

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUGUST 17.

ECCLIASTICAL CALENDAR.

August—1866. Friday, 17—Octave of St. Lawrence. Saturday, 18—St. Hyacinthe, C. East. Sunday, 19—Thirtieth after Pentecost. St. Joachim, C. Monday, 20—St. Bernard, C. D. Tuesday, 21—St. Joann. F. de Chantal, V. Wednesday, 22—Octave of the Assumption. Thursday, 23—Vigil of St. Philip de Beniti, C.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The latest advices from Europe, by the steamship City of New York, contain little of interest. An armistice, for four months, had been signed between Austria and Prussia; the former yielding to the fortunes of war, and, at least for the present, submitting to the demands of the latter. People are no longer obliged to await the comparatively tardy work of wind and steam for home news; modern science has linked us to the Old World, and the Atlantic Cable tells us hourly of the different moves on the political boards of Europe. The latest telegrams furnish us with news up to the 13th instant.—There was extreme excitement in London on the 9th, consequent upon the discovery of a supposed attempt to blow up the two Houses of Parliament. Some packages of gunpowder, with a fuse partially burning, were found near the entrance to the Chamberlain's office. By the news of the 13th, the prorogation of the British Parliament, on the 10th, is announced. The Queen, in her Speech from the Throne, recommends peace in Europe, and a continued observance of British Neutrality. She thanks the United States Government for its action during the Fenian raid in Canada, and gives expression to her joy at the successful completion of the Atlantic Telegraph. We learn with regret the apparent increase of the Cholera in England, the number of deaths from this terrible disease during the past week amounting to 1053.

Napoleon, now arbiter of Europe, appears watchful over the interests of France whilst endeavoring to bring about a peace between the hostilely arrayed powers of the Continent. To those at all acquainted with the Emperor's tactics this was a foregone conclusion. Napoleon is disgusted with the treaties of 1815, made whilst France was impotent, and now the rectification of the French frontier by its extension to the Rhine is demanded, as it was marked prior to its disturbance in 1814. Unless this demand is acceded to the war in Europe may assume a different aspect. In the meantime, military and naval preparations are being carried on in France with unusual vigor.

Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel agree about the future of Venetia; it is to be ceded to Italy, and an armistice has been concluded between her and Austria for this purpose.

We have nothing of interest from the United States. The Fenians appear to be astray again; but it is believed that the leaders have little intention of disturbing us.

Although it was stated that the Canadian Parliament would be prorogued on Saturday, the session still continues; no material measure is brought forward; a number of private bills are being pushed through, and before this reaches our readers they will have heard of its prorogation.

ROMAN LOAN.

Subscriptions for the Roman Loan will be received at the City & District Savings Bank, Great St. James Street, No. 5, every day between ten and three o'clock, by Mr. E. J. Barbeau; and temporary receipts in exchange for in limit debentures, bearing interest from the 1st October next, will be given on or before that day.

ALF. LAROQUE, Agent for the Roman Loan. Montreal, 16th Aug, 1866.

The Rev. John O'Brien, P. P. of Brockville, C.W., has been collecting in our city for two weeks to obtain funds for the liquidation of the debt on his church. We are convinced that the well known liberality of our Irish Catholic citizens was not appealed to in vain. The reverend gentleman left for Brockville early in the week.

It is, we fully believe, impossible to hammer into the heads of our separated brethren a correct idea of the one essential, or fundamental difference betwixt Catholicity and Protestantism. They invariably assume that, and argue as if that difference consisted in a difference of interpretation of texts from the Bible, and the different meanings which Catholics and Protestants, respectively, put on certain passages of Scripture. They invariably commence all their controversies with Papists, by begging the one question at issue, and then continue the argument as if their premises were admitted by their opponents. This is why all controversies betwixt Catholics and Protestants are, as a general rule, so barren of results, for the disputants do not, and cannot argue from any common premises.

The constantly reiterated objection urged by Protestants against the Catholic Church, to the effect that she, in some instances, discourages the indiscriminate reading of the books which make up what is called the Bible, and in no instance insists upon that reading as necessary to salvation, is based upon the same incapacity of the Protestant mind to apprehend or seize the essential or fundamental difference betwixt Catholicity and Protestantism. They assume as incontestable, that the writings contained in the Bible are the source of all religious truth, the fount from which the Gospel stream flows, and from which every man therefore, who seeks to quench his thirst must needs drink, or die.—Were this assumption true, were the Bible the source of religious knowledge, the medium appointed by Christ Himself for making universally known, and preserving in their integrity, the contents of His revelation, the language of Protestants when treating of the mode in which the Church deals with the Scriptures, called Sacred, would not be one whit too severe; and by withholding these Scriptures from, or even in not enforcing their perusal and study upon the laity as the one thing needful, she would stand self-condemned as the enemy of God, and the opponent of the truth. The whole force of the hacknied objection depends then upon the truth of the proposition that the book called the Bible is the one divinely appointed medium of supernatural communication betwixt God and man.—That this is a proposition to be proved, not to be assumed; that it is a proposition which all Catholics reject as the most ridiculous of superstitions, as destitute of the slightest foundation in historical fact, never enters into the heads of our Protestant friends; who go on arguing and objecting away, as if their arguments were absolutely unanswerable, and conclusive as to the anti-Christian character of the Catholic Church.

Our readers know, however, that the Catholic Church—though she never has insisted upon the reading of the Bible as essential to salvation; though she teaches that, even now in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, as in the first, when the book itself did not exist, salvation is perfectly possible to men who have never seen, or so much as heard of the said book—is well content that her children should have access to the written records of our religion, which the Church authenticates, and of which she is the guardian; and that for this purpose she is careful to provide her children with correct translations of those ancient writings, when she in her wisdom is persuaded that their perusal will promote the growth of piety amongst them. Not, of course, as if she thereby submitted her teachings to the judgment of the taught; as if she recognized in the book which she placed in her children's hands, a judge or umpire betwixt her and them, and by which the truth of her doctrines was to be tested. No! of course the Church does not do this; for by so doing she would abdicate all her functions, and proclaim herself an impostor: neither can it by any possibility enter the Catholic layman's head that he is to test the truth of the doctrines of his Church by what he reads in the Bible; for by the mere fact of entertaining such an idea, he would cease to be a Catholic, that is to say one who believes all that the Catholic Church believes and teaches for the simple reason—and no other—that she does so believe and teach. A body that would submit to have its doctrines tested by the Bible, would thereby acknowledge itself not to be the Church which existed long before one word of the New Testament was committed to writing; in whose Communion, during long centuries, millions, and hundreds of millions of faithful Christians lived, died, and were saved, whilst as yet for them, owing to their inability to read, and the scarcity of manuscripts before the invention of printing, the Bible cannot be said to have existed. The true Church sits in judgment upon the Bible, determines its text, and interprets its meaning; but is herself judged by none, for in her, God, the Holy Ghost, abides continually, and speaks by her mouth. The body, or society, which does not predicate this of itself, thereby, in fact, avows that it is not the Catholic Church, and that it has no claim upon any man's respect or obedience. It is false, therefore, and absurd to pretend that the study of the Bible can in any case make a man a Protestant: for he who takes the book into his hands, with the idea that the truth of the teachings of the Catholic Church is

to be tested by what he finds, or fancies that he finds therein, is, no matter what he may hold on every other particular point of doctrine, a Protestant at heart already; seeing that he has virtually protested against the infallible and supreme authority of the Church in all matters of faith and morals.

It is not from his inability to comprehend thus the essential and fundamental point of difference betwixt Catholics and Protestants, that the Montreal Witness criticises, as it does in its issue of a recent date, a translation into the vulgar tongue of the New Testament, lately published by his Lordship the Bishop of Tloa, the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Quebec. In placing this translation in the hands of his people, the Bishop did not pretend to give them a new rule of faith, or standard by which the doctrines which they have been already fully taught, are to be tested; his object was to give them, not a literary or grammatical puzzle, the solution of which every reader was to work out for himself as best he could; but a book in which he gives the real meaning of the words of the pensmen which, as determined once and for ever by the Church, is, like her Spouse, incapable of change or error; and therefore is it that he was more intent upon laying before them a full and perfect French equivalent of the original, than upon mere verbal fidelity, since a slavish adherence to Latin or Greek idioms, which obtain not in all cases in our modern languages, would tend rather to lead astray and bewilder, than to enlighten or edify.

And this is why in the passage carped at by the critic in the Witness, St. Matt. 1, 25, the words non cognoscebat eam, donec peperit filium suum primogenitum, were rendered, "and he had not known her when she brought forth her first born son;" because this more faithfully and fully renders to the French mind the one dominant idea which the original writer sought to convey—to wit: That the Son of Mary was not the Son of Joseph. Protestants have therein pretended to find a basis for a theory derogatory to the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin, as if the use of the words donec in Latin, and ece in Greek, necessarily implied that, after the birth of Jesus, His ever Blessed Mother had other children by her husband Joseph; and as regardless of the rules of Greek grammar, and of semitic idioms, as they are of the constant traditions of the Christian community, and the testimony of the Fathers, they from their insane desire to deprecate or cry down the superior excellence of the virginal life, put this vicious interpretation upon the simple words of the Evangelist whose real meaning has been fully and faithfully reproduced in French by the version of His Lordship of Tloa. To justify his criticism, our censorious friend of the Witness must show, that the Bishop has in some manner falsified, or deficiently rendered the meaning of the Evangelist; and if owing to the peculiar genius of the French language, this meaning required on the translator's part a deviation from mere verbal fidelity, or slavish adherence to the original, then was it not only lawful for, but incumbent upon the Bishop to venture upon that deviation, and to retain the meaning of the text, even at the expense of literal or verbal fidelity.

Now setting aside the fact that His Lordship of Tloa, as well as the humblest layman of his flock, gathers the true meaning of the passage in question, only from the constant and universal teaching of the Church, we contend that, tested by the laws of grammar, his rendering of it is unexceptionable; because the Greek ece, as may be seen by referring to any good Lexicon, of which donec is the Latin translation, by no means implies the idea which Protestant impugnors of the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God seek to attach to it. This involves a pure grammatical question, on which, therefore, none can be more competent to render a sound judgment than Greeks: and we refer, therefore, our critic of the Witness to the Homily of St. John Chrysostom, who, we suppose, understood the language in which he preached, wherein, treating of the Nativity of Our Lord, he goes at length into a careful grammatical criticism of the force and idiomatic value of the said "eos."

Mgr. de Tloa will, no doubt, be gratified and flattered to learn that, with this single exception the Witness attempts not to impugn the fidelity of the French version of the New Testament lately issued by His Lordship. The "copious notes" with which the Bishop has enriched his translation, and enhanced its value, meet, of course, with strong reprobation from our contemporary: inconsistently as it seems to us, for what after all are sermons but verbal notes or commentaries upon, and explanations of a given text of Scripture. Now if such sermons are innocent, nay useful and even necessary, when spoken, or delivered by a comfortable looking gentleman in a black coat and white choker, from a pulpit, we see not how written notes, or commentaries can be objected to. Besides, many Protestant versions of the Bible are published with what amounts to the same thing as notes, that is to say with marginal references to other passages in Scripture, which the Protestant publishers assume to be parallel to, and explanatory

of, the text to which said marginal references are attached. The objection however falls to the ground the moment it is understood that the Catholic takes his doctrines, and his faith, not from the Bible, but from the Church; and this because it is an historical fact that the Catholic Church existed long before the Bible, and that Christianity is older than the Christian Scriptures. Until this historical fact be disproved, it is morally impossible to convince the intelligent Catholic that the Bible, that those Scriptures, are the divinely appointed source of religious knowledge, the medium through which the contents of the Christian revelation were appointed to be conveyed to man. A Catholic may lapse into an infidel, an Atheist, or a Pantheist; but so long as the chronological relations of the Church and the Bible remain what they are, it is morally impossible for the educated Catholic, acquainted therefore with those relations, and familiar with the all-important fact that Christianity existed before the Bible, to subscribe into what is vulgarly termed a Protestant, or to accept that book as the teacher of religion, and the source of revealed truth.

One word more. If it be historically true that Christ Himself appointed, not the Bible, but a body of men whom He commissioned to teach all nations, as the medium for conveying the contents of His revelation to all nations throughout all ages, then indeed they who attempt to supersede that commission, by substituting a dead book for a living Church, are "anti-Christians," and the worst of "anti-Christians," seeing that they do their best to make the word of God void, and His express commandments of no effect.

The Witness is out of sorts. Whining is its ordinary mood; but, within the past week, it has been stirred up and exercised much at the withdrawal of the Education Bill.

But a few weeks ago, it kindly suggested to the Pope the propriety of His Holiness's taking up his residence in Canada; in fact, expressed its desire that he should come, and intimated how grateful the Witness would feel if the Holy Father would bring along some few presents in the way of statues and pictures. Such an invite from the "only religious paper" quite shocked, undoubtedly, the dear grandmothers who peruse its columns; but they will be quite surprised and frightened to learn from the same organ last week, that henceforth the Pope and his Cardinals are to rule in Ottawa. Protestants are to be bound hand and foot, "and be sacrificed"—gored by Roman Bulls. "Protestant children, if not sent to the West, are to be Romanised;" and as for those Protestant parents who live in out-of-the-way places, they—the Witness exhorts, "that is, if they are animated with the spirit of their fathers—are to suffer rather their goods and chattels to be distrained by an unjust government for school taxes" than expose their children to the possibility of being taught their prayers and catechism, and hence be enabled to pray to God and worship Him as their forefathers prayed and worshipped. Not possessing any of the spirit of his fathers, the Editor, of course, cannot be expected to think of sacrificing any of his "goods and chattels;" and, if placed in the position of others whom he exhorts to make sacrifices for conscience sake, he avows, his choice will be to pay something for the support of Roman Catholic churches.

Can the Witness read the signs of the times. "Public opinion in the townships indicates that the people will submit to no injustice," and this asserted, the ordinarily obsequious Editor strives to intimidate the government by declaring that, unless it follows his advice, "seeds of permanent trouble will certainly be sown." In fact, the Witness is getting restive. Will no one stroke Johnny down "if he should fall from grace."

We insert a petition to which a large number of signatures have been attached, but which was not sent to Ottawa on account, we presume, of the withdrawal of the Lower Canada Education Bill. Every fair-minded, honest Protestant will, we are convinced, admit the equity of the petitioners' demands:—

THE SCHOOL BILL.

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly in Parliament Assembled. The Petition of the undersigned Roman Catholics, and other citizens of the city of Montreal, in Lower Canada.

Humbly Sheweth: That the Protestant minority in Lower Canada, to protect the education of their youth against any unfavorable influence which might arise under a separate legislature in this part of the Province, are obtaining of your honorable house, in its present session an Act by which all their former privileges are maintained; and new advantages of an extensive and organic nature, granted.

That your petitioners rejoice that the enlightened wisdom of your honorable house, in receiving favorably the demands of the Protestant minority in Lower Canada, has singularly advanced the cause of true education, by restoring to it entire liberty of action, and freeing it from the pernicious results of compromise.

That whilst your Petitioners rejoice in the justice done the cause of education in the privileges secured to the Protestant minority of Lower Canada, they beg to represent, respectfully, but most urgently, to your honorable house, that impartial justice and wise legislation, demand that similar privileges be secured to the Roman Catholic minority of Upper Canada.

That the Catholic minority in Upper Canada have special and weighty claims upon the consideration of your honorable house in regard to the question of superior education, which the Protestant minority in Lower Canada have not. The Protestant minority in Lower Canada have a Normal School already supported out of the educational funds; the Catholic minority in Upper Canada have none. The Protestant minority in Lower Canada have grammar schools, industrial colleges, &c., similarly supported; the Catholic minority in Upper Canada have none. The Protestant minority in Lower Canada are represented in the Council of Public Instruction by five members; the Catholic minority of Upper Canada are represented by one only.

That for these grave reasons and others which will easily suggest themselves to the wisdom of your honorable house, your petitioners respectfully, but most urgently, ask that your honorable house will pass into law the bill at present before your honorable house, granting to the Roman Catholic minority of Upper Canada educational privileges similar to those granted to the Protestant minority of Lower Canada, and your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

CONVOCAION AND DIVORCE.

The moral evils, inseparable from the legal toleration of Divorce, have become so extreme in England, since the late fatal alterations in the law of Christian marriage, made by the British Legislature, that the subject has been brought before the notice of the Convocation of the Anglican church. The consequences of these alterations, it was alleged, were conspicuous in the contempt for the marriage laws that they had generated: in the frequent separations they had caused betwixt married persons: and the infamous allusions which it provoked and encouraged. Great aversion, too, was expressed by the Clergy towards the obligation imposed on them of employing the Service of Holy Matrimony, and the solemn words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to bless the impure unions of persons legally proved guilty of adultery with one another. This obligation the State imposes upon its creatures, the Anglican clergy; and these poor men, though their consciences as Christians must revolt at the dirty work imposed upon them, are by law obliged to officiate at the so-called marriages of divorce, and to give the nuptial benediction to the notorious and publicly convicted adulterers, whom, as a recompense for their adultery, the Divorce Court had previously released from their matrimonial engagements, giving them permission to enter the Holy state anew and under fresh conditions. Of this degradation, imposed by virtue of their position as government officials, on the clergy of the Church of England, one reverend speaker, Canon Selwyn, complained bitterly. "The law," he said, "as it stood endeavored to prevent collusion between the husband and wife, but it could not prevent collusion between the guilty persons; and the Church"—(That is to say, the State machine which the Rev. Mr. Selwyn calls the Church)—"was bound to marry those guilty persons, which he looked upon as a desecration of the service of Holy matrimony; and, in the words of Milton, by this means sin is muffled in the robes of law, or law disguised in the loose garments of sin."

The clergymen of the Church of England would be very much to be pitted in that the State, which is their creator, imposes such very, we do not say onerous, but dirty duties upon them, if their servile and degraded position were not in one sense their own work. They have deliberately chosen evil, when they might have chosen good. They have preferred the slavery of Erastianism to the liberty of the Papacy; for it is only in submission to, and union with, the Pope that deliverance from the soul humiliating bondage of Royal, or in other words, State Supremacy can be found. We cannot pity them therefore, though it must need pain us to see men so honorable in all other respects, so worthy of esteem in their learning and their great natural virtues, as no doubt numbers of them are, prostituting themselves, and what they believe to be the sacred office of priests in the Catholic Church, by assisting, at the bidding of the Civil Magistrate at, and blessing in the name of Father, Son, Holy Ghost, the impure anti-Christian sexual unions of notorious and convicted adulterers and adulteresses. No! It is impossible to conceive even of anything more humiliating, more revolting to the feelings of the Christian—than is this obligation of desecrating a holy rite—as all Anglicans admit marriage to be—and of blasphemously invoking the blessing of the Holy Trinity upon the filthy embraces of adulterers, which the law of the land imposes upon its obsequious tools—the clergymen of the Church of England. To Catholics it is a marvel, above all marvels, how men so excellent in so many other respects should stoop to such humiliation, should defile themselves by partaking in such a sin, and such a blasphemous mockery of the Holy One!