

The True Witness

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPT. 20, 1861.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE reports of an increase to the military forces in Canada are confirmed by the last steamer.—Three regiments are under orders, and will probably be brought hither by the Great Eastern, which is expected to sail about the middle of the present month.

The news from the Continent is of little general interest. It is rumored that Austria and Spain had declared their intention to place troops at the disposal of the Sovereign Pontiff, should the French garrison be withdrawn from Rome. The struggle betwixt the Neapolitans and the Piedmontese still continues, the former avoiding as much as possible all general engagements with their better disciplined enemies, who are now eighty thousand strong. The position of Austria with regard to Hungary is extremely delicate, and we may expect at any moment, to hear of the insurrection of the latter.

The real nature of the war, and the hideous atrocities perpetrated by the Piedmontese mercenaries upon the Neapolitans are now admitted, even by the warmest advocates of the former, and the loudest revilers of the Neapolitan patriots. The Naples correspondent of the London Times, whom no one can suspect of any prejudices against the Piedmontese, writing under date 27th August, gives the following revolting details:—

"The most recent 'act of justice,' the counter-massacre in Pontelandolfo, was one of which humanity shudders. What the precise number of those destroyed was I do not know, but this I know, that the report presented to General Cialdini was, 'that not one of those who remained in the town was spared.' There were women and children probably, as well as men, but all were indiscriminately burnt or slaughtered."

After a lame attempt at an apology for the foreign troops, by whom this massacre of the Neapolitans was perpetrated, the same authority thus continues:—

"I have heard, too, of other military executions for which even so much cannot be said. On one occasion, I am told, General Pinelli shot 48 of his prisoners in cold blood after the battle. One of them, who had been the prisoner of the Reactionists, appealed against the order, and in his agony loudly called out to be heard, but the commanding officer, turning his back upon him, was inexorable. The same informant states that on another occasion 300 persons were burnt in a wood near Potenza. Now, I cannot vouch these facts; in a court of justice I could not swear to them; but they are reported to me by one who is as well informed as any man in Naples, who was long a sufferer in prison under the late dynasty, whose sympathies are strongly with the cause of an united Italy, and who closed his report by saying 'the Bourbons committed great cruelties, but we must be silent.' In short, my impression is that the sacrifice of human life has been much greater than the world has any idea of, and I do not speak of those who have fallen in the field, but of those who have been made away with by a rough and summary kind of justice. * * * If I write as I now do, it is to induce greater caution, and to put a stop to excesses which, however characteristic they may be of the savage enemy, are a disgrace to an army of gallant soldiers fighting for fraternity and unity."

The writer admits also, that these "acts of justice" against men whose only crime is that of asserting their national independence with arms in their hands, have failed of the desired effect; that they have not intimidated; but have—as in the case of the atrocities perpetrated by the troops of the first Napoleon upon the Spanish insurgents—merely stimulated the hatred which the people of Naples entertain towards the invaders of their native land, who, like the demons of the Convention, are preaching the gospel of "Union, Fraternity, or Death."

"And now for my report of the 'state of the country,' as it is called, and I fear that my view of it is justified by facts. There is no real improvement.—The very multitude of the events renders it impossible for me to enumerate them. We hear officially of incendiary fires in the province of Aquila, and others again near Castellamare, of the invasion of Mercogliano, and the disarming of the National Guard and the opening of the prison; of several places in Campobasso being attacked; of an attack on Guardia Reggia, near Isernia; and the burning of the archives; as also on St. Egidio, in the province of Salerno, where the National Guards were compelled to give up their arms. The authorities, of course, endeavour to make light of these events, and say that, if it were not for this and not for that, the brigandage would be put down in a fortnight; but it is not put down, and the end is yet far distant, because the causes which led to it still exist."

"I still hold to my opinion that if this country is to become a part of an united Italy it must be held as a conquest, and my reasons for thinking so become stronger every day. The army, which from the very elements of which it is composed, and the necessity of our political changes, is looked upon more as Piedmontese than national, has been compelled to take such a hostile position as to render a voluntary fusion impossible. In the provinces—let it be distinguished as much as you choose—there is great irritation, and 50,000 or 60,000 disbanded soldiers have

All their relatives, and so have those who have fallen the victims of their own crimes and of the impetuosity of many cases just impetuosity; of the soldiers. Were it possible, therefore, it would be desirable to increase the regular force, putting little dependence on such aid as Southern Italy itself can furnish."—Times Naples Corr.

This be it remembered is the confession of a Liberal, and not the accusation of an enemy of the Italian revolution. By what means that revolution is forwarded, and what its objects, are thus before the world, and can no longer be denied or ignored. The revolution in Italy means "conquest," not voluntary union; the means by which it is promoted are murder, rape, and arson; and such is the cause, such are the means on which the Great Briton looks approvingly, because the victims are Catholics, and the foreign oppressors are the enemies of the Pope!

The affairs of the United States present no appearance of a speedy settlement. Meagre and most contradictory, are all the reports which reach us from the seat of war. We hear of desperate and bloody battles, lasting from early morn till dewy eve, with the loss of some fifteen killed and seventy wounded. There are marchings and countermarchings, which it is impossible to understand, and most tedious to read. In the North a regular "reign of terror" prevails; all classes of citizens are at the mercy of the mob; and it is suspected even, are liable to be thrust into prison. Amongst the names of the many victims of this odious tyranny, we find that of Mr. McMaster, the talented editor of the late New York Freeman. The President has disavowed General Fremont's proclamation in so far as it declared free the slaves of all masters in Missouri in arms against the North; and it is said that Fremont, who is one of the few men of talents of whom the Federalists can boast, will resign his command in consequence.

THE ANTI-CATHOLIC CATECHISM OF POINTE AUX TREMBLES.—It is an easy matter to make little children, dependent for their clothes and victuals upon the good will of their teachers, repeat parrot-like any nonsense that the latter may think fit to teach them. But it can scarce be doubted that, when no longer dependent upon these teachers, when no longer obliged to repeat the daily lesson, and to swallow the rapid dose of cant to which in their youth they were accustomed, the pupils of Pointe Aux Trembles will be the first to resent the insult offered to their intelligence, by their former Catechists. And it is to be dreaded that, when they shall perceive the absurdity of the principles in which, at the Pointe Aux Trembles Swaddling house they were indoctrinated, they will cast off all the restraints of religion and morality. The same process by which a Catholic is converted into a Protestant, must inevitably, if logically carried out, convert the Protestant into the infidel, or denier of all revealed religion. Were Christianity nothing better than the farrago of nonsense taught at Pointe Aux Trembles, its rejection would indeed be no loss, but rather a gain, morally and intellectually; and the converted pupil arrived at years of manhood, and capable of judging for himself will probably be of the same opinion,—and reject Christianity at the same time as he rejects the absurdities of his "souper" education.

We will give some few extracts from this Evangelical Catechism, as a specimen of the pabulum with which the tender mind of the interesting converts at Pointe Aux Trembles are regaled:—

Q.—"Was the Virgin Mary without sin?"
A.—"No; for she calls God her Saviour, and none but sinners need a Saviour."

Such an answer may suit the tender age and undeveloped intellects of the pupils into whose mouths it is put; but to the more mature intelligence the answer would suggest itself that—as he who by his advice, or restraining arm, prevents or preserves another from falling into the water, may by the latter be addressed as "his saviour;" with as good reason as if he had been dragged out of the water when almost drowned—so, the Blessed Virgin might have been preserved by, and account of, her divine Son, from all taint of sin, whether original or actual; and might therefore have spoken of Him by Whom she was preserved from sin as "her Saviour;" with as good reason as if He had delivered her from the stains of guilt actually contracted. If, because of her divine Son, Mary was preserved from all sin, then most certainly that Son was "her Saviour;" or preserver, and might have been so spoken of by the sinless Mother.

Q.—"Should we pray to her as an intercessor?"
A.—"No; because there is only one mediator between God and man; the man Christ Jesus, and Christ is the advocate with the Father."

For the same reason Protestants should not pray for one another, or request the prayers of their co-religionists; for surely, if the Blessed Virgin's prayers, or intercession in our behalf, be repugnant to the one mediatorship of Christ, the prayers or intercessions of Brother Stiggins for Brother Snooks, must be equally repugnant to that one mediatorship, and for the same reason.

Q.—"If we pray to her could she not hear us; and does she not know all things?"
A.—"No; because she sought her own son three days, not knowing where to find him."

Here again it would suggest itself to any one, not intellectually emasculated by the discipline of

Pointe Aux Trembles, that—seeing how trifling in a material point of view, are this earth and its inhabitants, in comparison with only the actually visible portion of the material universe around us—the Blessed Virgin might well be cognizant of all that is taking place in, and amongst the denizens of, the former, without being endowed with omniscience—an attribute which the Catholic Church nowhere assigns to any creature; and that it is possible that the faculties of the Blessed Virgin may, as well as those of the other saints reigning with Christ, have been so augmented or extended as to enable her to know and perceive many things which she could not understand whilst subject to the laws of mortality. When this mortal shall have put on immortality, and this corruptible, incorruption, we may presume that the sphere of our intellectual vision shall also be greatly and indefinitely, though not infinitely, extended.

Here is more of the same kind of stuff:—

Q.—"Is Jesus Christ continually offered as a sacrifice in the Mass?"
A.—"No; for He was offered once for all."

This answer may satisfy the catechumen; but will hardly prove conclusive to him who knows that the words "for all" are an interpolation, or forgery, by the Protestant translators of the Bible, and are therefore given in Italics in the "authorised version" of the work; and that the book in which those words occur, the Epistle to the Hebrews, is one for whose Apostolic origin and inspiration, or supernatural authority, no Protestant can assign even the shadow of a reason. All that Protestants can affirm about it is, that it is a work of which no original exists—as it was certainly not written in Greek; and that its authorship has long been a matter of serious dispute amongst Protestants—such as Calvin and Luther—who differing in all else, agreed only in this: that it—the Epistle to the Hebrews—was not written by St. Paul.

Q.—"Is He present in the host or wafer?"
A.—"No; for He ascended into heaven, and the heavens must retain him till the restitution of all things."

Here Protestants show that they cannot quote even their own Bible either correctly or honestly. The word "retain" was a forgery, originally foisted into the sacred text—ACTS iii., 21—as an argument against the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence; but so glaring was the cheat, that, in the modern version, and in that known as the "authorised version" in use amongst English Protestants, the word "retain" has been long ago abandoned; and the word "receive," as in the Rheims Testament, has been substituted in lieu thereof. The original forgery proved too much; for in that it was designed to establish that Christ's body was in heaven, in such a manner that it could not be on earth, it proved that Saul, when travelling to Damascus, as recorded Acts ix., 4, 5, 6, could not really have seen the very body of Christ; and that consequently St. Paul's testimony, as one of the witnesses to the fact of the bodily Resurrection of Christ, as 1 Cor. xv. 8, is utterly worthless. The witnesses to the Resurrection are valuable, only in so far as they testify to material facts, of which they had sensible cognisance; and unless St. Paul actually saw the body of Christ, that body which suffered, rose again, and afterwards was received into heaven, he, St. Paul, had no right to claim a place as witness to that stupendous fact, in the same order as Cephas, the twelve, the five hundred brethren, and those other witnesses who actually saw and handled the material body of Christ upon earth. We are therefore forced to conclude, either, that the body of Christ is not so in heaven as to be incapable of being really and truly on earth; or that St. Paul was an ardent impostor in claiming to have had sensible demonstration of Christ's Resurrection in the same sense and order as that accorded to Cephas and the other witnesses.

This is a great mystery no doubt, and has provoked the admiration of the saints in all ages of the Church. "O tou thaumatos," exclaimed St. John Chrysostom many long centuries ago, and before, according to the Protestant tradition, "Romish corruption," had commenced—"O tes tou Theou philanthropias." O marvel! O loving kindness of God! who sitting on high with the Father may be held in the hands of all, and gives Himself to be received. Such, in substance, is the exclamation of the great saint and Bishop of Constantinople, who upon such matters will be esteemed by many to be at least the equal of, and as well informed upon the question at issue as the editor of the Montreal Witness, and the erudite doctors of Pointe aux Trembles.

These extracts will give some idea of the religious training to which the poor children at the above named institution are subjected, and of the want of honesty, or want of capacity of their religious teachers. Though well adapted to inspire the juvenile mind with prejudices against Catholicity, the course of study is still better adapted to instil doubts of Christianity, and all supernaturalism. Carry out the logical processes of the French Canadian Missionary Society, and you arrive at the conclusions of the now notorious "Essayists," the septem contra Christum, as they are irreverently spoken of by

De Sacerdotio lib. III.

the English evangelical press. These do not expressly deny, any article of the Anglican Church; they merely put a new spiritual gloss upon old texts hitherto carnally interpreted. As the F. C. M. Society deals with the Real Presence, so literally asserted in the Bible, the "Essayists" deal with other supernatural facts, such as the Resurrection. They do not deny, nay, they will assert this doctrine of Christianity, but in a new sense. Christ, they will tell us, did not rise, carnally or materially, from the grave; but after His death He rose spiritually in the hearts, and affections of His disciples. As the one set of Protestants deal with the words "this is my body," and fritter away their meaning till they are so spiritualised as to be unintelligible, so the other set deal with those texts which assert Christ's resurrection in the body. The latter have as much show of reason on their side as have the former; and though the F. C. M. Society may not design it, the only result of its labors in Lower Canada will be to give us a Protestant population, such as France could boast of about the latter end of the last century. The French mind is too logical for the *via media* of evangelical Protestantism.

NOT TRUTH BUT POPULARITY.—The controversy in the Anglican Establishment, upon the merits and demerits of the *Essays and Reviews* wages as fierce as ever. The Government Bishop of Salisbury has determined to bring matters to an issue, by instituting legal proceedings against one of the most prominent authors of the peccant work, the Reverend Rowland Williams.

But here the question presents itself—"By what standard shall the tribunal test the orthodoxy of the reverend defendant?" Not by that of eternal truth; for no Protestant sect is, or even pretends to be, in possession of such a standard. Not even by the standard of the 39 Articles; for, as the Protestant world well knows, the questions which to-day agitate and distract the thinking portion of the community were unknown in the days of the reformers of the XVI century; and no reference to, no decision upon, those questions can therefore be expected in their works. Since the days of Luther, and Calvin, of Zuinglius, Cranmer, and John Knox, the grounds of religious controversy have altogether changed. Men no longer care to dispute about the meaning of Scripture texts, but address themselves to the question of the authority of the Scriptures; it is not the contents of the Christian Revelation that to-day furnish matter of controversy, but it is the fact of that Revelation itself, but it is the possibility even of any Revelation, *ab extra*, which is now called in question. The writings of the Reformers throw no light upon these dark controversies, which had not even emerged when they commenced their revolt against the Catholic Church.

How then shall the cause be tried?—what law shall be applied to it? This difficulty the *Times* solves, or attempts to solve, by an appeal to public opinion; by applying the test of popularity, since that of accordance either with truth, or with the 39 Articles, is manifestly impossible. It proposes that the teachings of the accused authors of the *Essays and Reviews* shall be submitted to popular opinion; and condemned or tolerated by the Church of England according as they are at variance, or in harmony with that unerring standard of the Protestant Faith.

"The question is," argues the *Times*, "what is, as a matter of fact, the belief of the Church of England on this question, and by the belief of the Church of England, we do not mean the belief of the Bishops or the belief of Convocation, but the belief of the congregations which compose the actual religious community called the Church of England. * * * What is the actual belief of the body of people who compose that Church, and this, we say, is a simple question of fact which we must decide in the best way we can. But whichever way it is decided, this is the fact which must determine whether Dr. Rowland Williams has opinions suitable and proper for a minister of the Church of England or not. * * * If Dr. Williams can show the Judicial Committee that the body of the religious community in which he is officiating accepts the ideological interpretation of Scripture, it will listen with the greatest attention to any evidence he can bring forward, and he will prove his right to officiate in that body."—*London Times*.

The *Times* has the frankness to add, speaking in the name of that great Protestant community whose religious opinions it faithfully reflects, that it will not even enter at the moment into the question whether he—the Rev. Dr. Williams—is right or wrong. Truth is but a matter of secondary importance; the one thing needful, indeed essential, in the Protestant minister, is, that he should believe and teach in strict accordance with the belief of his congregation, regardless of the truth or falsity of his faith and doctrines.

A more humiliating confession was never made, and a more damaging accusation than this was never brought against Protestantism.—Hitherto it has been professed, even in the Protestant world, that the business of the minister, or religious teacher, was to impart the knowledge of divine things to his hearers; now, it is unblushingly owned that his duty is to conform his religious opinions to those of the congregation to which he preaches. The minister was once supposed, by a beautiful Protestant fiction, to be the teacher, and the congregation the taught—as is actually the case amongst Catholics. The

order is however in practice reversed amongst the former; and their ministers are expected humbly to receive from their respective congregations, the doctrines which from the pulpit—the "Chair of Truth," as it is called in the Catholic Church—they are subsequently to retail.

If this arrangement has its advantages—and certainly it dispenses with all theological training—it has also its inconveniences. There is a custom in vogue amongst the Protestant sects, known as "Exchanging Pulpits;" and either this must be henceforward given up, or the ministers still availing themselves of it, must be very careful to make themselves acquainted with the faith of the new congregations before which they have to preach, and very particular in explaining the religious opinions of those which they make over to the administrations of their reverend friends, with whom they for the nonce "exchange pulpits." We can fancy some such questions as these passing between reverend gentlemen upon such occasions—"What do you people think of Paul?—do they sanction a belief in an actual resurrection of the body, and a state of future retribution?—are they Trinitarian or Unitarian?" and responded to by mutual injunctions to be very careful not to say or do anything at variance with the popular and generally received opinion upon such points as the Incarnation, or the Vicarious Atonement.

To this then has Protestantism, even in its most Christian or least Protestant phase, arrived at last. Truth in the religious order it confesses to be unattainable; nor even, by its best and wisest, can it propose any better test of doctrine than that of popularity. It cannot fall back upon the symbols and formulas even of the Reformers, for these are discarded and obsolete. "It does not," says the great Protestant champion, "directly follow that because our Reformers had certain ideas, therefore the Church of England as a religious body has exactly the same ideas now." Certainly not. Error by its nature is ever shifting; truth alone is one and immutable—the same to-day as it was yesterday, and as it will be to all eternity. No one expects, therefore, any correspondence of ideas upon religious subjects betwixt the Church of England to-day, and the leaders in the great apostasy of the XVI. century, by whom that church was founded, and its Articles composed.

If the *Essays and Reviews*, the favorable reception they have received from the public, and the controversies to which they have given rise—indicate the actual condition of Protestantism in England, and its future tendencies, so also the following, which the *Westminster Review*, the leading Protestant periodical of the British Empire, quotes from the works of the Reverend Edmund Scherer, formerly Professor of Theology in the University of Geneva—satisfactorily exposes the position and prospects of Protestantism in its Continental strongholds:—

"The days of Protestantism are numbered; I mean the days of Protestantism as a positive system—as an institution; for as a principle it is immortal."

And as old and as ugly, the author might have added, as original sin.

"Are not statements of cures effected by means of a *Fater* and an *Ave* of a nature to keep alive ignorance and superstition?"—*Montreal Witness*.

The above question is not, as our readers might at first probably suspect—copied from Mr. Buckle's "History of Civilization," neither is it the *dictum* of any professed infidel, or denier of a superintending Providence. We found it some weeks ago in the columns of the *Toronto Christian Guardian* (Methodist); and we find it again amongst the "extracted matter" of the *Montreal Witness* of the 11th instance; from whence we presume—and must believe, until assured by their own mouths to the contrary—that our evangelical cotemporaries and that evangelical Protestants generally, hold in common with infidels, that it is a sign of ignorance and superstition to believe that God hears and answers prayer; or that He will so far interfere with the "laws of nature" as to restore the sick to health by the special interposition of His divine will. The cures mentioned in the New Testament are of course but the fables which delighted a rude, superstitious, and ignorant age.

In this there is nothing new; for in their controversies with Catholics, evangelical Protestants use, and are by the very nature of the case compelled to use, the self same weapons which ultra-Protestants, or those who deny all revelation, all supernaturalism, employ against Christianity. By the inexorable logic of the latter, all prayer from man to God; from creature to Creator, is proved to be a fond and silly conceit, a remnant of ignorance and superstition. To pray for health when sick, to pray for peace in time of war; to pray for rain in seasons of drought; to pray for fine weather in time of pest—these, and all other kinds or forms of prayer, are by the more advanced Protestants of the present day, ridiculed as useless, or even worse than useless; because tending to prolong ignorance, to increase superstition, and to deter men from reliance upon their own energies. According to this school, "all statements of blessing obtained by means of prayer, are of a nature to keep alive ignorance and superstition." Upon