

# The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1895

## RELIGION AND POLITICS.

On the 14th January last, the Rev. C. E. Amaron—editor of *L'Aurore*—read a paper before the Ministerial Association in which he treated of "the tendency of the Liberal movement amongst French-Canadians." It would seem that this reverend gentleman has a self-imposed mission to proselytize his fellow-countrymen, and to add insult to injury, by heaping opprobrium upon them. Such was Voltaire's plan, when he sought to destroy the spirit of Faith in France; he insulted the race, the language, the customs and the most sacred heritages of the people. Mr. Amaron draws a contrast between Puritan New England and Catholic New France—but in so doing he omits facts, forges others, and distorts the remainder. After a rehash of the time-worn platitudes about Roman domination, ignorance and slavery, he has the sublime audacity to fling the following in the face of his fellow-countrymen:

"The French-Canadian population is divided into three classes—first, those who are by the conscience and heart wedded to the old religion; second, there are multitudes who are prepared to take your heads off if you dare to say a word concerning the errors of Romanism, and yet are as ignorant of the saving truth of those holy teachings that lead to the righteous living as the heathen of the South Sea Islands; third, there is a large and rapidly increasing class who have thrown aside the old faith, but attend church on state occasions, at certain set times, to save appearances."

He is careful to pass no comment upon those of the first category; he casts a baseless slur upon them, however, by the trick of creating a second category which evidently includes the first one; and those of the third category are unfairly judged, because he has no positive means of knowing that they are rank hypocrites, as he insinuates. He makes

matters worse by explaining that these Catholics, who only go for show to church, "are the better educated men and women, who have read a few pages of history." In other words, the French-Canadian who becomes educated, according to Mr. Amaron's ideal system, has learned to sail under false colors, to act the pretender, and to play the hypocrite. He again accuses his race of the rank-est cowardice, when he says:

"Speak to lawyers, physicians, notaries, journalists, intelligent business men, on these questions. If they do not fear to be betrayed, they tell you very plainly that they abhor the old system and that they have no faith in it."

They must be very noble characters who can thus speak to Mr. Amaron under the provision that he will not betray them.

We have no special mandate to defend the good French Canadian people of our Province against the aspersions of one of their own nationality; but as Catholics we do not wish to have them misrepresented before the other sections of our mixed population. In all that deliberate attack upon the race, and consequently upon their Faith, the only truth that is expressed may be found in the following sentence:

"The history of France is well known. A similar work is going on among the French of this country. There has been for a long time a spirit of restlessness in all the ranks of French society. It has matured in thousands upon thousands of cases, passing from the stages of opposition, indifference, and carelessness, to infidelity. The number of these is already very great, and is increasing rapidly."

Yes; we agree the history of France is well known—we don't require Mr. Amaron to teach it to us. That a similar work, to that which brought desolation on France, is going on—on a smaller scale—here, we admit. The spirit of restlessness does exist in French society. The passage from indifference to infidelity is true. So far as the effects are concerned we are with Mr. Amaron; but where we disagree is on the causes that produce such effects and upon the remedies to be applied.

He sees the cause of this infidelity—flowing from religious indifferentism—in the authority exercised by the Catholic Church and in the precepts that she teaches; he sees the remedy in Protestant evangelization, proselytizing, and perverting.

If he will kindly follow us for a few moments we will point out to him the real cause of whatever infidelity this Province has had the misfortune of possessing. He will see that it does not spring from the Church, but in spite of the Church. We need not remind Mr. Amaron that the cry which brought on the "Reign of Terror" was that of the radical, infidel, secret society section of the people. "Down with the clergy!" "Down with the nobility!" "Death to the King!" The altar stood in the way of the anti-clerical forces, and when the altar could not be torn down, it was seized and made the throne of glory for the goddess of Liberty, in the person of a wretched woman from the city slums. "The mob executioner of to-day became the mob victim of to-morrow." Faith fled, bleeding, before the demon of infidelity; the atheist imagined that he beheld the end of Catholicity, but in the drunken banquet of his fancied triumph, the *Mane, Theckel, Phares* blazed upon the wall, and the diadem fell from the brow of the iconoclast.

Out of the chaotic mass of the French revolution arose thousands of insects of infidelity, born in the darkness of secret conclaves, and sent abroad—like the plagues of old—to infect every land where the spirit of Faith was triumphant. On the heels of the pioneers of

Catholicity the parasites of infidelity rushed breathless and with a vengeance. In every land where the seeds of Faith were sown, these envoys of evil sought to plant the germs of infidelity. In no land more than in Canada—and particularly in Quebec—was the Faith most widely and firmly planted; therefore, this section of the New World afforded exceptional fields for the destructive work of the enemies of the Church. Here we wish it to be thoroughly understood that we are not speaking of the political policies, the merits or demerits of any party. Mr. Amaron speaks of the "Liberal movement among French-Canadians." We desire to point out to that gentleman that he is playing upon the word "Liberal," to the detriment of exactness and truth.

We have two political parties here; the Liberal and the Conservative; with their politics we have nothing to do. As far as the Church is concerned they are on an equal footing. A Catholic may be a good Catholic and belong to either party; he may be a bad Catholic no matter which party he belongs to. The name given to a party may have more or less significance according to its origin. We have now to deal with the Liberal party among French-Canadians, not from a political, but from a religious standpoint.

To understand exactly the situation, and avoid the rock upon which Amaron splits, we must distinguish between a Catholic-Liberal and a Liberal-Catholic. The Catholic-Liberal is a man who is in full accord with the Church, whose Faith is sincere, whose belief and practice are in harmony with Catholicity, and who, in the political sphere, believes in the policy of a party that is known by the name of Liberal. But a Liberal-Catholic may be a Conservative or anything else in politics, while he is an indifferent and unfaithful child of the Church. The Old France infidel, the continental mason, the offshoot of the revolution, the radical, God-hating, church-destroying enemy of Catholicity calls himself a Liberal, in contradistinction, not to a Conservative, but to a Catholic. He is a Liberal-Catholic.

This Liberal-Catholic lands here with his seed of infidelity and he commences to prepare the ground before sowing the germs of destruction. He meets the French-Canadian, who is a Catholic-Liberal—that is a Catholic in faith, a Liberal in politics; and he naturally asks, "what party do you belong to?" "To the Liberal party," replies the Canadian, "So do I," says the Frenchman, "so we are in the same boat." No they are not: the Canadian is an honest Catholic-Liberal, the other is a dishonest and cunning Liberal-Catholic. But our Canadian friend does not stop to draw fine distinctions nor to ask explanations of principles. He believes in the stranger, and the latter plays upon his confidence. Soon the Liberal-Catholic gets a hand upon the press; by degrees he identifies himself with a party in politics, in order to use it for his own purposes of infidel and anti-Catholic indoctrination. Soon the Catholic-Liberal is saddled with the designs and evil machinations of the real author of the infidelity that is seen cropping up in many quarters. It is not a political, it is a religious—or rather anti-religious propaganda.

There, Mr. Amaron, is the true cause for the effects you point out. It is not the Catholic Church, but the hidden, sworn enemies of Catholicity that are the parents of the indifferentism and infidelity of which you speak. We have not far to go for examples. If, then, the effacing of Catholic teaching, the crea-

tion of anti-clericalism, the training of a generation in the ways of Liberal-Catholicity, constitute the cause of the evil effects, the remedy must be in the removal of that cause, by a return to Catholic principles, by a spreading of Catholic ideas, dogmas and practices, by the Catholic education of the rising generation in the ways of the Faith, and in obedience to a Divinely constituted authority. Your Protestant evangelization of French Canadians is as powerless to stay the advance of the evil indicated as the fantastic and eccentric teachings of Pere Hyacinthe would have been to extinguish the fury of the Reign of Terror.

## BALFOUR ON SCHOOLS.

Now that the all-absorbing question of separate schools (as we call them here) is upon the lips of every person, it may not be out of place to give our readers a few quotations from Mr. Balfour's recent address before his constituents of East Manchester. What we call the separate school is known as the Voluntary School in England. No person will accuse Mr. Balfour of any partiality to Catholics or Catholic systems; but his arguments in favor of voluntary, or separate schools, apply equally in Great Britain and in Canada. And what stands good in the case of education in England or Scotland is likewise applicable in Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec. Having spoken of the arguments in favor of the School Board system—or Public School system—Mr. Balfour said: "I take precisely the opposite opinion. In my view the normal education, the normal machinery of education, required alike by the parent and by the community, is the voluntary school."

This is a pretty broad and sweeping assertion that is carried out on the wings of most irrefutable argument. "Nothing makes me more indignant," said he, "when I listen to these debates, the debates which take place partly in the newspapers, partly in the House of Commons, upon this subject, than to hear the tone of tolerance, sometimes of hostility, with which the voluntary schools are treated. I agree that, if voluntary schools do not represent great voluntary effort they will probably lose their value and their efficiency. But while they represent great voluntary effort, while they are the outward sign of the great feeling in the community among parents that their children should be educated in the faith of their fathers, so long they deserve, and ought to receive, something more than this bare treatment." Thus does Mr. Balfour continue: "In the second place, it has been conclusive evidence of how strong is the feeling of the parents of this country, and of those who believe in the cause of religious education, that to divorce secular matters in this way from religious matters, to declare that, because one is under the patronage of the State, the other may go shift as it will, to give grants and rewards and all the honors of this world to one and let the other go slide, is contrary to the best interests of the State and the individual."

Here is a solid argument and a very sensible statement. Coming down to the more immediately practicable, we find the English statesman expressing exactly what, times numberless, our Catholic people have contended in the present case of the Manitoba schools. "What is State Money?" he asks, and he replies, "State money is the money contributed by the taxpayer, and I do not suggest that out of the money contributed by the taxpayer you should pay in voluntary schools for a system of re-