

In a book which was condemned by the Archbishop of Quebec and placed upon the Index appears this glowing eulogy: "In no country has the Catholic religion been as intimately connected with the history of a people as in Canada, and nowhere has she made her presence felt in a more striking manner or by more admirable works. She has been the soul, the originating and directing genius of our nationality. . . . Hovering over our cradle, she surrounds it with a bright aureole. The priest was the friend, the brother and the companion in arms of our fathers. He partook of their dangers, their joys and their sufferings; he wept and rejoiced with them; he followed them on the field of battle, in their heroic journeys across the American continent, always at their side to encourage, aid and console them, and to plant the cross where they set up the flag of France. He did everything, sacrificed everything, suffered everything to aid them in founding on the shores of the St. Lawrence a French and Catholic nation. . . .

"And later, when the French flag, wet with the tears and the blood of our ancestors, had recrossed the seas, carrying with it whatever nobles the halls and the hullets had left in the country; when the Canadian people did not know where to look for friends and protectors, the priest did not abandon them; he stayed to help them remain French and Catholic. To him we owe the colleges and schools where our fathers, the Papineaus, the Bédards, the Panets, the Parents and the Bourdages got the knowledge which they needed to defend by written and spoken word, in Parliament and in the press, the religious and national rights of our ancestors."

After the Conquest the church became the natural leader of the people. Now that the military and civil officials, the merchants and capitalists, had returned to France, the peasants had nowhere else to look for guidance. Poor, illiterate, altogether untrained in the conduct of public affairs, they confided their future to men who were accustomed to wield authority and exact obedience and who had every reason to oppose

*L. O. David, *Le Clergé canadien, sa mission, son œuvre* (Montreal, 1896). See below, Chapter V., Section 2.