

Quebec minority in the first instance

was given by Mr. Alexander Galt, even so far back as when it was agreed to by the British American Provinces to form a Confederation to be called the Dominion of Canada. It was considered an essential condition of the union at that time that the Protestants of Quebec and the Catholics of Ontario should be secured for all future time in the privileges they then possessed, and indeed, considering the nature of the opposition then existing against such privileges being granted to the Ontario Catholics, it may very well be doubted whether these privileges would have been granted them peaceably if like privileges had not been demanded also by the Quebec Protestants.

Mr. Galt stated frequently in and out of Parliament that the Protestants of Quebec valued these privileges as they prized life itself; and it would have been an eternal disgrace to both Catholics and Protestants constituting the Parliament of Canada if the Separate school provisions, already granted by law to the Catholic body in Ontario, were not guaranteed in the act of Confederation, while the Protestants of Quebec received these guarantees with out any opposition from the Catholic majority of that province.

The disgrace which the Protestants of Canada would have incurred would be that of intolerance, while the Catholics would have been equally disgraced for cowardice if the provision desired by both minorities had not been inserted in the British North America Act, by which name the act establishing the Dominion of Canada is known.

The Protestants of Upper Canada (Ontario) well understood this and the clause permanently establishing Catholic Separate schools in Ontario, side by side with the Protestant Dissident schools in Quebec was passed with scarcely a murmur from any quarter. The provision in question forbids the taking away from either minority any privilege or right in regard to education which it held when the British North American Act was passed.

Since that time both acts have been amended so as to assimilate more and more the rights of the minorities to those of the majorities in each province, without trenching upon the rights already secured. These amendments have been deemed necessary for the smooth operation of the respective school systems, and have given satisfaction, without inflicting any injury or injustice upon the two minorities.

There have been agitators in Ontario who desired to take away all the rights given to the Catholic minority of Ontario by means of the amendments passed since 1867, but to the credit of the Protestants of the province generally, it must be said, that, as a body, they could not be moved to support the agitators who endeavored to disturb the peace of the country by carrying on an anti-Catholic crusade. The agitators learned a useful lesson, being taught that any efforts to create disturbance and dissension will meet with no encouragement from the province at large, and it is now hoped that never again will any agitation of the same kind be attempted.

It was by the destruction of the religious school system that the Atheists of France hoped, by degrees, to rear up a new generation, which might hate religion and bring about by degrees an anti-religious sentiment which should abolish the practice of religion in that country, and too well have they succeeded. If the agitators who are now clamoring for a National and godless school system in Quebec, the same results would come in due time in that province which have been attained in France, and this is probably the very result which these agitators desire. But it would be far better that the Public school system were entirely abolished, and that we should recur to the old voluntary private school system, than that a system of godless schools should be established by a noisy, but very small faction of the people of Quebec.

But we do not believe that even any large number of the Protestants of Quebec desire such a change as is here suggested. It is true that in some places the distinctively Protestant schools have been closed through the gradual diminution of the Protestant population in such localities, so that sometimes only one or two or three Protestant families remain in a school district who cannot support a Protestant school any longer. But surely, in such cases the diminished Protestant population can make use of the Catholic or Public school, in which their faith will never be tampered with. But it is not to be expected that for the sake of the very few who wish no religion to be taught in the schools, the great majority of the people should be deprived of their natural right to have religious teaching in their children.

The Semaine Religieuse does well to sound the alarm when such a project is even suggested, in order that the

Catholic public may be on their guard

against any threatening attitude on the part of a factious minority to destroy Catholic education under such false pretences as have been set forth in favor of so disastrous a change in the school laws of a Catholic province.

We may reasonably close this article by quoting the words of a Methodist Bishop, Dr. Coke Smith, of South Carolina, who, a few years ago thus spoke in an address delivered at Jacksonville, Florida.

"Intellectual culture by itself is the means of the development of rascality. Who break your backs? Who are the leaders of anarchistic movements? Are they the ignorant men of the country? No. They are the intellectual rascals, and the educated criminal is the most dangerous of all. No education deserves the name unless it has the moral side. The most powerful influence about the training of the child is the influence of the teacher. God save this country from godless teachers, and God save the country from a purely secular education."

The prognostications of this Bishop have been realized in the rapid increase of crime in the United States—murders, thefts, defalcations, suicides, etc. The present dominancy of atheism in France has been brought about in the same way, and to protect Quebec against similar results, the teaching of religion in the schools must be kept up at all hazards.

ANOTHER CHURCH UNION PROPOSED.

In the larger union contemplated by the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists of Canada, the Baptists have declared that they will not take part, the reason assigned by them being that "they are not prepared to give up distinctive principles."

This subject was debated at a meeting of the Baptist Ministerial Association held in Toronto during the month of May, 1904, at which Rev. Dr. Stewart, of the Bible Training School, took a leading part in the discussion. The reverend gentleman declared, proving his declaration from the New Testament, that "the unity of believers in Christ should be one of life, love and truth, and, therefore, spiritual union should form the basis of any organic union of churches. He favored the fullest co-operation of Christians in matters of common interest, but a serious hindrance to an effectual unity of the faithful such as was proposed would be met in the tendency to errors of doctrine."

It was then agreed by the meeting that "the Baptists are not ready to participate in the union movement of the three churches above mentioned, as they cannot give up their distinctive principles of regenerate membership and adult immersion."

In noticing the efforts which are now being made to effect the union referred to we have several times made a remark to the same effect, that on the mark to the same effect, that on the basis of union which has been partly agreed upon between the three parties to the contract, doctrines which are as easily set aside as beer, and are still, an integral part of the creed of two at least of the denominations as believed to be revealed by God. We cannot understand how denominations which thus believe can deliberately put aside such doctrines, even for the sake of a union which will give the united body an increase of influence, which is merely a political consideration.

This is, of course, their own business, and we do not refer to the matter for the purpose of influencing the judgment of the unionists, but solely to show how little is the value set upon scriptural teaching by the parties concerned, who have for three centuries maintained that it was for the sake of the truth of the Gospel that these separated from the Catholic Church. The Baptists have discovered the real motive which underlies the movement, and it is a proof of the honesty of their purpose that they will have nothing to do with it.

It now appears that the Baptists have discovered a direction in which they look for union consistently with their distinctive doctrines, the body with which they propose to unite being a smaller denomination known as "Disciples." A meeting was held in Toronto a few days ago by committee of both these denominations, at which the preliminary steps were taken with this object in view, and from all appearances the proposed union will be effected without any abnegation of principle on either side. The doctrines of these two denominations are said to be substantially the same, though there are minor differences in terminology and modes of expression, which will be easily reconciled.

While the quiet abnegation of doctrines which the Presbyterians and Congregationalists have partly agreed upon in order to unite in one body with the Methodists, must have the effect of weakening faith in all Christianity, thus leading to indifference to all Christian Doctrine, it does not

appear that the proposed union of Baptists and Disciples will have a similar effect.

PROTESTANTS PRAY FOR THE CHURCH IN FRANCE.

One of the most pleasing outcomes of the present religious crisis in France is the fact that the Right Rev. Robert Coleman, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Maine, has requested the clergy of his diocese to offer a special prayer in behalf of the Catholic Church in France. The prayer is as follows:

"O Heavenly Father, behold in mercy, our Sister, the Catholic Church in France, and if it be Thy will that she meet with persecution, poverty and humiliation, let it be for her good and for Thy glory. Grant that she may seek her victory, not in false and glorious deeds, not in wealth and luxury, not in the triumph of her enemies, nor in the power of the sacramental life in the priest and his people, in the family and in the home. We ask this in the name of our common Lord and Bishop of our souls to Whom be all glory." Amen.

THE RUSSIAN CHURCH.

A. B. of Montreal says:

"We have frequently seen it stated in the papers that the Russians generally belong to the Greek or Orthodox Church, and that the priests of this Church say Mass, hear confessions, and administer the sacraments in the Catholic Church. Believers in the Greek Church are also said to pay honor to the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and to carry about with them icons which they also honor, and which I understand to mean images of Christ. Will you please inform me briefly through the valued columns of the CATHOLIC RECORD, what are the chief characteristics of the Russian Church, and in what does it resemble or differ from the Catholic Church?"

ANSWER. It appears from the writings of the early fathers of the Church that there was some knowledge of Christianity in Russia at a very early period, inasmuch as Tertullian, who wrote about the year two hundred, speaks of the gospel having been then preached among the Scythians and Sarmatians, by which names Southern Russia was called. But there does not appear to have been any permanent impression of Christianity made there until the ninth century, when Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, sent missionaries thither. The nation, however, was not completely converted until about A. D. 988, and even when the Greek schism was permanently accomplished under Michael Cerularius in 1053, the Russians remained united under the Pope. This union continued down to the year 1439 when the Council of Florence met, at which the Schismatical Orientals became reunited with the Catholic Church. But this union was displeasing to the Eastern peoples, and in 1440, most of the Orientals renounced the union, and the Russians were soon after induced to join the schismatics. The Russian liturgical books, however, were composed while the Russian Church was united under the authority of the Pope, and are in use to the present day, so that they are doctrinally correct, and even recognized the authority of the Pope, as in the prayers of St. Sylvester's day, wherein this holy Pope is spoken of as head of the Church and the successor of St. Peter.

In 1453, Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and the Russians soon after this ceased to recognize in practice the patriarch of Constantinople as the head of their Church, though the Muscovite Patriarchs requested to be confirmed in their office down to the year 1657. From this time the Russian Church became independent of all other Oriental Churches.

In 1533, owing to indignities offered by the successive Patriarchs of Moscow to the Patriarchs of Kiev, the latter patriarchate formally united with the Catholic Church. This union continued down to 1793 when the Empress Catherine transferred the see of Kiev to the Schismatical Church, and suppressed by force the Catholic See. Many of the Catholics remained faithful, and those who did so are called Uniates, but Catharism's arbitrary measures caused many to fall away and join the schismatic