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PASTORAL LETTER

OF THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS

OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCES OF QUEBEC, MONTREAL AND OTTAWA

ON THE MANITOBA SCHOOL QUESTION.

We, by the Grace of God, and Favor of the Apostolic See, Archbishops and Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Quebec, Montreal and Ottawa.

TO THE SECULAR AND REGULAR CLERGY, AND TO ALL THE FAITHFUL OF OUR RESPECTIVE DIOCESES, HEALTH AND BLESSING IN OUR LORD :

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN :—

Called by the will of our Divine Lord to the spiritual government of the particular churches confided to their care, the Bishops, successors of the Apostles, have not only the mission to teach truth at all times and to infuse salutary principles into the souls of men, but they have, moreover, in certain critical and perilous circumstances, the right, and it is their duty to raise their voices to forewarn the faithful of dangers that threaten their faith, and to direct, stimulate and sustain them in the just vindication of their imprescriptible rights, manifestly disregarded and violated.

You know, dearly beloved brethren, the very painful position in which our co-religionists in Manitoba have been placed by the unjust laws which deprived them, six years ago, of the separate school system, which, in virtue of the Constitution of the country, they enjoyed till then—a school system so important, so necessary for a mixed population, for a healthy education and for the formation of children in the principles of the Catholic faith, which is, on earth, our greatest treasure and most precious inheritance.

We stood not in the need of civil tribunals, dearly beloved brethren, to see the injustice of these Manitoba laws, these attacks on liberty and justice, still, it has pleased Divine Providence, in His wisdom to obtain for Catholics the legal support of an unexceptional and sovereign authority in the recognition, by the highest tribunal of the Empire, the legitimacy of their griefs and the legality of a Federal Remedial measure.

In view of these facts, the Canadian Episcopate, solicitous above all, for the interest of religion and the good of souls, could not dissimulate the gravity of the duty which was imposed on their pastoral solicitude, and which obliged them to claim justice as they have done.

For, since the Bishops, whose authority is from God Himself, are the natural judges of questions concerning Christian faith, religion and morals, since they are the recognized heads of a perfect society, sovereign and superior by its nature and its end to civil society, it belongs to them when circumstances require it, not only to express unequivocally their views and their desires in every religious matter, but to point out to the faithful, or approve of suitable means to arrive at the spiritual end they have in view. This is the doctrine of the great Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical IMMORTALE DEI. "All that is sacred in human affairs under any title whatever, all that regards the end in view, all such falls under the jurisdiction and authority of the Church."

We deem it of importance, dearly beloved brethren, to remind you briefly of these principles inherent in the constitution of the Church itself, these essential rights of religious authority, in order to justify the attitude taken by members of the Catholic Hierarchy in the present school question, and to explain more fully the obligations under which the faithful are of following episcopal directions.

If there are, in fact, circumstances in which Catholics ought to manifest openly towards the Church all the respect and devotedness to which she is entitled, it is surely in a crisis such as the present, when the highest interests of faith and justice are at stake, demanding on the part of all good men, a united

and firm front under the direction of their leaders.

We had hopes, dearly beloved brethren, that the last session of the Federal Parliament would bring to a termination the school difficulties which so widely divided men's minds; we have been deceived in these hopes. History itself will judge of the causes which impeded the long expected solution.

As for us who have in view only the triumph of the eternal principles of religion and justice confided to our care, we, whom no defeat will ever be able to dishearten or turn aside from the accomplishment of the divine mission which was that of the Apostles themselves, we feel, in the presence of the electoral struggle about to take place, that an imperative duty is incumbent on us: this duty is to indicate to all the faithful under our jurisdiction, and whose consciences we have to direct, the only line of conduct to be followed in the present elections.

Need we, first of all, remind you, dearly beloved brethren, how noble and important is the right bestowed upon you by the constitution to designate for office the depositaries of public power? Every citizen worthy of the name, every Canadian who loves his country, who wishes it to be great, peaceful and prosperous, should interest himself in its government.

Now, the government of our country, of a people still young, but capable of occupying a distinguished place among the nations, will be what you will make it yourselves by your choice and by your votes.

That is to say, dearly beloved brethren, as a general rule, and save rare exceptions, it is a duty of conscience for every citizen to vote: a duty all the more grave and pressing as the questions disputed are important and may exercise over your destinies an influence more or less decisive.

That is to say, again, you should vote as honest, wise, enlightened and intelligent Christians.

Avoid, then, dearly beloved brethren, the deplorable excesses against which we frequently warned you: perjury, intemperance, lying, calumny, violence and party spirit, which warp the judgment and produce a kind of voluntary obstinate blindness.

Do not sell your vote. To vote is a duty, and duty is not sold. Give not your vote to the first comer, but to him whom in conscience you judge the best qualified by his mental powers, firmness of character, and his moral principles, to fill the noble office of legislator.

And that this judgment may be surer, and more enlightened, fear not the criticisms of a newspaper, nor the opinions of a friend who would hamper your mind; consult, when necessary, before voting, persons who, by their instruction, their rank or their social standing, are best qualified to judge of the questions that are agitated, and to appreciate the relative value of the candidates who ask your suffrage.

These are, dearly beloved brethren, general principles of wisdom and Christian prudence, that apply to all times and to all elections in which the laws of the country permit you to take part.

But, in the present circumstances, the duty of Canadian electors, principally Catholic electors, is invested with a character of special importance, to the gravity of which we desire to call your attention in a special manner. A grave injustice was committed against the Catholic Minority in Manitoba.

They were deprived of their Catholic Separate Schools, and forced to send their children to the schools that their consciences condemn. The Privy Council of England recognized the justice of the Catholic claim, and the right of the Federal Authorities to interfere, in order that justice be done to the oppressed. It is a question then for the Catholics of our country and well meaning Protestants to unite their strength and their suffrages, to secure a final victory for religious liberty, and the triumph of the rights secured by the Constitution. The means to secure this end is to elect, as representatives of the people, only men sincerely resolved to favor with all their influences and to sustain in Parliament a measure to remedy the evils from which the Manitoban Minority suffers.

In speaking to you thus, dearly beloved brethren, our intention is not to blind

ourselves to any of the parties that are combating in the political arena; on the contrary we desire to preserve our liberty. The Manitoba school question being, before all, a religious question, intimately allied to the dearest interests of the Catholic faith in this country, to the natural rights of parents, and also to the Constitution of the country and to the British Crown, we would regard it as betraying a sacred cause of which we are, and ought to be the defenders, if we did not use our authority to secure its success.

Remark, dearly beloved brethren, that a Catholic is not permitted, in whatever position he may be,—a journalist, an elector, a candidate or a representative—to have two lines of conduct in religious questions, one for private and the other for public life, to trample underfoot, in the exercise of his social duties, the obligations placed on him as a submissive child of the Church. This is why our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical LIBERTAS PRESTANTISSIMUM condemns those who "pretend that, in all that concerns the government of human society, its institutions, morals, laws, public functions, the instruction of youth, no more attention is to be paid to the Church than if she did not exist." For the same reason he says elsewhere (Encyclical IMMORTALE DEI): "Before all it is necessary that all Catholics worthy of the name, determine to be, and show themselves devoted sons of the Church: that they repulse without hesitation all that would be incompatible with this profession; that they make use of public institutions as far as they can in conscience for the furtherance of truth and justice."

Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, all Catholics should support only those candidates who bind themselves formally and solemnly to vote in parliament in favor of legislation which will restore to the Catholic minority of Manitoba the school rights to which they are entitled by the decision of the Hon. Privy Council of England. This grave duty is incumbent on every good Catholic, and you would not be justified either before your spiritual guides, or before God Himself in neglecting this obligation.

Until now we could congratulate ourselves on having the sympathetic support of a good number of our separated brethren, who understood that, in a country such as ours, having different religions, it is necessary for the general good to make use of that broadness of view which respects liberty of conscience and vested rights. We appeal again to their spirit of justice and patriotism, so that, joining their influence to that of the Catholics they may aid them to redress the grievances of which our co-religionists so justly complain.

What we want is the triumph of right and justice, the re-establishment of the rights and privileges of our Manitoba Brethren, the Roman Catholic minority, in educational matters so as to shelter them from arbitrary and unjust legislation.

We rely in this matter, dearly beloved brethren, on your spirit of faith and obedience.

We are convinced that, submissive in mind and heart to the teaching of your chief pastors, you will know how, if called upon, to place above your personal opinions and feelings the interest of a cause which excels all others; that of justice, order, and harmony in the different classes which compose the great Canadian family.

Done, and signed at Montreal, on the sixth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six.

† EDWARD-CHAS., Abp. of Montreal.
† J.-THOMAS, Abp. of Ottawa.
† L.-N., Abp. of Cyrene, adm. of Quebec.
† L.-F., Bishop of Tree-Rivers.
† L.-N., Bishop of St. Hyacinthe.
† N.-ZEPHIRIN, Bishop of Cythere, vic. [Apost. of Pontiac.
† ELPEHEGE, Bishop of Nicolet.
† ANDRE-ALBERT, Bishop of St. Germain of Rimouski.
† MICHAEL-THOMAS, Bishop of Chicoutimi.
† JOSEPH-MEDARD, Bishop of Valleyfield.
† PAUL, Bishop of Sherbrooke.
† MAX, Bishop of Druzipara, coadjutor [to the Bishop of St. Hyacinthe.
By order of their Lordships,
ALFRED ARCHAMBAULT, Canon,
Chancellor.

TO REVEREND JOS. HOGG.

REVEREND JOSEPH HOGG, City :

REV. SIR,—As foremost of the class of Protestant Christian leaders who, taking the school question for their text, are conducting from the pulpit, by canvassing their congregations and followers and by gracing party platforms with their presence, an active political campaign, it may not be considered out of place if I suggest to you how such actions appear to those who are not blinded by religious enthusiasm.

It may be an absurd belief, but it is, nevertheless a universal one amongst good Catholics; it was the belief of their fathers and of their fathers' fathers, and it is their belief, that it is proper for their children to receive religious teaching according to the tenets of their church, in their day schools. It is more than a belief, it has from time immemorial been considered an active obligation to the church and par of their religious faith.

For all time prior to 1890 the Catholics of this province enjoyed the right of supporting such schools with their own money. From 1871 under an act of the legislature of Manitoba down to 1890 these taxes were collected in common with Protestant school taxes and then divided in certain proportions, but at all times there existed the right to Catholics to support their own schools with their own money. Under this system Protestants lived with their Catholic fellow-Canadians as they should live; there was no hard feeling between them, no friction, no religious differences; it was not claimed Catholics were not good citizens, compared with Protestants in the same walk of life; it was not noticeable that their education was inferior.

Suddenly, without warning, without investigation, without agitation, (Mr. McCarthy to the contrary notwithstanding) separate schools were abolished. It is true they were not prohibited, but Catholics were told that they must be taxed in common with Protestants for state schools, that if they believed that their children should not attend such schools so much the worse for them, that either that belief must be sacrificed, their children go without tuition, or in addition to their school taxes, they must, at their own expense, support such separate schools as they might require. The history of their appeal to the courts is too well known to bear repetition. The result was that the judicial committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council unanimously declared, after hearing the arguments on both sides of some of the brightest ornaments of the English and Canadian bars that this legislation has caused a substantial grievance to the minority, and that the governor-general-in-council through the parliament of Canada had power to remove this grievance.

What followed? Protestants, led by their ministers, all over took the point that the judgment of the privy council did not say that parliament was bound to remove that grievance, but that it might at its option do so, and that while it had power to act, separate schools were such an utterly bad thing for the country that, in the exercise of its discretion, it should do nothing. Some able Protestant lawyers, few at first, took the ground that under the constitution as interpreted by the judgment, parliament was bound to act or break faith with the minority, to act or smash the constitution of Canada; not bound to act it is true in the sense of being compelled to do so if they refused, because that would imply a compelling power, and parliament being supreme, there is none such, but to act or break a solemn written and executed compact.

As time wore on the minority became the majority; one leading man after another, independent of creed or political attachment, expressed his concurrence in these views, until to-day no one of independence will seriously contend to the contrary. On this at least we find men like Sir Charles Tupper and Hon. Mr. Laurier, Hon. Mr. Foster and Hon. Mr. Mills, Sir Mackenzie Bowell and Sir Oliver Mowat, Hon. Mr. Dickey and Mr. Geoffron in absolute accord. Mr. Martin, himself, the father of the act, declared in parliament that the late decisions changed the position of matters, that he would like to see the local government pass legislation giving the min-

ority relief to their satisfaction, a satisfaction that he knew at the time could only be found in separate schools.

Conservative members in parliament introduced a measure of relief. It was not contended that this was introduced because the Conservative party believed in separate schools, but because they believed they were bound to carry out the constitution of Canada. The Liberal leaders objected. Why? Not because they took a different view of the constitution, but they said the time to act had not yet come; that Manitoba should first be asked herself to give this relief, and the remedy applied only when she refused, and also because the relief proposed did not go far enough. It was answered that it was useless to ask Manitoba to interfere, when she had again and again declared her intention of standing by the act. Mr. Martin said no; those declarations were made before the last decision, and that so altered the position of matters that the old refusals were now no refusals at all. Manitoba is now bound to remove this grievance, and will do so if requested. If not, then, as Mr. Laurier said, "in his hands the Catholics would not only receive justice but more than justice."

Now, sir, what is your position? With these facts before you in Hansard and in all the newspapers of the day, having given this matter sufficient consideration to justify yourself in your own opinion in dealing with it from the pulpit, you treat the question as if it were one of the desirability of separate schools, unfettered by contractual obligation of any kind. You undertake to lead your people from the pulpit, absolutely ignoring the keystone of the argument for remedial legislation, one about which all parties are agreed and without which the whole superstructure must undoubtedly collapse.

But apart from all this and admitting for the sake of argument that there is no such obligation, is it wise for ministers of the gospel to use the pulpit and their high office in preventing other Christian bodies from living up to the Bible according to their light? Why do you oppose separate schools? Not because the schools are inefficient. That is not the reason given from any pulpit; the remedy would not then be necessarily be prohibition, and if based on that ground the question is not within the jurisdiction of the pulpit.

The reason is plainly that you object to Catholics teaching their religion in school. This you wish to prevent. Why? Have you concluded after careful consideration that a bad Catholic is better than a good Catholic? Is the Catholic religion such that its teaching is absolutely detrimental to its believers. If so should not one hesitate about learning too much of the Protestant faith? If to learn in one manner to worship God is absolutely detrimental and worthy of prohibition why should men be paid to instil into Protestants reverence for that same God but by a slightly different process? Both Catholics and Protestants believe in the same God, serve the same Christ and yet with the vast majority of the inhabitants of this earth serving other gods it is thought proper for one minister of the gospel while teaching us "Peace on earth and good will toward men" to use his time, his church and the grace which God has given him to strike down his brother followers of their common Master, because they chance to differ on points of doctrine. Yet ministers grow eloquent on "Faith, hope and charity," and tell us that the greatest of all these is "charity."

Is the opposition then with some other object, the object of preventing Catholics from learning to serve God in their own way and thus starving them into accepting other doctrines? Surely there are enough sinners in the world, of Protestant persuasion, to monopolize the time of their leaders! Would it not be preferable to devote any extra energies in attending to such than in preventing the Catholic Church from teaching Christ to her own children in their own schools according to the doctrine of the Christian faith as adopted by men of the greatest eminence and of undoubted sincerity? In the present day of agnosticism and unbelief, would it not be better for Christianity as a whole that priest and parson stand shoulder to shoulder for their common Master, sinking differences of doctrine or church government in their efforts that men might be good, true and charitable, rather than to afford argument for unbelievers and queries for doubting Thomases by unfruitful disputations fomented by church jealousies?

Yours truly,
F. H. PHIPPEN,
Winnipeg May 26.