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The True Witness



Vol. LV., No. 8

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 1905.

PRICE FIVE CENTS

A "RELIGION" WITHOUT A CREED

(By REV. P. A. SHEEHAN, D.D.)

(NEW IRELAND REVIEW.)

It has been well said that a new heresy is to-day an impossibility. It cannot even be imagined. The world has so completely passed beyond that stage of antagonism to the Church, that it can never return to it. The great controversies of the past, which we regard as divinely appointed or divinely permitted trials, destined to make compact the whole body of Christian tradition, are now regarded by a large and influential section of thinkers as childish, because metaphysical. The world has cast aside the shreds and patches of doctrinal truth left by the Reformation, and now stands forth in all the bareness of its agnosticism, naked and unshamed.

It is an evil symptom, and yet a good symptom. Evil because it argues, nay, as we shall see, proves, the existence of indifference, the impartial repugnance to all Christian traditions and beliefs. Good, because it clears the ground and simplifies the issues between the great protagonist of Revelation—the Church, and its traditional and hereditary antagonist—the world. Henceforth, and forever, we are done with local and partial controversies about the invocation of Saints, the veneration of relics, the devotion of Orthodox to Our Blessed Lady, the utility and necessity of confession, the supreme excellence of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Much more may we regard as antiquated and out of date the historical questions and the controversies about dogmatic facts which agitated past generations. It is quite possible that even yet in far places on the outskirts of civilization these may be found preached or readers, brought up in all the narrowness of Sunday-school traditions, who try to save their slippery footholds on human credulity by catching at the ancient phantoms of Galileo and Inquisition and all the horrors of the three-volume novel of the eighteenth century. These little skirmishes must go on for a while, just as freebooting and guerilla warfare continue long after the defeated general of a great army has handed up his sword to the conqueror. But in the great centres of intellectual progress in the world—in London, Paris, Rome, New York—these minor spasms of past polemics are ignored, and the mighty forces on both sides are being sifted and rearranged along the two great lines of Faith and Unfaith, Dogma and No-Dogma, Life, as it represents itself to our bare senses, and Life as it is revealed to us with all its vast issues and responsibilities by Him who sitteth above the stars.

THE LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE.

Nay, by its very insistence on the truth of facts, and its deductions from them, as well as by the tremendous insight it gave into the stupendous workings of nature, it certainly enlarged men's vision and gave human thought a wider horizon. And when that vision fell short of the supernatural, when in answer to elementary questions about the origin of matter or of being, the men of science shook their heads and muttered "Ignoramus et ignorabimus!" (We know not, and we shall never know) the minds of their subjects, annoyed by the discovery of such limitations, and, as it were, dashing themselves against the plank wall of the infinite, gave themselves up to the wailings of pure Agnosticism and echoed the cry of the Masters: "We know not, and we shall never know!" But when, in our own days, Science itself has the ground cut from under its feet by fresher and more recent revelations; when every new discovery disproves some preceding theory that was regarded as beyond refutation; when the views of the greatest thinkers of past generations are now regarded as childish and absurd, and the most common and accepted ideas about space and time, color, sound, light are proved to be absolutely puerile; when the philosophy of atoms has been revised, disproved, reconstructed and still remains an enigma; and when no scientist can yet say whether matter is a condition of force, or force a condition of matter, the world that leaned its faith on the dogmatism of science has ceased to be ever skeptical; and in rejecting or disbelieving its dogmas has come to reject dogmas or doctrines of every kind. But because the common sense of mankind declares that in the lowest condition of human society, and still more in its higher and more complex forms, science

LETTER OF THE POPE

On the Catholic Social Movement and on the Non-Expedi.

(Freeman's Journal.)

POPE PIUS X.

kind of religion or ethics is necessary to keep the frame of things together, unbelievers have adopted the following formulas, which will at once be recognized:

"A religious life is compatible with disbelief in dogmas."
 "Religion, but no Churches or Creeds."
 "Ethics, but no doctrine."
 "Christianity without Christ."
 "The decay of sectarian dogma is the revival of the Christian life."
 "The decline in church attendance is a sign of greater religious vitality."
 "Christianity—not belief in Christ's divinity, but living according to Christ's maxims."
 "HOW MEN FOOL THEMSELVES."

This is the most popular form of what is known as "Independent Morality" in our age. And it is the most specious, because it admits and appeals to a moral sense, the existence of which, even in the worst of times, men have not controverted, although they might be uneasy under its restrictions. The schools and universities may contend about propositions, but however evil men might violate the moral sense and secretly rebel against its restrictions, it is only a Rousseau here and there, or a Walt Whitman once in a century, who can be found to argue a return to nature. It is quite true that Prof. Haeckel and other evolutionists admit the impossibility of reconciling a moral code based on humanitarian or social principles with the theory of natural selection. If this latter is the law of the universe, it is quite clear that the ancient Greeks and Romans were but following the finger of nature when they promptly extinguished every life that did not make for the welfare of the State. It is also true that Positivists, like Frederic Harrison, calmly repudiate the doctrines of Christ as incompatible with human progress at our time, and that he too advocates a reversion to Nature, or such an adaptation of ethics to the laws of Nature as shall meet social and political necessities. And it may be remembered that when Tompason threw Dogma to the winds when he declared:

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds."
 He ever after floundered hopelessly in his attempt to reconcile the wild savagery of Nature with some occult law that made for righteousness.

"Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,"

and with some far off, undefined and shadowy Utopia, where all things will be reconciled in unity and harmony—

"The one far off, Divine event,
 To which the whole Creation moves."
 YET THE WORLD NEEDS THE COMMANDMENTS.

But these are theories that have left no effect, at least as yet, on the government of the world. It is universally admitted that social safety, political well-being, the preservation of the Commonwealth, the sanctity of the home, the safeguarding of individual rights, demand the acknowledgment, if not the careful cultivation, of the moral sense. Whatever fine theories may be spun in libraries, the world cannot get on without the Commandments formulated on Sinai. If the imperious precepts: "Thou shalt not kill"; "Thou shalt not steal"; "Thou shalt not bear false witness" could be defied with impunity, civilization would end in a cataclysm, and all social life would perish without the possibility of being reconstructed on any other basis.

The necessity of some moral code may then be taken as generally admitted. But (say the non-dogmatists) this moral code must be considered independent of propositions, doctrines or decrees emanating from Churches. Nay, would it not even tell in favor of morality if the wars of the sects should cease; and if the ears of the world were no longer tormented with disputations about dogmas or controversies about abstract and metaphysical questions which the human mind will never solve; and if we were left at peace to pursue the avocations of life within the limits of the moral law, about which there can be no question?

(To be continued.)

To our dear sons Count Stanislaus Medolajo Albani, Professor Joseph Tomiolo, Commander Paul Pericoli, lawyer: Salutation and Apostolic Benediction.

Dear Sons: It is a pleasure to us, dear sons, to make known to you in affectionate and kindly words the consolation We have derived from the address in which great numbers of Catholic Italians have wished to express their personal gratitude for our late Encyclical to the Bishops of Italy dealing with the development of the Social Movement.

If manifestations of respect and love by the faithful, acting as individuals, have been always agreeable to us, there is still greater reason why we should be consoled by the manifestations of love and respect which persons of great influence, who are authorized to voice the sentiments of the different social classes, have deemed it their duty to offer to our person, or rather to that supreme power with which, without any merit on our part, Divine Providence has been pleased to invest us. An example of this kind is more edifying in itself and more effective and fruitful in beneficent results when it comes from above.

The noble sentiments pervading the address could not be more appropriate nor could they respond more fully to our fondest wishes. What we admire with the greatest satisfaction is the docility with which you receive our words. You declare, without reservation of any kind, that you are ready to follow willingly and joyfully our advice, and to carry out our views, which aim at safeguarding Christian society and at arousing in a salutary manner old and new forces in the common interest of the Church and of the fatherland for the salvation of souls. You could not have given us, dear sons, greater comfort in these times, especially as the Encyclical which has furnished you with the opportunity for making an open declaration of your filial attachment to our person, and of your full and strict submission to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, has supplied too many others with a pretext for misinterpreting our intentions, although the pretext rests on no basis of truth. In this way they have endeavored to mislead public opinion and the consciences of the common people, by deducing from our words, which in themselves are very explicit and very clear, a meaning totally different from that which we convey in them.

We, therefore, cannot refrain, dear sons, from complaining with you for the same reason that induced the Apostle Saint Paul to write these words to the Corinthians, which we adopt as our own: "For our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity of heart and sincerity of God, and not in carnal wisdom, but in the grace of God, we have conversed in this world and more abundantly toward you. For we write no other things to you than what you have read and known." As a letter of the great Apostle was wrongly interpreted, so also was our Encyclical on the Social Movement by certain persons, just as if we had said one thing and desired to be understood as saying quite another thing; just as if, in granting dispensations in particular cases, we desired to abandon the glorious traditions of the past and renounce the most sacred rights of the Church and the claims of the Apostolic See.

We, who have always taken care to speak to the faithful with that simplicity which Jesus Christ so strongly recommended to His Apostles, cannot allow them to do us the wrong of extracting from our letter a meaning which was not in it, and which We never intended to be in it, nor can We permit them to do what is still worse, namely, distort our words so as to impart to them a sense the very opposite of what they

PASTORAL LETTER

To City Clergy on the Occasion of Labor Day Celebration.

To the Pastor:

On the occasion of Labor Day there will be again this year a religious demonstration at which all workmen are cordially invited to be present. We will see repeated, I have no doubt, the magnificent spectacle of 1904.

It will be the first Sunday in September that the ceremony will take place. We will follow the same programme as last year.

The vast Church of Notre Dame proving too small to accommodate the enormous crowd of workmen, I thought it would be opportune to have on the same day at the same hour two separate ceremonies: one for the French-speaking workmen at Notre Dame, and the other for the English-speaking at St. Patrick's. I will be myself at Notre Dame; His Lordship the Bishop of Poggia will preside at St. Patrick's. In both churches there will be a sermon and act of consecration by the workmen to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Kindly read again next Sunday at all the Masses my letter of invitation of last year, and on the 3rd of September make it your duty to accompany, together with your curates, the workmen of your parish. Accept the assurance of my most affectionate and devoted sentiments.

—PAUL, Arch. of Montreal.
 Archbishop's Palace, Aug. 21, 1905.

OBITUARY.

MR. THOMAS MEEHAN.

There passed away Sunday afternoon at his residence, 182 St. Etienne street, Mr. Thomas Meehan, one of the best known of the older members of the Shamrock Lacrosse Club, and one of the most highly respected residents of Point St. Charles. Last December Mr. Meehan contracted a cold which developed into pneumonia and pleurisy, and from which he never fully recovered.

Mr. Meehan was well known in the parish of St. Ann's, and wherever known was highly esteemed. He was a friend to everybody, and had a happy knack of keeping all the friends he made. He was a member of the Catholic Order of Foresters and a life member of the Shamrock A.A.A. In the later seventies and earlier eighties he was one of the best known players on the Shamrock lacrosse team, and acted as captain for two terms. His last year as a player was 1881, when the Shamrocks won the world's championship.

Deceased was a machinist, and spent twenty-five years in the employ of Messrs. Pillow & Hersey, now the Montreal Rolling Mills Company. He was an excellent workman and here as elsewhere his place will be hard indeed to fill.

Mr. Meehan, who was forty-seven years of age, was one of a family of eight, of whom six yet survive, Patrick and Matthew, of Fairfield, Alaska; Richard, a guard in the Montreal jail; Henry, a grocer on Farm street, Phillip, who keeps a restaurant on St. Monique street, and Julia, the only sister. He also leaves a widow and six children. John, the eldest son, went last February with one of his uncles to Alaska, and is yet in ignorance of his father's death. It is just twenty-four years since his marriage, and both he and Mrs. Meehan were looking forward eagerly to the time when they might celebrate their silver wedding next year.

The funeral took place Tuesday morning to St. Ann's Church, where a solemn requiem Mass was celebrated. In the funeral cortege were the members of the Shamrock Lacrosse Club, past and present; the members of the Catholic Order of Foresters, and a large concourse of citizens. Interment took place at Cote des Neiges, H.I.P.

SISTER MARY JOSEPH.

Sister Mary Joseph died at the Hotel Dieu, Kingston, on Tuesday, aged 79 years. Deceased's former name was Adele Dupont, and she was born in Terrebonne, Que. She entered the community fifty years ago, and was for some years attached to the Hotel Dieu of this city. R.I.P.

IN THE LACROSSE WORLD.

On last Saturday afternoon the Shamrocks went down to defeat at the hands of the Capitals at Ottawa in the beginning of the second series arranged between the two teams. It was a delightful afternoon, and there were in attendance the Governor-General, Lord Grey, Prince Alexander, Hon. Curtis Guild, Lieut. Governor of Massachusetts; Col. Hanbury Williams, A.D.C., and Capt. Newton, A.D.C. There were also present, three hundred bluejackets and marines from the visiting squadron. Before facing the ball, Lord Grey made a neat speech. The game was a good exhibition of stick handling, and free from roughness. The Shamrocks played two intermediate men, Casey, the goal-keeper, and Frank Hogan, brother of the famous Jimmy Hogan, the inside home man. In the first half Shamrocks didn't seem to be playing their old time game, but the last half they played lacrosse with a vengeance, in whirlwind style, but it was too late to retrieve lost ground, the final score being 8 goals to 5. Casey, the goal-keeper of the Shamrocks, put up a wonderful game for a youngster, and stopped some lightning shots. Undismayed by such sharp shooters as the Capital home men, Casey stood his ground like a warrior; Johnny Brennan played a stellar game, ably supported by Hennessy, P. Brennan and Jimmy Hogan; Currie played like in the days of yore, and received a crack on the head as a memento of the occasion; Kawagh, Riley, McIlwaine, Howard and Kenny played the brand of lacrosse peculiar to themselves. The supporters of the boys in green are not discouraged at the defeat, but are confident that when Capitals come down here on Saturday, Sept. 9th, their favorites will overcome the lead of three goals and still win the series. Hootin will lead the home on that occasion. He and P. Brennan will play together for the first time this season.

Montreal defeated Cornwall at Cornwall on Saturday by 6 goals to 2.

A new record was established on Saturday at St. Catharines, Ont., when the Athletics, of the C.L.A., defeated the Chippewas by 27 goals to none. This is the highest number of goals ever scored against an opposing team. The Athletics are now champions of the C.L.A., and have sent a challenge to the Shamrocks for the Minto Cup.

On Monday, Sept. 4th (Labor Day) the second series between the Shamrocks and Nationals will commence at the National grounds.