

A COURT OF APPEALS.

In our last issue we referred to the fact that from the decisions of the "duly authorized judge" to interpret the "written as well as unwritten laws," there could only be two means of dissent, one by appeal and the other by open revolt against that authority. The latter question we leave for a future issue. As far as the appeal is concerned, we state emphatically that no such a thing can possibly exist.

Firstly, we have proven that the law, that is the Divine Law governing the Church, like that of all other legally constituted systems, is both "unwritten and written;" that due respect being had for the Legislator or Founder of such laws, their infallibility must be recognized; and, finally, that the interpretation of such laws must be subject to the decisions of a "duly authorized judge." So much being admitted, can there be any appeal from the decisions or the interpretations of such judge? We say most emphatically—"no."

Can you appeal from the most potent and the ultimate tribunal in any case. Firstly, who is the Legislator that gave those laws? Christ. Is Christ infallible as a Lawgiver? Most certainly. The laws then that emanate from an infallible Lawgiver must necessarily be immutable. To decide upon, or to interpret immutable laws, the judge appointed must partake of the infallible characteristic of the laws. If, then, that judge is infallible, to whom can we appeal from his decisions? To none other than the Lawgiver Himself—to Christ—to God. And if Christ, as God, delegated all His powers to that judge, as we have shown, surely the authority thus delegated must be infallible. Coming thus directly from Christ, the judge's authorization cannot be other than the same as that of Christ Himself as far as the matters left for his interpretation are concerned. If, therefore, any individual, claiming to be Christian, questions the judgments of that infallible judge and appeals therefrom—to what tribunal can such appeal be made?

The tribunal of the Founder of Christianity is certainly the highest one on earth or in heaven. To appeal, then, from Christ's Vicar to Christ Himself could only be a rational proceeding in the case that the Vicar had not received all the powers necessary to represent the Divine One who had promised to be with His Church. Consequently there can be no possible appeal from the interpretations of the law by the direct representative of Christ. In no system, human or divine, can there be an appeal from a superior court to one of inferior jurisdiction. In fact, it stands to reason that any attempt to question such decisions means merely a challenge to the Lawgiver, or rather a revolt against the dictations of Christ Himself.

This brings us to a most important question in the series of arguments—to the open revolts made against the Church's authority—therefore, that of the Church's Founder. This subject we will take up in another issue. For the present we will be satisfied with drawing attention to the wonderful perfections and astounding harmonies that exist in the organization of the Catholic Church. From Macaulay down to the last eminent and fair minded non-Catholic writer, all have acknowledged without hesitation the exceptional unity and the unbroken continuity of the Church. In its solidity of its foundation, the unbroken series of its hierarchy, the magnificent completeness of its laws, the perfection of its system, and the countless obstacles that the Church has ever surmounted, are proof and evidence of its Divine origin.

What an extraordinary spectacle! A handful of poor fishermen, powerless, ignorant and undisciplined, laying the basis of an organization that was to usurp the empire of the Cæsars and to dictate laws to the world, throughout the centuries, in every clime and to every race. Could that possibly be a human system of laws? Decidedly not. And if the system emanates from a Divine source, and partakes of the nature that belongs to all things divine, certainly it stands to reason that it must be as perfect in its application as in its origin. And the application of that system cannot be otherwise than through the medium of the duly and legally organized tribunal over which presides an infallible judge. Twist and turn the question as we may the only rational result must be in harmony with our contentions in these short articles.

We fail to understand how those learned and logically trained men, who are so opposed to the authority of the Church, and who preach individual interpretation of the Scriptures, can possibly reconcile their teachings with the facts they know to be true. The only explanation we can give is in the fact that they must be mentally blind, and that without the sufficient grace they must remain in the shadow of their errors.

THE WITNESS AT IT.

For some time past our friend the Daily Witness has been very generous in its expressions regarding Catholics and Catholic doctrines and practices. However, it could not be reasonably expected that such would perpetually continue. Consequently, we were not surprised to find in its issue of Wednesday, November 28, a leading editorial containing expressions that are as biting as they are unjust, and as unjust as they are false. The question that gave rise to this article is the attitude of Mr. Prefontaine regarding the proposed Chenier monument. In a petty fit of narrow sarcasm the Witness enquires whether or not Mr. Prefontaine is aware of the results that follow a person's coming under the ban of the Church. The able Alderman is reported to have said "what matters it whether he was buried in consecrated ground or not." And the clever Witness seizes upon this text to say: "Whatever spiritual powers may be wielded by prophets and apostles and men filled with the Spirit of God, a mere official ban will hurt no one spiritually, although it can be powerfully used as a means of worldly persecution and injury."

So thinks the Witness; and so thinks Mr. Prefontaine—if he is reported correctly. To this our learned contemporary adds: "As long as the monument stood it would flout and defy the assumption of ecclesiastics to damn men for political purposes, or, indeed, for any reason at all."

This one small article (small in spirit as in size) contains subject-matter for a dozen volumes of discussion. We will content ourselves with a few short remarks regarding both the editorial and the words of the prominent Alderman that gave rise to the effusion. In the first place the fact of a man being refused burial in consecrated ground may matter very little, or very much, according to the standpoint from which we consider the subject. If his friends, his relatives, or the people interested in him or in his memory, do not see anything to regret in the fact of their admired or beloved one reposing in unconsecrated ground, most certainly to the rest of the world it is of very little consequence. It is not the fact of having been refused Christian burial, according to the rites of the Church, that affects

the dead; it is the reasons, whether in the actions, motives, principles or general conduct of the departed, which led up to this result, that are of moment and that should be weighed. It is not the Church's censure that affects the future of a departed child of the Church, rather is it the events in the life of the one so marked out which gave rise to the censure.

The expression of the Witness "that a mere official ban will hurt no one spiritually" must be taken with that other phrase, that the monument "would flout and defy the assumption of ecclesiastics to damn men for political purposes, or, indeed, for any reason at all." To begin with, no ecclesiastic—from the humblest priest to the Sovereign Pontiff—ever assumed, or claimed the power, or sought to "damn" any person. If Christians are ever damned, in the sense of meriting eternal punishment, such condemnation comes from God, not from the Church, and is the result of that person's own life and not of the pronouncement against his conduct by the Church. Moreover, the Church, like the Divine Founder, is not on earth to destroy, but to save; and if any man is not saved it will be his own fault and not the Church's. We go still another step and say that the fact of a man being refused the benefits of Christian burial in consecrated ground does not necessarily mean that he is condemned to eternal punishment in the world to come. Christ alone is the Judge; and He alone decides the fate of the soul that appears before Him. The Church does not impose the eternal punishment. Even though a person were guilty of every crime known to Divine law, and died apparently in that state of guilt, it is impossible for the world, or even the Church's ministers, to know what passed in that soul as it clung to time and before it passed into eternity. A second of repentance, a sudden grace that was accepted and with which the dying corresponded, would suffice to change the whole aspect of his future.

The refusal, then, of the Church to allow the remains of certain persons to be interred in consecrated ground, is merely an act of censure for the open rebellion of such persons against the authority of the Church—therefore, the authority of God—and as a warning to all who might choose to follow the same path and to persevere therein unto the end.

We trust that this is sufficiently plain. The Witness editorial is but the embodiment of those foul calumnies that certain anti-Catholic writers love to scatter on all sides. They are fond of "sowing the wind," and perchance they will be surprised when they begin "to reap the whirlwind." They are ignorant of the Church's principles and they judge that Divine institution by their own human and fallible standard. If not ignorant, then they are worse—for their calumnies are intentional and the more indefensible in consequence.

One more word about Mr. Prefontaine and the monument. If, again, that gentleman is rightly reported, he said that the erection of the monument was a matter of business and not of sentiment. If there is no sentiment in the undertaking we fail to see the purpose thereof. If neither a sentiment of devotion to the memory of the man, nor one of patriotic admiration for the cause in which he acted, governs the actions of the promoters, such a monument would be either an insult to the one in whose commemoration it would be erected, or else a mere wanton act of unjustifiable trouble-sowing. If it is merely a business transaction we fail to see where the most important part of all business undertakings—that is the profits—comes in. Surely

the city is not speculating upon the transaction! If so it would speak very ill for all its promoters.

We prefer to believe that it is a question of honest sentiment and not one of mere business. If it were otherwise we could not see any *raison d'être* for such a monument. Here we wish it to be distinctly understood that we are not opposed to a commemorative monument to Dr. Chenier, either on national or political grounds. No more do we desire to have aught to say of this individual case from a religious standpoint. All we have stated is merely on general Catholic principles, in correction of the calumny in the Witness, not particularly directed against any individual. But we do think—and most sincerely—that in view of the conflicting opinions on the subject, the variance of sentiment, and the different divisions that to-day exist—divisions which should be moulded into one grand Canadian identity—the erection of the monument would be a source of unprecedented evils. There would be bitterness stirred up, and passions that are best left slumbering—r dead—would be awakened. God knows, we have enough of religious, national and political troubles and divisions without attempting, for one reason or another, to add brands to the fire. We want to live in peace, in harmony, in mutual forbearance, and above all, in mutual emulation; and we dread any such movement that may, directly or indirectly, serve to produce a contrary state of affairs.

TRUE PATRIOTISM.

The fact that the members of a nationality adhere to the traditions of their fatherland, instead of taking from, certainly adds to their importance and strength in a new country. Many a time have we said that, as far as Canada was concerned, the country would never become jealous of the love that her sons preserved for the olden lands whence they or their fathers came. Rather would she say, "fond of the old land they must be true to the new." This is a sentiment that, in our humble way, we have striven to inculcate, and we are glad to learn that our popular Governor-General—Lord Aberdeen—expressed similar sentiments in his admirable address on St. Andrew's night, in New York. It was thus His Excellency spoke:

"I know that it may be and has been suggested that the maintenance of these societies may hinder that fusion, that harmonious co-operation, which is so much to be desired in every community, but I have no apprehension on that score. Rather should the celebration of our love for the land of our origin be a stimulus and incentive to take a real share in promoting the welfare of the country of our adoption. And, besides, the individuality of a race is a thing not likely to be lost sight of. If we aim at getting rid of distinctive features, and to acquire similarity to others of a different nationality, we shall probably only succeed in being common-place. There is, so to speak, a soul belonging to nations as well as to individuals. Rob them of what is distinctly their own, and you rob them of this soul like quality. I trust that both here and in Canada, which I am proud to represent to-night, Scotchmen will show that they appreciate not only good business, but good government, and that what we claim to be a Scottish trait, namely, the love of right, will be carried into practice in supporting every well-directed movement for securing more and more of righteousness and equity in the administration of our public affairs."

We must heartily congratulate our Scotch fellow-citizens, as well as Scotchmen the world over, for the noble manner in which they have forged to the front, and for the grand patriotism that that they ever display on all their national festivals.

"I don't like winter," said one pick-pocket to another; "everybody has his hands in his pocket."