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The True Witness



Vol. LIV., No. 43

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 1905

PRICE FIVE CENTS

THE RELIGION OF NAPOLEON.

There has been of late years a remarkable revival of Napoleonic literature, not only in France, but in England and other countries also—coming down to the present hour, when one noteworthy work is just appearing for favor—and this reverence to an old theme has naturally produced a great deal of criticism upon the character of the central figure. But there is one aspect of his character which, except in the most recent work referred to, has received less attention than it has perhaps deserved—that is, his religious views. A mind so acute and capacious was almost certain to have strong and clear convictions on so vital a matter. In what direction did they tend? He has fortunately himself left us in no doubt—unless, which seems impossible, he has been audaciously misrepresented by his own friends. Though largely a child of the revolution, upon which he mounted to his meteoric splendor, he apparently retained mentally high above the welter of infidelity into which so many of his contemporaries and associates fell. The conversations we record in part, and which are the most authentic evidence we have on the subject, took place at St. Helena, and were provoked by the utterances of some of the scoffers who voluntarily shared his exile. They are very instructive.

One of the staff having spoken of Christ as simply a philosopher, Napoleon immediately corrected his view. "I know men," he said, "and I tell you Christ was not a man." Then he went on to say that no man who gave a study to the cults of the different nations could perceive in them a divine origin. Their founders were of the race and the family of Adam, of whom they showed all the passions and the vices. The temples and the priests proclaimed this origin, for their whole history is that of the inventors of despotisms.

"Paganism," he continued, "was never accepted as truth by the sages of Greece—neither by Pythagoras, nor by Socrates, nor by Plato, nor by Anaxagoras, nor by Pericles. On the contrary, the greatest minds, since the advent of Christianity, have had faith, and a living faith—not only Bossuet and Fenelon, whose mission was to preach it, but Descartes and Newton, Leibnitz and Pascal, Corneille and Racine, Charlemagne and Louis XIV. Whence this mystery, that a creed so mysterious and obscure as that of the apostles, has been accepted by all our great men, while the Theopneusts, drawn from the laws of nature, never imposed upon any instructed intellect? The reason is instructed. Behind the veil of mythology the sage was quick to detect the march of the laws of ancient societies, the illusions and the passions of the human heart, and the symbols of pride and science.

"In Paganism all is human, imperfect, incomplete, uncertain, contradictory. It is not with metaphors nor with poetry that one explains God, that one speaks of the origin of the world, and reveals the laws of intelligence.

"What know they more than other mortals," he asks, "these gods so vaunted, these legislators of Greece and Rome? What more than other mortals was known to Numa, Lycurgus, the priests of India and Memphis, Confucius and Mahomet? Absolutely nothing. The theopneusts have told us nothing that is essential to our knowledge. Their Theopneusts are obscure and confused, and is not a religion at all.

"One sole religion," he argues, "accepts fully the natural law and appropriates its principles; one alone has the aim of a perpetual and public instruction. This is the religion of Christianity. With the Pagans, on the other hand, the natural law was unrecognized, disguised, modified by egoism and the exigencies of politics. It was tolerated, but not viewed as invested with any character of sacredness. Mythology was a temple, consecrated to force, to heroism, to science, to material benefits. The sages had no place there; indeed, they were the natural enemies of an idolatry which defiled nature."

Then comes this fine passage: "Penetrate into these Pagan sanctuaries, and you find neither order nor harmony, but positive chaos—

"A thousand contradictions, conflicts between the gods, the immobility of sculpture, divisions subversive of unity, parceling out of the divine attributes, sophisms of ignorance and presumption, profane festivals, the triumph of personal degradation, impurity and abomination worshipped, all kinds of corruption, which do not glorify, but dishonor God."

And he continues: "Are these religions and gods to compare with Christianity? For me I say no. I call all Olympus to my tribunal. I judge the gods, but I am very far from prostrating myself before such vain simulacra. The gods and legislators of India and China, of Rome and Athens, do not impose upon me. Not that I am at all unjust to them. No, I appreciate them at their just value, which I have measured. Without doubt many leaders whose existence and achievements remain fixed in the memory as images of order and power, as ideals of force and beauty, were not ordinary men. But we must reckon in the visible results of their efforts the ignorance prevailing in the early ages of the world. This ignorance was necessarily considerable since vice was deified as well as virtue. Violence, riches, all the signs of arrogance and power, love of pleasure, voluptuousness without limit, and the abuse of force, are salient traits in the biographies of the gods as they have come down to us in fable and poetry. I cannot see in Lycurgus, Numa, Confucius and Mahomet more than legislators who, holding the first rank in the State, sought the best solution of the social problem. I see nothing to suggest divinity. In fact they never themselves made any pretensions to it."

Having thus disposed of the claims of Paganism to human belief, Napoleon directs his discourse to those of Christianity. He turns to Christ, in whom he sees nothing of man.

"His Gospel, the singularity of His mysterious being, His apparition, His empire, His march through centuries and kingdoms—all this is for me a prodigy, an unsoundable mystery. His religion is a secret of His own, and flows from an intelligence which is certainly not the intelligence of a man. There is in it a profound originality which creates a series of new words and maxims. Jesus borrowed nothing from the sciences. One finds nothing in Him but the imitation of the example of His life. He persuades the disciples more by an appeal to sentiment than by any ostentatious display of method or of logic; nor does He impose upon them any preliminary studies or the knowledge of letters. All His religion consists in believing.

"Yet with all this simplicity, neither history nor humanity nor the centuries can present anything that will compare with the Gospel. Who else than God could produce such a type, such an ideal of perfection, equally exclusive and original, where none can add to or take away a single phrase—a book differing from all others existing, absolutely new, with nothing like it preceding or to follow.

"There is still another marvel to be noted, Christ awaited all from His death! Is that the invention of a man? No; on the contrary, it is a strange phenomenon, a superhuman confidence, an inexplicable reality. Having only a few simple disciples, He is condemned to death. He dies an object of contempt to the Jewish priests and of contempt to His own nation abandoned and denied by His own. And how could it be otherwise when He announced the fact in advance? I shall be taken and shall be crucified, all the world will abandon Me. My first disciple will deny Me at the beginning of My torture; but afterwards divine justice will be satisfied, original sin will be expiated with My Crucifixion, the bond between God and man will be renewed, and My death will be the life of My disciples. They will be stronger without Me than with Me; they will see Me rise again; I shall ascend to Heaven, and send to them

from there the Holy Spirit for their instruction; they will believe, they will preach, and they will persuade the whole world."

Thus was inaugurated a war having a duration of 300 years. "In this war all the kings and all the forces of the earth were ranged on one side; and on the other I see no army, but a mysterious energy; some men scattered here and there in all parts of the globe, having no other rallying sign than a common faith in the Cross. On one side all the rage and hate of violence; on the other, sweetness, moral courage, and infinite resignation. During 300 years a struggle of thought against brutality, of conscience against despotism, of the soul against the body, of virtue against the vices. The blood of Christians flows in streams. Victims die kissing the hand that kills them.

The soul alone protests, while the body is delivered to torture. Everywhere Christians succumb, and yet everywhere they are triumphant."

Much more might be quoted of this remarkable discourse, which as a whole makes one of the most powerful sermons on record. It is desirable, however, to reproduce some of his declarations in respect to Protestantism. What is their religion? They pretend to have the same religion as the Catholics, only they accept it in what they call its original purity of the Holy Scriptures, shorn of accretions introduced by men into the teachings. This (he said) is all very well, but presents a grave inconvenience. We are governed by laws contained in the Code; is it necessary, suppressing all the magistrates and all the tribunals, to place the Code in every person's hands, that he may find rules for his conduct? You have a difficulty with your neighbor; you will not consult a judge but a book, and you will draw from the text, in good faith, the reading most favorable to your own interest! Protestantism (he continued) was at its point of departure an adoption of the religious Code pure and simple, but it revised this Code, and interpreted and applied it at the individual will. Hence, we are not dealing with a religion, nor even with a heresy or ad error, but a road open to all heresies, errors, and individual fancies. We have a series of negations and demolitions of which no limit can be traced. Where does Protestantism begin, and where does it end? None can tell. It is called a religion of reason, which is convenient, since it is an invention of man.

Catholicism, on the contrary, is the religion of faith, because it is the word of God. It is true that it is an ocean of mysteries; but in addition to the fact that Protestantism admits almost all of them, it has particular qualifications. It is one, has never varied, and it cannot change. It is not the religion of some man, but the truth of the Councils and the Popes; which goes back without interruption to Christ, its author. It possesses all the characteristics of a natural and divine thing; it stands on a plane above our passions and vices; it is a sun which lights the soul with mystery and majesty; it is infinitely superior to our spirit, and notwithstanding this superiority, is suitable to the commonest intelligence; its virtue is a hidden virtue which is within man as the sap is within the tree.

MGR. RACICOT'S CONSECRATION

The consecration of Mgr. Racicot, chosen Coadjutor Bishop of Montreal, will take place in St. James Cathedral on Wednesday next at 10 a.m. The consecrating prelates will be Archbishop Bruchet himself, assisted by Archbishop Langevin, of St. Boniface, and Bishop Emard, of Valleyfield. The sermon will be preached by Bishop Archambault, of Joliette. Many bishops of Canada and the United States, and many priests, are expected to be present at the ceremony. On Monday last the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, for whom Mgr. Racicot was formerly chaplain, presented him with an episcopal robe, and a full set of church ornaments, and on the eve of his consecration his former classmates in Montreal College will present him with a crucifix. The Bishop-elect went Thursday night to the College of Philosophy for a retreat of a week preparatory to his consecration.

THE MASS.

When, How Often and for Whom the Holy Sacrifice May Be Offered.

(Catholic Transcript.)

According to a common law of the Church, Mass should not be celebrated before the dawn, nor after midday. By virtue of benign interpretation, the rule is taken to mean that the sacrifice should not be completed before the dawn, nor begun after the noon hour. By special indulgence of the Holy See, Mass may be begun here in America an hour before the dawn and an hour after midday.

In cases of special stringency a priest is allowed to celebrate even at an earlier hour. For instance, if it was in a country parish and one of his people was in his last agony, the pastor could celebrate after midnight in order to consecrate a host to be administered to the dying man. It is likewise permitted by the Holy See to say Mass earlier in the morning for the accommodation of considerable numbers. Thus they have 2 or 3 o'clock Masses in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Pittsburg and other cities for the accommodation of the newspaper men who prepare the great Sunday editions. On holy days of obligation Mass is frequently celebrated long before dawn in order to afford laboring people an opportunity of assisting before going to work.

Generally speaking a priest is suffered to say but one Mass a day. On Christmas he is suffered to say three. On Sundays and holy days of obligation he is allowed to offer the holy sacrifice twice in these cases: First, if he is pastor of a parish where there is but one priest, and where the church is not large enough to accommodate all the people at one service; second, if a second Mass is necessary to accommodate a notable number of people—provided, of course, a second priest is not conveniently to be had. Permission to duplicate or say two Masses on holy days of obligation, is granted at the discretion of the Bishop. It is his to determine whether or not the necessity is sufficiently grave to justify a departure from the common law of the Church.

Considered in itself, the Mass may be offered up for all men, just as Christ died for all. It has, however, seemed good to the Church to lay down certain rules restricting, in a measure, the celebration of the sacred mystery. She is justified in this, because the Mass is the greatest and most formal act of Catholic worship. He who offers it up in a public manner represents the Church, and his act is supposed to be sealed with the stamp of her approval. As her representative, he is expected to conform himself to her will.

The Mass may be offered up for all living members of the Church, whether just or sinners. It may be said for the just in order that the virtue may abound the more; for sinners in order that they may be converted from the evil of their ways. Matters become more complicated when we consider those without the pale. We may class these under the head of excommunicated and those who never belonged to the Church.

Excommunicated persons are of two kinds—those who are tolerated and those that are to be avoided. The great majority of Catholic theologians assert that it is allowable to offer the holy sacrifice publicly, or in the name of the Church, for those who labor under the milder form of excommunication. Pope Martin V. says that as we are not forbidden to communicate with such persons, even in things divine, it is allowable to pray for them publicly and publicly offer the holy sacrifice in their behalf.

It is not permitted to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass publicly and in the name of the Church for those excommunicated persons who are to be avoided by the faithful. When the Church solemnly cuts them off from her communion, she intends from that very act to withhold from them the benefits which come from the public offices of the Church. She does not, however, forbid the priest, in his private capacity, to offer up

the holy sacrifice for their conversion. If his charity prompts him to apply to such deluded persons the fruits of the morning oblation, the Church will not interfere with his pious intention.

We may, of course, offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass for the conversion of those who were never of the household of the faith. St. Paul called publicly upon his hearers to pray for "all men—for kings and all who were exalted." Now, among those who reigned and were seated in high places in St. Paul's day were many who were never in communion with the Church. At the Mass on Good Friday the Church prays for nearly everybody. So much for the living.

The Church recognizes three classes among the dead—the saints, the damned and the souls in Purgatory. The saints do not need the fruit of the Mass. They have nothing to gain—no sins to expiate. We may offer Masses for them, but not for their help. The damned are beyond help. Their works follow them, and they cannot repent.

Mass cannot be publicly offered up for those who are solemnly excommunicated, and who die without having shown any repentance or having been absolved either before or after death. The priest may, according to a most probable opinion, say private Masses for dead heretics and schismatics. Public Masses for them are prohibited, since such a practice would make the weak and illogical conclude that all forms of religion are equally good. Don't get excommunicated; don't go into schism; don't be a heretic, and then you can count upon the suffrages of the Church after death.

The Coming Crash in Russia.

In a vigorous article in the North American Review, the veteran champion of political liberty, Karl Blind, discusses "The coming crash in Russia." He pours scorn upon Pobiedonostoff, whom he holds up to opprobrium as "Russia's grand inquisitor," and "the clericalist Tartuffe," because that dignitary has consistently used his influence with the weak-minded Czar to prevent him from heeding the just demands of his people. As proving that the dissatisfaction with the autocracy is deep-seated and confirmed, Prof. Blind refers to the armed outbreak against the government in 1825, and he gives an account of the noblemen and army officers who were involved in that unsuccessful attempt to establish a constitutional rule in Russia. Now, however, circumstances are more propitious to the popular cause, and the discontent is much more widespread, as is indicated by the various events to which Prof. Blind alludes; and he declares that, look wherever we may, the walls of the great prison-house, called the Czar's empire are showing cracks and signs of crumbling. Referring to the public sentiment in Russia toward the war now waging, Prof. Blind says:

"Until lately the Russian landowner was rather averse to ideas of political opposition. The war has roused him. His laborers are taken from him by military mobilization. The wages he has to pay rise correspondingly in the absence of sufficient hands. His produce cannot be disposed of, as the army administration has seized hold of all the railway trains. There is a dangerous fermentation among the peasantry, threatening the life and the property of the landowner. Industry, too, is paralyzed among the manufacturing class and its workmen. There is great fear as to the impossibility of maintaining a gold standard, which is but artificially kept up by continual loans abroad. Family life has become terribly disturbed, the upper ten thousand being now also drawn into the military vortex. Any one going to the Far East looks upon his forced departure as the possible end of his life; for it is generally held that what happens in that distant region is no longer regular warfare, but mere massacre. Hence, all Russia is filled with hatred of this war, and of the political state of things which has brought it about."

Unless we smile and make glad is it not unreasonable to expect the same of others?

10,836 PLEDGES.

Results of a Month's Work by the "English Father Mathew" in Australia.

"When Father Hays returned to Melbourne on Saturday," says the Advocate, of that city, "his few days in the country districts had yielded him 3822 pledges, making a total of 15,835 since his arrival last month. On his way to the country he was met at various railway stations, as the train was passing through, by crowds of people, with priests and Protestant Ministers, who welcomed him to Australia and wished his work God-speed."

From the above it is evident that the wonderful success achieved in England and Ireland by "the English Father Mathew," as Father Hays is called, is being duplicated in Australia. There is an account of one of the meetings held in the last-named country:

"At Castlemaine he addressed in the new Town Hall the largest assembly ever seen in the district. Over 1200 persons were present, and hundreds were turned away from the doors. The Mayor, who presided, supported by the clergy of all denominations and all the leading townspeople, said he was delighted to see such a great audience to hear so fine a man as Father Hays, who was one of the greatest leaders against the greatest enemy that had ever threatened the manhood of the world."

"It was a unique sight when Father Hays, amid such surroundings, came forward in his Roman cassock, and the scene was yet more remarkable when the vast audience arose and cheered and demonstrated their welcome. He declared himself a Catholic priest who had devoted his life to the work of saving his fellowmen from the curse and slavery of intemperance. He made an earnest appeal for personal total abstinence, and 550 persons took the pledge."

In St. Mary's Church at Kyneton the great audience assembled included Rev. Canon Bishop, of St. Paul's Church of England; Rev. A. Bishop, and many adherents of other churches. Later a "citizens' reception" was held in a public hall at Kyneton. The place was "packed to the doors fully one hour before the time announced for the proceedings to commence. Galleries, passages and entrances were all crowded, and large numbers were unable to obtain an entrance. It was a wonderful gathering of all creeds and classes. The Catholic priests, clergy of the Church of England, Wesleyan, Methodist and Presbyterian ministers were present. Father Hays spoke for one hour and administered the pledge to about 500 persons."

Convent of Ste Genevieve Burned Down

A shadow was cast over Good Friday for people of Montreal, and neighborhood by the news of the disastrous fire with loss of life at the convent of Ste. Genevieve. One Sister, ten pupils, and four old people were the victims.

Of the convent itself, nothing now remains but a heap of ruins. The nuns were driven from their beds in night attire, and all their worldly possessions perished in the flames. The Superiors and the little band of Sisters found refuge in the Presbytery, while Dr. Ladouceur turned his home into a hospital and treated those who were injured at the fire.

Generosity is growing less fashionable. Self-interest is so much more in accordance with modern ideas.

Those who see evil in everything have perverted minds and are not to be trusted. There is some good in most things, though few fail to discover it.

They who fail after earnest striving are surely entitled to applause. Failure is no dishonor. It should only spur us on to greater effort.

Don't wait until your friend is dead to land him aid. If he is worthy of your love do not hesitate to show it upon him while he yet lives.

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