



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. III.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUGUST 20, 1852.

NO. 2.

THE IDEAS OF A CATHOLIC AS TO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.

Translated from the French of Abbé Martinet, for the *Tru Witness*.

21.—PLAN OF A COLLECTION FOR MAKING CATHOLIC DOCTRINE BETTER KNOWN—FAULTS TO BE AVOIDED.

A certain witty traveller has found great fault with the mountains of Switzerland for being *too near the eye*. The Catholic doctrines, with the exception of the capital points summed up in the catechism, have the contrary fault, being *too far from the eye*. They lie hidden in vast collections where the world will never seek them.

It is for Catholic writers to produce them under a form fit for circulation, under the form of periodical publications, short, substantial, and attractive. The world is too busy to listen long, if it be the truth which demands attention.

A collection which, without lessening Catholic doctrine, would yet so far concentrate it as to enable the eye to contemplate its marvellous beauty, its divine proportions; a collection which would show how all true light, in what order soever it may be, necessarily radiates from the focus of religion; how the word which makes God known, also makes man, and the world known; how that word, enlightening man as to his past and future, enlightens him also on his present condition, lays down the plan of society, points out its end and the means to be used in attaining it, bases the freedom and prosperity of nations on their fidelity to the divine law,—the security and the greatness of rulers on the exclusive employment of their power for the welfare of the people and the glory of the supreme Ruler of all; a collection which, with a just mixture of philosophy and history, would envelop this thesis in a series of articles, re-producing, under an abridged form, all that is most substantial in our best writers of every age; such a collection, we say, would be eminently successful, for there is in the world a great thirst for truth, under an appearance of indifference.

Whilst wishing that the many distinguished writers who belong to the Catholic cause should devote themselves to this work—alone worthy the name of restoration, because that in establishing the reign of truth, they labor for the success of all, especially the slaves of error—we yet admonish them to beware of two faults.

The first would be to give too much place to controversy in a work intended to bring truth prominently forward, and in which error should only have the place of shade in the picture.

We have very good polemics in books and in religious journals; it is to be desired that the number should increase; but nothing would contribute more to the success of the daily controversy, than to provide its organs with a work which would give to the principles they defend a completeness and a development on which they cannot enter.

The other fault to avoid would be to offer, instead of the whole truth detached fragments thereof. The object is not to construct a religious museum, but a Christian society. To error generalised as it is, we must oppose universal truth.

Catholic pens have hitherto demonstrated, some that Catholicity alone is true, others that it alone is beautiful, and others that it alone is good. The point now is to unite these demonstrations, and to offer in one grand picture that fair and indivisible trinity.

It must be shewn how Catholicity, instructing men in all that it imports them to know, puts them in possession of all truth, as far as is consistent with the state of probation, which is a state of faith more or less enlightened, and not of intuition. It must then be shewn how, in revealing to men their true relations with God, with their fellow-creatures, with the material world, and assisting them to enter upon these relations, Catholicity procures for them all the happiness compatible with exile, peace and happiness being the fruit of justice. It must finally be proved that beauty is but the reflex of perfect order, and that its highest, and broadest manifestations, are the lot of souls who love the true and the good.

By developing to some extent the principles of Christian policy, one would supply the first want of the times, and would excite the interest of a public which has been so long the victim of a fatal quackery, and can only be fully re-established by submitting to a good sound regimen.

The word "Christian policy" reminds us of a recent and very remarkable work, which shews how far a truly Christian philosopher, well acquainted with the world, may throw light on subjects the most obscure, and the most clouded by political art. Let us here quote what the estimable author says with regard to the only society which has real strength, because it alone has real truth—the Catholic Church—the last hope of a perishing world:—

"The immortal spouse of the Son of God, whose

living and perfect likeness she is, the Church has grown and flourished from age to age, ever developing new treasures of wisdom and of power; she has neither wrinkle, nor stain, nor old age; her doctrine is ever pure and spotless, and her light unailing; she has never lost aught of that miraculous virtue which, once animating the social body, snatches it from the corruption of the tomb to give it a new life; her voice still arouses the nations who sit in darkness; and if the divine power, wherewith she is invested, bring not back from the gates of death an expiring world, it is because its voice no longer cries out to her: *If thou wilt, thou canst make us whole*, for immediately it would be done unto men, according as they had believed."

PROTESTANTISM.

THE LATEST SECT.—SPIRITUALISTS' CONVENTION. (From the *Boston Courier*, Aug. 7.)

A convention of professed believers in "spiritual manifestations"—men and women—asssembled in Washingtonian Hall, Bromfield-street, yesterday morning. It was a singular collection of dupes and fanatics, resembling more a congregation of lunatics than a company of rational creatures. In fact, we have never seen the like outside the walls of a madhouse. That the "spiritualists" are moved by something, no one can doubt who has ever seen them in council. Their bleared and sunken eyes, their idiotic starrings, their sprawlings and pawing acts of familiarity with each other, their mumbling and incoherent speeches, all would seem to favor the vulgar notion that these creatures are "possessed."

The convention held three sessions during the day. Among the leading spirits were Andrew Jackson Davis, John M. Spear, Rev. Charles Spear, Rev. Adin Ballou, W. Porter, Le Roy Sunderland, Eliza J. Kinney, and Eunice Cobb. The Rev. Mr. Ballou was appointed temporary chairman. A committee was appointed to retire and report a plan of organization, under which the inspired body may meet for weekly consultation. During the morning session, the male "mediums," as they are called in the jargon of the craft, having been arranged on the right of the platform, and the "medium" sisterhood on the left, the spirit suddenly took "possession" of an unwashed strapping fellow, whose name is unknown. The action of this worthy resembled, for all the world, that of a fuddled somnambulist. After "sawing the air" for some time, he approached Mr. John M. Spear, and taking that gentleman by the hand, conducted him to Mr. A. J. Davis. After some more mummery, he placed Spear's hand on the top of Davis's head. Presently Spear became "possessed," and with his hand still upon Davis's head, proceeded to "consecrate" that individual "to the harmonical work," &c. This ceremony over, Messrs. Spear and Davis took their seats; but the leading spirit flickered a little longer—made a speech, announcing that the "spiritual and the natural worlds were about to be brought together"—that everything was harmony in the first world, and concluded by prognosticating the end of bad times in this world.

The next performer was a woman. She read from a large volume a series of letters, purporting to have been dictated by the inhabitants of the spiritual region. Her correspondents are quite numerous, and embrace persons of the "first respectability" in the other world. The substance of the letters was, that a judgment had been recorded, by which the spirits who were in the lower spheres—for it will be remembered that spirits in the other world, according to the mediums, are classified in seven spheres—had been raised, and that these lower, or, as they are termed, undeveloped spirits, will no more molest the believers. One letter went on to state that the elevation had been accomplished through the direct intercession of the spirits of the third, fourth, and fifth spheres. Another letter gave an account of a sinner that had been promoted through prayers of this woman, and another announced that the world was coming to an end, and that "nothing shall be hurt or destroyed in all the Lord's holy mountain." At the close of this profane trumpery, the spiritualists adjourned to dinner.

In the afternoon there was another session, Mr. Ballou still in the chair. The committee appointed in the morning submitted the following report:

"The undersigned being desirous of promoting a true knowledge of spiritual phenomena, and the laws of the spirit world, as also to use our best endeavor to further the vital interests of ourselves and the world around us, in seeking every available illustration and confirmation of that great central principle of Christianity, embraced in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, do hereby organise ourselves for these purposes into two distinct bodies:—

"First—A State Association.
"Second—A City Conference, for the city of Boston—the name of this body to be the 'Massachusetts Association of Spiritualists.' The officers of the society to be a President, a Vice-President,

Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, and three directors, all of whom to be elected by ballot annually, and their duties to be such as are usual for such offices. The 'Association' to meet quarterly, and the 'Conference' once a week. Any person may join the 'Association,' by signing the constitution, and contributing four dollars a year, and the 'Conference,' by paying a dollar a quarter."

The report excited some debate, but it was finally accepted, after striking out the proposition for a "State Association." The meeting then adjourned. After adjournment, about twenty of the "spiritualists" proceeded to a rehearsal. They arranged themselves on settees, and presently a young fellow commenced slapping his head in the wildest manner. The initiated smiled with delight. By and by, the "possessed" individual rose from his seat and proceeded to march up and down beside the company on the settee, occasionally embracing the brotherhood and the sisterhood, and ejaculating wild and incoherent language about religion. His conduct was uncouth and indecent beyond description. He continued in this pretended trance for half an hour. All this time the other mummies remained silent—some watching his maniac motions, while others drooped their heads as if in mystical contemplation. Presently the whole crowd was started by the outpourings of extravagance from another of the "possessed." This was a woman. Her conduct was, if possible, more grotesque and disgusting than that of the actor who preceded her. Like one in the night-mare, she screamed out—"Oh," "oh," "dear," "dear," and now and then uttered some broken camp-meeting language, such as "glory!" "glory!" "I see Jesus," &c.

In the evening there was another meeting of the convention, Mr. Ballou, as before, in the chair. Several persons had stated that they had known instances where the sick had been restored to health, through the agency of the spirits, or, to use the language of one of the simpletons, "Cures had been done by the spiritual manifestations." The names of the persons healed, as well as the names of the mediums who healed them, were given; and all the circumstances necessary to establish faith in the monstrous humbug, were recounted. An individual told of a man in Springfield, who had been admonished by the spirits to give up rum-selling, and send his children to Sunday school, and stated that the man obeyed, &c.

After some time spent in "telling experiences," a young man rose from among the auditors, and, with his eyes closed, walked to the platform. He was "possessed." He proceeded to pray—pretending to use the language of the spirit who had possessed him. The spirit's name was afterwards ascertained to be Deacon Gray. The prayer was an incoherent composition, and the deacon, of course, was to blame for that, but he should not be held accountable for the awkward gesticulations of the medium. At the close, the preacher announced that the spirits desired that all mediums in the hall should group together in the vicinity of the rostrum, for the purpose of communication.

Instead of obeying the request of the "spirits," however, the "mediums" renewed a recital of their experiences of the wonderful developments of the "manifestations." This was somewhat provoking to a portion of the audience, who had come to the meeting for the purpose of hearing a spiritual conversation, and there was quite a "manifestation" of indignation. Finally, the President stated that it was too late to enter into a parley with the inhabitants of the other world, and that the meeting had better adjourn. Mr. Henry Kemp, the well-known polemicist, thought the suggestion of the President ill-timed. "The spirits," said he, "desire a conference with the mediums. It was not right in the chair to interpose any objection to the interview. The spirits were, according to the believers in this new theory, the superiors, and ought to be obeyed." Mr. Kemp said that he came to the meeting in search of light, and if those present could give him any, he would be thankful. He was an "outside barbarian," ready to be convinced. His faith, he was sorry to say, had not been affected by anything that he had seen or heard during the evening. He was very anxious that an interview might be had with the "spirits," especially since they had asked for it. He hoped the chair would not stand in the way. Mr. Kemp's speech was applauded by the "dispossessed."

The President replied that it was late, that it would take considerable time to harmonise the "mediums," that if the gentleman desired knowledge upon the vast subject of spiritualism, a more favorable opportunity would be afforded him, &c.

Mr. Kemp assured the President that his desire was knowledge, and that he was open to conviction on all subjects. He repeated that it was not courteous towards the "spirits" to deny them the interview which they had so civilly asked. Mr. Kemp's second

appeal in behalf of "liberty of knocking" was also applauded.

Some discussion ensued, and the "mediums" siding with the chair, the meeting, after taking up a collection to defray the expenses, adjourned to Friday evening next, when the "conference" is to be organised.

After the adjournment, several of the "mediums," at the solicitation of many curious persons present, attempted a consultation with the spirits. A table was procured, the mediums sat around it; but the spirits were dumb. This was afterwards explained by a young lady who became "possessed," who stated that the spirits were offended at the conduct of the unbelievers, who had wickedly scoffed at the proceedings of the convention. We have not time to describe the conduct of the "mediums" who sat round the table; but it is enough to say that it was in keeping with all their previous movements—ridiculous in the extreme.

At such a spectacle of "Bedlam broke loose," as is displayed in this exhibition of charlatans and dupes, one is overcome with the mingled emotions of indignation and melancholy. The knaves who encourage this monstrous and wicked delusion deserve to be treated as public criminals. The poor creatures who are led away and besotted by their tricks, should be sent to a lunatic asylum, or cured of the disorder of their brains by being set to earning their living in some decent employment.

THE POOR BROTHER OF THE CHARTERHOUSE.

From the city pleasure ground of Smithfield it is not a distance of many steps to Charterhouse-square, a fortified position in the heart of London, made secure by an array of iron gates, and garrisoned by a well-victualled beadle. Charterhouse-square is nearly as quiet now, in the very core of the noisy city of London, as it was five hundred years ago, when it was a lonely field, bearing the name of "No Man's Land." Ralph Stratford bought it as a place of burial for the victims of the pestilence of 1349. "In this place of sepulture was buried in one year," says Camden, "no less than sixty thousand of the better sort of people." Thirteen acres of adjoining ground, bought at about the same time of "St. Bartholomew's Spittle," and called the Spittle Croft, had also been enclosed and consecrated. Upon this ground Ralph de Northburgh, Bishop of London, founded a monastery, devoted to the use of the Carthusian monks, whose name of Chartreuse time has corrupted into Charterhouse. It was the third Carthusian monastery instituted in this country. Such monasteries being always named after some event in the life of the Virgin, the title and address of this one was—"The House of the Salvation of the Mother of God, without the Bars of West Smithfield, near London."

The monastery having been suppressed by Henry VIII. in 1537, its site, with all the buildings on it, was in the next place bought by Thomas Sutton for the erection of a proposed Free School Hospital Foundation. Thomas Sutton had enjoyed lucrative situations under Government, and had acquired also very great wealth by a happy speculation in coal mines near Newcastle. He had next increased his wealth by fitting vessels out for privateering service, and had finally enlarged his borders as a money-lender at usurious interest upon the largest scale. This taste for money-getting being accompanied with a great dread of money-spending, Sutton's wealth became so serious as to inspire him with the hope that he could fully make amends with it to Heaven for any profane things he might have done in getting it together. He designed the foundation of a vast establishment for the education in their youth of promising boys found among the poor, and for the support of decayed gentlemen in their old age. For this purpose Sutton bought the Charterhouse, intending to erect and endow a noble edifice within its walls, and this he obtained leave to do from James I. in the year 1611. Six months afterwards he died, almost an octogenarian. He has been charged with avarice in acquiring the money he bequeathed, and has been pointed out as the original of Volpone the Fox; but this Gifford disproves.

Sutton being dead, high festival was held over his body. Before the funeral procession started from the house, there was taken by the assembled mourners a slight refreshment, in the form of a hogshend of claret, sixteen gallons of Canary wine, twelve gallons of white wine, ten gallons of Rhenish, six gallons of hippocras, six barrels of beer, with a little diet bread and a few wafers. After the funeral the mourners dined at Stationer's Hall, where they ate forty stone of beef, forty-eight capons, thirty-two geese, forty-eight roasted chickens, thirty-two neats' tongues, twenty-four marrow bones and a lamb, forty-eight turkey poult, seventy-two field pigeons, thirty-six quails, forty-eight ducklings, ten turbot, twenty-four