

THE TRUE WITNESS  
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LAYS OF THE COLPORTEURS.

(Concluded.)

The Panther sure the noblest next the hind,  
And fairest creature of the spotted kind.  
Ah! could her inborn stains be washed away—  
She were too good to be a beast of prey.—DRYDEN.

In the first of these Lays, we took the liberty of pointing out some of the absurd falsehoods periodically published against the Catholic clergy of Canada, calling upon the office-bearers of the French Canadian Missionary Society, to speak out like men, to give the names of the accused parties at full length, and to substantiate their charges. In the second, we addressed a few remarks to the members of the Society, pointing out the dangerous consequences that may be expected to result from their tampering with the faith of our simple, yet religious and honest, habitants, —and how frail a foundation the authority of a pedlar offered, whereupon to rear a superstructure of Faith. To-day, we propose to ourselves, to consider whether members—clergymen, calling themselves "ordained" priests—of the church of England, can consistently with the allegiance they owe to their own church, become or remain members of the French Canadian Missionary Society.

That Baptist and Brownist—Congregationalist and Mormonist—Jumpers and Independents—New, and Old, Connections—Shakers, and—all! well, we can't go on with the whole lot of them. Adam, indeed, when fresh from the hands of his Maker, and ere sin had dimmed the brightness of his intelligence—Adam was able to give "names to all cattle, and to every beast of the field."—Genesis 11 ch. 20 v. But as we can lay no claims to the intellectual endowments of an Adam, we must be excused attempting a nomenclature more difficult, by far.

That all the different sects then, into which Protestantism is split up, whose name is Legion, should form themselves in battle array against the Church of Christ, and utter such foul breath to her disparagement, does not surprise us—does not vex us. "It is their nature to," as the divine Watts would sweetly sing—"It is the nature of the living creature," which every conventicle brings forth, "each after his kind."—Gen. 1 c. 24 v.—and there is no more to be said about it.

But it does excite within us a feeling of surprise, not unmingled with regret, when we behold members of the church of England—clergymen who profess to have received their priests orders from the hands of Anglican and apostolically-descended Bishops, uniting themselves to, and making common cause with, the enemies, not of our church only, but also of their church—we repeat it—the bitter, the irreconcilable enemies of their church. The spotted panther, beautiful though spotted, is no less hated by the "insatiate wolf" the "bristled boar," and the "bloody bear," than is the milk-white hind.

Let us not be misunderstood. As Catholics, we behold and weep over the "great gulf" betwixt us and the church of England;—a great gulf, which we cannot make one effort to cross over to go to her, but which we hope, and sincerely believe, her children will soon cross, (as, indeed, they are daily doing,) in order to come to us.

In the meantime, the difference of our respective creeds cannot prevent us from thinking and from speaking of the members of the church of England, her clergy, and her dignitaries, with sincere respect. When we speak of them, we know we speak of gentlemen and scholars, unsurpassed by any in the world. In a word, we know that we are speaking of the men of Oxford and of Cambridge. How then can we speak of them but respectfully!

Catholics know well how to distinguish betwixt the clergy and the bishops of the church of England, and all the "spawn of the conventicle." They are not apt to mistake a red brick meeting-house for Westminster Abbey, and a very slight inspection is sufficient to convince them of the immense difference there is between the liturgies of the church of England, and the maudlin drivellings of some enthusiastic, but ill-advised tallow-chandler.

Alas! then, that members of the church of England should themselves do their utmost to destroy this feeling of respect which we entertain towards them. Alas! that they should be so forgetful of what is due to themselves—to their dignity,—to the sacred office of priest, to which they lay claim,—to that church from whose bishops they have received their sacerdotal character, as to mix themselves up with societies, with associates, altogether unworthy of them. They ought to be ashamed to be seen marching thro' Coventry with such ragged companions. That's flat. Why, they can't muster a whole Confession of Faith amongst them. What spirit of self-destruction has inspired them to become members of the F. C. M. Society? Or, if they must needs enroll themselves members of that comical society, why do they not first cease from calling themselves members—from exercising the sacerdotal functions of a church whose dogmas they despise, and whose pre-

tensions they set at naught? Is it not written that "no man can serve two masters"? He must hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot be members, both of the church of England, and of the F. C. M. Society. Let us then compare the standards of the F. C. M. Society, with the liturgy and the thirty-nine articles of the church of England.

By the III Article of the constitution of the F. C. M. Society, it is enacted "that no person shall be admitted a minister, office-bearer, &c., whose religious sentiments are not decidedly in accordance with the great evangelical doctrines of the Protestant faith." The first of which is thus defined—as a belief in "the fallen and totally depraved condition of human nature." Certainly this article of faith of the F. C. M. Society, is not in accordance with the ninth article of the 39 Articles of the church of England, where we read that "Original sin is that whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness;" but not a word about man's total depravity. Nor is this an unimportant distinction. The "very far gone" may be reconciled with the free-will of Erasmus, whilst the "total depravity" leads inevitably to the serf-will of Luther.

By the V. Article of the constitution of the F. C. M. Society, it is enacted that instructions be given to all their agents, and ministers—(we wonder how priests of the church of England like being classified with the motley group of ministers)—"to abstain from urging their own peculiar denominational views as to doctrine, or church government." Certainly, the man who abstains from urging on those, whose creed he is striving to change, his own views as to doctrine, cannot be very firmly convinced as to the truth of what he professes to believe. But let us see again what the church of England says upon this point. In the eighth of the 39 Articles, we find it written that—"The three creeds, Nicene creed, Athanasius's creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' creed"—ought thoroughly to be received and believed. But how can they be received if they are not proposed? How believed, if they are not taught to the unhappy men upon whose faith the F. C. M. Society is practising?

Again, with regard to church government, it is laid down in the preface to the form of making, ordaining, and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons, that "It is evident unto all men, that these orders have existed in the church of Christ, from the time of the Apostles." Hence we may conclude that the church of England insists upon their necessity, now, and for the future; and, also, that she cannot recognize any society, wherein these orders do not exist, as forming a portion of the church of Christ.—Although, if a member of the society, being a member of the church of England, were to offer his opinions upon the proper form of church government, he would probably be kicked out of the society,—we find A. Solandt is no way scrupulous about giving his opinions on this important topic. Vide Record, June, 1848, where A. Solandt informs us he spent the whole night—for eight hours, even until one o'clock, with an old schoolmaster, discussing questions about Jesus Christ and Church Government. The Record, for December, 1849, informs that the colporteurs "have much need to have their hands held up." We think they have much need to have their mouths stopped.

Again, the F. C. M. Society does not insist upon the necessity of infant baptism; and we strongly suspect that, if their opinions were more fully known, it would be found that the great majority of that heterogeneous body deny the vital doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Let us see what are the opinions of the church of England upon these two points.

In the twenty-seventh of the 39 Articles, the church of England declares that "The baptism of young children is, in anywise, to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ. In her liturgies and in her catechism, the church of England proclaims her belief in the all-important doctrine of baptismal regeneration, in no ambiguous language.

Nor is this all. There are still greater discrepancies between the teaching of the F. C. M. Society and the doctrines of the church of England.

The F. C. M. Society teaches, or at least tolerates the teaching of, pure Nestorianism—a heresy condemned by the council general of Ephesus, A. D. 431, whose authority, as one of the first four general councils, we always thought the Anglican church recognized—but, at all events, a heresy condemned by the second article of the 39 Articles of the church of England.

Let us turn once more to the legends of the colporteurs.

For instance, we read in the Missionary Record, for the month of December, 1849, the opinions, concerning the personality of the Saviour, of some six wretched individuals, who have been debauched by the preaching of A. S.,—initials, designating, we suppose, our old friend, Andre Solandt, whose evangelical love for truth we have already had occasion to point out.

"(Col. Loquitur)—I asked them several questions concerning the state of their souls."

Cool, this!—rather. Only fancy a pedlar asking you, "how your soul felt this morning,—or what experiences you have had since breakfast."

"They answered, that if they were called to die now, they should hope that Jesus, the Son of God, who was a man upon the earth, and who is one-with-the-Father, would receive them." (The italics are our own.)

From the above sentence, we certainly would not suspect that the F. C. M. Society taught that Christ was as much God when upon earth, as he is now, when seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. But here is evidence as to their teaching, more conclusive, which we find in the same society's Record, for June, 1848.

"From the Journal of J. Vessot.  
After a long discussion, a woman said to me that the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God. I said no. With the help of God, I was enabled to make her understand that the Virgin was the Mother of Jesus Christ, as man, but not as God. I cannot tell you how surprised she was when she comprehended this."

No wonder at all if the poor woman were surprised. We were when we read it. We had been taught, and had ever believed until the advent of J. Vessot, that, by the Hypostatic union of the Godhead, with the Manhood, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, was formed one Christ—perfect God and perfect man—one sole person, of which the Virgin Mary was the Mother. However, the F. C. M. Society intends to set us right upon this important point, by renewing amongst us in Canada, in the XIX. century, the old blasphemous heresies of the Patriarch of Constantinople in the V. But let us see how far this Nestorianism coincides with the doctrines of the church of England, respecting the Incarnation. First, she professes, in the Athanasian creed that "it is necessary to everlasting salvation that man believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ." And in the second of the 39 Articles, she thus defines her own belief:—

"The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, . . . took man's nature, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person never to be divided."

No, not even by J. Vessot, colporteur, or the whole of the F. C. M. Society, to boot.

And yet in spite of all this, there are gentlemen, and clergymen, members of the church of England, members of the F. C. M. Society. They have a perfect, an incontestable right, to make themselves ridiculous, but they should not, certainly, try and bring disgrace upon their church.

And the Bishops, the Fathers of the Anglican Church; what are they about? They look on, and hold their peace. Are they unwilling or are they unable to prevent such scandals? Is it through fear or through impotence that they are silent? We know not. In either case—alas! for the dignity of a Bishop of the Church of England. How are the mighty fallen?

"Ichabod—Ichabod, for the glory is departed!!!"  
Here endeth the Lays of the Colporteurs.

WHO THE MARONITES ARE.

"There are none so blind as those who will not see." This is an axiom whose truth we every day see exemplified in "the affairs of men," and it especially applies to our worthy contemporaries of the super-evangelical school. Now it is a positive fact that everything relating to the Catholic Church is seen by them through a distorted medium, while all the manifold proofs of her divine origin, which stand forth before the nations in unmistakable characters, are by them seen not at all, purely because they will not see—their vision being darkened by the thick mist of prejudice. Thus a recent article of ours, having for its heading, "WHO ARE THE MARONITES?" has called forth certain captious opposition, though it contained not a single assertion incompatible with the strictest truth. We answered the question in a general way, deeming it unnecessary to descend into any very minute details, whereupon a certain Britannicus in the Witness takes upon him to answer our query, on the hypothesis that we had mis-stated the facts. Now let us see what he has to say on the subject. First he objects to our saying that the Maronites "have preserved the faith pure and unsullied, as transmitted to them by the Apostles." And asserts that they were Monothelites, and thereby forfeited their claim to Apostolicity. This is just as fair a specimen of Protestant sinuosity in argument as one could desire to see. Any one who is at all conversant with the history of the Church, will at once remember the Monothelite heresy, (which had after all but a short duration,) and how widely it was diffused throughout the Eastern churches. It is a historical fact that one of its greatest promoters, Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, was by birth a Syrian, and that this insidious poison had tainted the greater portion of his native province. It may then be inferred that the Church of Syria fell from her high position—she did—it is true—but, thanks to the God of all goodness, the Christians of those regions were not to remain long in the darkness of error—they had suffered too much for His holy name to be long abandoned by Him, and after the lapse of some years, they were again gathered into "the one fold" in which they now rest secure. But their temporary crime was washed away by their subsequent repentance and submission to the Chief Pastor of the Church, and their Apostolicity can in no way be questioned—they erred for a brief season—they repented and came back to "their father's house," like the prodigal son of old—they abjured their transient error, and embraced again the faith planted amongst them by the Apostles—why should it be denied then that they are of Apostolic origin?—The prodigal son was none the less his father's son for having wandered for a time in a far country. But this Britannicus is evidently aware of the great importance of this question. He knows, or ought to know, that the Syrian Catholics have preserved the faith unsullied as regards Transubstantiation and the other great mysteries, for even the Monothelites were never so far carried away as to doubt those articles of faith. Their error was that there was but one will in Christ; but we have yet to

learn that they ever denied His real presence in the Eucharist, or the power left in the Church of forgiving sins, or His having established a visible representative of His power on earth.

And, then, how this correspondent of the Witness brings the precious fact that "Pope Honorius, one of the Infallibles, was of the same opinion, and was censured for it?" Happily for the memory of that good Pontiff, his orthodoxy can be as fully established as any other fact in ecclesiastical history. For our own part, we should deeply mourn had we the slightest reason to believe that even one of the successors of St. Peter had ever erred in faith while occupying the papal chair; but on this head our minds are at rest, for even Honorius, although his revered name is so flippantly quoted in connexion with heresy, was as sound in faith—and in every distinct article thereof—as is his present successor, Pius the Ninth, than whom a more excellent pastor has not yet governed the flock.

With regard to His Holiness, Pope Honorius, it is only to be said that the arch heretics of his days were as subtle and as cunning as heresiarchs are and have been, and the Pontiff, however firm and lively his faith, was somewhat deficient in worldly wisdom. In his great anxiety to preserve peace in the Church, he was prevailed upon to remain silent at a time when the wiser course would have been to arise at once and hurl the anathema of the Church against the infant heresy. But he was induced by the sophistical arguments of Sergius, to hold back, and the duty of denouncing the Monothelite heresy devolved upon his successor. Now here stands the fact as we find it in ecclesiastical history: "Sergius had the artifice to impose for a while on the Pope Honorius, by a letter full of craft, dissimulation, and falsehood. He persuaded him, by captious expressions, to tolerate a silence on the questions of one or two wills in Christ, in order to prevent disturbances and scandal among the ignorant, who might be shocked if the question of two operations was to be agitated. It is, however, evident, from the most authentic monuments, that Honorius never assented to the error of the Monothelites, but always adhered to the truth, and held with St. Leo, and the Catholic Church, the doctrine of two wills, contrary and opposite to one another; that of the flesh, and that of the spirit—that is to say, a will of concupiscence, which revolts against the spirit. Honorius was undoubtedly wrong in agreeing for some time to be silent on the article in question, because this indiscreet, ill-timed silence, though not so designed, might be deemed by some a kind of connivance. He should have been more active in extinguishing the error in its first rise, when the sparks appeared; for a rising heresy seeks to carry on its work under ground without noise, it being a fire which gradually spreads itself under cover."

It was for this "ill-timed silence," then, that Honorius was censured in the general council called to condemn Monothelism, and not (as this Britannicus ignorantly asserts,) for having been of the same opinion. Moreover, were he better acquainted with Church history, or candid enough to admit the fact, he would know that many respectable writers of those times, have set down the insertion of Honorius' name in the list of the censured, as a pure forgery. But without going so far into the question, we pronounce it either a gross mistake or a grievous falsehood that the Pope Honorius ever favored Monothelism or any other heresy, and we have positive proof (if it be required,) to support our assertion.

For the rest, the distinctive title, Maronites, took its rise amongst the Syrian Christians, from the illustrious St. Maro, who founded many monasteries in the mountain region of Libanus in the fifth century, and though these monks were so unhappy as to fall into the Monothelite error for some time—which is not very surprising considering their isolated position—yet so soon as they had again an opportunity of communicating with orthodox Catholics, they hastened to recant their error, and not only "professed a sort of orthodoxy," but became again as they had been before, faithful children of the Church.

With respect to "retaining their own rites," that constitutes no essential difference—it is merely in the ceremonial part of worship that they differ from us—their doctrines are the same, and their practices of religion. They have had for many ages a college in Rome, which has done good service in the Church, and produced many eminent men. We should like to hear Britannicus or any other say to a Maronite priest or layman, "You are not of the Catholic—the Roman Church—your worship is different, and you do not hold by the celibacy of the clergy." "Why, he would reply, "it is very strange if we are not Catholics as you say—we believe, on all the fundamental points of faith, precisely what the Church believes, and faith, you will allow, is the principle—the life and soul of religion. We are, therefore, in communion with the Church of Rome, and have the very closest bond of union with our common pastor, for we have our principal college located under his very eye, and under his especial tutelage. Then, as to the rites which you say we observe in contradistinction from the Church of Rome, it never enters our minds to think that a point of difference. The same power that invested the sacred mysteries with the garniture of ceremony, can modify, or fashion it as she pleases, or take it away altogether—it is not her ceremonies that are unchangeable—it is her doctrines; therefore, it is of little consequence whether we of the East have our religious ceremonies exactly the same as have our brethren of the Western Churches—we believe as they do—we journey heavenward by their road of mortification and self-denial—we invoke, as they do, the powerful protection of the Saints who reign with God—we are then Catholics—Catholics in heart and soul—in faith and in spirit. Go, thou cavalier against the known truth, go and learn humility—the first of Christian virtues, and then thou too wilt have thine eyes opened to the truth, and thou too wilt do as my nation has done; recant the errors of the past and