

The True Witness

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1873.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.

Friday, 19—Ember Day. Of the Feria. Saturday, 20—Ember Day. Vigil. Of the Feria. Sunday, 21—Fourth in Advent. Monday, 22—St. Thomas, Ap. Tuesday, 23—Of the Feria. Wednesday, 24—Fast. Vigil of Christmas. Thursday, 25—Nativity of Our Lord. Christmas Day.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Bazine trial has come to an end, and, as might have been foreseen, has resulted in a verdict of guilty. Sentence—death, and degradation from rank and honors, but accompanied with a unanimous recommendation to mercy. In consequence, the sentence of death has been commuted to twenty years imprisonment, and the public ceremony of degradation will, we suppose, be dispensed with. Bazine is an old soldier, and has won honors on many a hard fought field, having risen from the ranks. His career is now closed, unless, indeed, the whirligig of time should bring about a Bonapartist restoration, in which case his sentence would be reversed, for his sin lay in this: that he consulted the interests of his old master, rather than those of France.

The news from the seat of war near the Gold Coast is not cheering. Sir Garnet Wolseley is struck down with fever, and though it may be true that the attack is slight, still its effects upon the system are severe; and when convalescent the victim to it is always more or less enfeebled, and liable to another attack. It will be well for Great Britain when it shall be able to get rid of this nasty little war.

THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AT VILLA MARIA.—Throughout the entire Catholic world, Monday, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, was a day of general rejoicing and triumph. From the splendid temples of mighty cities and the humble churches of quiet villages, from secluded cloisters and silent monasteries, rose up like thrilling songs of homage, poems of triumph in honor of the Immaculate Conception. Downwards from our glorious Pontiff on whom Heaven conferred the great privilege of fastening this last most perfect gem in the glittering diadem that adorns our Lady's brow, to the humblest school girl in our convents, all thought of Mary on that day; prelates, priests, Christian statesmen and men of science, princes and Kings, lovingly hailed her "conceived without sin."

Here, also, amidst ourselves, dwellers in *Ville Marie*, city founded in her honor, called by her name, has the festival been joyously celebrated; and in no place more worthily than in that chosen spot at which Mary is at once Mother and Mistress, the Convent of Villa Maria, Monklands. That day was selected for the solemn benediction of a statue, worthy in its chaste beauty of Mary herself, and forming a suitable addition to the new altar of the chapel, declared by those who have studied the architecture of the altars of Italy, a perfect *chef d'œuvre*.

Ah! the good sisters know well the secret of imparting to such festivals a holy and irresistible charm; and even worldly eyes grew moist with tears as the line of fair young girls, white robed and white veiled, filed slowly in; and amid the thrilling tumult of sweet music and fresh clear voices, took off their snowy crowns, and deposited them with their glowing floral offerings, at Our Lady's feet. The scene was one to be long remembered. There they knelt, those favored children of Mary, their youthful heads bowed lowly in prayer, innocent, happy in the present, whatever be the sorrows or trials that may await them in later years; while calmly and lovingly the newly blessed statue of Mary smiled down on them from amid the starry lights, sweet flowers and clouds of incense surrounding it. Pure and ineffaceable indeed must be the sacred influences of such scenes on their young hearts—deep and true must be the foundations of virtue laid within

them; and though later they may be called by circumstances to mix in glittering fetes where the Prince of this world will be more honored than Mary or her humble Son, the recollection of what they have seen and heard in Villa Maria will surely prove a talisman powerful enough to guard the priceless treasure of their innocence.

"THE PROTESTANT BISHOP OF MANCHESTER ON THE CHURCH."—This is the heading of a paragraph in the London *Times* from which we learn what are the views of Dr. Frazer, and we suppose of his brethren on the Government bench of Bishops, upon the great questions now distracting the Parliamentary Israel. The said Bishop has been lecturing in the interests of the Missionary societies; it is needless to add that he is sternly anti-Roman; but it may be doubted whether after all he has not rather served than injured the Church against which he took up his parable. Indeed he most emphatically asserted no doubt unconsciously, pronounced sentence of condemnation upon Protestantism, and appended the fundamental principles of Romanism. Thus it came about.

He found himself called upon to denounce the liberalism and prevalent indifference of the age to dogmatic truth. "We allowed" he complained "every man to do just as he liked, and almost say just what he liked, and people had got into such a way that they thought one faith was as good as another, and did not go like the Apostles to their Master and say 'tell us what is the truth.'"

No; there are amongst Protestants none who so act, for by so doing they would renounce the fundamental principle of Protestantism, the right of private judgment. Beside to whom should they go? Who is there, or what is there on earth to-day; who, that stands as towards all Christians in the position that whilst on earth Christ stood towards the Apostles. To Him men in those days might address the question "tell us what is truth" for He was an infallible teacher; but according to the teachings of Protestantism, of the one dogma common to all who reject the Catholic Church, there is on earth no infallible teacher, no living authority to whom men can address the question—"What is truth?"

But there is the Bible; and surely a Protestant Bishop directed his hearers to that Bible as capable and alone capable of answering the all important question. Not a bit of it. It is not to the Bible that man must go to learn the truth, but to the Church of England whose mouth-piece is the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Again we copy from the *Times* :—

"The Church of England was the only Church handed down to them from the Apostles, and no man was at liberty to take his Bible and make a religion out of it according to his own view."

But that Dr. Frazer is an Apostolic man, and would not do such a thing, we should suspect him of reading *Don Juan*, and should conclude that the passage wherein the author eulogises the Church of England at the expense of all other sects—"I know that all save England's Church have shammed, &c." must have been lingering in his memory. What the Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, and Baptists, and Methodists, and all the other Protestant sects thus summarily unchurched and disposed of will say to it; how far the Church of Scotland will submit to be told that its claims to Apostolic origin are but a sham, we care not; but what does interest us is to see how Protestants in England will stand being told by one in authority, and a high government official that "no man was at liberty to take his Bible and make a religion out of it, according to his own view." Why? a Papist could not have spoken in stronger terms against the right of "private judgment." Shade of Chillingworth! if to your present abode, the words of the Protestant divine could penetrate, what would you say of the Religion of Protestants in the nineteenth century?

But, intellectually speaking these Anglican bishops are most rare monsters. They have two voices, one to speak well of Church authority, another or backward voice which can but utter foul speeches and detract; with one they assert as against Methodists, and other dissenters the Catholic principle of authority; with the other as against Catholics they glorify the right of private judgment and an open bible. For our Bishop of Manchester having in the morning denounced the latter principle, in the evening of the same day continued his lecture, placing the glory of the Establishment, not in its Apostolicity, not in its being the only church now in the world handed down from the Apostles; or in its being the "purest in faith and government that the world had ever seen since the days of the Apostles"—(this was not said as a joke); but in this, that "they had a free and open Bible in their own tongue put into every man's hand," which same Bible, in the morning he had told us "no man was at liberty to take and make a religion out of according to his own view." To give the Bible to the people with this restriction is like

giving Master Tommy a drum, with strict injunctions not to beat it.

Dr. Frazer of Manchester to use another military comparison, is one of the great guns of the Establishment, put forward to defend by the heavy fire of his legio, the Church by Act of Parliament established, against the assaults of Romanism on the one hand, of Dissent and Infidelity on the other. Is it to be wondered at that an institution defended by such men, and by such weapons is fast becoming in England the laughing stock of all intelligent persons!

A STATESMAN.—What is meant by, in the United States, the word "statesman?" We shall search the dictionary in vain for an answer:—Webster and Worcester alike are dumb on the topic, and still should we be left to exercise our wits and patience were it not for the celebrated Boss Tweed now appropriately clad in convict attire, more glorious by far than the striped lilies of the field. He has furnished a definition of the word "statesman" as understood on this continent which will last as long as the English language endures. As in England "respectable" means the keeping of a horse and gig, so the word "statesman" in the United States denotes a thief, one who robs the public treasury. "I am of no particular religion," said the great man, upon his admission within the pleasant walls of the Penitentiary, whereupon he was duly registered as a Protestant. Questioned as to his business, he described himself simply as "a statesman." It is said that this retired statesman is about to enliven his leisure hours, and edit the public by the writing of a general confession of his political career, with full particulars of his associates. 'Twill make a wondrous funny book.

MR. ANGLIN.

At a banquet given some weeks ago in honor of the retired Ministers, Mr. O'Connor, late Postmaster-General, said:

"Although he had no political sympathies with Mr. Anglin; although they had never pulled together on general political questions, still he would have felt somewhat refreshed, he would have felt that those people who had been proclaiming their love for Irishmen had been somewhat sustained if they had taken Mr. Anglin into the Government—and a most powerful ally he would be."

On nomination-day in St. John, N.B., Mr. Burpee, Minister of Customs, addressing his constituents, bore testimony to Mr. Anglin's numerous merits as follows:—

"From what he knew of the men who had been fighting the battles of the Opposition, there were none whose ability and experience rendered them far more entitled to it (the office he himself held), and among them he might mention Mr. Anglin, whose character for ability and consistency stands high in the Dominion."

To this graceful tribute, Mr. DeVeber, another candidate, added one of his own:—

"Socially and in point of ability, Mr. Anglin is the equal of any man in the Dominion."

And the *Toronto Globe*, the *Ottawa Times* and *Citizen*, the *Hamilton Times*, and numerous French papers, including the *Moniteur Acadien* (N.B.), have proclaimed Mr. Anglin's worth, and lauded his sterling consistency and honesty.

Therefore by both political friends and opponents—what can be said of few others—Mr. Anglin is looked upon as a statesman of superior abilities and untarnished record.

Why then has he not been taken into the new Cabinet by the men to whom, when in Opposition, he gave a loyal and hearty support?

Will some one of the numerous organs explain, not as the *Globe* has attempted to do, but in a manly way without quibble or shuffle?

The Irish Catholics of the Dominion await this explanation; they are entitled to it; and if they do not receive it, they will be prepared to turn the ballot to good account at the next general election.

WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.

SHORT SERMONS FOR SINCERE SOULS.

No. 47.

"For from the heart come forth evil thoughts adulteries fornications," &c.

Hitherto, Christian soul, we have only considered the external causes of impurity; we have only, as it were, stormed the outworks of the great citadel. Were we to stop here, we should indeed have done little towards dislodging the enemy, because he would still be firmly seated in his stronghold, and would thence be able to defy our greatest efforts. The citadel of impurity is the human heart. It is not I that say this; it is Jesus Christ. Rebuking the Pharisees for their strict observance of outward ceremonies, whilst they neglected the interior spirit, he reminds them that "from the heart come evil thoughts, adulteries fornications," &c. Would! oh would, Christian soul, that all men would put aside all impure desires and thoughts, because the citadel of impurity would then be empty; it would no longer have any power for evil.

The Old Law did not extend to interior thoughts. It condemned interior sins, it is true, since we find covetousness, whether of our neighbour's wife or of his goods, condemned in the ninth and tenth commandments, but it had no penalties no expiations for them. It had purifications and sacrifices for all exterior transgressions of the Law, but none for interior transgressions. It ordained the purification of the body, of the house, of the garments; but it had no salutary bathing, no expiatory sacrifice for the cleansing of a heart soiled and polluted by evil thoughts and impure desires. Hence it was that Jesus Christ whilst he did not abrogate the Old Law, yet added to it and extended it so as to make it a New Law. "You have heard," he says, that it was said to them of old, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' but I say to you (Matt. XV.)—you shall not think of adultery." And from that moment, Christian soul, the Sacrament of Penance commonly called Confession, became necessary. The Old Law contemplated only the punishment or expiation of exterior sins, and therefore no interior tribunal was provided; but the moment Jesus Christ, by those words: You have heard that it was said to them of old, and but I say to you and extended the law to the punishing of interior sins, that moment an interior tribunal with power to loose or bind became necessary and was confided in due time to St. Peter and his successors. It belongs to the Law of Jesus Christ to descend into the uttermost depths of the human heart—to throw open its most intricate folds and to sit in judgment over its most secret thoughts; which Jesus Christ himself declared are the things that defile a man, XV. 20. And here, Christian soul, arises a grave question because of almost daily recurrence. Are impure thoughts always a mortal sin? To so grave a question, and one of the same time of so great difficulty, I must endeavour to give you as plain and simple an answer as the subject will admit of. First then you must know, that as it is utterly impossible for us to prevent impure thoughts from arising in our minds at some time or another, so it is no sin to be afflicted with them. The greatest Saints were perhaps even more tempted by them than you. St. Paul, who for his supereminent faith and zeal was transported to the third heavens, had nevertheless to battle so fiercely against a "sting of the flesh," that he cried out in anguish to God to be freed from it. The blessed Angela of Foligno was so rudely attacked with these temptations that she excited the pity and drew tears from the eyes of those to whom she recited her battles. St. Benet threw himself into a thorn bush, St. Francis plunged into a pond of freezing water, in order to overcome the attacks of impure desires. Christian soul, shrink not from these temptations—at least not on the score that they sully your purity. Were these great Saints, think you, less beloved of God because they had been assailed thereby? Was St. Paul less an Apostle because he had felt the stings of the flesh? Were St. Benet and St. Francis less holy because they had felt the goadings of impure desires? No, Christian soul, assuredly not. That sting of the flesh felt by St. Paul added the title *Soldier* to that of *Apostle*, and every time he overcame it there was added the third title *Conqueror*. No, Christian soul, it is no disgrace to a garrison to be attacked; the only disgrace is not to repel the attack; the only fear is not to have strength enough to overcome the assailants. The true soldier sighs for war and for the camp. He feels that as he lies in ease and idleness in his barracks, he is laying up no laurels, he is earning no rewards, he is fulfilling no vocation; nay, he even doubts his own manhood. But when he has been in battle, when he has done his duty as a soldier should, he then knows his strength and feels that he has not lived in vain. Again, a king confided to a certain general a fortress of great importance to hold it against all comers. An emissary arrives from the enemy bearing a letter to that General offering a large sum of money, if he will give up the

place. The General, not knowing the contents, opens the letter and begins to read. At length the intention of the letter becomes manifest; the General throws it to the ground, tramples upon it and loads the emissary with reproaches. Has that General's honor suffered any diminution of its brightness by the reception of that letter. No.—Neither, Christian soul, does your purity suffer any diminution by the mere attacks of impure temptations. Mark then this step.—Temptations to purity are in themselves no injury to purity even though they should be continuous haunting us day and night. So long as we give not assent to them they cannot injure purity. Let us now go a step further. If this General at the moment of receiving this letter knew the nature of its contents; and consented to receive it, or if after discovering its contents by reading the letter, he manifested no displeasure, might not his King justly suspect his fidelity? Most assuredly he might. I do not say remember, that he had thereby become unfaithful, but this I do say, he had at least rendered his fidelity deserving of suspicion. So with you, Christian soul, God has given to you the important city of your soul to be defended against all his enemies. The devil seeks to obtain possession of that city from God and sends to you his emissary with the letter of impure desires. If the moment you discover the nature of this letter you do not cast it to the ground, trample it under foot and load the emissary with reproaches depend upon it, that moment you render yourself open to suspicion of disloyalty, that moment your honor becomes tainted. I do not say that as yet you have been guilty of the sin of want of loyalty to purity and of spiritual rashness in exposing yourself to danger.

In all sins of impurity you must consider three stages. First, the suggestion to the mind of the impure idea. Second, the notions of the flesh corresponding with the idea. Third, the assent of the will to the impure ideas and their corresponding emotions. Up to the third stage no sin of impurity has yet been committed. The emotions of the flesh are as much beyond our control as the ideas themselves—death alone can put a check to them. It is at the third stage only, that the sin of impurity begins. And here a question suggests itself. It is possible, that impure ideas may occur to the mind without producing any corresponding emotions of the flesh; if she will consent to these impure ideas, has any sin been committed? Not any sin of impurity because the emotions of the flesh are necessary to constitute impurity. But the sin of spiritual rashness has certainly been committed by placing oneself in the danger of arousing concupiscence.

But the impure ideas having occurred to the mind and the emotions of the flesh having been excited, the will is called upon to assent. How shall we be able to know whether the will has consented or not? This question God only can answer, because he alone can read our hearts. But the holy Fathers and the masters of a spiritual life give us certain rules whereby we may be able to form a prudent opinion.—However long the temptation may be—however strong may be the emotions which it produces, the will may be considered not to have assented so long as it has felt any discomfort from it; whether that discomfort arises from the holy motive of a fear of offending God, or from the mere human motive of a feeling of the disgracefulness of the sin. The first will render the non-assent worthy of an eternal reward; the second raises it no higher than an ordinary human act.

"But you say there is the difficulty. If I felt sure that my will had entered any protest whatever however slight, I should rest content that there was no consent and therefore no sin but my protest is often so very slight, that my will appears to be neutral—and this neutral will is so often accompanied with a certain feeling of satisfaction at finding that the temptation is present, that I feel scruples of conscience, that I have assented."

As soon, Christian soul, as the temptation assails you, you should resist it and drive it away. Such would be the conduct of a generous soul; and in proportion as your resistance is negligent and lukewarm in that proportion may your will be suspected of being in league with the enemy of your soul to deliver up the city; but this negligence and lukewarmness have not as yet amounted to a mortal sin because the defence of the city has not yet been abandoned. As long as there is any struggle in your mind however slight, no sin of impurity has been committed, but the moment the mind is perfectly neutral neither caring to repel or not to repel, that moment according to the safer and more approved doctrine you are guilty of mortal sin. *He who is not for me, saith our Lord is against me.* Mark well, Christian soul, in order for your will to be guilty of consenting to impure desires it is not necessary, that it should take delight in them or wish to put them into action; it is sufficient for mortal sin, that you should become con-