

The True Witness.

AND
CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,
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We beg to remind our Correspondent that no letters will be taken out of the Post-Office, unless pre-paid.

The figures after each Subscriber's Address every week shows the date to which he has paid up. Thus "JOHN JONES, August '63," shows that he has paid up to August '63, and owes his Subscription from that date.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUG. 23.

ECOLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.

AUGUST—1867.

Friday, 23—Vigil of St. Philip de Beniti O.
Saturday, 24—St. Bartholemew Ap.
Sunday, 25—Eleventh after Pentecost, Sacred Heart of Mary.
Monday, 26—SS. Naz., Orelso, etc., MM.
Tuesday, 27—St. Joseph de Cal., O.
Wednesday 28—St. Augustin B. D.
Thursday, 29—Beholding of St. John the Baptist

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

Each year when our subscriptions become due we are reminded of the old adage:—

"To spend or to lend or to give in,
It is a very good world we live in;
But to borrow or beg, or to ask one's own,
It's the very worst world that ever was known."

At present many of our friends at a distance have not replied to our orders for payment of their small accounts. Our journal, as well as all other newspapers, is supported by the multitude of very small sums. In this it much resembles the grand Cathedrals—a pride and a pleasure to those thousands who have contributed their pennies to their erection. It is impossible to purchase paper, pay for literary productions, and the mechanics' labor, and supply our readers with a good Catholic paper unless, on the other hand, our readers perform their part of the contract. It is to be hoped that all outstanding accounts will be paid in before the close of the month, and thus remove the anxiety which the managers of this journal must feel through the forgetfulness or wilful carelessness of defaulting subscribers.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The steamer "City of Paris" brings Liverpool dates to the 7th, and Queenstown of the 8th. The Abyssinian captives, it appears, are cut off from the Emperor, both parties surrounded by rebels. There is no danger of their falling into his hands again. English papers comment that there is no use now of an expedition to Abyssinia. The Emperor Napoleon would receive the great bodies of State on the 15th and leave for Salsburg on the 16th or 17th to visit Francis Joseph.

The Gazette d'Italia states that the Garibaldian party propose to make a movement on Viterbo.

Some contagious disease had broken out in Candia. French ships took over 9,000 families thence to Greece.

The Sultan reached Constantinople on the 7th.

The elections to the French Council General terminated with the following results:—Of 600 elections 464 were secured by the Government candidates; and 21 only by the Opposition. In the remainder the administration remained neutral.

It is expected that negotiation will shortly be opened for a treaty of commerce between Russia and Prussia.

There were 3,333 deaths from cholera in Sicily for the week ending July 24.

A water-spout burst in the village of Palazzolo, Italy, destroying thirty houses and damaging seventy. Ten persons were killed and twenty six injured by the falling of buildings. Of 1500 inhabitants 400 are houseless.

The disease was abating at Palermo. The health of Messina and Syracuse was good.

The Bishop of Orleans, in a letter, expresses apprehension for the security of the Papal States. He does not fear internal revolution, but thinks some insidious plot against the Holy Father is being matured at Florence.

The *Moniteur* repeats its statement that the September Convention will be executed in good faith by the Governments of France and Italy.

Cholera has somewhat decreased in Rome, but is extremely virulent at Frisnone and several villages in the mountains.

A frightful accident had occurred on the Great Indian Railway. There were 13 killed and 20 injured.

The English Settlement at Nagasaki was damaged by a severe storm.

An Athens letter says the Turks declare they

are supplying food to over ten thousand poor Christians in Crete. There are fourteen thousand Cretan refugees in Greece nearly all supported by charity.

A large part of the Government buildings at Buenos Ayres were destroyed by fire.

Preparations for a mine which would blow up the Government House at Montevideo had been discovered, and various persons arrested.

LONDON, Aug. 16th.—The English Parliament was prorogued on Wednesday, 21st.

LONDON, Aug. 17.—The rain still continues throughout the country and it is thought the crops suffered extensively in some districts.

PORTSMOUTH, Aug. 16.—The British ship-of-war "Serapis" left this port yesterday for Ireland, whence she will take a regiment to Quebec, Canada.

LIVERPOOL, Aug. 16.—"City of Boston," which arrived yesterday, reports on 4th inst. ran down and sunk schooner "Silva," bound for Boston; no lives lost.

The writs for the nomination in the city of Montreal have been issued for Thursday the 29th of this month.

FREE INQUIRY.—Protestants glory themselves on their love for freedom of thought, and of their adherence to the Apostolic maxim to prove all things. There is with us—so they boast—none of that shrinking from full and fearless investigation of all questions touching faith, and the mysteries of our religion, which characterises Romanists. Our faith, they boast, is an intelligent faith, the product of our own intellectual researches, and careful examination of evidence on both sides. That of Romanists, on the contrary, is a grovelling superstition, that has no foundation more solid than that of authority. Hence, whilst we invite, the latter invariably strive to stifle inquiry, placing on the *Index*, and prohibiting the perusal of, all books which might suggest in the minds of the readers, doubts as to the truth of the religious system in which they have been brought up. Hereupon the Protestant looks heavenwards, and gives God thanks that he is not as other men are; and that his religion has naught to learn from free inquiry.

So the Protestant boasts, so he argues against Catholics; but how does he act? how does he argue when his opponents are not Papists, but Neologists? not men who believe too much, according to his arbitrary standard, but men who believe too little, and whom he accordingly qualifies as infidels?

This question we find resolved in a very satisfactory manner in a Report given by the London *Times* of the proceedings at a late annual meeting of the *Church Missionary Society*, presided over by the Earl of Chester, and attended by the Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, and by a large number of other members of the Protestant Episcopate. Canon McNeil, a great gun of the Establishment, a very Boanerges, or child of thunder, against the ignorance, superstition, and non-inquiring spirit of Papists, was one of the principal speakers; his speech was loudly applauded by his hearers, both lay and clerical; and the motion which it prefaced was carried triumphantly. What then was the burden of his speech? According to the Report in the *Times*, the Rev. Canon McNeil, in the course of a long speech,—

"Urged upon all his hearers, both lay and clerical, to abstain from reading such literature as *Essays and Reviews*. He said it was the clergyman's duty to preach that of which he had been convinced before his Ordination, and not to enter upon speculations."

To the formal principal, in the above laid down, we, as Catholics, take no objection; but how Protestants who taunt us with our shrinking from free inquiry; who reproach our clergy with keeping their people in ignorance, because they strongly urge upon them to abstain from reading such books as throw doubts on the truth of their religion; and who insist that it is the duty of Catholic clergymen, after their ordination, to enter upon speculations as to the truth of the doctrines which they were ordained to preach—how Protestants, we say, can uphold such a principle as that laid down by Canon McNeil is to us incomprehensible; and affords another glaring instance of Protestant inconsistency, and of the Protestant system of two sets of weights and measures, with which their adversaries reproach them.

But let that pass. It is neither to the inconsistency of Protestantism nor to its dishonesty that we invite attention, but to its recognition of the soundness of the principle upon which the Catholic Church interdicts to all her children the reading of books whose tendencies are to weaken faith; and upon which also she discourages speculations upon the subject matter of divine revelation. The wisdom, the propriety of this course, the soundness of the principle is, when their interests are at stake, recognised by Protestants; and is by them endorsed. Neither can Protestants pretend that the restrictions imposed by the Church on indiscriminate reading of anti-Catholic books; and the discouragement of speculation, are necessarily aggressions upon religious liberty, or an insult to the human intelligence, for, do they not themselves do the same things? and, nevertheless, is it not their

constant boast that they are free, and that their religious system is eminently favorable to intellectual development, and a vigorous intelligence?

It is not then in the assertion of the principle of restriction, but in the application of that principle, that, according to Protestants (who would fain assert the principle for themselves, but at the same time condemn the Catholic Church,) that the sin of the latter against the human intellect and religious liberty, and freedom of inquiry consists. To prohibit by moral censures the "reading such literature as *Essays and Reviews* is the exercise of legitimate authority: but for the Catholic Church, by her censures, and moral means of restraint, to impose restrictions upon the reading of anti-Catholic literature, and which is very often scurrilous, sometimes obscene, and always unscrupulously mendacious, is a high handed and tyrannical exercise of power. But here the question arises—"Who is to be the judge?" as to what literature is dangerous and worthy of being placed under ban? by whom is the wheat to be winnowed from the chaff, and the good book distinguished from the bad? Not—even according to the Protestant principle as laid down by the evangelical Canon McNeil—not by every individual for himself, must this be done: for before any one can exercise an act of personal judgment upon a book, say *Essays and Reviews*, he must himself have read it; and Canon McNeil strongly urges all men not to read such books. It is clear therefore that he does not make the individual the judge; and that, therefore, since according to him there are books which should not be read, and against which the people should be put on their guard; there must, or at all events, should, be somewhere a tribunal intellectually competent to discriminate with certainty betwixt the good and the bad in literature: and morally competent to interdict to the people generally, the study of the bad. Of course, if we could read Canon McNeil's heart, we should find thereon inscribed, "I am that tribunal intellectually competent to pronounce verdict; morally competent to enforce judgment." And what our evangelical friend thinks of himself, so also does every Spurgeon and Stiggins of the lot think also of himself in particular.

And hereupon, not upon their law of the case, but upon their right or competency to apply that law, do we join issue with McNeil, and Spurgeon, and Stiggins aforesaid. No! good gentlemen, we say unto them; we do not recognise you as competent judges in the premises. When, and in what terms, did the Lord appoint you to bear rule over us, to teach us our duties, to prescribe to us what we should read or abstain from reading? That literature, hostile to Christianity, and impugning the truths of revelation, should not be read by any Christian, is good law, though the devil, though the father of lies were to speak it; but who are you, what are you, that without further inquiring, that, without examining for ourselves—that is to say, without first carefully reading the very books which you urge us not to read—we should take your word for it, that the books which you censure are indeed hostile to Christianity, and do indeed impugn the truths of revelation?

A law, without a tribunal competent to apply that law, is a dead law, is an absurdity, and if therefore the above cited law be good, as Protestants assert, as all Catholics must admit—there must necessarily be some tribunal competent to apply it, that is to say intellectually competent, because infallible, as to the fact of revelation, and in its interpretation of those facts, morally competent—because by Christ Himself commissioned to address all men in the accents of authority, so that he who slights its behests, slights also, and sets at nought, the precepts of Christ Himself. Such a tribunal we can recognise—not in any individual however learned, or however exalted his social position—no, not though he be a Canon of the Church as By Law Established—we can recognise it indeed, but in the Catholic Church, and in her alone. To her, and to her alone, without any sacrifice of our dignity as men, and as intelligent creatures responsible to God for the exercise of our intellectual faculties, can we submit ourselves and our reason; and we should feel ourselves to be degraded, humiliated, and guilty of sin against reason and therefore against Him Who is reason itself, were we to yield obedience to any other tribunal on earth. If we Catholics submit ourselves to the Church, and refuse to read such literature, as the tracts, for instance, and garbled and emasculated versions of the sacred writings which evangelical Swaddlers delight to force upon us, we do but act strictly in accordance with the principle, or law laid down by Canon McNeil, and in obedience to a tribunal which claims to speak with divine authority, and whose claims we admit. We Papists therefore are consistent.

But when Protestants, at the instigation of the Protestant minister refuse to read such literature as *Essays and Reviews*; when they refuse to enter upon speculation as to the truth or falsity of the facts of Christianity, its prophecies, and miracles, the case is different. They cannot pretend that Mr. Spurgeon, or Canon McNeil, or the Rev. M. Stiggin, is a judge or tribunal by God

appointed to adjudicate in the premises; and to whom, therefore, at the peril of their immortal souls, they are bound to yield implicit obedience. Protestants know that the preacher to whom they listen, though he may interest them by his eloquence, delight them with the graces of his style, amuse them with his buffooneries, or tickle their prurient fancies with his invectives against Nuns and Priests, has no more rightful authority over them than has the *cantatrice* at the opera whose magnificent *Soprano* enchants them, or than has the Clown at the Circus, whose contortions amaze them, and at whose jests they loudly laugh. The Protestant minister is a gentleman whom the congregation engages at so much *per annum* to do their preaching and praying for them: who has no authority over them, but what they themselves have given him; and who is no better than any one of themselves, has no right of any kind to interfere with their literary studies or to attempt to set limits to their speculations. Such being the case the Protestant who submits to have the sphere of his reading curtailed, or his speculations limited by his minister, is indeed a slave, because he makes abnegation of his intellectual rights to an authority which in his heart of hearts he knows has no claims upon his allegiance. He is, not "priest-ridden," indeed, but "minister ridden" or man ridden; and his rider he himself knows to be a very ordinary mortal, and not one whit different from himself. Protestant obedience is indeed slavery: the obedience of the Catholic Church is intelligent obedience of the free man.

RITUALISTS AND ANTI-RITUALISTS.—The strife betwixt the two antagonistic parties in the Anglican deomication having traversed the ocean, has reached our shores, and even now is raging with much intensity, much bitterness of spirit, and a plentiful outpouring of hard words, in most of the towns and cities of U. Canada.

Though the parties to this strife are respectively known as "Ritualists," and "Anti-Ritualists," we think that the names by which they are severally distinguished are not happily chosen, inasmuch as they do not bring prominently forward a salient point of divergence betwixt the combatants. Love of Ritualism, attachment to forms, ceremonies, genuflexions, and ecclesiastical dresses, is not the chief characteristic of the so-called Ritualists: and neither is it opposition to these things or attachment to a bold, irreverent, and unattractive mode of conducting worship—that which mainly distinguishes the so-called anti-Ritualists, from their opponents. There is something deeper, and more important than dresses, and ceremonies, and ritualism, involved in this controversy.

And this something, would be more clearly brought out, and the real significance of the movement now agitating the troubled waters of Episcopal Protestantism, would be made plainer to the simple intelligence, were the names of "Sacerdotalists" and "anti-Sacerdotalists" applied respectively, to the contending parties.—For in the present stage of the dispute it is neither more nor less than, on the one side an assertion of Sacerdotalism, and on the other, a vigorous protest against it. This is why the laity of the wealthier classes, both in England and in Canada, are for the most part so bitterly opposed to Ritualism, in this respect, approving themselves staunch Protestants, since, in its inception, Protestantism was essentially an anti-Sacerdotal revolution.

As a general rule, Protestants care little either way for dogmas, unless they involve or imply the necessity of some ascetic practice. In the ordinary language of intelligent Protestants, all dogma is at best but a matter of speculation, and belongs, not to the domain of religion, but, as they phrase it, of theology. Indifference to dogma always has been, and is daily becoming still more, the badge of Protestantism, which on the other hand always has been—and, as the principles of the Reformation are better understood, and more fully carried out, will constantly become more averse to Sacerdotalism, or the pretensions made by a class of men to the possession of supernatural power or authority. So much is this the case, that Protestantism, though formally consisting in a protest against the authority of the Catholic Church, consists materially in a protest against the doctrine that any man, or any set of men, possess, in virtue of their Ordination—whether Episcopal, or Presbyterian, any special spiritual authority, supernatural powers, or privileges of any kind. The true Protestant will not brook the pretensions of a priest, whether of the Anglican, or of the Catholic Church: he will recognise no division into cleric or laic, for with him all are equally priests, or ministers, and all in another sense, are equally laymen for all are, in respect of spiritual power or authority, on a footing of perfect equality.

Now—and this is just what shocks the genuine Protestant sentiment—the Ritualist in his every word, in his every jest, in every genuflexion that he may make, in every ribbon that he may put on, asserts implicitly the existence of two distinct orders in the Christian Church—an order clerical, and an order laic. He asserts for himself a

peculiar character as priest; that of being in an especial manner a mediator, or minister, betwixt God and man, endowed by and in virtue of his Ordination with special supernatural power, or authority to do certain things which no person, not so ordained can do, or under any circumstances can have the right even to attempt to do. It is this assertion or rather, on the part of Anglican ministers, this assumption of a Sacerdotal or supernatural character, that, more than anything else, more than the flowers, and the music, and the albs, and the chasubles, and the Gregorian chant, and the bowing to the altars, shocks the feelings of staunch and sensitive Protestants.

This is, we think, well brought out by the outcry that has been raised against the assumption of the Ritualists in the matter of Absolution, which many of them give in the very same form as that used by Catholic priests, and after having received the particular confessions of, their several penitents. By this act, more perhaps than by any other, do they, the Ritualists, assert their peculiar, supernatural, and sacerdotal character; by this more than by any thing else that they say or do, do they assert their distinction from the people, their God derived authority over the laity, and their spiritual or supernatural power. Therefore is it—that against this practice, against this imitation or *singerie* of the Catholic Sacrament of Penance, in which the more advanced Ritualists indulge, is the indignation of the more consistent Protestants of the Establishment more particularly directed. They are right; their instincts as Protestants are true to them in this case; and they see, that on this one question—that of the power of remitting or retaining sin, depends the fortunes of the battle betwixt Sacerdotalism and anti Sacerdotalism, naturalism and supernaturalism, in the Church of England, and indeed the fortunes of Protestantism itself.

In one respect too, for the Sacerdotalists or Ritualists, this is the very best question that could be selected; and their opponents, members of the Anglican sect, therefore, cunningly seek to direct attention from the true issue, to a side and irrelevant issue which they have raised. Instead of confining themselves, as by the laws of logic they are bound to do, to the discussion of the question—"Is the so-called priest of our common Church as By Law Established, legally authorised to claim for himself, in virtue of his Ordination, a special power, or power not common to others not so ordained, to forgive sins, and to retain sins?" they dishonestly seek to join issue upon the question—"Is any man, ordained or unordained, invested with the supernatural power claimed by the High Church ministers of our Establishment with respect to the forgiving and retaining of sins? These two questions have nothing whatever to do with one another; and the only question at issue is—What legal power does the Act of Parliament in virtue of which the Anglican Church is Established, confer upon its ordained ministers?"

Now this question any honest unprejudiced, man of ordinary intelligence can solve for himself, by merely reading over the Anglican Ordination service. As clearly as the Anglican Liturgy, or Book of Common Prayer, decides against the Ritualists on many innovations connected with the Eucharistic celebration, which the latter have introduced, as clearly, to say the least, does it claim for the ordained priest the power of remitting or retaining sins. Not only is this evident from what the Liturgy enjoins the priest to say in its service for the sick, and from what it says in its prescribed form for the "Ordering of Priests"—but it is equally clear from what it does not say, in the form which it prescribes for the ordering of another class of its ministers or deacons. Its silence in one case is as significant and conclusive as its outspoken language in another. For instance:—

The candidate for Deacon's Orders takes authority to "execute the office of Deacon; to read the Gospel in the Church of God; and to preach the same," if licensed by the Bishop.—That is all: not a word in his case is uttered, about taking any authority to remit, or retain sins.

But in the ordaining of Priests, the case is different. There the candidate takes authority "to preach the word of God, to administer the Sacraments" and these words are especially addressed to him:—

"Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."

It is clear from this, then, that the Anglican Church professes to confer upon those whom it ordains Priests some power or authority in the matter of forgiving or retaining sin, which it does not confer upon those whom it ordains Deacons. But the latter have to say the least, all *natural* powers in the premises, all what other men, neither deacons nor priests, possess—that, to wit, of declaring in general terms the simple fact, that God is ever willing to forgive and put away—for Christ's sake—the sins of the truly penitent; therefore, if the priest, in virtue of his ordination, receives more power in the premises than is possessed by the deacon, who possesses all *natural* powers over the retaining and remitting sin—it is a self-evident proposition that the former, or