women, pp. 221-222). The fact is that Fr. Blanchet was in Oregon in 1844 and did not arrive in Europe until 1845 (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 59). However he did have the Paris ladder printed during the visit to Europe which began in 1845. The same author suggests that Fr. De Smet may have had ladders printed in Europe and brought them back with him when he arrived in Oregon from Europe in 1844 (DRURY, op. cit., p. 221). To the knowledge of the writer Fr. De Smet was responsible only for his own ladder (see Part III). Another point is raised by the same author. He explains that on June 14, 1938, he called upon Fr. Cornelius Byrne, Desmet Mission, Desmet, Idaho, and secured from the priest a broadside 21 3/4" x 22" bearing the title of the Paris ladder. The author adds that a similar copy can be found at the Oregon Historical Society, Portland (DRURY, op. cit., p. 222). The writer found the Oregon Historical Society ladder to be in four sections, each section measuring 2'4" x 1'10". This suggests that the ladder obtained at Desmet, Idaho, which is now at Yale University Library, is some 6 1/4 inches shorter in vertical length (21 3/4") than the copy at the Oregon Historical Society, Portland (28 inches). These Oregon Historical Society ladder measurements refer to the four individual pieces. The four pieces make up one ladder measuring nine feet four inches (9'4") by twenty-two inches (22").

¹¹ A continuous copy can be found in the Mt. Angel Abbey Museum, Mt. Angel, Oregon. This ladder originally in separate sheets, was put together by Mark Schmid (Mark Schmid, interview with the writer, 2 June, 1963).

fixing the four individual sections to a flat surface. One copy of the Paris ladder¹² was pasted to two large pieces of cardboard each measuring 2'4" x 1'10". Section 1 and 2 of the ladder were affixed to either side of one of the cardboard pieces and sections 2 and 3 were affixed to the other. This ladder would have to be studied in sections. Section 2 would be hidden on the back of the cardboard while section 1 was under study. At the top of the cardboard pieces heavy brass rings have been inset. This permits the ladder to be hung without fear of tearing the paper.

An examination of the Paris ladder reveals one innovation which was to be incorporated in later Blanchet ladders. Many of the personages and events of the Old and New Testaments are not only represented on the ladder but are also given a date.¹³ The dates signify either the years from the beginning of the world (A.M.),¹⁴ before the time of Christ, or after the time of Christ. It appears likely that Fr. Blanchet prepared this ladder with the help of a bible edited in Paris which belonged to his personal library.¹⁵

12 This copy can be found in the Archives of the Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

13 The photocopy of the Paris ladder found herein is so reduced in size as to make it impossible to read the inscriptions.

14 A.M.: "a mundo," from the beginning of the world.

15 Sainte Bible contenant L'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament avec une Traduction Française en forme de Paraphrase, par le R.P. De Carrières, et Les Commentaires de

The editors of the bible arranged the volumes with copious footnotes and the events and personages appearing in scripture are scrupulously dated.

The explanations of the Paris ladder will follow the method used for previous ladders, namely: from the base of the ladder to the top and from left to right. The explanations are given by Fr. Blanchet on the ladder.

A. The Scene at the base of the ladder.

1. The Trinity with the words: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God."

B. Eight squares across the bottom of the ladder.

2. The six days of creation; the tree of knowledge and the serpent; hell.

C. Six squares.

3. Adam and Eve expelled from the garden; Cain; Abel; death of Abel with the date given as 128; Seth (130-912); purgatory.

Menochius, Paris, Gaume Frères Libraires, 1833; afterwards referred to as: CARRIERES, Sainte Bible. A manuscript entry inside the front cover reads: "P.N. Blanchet ptre aux Cèdres, 1836." Volumes 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14 can be found in the Archives of Mt. Angel Abbey (Rare Book Room). These volumes were part of a collection of Archbishop Blanchet's personal library (Barnabas Reasoner, archivist, Mt. Angel Abbey, interview with the writer, 2 June, 1963).

D. Six figures.

4. Enos (235-905);¹⁶ Cainam (325-910); Malaiuel (395-895); Jared (460-962); Mathusala (687-969); Lamech (874-777).

E. Three scenes.

5. Jubal and Tubalcain; death of Abraham (930);¹⁷ Henech taken up into heaven (987).

F. Another three scenes.

6. Corruption of the human race; God appears to Noe; family of Noe.

G. The final five scenes on the first section of the Paris ladder.

7. Noe's ark (1656); descendants of Noe; malediction of Cham; tower of Babel; dispersal of the people (1750).

H. The first scenes across the base of the second section of the ladder.

8. Melchisadech; call of Abraham (2083); sacrifice of Isaac (2145); vision of Jacob (2245); Jacob and Esau (2265); Joseph is sold by his brothers (2276).

¹⁶ This genealogy is taken from Genesis, Chapter 7. The first date represents the year of birth and the second the age of the scriptural figure, (A.M.).

¹⁷ The single date marks the personage or event in its relative historical date, (A.M.).

I. Eleven scenes.

9. Putiphar (2286); Pharaoh's dream (2287); Jacob sees Joseph again (2298); Egyptian slavery (2315); Moses saved (2513); burning bush (2513); Moses and Aaron (2513); plagues of Egypt; passover; passage through the Red Sea; Job.

J. The mountain scene and the tablets numbered I-X.

10. Moses on the mountain; the commandments given to the Hebrews.

K. Included in this section are: the illustration to the right of the mountain, the scene next to this illustration, four figures above this same illustration, and seven figures to the right of the ladder.

11. Ark of the Covenant; the Hebrews wander 40 years in the desert; King Saul (2909); King David (2934); King Solomon (2989); King Roboam (3029); Josue; Deborah; Gedeon; Jephthe; Samson; Heli; Samuel.

L. Four figures to the left of the ladder and the temple to the right.

12. Isaias (3219); Jeremias (3375); Ezechiel (3342); Daniel in the lions' den (3466); Solomon's Temple.

M. Twelve personages.

13. Osee (825);¹⁸ Joel (800); Amos (780); Abdios (780); Jonas (825); Micheas (758); Nahum (740); Habacuc (500); Sophonias (600); Aggeus (520); Zacharias (500); Malachias.

N. Eleven scenes. The first scene includes two personages.

14. Elias taken up into heaven; Elizeus (3291); dispersal of the tribes, Babylonian captivity; Suzanna; Tobias recovers his sight (3320); victory of Judith (3348); humility of Esther; Nabuchodonosor; Balthazar condemned (3495).

O. Six figures. The first scene includes two personages.

15. Eleazor (3837); martyrdom of the Maccabee brothers; Judas Maccabeus (3828); Heliodorus scourged with stripes (3828); Senneacherib assassinated (3291); Old Testament; three children in fiery furnace (3417).

P. Three scenes complete the second section of the Paris ladder.

16. St. Joachim, Mary, St. Anne; shepherds go to the crib, birth of our lord Jesus Christ, three kings go to

¹⁸ Apparently the printer at this point erred. The ladder reads "Osee 825 avec Jésus Christ" instead of "avant Jésus Christ". At this point the dating records the years before Christ.

adore Jesus — Gaspar, Melchior, Balthasar; Elizabeth, the young St. John and Zachary.

Q. Base of the third section of the ladder; eight scenes.

17. Annunciation; visitation; nativity; presentation; flight into Egypt; return from Egypt; Nazareth; Jesus in the temple.

R. Four scenes.

18. Agony; water changed into wine; resurrection of Lazarus; crowning of the virgin.

S. Four scenes in the third row.

19. Jesus condemned; multiplication of the loaves; transfiguration; assumption.

T. Four scenes in the fourth row.

20. Jesus scourged; Samaritan woman; Magdalene; Pentecost.

U. Four scenes in the fifth row.

21. Crowning of thorns; paralytic; Cananean woman; Ascension.

V. Four scenes in the sixth row.

22. Jesus carries his cross; centurion; man born blind; Resurrection.

W. A scene centered at the 30th year; Jesus baptized by St. John.

X. Twelve figures.

23. The twelve apostles; Peter; Andrew; James; John; Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew; James; Jude; Simon; Matthias.

Y. Seven scenes.

24. The seven sacraments; baptism; confirmation; communion; penance; extreme unction; orders; marriage.

Z. The scene centered at the 33rd year: crucifixion.

Z.1. Twelve tablets.

25. Articles of the creed: I-XII.

Z.2. The ladder now enters upon the years after Christ: eight scenes.

26. Faith; hope; charity; prayer; death; judgment; paradise; hell.

Z.3. Six tablets and seven scenes.

27. The six commandments of the Church;¹⁹ a church built upon a rock;²⁰ St. Peter in prison; St. Stephen;

¹⁹ The Paris ladder introduces the six precepts of the Church instead of seven.

²⁰ This is the only symbol not described by Fr. Blanchet.

St. Paul; Constantine.

Z.4. Ten personages.

28. St. Helena; Julian the apostate; St. Athanasius; St. Basil; St. Ambrose; St. John Chrysostom; St. Augustine; St. Jerome; St. Gregory; St. Augustine, the apostle of England.

Z.5. The ladder now enters upon the fourth and final section: to the left a large scene and to the right two smaller scenes.

29. Councils; Donat (311), Arius (319); Marcedonius (381); Pelagius (412); Nestorius (430).

Z.6. A scene to the left and to the right.

30. Triumph of religion; Eutyches (448); Monothelites (630).

Z.7. To the left on the third row a series of celestial bodies and opposite one scene including four personages.

31. Grandeur of God in his works; Mohammed (612); Iconoclasts (787); Luther (1517); Calvin (1536).

Z.8. A scene to the left and one to the right.

32. Chinese martyrs for the faith; preaching of the gospel.

2.9. Across the top of the ladder can be seen three scenes.

33. General resurrection; paradise; last judgment.

2.10. The title of the Paris ladder completes the description.

Only one comment appears necessary. The Paris ladder was little more than a compendium of biblical pictures. The ladder all but lost the simple, comprehensive impact of the earlier Blanchet creations.

1978
 1979
 1980
 1981
 1982
 1983
 1984
 1985
 1986
 1987
 1988
 1989
 1990
 1991
 1992
 1993
 1994
 1995
 1996
 1997
 1998
 1999
 2000
 2001
 2002
 2003
 2004
 2005
 2006
 2007
 2008
 2009
 2010
 2011
 2012
 2013
 2014
 2015
 2016
 2017
 2018
 2019
 2020
 2021
 2022
 2023
 2024
 2025
 2026
 2027
 2028
 2029
 2030
 2031
 2032
 2033
 2034
 2035
 2036
 2037
 2038
 2039
 2040
 2041
 2042
 2043
 2044
 2045
 2046
 2047
 2048
 2049
 2050
 2051
 2052
 2053
 2054
 2055
 2056
 2057
 2058
 2059
 2060
 2061
 2062
 2063
 2064
 2065
 2066
 2067
 2068
 2069
 2070
 2071
 2072
 2073
 2074
 2075
 2076
 2077
 2078
 2079
 2080
 2081
 2082
 2083
 2084
 2085
 2086
 2087
 2088
 2089
 2090
 2091
 2092
 2093
 2094
 2095
 2096
 2097
 2098
 2099
 2100
 2101
 2102
 2103
 2104
 2105
 2106
 2107
 2108
 2109
 2110
 2111
 2112
 2113
 2114
 2115
 2116
 2117
 2118
 2119
 2120
 2121
 2122
 2123
 2124
 2125
 2126
 2127
 2128
 2129
 2130
 2131
 2132
 2133
 2134
 2135
 2136
 2137
 2138
 2139
 2140
 2141
 2142
 2143
 2144
 2145
 2146
 2147
 2148
 2149
 2150
 2151
 2152
 2153
 2154
 2155
 2156
 2157
 2158
 2159
 2160
 2161
 2162
 2163
 2164
 2165
 2166
 2167
 2168
 2169
 2170
 2171
 2172
 2173
 2174
 2175
 2176
 2177
 2178
 2179
 2180
 2181
 2182
 2183
 2184
 2185
 2186
 2187
 2188
 2189
 2190
 2191
 2192
 2193
 2194
 2195
 2196
 2197
 2198
 2199
 2200
 2201
 2202
 2203
 2204
 2205
 2206
 2207
 2208
 2209
 2210
 2211
 2212
 2213
 2214
 2215
 2216
 2217
 2218
 2219
 2220
 2221
 2222
 2223
 2224
 2225
 2226
 2227
 2228
 2229
 2230
 2231
 2232
 2233
 2234
 2235
 2236
 2237
 2238
 2239
 2240
 2241
 2242
 2243
 2244
 2245
 2246
 2247
 2248
 2249
 2250
 2251
 2252
 2253
 2254
 2255
 2256
 2257
 2258
 2259
 2260
 2261
 2262
 2263
 2264
 2265
 2266
 2267
 2268
 2269
 2270
 2271
 2272
 2273
 2274
 2275
 2276
 2277
 2278
 2279
 2280
 2281
 2282
 2283
 2284
 2285
 2286
 2287
 2288
 2289
 2290
 2291
 2292
 2293
 2294
 2295
 2296
 2297
 2298
 2299
 2300
 2301
 2302
 2303
 2304
 2305
 2306
 2307
 2308
 2309
 2310
 2311
 2312
 2313
 2314
 2315
 2316
 2317
 2318
 2319
 2320
 2321
 2322
 2323
 2324
 2325
 2326
 2327
 2328
 2329
 2330
 2331
 2332
 2333
 2334
 2335
 2336
 2337
 2338
 2339
 2340
 2341
 2342
 2343
 2344
 2345
 2346
 2347
 2348
 2349
 2350
 2351
 2352
 2353
 2354
 2355
 2356
 2357
 2358
 2359
 2360
 2361
 2362
 2363
 2364
 2365
 2366
 2367
 2368
 2369
 2370
 2371
 2372
 2373
 2374
 2375
 2376
 2377
 2378
 2379
 2380
 2381
 2382
 2383
 2384
 2385
 2386
 2387
 2388
 2389
 2390
 2391
 2392
 2393
 2394
 2395
 2396
 2397
 2398
 2399
 2400
 2401
 2402
 2403
 2404
 2405
 2406
 2407
 2408
 2409
 2410
 2411
 2412
 2413
 2414
 2415
 2416
 2417
 2418
 2419
 2420
 2421
 2422
 2423
 2424
 2425
 2426
 2427
 2428
 2429
 2430
 2431
 2432

SPANISH LADDER

1856

Original in the
Archives of the Oregon
Historical Society,
Portland, Oregon.

CHAPTER X

SPANISH LADDER

Hard-pressed to meet the heavy financial obligations of his archdiocese, Archbishop Blanchet, with the approval of the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda¹ in Rome, left Oregon City in the fall of 1855 on a begging tour of South America.² While in Chili, in 1856, he published a pamphlet in Spanish giving a sketch of the ecclesiastical Province of Oregon,³ and also published a Catholic ladder which will be known as the Spanish ladder.

¹ This is the abbreviated title of the congregation officially known as Sacra Congregatio de propaganda fide, or Christiano nomini propagando. The chief function of this department of the Catholic Church in Rome is the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs in what are commonly known as "missionary countries". It had its origin in a commission of cardinals established under Pope Gregory XIII, 1572-1585, which became a congregation properly so called under Gregory XV, 1621-1623. Before the Constitution "Sapienti Consilio", 29 June, 1908, came into force, the Congregation of Propaganda had jurisdiction over several countries in which normal Catholic hierarchies of the latin rite were established (Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. XIII, p. 142-143).

² O'HARA, Catholic History, p. 119-120.

³ Francis Norbert BLANCHET, El Arzobispo de Oregon-City a los fieles de Chile Noticias sobre la provincia eclesiastica de Oregon, Traducidas del frances par el r.p. Chaparro, Valparaiso [Chile], Imprenta del Comercio, 1856.

Translated, the title of the Spanish ladder reads:

The Catholic and mysterious ladder of Jacob.
A Historical and chronological chart of religion
and christian doctrine invented in Oregon in 1839
by one of the first Catholic missionaries.⁴

The Spanish ladder⁵ which measures 43" x 17 1/2" was lithographed by the firm of Libas, in Valparaiso, Chile.⁶ It carries the date 1856.⁷

The Spanish ladder combines many features of earlier Blanchet ladders. A cursory examination of the photocopy found herein will show: 1. the familiar bars and dots of the original Sahale stick, forming the central theme of the ladder; 2. a return to the use of vertical bars or blocks which portray various personages and events in Scripture and the history of the Church; 3. the sparing use of pictorial representations so much overdone in the

4 Escala catolica y misteriosa de Jacob. O cuadro historico y cronologico de la religion y de la doctrina cristiana. Inventada en Oregon en 1839, por uno de los dos primeros misioneros catolicos.

5 The Oregon Historical Society Museum has a copy of the Spanish ladder. On the back of the ladder it is noted that this ladder was presented to the Museum on July 26th, 1902, by St. Mary's Academy and College. This is St. Mary's Academy and College, Portland, Oregon (R.E. Fessenden, interview with the writer, Portland, 5 June, 1963).

6 See the base of the Spanish ladder, left lower corner.

7 There are six dots after the year 1850 which dates the ladder, 1856.

Paris ladder; 4. the extensive use of copious written explanations; 5. the dating of Scriptural figures and episodes.

The Spanish ladder puts great emphasis on dating certain episodes and figures appearing in religious history. Since the dates which appear on the photograph of the Spanish ladder found herein can be read with relative ease, at least with the use of a magnifying device, the writer will not attempt to transcribe all the dates appearing on this ladder. Suffice it to say that the dates represent: 1. the year in which the personage lived or the event happened, computed from the beginning of the world (A.M.); 2. or the year prior to the coming of Christ; 3. or the year after the coming of Christ (A.D.); 4. the span of years. For example, Seth is given as: 912, and again, as: 130 to 1042. He lived 912 years from the year 130 to the year 1042 A.M.

The lengthy explanations appearing on the left and right side of the ladder give detailed instructions on how this catechetical device should be used. A translation of these instructions will be found in the appendix.⁸

The explanations of the Spanish ladder will follow the pattern used for previous ladders; namely, proceeding

⁸ Appendix "C". Much of what appears on the Spanish ladder is repeated on the New York ladder.

from the base of the ladder to the top, from the left to the right. Each symbol or group of symbols will be numbered. The explanations of the events and personages portrayed on the Spanish ladder are given by Archbishop Blanchet on the ladder.

A. The triangle at the base of the ladder.

1. God from all eternity three Persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

B. Eight scenes.

2. The six days of creation; the angels, heli.

C. Six blocks.

3. Cain; Abel; Seth; Raphael; Gabriel; Michael.

D. Four blocks near the centre of the ladder.

4. Death of Adam; Henoch is taken up into heaven; sons of God; sons of men.

E. Nine blocks to the right of the ladder.

5. Nine choirs of angels: angels; archangels; thrones; dominations; principalities; powers; virtues; cherubim; seraphim.

F. Four blocks above the hierarchy of angels.

6. Noe; Sem; Cham; Japhet.

G. To the left, a tower.

7. The tower of Babel. The writings surrounding the tower explain: end of the flood, 1657; tower 15 stories high; after the confusion of tongues Sem passed into Asia, Cham into Africa and Japhet into Europe; from the year 1757 to 2000 A.M. various empires are founded; the corruption of the world begins again; the need of a chosen family to preserve intact the deposit of truth; call of Abraham in 2083 and his faith put to the test when ordered to sacrifice Isaac at the age of 37.

8. The writings directly under the tower give the seven epochs of ancient history: a. from the creation to the flood, 1656 years, 1 month and 26 days; b. from the flood (1657) to the call of Abraham, 426 years, 4 months, 18 days; c. from the call of Abraham to the departure from Egypt (2513), 430 years; d. from the departure from Egypt to the completion of the temple (2992), 479 years, 17 days; e. from the completion of the temple to the end of the captivity (3468), 476 years; f. from the end of the captivity to the advent of our saviour, Jesus Christ, in the year 4000, 532 years.

9. The explanations to the right of the ladder under the blocks symbolizing the nine choirs of angels comment upon the writings of Moses: Adam lived 50 years with Lamech, Lamech 93 years with Sem, Sem 50 years with Isaac

and Isaac 33 years with Levi who was the father of the grandmother of Moses, called Jochabed, who undoubtedly had seen Levi. It is therefore very certain that Moses has written nothing that was not still in the memory of all since he was only distant from Adam by 4 or 5 generations. (Biblical scholars would not accept Fr. Blanchet's thesis today.)

H. The scene of the ark.

10. The building of the ark began in 1656, completed in 1657.

1. Above the tower there are seven blocks and to the right of the ladder, a fire and three blocks. Above the seven blocks, another seven blocks.

11. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Juda, Levi, Melchisadech.

12. Burning of Sodim and Gomorrha in 2107.

13. Lot, his wife and his children.

14. Moses, Aaron, Pharoah, ten plagues, red sea, Job.

J. The mountain and ten large blocks and above them 16 blocks.

15. Mt. Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments.

16. The ark of the covenant; 40 years in the desert;

Balaam; entrance into the promised land; Caleb; Josue; Deborah; Gedeon; Jephte; Samson; Heli; Samuel.

K. Five blocks and the temple.

17. Saul; David; Solomon; Roboam; Jeroboam; the temple of Solomon begun in the year 2992, completed in the year 3001.

L. Twelve blocks.

18. Four major prophets: Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel; Barach; Elias taken up into heaven; Elizeus; reign of Jude; reign of Israel; Ezechiel; Sennacherib; Manasses.

M. Twelve blocks.

19. Twelve minor prophets: Osee; Joel; Amos; Abdias; Jonas; Micheas; Nahum; Habacuc; Sophonias; Aggeus; Zacharias; Malachias.

N. Twelve blocks, below the book which appears on the left side of the ladder.

20. Jezabel; Nabuchodonosor; Balthazar; Holofernes; Nicanor; Cyrus; Babylonian captivity; Suzanna; Tobias; Judith; Esther; Mardochai.

O. The book and nine blocks.

21. The Old Testament; Heliodorus; Alexander Jaddus; Antiochus; Eleazor; Maccabees; Judas Maccabeus; Assuerus; Naaman.

P. Four blocks near the centre of the ladder.

22. Joachim, Anne; Zachary, Elizabeth.

Q. Three figures to the left of the ladder, the scene in the centre of the ladder at the year 4000, the three figures to the right of the ladder.

23. The three kings or Magi: Gaspar, Balthazar, Melchior.

24. The nativity scene: Mary, the infant Jesus, Joseph.

25. The angels, the shepherds, the High Priest.⁹

R. Six blocks.

26. Bethlehem; innocents; Herod; in Egypt; Nazareth; Jerusalem.

S. The star of Bethlehem.

T. Fifty pictorial scenes are depicted. Each group of five scenes will be noted starting from the bottom to the top, not from left to right:

27. Annunciation; Visitation; Birth of Christ; Presentation; Jesus among the doctors.

28. Magdalen; waited on by the angels; election of the 12 apostles; humble children; miraculous catch of fish.

⁹ Fr. Blanchet does not describe this Scriptural figure. However, on the New York ladder the same figure appears and he is described by the caption 'High Priest.'

29. Martha and Mary; the prodigal son; Lazarus and the rich man; pharisee and publican; workers in the vineyard.

30. Magdalen; beheading of John the Baptist; multiplication of the loaves; St. Peter walking on the waves; the Cananean woman.

31. Baptism; Jesus in the desert; wedding feast at Cana; good Samaritan;¹⁰ calming of the storm.

32. Raising the widow's son; the leper and the centurion; Sermon on the mount; cure of the paralytic; cure of one possessed.

33. The samaritan woman;¹¹ the one born blind; adulterous woman; cure of the ten lepers; transfiguration.

34. Last supper; sellers expelled from the temple; triumphal entry into Jerusalem; living in Nazareth; raising of Lazarus.

35. Shepherds at the crib; adoration of the Magi; flight into Egypt; raising the daughter of Jairus; return from Egypt.

36. Jesus carrying the cross; crowning with thorns; flagellation; agony; betrayal of Judas.

¹⁰ The scene depicts the good Samaritan, although the caption refers to the Samaritan woman.

¹¹ The scene depicts the Samaritan woman, although the caption refers to the good Samaritan.

U. Four figures are seen between the fifty scenes.

37. Jesus amidst the doctors and Joseph and Mary; Jesus and John the Baptist.

V. Twelve blocks.

38. The twelve apostles; Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Jude, Simon, Judas.

W. Seven blocks, on either side of the crucifixion scene.

39. The seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, matrimony.

X. The crucifixion scene with the three crosses of Jesus and the two thieves.

Y. Ten scenes.

40. Faith, hope, charity; resurrection, ascension; assumption, coronation; good works; St. Matthias, St. Paul.

Z. Immediately above the crucifixion scene.

41. The Our Father; Pentecost; the Hail Mary.

Z.1. Five blocks.

42. The five commandments of the church.¹²

¹² The Nisqually ladder had 7 commandments of the Church, the Paris 6 and the Spanish 5, the number depending upon the legislation of the Church for the time and country.

Z.2. On the left of the ladder, the church and to the right, four figures, and above them another figure and a book.

43. St. Peter's Church¹³ and the note, Matthew 16, 18.

44. St. Helena, Constantine with the cross above him, Heracletus, Julian the Apostate.

45. St. Augustine, Apostle to England; New Testament.

Z.3. On the left above the Church.

46. The ten persecutions; the 18 Doctors of the Church; the 18 Councils of the Church.

Z.4. On the right above St. Augustine.

47. Arius, Macedonius, Pelagius, Semi-Pelagians, Nestorius, Eutyches, Monothelites; Mohamet, Iconoclasts, Berengarius, Albigensians, Photius, Michael Ceruleus; schisms: Donatists, Greek, Western, English.

Z.5. Three figures standing below the branch.

48. Luther, Henry VIII, Calvin.

Z.6. Above the branch.

49. Baius, Jansenius, Wesley.

¹³ Earlier ladders describe the Church as the Church of Constantine.

Z.7. A figure standing above the branch and holding a cross; the missionary, St. Francis Xavier.

Z.8. Alongside the dates from the year 100 to 1856, Fr. Blanchet notes the year in which the missionaries arrived in various countries of the world.

The Spanish ladder differs in a number of particulars from previous ladders as has already been noted. However, the most notable point of difference is in the amount of information contained within the compass of the Spanish ladder. This ladder provides a more extensive summary of Catholic doctrine and religious history. In the opinion of the writer the more complex the ladder the less effective its use. However, this point is open to divergent opinions.

CATHOLIC LADDER

CHRONOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CHART OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION AND DOCTRINE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

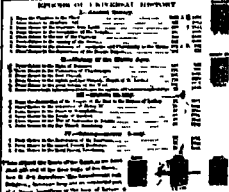
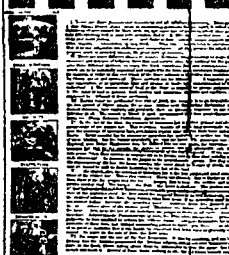
THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

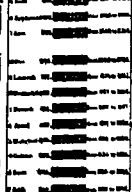
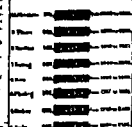
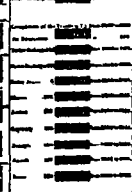
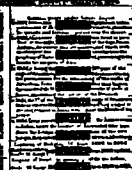
THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

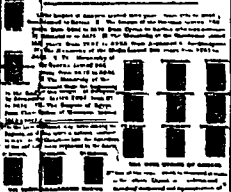
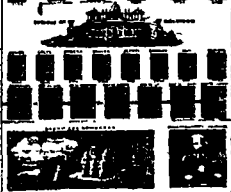
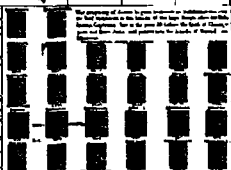
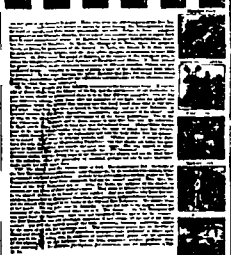
THE JOURNAL OF THE



THE JOURNAL OF THE



THE JOURNAL OF THE



THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

THE JOURNAL OF THE

NEW YORK LADDER

1859-1860

Original in the Archives
of the Oregon Province of
the Society of Jesus, Crosby
Memorial Library, Gonzaga
University, Spokane, Washington.

CHAPTER XI

NEW YORK LADDER

The final edition¹ of Fr. Blanchet's Catholic ladder was lithographed in New York² and will be known as the New York ladder. A perusal of the photograph of the New York ladder found herein will show that Fr. Blanchet's final creation was an English edition of the Spanish ladder with some additions. The New York ladder bears the title: "Catholic Ladder a Chronological and Historical Chart of the Christian Religion and Doctrine."³

It would appear that the New York ladder was lithographed in the fall of 1859 or early 1860. Fr. C. Leblanc, Chancellor of the Diocese of Montreal,⁴ in answer to letters addressed to him from Archbishop Blanchet on February 6th, 1860 and March 7th of the same year, writes:

1 To the knowledge of the writer, the New York ladder was the final ladder created by Archbishop Blanchet.

2 Printer's credit at the base of the ladder.

3 See photograph of the ladder found herein.

4 The present Archdiocese of Montreal, Canada, was erected an Episcopal See May 13th, 1836, and created an Archdiocese June 8th, 1886 (The Official Catholic Directory, New York, published annually by P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1962, part III, p. 13).

I disposed of the Catholic Ladders in different bookstores of the City who were happy to sell them on commission but it goes slowly as the French don't speak English and the Irish are poor.⁵

There is no doubt that Fr. Leblanc is speaking about the New York ladder when he refers to the fact that "the French don't speak English."⁶ The New York ladder was rendered in English. Since the arrangements for the sale of the ladder were discussed in letters of February and March, 1860, and since Fr. Leblanc had already distributed copies of the ladder by May, 1860, it would appear likely that the ladder was lithographed sometime during the winter of 1859-1860. At the base of the ladder a note reads: "entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by F. N. Blanchet, [...]."⁷ That the ladder had been completed and readied for the printer in 1859 can be established from one of the explanations found on the ladder itself: "State of the Chief Pastors in the whole Catholic world in 1859."⁸

5 L. of Leblanc to Blanchet, 10 May, 1860, (A.N.F., I 36).

6 Ibid.

7 See base of the photograph of the New York ladder found herein.

8 See the photograph of the New York ladder, the final comment at the base of the right side.

The New York ladder, which measures 4'2" x 2'1 1/2", was produced in such a way that it could be folded between two hard covers making a very small booklet 3 1/2" x 5 1/2". It is a source of some surprise to open up the booklet and find such a large sheet compressed into such a small space. The front cover of the booklet carries the title "Catholic Ladder."⁹

Archbishop Blanchet published in conjunction with his New York ladder a booklet¹⁰ which explained the ladder and was meant to be a key to the understanding¹¹ of his catechetical aid.

9 Two copies of the New York ladder can be found in the Archives of the Oregon Historical Society, Portland; one copy in the archives of the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon. The archives of the Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus, Crosby Memorial Library, Gonzaga, have three copies of the ladder: 1. a framed copy long preserved in the sacristy of the old Catholic Church at Port Townsend, Washington (SPEARMAN, Catholic Ladder, p. 18); 2. a copy stitched to heavy paper which also came from Port Townsend (Wilfred SCHOENBERG, interview with the writer, 24 June, 1963); 3. a booklet containing a New York ladder found by Fr. Peter Halpin and presented to the archives June 20th, 1952 (Wilfred SCHOENBERG, interview with the writer, 24 June, 1963). The framed and stitched copies are not attached to the hard covers.

10 With the authorization of the Archbishop of Oregon City, The Key to the Catholic Ladder; containing a sketch of the Christian religion and Universal History useful to all, New York, T. W. Strong Printer, 1859.

11 The booklet was obviously meant to be used in conjunction with the ladder as it contains the instructions on how the ladder is to be used, its history, and added apologetical material. It would appear that Bishop

Since the New York ladder is for the most part a duplication of the Spanish ladder, we will dwell only upon those points which are not found in the earlier edition.¹²

A. Surrounding the ladder are two columns of explanations.

1. The apostolical chain of Popes from Peter to Pius IX.
2. Method of using the Catholic ladder.¹³
3. Promises and prophecies of a Saviour.¹⁴
4. Religious world displayed: Fr. Blanchet gives the population of Christians, Mohammedans, Jews and pagans for Europe, Asia, Africa and America.
5. The Christian world shown: Fr. Blanchet gives the population of Catholics, Protestants and Greeks in Europe, Asia, Africa and America.
6. Ten rites of the Catholic Church are given.

Demers may have been asking for copies of this booklet when he wrote to Archbishop Blanchet: "The ladders you sent me are not the last edition. I have a great number of these. [...] Would you send me your last ladder with the explanation" (L. of Demers to Blanchet, Victoria, 22 July, 1865 [A.A.P., D. II 17, p. 1]).

12 See the Spanish ladder and appendix "C".

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

7. The Catholic world shown, giving the countries in union with the See of Rome: a) from Constantine to Arius; b) before the rise of Mohammed; c) before the apostasy of Luther; d) in the year 1860, in Europe, Asia, Africa and America.

8. State of chief pastors in 1859: Fr. Blanchet lists the name of the Pope, the numbers of cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops and vicars apostolic.

B. The first section of the New York ladder from the year 100 to the year 2000 A.M. is substantially the same as the Spanish ladder. However the epochs of universal history represent an addition.

9. Ancient history: nos. 1-6 are found on the Spanish ladder; 7. from the Messiah to the accession of Constantine and Christianity to the throne (312 A.D.); 8. from thence to the destruction of the Roman Empire (476).

10. History of the Middle Ages: from thence (destruction of the Roman Empire) to the flight of Mohammed (622); from thence to the coronation of Charlemagne (800); from thence to the first crusade (1095); from thence to the eighth and last crusade (1270); from thence to the great schism of the West (1378); from thence to the termination and capture of Constantinople (1449).

11. Modern history: from the destruction of the Eastern Empire to the schism of Luther (1517); to the

abjuration of Henry VIII (1593); to the peace of Westphalia (1648); to the treaty of Ryewich (1697); to the war of succession in Austria (1740); to the first French revolution (1789).

12. Contemporaneous history: to the restoration of the Bourbons (1815); to the second French revolution (1830); to the third French revolution (1848).

C. Below the epochs of history Archbishop Blanchet begins the explanation of sacrifice and continues it above the symbols of the archangels.

13. Sacrifice in the law of nature; sacrifice in the law of Moses; sacrifice in the Christian law.

D. Below the scene of the ark Archbishop Blanchet dates the ancient kingdoms.

14. The empire of the Assyrians (1770-3466); the empire of the Persians (3466-3674); the monarchy of the Chaldeans (2092-3223); the monarchy of the Medes (3257-3466); the monarchy of the Greeks (3670-3936); the monarchy of the Persians (1771-3674); the empire of Egypt, 1663 years.

E. A most interesting change found on the New York ladder but not on previous ladders is the dating of the close of the Old Testament era. Archbishop Blanchet gives

the final year not as 4000 but as 4003. The bible¹⁵ found in his personal library gives this date.

F. A notable change in the New York ladder is the absence of the 50 scenes found on the Spanish ladder. The New York ladder has ten:

15. Annunciation; visitation; nativity; presentation; Jesus in the midst of the doctors.

16. Agony, scourging, crowning; carrying of the cross; crucifixion.

G. On either side of the 33 dots are found four scenes, three of which appear on the Spanish ladder. The fourth carries the caption: Jesus is tempted in the desert.

H. On either side of these four scenes Archbishop Blanchet explains:

17. Three fundamental maxims to end all religious controversy: a) The Divine Master in establishing a religion here on earth to which all are invited left a rule or method by which those persons who sincerely seek it might with certainty find it; b) this rule must be secure and never failing; c) this rule must be universal.

18. Three classes of Christians approach this secure and universal rule: a) through private inspiration; b) the

15 CARRIERES, Sainte Bible.

bible as explained by private judgment; c) the written and unwritten Word of God as explained by the tribunal of divine institution.

19. Having found the golden and true rule of faith one must next search for Christ's Church which is one, holy, catholic, apostolic.

20. In the law of the land, common or unwritten law is the chief cornerstone of written law. A judge is the living oracle who decides in case of doubt.

21. In the church there is the written law, the Bible and the unwritten law, tradition. Tradition is the cornerstone of the written law. As in the civil law there are judges to decide in cases of doubt.

22. New Testament: by preaching not by writing the apostles propagated the Christian religion. Several wrote nothing. Even Christ himself did not commit to paper.

23. The four gospels are four infallible witnesses to the unwritten word.

24. The Church came first, the books of the New Testament came afterwards.

I. Below the branch and the figures of Luther, Calvin and Henry VIII are some additions.

25. The blocks denoting the ancient heretics are gone but their names still appear.

26. The books of the New Testament written after the Ascension of Jesus Christ are given.

27. Next to the list of scriptural books is a lengthy explanation of errors from Sabellius to Protestantism.

J. To the left of the years 1300 to 1860.

28. Archbishop Blanchet lists the pertinent texts from scripture which pertain to: the mission of the apostles; the authority of the church; the promises of the Holy Ghost; the presence of the Holy Ghost in the General Councils; Christ's repeated prayers that the Church might be one; the Church of St. Peter, with the measurements of its size and the dates of its inception and completion.

The New York ladder portrays a summary of the Old Testament, the New Testament and the history of the Catholic church as did the previous ladders. However, the Archbishop obviously meant his final catechetical creation to do more. The New York ladder enlarges upon religious history, adds a summary of profane history, and sets forth the validity of the Catholic Church's claim to divine institution. In the opinion of the writer the complexity of this catechetical aid precluded its use except for those already introduced to the simpler format.

PART III

OTHERS USE BLANCHET'S IDEA

It is not surprising that Fr. Blanchet's catechetical aid inspired others to create their own versions of the chronological ladder. As early as 1840 the first Protestant ladder appeared. Chapter Twelve will discuss this ladder under the title, "First Protestant Ladder." Fr. De Smet, a Jesuit missionary, on his first visit to the lower Columbia met Fr. Blanchet and returned to St. Louis with a Catholic ladder. Chapter Thirteen deals with the Blanchet ladder which Fr. De Smet edited. Chapter Fourteen, entitled the "Second Protestant Ladder" describes the work of the Rev. H. H. Spalding, a minister attached to the American Board Missions. A much later work, Fr. Lacombe's Catholic ladder, will be studied in Chapter Fifteen.

CHAPTER XII

FIRST PROTESTANT LADDER

The appearance of a Protestant¹ ladder was, in effect, a confirmation of the value and effectiveness of Father Blanchet's new teaching aid. Considering the widespread use of the Catholic ladder in the year 1839,² it was not surprising that the Vicar General's preaching device soon came to the attention of the Methodist missionaries in Oregon. Within a few months of the appearance of Fr. Blanchet's Catholic ladder, Rev. Daniel Lee³ had created a version of the ladder suited to the needs of his

1 This ladder was also referred to as the Evangelical ladder (R.M.D.Q., 1843, no. 5, p. 35).

2 See Chapter II.

3 Rev. Daniel Lee was the nephew of Rev. Jason Lee, founder of the Oregon Methodist Mission. Rev. Daniel Lee arrived at Fort Vancouver, September 15, 1834, in the company of his uncle and three laymen: P. L. Edwards, C. M. Walker and Cyrus Shepherd (William I. MARSHALL, Acquisition of Oregon and the Long Suppressed Evidence about Marcus Whitman, Seattle, Lowman & Hanford, 1911, vol. 2, p. 22); W. H. Gray, a layman attached to the Presbyterian mission, does not include C. M. Walker as a member of Jason Lee's party (W. H. GRAY, A History of Oregon, p. 40). The name Daniel Lee appears in a list of Protestant ministers in Oregon in 1843 (BLANCHET, Journal 8, p. 4, [A.A.F.]).

Methodist associates,⁴ as we learn from a letter of Father Blanchet addressed to the Coadjutor Bishop of Quebec in March, 1840: "The minister Daniel Lee [...] had the effrontery to make a copy of the historic ladder from ours."⁵

Within the same month of March Father Demers was informed about the new Protestant ladder: "I have just learned from Mr. Douglas that Lee has really aped our ladder."⁶

There is no doubt in the minds of either Frs. Blanchet or Demers that Rev. Daniel Lee had based his creation upon the original design of Father Blanchet's ladder. In view of this it would appear likely that the Protestant

4 The editor of the Rapports, commenting on the Protestant ladder, adds a footnote: "Minister Waller had used the ladder composed by Father Blanchet in order to make one in his own style" (R.M.D.Q., 1843, no. 5, p. 35). There is no doubt that Mr. Waller used the Protestant ladder but it appears unlikely in the light of Father Blanchet's comment regarding the authorship of Rev. Daniel Lee, that he created his own Protestant ladder. See BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 47.

5 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Fort Vancouver, 19 March, 1840 (A.A.Q., C.A. vol. 1, 153-154, p. 4).

6 L. of Demers to Blanchet, Vancouver, 27 March, 1840 (A.A.P., D. II 106, p. 3). Father Demers was at Fort Vancouver from February 25th, 1840, until April of that year (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 39). It would appear that Fr. Demers must have missed the Vicar General when he arrived at Fort Vancouver, March 16th (ibid.). Father Blanchet had already learned of the Protestant ladder, March 19, 1840, as we learn from his letter of that date to Bishop Turgeon (A.A.Q., C.A., vol. I, 153-154, p. 4).

ladder was very similar in structure to the Catholic ladder. One would expect that Rev. Daniel Lee had used the bars and dots of the original Sahale stick and had chosen the marks and images best suited to his purpose. Allowances would have been made for doctrinal differences which would have necessitated certain changes in the original format of Father Blanchet's ladder.⁷ Father Blanchet notes one change which was made to accommodate the events of the sixteenth century:

The protestant ministers [...] have put together an imitation of our historical ladder and they have not hesitated to put on it a mark at the sixteenth century to designate the birth of their religion.⁸

7 Notice sur la Mission de L'Oregon, p. 180. In a chapter devoted to an explanation of Father Blanchet's ladder, the author comments on an interchange between Chief Tamakoon of the Cascade tribe and a certain Methodist minister and adds: "An Indian complained, above all, of seeing only three medicines (sacraments) and of not seeing the name of Mary" (*ibid.*). However, Father Blanchet notes that Rev. Daniel Lee "[...] admits 2 medicines (sacraments)" (L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Fort Vancouver, March 19th, 1840 [A.A.Q., C.A., vol. I, 153-154, p. 4]).

8 R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 63. It can be assumed that the branch which appears on all of Fr. Blanchet's ladders, representing the reformation, would not appear on the Protestant ladder but would be replaced with the "mark" at the sixteenth century. Dr. Whitman's reaction to the branch on the Catholic ladder substantiates such a conclusion: "(the branch) which represents all Protestants as the withered ends of the several branches of Papacy falling off down into infernal society & flames..." (L. of Dr. Whitman to the American Board, November 11, 1841, in: Nellie B. PIPES, "The Protestant Ladder", in Oregon Historical Quarterly, September, 1936, p. 238). The Rev.

An added comment sheds little light upon how the ladder was altered at the 16th century: "But he [Rev. Daniel Lee] will have trouble explaining the separation of the Protestants in the 16th century."⁹

This ladder which, like Father Blanchet's, was done on paper¹⁰ was probably used at Fort Vancouver,¹¹ Fort Nisqually,¹² the Dalles,¹³ and at the Clackamas River and Willamette Falls.¹⁴

H. H. Spalding notes his reaction to the branch on Father Blanchet's ladder: "Upon this chart [Catholic Ladder] Protestants are represented as leaving the road to heaven and are in one to hell" (Spalding to Greene, February 3, 1847, in DRURY, First White Women, p. 223).

9 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Fort Vancouver, 19 March, 1840 (A.A.Q., C.A., vol. I, 153-154, p. 4).

10 L. of Blanchet to Demers, Vancouver, 7 April, 1840 (A.A.P., B. III 6, p. 2).

11 Since both Fathers Blancher and Demers learned of the Protestant ladder at Fort Vancouver, it appears reasonable to assume that Rev. Daniel Lee used his new ladder at this fort. Rev. Lee was at Fort Vancouver in January, February and March of 1840 (BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 39). See: L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, March 19th, 1840 (A.A.Q., C.A., vol. I, 153-154, p. 4).

12 When Fr. Blanchet was preparing to leave Fort Nisqually for Whidbey Island, May 27th, 1840, he employed two Indians to act as guides. One of the Indians was a friend of Mr. Wilson, the Methodist minister at the fort, who had "taught him the ladder" (L. of Blanchet to Signay, St. Paul on the Wallamette, 23 February, 1841 [A.A.P., B. III 6, p. 2]).

13 Fr. Blanchet suggests that the Indians of the Dalles rejected the Protestant ladder "at the sight of our ladder" (L. of Blanchet to Demers, Vancouver, 7 April, 1840 [A.A.P., B. III 6, p. 2]).

14 An unusual event took place at the Indian village on the Clackamas River, in May, 1841, which involved

Father Demers anticipated that Rev. Daniel Lee "will not miss sending some [ladders] to the Methodist mission at the Willamette."¹⁵ Although we have found no direct reference to the use of the Protestant ladder at the Willamette mission, 12 miles south of St. Paul, there is reason to believe that ladders would have been sent to this mission. The Willamette was the initial foundation in Oregon and headquarters for the Methodist mission.¹⁶

In his letter to the Vicar General in which he first mentions the Protestant ladder, Father Demers adds an interesting comment: "[...] he [Rev. Daniel Lee] will

both the Catholic and Protestant ladders. Father Blanchet recounts the details: "After the Mass and the instruction [...] I saw Mr. Waller enter [...]. He expressed his dissatisfaction on my coming. 'Intruding', he said, to preach to the Indians of his jurisdiction [...]. The Indians surrounded us [...]. Chief Katamus went to find the evangelical ladder of his minister and placed it alongside mine: the Indians saw with their own eyes that the religion of this poor Mr. Waller did not begin with J.C. [...] Several have since abandoned him and have told him to come and pick up his ladder [...]" (R.M.D.Q., 1843, no. 5, p. 35-36). Since Mr. Waller had his residence at the Willamette Falls, it can be presumed that the Protestant ladder was used at his mission at the Falls (WILKES, Narrative, vol. IV, p. 343). For the dispute between Mr. Waller and Father Blanchet, see: WILKES, Narrative, vol. IV, p. 367-368; also BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 47.

¹⁵ L. of Demers to Blanchet, Vancouver, 27th of March, 1840 (A.A.P., D. II 106, p. 3).

¹⁶ GRAY, A History of Oregon, p. 41. See: WILKES, Narrative, vol. IV, p. 350-355.

try to pass for the author but your's is well enough known."¹⁷

This remark not only expresses the concern of Father Demers about safeguarding the true authorship of the original ladder but at the same time confirms the supposition that the original Protestant ladder was, in fact, a duplication of the original creation of Father Blanchet.

The writer has not succeeded in finding an extant copy of the First Protestant ladder, and suspects that no extant copy exists.¹⁸

¹⁷ L. of Demers to Blanchet, Vancouver, 27th of March, 1840 (A.A.P., D. II 106, p. 3).

¹⁸ The writer contacted the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, New York, under whose aegis the Rev. Daniel Lee would have been sent to Oregon: "We have no information on this subject (the evangelical ladder) in our files, but we are forwarding your letter to the Oregon Conference Historical Society for the attention of Ormal B. Trick, P.O. Box 185, Estacada, Oregon [...]" (L. of Mrs. Elsie Lund, assistant librarian, to the writer, 10 March, 1965). Ormal B. Trick wrote: "Dr. Robert M. Gatke of Willamette University, who is an authority on Methodist Church history in Oregon, does not know of Daniel Lee using the 'Ladder'" (L. of Ormal B. Trick to the writer, 24 March, 1965). Clifford M. Drury thought it more likely that Daniel Lee would have adapted the Protestant ladder of H. H. Spalding, suggesting, therefore, that Daniel Lee's ladder is not known to historians. The remarks of Clifford Drury are particularly pertinent as he has been carrying on research in the field of missionary history of the Pacific Northwest for over 30 years and is the author of seven books on the subject (L. of Clifford M. Drury to the writer, Pasadena, California, 30 March, 1965). Calvin J. Sutherlin, professor of Field Work, Pacific School of Religion, California, with the help of Mrs. Kathryn Warnick, Librarian, Southern Methodist University, Dallas,

Texas, researched this question of the Evangelical ladder for the writer, and discovered what the Methodist missionaries refer to as a 'Chain of reasoning,' which parallels the historico-biblical approach of the bible and would also be closely allied with the ladder. However, as Calvin Sutherlin states: "[the chain] was a chain of reasoning, and apparently not a device" (L. of Calvin J. Sutherlin to the writer, Dallas, Texas, 22 March, 1965). In the light of the comments of these authorities on missionary activity in Oregon, it appears that the ladder used by Rev Daniel Lee is unknown in the Pacific Northwest and it is likely no extant copy exists.

As they have been proved by the evidence of
the world to have been proved by the evidence of the world



From the ground of the world
The world of the world

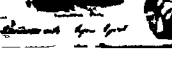
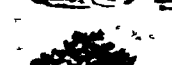
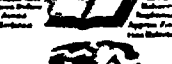
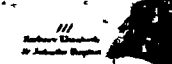
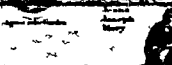
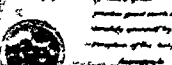
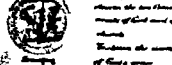
From the ground of the world
The world of the world

From the ground of the world
The world of the world

From the ground of the world
The world of the world

From the ground of the world
The world of the world

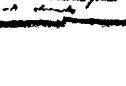
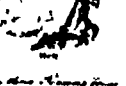
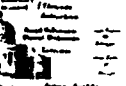
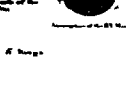
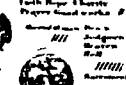
From the ground of the world
The world of the world



From the ground of the world
The world of the world



From the ground of the world
The world of the world



DE SMET LADDER

1843

Original in

DE SMET, Letters and Sketches, 1843.

CHAPTER XIII

DE SMET LADDER

Fr. Peter John De Smet,¹ whose missionary travels took him to the Pacific Northwest, created his own Catholic ladder.

On his second journey to the Oregon Territory Fr. De Smet reached Fort Vancouver June 8th, 1842.² On this occasion he not only met his co-labourers in Oregon,³ Frs. Blanchet and Demers, but also saw the Vicar General's catechetical invention, the Catholic ladder:

1 Fr. Peter John De Smet, a member of the Society of Jesus, commonly called the Jesuit Fathers, was born at Termonde, Belgium, December 31st, 1801. Fr. De Smet arrived in St. Louis (U.S.A.), in the year 1828. At the Council of Baltimore assembled in 1833 the bishops of the United States confided the Indian missions to the care of the Jesuits. On the 30th April, 1840, Fr. De Smet was dispatched by his Superior, Fr. Peter Verhaegen, to investigate the possibilities of opening missions among the Indian tribes of the mountains, the eastern sector of the Oregon Territory. Returning to the Oregon Territory in 1841, Fr. De Smet established St. Mary's Mission in the Bitter Root country. In the summer of 1842 he made his way down the Columbia River and met for the first time Frs. Blanchet and Demers (P. J. MAHON & J. M. HAYES, ed., Trials and Triumphs of the Catholic Church in America, Chicago, J. S. Hyland & Company, [1907], vol. I, 386-390; William L. DAVIS, A History of St. Ignatius Mission, Spokane, C. W. Hill Printing Co., [1954], p. 3-5; see also page 51).

2 SCHOENBERG, Chronicle, p. 12.

3 Ibid., p. 12.

The Rev. Father [De Smet] speaks of our ladder with approval, is going to use it, believes that its use will be established in the whole christian world on account of its utility. Thanks be to God!⁴

When Fr. De Smet left the lower Columbia on his return to the mountains he took with him a copy of Fr. Blanchet's ladder, as the Vicar General explains:

[...] Fr. De Smet finds [the ladder] very useful, has taken it in order to have it lithographed in the States. This [ladder] will be more complete.⁵

By the spring of 1844 the Vicar General had received copies of Fr. De Smet's version of his Catholic ladder.⁶ Based upon the format of Fr. Blanchet's creation, the De Smet ladder was embellished with additions and changes. The Vicar General sent a copy of this new ladder to Bishop Turgeon:

F. X. Payet heretofore in the employ of the Company in the west for 30 years, will present to you on my behalf [a ladder] which was lithographed at St. Louis with the changes and additions of Fr. De Smet.⁷

4 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Vancouver, 24 June, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-43).

5 L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 3 November, 1842 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-50).

6 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Vancouver, 6 April, 1844 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-91).

7 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon (ibid.).

In his letter to the Coadjutor Bishop of Quebec and, again, in a letter to Fr. Cazeau, Fr. Blanchet comments upon the reaction of the Indians to this new version of the Catholic ladder:

The Indians say of it: this one [De Smet's] is good to look at, ours is better to talk with or pray with.⁸

Fr. De Smet lost no time in compiling and publishing his version of the Catholic ladder. Leaving St. Mary's Mission July 29th, 1842, for St. Louis,⁹ he published his first book¹⁰ in the spring of 1843.¹¹ The ladder which he entitled the "Indian Symbolical Catechism"¹²

8 L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Vancouver, 6 April, 1844 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-91); in a letter to Fr. Cazeau, Fr. Blanchet writes: "[...] the Indians say of it: Okouk pous nanich: this one De Smet's to look at: okouk pous wasra, this one to talk with" (L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 6 April, 1844 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-92)).

9 SCHOENBERG, Chronicle, p. 12.

10 P. J. DE SMET, Letters and Sketches with a Narrative of a Year's Residence Among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains, Philadelphia, M. Pithian, 1843, p. 245; afterwards referred to as: DE SMET, Letters and Sketches, 1843.

11 SCHOENBERG, Chronicle, p. 12.

12 DE SMET, Letters and Sketches, 1843, p. 245. One author comments that in their eagerness to obtain a copy of De Smet's ladder, the missionaries cut out the ladder in Fr. De Smet's book, with the result that it was hard to come by a copy with the picture of the ladder still intact (ST. HILAIRE, Pedagogy in the Wilderness, p. 57). The De Smet ladder is also found in: THWAITES, Early Western Travels, vol. 27, p. 405.

appeared in the "Letters and Sketches with a Narrative of a Year's Residence Among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains."

In the letters to Bishop Turgeon and Fr. Cazeau Fr. Blanchet explained that he was sending copies of Fr. De Smet's ladder. However, he made no mention of sending copies of Fr. De Smet's book which would have been published about this time. This leads one to believe that Fr. De Smet had published off-print copies of his ladder. A De Smet ladder which is particularly impressive can be found in one edition of his 1843 publication, 'Letters and Sketches.' Although carrying the same date and publisher this edition¹³ includes a coloured rendition of the De Smet ladder. It is possible that Fr. Blanchet referred to this coloured edition when he commented that the Indians thought De Smet's ladder was "good to look at" while Blanchet's ladder was "better to talk with or pray with."¹⁴

The De Smet ladders, both plain and coloured, measure 22 1/2" x 7 1/4" and are printed from a cut 22" x 5 1/8". In the study of Fr. De Smet's ladder repeated

13 The writer examined a copy of this 1843 edition in the Archives of the Province of British Columbia.

14 L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 6 April, 1844 (A.A.Q., C.A. II-91).

references will be made to his own description of the "Indian Symbolical Catechism" which will be found in the appendix.¹⁵ Following generally the same procedure previously used, we will give each symbol or groups of symbols a number in order to facilitate the explanations. The photocopy of Fr. De Smet's work found herein will assist the reader in following the description.

In creating his version of the ladder Fr. De Smet followed the original format of Fr. Blanchet's Sahale stick. The 40 bars and 33 dots with the 18 bars and 43 dots form the central theme of his symbolical catechism.

A. Across the base of the ladder.

1. The symbol of the Trinity and the words: "Before all ages God alone in three Persons from all eternity."

2. The heavens, the earth, Adam and Eve, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the serpent, the sun, moon, stars, the angels, and hell.¹⁶

B. Three sets of vertical lines.

3. Cain, Abel, Seth.¹⁷

¹⁵ See appendix "D".

¹⁶ Appendix "D", no. 2. It may have been the symbol of hell found on the De Smet ladder which moved the Rev. H. H. Spalding to create his Protestant ladder. See Second Protestant Ladder.

¹⁷ Fr. De Smet does not mention these Old Testament figures in his description of the ladder.

4. Death of Adam.¹⁸

5. Enoch [Henoeh] is taken up into heaven.¹⁹

C. The pictorial representation of the tower of Babel and the ark and four vertical lines.

6. The tower of Babel, built by Noah's descendants.²⁰

7. Noah's ark, in which four men and four women are saved; all the others perish in the deluge.²¹

8. Noah, Sem, Cham, Japhet.²²

D. Above and to the left of the tower of Babel, five vertical lines and directly above the tower, one vertical line.

9. The patriarchs; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job.²³

10. Pharaoh.²⁴

¹⁸ Appendix "D", no. 3.

¹⁹ Appendix "D", no. 4.

²⁰ Appendix "D", no. 6. It cannot be seen in the photocopy but a thin line joins this scene with the 16th of the 40 bars.

²¹ Appendix "D", no. 5. A line joins this scene with the 15th bar.

²² These Old Testament figures are not mentioned in Fr. De Smet's description.

²³ Appendix "D", no. 7. In the photocopy one will see the word Patriarchs written over these vertical lines.

²⁴ Appendix "D", no. 7. On the ladder the name is written "Pharo", in the description "Pharaoh."

E. Above the ark, a city in flames upon a hill-top and one vertical line to the lower right of the scene.

11. Sodom, Gomorrah, five cities destroyed by fire from heaven.²⁵

12. Lot saved by two angels.²⁶

F. The pictorial representation of Mt. Sinai is shown with a figure holding two tablets. Ten vertical lines can be seen with the names Moses, Mount Sinai and Aaron.²⁷

13. The Ten Commandments of God given to Moses on Mount Sinai.²⁸

G. Seven vertical lines are drawn with the names of seven judges; the pictorial representation of the temple of Solomon; four vertical lines with the names of four kings; and two notes: over Israel 18 kings; over Juda 19 kings.

14. The seven judges: Josue, Debora, Gedeon, Jephte, Samson, Heli, Samuel.²⁹

25 Appendix "D", no. 8.

26 Appendix "D", no. 8.

27 Fr. De Smet does not mention Aaron in his description of the ladder. He spells his name Aron on the ladder.

28 Appendix "D", no. 9.

29 Appendix "D", no. 9.

15. The temple of Solomon.³⁰
16. The four kings: Saul, David, Solomon, Roboam.³¹
17. The kingdom of Israel formed of ten tribes, subsisted for 253 years under 18 kings.³²
18. The kingdom of Juda formed of two tribes, subsisted for 386 years under 19 kings.³³

H. Above the scene of Mt. Sinai, the Old Testament is pictured with a dove hovering over it; twelve vertical lines naming the minor prophets.

19. The Old Testament.³⁴
20. The twelve minor prophets: Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zacharias, Malachias.³⁵

I. In his description of the ladder Fr. De Smet gives explanations for Elias, Eliseus, Jonas, the

30 Appendix "D", no. 10.

31 Appendix "D", no. 9. However, the four kings are listed as judges not as kings.

32 Appendix "D", no. 9.

33 Appendix "D", no. 9.

34 Appendix "D", no. 15.

35 Appendix "D", no. 11. Fr. De Smet lists the names of twelve minor prophets on his ladder but not in his explanations.

captivity of Babylon, Susanna, Tobias, Judith, Esther, Nabuchodonozor and the three children in the furnace.³⁶ However, none of these personages or events are found on the De Smet ladder.

J. Above the temple of Solomon, four vertical lines are given with the names of the four major prophets; seven vertical lines with the word Machabees; a single vertical line marked Eleazor, and the name Antiochus.

21. The four great prophets: Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel.³⁷

22. The seven Machabees and their mother; the holy man Eleazor; Antiochus.³⁸

K. Above the symbol of the Old Testament, three vertical lines are drawn and opposite these lines, the words Annunciation to B.V.Mary.

36 Appendix "D", nos. 12, 13, 14.

37 Appendix "D", no. 11. Fr. De Smet does not list the names of the major prophets in his description of the ladder but they do appear on his ladder.

38 Appendix "D", no. 16. Fr. De Smet gives Antiochus as the spelling in no. 16 and Antiochas in no. 17. Also under no. 16 Fr. De Smet adds the names St. Joachim and St. Anne. No symbols appear on the ladder to account for them. They appear to be misplaced in the description under no. 16. They would fit more aptly under no. 17.

23. Zachary, Elizabeth and John the Baptist.³⁹

24. Annunciation to the B.V.Mary: the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and announces the Incarnation of the Word, the second Person of the Trinity.⁴⁰

L. The De Smet ladder now enters upon the series of 33 dots denoting the life of Christ. At the base of the 33 dots can be seen a pictorial representation of the visit of the three Magi to Bethlehem with Mary shown holding the child and the three kings kneeling before the infant. St. Joseph stands behind Mary and the star of Bethlehem can be seen in the upper right corner of the scene. A number of symbols and names surround the scene: 1. To the left of the scene the names Jesus, Joseph and Mary. 2. To the right of the scene can be seen three vertical lines with the names Kings. 3. Below the three vertical lines a single line can be seen with the name Herod. 4. Directly above the scene are found the words Circumcision and Presentation. 5. To the right on a line with the

39 Appendix "D", no. 17. The names of Mary and Joseph are included in this explanation although there are no marks provided for them on the ladder.

40 Appendix "D", no. 17. Fr. De Smet adds in his description the distances between Jerusalem and Nazareth, Bethlehem and Emmaus. It appears that no. 18 should also be included under the title of the Annunciation: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made man for us; the history of the Annunciation.

top of the nativity scene another vertical line appears with the explanation: Death of the Holy Innocents.

6. Above the scene the words: Flight to Egypt.

25. Jesus, Joseph and Mary: Jesus Christ is born on Christmas day, at Bethlehem.⁴¹

26. The three kings (Magi) Gaspar, Balthazar and Melchior, having seen the star, come to adore the infant Jesus.⁴²

27. Herod seems to kill the infant Jesus.⁴³

28. The circumcision: at the end of eight days Jesus is circumcised and receives the name Jesus.⁴⁴

29. The presentation: the infant Jesus is carried to the temple of Jerusalem forty days after his birth. The holy man Simeon and the widow Anne acknowledge Him as God.⁴⁵

41 Appendix "D", nos. 19, 20. Fr. Blanchet mentions the angels and shepherds but neither of these are found on his ladder.

42 Appendix "D", nos. 21, 23.

43 Appendix "D", nos. 22, 23, 26.

44 Appendix "D", no. 19. Although it cannot be seen in the photograph, the author of the ladder at this point traces a thin line to connect the word circumcision with the first of the 33 dots.

45 Appendix "D", no. 23. A thin line joins the word presentation to the first dot.

30. Death of the holy innocents: by command of Herod all the children in the town and environs of Bethlehem are put to death.⁴⁶

31. An angel orders Joseph to flee into Egypt with the infant Jesus and Mary his mother.⁴⁷

M. Fr. De Smet gives an explanation for the return of Jesus, Joseph and Mary to Nazareth.⁴⁸ However, no symbol for this event is seen on the ladder; opposite the 12th dot the words Teaching the doctors.

32. Mary and Joseph lose the infant Jesus at the age of twelve years, and find him at the end of three days, in the temple, in the midst of the doctors of the law.⁴⁹

N. A number of events are associated with the 30th, 31st, 32nd and 33rd year of Christ's life on earth.

46 Appendix "D", no. 24. The author explains this event in the instructions found in no. 24. It would appear that Fr. De Smet meant this instruction which is part of no. 24 to be explanation no. 25, as explanation no. 25 is missing in the text. (See appendix.)

47 Appendix "D", no. 24. A thin line joins the words Flight into Egypt with the first dot.

48 Appendix "D", no. 27.

49 Appendix "D", nos. 28, 29.

33. A thin line connects the 30th year with: Christ baptized by John the Baptist⁵⁰ and the 40 days fast in the desert.⁵¹

34. A line connects the 31st year with: the beheading of John the Baptist,⁵² Christ choosing his apostles⁵³ and the promise made to Peter.⁵⁴

35. A line connects the 32nd year with: the transfiguration and the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem.⁵⁵

36. A line connects the 33rd year with: the last supper.⁵⁶

O. To the left of the 33 dots Fr. De Smet explains how to gain heaven and how to obtain God's grace.

50 Appendix "D", no. 32.

51 Appendix "D", no. 32. This explanation is found in the instruction associated with no. 32.

52 This event is not found in Fr. De Smet's explanations. It appears, however, on the ladder.

53 Appendix "D", nos. 33, 35.

54 Appendix "D", no. 34.

55 These events are not found in the explanations, although they are found on the ladder.

56 This event is noted on the ladder but not in Fr. De Smet's explanations.

37. To gain heaven: you must believe in the twelve articles of the Apostles creed, observe the Ten Commandments of God and of his church.⁵⁷

38. To obtain the assistance of God's grace: practice good works and sanctify yourself by the reception of the holy sacraments.⁵⁸

P. A series of nine pictorial representations form a semi-circle around the 33 dots of Christ's life.

39. Starting from the left: Christ's agony in the garden; his scourging at the pillar; his crowning with thorns, carrying his cross.⁵⁹

40. The central pictorial representation: Jesus Christ died on Good Friday.⁶⁰

57 No comment appears in Fr. De Smet's explanations.

58 Fr. De Smet mentions the sacraments again (see no. 42), also good works (see no. 47).

59 Fr. De Smet makes no mention of these scenes in the description of his ladder.

60 Appendix "D", nos. 37, 38. Fr. De Smet also mentions the "other crosses and the robbers" although no symbol appears for them on the ladder.

41. To the right of the central crucifixion scene: the resurrection;⁶¹ ascension;⁶² descent of the Holy Ghost;⁶³ assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary.⁶⁴

Q. To the right of the scene depicting the ascension are found seven vertical lines and above these marks are four other vertical lines.

42. The seven sacraments, instituted by Jesus Christ for the sanctification of mankind.⁶⁵

43. The end of man: death, judgment, heaven, hell.⁶⁶

R. To the left of the central scene of the crucifixion are found twelve vertical lines and above these twelve bars another six vertical lines.

44. The twelve apostles.⁶⁷

45. The six commandments of the Church.⁶⁸

61 Appendix "D", no. 39.

62 Appendix "D", no. 40.

63 Appendix "D", no. 40.

64 Although this scene is depicted on the ladder, Fr. De Smet makes no mention of it in his explanations.

65 Appendix "D", no. 42.

66 No mention of these marks is made in Fr. De Smet's explanation of his ladder.

67 Appendix "D", nos. 33, 34, 35, 36.

68 Appendix "D", no. 45. It will be noted that Fr. De Smet's 1843 ladder mentions six precepts of the church while Fr. Blanchet's 1843 ladders name seven.

S. To the right of the crucifixion scene, we find three vertical lines and below them, two vertical lines.

46. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.⁶⁹

47. Prayer: in order to obtain the assistance of the grace of God;⁷⁰ good works: our duties of every day, week, month, year.⁷¹

T. We now come to the period following upon the death of Christ which portrays the history of the church. To the left of the horizontal bars is found a church perched upon a rock and surrounded by the sea; to the right of the bars: a cross, a book and a list of ten names.

48. The church of Constantine the great; Christ's church.⁷²

69 No mention is made of these marks in Fr. de Smet's description.

70 Appendix "D", no. 43. It is particularly interesting to note that Fr. De Smet mentions at this time St. Paul but provides no mark for him. It will be recalled that Fr. Blanchet added a mark for St. Paul on his ladder at the suggestion of Fr. De Smet (see p. 77).

71 Appendix "D", no. 44. Again Fr. De Smet mentions Matthias but does not provide a mark for him on his ladder.

72 Appendix "D", no. 46. On the ladder the church is described as Christ's Church; in the explanations as the Church of Constantine.

49. The cross of Jesus Christ found on Calvary by St. Helena.⁷³

50. The New Testament.⁷⁴

51. The ancient heretics: Mohammed, Iconoclasts, Berenger, Albigensians, Photius, Michel, Cerulaire, Wicleff.⁷⁵

U. Immediately above the pictorial representation of the church two groups of eight vertical lines will be seen and above the list of ancient heretics, Fr. De Smet notes the four great schisms.

52. Sixteen Fathers of the Church.⁷⁶

53. The four great schisms: Donatist, Greek, Western, English.⁷⁷

73 Appendix "D", no. 47. Fr. De Smet mentions Julian the Apostate in his description of the ladder but provides no mark for him on the ladder. He also mentions Heraclius but provides no mark for him.

74 Appendix "D", no. 48. Fr. De Smet also mentions the "arrangement of the Canon", however no mark or symbol appears on the ladder.

75 Appendix "D", nos. 53, 54. Fr. De Smet mentions the names of Michael and Cerularius on his ladder. These two names refer to the same person, Michael Cerularius. No mention is made of the patriarch of Constantinople in Fr. De Smet's explanations.

76 Fr. De Smet does not mention the Fathers of the church in his explanations but on the ladder he provides sixteen lines without, however, mentioning the Fathers of the church by name.

77 Appendix "D", no. 55.

V. Above the marks representing the Fathers of the Church a pictorial representation portrays God with hands outstretched before the world, and above the scene the words: "And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (Matthew 28, 20); above the list of schisms the words "Modern Heretics" referring to the names found on the branch.

54. The ecumenical councils: Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, Constantinople, Constantinople, Nice, Constantinople, Lateran, Lateran, Lateran, Lateran, Lyons, Vienna, Constance, Basle, Florence, Trent.⁷⁸

55. The modern heretics: Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Henry, Jansenius, Baius, Wesley, George Fox, Mormons, Miller, Campbell.⁷⁹ Above the branch Fr. De Smet quotes Matthew, 18, 17.

W. Fr. De Smet recounts the history of Catholic missionary development from the year 100 to the year 1842 A.D. Using the bars and the dots representing the years

78 Appendix "D", no. 58. Fr. De Smet lists the 19 Ecumenical Councils by name in his ladder but does not mention them by name in his description of the ladder. The Bancroft ladder provided for 19 Councils, while the Cowichan ladder noted only 18 Councils (see p. 108).

79 Appendix "D", nos. 56, 57. In his explanation of the ladder Fr. De Smet mentions by name: Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII, Baius, Jansenius and Wesley.

100 to 1842, he places opposite each century or year the country evangelized in that era.

56. By centuries:⁸⁰

100	Rome	1000	Hungary
200	Spain	1100	Sweden
300	England ⁸¹	1200	the Goths
400	Persia	1300	Tartary
500	Ireland	1400	Bosnians
600	Brittany	1500	Abyssinia ⁸²
700	Germany etc.	1600	India
800	Saxony	1700	Paraguay etc.
900	Russia	1800	China etc.

⁸⁰ Appendix "D", no. 60.

⁸¹ Appendix "D", nos. 50, 51. Augustine landed at Kent in the year 597 (The Catholic Encyclopaedia, An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church, New York, The Gilmary Society, [c1907-1954], vol. 1, p. 505; hereafter referred to as: Catholic Encyclopaedia). Fr. De Smet explains that England remained Catholic for 900 years. This description is correct if one describes the period in round figures. However, the consummation of the schism in England took place in the year 1535 (Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 5, p. 445), which would give the accurate figure of 938 years.

⁸² Fr. De Smet shows the branch representing Protestantism attached to this same century, also a cross marking Columbus.

57. By years:⁸³

1801 Europe	1820 Sandwich Islands, Abyssinia
1802 America	1821 Wallis Islands, Thibet
1804 Africa, Asia	1823 Marquesas, Persia
1807 Szeuhuen, Cochin China	1825 New Zealand, Corsica
1809 Hindustan, Tong- king	1827 Batavia, India
1811 Madura, Siam	1828 Potowatamies, Santo Domingo
1813 The Levant, China	1830 Abbitibbi Indians, Martinique
1815 Jamaica, Tartary	1831 Egypt, Syria
1817 British Guiana, Algiers	1832 Mount Lebanon, Tur- key, Sandwich Is- lands, New Zealand, etc.
1819 Oceania, Guinea	

X. Fr. De Smet describes the missionary activities of the 19th century directly connected with the Oregon Territory.

58. At the year 1835: many Potawatamies were converted as also the northern Indians bordering on Red River.⁸⁴

59. At the year 1838, two vertical lines; baptized the chief of the Kayuses and Lake Indians; visited and baptized great numbers of Indians along the coast of the Pacific.⁸⁵ At the year 1838 on the left side of the

⁸³ Appendix "D", no. 60.

⁸⁴ Appendix "D", nos. 59, 60.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

vertical line of dots two vertical lines appear with the names Blanchet and Demers.⁸⁶

60. At the year 1840, two vertical lines: Peter and Paul, chiefs of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles. In the same year to the left: one vertical line with the name P. J. De Smet.⁸⁷

61. At the year 1841: Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, Nez Percés, Pointed heads.⁸⁸ To the left, one set of two vertical lines and another set of three lines; the arrival in Oregon of Frs. Point and Mengarini and three lay brothers.⁸⁹ The text, which is written vertically on either side of the dots, refers to the missionary conquest of the world and is taken from Romans 10, 18.

62. At the year 1842: the Cauldrons, Okonogans, Kootenays.⁹⁰ A single vertical line follows with the name Blackfoot chief.⁹¹

Y. The ladder closes with a pictorial scene showing the three Persons of the Trinity crowning the Virgin

⁸⁶ Appendix "D", nos. 59, 60.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Mary and above the scene the words: "For when he has been proved, he shall receive the Crown of life which God has promised to them that love him" (James, 1, 12).

There is no question that Fr. De Smet influenced the development of the Catholic ladder. Fr. Blanchet credited Fr. De Smet with the addition of the tree of knowledge and the serpent, St. Paul, St. Matthias and Julian the Apostate.⁹² It would appear that during their meeting in 1842 the missionaries discussed improvements which appeared in both Blanchet's and De Smet's ladders.⁹³ Later Blanchet ladders incorporated ideas which first appeared in Fr. De Smet's creation: 1. the use of pictures;⁹⁴

92 See page 77.

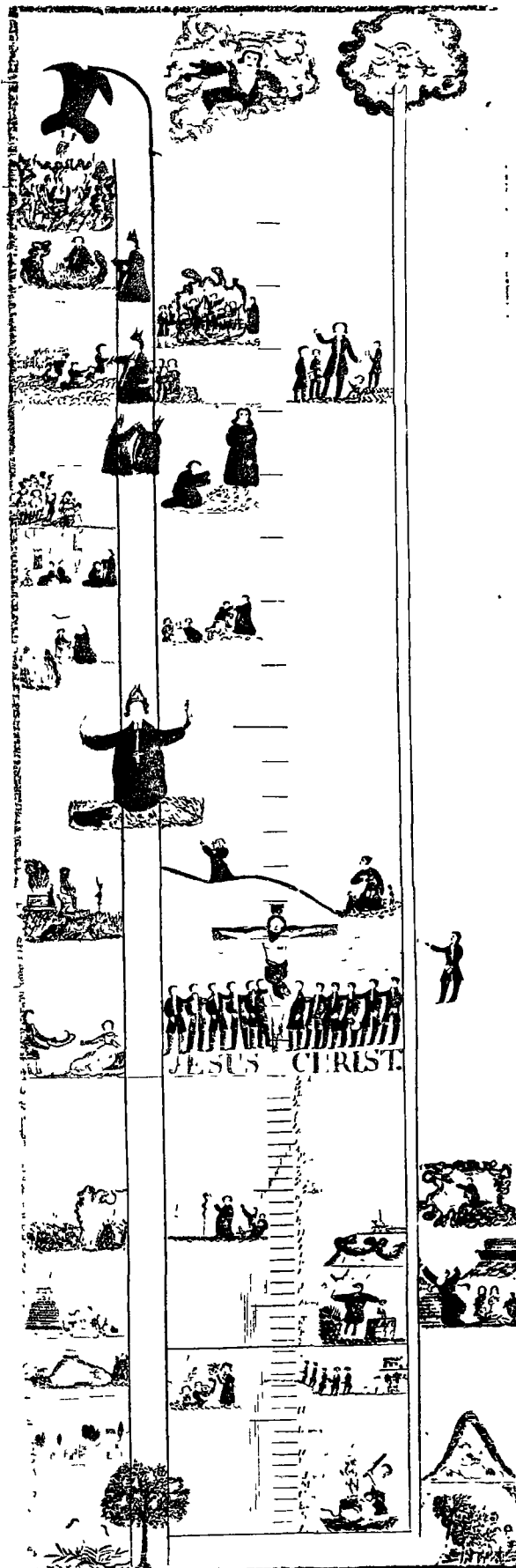
93 Fr. Blanchet in a letter written shortly after the meeting explains that Fr. De Smet's ladder "will be more complete" (L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 3 November, 1842 [A.A.Q., C.A. II-50]). Fr. Blanchet must have known before the appearance of the De Smet ladder some additions that Fr. De Smet would make. The Councils of the Church appeared on both the Cowichan and De Smet ladders. However, with the exception of the Paris ladder which does not give the number and the Bancroft ladder which gives 19, Fr. Blanchet did not agree with Fr. De Smet as to the number. Fr. Blanchet omits the Council of Basle, and gives 18, Fr. De Smet includes it and gives 19.

94 It would appear that the Paris ladder was an attempt to capitalize on the use of pictures. Fr. De Smet introduced the sparing use of pictures. Both the Spanish and New York ladders reflect a return to a moderate use of pictorial representations.

2. the addition of the missionary history of the Church;⁹⁵
3. the addition of the Fathers of the Church.⁹⁶ These individual points, which first appeared on the De Smet ladder, found their way into Fr. Blanchet's later creations in the further development of his catechetical aid.

95 The Spanish and New York ladders incorporate the missionary history of the Church which was emphasized in Fr. De Smet's ladder.

96 The Paris ladder gives 7 Fathers of the Church, the New York ladder 10, and Fr. De Smet's ladder 16.



SECOND PROTESTANT LADDER

1845-1846

Original in the Museum of
the Oregon Historical Society,
Portland, Oregon.

CHAPTER XIV

SECOND PROTESTANT LADDER

The best known Protestant ladder is the work of the Rev. H. H. Spalding,¹ founder of the Presbyterian mission at Lapwai,² who arrived in the Oregon Territory in 1836, under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.³ It is generally considered

1 Rev. H. H. Spalding explains that "[...] I have planed [sic] & Mrs. S. has drawn & painted a chart about 6 feet long & 2 feet wide [...]" (PIPES, Protestant Ladder, p. 239). The actual measurements are 5'7" x 1'9 1/2". It is described as drawn on "sheets of cap-paper" (GRAY, History of Oregon, p. 184). The colours used are "green, red, blue, brown, yellow and black" (PIPES, Protestant Ladder, p. 239). Although the paper could be described as an off-white, the ladder now hangs in the Oregon Historical Society Museum, Portland, Oregon, behind yellow tinted glass which gives the work a yellowish tinge.

2 W. H. Gray describes the location of Rev. H. H. Spalding's mission: "In a few days Spalding and Whitman started with the Nez Perces to look at their country, in view of a location among them, leaving Gray [the author and a lay assistant to the Presbyterian mission] alone in charge of the building and goods, while they examined the country up the Clearwater River, and selected a location in a beautiful valley about two miles up the Lapwai Creek, and about twelve miles from Lewiston" (W. G. GRAY, History of Oregon, p. 166). This is Lewiston, Idaho.

3 GRAY, History of Oregon, p. 110.

that the original Spalding ladder now hangs in the Museum of the Oregon Historical Society in Portland.⁴

4 Nellie Pipes writes: "[...] the Oregon Historical Society is fortunate in owning the original Protestant Ladder. It was presented by Mr. George F. Holman and his sister, Miss Kate Holman, who inherited it from their brother, the late Mr. Frederick V. Holman, for many years president of this Society" (PIPES, op. cit., p. 240). The Spalding ladder postdates the creation of Rev. Daniel Lee and cannot, therefore, be considered the original Protestant ladder. There is no direct evidence to question the supposition that the original Spalding copy is to be found in the possession of the Oregon Historical Society, but some doubt must remain in the matter in view of the fact that the Rev. H. H. Spalding created many copies of his ladder. Mrs. Spalding made "perhaps 500 like ones for the interested Indians" (L. of Spalding to Mrs. F. F. Victor, Lapwai Agency, June 29, 1865, in: DRURY, First White Women, p. 223). Although "The figure is too high to be believed" (ibid.), there could be little doubt that the Rev. H. H. Spalding and his wife reproduced many copies of their original ladder. The extant copy at the Oregon Historical Society Museum does not appear to be necessarily the original copy. In an article entitled Pedagogy in the Wilderness, the author suggests that Rev. Spalding made only one copy of his ladder (ST. HILAIRE, op. cit., p. 57). The only other known full size copy of the Spalding ladder extant today is a coloured photocopy in the Archives of the Oregon Historical Society (Mr. R. E. FESSENDEN, Chief Librarian, Oregon Historical Society, interview with the writer, 31 May, 1963). A coloured reproduction of Spalding's Protestant ladder (central portion) appears in Westward on the Oregon Trail, Americal Heritage Junior Library, 1962 (DRURY, First White Women, p. 223). A black and white copy can be found in PIPES, Protestant Ladder, p. 237. Affixed to the glass case in which the Spalding ladder now hangs in the Oregon Historical Society Museum is a card which reads: "The Protestant Ladder used to teach Indians the Protestant Religion. Drawn by Mrs. H. H. Spalding at Lapwai Mission, Idaho, 1844." This date does not appear accurate. The creation of the ladder is mentioned by the Rev. H. H. Spalding in a letter to the American Board dated February 12, 1846 (PIPES, Protestant Ladder, p. 238). The Rev. H. H. Spalding would hardly have waited two years to advise his superiors of his new

The second Protestant ladder has an interesting background. It appears that the Wilkes Exploring Expedition, which was engaged in the charting of the Pacific Northwest for the American government,⁵ reached Wailaptu, near old Fort Walla Walla, in the summer of 1841.⁶

catechetical device. The more likely date would appear to be 1845 or 1846. Mr. R. E. Fessenden, Chief Librarian, Oregon Historical Society, writes: "We feel the ladder label is inaccurate and plan to change it" (L. to the writer, 10 July, 1963).

5 James Richardson writes: "During the summer of 1841 it [the Wilkes' Exploring Expedition] did much exploration work in this [Pacific Northwest] region and added extensively to the world's geographical knowledge of the Puget Sound and Columbia River areas. The squadron was in command of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, of the United States Navy, and for that reason the enterprise is most often referred to as the Wilkes Exploring Expedition. The Government itself is partly responsible for the latter title. While the results were being prepared for publication President Buchanan (February 8, 1859), complied with a resolution of Congress asking for a statement of all expeditions 'on account of the preparation and publication of the work known as Wilkes's Exploring Expedition'" (James M. RICHARDSON, Messages and Papers of the President, vol. V, p. 537 cited in: Edmond S. MEANY, "Diary of Wilkes in the Northwest", in Washington Historical Quarterly, vol. XVI, no. 1, 1925, p. 49).

6 Lieutenant Wilkes writes: "The party reached the mission [...] and were welcomed by Dr. Whitman and Mr. and Mrs Gray, of the American Board of Missions. This station was established in 1837 [1836], with three others, and is known by the names of Wailaptu. The second station, called Lapwai (clear water), is at the mouth of the Kooskooskee, under the Rev. Mr. Spalding. The third was about sixty miles up that river, and was called Kamia, where the Rev. Mr. Smith was stationed for two years" (WILKES, Narrative, vol. IV, p. 393-394); The American Board Missions were established in Oregon in 1836 (GRAY, History of Oregon, p. 143). See BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 62.

Dr. Marcus Whitman was in charge of the American Board Mission established at Wailaptu.⁷ In the course of the visit the men on the survey told the doctor⁸ about a Catholic ladder which they had seen at Fort Vancouver:

If you see Mr. Hale or Mr. Drayton of the U.S. Exploring Squadron (& perhaps others may tell you the same) [sic] they can describe to you the picture of a tree hanging in Chief Factor McLoughlin's room at Vancouver which represents all Protestants as the withered ends of the several branches of Papacy falling off down into infernal society & flames as represented at the bottom. This gives a good idea of their manner of instruction to the Indians as drawn out in manuscript & given to them accompanied with oral instruction of a similar character. The possession of one of these manuscripts by an Indian binds him not to hear any more the instruction of Protestants so far as observation goes.⁹

7 Dr. Marcus Whitman and Rev. Samuel Parker, visited the country with a view to setting up missions in 1835, under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (GRAY, History of Oregon, p. 41). Dr. Whitman returned in 1836 with his wife, Rev. and Mrs. H. H. Spalding and W. H. Gray (GRAY, op. cit., p. 112).

8 Dr. Marcus Whitman was a physician, never a clergyman (William I. MARSHALL, Acquisition of Oregon and the Long Suppressed Evidence about Marcus Whitman, Seattle, Lowman & Hanford Co., vol. 2, p. 34).

9 L. of Dr. Whitman to American Board, November 11, 1841, in: Nellie B. PIPES, op. cit., p. 238. Nellie B. Pipes suggests that: "None of the pictures or accounts of the Catholic Ladder which the writer has seen conform to the description given to Dr. Whitman by the members of the Wilkes expedition [...]" (op. cit., p. 238). On the contrary the description of the Cowichan ladder or the De Smet ladder conforms accurately. The ladder described as hanging in Dr. McLoughlin's room could very well be the ladder presented to him by Father Blanchet in 1840 (L. of

Dr. Whitman's letter of November 11th, 1841, indicates that the American Board Missionaries first heard about Fr. Blanchet's Catholic ladder in the summer of 1841. Some five years later the Rev. H. H. Spalding in a letter to the American Board, February 12th, 1846, explains why he felt the need to create his version of the ladder:

The Catholics in this country have had printed (I suppose in the States) a vast No of small charts on which the Road to Heaven is exhibited & from which Luther is represented as branching off in a road that leads to hell. [...] They tell the people that Luther laid down his black gown & cross together & went off in the Road to hell after a wife & never returned & that all American preachers i e all Protestants are on the same road to destruction. To meet this attack I have planed [sic] & Mrs. S. has drawn & painted a chart about 6 feet long & 2 feet wide containing two ways one narrow & one broad.¹⁰

Blanchet to Demers, Vancouver, 7 April, 1840 [A.A.P., B. III 6, p. 2]). Both Dr. M. Whitman and W. H. Gray describe the Catholic ladder as a tree. This description was also used by Bishop Demers: "Two chronological trees of religion" (L. of Demers to Blanchet, Victoria, 28 July, 1855 [A.A.P., D II 17, p. 1]).

¹⁰ L. of Spalding to American Board, February 12th, 1846, in: Nellie B. PIPES, *op. cit.*, p. 238-239. W. H. Gray, the lay assistant to the Presbyterian mission, adds some interesting details to his explanation for the Spalding ladder: "Both Mr. Rogers and Mr. Spalding soon learned to set type, and print the small books required for the Indian schools that had been kept at the stations. The books and instructions were furnished gratuitously to all the Indians that wished to receive them. This caused special efforts on the part of the priests to counteract the influence of the books printed by Spalding. To illustrate their ideas, and show the evil of heretical books and teachings, they had a representation of a large tree, with a cross on top, representing all religious sects as going

Two Catholic ladders could fit the description given by the Rev. H. H. Spalding, the Cowichan ladder and the De Smet ladder. Both ladders would be in circulation by the year 1846,¹¹ both could have been printed in the United States,¹² both carry a symbol of hell. However, if the De Smet ladder was in circulation in eastern Oregon, which presumably it was, his ladder would appear to be the more likely, particularly if the Rev. H. H. Spalding obtained a copy of Fr. De Smet's first book "Letters and Sketches with a Narrative of a Year's Residence Among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains." In describing the reformation which is represented on his ladder by the branch, Fr. De Smet wrote:

up the tree, and out upon the different branches, and falling from the end of the branch into a fire under the tree, with a priest by the side of the fire throwing the heretical books into it. This was an interesting picture, and caused much discussion and violent denunciations among the Indians. Mr. Spalding, to counteract the influence of the Roman Catholic tree among the Indians, had Mrs. Spalding paint a number of sheets of oap-paper, commencing with Adam and Eve [...]" (GRAY, op. cit., p. 184). No Catholic ladder to the knowledge of the writer conforms to the description given of a priest throwing books into the fire.

11 The Cowichan ladder was created in 1843 as also the De Smet ladder.

12 The Cowichan ladder may have been printed in the United States. The De Smet ladder was printed in the United States.

Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII wander from the way of Christ, reject His religion, that is, the Catholic Church. The by-road and its forks represent the Reformation, with its divisions or variations for the last 300 years. The straight road of Jesus Christ existed along time before. Lucifer, or Satan, the first to take a wrong road — he seduces Adam and Eve and their descendants to accompany him. Jesus Christ comes to conduct us into the right road, and enable us to keep it by the grace of redemption. The devil is enraged at the loss he suffers; but he succeeded in the following ages, by inducing men to walk in a new, bad road, that of the pretended Reformation.¹³

Since Fr. De Smet's references to the straight road of Jesus Christ and the bad road of the reformation parallel the Rev. Spalding's reference to the two ways, one narrow and one broad, it is possible that the Protestant ladder of Rev. Spalding was created in view of the De Smet ladder.

The Spalding ladder shows the familiar bars of the Catholic ladder, 40 in the Old Testament and 18 in the New Testament. However the dots, representing individual years, are not featured. Nor are the bars on the Spalding ladder in bold relief as noted on the Catholic ladders.

Starting from the bottom of the ladder, we note that about one-third is devoted to scenes from the Old Testament.¹⁴ Alongside the bars of the Old Testament

13 DE SMET, Letters and Sketches, p. 251-252.

14 Rev. H. R. Spalding's only comment on the Old Testament is: "After representing briefly some of the important events of the world before the Christian era & the crucifixion of Christ I come to Paul [...]" (Nellie B. PIPES, op. cit., p. 239).

are the names of important personages from Adam to Christ.

1. To the left of the broad way:

- a) Adam and Eve under the tree of knowledge, Eve presenting the apple to Adam (Genesis 3, 6).
The caption reads: Adam and Eve Fallen.
- b) A scene of closely packed houses, which may represent the inhabiting of the earth. The caption is written in the Nez Perce language.
- c) The inundation of the world in the flood.
Noah's ark can be seen riding the waters (Genesis 7, 17). The caption: Flood.
- d) Building the tower of Babel (Genesis 11, 4).
Caption: Babel.
- e) Rebellion of Korah (Core). The earth swallowing Korah and his followers (Numbers 16, 33).
The caption: Korah.

2. Between the broad and the narrow way:

- a) Cain killing his brother, Abel (Genesis 4, 8).
The caption: Cain and Abel.
- b) The sons of God marry the daughters of men (Genesis 6, 1-4). The caption: Daughters of men; Sons of God.

- c) Abraham's hand stayed by the angel when he was about to sacrifice his son, Isaac (Genesis 22, 12). The caption: Abraham and Isaac.
- d) Israelites saved from the Egyptians by the passage through the Red Sea (Exodus 14, 22). The caption: Red Sea.
- e) The rod of Moses turns into a serpent (Exodus 7, 10). The caption: Brazen Serpent.

3. To the right of the narrow way:

- a) Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden before their fall¹⁵ (Genesis 1, 26).
- b) Eve holding her son, Seth (Genesis 4, 25). The caption: Seth born.
- c) Noah, surrounded by his family, kneels before an altar of sacrifice. The ark can be seen in the background (Genesis 8, 20).

¹⁵ W. H. Gray gives a general idea of the Spalding ladder: "[...] commencing with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, representing the shrubbery, and all kinds of fruits, and the serpent, and the angel (after the fall) as guarding the garden; giving the pictures of most of the prominent patriarchs; Noah and the ark, and the prophets, down to Christ and the twelve apostles" (GRAY, op. cit., p. 184). There is neither a serpent, nor an angel, as described by W. H. Gray, but his explanation of the garden of Eden with the 'shrubbery and all kinds of fruits' could fit this scene.

d) Moses in the midst of the clouds atop Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20, 21). The caption: Moses receiving the Law.

4. To the left of the broad way and on a line with the last bar of the Old Testament: the daughter of Herodias receives the head of John the Baptist upon a platter (Matthew 14, 11).
5. The scene of the crucifixion with Christ surrounded by the twelve apostles.¹⁶
6. To the left of the broad road and above the crucifixion scene, we see, what appears to be someone saluting an idol. Behind the idol, a priest (we judge by his garb) stands or kneels at an altar of sacrifice. The author does not indicate the meaning of this scene.

The ladder enters upon an explanation of the Christian era. The Rev. H. H. Spalding in his letter to the

¹⁶ Nellie Pipes writes: "Perhaps the high point, pictorially, is the scene of the crucifixion, and the twelve apostles and Saint Paul clothed in the garb of dignity and decorum, modeled probably from Mr. Spalding's own 'best suit.' To give variety and distinction to the group green coat and brown trousers alternate with brown coat and green trousers" (Nellie B. PIPES, op. cit., p. 240).

American Board goes into a detailed explanation of the scenes which he has chosen to depict the iniquity of the Church which follows the broad road to perdition.

With the scene of Christ's crucifixion:

I come to Paul whom I represent as pointing to one who has turned off from the narrow way where he has left his wife & children & with black gown on & a cross in his hand is just entering the Broad Road. A few of Paul's prophecies concerning the man of sin are translated & printed as proceeding from his mouth such as he shall forbid to marry [...].¹⁷

The figure of an ecclesiastic can be seen moving along the path which leads to the broad road:

[...] after he has left his wife & entered the Broad Road he is represented as the Pope with a sword in one hand & torch or fagot in the other, a king kissing one foot & a bishop the other.¹⁸

The scene to the left of the broad road shows:

"Tetzel"¹⁹ receiving a sum of money from a young man whose

¹⁷ L. of Spalding to American Board, February 12, 1846 (PIPES, op. cit., p. 239). The script mentioned by the author, here, and the script which appears in the following scenes, is written in the Nez Perce language.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Johann Tetzel, first public antagonist of Luther, was preaching the indulgence to aid the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, which coincided with Luther nailing the 95 theses on the castle church door at Wittenberg, October 31st, 1517 (The Catholic Encyclopaedia, An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church, New York, The Gilmary Society, [c1907-1954], vol. XIV, p. 539).

father has escaped hell all but one of his feet, is represented."²⁰

Above the sketch of the man escaping hell:

A Nunnery is drawn from which a young priest has come out & is paying 18s to get the sin of Fornication pardoned according to "Taxa camerarum Apostolica" of the Chancery court of Rome.²¹

To the right of the broad road we view:

The lifeless body of a father killed by his own son for his money, is represented with the mother & sisters weeping on the bleeding corpse, & at a little distance the murderer before a priest receiving pardon for 10s 6d according to the same book.²²

The significance of the scene above the nunnery is not at all clear. The author appears to have overlooked this scene in his description of the ladder. This

²⁰ PIPES, op. cit., p. 239.

²¹ The inclusion of this sketch in Spalding's ladder is a sad commentary upon the malicious accusations which grew out of the Reformation period. The Chancery court of Rome to which Spalding refers is most likely what is known today as the Apostolic Camera. This department of the Roman Curia has the responsibility "for the temporal goods and rights of the Holy See, especially sede vacante [after the death of the pope and before the new pope is elected]" (Annuario Pontificio, Città del Vaticano, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1960, p. 1606). Although its office is much more restricted today, "in the XIII and XIV centuries it acquired certain jurisdictional functions, not merely in matters of finance but also in some penal and civil cases" (ibid.). See also: P. Christophorus M. BERUTTI, O.P., De Curia Romana, Romae, Officium Libri Catholici, 1952, p. 76-79.

²² L. of Spalding to the American Board, in: PIPES, op. cit., p. 239.

explanation remains a matter for conjecture. To the right of the broad road we note an ecclesiastic kneeling before the Virgin Mary. Although, again, the author does not comment upon this scene, there is little doubt that the Rev. H. H. Spalding intends to portray his disapproval of veneration for the Virgin Mary. A caption reads: Virgin Mary.

Proceeding up the ladder: "Boniface IX & Benedict XIII are represented as contending with deadly weapons."²³ The author continues:

Further up he is represented with 5 children by his side & again as receiving the bleeding head of Admiral Coligny²⁴ who was beheaded at the great slaughter of St. Bartholomew & his head sent by Charles IX to the Pope who ordered public thanks to be given to Charles & a jubilee [sic] to be proclaimed throughout France.²⁵

23 L. of Spalding to the American Board, in: PIPES, op. cit., p. 239. The scene refers to Piero Cardinal Tomacelli, elected Pope at Rome, 2nd of November, 1389, as successor to Pope Urban VI. He reigned under the name of Boniface IX until his death, October 1, 1404. Pedro Cardinal de Luna was elected at Avignon as anti-pope, 28th of September, 1394, and took the name of Benedict XIII (The Catholic Encyclopaedia, p. 670-671).

24 Gaspard De Chatillon, 1519-1572, admiral of France and Protestant leader won the favour of Charles IX. The king's regard for the admiral and the bold front of the Huguenots, alarmed the queen-mother and the massacre of St. Bartholomew was the consequence. On August 24, 1572, the night of the massacre Admiral Coligny was murdered by a servant of the Duke of Guise (Encyclopaedia Britannica. A New Survey of Universal Knowledge, Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., [1929-1952], vol. VI, p. 13).

25 PIPES, op. cit., p. 239.

The next scene depicts a large group of people enveloped in flames and the author explains: "Some of those burnt in queen Marys reign are drawn;"²⁶ "The burning of Bibles in the N of N Y State is drawn."²⁷ The broad road culminates with "The end of the Man of Sin is represented by his falling back into hell at the approach of the Lord Jesus Christ who is coming in the clouds of heaven with his holy angels."²⁸

Returning to the narrow road we note only one scene: "Luther is represented as leaving the Broad road and returning to the narrow way."²⁹ Luther is pictured with four people, each with a bible in hand. The narrow way reaches to heaven where an angel places a crown upon one who has travelled the narrow road.

With copies of Spalding's ladder circulating in the area of the Board Missions, the Protestant ladder must have seen much use. The Rev. H. H. Spalding describes one catechetical session: "About 9 oclock came to a village of some 40 lodges, alighted, wrang a bel although most of the

26 PIPES, op. cit., p. 239.

27 Ibid. "No explanation is at hand to account for Spalding's reference to the burning of Bibles in the northern part of New York State" (DRURY, First White Women, p. 225).

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

people were already around me, unrolled the Chart & talked about 2 hours. Rode hard the rest of the day to reach another village but found it upon an Island & did not go over till next morning. However several canoes came over to my tent & I explained the Chart to them as long as brush could be found for a fire light."³⁰

W. H. Gray comments upon the use of the Spalding ladder: "Spalding's pictures were in such form, contained so much Bible history and information, that his Indian preachers, to whom he gave them, could attract larger crowds of Indians, to listen to the instructions given by Spalding, than those who had the Catholic tree."³¹

There was little in common between the earlier work of Rev. Daniel Lee and the later creation of Rev. Henry Spalding. Rev. Lee fashioned a preaching aid based upon Fr. Blanchet's concept of the ladder. The Blanchet ladder was meant to present a clear and simple résumé of the basic tenets of the Catholic faith. It can be presumed that the Rev. Daniel Lee's first Protestant ladder presented a clear and simple résumé of Methodist belief. By comparison, the ladder of Rev. H. H. Spalding which postdates both the Catholic and Methodist ladders, did

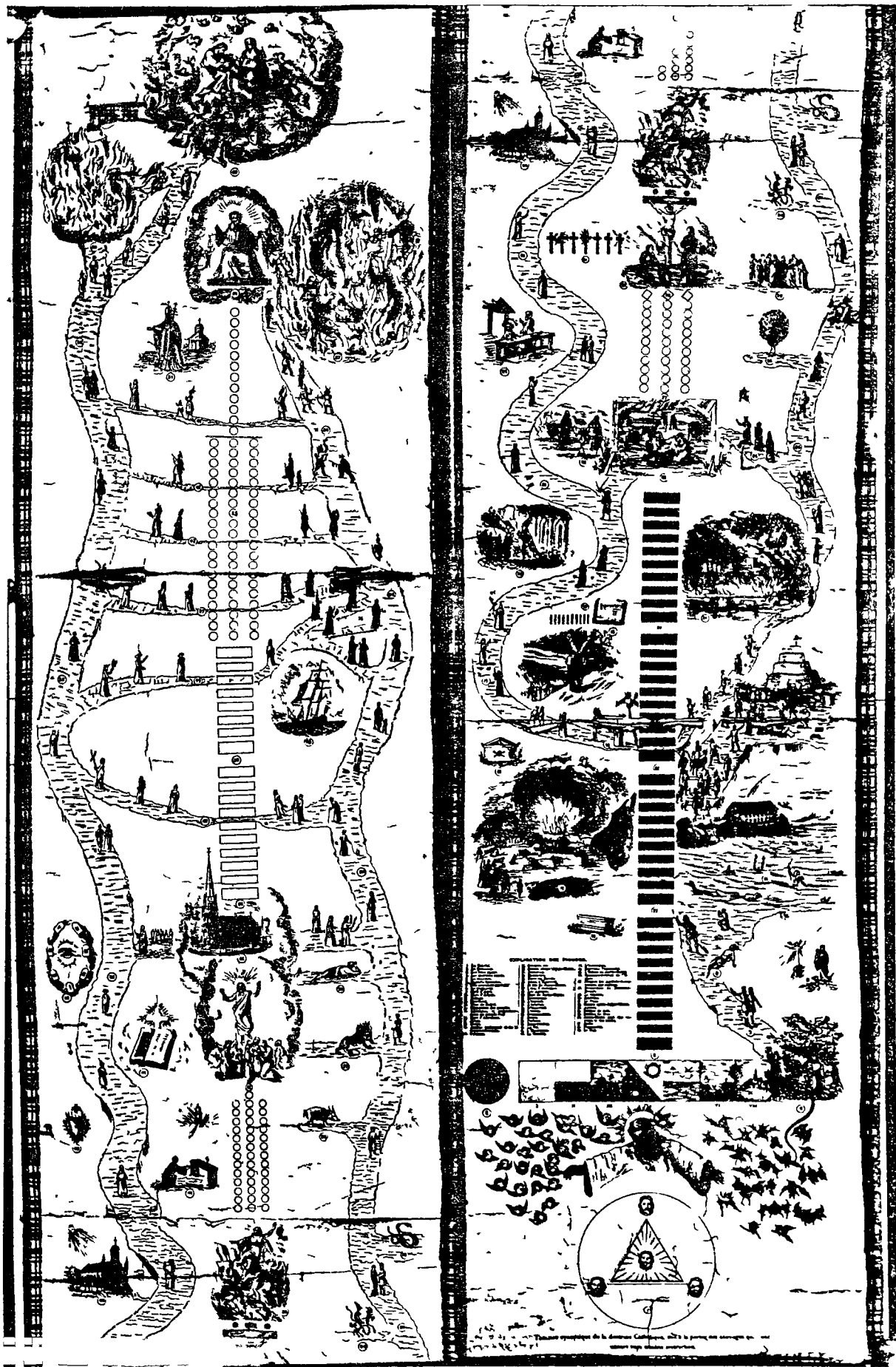
³⁰ PIPES, op. cit., p. 239.

³¹ GRAY, History of Oregon, p. 184.

little to contribute to a positive knowledge of Protestant belief. With the exception of that part of the Spalding ladder devoted to a résumé of the Old Testament and the scene depicting Martin Luther on the narrow path, the purpose envisioned by the Rev. H. H. Spalding was simply an attempt to show the Catholic Church in the worst possible light. A comment on the Spalding ladder reads:

By picturing the Roman Catholic church as departing from the true apostolic faith, and by showing the Pope falling down into hell instead of the heretics, a Roman Catholic ladder could be changed into a Protestant ladder.³²

This comment could be applied to Rev. Daniel Lee's ladder, but it does not appear to be an apt description of the Spalding ladder.



EARLY LACOMBE LADDER

1872

Original in the Archives
of the Oregon Province of
the Society of Jesus, Crosby
Memorial Library, Gonzaga
University, Spokane, Washington.

EARLY LACOMBE LADDER

1872

Original in the Archives
of the Oregon Province of
the Society of Jesus, Crosby
Memorial Library, Gonzaga
University, Spokane, Washington.

CHAPTER XV

LACOMBE LADDER

The celebrated Oblate missionary of the Canadian Northwest, Fr. Albert Lacombe,¹ introduced a new concept in Catholic ladders. In a biography² of the missionary, Fr. Paul Breton tells of Fr. Lacombe's creation:

For some time Lacombe had considered the idea of using pictures to teach the Indians. A Father

1 Born in St. Sulpice, Quebec, on February 27th, 1827, Fr. Lacombe was ordained a priest July 13th, 1849. He entered the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) September 28th, 1861. Renowned as a missionary among the Canadian Indians of the Cree and Blackfoot tribes, as well as the Metis, he played an important role in the history of the Canadian Northwest. Founder of St. Albert, Alberta, he was a recognized authority on the Prairie Indians and their languages. In recognition of his intercession with the Blackfeet at the time of the building of the Railroad, he became President of the Canadian Pacific Railway for one hour (Paul BRETON, The Big Chief of the Prairies, [Montreal], Palm Publishers, [1955], p. 89, 143-144; afterwards referred to as: BRETON, Chief of the Prairies). Fr. Lacombe left for the Red River district August 1st, 1849 and except for a short stay in Montreal October, 1851 to May 1852, he gave his life for the missions of the Canadian Northwest until his death December 12th, 1916 (see chronology of Lacombe's life in: BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 143-145).

2 BRETON, Chief of the Prairies. Fr. Paul Breton, as archivist for the Oblate Province to which Fr. Lacombe belonged, is the custodian of much of the missionary's records (L. of Breton to the writer, 15 July, 1963).

Darveau³ had used a type of chronological ladder at Red River, inheriting it from Father Blanchet who had been the original inventor. But to Lacombe goes the credit for transforming the idea into a small masterpiece of pedagogy. It took eight years to complete.⁴

The circumstance which led the missionary to create his preaching aid makes an interesting narrative. Prior to the year 1865 Fr. Lacombe worked principally with the Cree tribes and the Metis.⁵ In that year the missionary was directed by his Oblate superior to establish a permanent mission among the warlike Blackfeet Indians of southern Alberta.⁶

However, the Blackfeet Indians did not respond to the missionary's preaching with the same zeal he had witnessed among the Crees.⁷ One day discussing the truths

3 Fr. John Edward Darveau, born in 1814, volunteered for the Columbia Mission but passage for him could not be arranged with the Hudson Bay Company. He remained in the Red River district under the jurisdiction of Bishop Provencher (L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 17 April, 1841 [A.A.P., B. I 24, p. 2]; MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 161-162). He met death in a drowning accident June 4th, 1843 (L. of Provencher to the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon, St. Boniface, 4 August, 1844 [A.P.F.L., a copy]).

4 BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 64.

5 Ibid., p. 64.

6 MORICE, Church in Western Canada, p. 344.

7 MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 344-345; BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 64; Katherine HUGHES, The Black-Robe Voyageur, New York, Moffat, Yard and Company, 1911, p. 202, afterwards referred to as:

of religion with two of the tribe,⁸ Fr. Lacombe enlivened his explanations with symbols which he sketched in the sand.⁹ This visual lesson seemed to please the Blackfeet. Spurred on by their interest in the visual approach, the following day Fr. Lacombe nailed to poles set up in the middle of the camp a buffalo hide.¹⁰ Gathering his catechumens around the rustic blackboard he continued his instructions sketching figures, marks and symbols with a piece of charcoal. The plan of the Lacombe ladder was born that day.

Fr. Lacombe improved upon his buffalo hide ladder:

At St. Albert [...] I made with ink and paper a longer history with these pictures. It started at the Creation, and went down through Bible history to the coming of Christ; then through the history of the Church and all Life on our pilgrimage to Heaven.¹¹

HUGHES, Black-Robe; UNE SOEUR DE LA PROVIDENCE, Le Père Lacombe, Montreal, Devoir, 1916, p. 233, afterwards referred to as: UNE SOEUR, Le Père Lacombe.

8 For economic reasons a branch of the Blackfeet nation had divided itself into three groups of forty-five, fifty and sixty tepees respectively. Fr. Lacombe lived with the smallest group (MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 345).

9 BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 66; HUGHES, Black-Robe, p. 202-203; UNE SOEUR, Le Père Lacombe, p. 233-234.

10 BRETON, op. cit., p. 66; HUGHES, op. cit., p. 203; UNE SOEUR, op. cit., p. 234.

11 HUGHES, op. cit., p. 203.

In a letter of October 16th, 1865,¹² addressed to Alexander Taché, Bishop of St. Boniface,¹³ Fr. Lacombe informed the Bishop that: "last summer I made a 'Catholic ladder' which is very popular among the Indians and is of great assistance to me."¹⁴

The Catholic ladder took eight years to perfect¹⁵ and was finally lithographed¹⁶ and made available to other

12 L. of Lacombe to Taché, St. Albert Mission, 16 October, 1865 (A.A.S.B., 1806).

13 Bishop Alexander Taché succeeded Bishop Provencher as Bishop of St. Boniface in 1853. Appointed first Archbishop of the See of St. Boniface in 1871, he directed the Catholic missionary work of the Canadian Northwest until his death in 1894 (The Official Catholic Directory, part III, p. 43).

14 L. of Lacombe to Taché, 16 October, 1865. Some authors suggest that Fr. Lacombe reached the Blackfoot country in 1871 and therefore date the creation of the Lacombe ladder as 1871 (HUGHES, Black-Robe, p. 201; UNE SOEUR, Le Père Lacombe, p. 225, 233-234). However, both MORICE, Church in Western Canada, p. 344 and BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 64, give his arrival among the Blackfeet as 1865.

15 BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 64.

16 The lithographed non-coloured Lacombe ladder, found herein, has 18 bars and 72 dots in the upper section of the ladder which would likely date the ladder 1872. This date is confirmed by Fr. Lacombe's explanation of his ladder which he gives at the lower left hand corner. The number 53 appears among the dots on the upper section and in the explanation no. 53 is given as "the years." The last dot should signify the date of the ladder and the last dot is the 72nd, 1872. This copy reads: "Synoptic chart of Catholic doctrine for the use of Indians who have not received any instruction" (see the description given at the base of the photocopy found herein). This copy of

missionaries.¹⁷ In 1872 the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame in Montreal prepared a coloured edition which became the prototype of later Lacombe editions.¹⁸ Fr. Morrice commenting on the Lacombe ladder writes:

the Lacombe ladder which measures 5'8" x 11" was found at St. Ignatius Mission, Montana (Wilfred SCHOENBERG, interview with the writer, 20 June, 1963). The ladder can be found in the Archives of the Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus at the Gonzaga University Crosby Memorial Library, Spokane, Washington. The ladder has a canvas back and is rolled on a small stick. Although the photocopy would appear to be a double type (Lacombe ladders could be cut vertically and pasted end on end to make a single ladder) it is in fact a single ladder which was photographed in two sections and gives the impression of being a double type. A close examination will show part of the right top to be overlapped on the left base of the ladder.

17 BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 66.

18 UNE SOEUR, Le Père Lacombe, p. 234; BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 66; HUGHES, Black-Robe, p. 203. A number of Lacombe coloured ladders can be found in the Northwest: 1. In the Archives of the Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus: a. A coloured Lacombe ladder 2'1/4" x 2'11 1/2" double type (Lacombe ladders could be cut vertically and pasted end on end to make a single strip) which carries the date 1874 in dots. At the base of this ladder it reads: Paris: at the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate and at Ch. Letaille, editor, 15 Garancière Street - Montreal; at the Oblate Fathers, St. Peter's Church, and at M. Valois Bookstore. Imp. Lith. Oliver-Pinot Edit. at Spinal. b. Three copies about 3' x 2' were edited by the C. O. Beauchemin Company, Montreal, and registered according to the Act of Parliament in 1895. They are double types. One framed copy about 5'10" x 1' is a single strip. Of the three non-framed ladders two are in excellent condition and were found at St. Ignatius Mission, Montana (Wilfred SCHOENBERG, interview with the writer, 20 June, 1963). The third is a worn copy and was in the possession of two Indian catechists of about 75 years of age, named Paul and Felicitas Two Kill, Assiniboine Indians living

Father Lacombe's "Catholic Ladder" of which we present to the reader a greatly reduced reproduction, is now in universal use in the missions of the Canadian West, from Lake Superior to the Pacific. [...] of which the prototype was evidently that first prepared by Fr. Blanchet.¹⁹

near St. Ignatius Mission, Montana (Wilfred SCHOENBERG, Travel Diary, vol. I, 1946, p. 95). 2. The Archives of Mt. Angel Abbey have a Lacombe ladder, the single strip type measuring 5'10" x 1'-folds into two hard covers making a book 12 1/4" x 6 1/4". This ladder printed by C. O. Beauchemin & Co., was purchased by Fr. Charles Moser around 1910 (Charles MOSER, interview with the writer, 5 June, 1963). This ladder, which is in excellent condition, belongs to an edition registered according to the Act of Parliament in 1895. 3. The writer obtained on loan a Lacombe ladder exactly the same as the Mt. Angel copy which belongs to Chief Daniel Leon, Topley Landing, B.C. The Oblate missionary in charge of this mission writes: "Chief Daniel Leon told me that Father Morice gave him the 'chart' and that he himself used it to teach others. As you see it is well worn and must have had a lot of use" (L. of I. McCormack to the writer, 9 January, 1963). The ladder has been patched in several places. 3. At the Kuper Island Indian Residential School, Chemainus, B.C., is a double type Lacombe ladder about 3' x 2' which was found at St. Paul's Mission, North Vancouver, B.C. This edition edited by the Beauchemin Bookstore Ltd., also carries the registration date of 1895. This copy will be found herein. A photocopy of this edition is found in the Archives of the Diocese of Victoria and measures 19 1/2" x 13 1/4". Smaller photocopies 10" x 6 3/4" have been in use at Saanichton, B.C., among both White and Indian children. 4. A recent Lacombe ladder edited by the University of Ottawa, a double type, measuring about 3'3 1/2" x 2'2 1/2" is in use among the Seanch Indians at Saanichton, B.C., the Cowichan Indians at Duncan, B.C., also the Kuper Island Indians, the Chemainus Bay Indians, the Forlier Pass Indians, all bordering upon Kuper Island north of Victoria, B.C.

¹⁹ MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. II, p. 290. Katherine Hughes suggests that Fr. Lacombe was the originator of the ladder: "The echelle - the ladder - the other priests called it for its shape, and they laughed at my plan. But they liked it too." The author presents this comment as a direct quote of Fr. Lacombe (HUGHES, Black-Robe, p. 203). The Sisters of Providence in: Le Père Lacombe, p. 233-234, leave the impression that Fr. Lacombe created the idea of the ladder.

There appears to be little doubt that Fr. Lacombe's Catholic ladder was inspired by Fr. Blanchet's earlier creation. As early as July 23rd, 1841, Fr. Blanchet's ladder had found its way among the Cree Indians,²⁰ a tribe among whom Fr. Lacombe spent part of his missionary life prior to creating his ladder. In a letter to Bishop Signay of Quebec, Bishop Provencher wrote:

A half-breed named Pitcher, (or Pichet) living among the Indians, just this year came on foot from the Rocky Mountains in order to see the priests and get me to send someone to the aid of the Cris [sic] quite numerous in these parts. Father Thibault²¹ who speaks the language of these Indians, has by means of Father Blanchet's historical-chronological chart instructed him very well and has had him take a copy of this chart to use among his people.²²

Fr. Thibault must have created a facsimile of the ladder from explanations of the new catechetical aid found

20 L. of Provencher to Signay, 23 July, 1841 (R.M. D.Q., 1842, no. 4, p. 2).

21 Fr. Jean-Baptiste Thibault was born at St. Joseph of Levis, December 14th, 1810, and had arrived at St. Boniface in the summer of 1833, where he had received the order of priesthood on the 8th September of the same year. While at the head of the six scholars who then formed St. Boniface College, he was studying the Indian languages and in July, 1834, he had already made considerable progress (MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. 1, p. 146-147). Even at that early date Bishop Provencher saw in him "a subject precious for his missions" (L. of Provencher to Signay, 16 July, 1834, cited in: MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 147).

22 L. of Provencher to Signay, 23 July, 1841 (R.M. D.Q., 1842, no. 4, p. 2).

in Fr. Blanchet's letters transmitted to Bishop Provencher. Bishop Provencher did not receive an actual copy of a Catholic ladder until sometime after March 30th, 1842.²³ However, from the numerous references to the ladder in Fr. Blanchet's early letters it would not have been difficult to fashion a facsimile. After the arrival of the packets sent overland from the Columbia March 30th, 1842, the priests in St. Boniface would have seen the manuscript copy of Fr. Blanchet's Quebec ladder for it was on this occasion that Fr. Blanchet sent Bishop Provencher a copy,²⁴ which was later printed in Quebec.

About one year later printed copies of the Blanchet Quebec ladder were sent to St. Boniface for use in the missions under the jurisdiction of Bishop Provencher.²⁵ Bishop Signay in a letter dated April 17th, 1843, advised Fr. Blanchet that copies of the Quebec ladder were sent to all the missions under the jurisdiction of Quebec and St. Boniface was mentioned specifically.²⁶ The Blanchet ladder was not only known but it had already been put to use at

23 See reference no. 10, Chapter III.

24 Ibid.

25 See reference no. 7, Chapter IV.

26 Ibid.

Pine-o-notang,²⁷ Manitoba, in July, 1843.²⁸ Fr. Darveau used the ladder and he describes the reaction of one Indian to Fr. Blanchet's creation:

Among my audience there was an old man who so dreaded prayer [the Catholic religion]²⁹ that he did not even dare look at the Catholic ladder we owe to the zeal of Fr. Blanchet. "I fear," he said "the magical power of that piece of paper."³⁰

Fr. Thibault could write in the year 1844 that the Chippewayan Indians of Cold Lake, Lac la Biche and Ile à la Crosse of Alberta and Saskatchewan "all understand and can explain the chief points of the [Blanchet] Catholic Ladder."³¹

27 Fr. Morice appears to be at variance with Fr. Darveau in regard to the place where the event about to be described took place. Fr. Darveau in his letter recounts how on the 24th July, 1843, he arrived at Pine-o-notang and the old man saw his Blanchet ladder. He then goes on explaining that on the 28th of August, 1843, he arrived at Le Pas (L. of Fr. Darveau written at St. Francis Xavier Mission, 7 December, 1843 [R.M.D.Q., 1845, no. 6, p. 90]). Fr. Morice repeats Fr. Darveau's story about the old man but he gives the place as Le Pas, Manitoba (MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 177-178).

28 L. of Darveau to [?], St. Francis Xavier Mission, 7 December, 1843 (R.M.D.Q., 1845, no. 6, p. 90).

29 Fr. Morice explains "prayer" as the Catholic religion (MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 178).

30 L. of Darveau to [?], St. Francis Xavier Mission, 7 December, 1843 (R.M.D.Q., 1845, no. 6, p. 91).

31 L. of Thibault to Provencher, Lake St. Anne, 23 December, 1844 cited in: MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 199.

The Protestant ministers established in the Northwest in the period 1844 to 1847³² had already come to the knowledge of the Catholic ladder.³³ They complained that:

[...] instead of instructing the candidates for baptism, they [the priests at Ile à la Crosse] gave them a paper containing the names of the Patriarchs and apostles, representations of heaven, saints, the flood, Solomon's temple, etc. Above all, the author notices thereon a road representing the Roman Catholic religion which leads to heaven, and another marked "pretended Reformation" ending in a very different place.³⁴

Mention of the "pretended Reformation" strongly suggests that the Protestant ministers had seen or heard of Fr. De Smet's ladder,³⁵ for it is the De Smet which describes the Reformation in just such terms. If the Protestant ministers of this period knew of Fr. De Smet's ladder then there is more reason to believe that the priests had also seen it or at least heard of it. Further, there is every

32 Fr. Morice discusses a book The Rainbow of the North and although he does not give the exact date to which he refers he discusses the subject in a chapter dealing with 1844-1847 (MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 187).

33 The Rainbow of the North, p. 168, cited in: MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. I, p. 206.

34 Ibid. The road of Protestantism marked "pretended reformation" does not fit any copy of Blanchet's ladder to the knowledge of the writer, nor does it concur with De Smet's ladder. However, in his description of the symbols on his ladder Fr. De Smet uses the term "pretended reformation" (DE SMET, Letters and Sketches 1843, p. 252).

35 Ibid.

reason to believe that copies of De Smet's 1843 publication "Letters and Sketches" would have made their way into the Prairie Provinces before 1865. In this work a copy of Fr. De Smet's ladder could be found along with a lengthy explanation of his catechetical creation.³⁶

Copies of the annual Reports of the missions of Quebec³⁷ would have been circulated throughout the Canadian Northwest from the year 1839.³⁸ A personal copy of the Reports would likely have been available to each priest in the St. Boniface area.³⁹ Since the Reports of 1841 and 1842 included information on the Catholic ladder⁴⁰ the

36 DE SMET, Letters and Sketches 1843, p. 253.

37 R.M.D.Q.

38 The reports printed in the R.M.D.Q. always included one from the Red River Missions which were under the charge of the Association. Copies of the annual publication would have been sent to this mission as they were to the Columbia. Bishop Signay in 1844 sent 8 copies of the Report to Fr. Blanchet with instructions to give one each to the priests. The other four he could distribute as he saw fit, however, the Bishop suggested one should be sent to the Sandwich Islands, one to Fr. De Smet who proposes to visit you, and one to Dr. McLaughlin (L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 9 April, 1844 [A.A.P., B. I 16, p. 4]).

39 See footnote 38 above.

40 The 1841 Report covers the mission at Fort Nisqually and the making of manuscript ladders (R.M.D.Q., 1841, no. 3, p. 54-61), while the Report of 1842 (R.M.D.Q., 1842, no. 4, p. 46-51) speaks of the use of the Sanale stick and the Catholic ladder at Whidbey Island. These references are but two of many.

priests of the Red River Mission would have been introduced to the Catholic ladder. There is little question that the priests in the Canadian Northwest would have been avid readers of the Reports as much of what was contained in the yearly publication was directly concerned with their own mission field or that of fellow priests with whom they were acquainted. It could be assumed that the Report of 1843, which carried a copy of Fr. Blanchet's ladder, would likely have been a particularly prized copy.⁴¹

If the priests of the Red River knew about the Catholic ladder in the early 1840's it would be most unlikely that Fr. Lacombe would not have heard of the Blanchet ladder before 1865. Again, it is rather to be taken for granted that Fr. Lacombe himself in his college days⁴² in Montreal would have followed with interest the annual publication from the Propagation of the Faith in Quebec. He would have undoubtedly seen the Blanchet ladder in the 1843 edition of the Reports.

41 If missionaries in their eagerness for a ladder often cut out the ladder from Fr. De Smet's book, it is likely the priests of Canada's Northwest would have prized the Blanchet ladder (see p. 181).

42 Entered college in 1840 and was ordained in 1849 (BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 143).

The evidence in support of the contention that Fr. Lacombe was familiar with the Blanchet ladder before creating his own Catholic ladder appears overwhelming.⁴³

If Fr. Lacombe cannot be credited with having invented the idea of using a Catholic ladder, he deserves full credit "for transforming the idea into a small masterpiece of pedagogy."⁴⁴

No ladder predating Fr. Lacombe's coloured ladder saw such wide distribution. One thousand copies were printed shortly after the Sisters in Montreal had completed the coloured edition.⁴⁵ Several thousand copies were printed for missions around the world on the recommendation of Pope Pius IX.⁴⁶ The Superior General of the Oblate Fathers saw Fr. Lacombe's ladder in 1873 and recommended printing 10,000 copies.⁴⁷ A Mr. Detaillé, head of a Paris publishing house by that name, printed 16,000 at a nominal

43 The supposition that Fr. Lacombe knew of the Blanchet ladder before creating his own is shared by: MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. II, p. 290; BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 64; ST. HILAIRE, Pedagogy in the Wilderness, p. 59.

44 BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 64.

45 UNE SOEUR, Le Père Lacombe, p. 234.

46 HUGHES, Black-Robe, p. 203.

47 Ibid., p. 216.

cost.⁴⁸ This is not to mention the copies printed by the firm of G. O. Beauchemin and Sons, in Montreal, whose name appears on many extant copies.

The innovation in the Lacombe ladder which is not found in previous Catholic ladders, is the use of the two paths, the way of good and the way of evil. Although the use of the two ways is as old as the Didache,⁴⁹ Fr. Lacombe was the first to create a Catholic ladder in which the two ways are used.⁵⁰

48 HUGHES, Black-Robe, p. 216-217.

49 The Didache or the Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles was an early treatise accounted by some of the Fathers of the Church as next to Scripture (Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. IV, p. 779). The first line of the Didache reads: "There are two Ways, one of life and one of Death, and there is much difference between the two Ways" (Arthur J. MacLEAN, ed., The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1922, p.1).

50 Fr. De Smet mentioned the two ways (DE SMET, Letters and Sketches 1843, p. 251-252). The Rev. H. H. Spalding created his ladder using the two ways: He makes use of the broad way, representing the Catholic Church and the errors of the Old Testament, and the narrow way, representing Protestantism and righteous episodes of the Old Testament. It is not clear whether or not Fr. Lacombe was influenced by the second Protestant ladder of Rev. Spalding. He could have been influenced since the ladder was in use in Oregon in the latter part of the 1840's and word of its existence could well have come to the Canadian Northwest. However, if he prepared his ladder with a view to Spalding's ladder one would expect that he would have constructed a ladder with a broad and narrow path. His ladder has two paths but both are of the same dimensions. It would appear much more likely that if he was influenced in this regard it was De Smet's mention of the two paths in his book. To the writer it appears likely that Fr. Lacombe discovered this idea himself.

In arranging his preaching aid Fr. Lacombe used the familiar bars and dots of the original Sahale stick which were incorporated into all Blanchet ladders but instead of the long line of 33 dots representing the life of Christ, he compressed this period by using three lines of 11 dots. For the period after Christ's Resurrection he added 40 dots which do not appear on other ladders. And in the marking of the years of the nineteenth century he again compressed the period into three lines of dots instead of one single line.

The photocopy of Fr. Lacombe's 1872 ladder found herein gives us a model of the author's early non-coloured copies. Since the author gives the description of his ladder⁵¹ we will proceed to the explanation of this ladder following his own description.

1. The triangle at the base of the ladder: the Trinity.
2. The figure of God: the Creator.
3. The angels to the left: the good angels.
4. The angels to the right: the bad angels.
5. The squares at the base of the ladder: creation.
6. The scene to the right of the days of creation: earthly paradise.

⁵¹ The explanations are found at the base of his ladder.

7. The two figures walking from the garden of paradise: our first parents.

8. The scene to the right, Mary holding the child and the shining cross to her right: the promise of a redeemer.

9. The figure lying prostrate: the death of Abel.

10. The coffin: death of Adam.

11. The waters and the ark: the deluge.

12. The scene to the left of the ark: sacrifices.

13. The tower to the right: tower of Babel.

14. A path leading to the right passed the tower: the dispersal of the people.

15. Commencing the way of good on the left of the ladder: Abraham and the beginning of the Jewish race.

16. A second coffin: death of Abraham.

17. The sixth figure on the way of good: Jacob.

18. The scene below the 10 vertical bars: Moses.

19. The ten vertical bars and the book: the old testament and the ten commandments.

20. The scene to the left at about the 38th bar: Solomon.

21. The scene on the right of the ladder opposite Solomon: Sodom, etc.

22. The number 22 is repeated between each set of ten bars: the centuries before Christ.

23. The scene at the top of the 40 bars: Bethlehem.

24. The three figures to the right of the Bethlehem scene: Epiphany.

25. The scene to the left of the Bethlehem scene: the flight into Egypt.

26. The scene to the left of the 33 dots: Jesus at Nazareth.

27. The first 30 of the 33 dots: Jesus Christ's thirty years.

28. The three diamond-shaped dots of the 33: he teaches three years.

29. The figures to the right of the crucifixion scene: the apostles.

30. The crucifixion scene: the death of Jesus Christ.

31. The seven crosses to the left of the crucifixion scene: sacraments.

32. A peacock can be seen to the right at about the middle of the 33 dots: pride.

33. On the road to the right and above the peacock a devil is holding a man to the ground: avarice.

34. Directly above the apostles a devil is seen riding a goat: impurity.

35. To the right of the ladder and near the top of the photocopy a snake can be seen: envy.

At this point the reader will note that the photocopy overlaps. The next scene is that of a pig and can be

seen about two inches from the base of the ladder on the second section.

36. The pig: gluttony.

37. Above the pig a lion can be seen: anger.

38. Above the lion a man lies at his ease: sloth.

39. At the base of the second section of the ladder the scene directly above the crucifixion: resurrection.

40. To the left of the ladder a church appears on a line with the scene of the resurrection: faith.

41. To the left of the 40 dots a woman is seen kneeling before an altar: faith.

42. Directly above the Church a figure of a heart: charity.

43. Above the 40 dots the figure of Christ: ascension.

44. To the left of the scene depicting the ascension a book with a cross: new testament.

45. A church directly above the scene of the ascension: the church of Jesus Christ.

46. To the left of the church an eye surrounded by seven tablets: the commandments of the Church.

47. Wherever the road passes from the left to the right no. 47 appears: mission of the apostles and conversion of the nations.

48. The ship to the right of the ladder: the discovery of the new world.

49. The three figures crossing from the left to the right at the year 1600: the reform.

50. Where the road divides in three after passing through at the year 1600: heresies.

51. The figure to the left near the year 1872: the Pope.

52. This number appears between the year 1000 and 1100 A.D.: the centuries after Jesus Christ.

53. This number appears among the 72 dots: the years.

54. At regular intervals along the road to the right of the ladder number 54 appears: the evil path.

55. At regular intervals along the road to the left of the ladder: the good path.

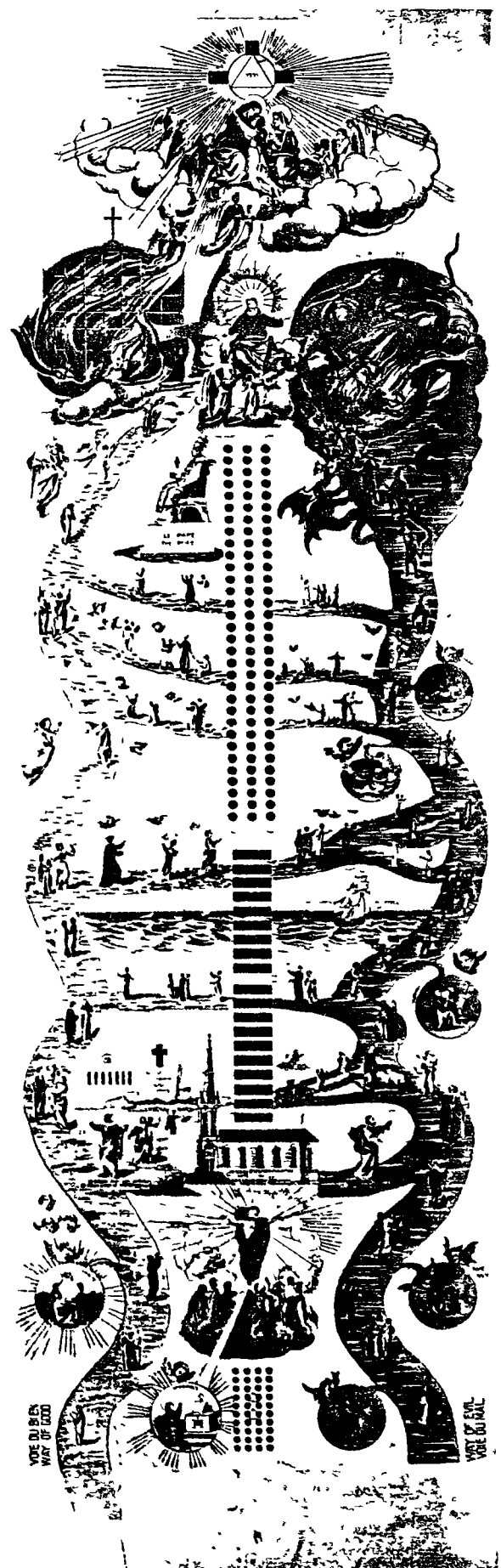
56. The scene immediately above the 72nd dot: Jesus Christ judge of the living and the dead.

57. The scene of fire to the right of the 72nd dot: hell.

58. The scene of fire to the left of the 72nd dot: purgatory.

59. The triumphal scene at the top of the ladder: heaven.

A second photocopy of the Lacombe ladder can be found herein. Although this ladder bears a registration date of 1895 an examination of the dots dates the ladder



COLOURED LACOMBE LADDER

1896

Original at the Kuper Island
Indian Residential School,
Chemainus, B.C.

1896.⁵² It will be noted that six dots appear at the base of the columns which are not coloured. The ladder was likely meant to be updated each year by the colouring of one dot. The coloured ladder, although differing in several individual points, is basically the same as the non-coloured 1872 ladder. Moreover, this later edition of the ladder was printed both in French and in English, and carried the name "Pictorial Catechism."

The author in explaining this ladder gives a more comprehensive idea of what he expected the ladder to portray.

1. The fundamental mystery: the Holy Trinity.
2. The Creation: the chaos; good and wicked angels, the six days; the Lord's rest honoured by the sanctification of Sunday.
3. Original sin: Adam and Eve driven away and condemned to work, suffering and death.
4. The promise of a Redeemer.
5. Scale of the 40 centuries before Christ; black bands.
6. Abel; Cain; corruption of mankind; flood; Noah; Babel; dispersion of the nations.

52 See photocopy.

7. Vocation of Abraham, father of believers in the only and true God.

8. The two ways: to the right,⁵³ the devil's way, idolatry, paganism, the seven capital sins; to the left,⁵⁴ the way of God, the Old Law, the New Law, virtues and sacraments of Christianity.

9. Birth of our saviour; hidden life; public life; 33 years (30 red rounds, 3 squares).

10. The passion; the seven sacraments coming out of the saviour's side; the three theological virtues.

11. The two nights (two black rounds), Indian's way of reckoning, instead of three days.

12. The resurrection: 40 days (40 red rounds).

13. The ascension.

14. The establishment of the Church; St. Peter; St. Paul; mission of the 12 apostles.

15. The scale of the centuries after Christ (red bands for the centuries, red rounds for the years).

16. The most important facts by centuries.

⁵³ In pointing out the two ways the author explains that to the left one finds the way of evil, when in fact it is to the right. In the recent reprinting of the Lacombe ladder by the Institute of Missionology of the University of Ottawa this error remains.

⁵⁴ Fr. Lacombe explains that the way of good is to the right when in fact his ladder shows it to the left.

17. Discovery of America; the principal heresies which lead souls from the good to the bad road; the infallible pope directs and blesses the efforts of the children of the church; the devil, father of lies, drives his own children toward the abyss.

19. The particular judgment of each man: hell, purgatory, heaven.

A biographer of Fr. Lacombe commenting on the missionary's catechetical ladder gives a most apt summation:

History, doctrine, morality, everything was included, clearly and simply expressed. [...] it proved more effective than many hours of oral instruction. The simple words of the Cure d'Ars accomplished more good than many a learned sermon by a great theologian. The simplicity of Lacombe's eloquence won over whole bands of Indians, one of his most effectual teachings being his famous "Catholic Ladder."⁵⁵

The proof of the value of any preaching aid is to be gauged by its effectiveness.

In the opinion of the writer, the evidence in favour of the opinion that Fr. Lacombe found his inspiration either through direct contact with a Blanchet ladder, or indirectly through a De Smet ladder, is overwhelming. Yet, it must be pointed out that just as at Quebec in 1637 the untutored Indian sketched a Catholic ladder upon the ground while Fr. LeJeune expounded to him the message of

55 BRETON, Chief of the Prairies, p. 67.

the Gospel, it is possible, though improbable, that Fr. Lacombe did, in fact, create his ladder without the aid of Blanchet's earlier model.

CONCLUSION

When Fr. P. J. De Smet saw Fr. Blanchet's Catholic ladder on his arrival at Fort Vancouver in 1842, he uttered the prophecy that this catechetical aid would be adopted by the whole world.¹

As early as 1843 the Blanchet Catholic ladder was known on the Pacific Northwest Coast, the Canadian Prairies and in Eastern Canada. In 1848 it became the official catechetical aid in the territories encompassed within the Archdiocese of Oregon. The publication of Fr. De Smet's book in 1843, which included a copy of his own Catholic ladder, brought this catechetical aid to a large audience. The Blanchet ladder sent to Fr. Walsh introduced it to Hawaii, as the creation of the Spanish ladder and Fr. Blanchet's visit to Chile made this preaching aid known in South America. The Protestant ladders of Revs. Daniel Lee and H. H. Spalding played an indirect role, and Fr. Lacombe's well known device almost fulfilled De Smet's prophecy.

But the Catholic ladder never quite achieved the success envisioned by Fr. De Smet. It is true that Fr.

¹ BLANCHET, Sketches, p. 49.

Lacombe's ladder always enjoyed good fortune, and A. G. Morice could say in 1910 that it is "now in universal use in the missions of the Canadian West, from Lake Superior to the Pacific."² Individual missionaries continued to use the Blanchet ladder. One missionary could write to friends in Belgium and, in passing, mention that he was using the Catholic ladder,³ presuming that his readers knew of this preaching aid, which they most likely did. But the lack of understanding of the theological significance of the Catholic ladder and its gradual drift into obsolescence, even in Oregon, is symbolized in the severe blow which it received in the land of its birth:

Since uniformity, also in the manner of handing on Christian doctrine, is much to be desired, we decree that the Catechism, published in English by the author Butler, as approved by the Irish Bishops, and for a long time in use among the faithful, be used for all the faithful speaking English.⁴

This decree of the Second Provincial Council, held in Oregon in 1881, was in marked contrast to the decree of the First Provincial Council in 1848, presided over by

2 MORICE, Church in Western Canada, vol. II, p. 290.

3 L. of Gustave Donckele to the Rector of the American College, Louvain, Belgium, Cowichan, Vancouver Island, 5 June, 1879 (A.A.C.L.; this archive is not indexed).

4 Acta Conc. Prov. Oregon., p. 45.

Archbishop Blanchet, Bishop Demers and Bishop A. M. A.

Blanchet:

[...] it will be profitable if all who are engaged in handing on Christian doctrine, particularly among the Indians, use the Symbolico-Historical Chart (the Catholic ladder), which in the year 1839 was contrived by the missionaries of this region, as if by a divine instinct, with great profit to souls.⁵

Frs. Blanchet and Demers put the emphasis upon the historico-biblical approach found in the Bible. The Second Provincial Council in Oregon put the emphasis upon the structured format of the catechism. The catechetical renewal of the 20th century would subscribe to the viewpoint of Oregon's early missionaries.

If the Catholic ladder did not become known throughout the world in the past 100 years, the theological insights inherent in it are today of universal interest. The renewal of interest in a theology of preaching, evidenced in the whole Catholic world, has given an impetus to the study of catechetics in its historical development. In the light of present interest the Catholic ladder of Frs. Blanchet and Demers deserves particular attention.

This research has attempted a study of the Catholic ladder in its beginnings and its development, in its structure and the influence which it exerted upon later

5 Acta Conc. Prov. Oregon., p. 15.

teaching aids. Particular attention has been given to the content of the Gospel which is encompassed within its scope. This study is essential to an understanding of its theological significance.

APPENDIX "A"

AN ENLARGEMENT OF THE NOTE
WHICH IS FOUND IN THE UPPER LEFT HAND CORNER
OF THE NISQUALLY LADDER

This large roll was discovered by E. Huggins
in the upper floor of the store or warehouse,
at Fort Nequally, Pierce County, Territory
of Washington, amongst a lot of other old,
and apparently, useless papers, left by Doctor
Wm. B. Palmer when he left Nequally to
take charge at Fort Steptoe, Boncomers Island,
near the 19th September 1859. —

Up to this day — 23rd April 1903. The undersigned
has not succeeded in learning the meaning of
the Symbolical chart, although satisfied that
it was used by the Roman Catholic Missionaries
to aid them in teaching the Indians the
Christian religion, at, or near Fort Nequally, in
the year 1841. or 1842. —

E. Huggins.

APPENDIX "B"

BLANCHET'S LETTER 1842

Explanations of the Catholic ladder found in the letter of Blanchet to Turgeon, St. Paul on the Willamette, 30 March, 1842, A.A.Q., C.A. II-36, p. 3-6. The essential explanations are given. However, the incidental marks have been omitted.

1. The 4000 years from the creation of the world to the coming of the messiah: the 1842 years since the birth of Jesus Christ to us.

2. Heaven, earth, Adam, Eve, sun, moon, stars, angels.

3. The children of Adam, Cain, Abel, Seth.

4. The death of Adam; Henoch taken up to heaven will return at the end of the world.

5. The ark of Noe in which were saved 4 men and 4 women; all the others perished in the deluge.

6. The tower of Babel built by the descendents of Noe.

7. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Pharao.

8. Sodam, Gomorrhæ.

9. The 10 commandments of God given to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

10. The judges, Debora, Gedeon, Jepheth, Samson, Samuel.
450 years under the judges.

11. The kings, Saul, David, Solomon, Roboam: the temple of Solomon. The kingdom of Israel lasted 253 years under 17 kings; that of Judas, 386 years under 19 kings.

12. Elias is taken up into heaven, he will return at the end of the world; vocation of Eliseus.

13. The four major prophets: Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel.

14. The 12 minor prophets: Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonie, Aggeus, Zacharias, Malachias.

15. Jonas 3 days in the belly of a whale.

16. The captivity of Babylon, the chaste Susanna, Tobias, Judith, Esther.

17. The old testament; Eleazor, the Machabees, Antiochus.

18. Zachary, Elizabeth; Mary, Joseph.

19. Jesus Christ, son of God, became man for us.

20. The star of J.C.

21. The 3 magi kings, Gaespard, Balthazar, Melchior, having seen the star come to adore J.C.

22. The evil king Herod wishes to kill J.C.

23. An angel warns the 3 magi kings not to return to Herod's palace, but to return by another route.

24. An angel warns Joseph to take the infant Jesus and Mary his mother and to save themselves in Egypt.

25. Jesus, Mary, Joseph save themselves in Egypt.

26. The evil king Herod massacres all the little children in the city and around Bethlehem.

27. An angel advises Joseph to take the infant Jesus and Mary his mother and to return to his country.

28. Jesus Christ is born on Christmas day.

29. He remained visible on the earth about 33 years.

30. Mary and Joseph lose the infant Jesus for 3 days at the age of 12 years and find him in the temple.

31. John the Baptist baptizes J.C.

32. The 12 apostles of J.C.: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholemew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Jude, Simon, Judas.

33. St. Peter the head of the apostles, the vicar of J.C. and the first pope.

34. Judas sells his master for 30 pieces of silver.

35. The mountain of Calvary, the cross of J.C., the crosses of the robbers.

36. J.C. died Good Friday.

37. J.C. rises again on Easter.

38. J.C. ascended into heaven on Ascension day.

39. J.C. sent the Holy Spirit to his church on Pentecost day.

40. J.C. will come again on the earth at the end of the world for the general judgment.
41. The 12 articles of the Apostles Creed.
42. The sacraments instituted by O.S.J.C. to sanctify us; Baptism etc.
43. Prayer to obtain the help of God's grace.
44. Our work of every day, every week, every year.
45. The 7 commandments of the church: les fêtes tu sanct... etc.
46. The church of Constantine.
47. The cross of J.C. found on Calvary by St. Helena after a 3 year search.
48. The new testament.
49. St. Augustine priest converts the English and shows them the way (religion) of J.C., or of the Catholic church.
50. The English walk 900 years on the way of J.C.
51. Luther, Calvin, Henry 8 reject the way of J.C.
52. Two priests arrive in this country to show us the way of J.C. or the Catholic church.

APPENDIX "C"

EXPLANATIONS FOUND ON THE SPANISH LADDER

I. Method of Using the Catholic Ladder.

1. Begin by running up from the bottom to the top, the column of ages, through which the world has lasted. Immediately after, point out, in succession, the epoch of the 4,000 years, that of the 33 and that of 1856. Having done this you will point out the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, of the incarnation and of the Redemption, so as to teach the learner how to distinguish them by their names.

2. After this, you will point out, at the foot of the column of the centuries, the image which relates to God, and say all that we know of his divine attributes and divine perfections, namely: his eternity, his immensity, his providence, his power, etc. You will then proceed to explain the great mysteries.

3. From speaking of the power of God, you will pass on to the creation in a period of six days, adverting to the sanctification of the seventh day, which God reserved for himself and consecrated to rest. Further on, you will refer to the creation of the Angels when he made the light on the first day of creation. Then speak of the rebellion

of the wicked angels, a short time after their creation, their fall into hell, created at the moment of their rebellion; as also of the faithfulness of the pure angels, and of their reward in Heaven.

4. You will subsequently point out the tree of knowledge of good and evil. You will state God's command not to touch its fruit: also the envy and the madness of the cursed enemy of man at the sight of the happiness of Adam and Eve in the earthly paradise; the resolution which he took to work out their ruin and to drag them into the pit along with himself and his rebellious followers; his temptation of the first pair, under the form of a serpent; the wiles of the devil in that work of temptation; the disobedience of our first parents, but a short time after their creation; the rejoicing of the devils when they saw Adam and Eve, with all their posterities, involved in one and the same condemnation by the justice of God; the promise of a saviour, through the means of another woman (Mary most pure), who was to crush, that is to baffle the power of the serpent (the devil), by bringing into the world the promised Saviour, in order to repair the guilt of the first woman.

5. From this point you will proceed to the fulfillment of the promise, pointing out, in a merely cursory manner, the intermediate events, and especially so to the

beginners, whose attention should be distracted as little as possible from the thread of historical facts, but rather made to dwell on the principal object. The rest is but accessory, and may be brought in, further on, with some measure of advantage.

6. When you have reached the period of 4000 years, you will begin to give a historical sketch of religion, from the birth of Jesus Christ down to our days. You will refer to the 33 years of his life; to the apostles; to Calvary; to the sacraments; his promise to the church; his resurrection and ascension; to the mission of the apostles; the coming of the Holy Ghost; the conversion of the nations of the earth to the Catholic faith down to the present day. Having done this, you will proceed more fully to explain the various points which had been only touched upon in reference to the chart.

7. Having concluded this sketch of religion, you will pass to the explanation of the symbols of the apostles, of the commandments of God and of his church, of the Lord's prayer, angelical salutation and sacraments, which embrace the whole of the christian doctrine, or all that is to be believed, done, asked and received for salvation. But before you touch this branch of your duty, do, in regard of those prayers, what you had done in respect to the historical sketch of religion; that is, give a general

character of them and of each of them; tell by whom, how, and under what circumstances they were composed or uttered; and teach your beginners to retain the title of the sum of the things or articles contained in them. For example:

1. In relation to the Apostolic creed: by whom and when it was composed; say all that is embraced in it, was, in substance, received from the lips of Jesus Christ; that there is one article respecting the first of the three persons of the Godhead; that there are six articles relative to the second person, and one touching the third, and so on.

2. Touching God's commandments: by whom, when and how they were given out and uttered; that there are three which refer to God, and seven which refer to our neighbour. Sum of them: God, his holy name, his holy day; honouring father and mother; not to kill, not commit impurity, not to steal, not to lie, not to covet impurities, not to covet another's goods.

3. Touching the commandments of the church: by whom and for what purpose they have been established; the sum of them: festivals, mass, confession, communion, fasting and abstinence, and church dues.

4. Touching the sacraments: by whom and for what purpose instituted; their names; two of them which blot

away sin; three of them which can be received once only, and the definition of them all.

5. Touching the Lord's prayer: by whom and at whose request it was uttered; three petitions which relate to God, and four which relate to ourselves.

6. The angelic salutation Hail Mary: by whom it was addressed, and so on.

To this general statement you may add later, with profitable results, particular and more substantial details.

II. Promises of a Saviour.

1. Promises made to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3: 15).
2. Promises renewed to Abraham (Genesis 12; 1, 2, 3).
3. Promises renewed again to Abraham (Genesis 22; 15, 17, 18).
4. Promises renewed to Isaac (Genesis 26; 4).
5. Promises renewed to Jacob (Genesis 28; 13, 14).
6. Promises renewed to Moses (Deuteronomy 18; 17, 18, 19).

Prophecy of Jacob to Juda (Genesis 49; 8, 10, 18).

Prophecy of Moses to Israel (Deuteronomy 18; 15).

III. Prophecy of the angel Gabriel.

1. Prophecy of the angel Gabriel to Daniel. 9; 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

2. The explanation of the vision.

In view of the seventy years during which the Babylonian captivity was to last, the angel Gabriel reveals to Daniel, the prophet, the determined period which was to bring on the redemption of mankind, prefigured in the deliverance of the Jewish people. The angel of God points out to the prophet the seventy weeks summing up 490 years which were to elapse from a certain period of that people's history, namely from the time of the order given by Artaxerxes for the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. With the close of that period the Messiah was to deliver mankind from the bondage of the devil. Such was the time that God had marked out for putting an end to the reign of sin; for establishing eternal justice upon earth and fulfilling the prophecies that looked to the coming of Christ. From the royal order to the preaching of Christ, 69 weeks of years are . With the beginning of that period of time the walls of Jerusalem are again to be built. Upon entering on the seventieth week, Christ will make a covenant with many of the Jewish people through the preaching of the Gospel, and go on confirming that covenant by the performance of unparalleled miracles. In the half of the

same week Christ is to be betrayed to death and his sacrifice will put an end to the sacrifices of the Jewish law, but the people that will have denied him, God shall condemn. They shall be destroyed by a victorious leader who shall overthrow both city and temple; and the shall last until the end of time. This was accomplished by Titus with his Roman legions in the year 70 of our era or forty years after the commencement of our Saviour's holy ministry. Julian the apostate in the year 363 verified the prophecy of our Saviour, relative to the last stones of the temple.

IV. Prophecy of Balaam.

1. (Book of Numbers 24: 17)

APPENDIX "D"

DE SMET'S LADDER EXPLAINED

Fr. P. J. De Smet in: Letters and Sketches 1843, p. 245-253, gives his explanations of the Indian Symbolical Catechism.

1. Four thousand years from the creation of the world to the coming of the Messiah. 1843 years from the birth of Jesus Christ to our times. (On the map, each blank line represents a century.)

2. The heavens, the earth, Adam and Eve, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the serpent, the sun, moon, stars, the angels, and hell.

3. Death of Adam.

4. Enoch taken up into heaven; he will return at the end of the world.

5. Noah's Ark, in which four men and four women are saved; all the others perish in the deluge.

6. The Tower of Babel, built by Noah's descendants.

7. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh.

8. Sodom, Gomorrah, five cities destroyed by fire from heaven. Lot saved by two angels.

9. The ten commandments of God given to Moses alone on Mount Sinai. Instruction - ... The twelve Tribes. Government of God by means of Judges for the space of three to four hundred years. Josua, Debora, Gideon, Jephthe, Samson, Heli, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Roboam. Instruction. - The kingdom of Israel formed of ten tribes; it subsisted for 253 years, under 18 kings. That of Juda, formed of two tribes, subsisted 386 years, under 19 kings.

10. The Temple of Solomon.

11. The four great and the twelve minor prophets.

12. Elias taken up into heaven; will return at the end of the world. Eliseus his disciple. Jonas three days in a whale's belly.

13. The captivity of Babylon.

14. History of Susana, Tobias, Judith, Esther. Nabuchodonozor reduced for the space of 7 years to the condition of a brute. The three children in the furnace.

15. The Old Testament.

16. The holy man Eleazar. The seven Machabees and their mother; Antiochus, St. Joachim, and St. Anne.

17. Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph. The apparition of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias. Birth of St. John the Baptist. The angel Gabriel appears to Mary. Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word. Fear of Joseph. The visitation. Mary and Joseph leave for Bethlehem.

Jerusalem is 30 leagues from Nazareth, Bethlehem is 2 leagues from Jerusalem, Emmaus 3 leagues.

18. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made man for us. The history of the Annunciation.

19. Jesus Christ is born on Christmas day, at Bethlehem. The history of His birth; the angels and shepherds. The circumcision at the end of eight days. The name of Jesus.

20. The star of Jesus Christ seen in the East, predicted by Balaam.

21. The three kings (Magi) Gaspard, Balthazar and Melchior, having seen the star, come to adore the infant Jesus.

22. Herod wishes to kill the infant Jesus. Herod's fears; his hypocrisy; his recommendation to the Magi.

23. An angel orders the three kings not to return by Herod's dominions, but by another road. The infant Jesus is carried to the temple of Jerusalem forty days after his birth. The holy man Simeon, and the holy widow Anne acknowledge Him as God. This fact comes to Herod's ears; his anger; his strange resolution with regard to the children of Bethlehem, where he thought the infant Jesus had returned.

24. An angel orders Joseph to fly into Egypt with the infant Jesus and Mary his mother. 25. Instruction. - What

happened the night after the presentation in the Temple. By the command of Herod all the little children in the town and environs of Bethlehem are put to death.

26. He falls sick and dies at the end of a month, devoured by worms. (Croiset, 18 vol. page 17.)

27. An angel orders St. Joseph to carry the infant Jesus, and Mary his mother, back into their own country. They return to Nazareth.

28. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, go up every year to the temple to celebrate the Passover.

29. Mary and Joseph lose the infant Jesus at the age of twelve years, and find him at the end of three days, in the temple, in the midst of the doctors of the law.

30. Jesus Christ dwelt visibly on earth for more than 33 years.

31. He taught men the manner of living holily. He gave them the example, and obtained for them the grace to follow it, by his sufferings and death.

32. St. John baptizes Jesus Christ. Instruction. - ... Jesus Christ goes into the desert. He fasted for forty days. He is tempted by the devil.

33. The twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ - Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Jude, Simon, Judas.

34. St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and the first Pope.

35. The Apostles the first Bishops.

36. Judas sells his master for thirty pieces of money. Hatred of the Jews. The treason of Judas.

37. Mount Calvary. The cross of Jesus Christ. The other crosses and the robbers.

38. Jesus Christ died on Good Friday. History of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Crucified at 12 o'clock and died at 3. Darkness over the earth. Miracles. Repentance of the executioners. His soul descends into hell. His body is embalmed and laid in the sepulchre, and guarded by Roman soldiers.

39. Jesus Christ rises from the dead on Easter day. History of the Resurrection. He appears to Mary, to St. Peter, to the two disciples going to Emmaus, to the Apostles. Incredulity of St. Thomas. Christ's apparition eight days after. Then also at the lake of Tiberias. The confession of St. Peter. The mission of the Apostles.

40. Jesus Christ ascends into heaven on Ascension day, 40 days after His resurrection. He send the Holy Ghost to His Church 10 days after His ascension. Wonders and mysteries of the day.

41. He will return to the earth at the end of the world for the general judgment.

42. The seven Sacraments, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ for our sanctification. The three Sacraments that can be received but once. The five Sacraments of the living. The two of the dead.

43. Prayer in order to obtain the assistance of the grace of God. St. Paul and St. Matthias.

44. Our duties for every day, every week, every month, every year.

45. The six Commandments of the Church.

46. The Church of Constantine the great.

47. The cross of Jesus Christ found on Calvary by St. Helen, after having sought it for three years. The miraculous cross of Constantine. The invention of the Holy Cross. The cross carried by Heraclius in the seventh century. Julian the Apostate.

48. The New Testament. The arrangement of the Canon. The discipline ordained by the Council of Nice.

50. St. Augustine converts the English and teaches them the religion of Christ or the Catholic religion.

51. The English follow the religion of Christ, or the Catholic religion, for 900 years.

52. Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII, wander from the way of Christ, reject His religion, that is, the Catholic church. The by-road and its forks represent the Reformation, with its divisions or variations for the last 300 years. The

sttaight road of Jesus Christ existed a long time before. Lucifer or Satan, the first to take a wrong road — he seduces Adam and Eve and their descendants to accompany him. Jesus Christ comes to conduct us into the right road, and enable us to keep it by the grace of redemption. The devil is enraged at the loss he suffers; but he succeeded in the following ages, by inducing men to walk in a new, bad road, that of the pretended Reformation.

53. Arius, Macedonius, Pelagius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Monothelites.

54. Mahomet, Iconoclasts, Berenger, Albigenses, Photius, Wicleff.

55. The four great schisms — of the Donatists, the Greeks, the West, and of England.

56. Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII.

57. Baius, Jansenius, Wesley.

58. The sacred phalanx of the Ecumenical councils.

59. The priests came into the Indian country to teach the Indians the right road or the religion of Jesus Christ, to make them the children of the Catholic church.

60. History of the Catholic missions now flourishing throughout the world.

APPENDIX "E"

FACSIMILE OF THE ORIGINAL SAHALE STICK

At Tsaout Indian Reserve on Vancouver Island Most Reverend Remi De Roc, Bishop of Victoria, was received by a gathering of Indians February 2nd, 1963. On this occasion Chief Edwin Underwood in the name of the Vancouver Island Indian tribes presented to the Bishop this Sahale stick.

The Sahale stick was carved by Earl Claxton of the Tsaout Band of the Saanich Indians. The Thunderbird which can be seen at the top of the Sahale stick was carved by Leonard Paul, also a Saanich Indian, of the Tsartlip Band.

The carver reproduced what he considered to be a reasonable facsimile, although not an exact replica, of the original Sahale stick created at Cowlitz Prairie by Fr. Blanchet in 1839. The additions made by the carver are: 1. the Thunderbird was thought to suggest the Indians' concept of God;¹ 2. the symbols on either side of the stick were added to give some explanation of the bars and

¹ In fact, the Indians recognized 'Sahale Taï' as their God. Sahale means 'Heaven' and Taï means 'Chief,' or the 'Heaven Chief.' This question is treated at length by Franz BOAS, Thirty-First Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1916, p. 543-545.

dots; 3. the 40 dots after the crucifixion scene show the influence of the Lacombe ladder with which the carver was familiar; 4. the base was added to hold the Sahale stick in an upright position. The scenes of creation were carved on the base; 5. the church was added after the 40 dots, again showing the influence of the Lacombe ladder, as was also the extra two crosses; 6. the figure of the Indian at the base was added to give the work an Indian touch. However, the bars and dots represent an attempt by the Indians to recreate the Sahale stick. (Interview with the carvers, Tsaut Reserve, Saanichton, B.C., 2 February, 1963.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Within this bibliography are to be found the letters, books and articles which are the principal sources for a study of the Catholic ladder. Secondary sources and supplementary reading will be found in the footnotes of the individual chapters.

LETTERS

- L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 27 April, 1838, A.A.P., B. I 16.
- L. of Demers to Cazeau, Vancouver, 1 March, 1839, Portland, A.A.P., D. III 6.
- L. of Blanchet to Signay, Fort Vancouver, 5 October, 1839, A.A.P., B. III 6.
- L. of Demers to Cazeau, Cowlitz, 5 February, 1840, A.A.P., D. III 2.
- L. of Blanchet to Demers, St. Paul, 2 March, 1840, A.A.Q., C.A., vol. 1, p. 136.
- L. of Blanchet to Signay, Fort Vancouver, 19 March, 1840, A.A.Q., C.A., I 153-154.
- L. of Demers to Blanchet, Vancouver, 27 March, 1840, A.A.P., D. II 106.
- L. of Blanchet to Demers, Vancouver, 7 April, 1840, A.A.P., B. III 6.
- L. of Pambrun to Blanchet, Walla Walla, 6 May, 1840, A.A.P., B. I 15.
- L. of Pambrun to Blanchet, Walla Walla, 2 June, 1840, A.A.P., B. I 23.

- L. of Demers to Blanchet, Cowlitz, 20 August, 1840. A.A.P., D. II 106.
- L. of Blanchet to Provencher, St. Paul, 24 August, 1840, A.A.S.B., 102.
- L. of Blanchet to Demers, St. Paul, 28 December, 1840, Portland, A.A.P., D. III 3.
- L. of Demers to Blanchet, Cowlitz, 2 January, 1841, A.A.P., D. II 92.
- L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 23 February, 1841, A.A.P., B. III 5.
- L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 17 April, 1841. A.A.P., B. I 24.
- L. of Blanchet to Signay, Willamette, 17 February, 1842, A.A.P., B. III 18.
- L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, St. Paul, 22 March, 1842, A.A.P., B. III 19.
- L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, St. Paul, 30 March, 1842, A.A.Q., C.A., II-36.
- L. of Blanchet to Signay, St. Paul, 30 March, 1842, A.A.Q., C.A., II-26.
- L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Vancouver, 24 June, 1842, A.A.Q., C.A., II-43.
- L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 3 November, 1842, A.A.Q., C.A., II-50.
- Report of Blanchet to Signay for the year 1842. A.A.P., B. I 4.
- L. of Signay to Blanchet, Quebec, 17 April, 1843, A.A.P., B. I 16.
- L. of Blanchet to Turgeon, Vancouver, 6 April, 1844, A.A.Q., C.A., II-91.
- L. of Blanchet to Cazeau, Vancouver, 6 April, 1844. A.A.Q., C.A., II-91.
- L. of Demers to Blanchet, Victoria, 22 July, 1865, A.A.P., D. II 17.

L. of Demers to Blanchet, Victoria, 28 July, 1865, A.A.P.
D. II 17.

L. of Lacombe to Taché, St. Albert Mission, 16 October,
1865, A.A.S.N., 1806.

L. of Gustave Donckele to the Rector of the American College, Louvain, Belgium, Cowichan, 1879, A.A.C.L.

NOTES OF FR. BLANCHET

Journal 3, A.A.P.

Journal 8, A.A.P.

General Notes on the Indians 1838-1848 (Notices intéressantes), A.A.P., B. I 22.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Acta et Decreta Conciliorum Provinciae Oregonopolitanae annis 1848, 1881, et 1891 celebratorum, Mt. Angel, Typis Monasterii S. Benedicti, 1895, 75 p.

BAGLEY, Clarence B., Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon, Seattle, Lowman & Hanford Company, 1939, 2 vols.

-----, In the Beginning, Seattle, Lowman & Hanford Co., 1905, p. 29-33.

BLANCHET, F. N., Historical Sketches of the Catholic Church in Oregon During the Past Forty Years 1838-1878, second edition, Ferndale, 1910, 71 p.

-----, The Key to the Catholic Ladder: containing a Sketch of the Christian religion and Universal History Useful to All, New York, T. W. Strong, 1839.

BOSHOUWERS, Francis, S.M.M., "Early Cowichan History", in British Columbia Orphans' Friend, 1928, vol. 25, no. 4.

BRETON, Paul, O.M.I., The Big Chief of the Prairies. [Montreal], Palm Publishers, [1955], 145 p.

Bulletin de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface, Saint-Boniface, Imprimerie du Manitoba, 1913, vol. III, p. 146.

DEMERS, Modeste, The Missionary's Companion on the Pacific Coast, Chinook Dictionary, Catechism, Prayers and Hymns composed in 1838 & 1839 by Rt. Rev. Modeste Demers, revised, corrected and completed in 1867 by Most Rev. F. N. Blanchet with modifications and additions by Rev. L. N. St. Onge, Montreal, [n.p.], 1871, 68 p.

DE ROO, Peter, Varia, Ecclesiastical Hierarchy in Oregon. in De Roo Correspondence 1861-1886, Mt. Angel, A.Mt.A., (rare book room).

DRURY, Clifford M., First White Women over the Rockies, Diaries, Letters and Biographical Sketches of the Six Women of the Oregon Mission who made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838, Glendale, Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963, 2 vols.

McNAMEE, Mary Domenica, Willamette Interlude, Palo Alto, Pacific Books, [1959].

Notice sur le territoire et sur la Mission de l'Orégon, suivie de quelques lettres des soeurs de Notre Dame établies à Saint Paul de Willamette, Bruxelles, Bureau de publication de la Bibliothèque d'Education, 1847, 180 p.

Le Petit Catéchisme du Diocèse de Québec, Quebec, Auguste Germain, 1818, 95 p. English edition: An Abridgement of the Quebec Catechism, Quebec, C. Le François' Printing-Office, 1819, 87 p.

PIPES, Nellie B., "The Protestant Ladder", in Oregon Historical Quarterly, vol. 37 (1936).

Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec qui sont secourues par l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi, Québec, Frechette & Cie, 1839, no. 1: 1840, no. 2; 1841, no. 3; 1842, no. 4; 1843, no. 5; 1845, no. 6.