

The True Witness

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUG. 23, 1861.

Our appeal to our readers last week has, we are happy to say, already been promptly and satisfactorily responded to by many of our subscribers, to whom our thanks are hereby tendered. We may be permitted to express a hope that their conduct will be followed by a still larger number. Thus only can an independent paper—one which receives no support from party, and which will not consent to change its principles and its tactics, with every varying gust of popular passion or popular caprice—be maintained; and if it is the case that too many professedly Catholic journals have degenerated into mere party hacks, bartering their independence for a mess of pottage in the shape, sometimes of Government advertisements, sometimes dished up in even a more disreputable guise—the cause is to be found, not merely in the venality of editors, but in the apathy and dishonesty of the Catholic public. Editors do not live by outstanding accounts alone; they require, as do other men, nutriment more substantial; and if they, as but too frequently occurs, make sacrifice of their principles, and assume the livery of political partisanship, it is because their lawful nutriment has been unjustly withheld from them.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

Tidings of the battle at Bull's Run on the 21st ult., and the total defeat of the Northerners, had reached Europe, and had created much sensation in France and in Great Britain. It is said that the former seriously contemplates recognising the Southern Confederacy as an independent belligerent, in which case the British Government will follow the example. In England, the almost general feeling seems to be one of satisfaction at the success of the Southerners; and the *Times*, the best exponent of public opinion, indulges in some very sarcastic, and by no means flattering remarks upon the military prowess of the Northern or Federal army. This of course is no indication of any sympathy with Southern slaveholders, but must be accepted as the very natural expression of indignation aroused amongst all classes by the bluster of the New York press, and its incessant attacks upon the British Government. There is, it cannot be denied, a very angry feeling springing up betwixt the two people, betwixt the subjects of Her Majesty, and those of this Continent who still profess allegiance to the Union. To what dimensions this may extend, and what serious results may thence flow, it is impossible to predict; but the precaution of the British authorities in sending troops to Canada does not seem to be uncalled for, since the many important interests at stake in the question of the blockade of the Southern ports may very easily give rise to a *casus belli* betwixt the two countries. Even in the social conditions which the civil war now raging must inevitably generate amongst our neighbors, are to be found reasons for apprehending a rupture of the amicable relations hitherto subsisting betwixt the Imperial and U. States Governments. The war has called thousands away from their ordinary peaceable occupations; and though it may not have made soldiers of them—it is impossible to improvise an army—it has spoiled numbers of citizens, it has put arms into their hands, and has in a great measure unfitted them for their former domestic avocations. These men, when disbanded, will not easily settle down again to their old habits, and will always prove very disagreeable, even if not very dangerous, neighbors. They will take naturally to filibustering, "sympathizing," plundering, and kindred pursuits, to which the people of the United States are already prone, and of which Canada, as nearest at hand, would in all probability be the object; and to guard against these, and their inroads, when the civil war shall have been brought to a close, will require the utmost vigilance on the part of the Imperial and Canadian authorities. A formal declaration of war may be averted by the diplomatist; but it is not the Government of the United States, but its millions of rowdies over whom it has no control, and who make war "on their own hook," whom we have to guard against, and who unless closely watched, may yet precipitate the two countries into open hostility.

The European news is singularly uninteresting. There is nothing to report of any consequence from Naples; of course the "brigands" are always being thoroughly routed, discomfited and utterly crushed by the gallant bands of Cialdini, but nevertheless, though thus destroyed one day, they revive with renewed vigor the next. In

default of other topics, the affair of General Goyon with Mgr. de Merode forms the subject of discussion. The former, ashamed of his conduct attributed to him, conduct incredible on the part of a French officer, affirms that the *Pays* has grossly exaggerated the circumstances, even if it has not actually misstated them. In the meantime, although the Sovereign Pontiff refuses to dismiss Mgr. de Merode, the *Times*' correspondent infers "that the Papal territory will not be evacuated so soon as is supposed, by the French army." Amongst other items of minor interest, we find it recorded by the *Times* that the Court of Rome had sent for, and deprived of his benefice, the Father Jacques, the confessor of Cavour, and who sacrilegiously administered the last sacraments of the Church to that notorious and impenitent sinner. This is possible; but the reasons assigned in the English journal for this step are manifestly false, and a mere Protestant invention to create prejudice against the Church. We are told by the *Times* that this Father Jacques has been thus harshly dealt with, for refusing, in an interview with the Pope—at which of course the *Times*' correspondent was present taking notes—to betray the secrets of Cavour's confession. With such silly stuff is a Protestant public crammed! and with such indigestible food the said intelligent public is completely satisfied.

A man can hardly be expected to make a good cobbler without some previous apprenticeship, neither would the careful housewife entrust the mixing of a pudding to one altogether unversed in the mysteries of the *cuisine*. It is only in theology, only in the most abstruse and difficult of sciences with which human intelligence has to deal, that it is assumed that the most ignorant are the most competent to give a true judgment, and that neither study nor previously acquired habits of mental discipline are of any the slightest importance. Just as every man has an intuitive apprehension that he can drive a gig, or steer a boat, so with many it is a settled article of belief that every one is fully able to pronounce authoritatively, and without examination, upon the several articles of the Catholic faith. With honest Dogberry, most Protestants hold that if "to be a well-favored man is the gift of fortune," a thorough knowledge of Romish theology "comes by nature."

This assumption of the competency of every man, not being a Catholic, to pronounce authoritatively, without previous mental training, and as it were by intuition, upon the doctrines and discipline of the Catholic Church is strongly and ludicrously conspicuous in many of our Upper Canadian cotemporaries; and though where so many distinguish themselves by their silly arrogance, it may appear invidious to particularise, we cannot abstain from assigning a prominent place to the British *Herald*, and to the *Christian Guardian*. Others may be more violent; but the two journals above named may justly boast of being preeminently silly.

One thing must be conceded to Catholicity even by its enemies—that, whether true or false, whether of divine or of human origin, it is logically coherent in all its parts; so that, given any one doctrine, all its other doctrines and practices shall be found connected therewith, and bearing a certain definite relation therunto. In this respect the Catholic Church, in the moral order, presents a remarkable analogy with the phenomena of the material or physical order; and as in the latter, the skillful comparative anatomist from the inspection of a single tooth is able to determine many characteristics of the animal to whose jaws it once belonged, so in the Catholic Church there is such close and necessary connection betwixt her several doctrines, and betwixt these again and her discipline, that the skillful comparative theologian might almost construct an entire system of Romish dogma from the careful study of some two or three of her more prominent articles. Her Christology, and her anthropology determine her doctrine respecting the future, and final, state of man; and these three together, form one complete and harmonious whole, from which not a stone can be removed, in which not a brick can be displaced, without destroying the symmetry of the entire structure, and imperilling its stability.

It is thus that the doctrines of "good works" and of "merit," and the entire penitential system of the Catholic Church, together with the doctrine of a Purgatory, flow as a necessary sequence from the Catholic doctrine of "free will;" whilst from the former again, in connection with the Catholic doctrine of the "Communion of Saints," flows the doctrine of "Indulgences;" so that the negation of the latter involves the negation of all its antecedents—(antecedent, not in the chronological, but in the logical, order)—and imposes upon the impugner the necessity of denying not only the Tridentine doctrine of man's "free-will," but the article of that symbol which many Protestant sects still retain, and in virtue of which they still profess to believe in the "Communion of Saints." Indeed, at the first outbreak of the great apostasy of the XVI century, the controversy turned almost exclusively on the freedom or serfdom of

the human will; and both Luther and Erasmus felt that according as one or the other of these doctrines was established, so also would be established the truth or falsity of all those other Romish doctrines which the Reformers attacked.

If therefore we were to enter into a controversy with either of our above named Protestant cotemporaries upon the subject of these "Indulgences" which they—not knowing what an "Indulgence" really means—so violently condemn, we should be compelled, first to discuss with them the question of "merits" and "good works." But these again cannot be discussed without a previous discussion as to the freedom or serfdom of man's will. For certainly, if man has not freedom of will, then can no work of his be either good or bad, meritorious of reward or of punishment; whilst if it be accorded that man is a free moral agent, then also it must be conceded that his acts have a certain moral value—meritorious only if they correspond with the freely offered grace of God, without which no act of man can merit a supernatural reward. This discussion we cannot at present find time to enter into; besides, as much controversy proceeds from the employment of a defective terminology, and as the Reformation has had the effect of corrupting language as well as faith and morals, giving to words when employed by Protestants, a sense very different from that which Catholics attach to them, it would be necessary first to settle the meaning of the terms whose employment such a discussion would unavoidably necessitate. The term "justification" conveys one idea to a Protestant, another and very different idea to the Catholic. So too with the term "merit," merit of congruity or *de congruo*, merit of condignity, or *de condigno*—all of which discussions would be out of place in the ephemeral columns of a mere weekly newspaper.

We may be permitted, however, to call our cotemporaries' attention to the fact that there is no absurdity, nothing repugnant to the idea of God's perfect justice and mercy, in the doctrine that He does not always remit all temporal punishment for sin, even when for Christ's sake He pardons the penitent sinner. Punishment, as administered by God, to Whom vengeance belongs of right, may be retributive, as in the case of the penalty inflicted on the impenitent sinner; or it may be reformatory, and purgative as well as penal, as in the case of those punishments with which He chastens those whom He loves, and with which He scourges every son whom He receiveth. There is a moral discipline in suffering; which purifies the heart from sin, and fits the sufferer who accepts his punishment in a meek and Christian spirit, for entering into that place into which nothing impure or defiled can enter; whilst it is an essential feature of Catholic doctrine that it asserts that, to be "justified" man must become really "just;" *et non modo reputatur, sed vere justus nominatur et sumus.* *Conc. Trid. c. vii.* Herein lies the secret of the divergence betwixt the Catholic and the Protestant. With the latter, if of the evangelical stripe—justification is a mere legal fiction, an imputed justice, a sort of *John Doe* and *Richard Roe* process in Heaven's chancery; a purely forensic act, not implying any internal change in the person justified, and not exacting therefore, any previous purgative discipline such as the Catholic doctrine insists upon, as necessary in most cases, before the unjust man can become truly just, or renewed in spirit, and therefore fitted for heaven. In one system therefore, there is no room for Purgatory, no need for Indulgences which the other retains; but unless our opponents can show that the doctrine of "free will" is absurd or self-evidently false, they have no right to laugh at, or denounce those other doctrines which flow from it as logically as does the conclusion of any proposition in Euclid from the terms of its enunciation.

This tendency to cry out, to bluster, and to substitute rapid declamation for argument not unfrequently commits those who have recourse to it, to disagreeable alternatives. Thus the British *Herald* pretends that the Catholic doctrine of absolution is so manifestly absurd that "no man exercising his reason, which is as much the gift of God as Revelation, can believe it;" and by so pretending our cotemporary reduces himself to the alternative of asserting that the compilers of the Anglican Liturgy were either fools or knaves; fools, if they believed that which no "man exercising his reason could believe;" knaves, if not believing the doctrine of priestly absolution as held by the Romish Church, they embodied that doctrine in their Liturgy and commended it to the belief of succeeding generations.

Now it is incontestable that in the Liturgy of the Anglican Church, for whose orthodoxy we have the voucher of an Act of Parliament, the doctrine of "priestly absolution" as held by the Romish Church, and in its most absolute form, is explicitly set forth. In the office for "Ordering of Priests," the Bishops lay his hands upon the head of the candidate for Holy Orders and says:—

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest, in the Church of God, now committed

unto thee, by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." *Book of Common Prayer.*

What mean these words, if they do not mean some special power to forgive or retain sins, thereby conferred? All men, all women, have the power and the right to declare and pronounce that God will forgive those who truly repent them of their sins; and were this all that the words of the Ordination Service, were intended to convey, what need of so much ceremony to confer, that which every one possesses, ordained or unordained? What need of Right Reverend Fathers in God By Act of Parliament, what need of wigs and lawn sleeves, of solemn laying on of hands, and invocations of the Holy Ghost? But the sense in which the Church of England priest is empowered to forgive and retain sins, is, fortunately for our case clearly defined in another part of the Anglican Liturgy—in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick; wherein particular or special confession is recommended to such as feel their conscience "troubled with any weighty matter;" and "after which confession," continues the rubric, "the Priest shall absolve him (the penitent) if he humbly and heartily desire it, after this sort:"—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences. And by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

What is claimed above by the Anglican ministers is all that the Catholic priest pretends to—absolve, in virtue of the authority committed to him by Jesus Christ. If the assumption of such authority by the latter be a blasphemous usurpation, then is the Anglican a blasphemous pretender to authority which he does not possess; but if the latter be free from this reproach, then is the British *Herald* guilty of gross injustice towards the compilers of the Anglican Liturgy in that it asserts that "no man exercising his reason can believe" that Christ has given authority to His ministers to forgive sins. Our cotemporary is at liberty to select which horn of the dilemma he pleases.

We would also suggest the following reflections to our cotemporaries. Some very reasonable and learned men, some very good, moral, and virtuous men, have been Papists or Roman Catholics; believing all the Church believes and teaches, practising to the best of their abilities, all she enjoins. If then, her doctrines are so absurd, her practices so immoral, that the illiterate Methodist cobbler can see, or profess to see their absurdities; if then, those practices are so immoral, or of such immoral tendencies, that the evangelical grocer, over the way, who sands his sugar, waters his rum, and foully adulterates his tobacco, before engaging in the evening spiritual exercises, deems himself at liberty to denounce them—how comes it that those intellectual errors so palpable, those moral errors so gross, have escaped the notice of men whom even Protestant fanaticism must admit to have been learned and virtuous?

IMAGE WORSHIP.—"God help the wicked!" we say, with honest Jack—What a world it is to live in! Here are Protestants, the very cream of the cream of the Protestant world, taking to "image worship;" making unto themselves carved images, and graven images; setting them up, and inaugurating them; making speeches, prayers, and singing of hymns, to an extent which would be incredible, were it not all duly set forth at length in the columns of the Protestant *Times*.

About the latter end of the XVII century there was born in England a child; who growing up, as children, if let alone, will grow up, to man's estate, set up in business as a dissenting minister of some sect or another, kept a conventicle, and wrote much ludicrous doggerel, which he called "Hymns," and so acquired great notoriety amongst the elect vessels. His name was Watts, Isaac Watts, known to little boys as the author of the sweet sacred lyric—"Let dogs delight to bark and fight, for 't is their nature to." Yet if but an indifferent poet, the said Isaac was considered, and is by many still considered, an out and out saint—quite a first-rate article in the pious line. It is to him that the carved, or graven image whereof we intend to speak, has been dedicated, and whereof the solemn inauguration was duly commemorated by the London *Times*. Henceforward Isaac Watts must be treated with respect, if not as a poet, yet as one occupying a high place in the Protestant hagiology.

He, that is to say, Isaac, was solemnly canonised upon Wednesday, 17th ult., a day ever memorable in the annals of Protestantism. The graven or carved image of the saint, eight feet in height, and of the best Sicilian marble upon a pedestal of the same, also eight feet in height, was solemnly inaugurated at Southampton in the public park, in the presence of an immense crowd of devotees. Lord Shaftesbury officiated as high priest, assisted by Protestant ministers of many denominations; from the Rev. Mark Cooper, M.A., Rector of St. Mary's, down to the Rev. Mr. Adkins, pastor of the Independent Chapel, who also pronounced the Benediction.

The service commenced by the singing of anthems, and a dedicatory prayer. The graven image was then solemnly unveiled to the gaze of the worshippers, and the inaugural address was pronounced by Lord Shaftesbury. He said:—

"A word as to the motives which had actuated them in the erection of that statue. The erection of monuments as mere works of art, was idle; but their object should be that they might keep good examples before their eyes, and reproduce their good deeds in their own conduct. In this spirit the men and women of Southampton might look upon a statue which would not only be an ornament to their town, but would be a great and lasting benefit to its inhabitants. And, when their lisping children should ask them, 'What meaneth this statue?' they might tell them it was a resemblance of a great and good man, who from his earliest to his latest years thought only of God and His service. Here, then, was their earthly pattern and example. Let this be the model for their imitation."

All rites having been thus duly performed, the graven image—which it is forbidden to make—was handed over to the Mayor and Corporation of Southampton; and another hymn having been sung, and Benediction pronounced, the interesting and indeed imposing ceremonial was brought to a close.

That our Protestant fellow citizens of all denominations, have a perfect right to make tomfools of themselves, if they so please, no Papist will have the presumption to deny; but we have good cause to complain of their inconsistency and injustice when they tax us with idolatry, and breach of the decalogue, for doing that which they do themselves. They erect statues of men whom they esteem as saints, not only to perpetuate the memory of the deceased, but as a tribute of honor to those whom we are told we should make our "earthly patterns and examples." But herein lies the whole secret of the Catholic practise of erecting images of the Saints and Martyrs in our Churches, and places of worship. We erect them, to recall to mind the virtues of those in whose honor they are erected, and also to excite to the imitation of their virtues; "*non quod credatur inesse aliqua in iis divinitas vel virtus, propter quam sint colenda;*" as the Council of Trent declares—but as tributes of veneration to the Saints, whom by these statues or images we represent, and as incentives to devotion and a holy life:—

"Sed etiam quia Dei per sanctos miracula et salutaria exempla oculis fidelium subjunguntur; ut pro iis Deo gratias agant, ad sanctorumque imitationem vitam moremque suos componant; exultentque ad adorandum ac diligendum Deum, et ad pietatem colendam." *Conc. Trid. Sessio 25.*

Be consistent if you can, we would say to Protestants; and whilst you yourselves erect, and with religious honors inaugurate, the graven images of your pseud o-saints, suspend for a season your iconoclastic fury against Papists.

The petition in behalf Dr. Patterson, the abortionist, has been very properly rejected by the Executive; and in so far as the two convicts, Burns and Patterson, are concerned, the supreme sentence of the law will be carried into execution on Friday the 6th prox.

The *Montreal Gazette* is very indignant at this result; and in its zeal for the abortionist, outrages truth and decency by insinuating that the decision of the Executive in the above instances has been influenced by prejudices of "nationality and of creed." This is as unfounded in fact, as our cotemporary's argument is deficient in logic. He argues that the evidence on Dr. Patterson's trial was not sufficient to prove that the death of the girl Sarariat was the prisoner's handiwork, and that therefore the convict should be sentenced to imprisonment for life in the Penitentiary. But this is an argument for setting aside the verdict of "Guilty" brought in by the jury, and for letting the accused go free altogether. Either it was proved, or it was not proved, that he caused the death of Olive Sarariat. If he did, he was a murderer, because he was engaged in procuring abortion, an unlawful act; if he did not cause her death, if the death of the girl on whom he practised his foul arts was not the work of his hands, or if there be any reasonable doubts upon the subject, he is entitled to a verdict of "Not Guilty," and should be set free. Why should he be sent to the Penitentiary if there be any doubts as to his having committed the offence for which he has been sentenced? Would the *Gazette* imprison a man in the Penitentiary because he had not been proved guilty of a capital offence with which he had been charged? In short, there is no middle ground logically tenable betwixt the execution of the capital sentence, and the discharge from confinement of the prisoner whose guilt has not been proved. In that the *Gazette* dare not insist upon the last named alternative, it confesses its belief in the verdict of "Guilty" brought in by the jury; and its anxiety to shield the doubly-dyed murderer, is but the expression of a invidious sympathy for criminals, and of its tenderness towards abortionists.

The *Commercial Advertiser* adopts much the same line of argument as the *Gazette*. It contends that the offence for which Patterson was tried was the murder of the girl Sarariat, alone, and that the previous murder of the latter's child was not the offence with which he was charged; our cotemporary contends also that the medical evidence adduced on the trial, was not sufficient to show that the girl came by her death through the act of the accused, whilst no one pretends