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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE. MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1856.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The rejoicings in England on account of the proclamation of peace have been very faint indeed; the general feeling is that the terms are not such as might have been demanded, and that upon the whole the result has been entirely to the advantage of our Allies. The military reputation of France is higher than ever; the same can hardly be said of England. Some little anxiety had been caused by the refusal of Austria to withdraw her troops from the Principalities, but this, it is said, is now at an end. The French army is to be reduced from 600,000 to 400,000 men; and the great naval armaments of England will also be considerably reduced. After a long and strict search for the missing Pacific, the steamers Tartar and Desperate have returned to port unsuccessful. Steam transports are being despatched to the Crimea to bring home the troops. The Tablet asserts that the seat on the Bench, vacated by the death of Mr. Justice Torrens, is to be conferred upon Mr. W. Keogh.

The Protestant of the 12th instant is fully satisfied that a very small number of intelligent Romanists are true and earnest believers in the doctrine that the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mother of God was, from the first moment of its existence, free from the stain of sin—or, in other words, in the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception" of Mary. Upon what grounds our cotemporary comes to this, to him, satisfactory conclusion, he does not condescend to inform us; and though he speaks of "general arguments against this dogma," he does not, and he cannot assign one of the slightest value, why we Romanists should doubt that the Virgin Mary was "Conceived" Immaculate, or without stain of Original Sin. Our friend's triumph is therefore premature.

For, if by "Romanists" our cotemporary means Catholics throughout the world in communion with the See of Rome, we must take the liberty of assuring him that there is not one intelligent member of that faith who has the slightest doubts about this "Papal decree," or "absurd dogma." A Romanist is one who believes all the Church believes and teaches, because, and only because, she believes and teaches it. Other reason than this for believing in any of the mysteries of revelation, no "intelligent Romanist" can assign; and consequently, the moment an "intelligent" or a logical and consistent "Romanist" sees reason to doubt of the infallibility of the teaching of the Church on any one point, he sees reason to reject her teaching upon all. The "intelligent" Romanist therefore, who is "not a true and earnest believer" in the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception," is not a true believer in the infallibility of the teaching of the Catholic Church—can have therefore no reason, whatever, for believing in any of the other dogmas of that Church—and is therefore, neither Romanist nor Christian, but simply an infidel. The Romanist, we say, has no better, indeed no other reason, for believing in the Divinity of Christ—the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity—the Sacrificial efficacy of Christ's death upon the cross, or the inspiration and supernatural authority of the Scriptures—than he has for believing in the "Immaculate Conception" of Mary. He has no reason for accepting any one of these dogmas, except the authority of the Church; and if that authority be insufficient to establish any one of them, it is surely insufficient to establish them all.

But why should either "intelligent" Romanists or "intelligent" infidels—why should any one, who appeals to reason, and rejects the authoritative teachings of the Church—doubt for one moment of the "Immaculate Conception"? What reason can any one assign why Mary should not have been Conceived Immaculate? The presumption certainly is that all the children of men are so conceived; nor is there any reason for believing the contrary, except the teaching of the Catholic Church. Here is the simple state of the case. If the Protestant can show, by the light of reason, without appealing to revelation, that, in any single case, the soul of the newly conceived infant is Maculate, or stained with sin, then will we admit that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is, as he calls it, "absurd." If he cannot do this, he must excuse us for looking upon

\* The authority of the Scriptures in the natural order—that is, their historic credibility—must be established as we establish the credibility, or historic value, of any other ancient documents—of the writings of Tacitus, or of Herodotus.

him, as an impertinent addle-pated blockhead, who makes assertions that he is unable to substantiate.

The argument—if to such rigmarole we may apply the term—of the Protestant against the doctrine of the Catholic Church, in so far as we can make it out, is—"that when God took upon Himself to deliver man; He was born of a woman," and therefore not of "an immaculate being." But why should not a woman be an immaculate being? we ask. Does not even the Protestant church of England admit by its collect for Christmas Day—in which it is said that Christ was "born of a pure virgin"—that a being may be pure or immaculate, and at the same time a woman? And, if it be not repugnant to reason or "absurd" to believe that Mary was pure or immaculate when she had attained an age at which, as from experience we know, most children of men have become impure or stained with actual sin; why, or how can it be "absurd" to suppose that her soul was equally pure or free from all stain of sin at the first moment of its creation? If the Conception of Mary was not Immaculate, how and when did she become what the collect of the Church of England calls her, "a pure virgin" or immaculate? He who qualifies the dogma of the Immaculate Conception as "absurd," is, if amenable to the laws of logic and common sense, obliged to give a clear and explicit answer to all these questions.

The Quebec Gazette does, we must admit, attempt in reply to the True Witness of the 28th ult. to answer these questions; or rather, to prove from reason, the transmission of the stain of original sin, from Adam to all his descendants. As his argument is novel, if not clever, we take this opportunity of laying the gist thereof before the reader; premising that it is neither theological nor psychological, but physiological!

"She—Mary—had a father and she had a mother, and must necessarily have inherited their frailties, there being none perfect among the descendants of Adam."—Quebec Gazette, 1st inst.

This is begging the question at issue. That the Blessed Virgin had a father and a mother, it need not the Gazette to tell us; but what reason can he assign why the soul of their newly conceived child should not have been pure or immaculate at the moment of its conception? Why must it necessarily have inherited their frailties?

Physiology proves that the sins of the father descend unto the third and fourth generations.—It Physiology does no such thing. Physiology may prove that the consequences of a particular class of sins are transmitted from father to son, but it does not show that the sins themselves are transmitted; it does not show that the soul of the son of the thief, or of the murderer, is stained with the sin of robbery or with blood.

For the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception relates only to the soul of Mary, or what theologians call the passive Conception. Now what light, would we ask of the Quebec Gazette, can physiology—or anatomical researches however minute, throw upon the state of the soul? Even a Cuvier would be sore puzzled to pronounce upon the condition of a man's soul from an inspection of the os sacrum, or a post mortem analysis of the contents of his stomach. From these he might indeed conclude as to what the deceased had had for dinner, but not as to whether he was in the habit of saying his prayers; as to the activity of his digestive organs, but hardly as to his acceptability with God.

Granted to its fullest extent, the proposition of the Quebec Gazette, that children inherit the frailties of their parents—granted that pimples are hereditary, that the wooden legged father, invariably and as a matter of course, begets wooden legged sons, and that the maternal wig is combed upon the heads of the children even to the third and fourth generation—granted all this—and the Quebec Gazette can hardly ask us to grant more—how can he thence conclude that the soul—not the head or legs, but the immortal soul—of the newly conceived child of frail and sinful parents, is also and already, by no act of its own, foul with the stain of sin, and consequently the object of its Creator's wrath? Is this in accordance with reason or physiology?

But we object to physiology as the test of doctrine. Apply the principles of physiology to the narrative given by St. Matthew and St. Luke of the birth of Jesus; and how will it stand that test? Is not that narrative, at the least, as "absurd" and as "contrary to reason, to experience, and the principles of physiology" as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of Jesus? The Protestant and his friends should remember that Romanists are consistent; and that, if they should succeed in persuading the latter to renounce the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, they will have also furnished Romanists with an unanswerable argument for rejecting the equally "absurd," and equally "unreasonable" doctrine of the Incarnation—or that Christ was "born of a pure Virgin."

"One man having sinned—ergo—all men are begotten sinners"—says the Gazette. "This is common sense, and it is the reasoning of the learned also."

It is not "common sense," for the sense of many—of the great majority of enlightened and educated Protestants—of the leading Protestant divines, metaphysicians and philosophers, both in the Old and New World—and of all who reject the Calvinistic phase of Protestantism—rejects, as monstrous, as inconsistent with reason and justice, the "ergo" of the Gazette—that "one man having sinned all men are begotten sinners." This may be the logic of the conventicle, the reasoning of the old women who sit upon their benches, but certainly not of the learned. It may be a doctrine of revelation, but assuredly it is not the prompting of common sense. We call therefore upon the Gazette to prove his "ergo," to show by reason, and common sense—that sense which he, and we all have in common—that, "one man having sinned, all men are begotten sinners."

"We should like to know"—says the Cobourg Star, a Protestant paper of Upper Canada—if it be true that the Catholic Church condemns all secret societies, simply on the ground of their being secret—"what exempts the Order of the Jesuits from this category, and the still more detestable institution of the Inquisition?" We reply—This—that, neither the Order of the Jesuits nor the Inquisition is a secret society; and though in Spain and Portugal, anti-Catholic sovereigns may have succeeded in perverting the "institution of the Inquisition" into an engine of their tyranny—the Catholic Church cannot be held responsible for the acts of her disloyal and rebellious children. As conceived and instituted by the Church, the Inquisition was an admirable institution; as an engine of State, and when under State influence, it may occasionally have degenerated into a "detestable institution." From which we draw this moral—not that the Inquisition is detestable, but—that all interference by the State with ecclesiastical institutions is corrupting, and injurious to the best interests of religion and humanity.

Again our cotemporary asks—"if Protestant William was 'cruel and bloodthirsty' what in the name of common sense, common honesty, and common justice was the Romanist James II?"

James the Second was a weak King, and a very bad Catholic; whose memory no Catholic feels himself called upon to defend, and whose name has never been put forward as that of a "pious and glorious sovereign." As a King he attempted to govern upon the Protestant principle of the "Divine Right of Kings"—a principle first broached and defended by Protestant writers, and eloquently refuted by the Jesuits, and the great controversial writers of the Catholic Church, in the XVI. and XVII. centuries. Early imbued with this principle—one which whilst a Protestant he must have heard proclaimed from many a Protestant pulpit, as the glorious characteristic of Anglican Protestantism—it is not wonderful that James followed the precedents of a Henry the VIII., an Elizabeth, of his grandfather and his father, rather than those of the old Catholic and constitutional sovereigns of England. The objects he had in view—viz.,—the abolition of the cruel Protestant penal laws, and the establishment of religious liberty—were good; the means he employed to carry them out were perhaps bad, and certainly not approved of by Rome; but his undignified behaviour in Ireland, his cowardly desertion of a brave and generous people in arms for their lawful sovereign, and the defence of their native land against the foreigner, are crimes unpardonable, in the eyes of the Irishman and the Catholic. No Romanist therefore need undertake the task of defending the character of James the Second, who was neither the hero nor the champion, not even a dutiful son, of the Church—and whose memory is not held in honor by Papists at the present day.

Very different is the case as between Dutch William of Glencoe immortality, and nineteenth century Protestants. He is their special hero, their glory, and their champion. His "pious and immortal memory" is their favorite toast, or rather their doxology; in which they at once sing praises to his name, profess their belief in the glorious doctrine of "Protestant Ascendancy," and commemorate the conquest of England and Ireland by the Dutch.

We therefore deem it unnecessary to pursue the parallel betwixt the "Glencoe Massacre" of William, and the "Bloody Assizes" of James. In the latter, justice was not tempered with mercy; but there is no proof that punishment was inflicted upon any except rebels who had taken an active part in the Monmouth rebellion. There may have been harshness; the last penny may have been usuriously exacted with un-Christian severity; but there was neither injustice nor illegality, nor, above all, treachery. James was unforgiving; but he did not, like Judas or William, salute his intended victim with the kiss of peace.

None of these however were wanting in the "Glencoe Massacre." The Glencoe men had committed no crime against God or man. Having taken up arms for the defence of their king and country, they submitted to the foreign conqueror when further resistance would have been useless; they complied in so far as they could, with all the requisitions of the law which their new masters imposed upon them; they received the strangers who came into their straths, with hospitality and generous confidence—giving them to eat and to drink of the best their glens could afford; and whilst relying upon the honor and good faith of a Protestant prince, were, by his express orders, murdered, in cold blood, and without form of trial, by their very guests who but a few hours before had partaken of their bread and their salt. It is this that distinguishes the "Glencoe massacre" from every other atrocity recorded in history, and has doomed the name of Dutch William to the eternal execration not only of every true Scotchman, of every Catholic, but of every honest loyal hearted gentleman throughout the world. There have been massacres more bloody, numbering more victims, but none so unprovoked, none so cowardly, none so treacherous as William's massacre of the brave and loyal Macdonalds of Glencoe.

\* Hallam, in his Constitutional History fully admits this; Macaulay, who glorifies the treacherous Dutchman, has, as our readers, we suppose are aware, been publicly burned in effigy in the Highlands.

FIRE AT QUEBEC.—A destructive fire broke out in Champlain Street on Saturday last, and which was not extinguished before much property had been destroyed.

The river in front of the city is now clear of ice. The first steamers of the season arrived at our wharves yesterday, and the navigation may now be considered open.

THE SABBATH QUESTION.—The Montreal Witness still continues the discussion of this question; but wanders sadly from the real point at issue. Betwixt Catholics, and the clique of Protestants to which he belongs, there is no question as to the duty of abstaining from all servile work on the Lord's Day, or as to the obligation upon all Christians to observe one day in seven as a period of rest. The commands of the Church upon these points are explicit; and these are a sufficient, as well as the only, reason why we, Catholics, observe the first day of the week to keep it holy.

But the real question that underlies all that load of useless controversy beneath which the Montreal Witness delights to crush his readers, is—Are all innocent amusements—that is, amusements innocent per se, and perfectly lawful on Mondays and Thursdays—as well as all servile work, forbidden on Sundays? Is it of divine precept that, on that day, men should abstain from all harmless sport, and all cheerful recreations, as well as from all servile work? This is the real question at issue betwixt the Sabbatarians, and those profane persons who will not bow down before Mr. Spooner, nor worship the image which the Puritans of the XVI. century set up.

We know that, with the children of Israel, the Sabbath, though a day on which all unnecessary work was suspended, was also a day of feasting and enjoyment; a day on which the people made merry, and rejoiced before the Lord their God; each man under his own vine or fig tree, with music and song. Are these then forbidden to the children of the Christian dispensation?—or is it enjoined upon them to observe their Sabbath in silence and gloom, whilst the Jews of old kept it as a day of mirth, and as a joyful festival?

The Catholic answers these questions in the negative. Neither from reason, nor revelation, neither from the natural law, nor the law given through Christ, can he learn that amusements, innocent in themselves, which interfere not with the hours of worship, and which impose no necessity for servile work on the Lord's Day upon others, are offensive to God. On the contrary; he is taught that the Sabbath is for man, not man for the Sabbath; that the day was accorded to him by an All Merciful Father, as a boon; not imposed upon him as a dreary penance by a capricious and malevolent tyrant. Hence and herein lies the difference betwixt the Catholic and Puritanical observance of the Sunday. The one keeps the day as a "Feast," because it is his Lord's Day; and his Lord is the God of Charity, Who loveth all things that He has made. The Puritan—and in this he also is consistent—observes it as his Lord's Day; and his Lord is the God of Calvin and of Knox—a being who has no one attribute in common with the God of Catholics, save that of infinite power.

PROTESTANT "RULE OF FAITH."—A new question has been started which, it seems, will not be settled by our separated brethren without much difficulty. It is this—"Is the Old Testament, as well as the New, part of the Protestant 'Rule of Faith'?" If so, is it the "Rule of Faith" equally, and in the same sense as the other? and if it is not, in what respects is it unequal, and in a different sense, to be accepted by Christians as their "Rule of Faith?" These questions are propounded by the Examiner—a Baptist organ—to the Observer, the exponent of some other Protestant sect; but to them the Observer maketh no reply. If he denies the Old Testament to be part of the Protestant "Rule of Faith," and yet admits it to be part of the Bible, or Written Word of God, it is clear that he must renounce his old war-cry of "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible," as the Protestant "Rule of Faith." Still more difficult will be his position if he admits that the Old Testament is in any sense part of the Protestant "Rule of Faith;" for he will then either have to admit that the Old and New Testaments are equally, and in the same sense, the rule of faith and practice for Christians—which is absurd; or to define clearly and sharply, wherein, and in what sense, they are both part of the same rule of faith and practice for Christians, and yet are not equally, and in the same sense, that rule—which is impossible.

The New York Church Journal—an Anglican organ—chuckles with glee over this dilemma; and asks significantly—

"Does the Observer see ahead the necessity of a 'Church' which hath authority in controversies of Faith?"

The Catholic, in like manner, would ask of the Anglican—"Does he—the latter—see the necessity of an infallible Church? as such alone can have any authority in controversies of Faith?" A fallible authority is no authority at all; and if our cotemporary claims authority for what he calls his "church," he must, to be consistent, claim for it "infallibility" on those matters at least in which it exercises its authority, and pronounces judgment. Otherwise his position is as untenable as that of his fellow Protestant; the Observer.

FUNNY.—The Toronto Church, organ of the Anglican Protestant sectaries in Upper Canada, says that it—"can pity and forgive, while it deeply deplores, the very serious errors into which the Calvinistic portion of our brethren within the church, have fallen"—and "could afford to smile at the simplicity with which they"—the fallen brethren—"style themselves par excellence evangelical; did we not groan in spirit as we recollect how fearfully their mistaken sentiments tend to undermine some of the dearest truths of the blessed Evangel." This is rich; almost too much, considering that Calvinism, unmitigated Calvinism, is the doctrine of the Church of England's 39 articles; which were drawn up by the principal Calvinists of the XVI. century.