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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1850.

LAYS OF THE COLPORTEURS.

(Continued.)

“Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites—for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.”—St. Matt. c. XXIII, v. 13.

A text full of meaning, and one which the members of the French Canadian Missionary Society would do well to lay to heart.

In our last, we took the liberty of laying before our readers, a few of the legends of the Colporteurs, in order to show what manner of men these Colporteurs are, and what kind of Spirit it is that speaks by their mouths. For so doing, we have been, as we fully expected, set down as scoffers, as sons of Belial, and have heard our office-stool blasphemously designated as the “scorner’s chair.” However, this shall not prevent us from putting our hands to the plough, and doing our best to root up cant and hypocrisy, wherever or whenever we meet with the noxious weeds.

We are weary of Colporteurs, and will, in the present number, content ourselves with offering a few affectionate remarks to the members of the Society itself.

And here let us carefully distinguish; for, far be it from us to include all its members in the same condemnation. The F. C. M. Society is a sort of Noah’s ark, to which men of all kinds of strange and monstrous creeds come flocking. It is like the “great sheet,” which St. Peter saw, being in a trance, “knit at the four corners, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things.” Here we perceive these three—beasts clean and unclean, and creeping things. The enemies of the Church at all times and in all places, may be also divided into three classes. Let us try and distinguish them. The first class, then, may be said to comprise those who, from their youth upwards,—or ever they had discarded clouts and pinnafors, to encase their nether parts with those integuments whose name we dare not utter,—have been taught to believe that the Pope is the man of Sin, and the Son of Perdition,—that the Church is Anti-Christ, and all Catholics damnable idolaters. These are they, who, having imbibed a hatred of Catholicity, with their first pap, still firmly hold to the legend of Pope Joan, look grave when the name of Maria Monk is mentioned, and live in hourly dread lest an army of Jesuits should have landed at Point Levi, to re-conquer, at the point of the Crucifix, the possessions of which they have been plundered. Good men these, tho’ simple,—conscientious and honest, tho’ mistaken; of better appetites than judgment, and more remarkable for the strength of their digestive, than of their intellectual, faculties. Their very prejudices should be dealt with tenderly, and God forbid that we should say anything to offend them.

The second class consists of those, who are enamoured not of heavenly, but of terrestrial mansions,—who yearn, with bowels of affection, after the riches of the Church, her jewels of gold, and her jewels of

silver; and would fain be clad in the purple and fine linen of the Sanctuary. These are they, who trust that if they can but succeed in destroying that religious sentiment, for which the French Canadians are so honorably distinguished, the wealth of the Church shall become unto them “as a prey,”—her lands, her seignories, be unto them for a possession.

The third, and last, class may be said to be made up of those who have taken to the Evangelical line of business, because they have failed in all others, and who have set up in the “pious,” for the same reasons which induced Mr. Squeers to set up in the schoolmastering way. These are they, to whom the trade of gospel-mongering furnishes “daily bread,”—who, if they were well paid for the job, would hawk about with the same indifference, the Bible, the Koran, or the Talmud, the Newgate Calendar or the Adventures of the Chevalier de Faublas, and who, for a reasonable consideration, would direct, with equal alacrity, the steps of the anxious sinner to the grog-shop or the meeting-house,—to the nearest Conventicle or any where else.

In a word, the F. C. M. Society, like all other societies, numbers amongst its members the good, the bad, and the indifferent. Some who, from a mistaken zeal for Protestantism,—others who, through a desire to seize upon the property of the Church, or from motives still more sordid and mercenary, would poison and corrupt the minds of the simple French Canadian habitants. To those, who, in their own hearts, are aware that they belong to neither of the last two classes, no offence can be given by our remarks, and tho’ we have taken the liberty to distinguish the different classes of which the enemies of the Church may be said to be composed, we disclaim any allusion to any individual. For clarity bids us believe, that the poorest Colporteur, as well as the richest among the members of the Society, may be—merely an ignorant, tho’ well-meaning man, who conscientiously believes that he is doing God service, by opposing His Church.

To these then,—to the honest and sincere members of the F. C. M. Society, would we address a few remarks, in no unfriendly spirit, and we would ask them to tell us candidly what it is they want to effect? We would say to them—gentlemen, do you wish to make the French Canadian habitant believe something? What is it? Is it the wondrous mystery of a Triune God?—they believe that already. Is it the Divinity and Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God?—this also do they believe. Is it the fallen condition of man—the infinite value of the price at which he was redeemed—the necessity of leading a holy life—a future judgment—and a world to come?—all this have they believed from their youth upwards. But, perhaps you do not wish to make them believe, but to disbelieve,—not to trust, but to doubt,—not to put on, but to put off some of the armour of Faith. Tell us, then, how much do you wish them to discard? Is it the helmet or the breastplate?—is it the sword or the shield that you desire them to cast away? Do you not fear, lest, when once they shall have commenced stripping, they may put off too much, until they are reduced to the nakedness of unbelief? Ah! yes you do. See, here are your very words: “Yet, we do not rejoice without trembling. What they have been taught to regard as Christianity, will be discovered to be a cunningly devised fable. But in rejecting this corrupted Christianity, there is a danger that they may reject Christianity itself.” Say, rather, gentlemen, a moral certainty; for when you shall have succeeded in destroying the authority of the Church, what authority do you intend to put in its place? Authority you must have.

Many Protestants appear to labour under the singular delusion, that Catholics recognise one authority, for one set of dogmas,—and another authority, for another set: that Catholics appeal to the Bible, or written tradition, in support of the first, and to the authority of the Church, or unwritten tradition, for the confirmation of the latter. No opinion can be more erroneous. With the Catholic, everything is built upon the same foundation. If he believes in the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, it is for precisely the same reason that he believes in the Real Presence—in the eternity of hell-fire—in an intermediate state of purification—in the atonement offered for men upon the Cross—in the great power and efficacy of the intercession of the Saints reigning with Christ, and above all, of the Blessed Mary, sweet Virgin Mother of God—and so with all the other articles of his creed. If the Catholic reveres the Bible, as the Word of God, and believes it to be His revelation to man, it is upon the authority of the Church, and upon that alone, that he receives, reveres, and believes in it as such. What authority, then, do you propose to substitute for the authority of the Church? You will tell us the authority of the Bible. But upon what authority is the poor habitant to receive

the book you call the Bible, as the Word of God? You cannot say that it is the same book as that which the priests call the Bible. This would be a lie too easily detected. Besides, you will have taught the Canadian to look upon the priest as an impostor,—a deceiver upon some points; why, then, a deceiver upon all. The habitant must then receive your Bible, if he receives it at all, upon the authority of your Colporteurs. Yes. He must receive the book upon the bare assertion of your Colporteurs; or, else, see—what a task do you impose upon these unhappy pedlars. They, poor, ignorant men, must undertake to prove, that the book they hawk about contains the whole of God’s revelation to man—and nothing but that revelation; that every verse, chapter, and book contained in the volume, is genuine, is authentic, and divinely inspired; that through a long series of ages it has been infallibly transcribed, infallibly translated, infallibly printed, and that he, the poor, simple habitant is able infallibly to appropriate its contents. Let us imagine the scene.

[Interior of cottage. Enter Colporteur and pack, with a white neckcloth, and a long face.]

Colporteur.—Good day, good day, Jean Baptiste, how is all your family.

Habitant—(crossing himself)—Very well, very well indeed, I thank God and the Saints. My good woman is all right now, and my little Philomene made her first communion last week,—and (tiens) see what a pretty engraving of the Blessed Virgin the Nuns have given her to hang over the head of her bed.

Colporteur—(groaning)—Ah! my dear friend, you’re all wrong. You are in a bad way. You are going to hell as fast as a horse can gallop. You listen to the priest, and believe what he tells you. Your curé is a rogue, and the Bishop is nothing better than an impostor.

Old Lady.—For shame, then, for shame. I am sure the curé is a good man to the poor, and, then, how kind he was to us last winter when I was sick.

Colporteur.—Rags, my dear madam, filthy rags; good works partake of the nature of sin—“cisterns are they,—broken cisterns, that will hold no water.” See, here, what this little tract says about good works. It is written by that worthy man, the Rev. Mr. “Snawley Stiggins,” and is entitled “SINNERS SILENCED, OR, ISRAEL STRIPPED TO THE BUFF.”

Old Lady.—Ah! Mr. Pedlar, since you have taken up with these missionaries there is no understanding you. But, I know that monsieur le curé tells us that God is well pleased, when we keep his commandments, and practice our religion.

Colporteur.—Ah! you would have changed your opinion, if you had only accompanied me, as I begged of you, one Sabbath, to Meeting, to hear that precious man, the Rev. Mr. “Howlen Cursen,” hold forth, when he insisted that there were plenty of predestinate little babies in hell, “not more than a span long.” It was a season of great refreshment—blessed moments, indeed—ah! His discourse was printed at the request of the Society. Here it is—“CONSOLING CONSIDERATIONS, OR, GREAT COMFORT IN THE ETERNAL DAMNATION OF LITTLE CHILDREN.”

Habitant.—We don’t want any of your books—but here comes monsieur le curé, let us see what you will say to him.

Enter Curé.—Good morning, my children, what is the matter here?

Habitant.—It is a Colporteur, mon pere, who wants us to take some of his books.

Curé.—Ah! my friend, I suppose that you are one of those Bible Pedlars, who travel about the country, trying to persuade our good people (braves gens) that if they leave the Church, they will have no more tithes to pay.

Colporteur.—Profane man! It is the Word of God that I sell—(aside)—and a very good job I have made of it, too. I got the trowsers I have on now, for a copy of the New Testament.

Curé.—Softly, softly, my friend, you say that the book which you have in your hand, is the Word of God. What proof have you?

Colporteur.—The Rev. Mr. “Grimes Washpot” says that it is the Word of God, and our Society sells it as such.

Curé.—And you say that this book contains the whole of God’s Word,—all that he has ever revealed to man? Tell me, then, what has become of the “Book of Nathan,” the Prophet, and of “Shemaiah,” the Prophet. Where is the Vision of “Iddo,” the Seer, which he did see, and many other books, which are referred to in the Bible, but which I don’t find here.

Colporteur—(puzzled)—Can’t say. They don’t sell them at our store.

Curé.—Well, you had better go, and find out, before you come round here again. Get along with you, Mr. Pedlar—go, and attend to your farm, to your poultry-yard, and your pigs. Do your duty in that station of life in which God has placed you, and you may be an honest and respected man, yet;—but don’t set up for a teacher in Israel.

[Exit Colporteur, muttering:] I won’t put this down in my journal.

Ah! gentlemen, you had better leave Jean Baptiste alone. He is a very good, a very honest and religious man, as he is. If you must needs proselytize, there is a large field for the exercise of your gifts. The interior of Africa—India—China—and all Australia. Why don’t you go there? Is it because there are real hardships and real perils to be encountered there?—things more formidable than little dogs and big stones, than mops and broomsticks? You are quite right. There are spears there, and waddies, Bomerangs also, and tomahawks,—but NO COLPORTEURS;—for your Evangelical Missionary is a prudent man. Go amongst the savages, gentlemen, and we shall begin to think that you are in earnest. This you would do, if you were not afraid; or if your zeal for the extension of the Redeemer’s Kingdom, were but one half so great as you would

have us believe. Go there, but leave Jean Baptiste alone, and don’t try to cut his Faith down to your standard of belief.

This same cutting down, is a very delicate operation. It has been recommended to be tried with boots, as a speedy way of making a pair of shoes. We distrust the plan. The boots will certainly be ruined, and the shoes, at best, be doubtful. The only things with which *Razeeing*—or cutting-down, has answered, are some of our old seventy-fours, commonly known in the navy, by the name of the “Forty Thieves.” Rascally craft they were—could neither sail nor fight; but being cut down, they turned out first-rate 50-gun frigates, remarkable for their weatherly qualities, stiff under canvass, and always carrying their lee guns well out of water. Still we don’t think that the plan will succeed with Catholics. We fear that the *razeeed* Catholic will prove a very worthless article, unstable in all his ways, and blown about by every wind of doctrine. No, gentleman, you may ruin a Catholic, but you will not make a Protestant, unless in so far as a Protestant is nothing more than a Catholic perverted.

This you may do.

Perhaps, also, from time to time, to grace your triumphs, you may catch a lewd priest, who, weary of the Church, and all her fasts, will gladly renounce Catholicity and Chastity, in order to embrace Protestantism, and what, from courtesy, we suppose, we must term “a wife.” Some pangs of remorse, some reproaches of an accusing conscience, he may haply feel; but these he will try to stifle, amidst the applauses of those to whom incontinence is an excuse for perjury,—and with whom, apostacy, like Charity, can cover a multitude of sins.

Here endeth the Second Fytte of the Lays of the Colporteurs.

(To be Continued)

EVANGELICAL MISSIONARIES.

In our remarks to-day, upon the French Canadian Missionary Society, we have alluded to the well-known fact that Evangelical Missionaries are very prudent men, as far as respects taking care of their own persons. Lest we should appear to malign these holy men, or to undervalue their apostolic zeal, we quote the following passage from a speech lately delivered by a Dr. Duff, before the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, on Missions to India, and the Missionary cause in general. We are indebted to the columns of the Montreal Witness, July 29th, 1850, for this discourse. We beg of our readers to remark the difference between the Spirit which animates the Jesuits and the Evangelical men; remembering, at the same time, that in China, whither the Jesuits volunteered to go, the Crown and Pain of Martyrdom really does await the Missionary, on account of the deadly hostility of the Chinese, not only to Christian Missionaries, but to all foreigners, whilst in India there is no enemy more dangerous than the climate.

Dr. Duff, after complaining of the want of Protestant Missionaries in India, observes that “all the churches of Britain do not supply above 150 men—only one man to a million, and thus continues his piteous complaint:—

“Excuse me for being somewhat in earnest in this matter. When a Jesuit Missionary came some time ago from China to Europe, and advertised for laborers, he tells us that there was not a province within the range of the Society from which names of candidates did not come pouring in. From the small country of Portugal and two Colleges, there were not fewer than ninety applications, many of them written and subscribed in the blood of the applicants, indicating that they were ready to shed the last drop of it in the cause. And shall it be told in Gath, and published in Askelon, that Portugal could furnish ninety Jesuit missionaries all at once, and that the Free Protestant Church of Scotland cannot furnish one—is this to be said of us? This is what surprised me most in coming to this country,—you must excuse my plainness, that it was actually the case that a man could not be found to go to Madras. What! thought I, one missionary not to be had to go to India! Surely the thing is impossible; you might as well tell me that in the auriferous regions of California there is not a particle more gold, nor a stalk of heather on the mountains of ancient Caledonia, nor along the banks of the Rhine or the Rhone a cluster of grapes, nor in the plains of Bengal a palmyra tree, nor in the Polar Sea a fragment of ice! And yet it turns out to be a fact that not one such man can be found.”

The italics in the above are our own. Nothing that we could say in confirmation of our statement could be stronger than this. Were we wrong in saying that “your Evangelical Missionary is a prudent man”?

NEW CATHOLIC CHURCH AT BURLINGTON.

On Thursday, the 22nd, the first stone of a new Catholic Church was laid at Burlington, amidst the prayers and thanksgivings of a vast assemblage of pious souls. The Rev. Mons. Mignault, curé of Chambly and Vicar-General for the Diocese of Boston, assisted by seven other clergymen, officiated.