

"POLITICAL RELIGIONISM"
And the P. P. A.

To the Editor of the Catholic Register.

DEAR SIR I have waited a long time—too long for one better qualified than I feel myself to be, to criticize Col. O'Brien's reply to Mr. Edgar's letter on the P. P. A. which appeared in the *Mait* of Dec. 13, 1893. But no one seems to consider the gallant Colonel as a "foeman worthy of his steel." It might have been the time was so near Christmas, season of peace and good will, that none wished to harbor ill-feeling for one who if he could not cut deep tried to cut broad by slashing and dashing in all directions. Col. O'Brien should not be allowed to say anything and everything he pleases against Catholics without our having an answer to give. With this idea, I come forward and venture to offer a brief reply to his violent attack upon our Church and people, and show that Ignorance is the root of the defamation and Prejudice its fruit.

Col. O'Brien admits that politicians holding the most adverse views write in denunciation of the P.P.A., but attributes to these critics of the P.P.A. motives unworthy of honorable men. He accuses them of lack of patriotism, philanthropy and toleration. What right has he to cast stones? What about the third political party founded by the champion of unequal rights? The lack of patriotism, philanthropy and toleration—especially the last—is surely met by the *Tu quoque* argument. In his reply to what was a most manly and patriotic arraignment of a band of conspirators, Col. O'Brien has given free expression to his bigotry and hatred of Catholicism. It is a noted fact that Protestants with Irish Catholic names are usually more bitter and malignant against the religion of their forefathers. This champion whose name betrays his origin has insulted the Roman Catholics most outrageously, and written of them not as if the same country were common to him and to us, but as if we were Chinese, Maories or Zulus.

The letter is made up of the usual gross misrepresentations and hackneyed diatribes against the Church of Rome. Its author insolently demands the withdrawal of what he calls the "arrogant assumptions of the Encyclical." What encyclical is meant he does not explain. Does he mean the Encyclical that has been lately forged and extensively circulated by the P. P. A. in the United States, purporting to be a decree from Pope Leo XIII. ordering a general massacre of all Protestants without distinction of age or sex? This forged encyclical is a specimen of P.P.A. methods, and Col. O'Brien's argument. Seventeen Protestant ministers of Columbus, Ohio, exposed this vile conspiracy. And Col. O'Brien holds that people who use such methods, or in a word the P.P.A., can do good work by keeping down those aggressive Catholics who number only one-fifth of the population. What gallantry! What noble, generous sentiments!

Now I do not intend to be aggressive—in fact I am on the defensive. My sole object as a Catholic is self-defence against a furious enemy in an uncalled for and unprincipled agitation.

Col O'Brien asks at what period of its history has not the Church been aggressive? I ask at what period it has been aggressive. I admit that the Church of Rome has been aggressive in one sense of the word. The divine commission under which the Apostles went forth to teach all nations was to the Roman pagan aggressive: it meant encroachment upon the false divinities and the corrupted morals of the Empire. It meant more. It meant the crumbling of the Empire itself and the substitution of the Papacy in its stead. "The chair of the Fisherman stood in the very palace of the Cæsars." It

was aggression when St. Clement, who was related to Domitian, celebrated Mass in the Catacombs, and preached so eloquently, and fervently, and made so many converts that the Emperor Trajan—by no means the worst of his class—ordered him to offer incense to Jupiter or be exiled. He chose the latter, was sent to the Crimea, then the Roman Tasmania. Here he continued his work of aggression until Trajan ordered him to be drowned as a sacrifice to Neptune. There is no need of tracing that line of Supreme Pontiffs down to Leo XIII., now happily reigning—the 260th Pope from St. Peter.

To the Catholic the cardinal fact of the world's history is the birth and death of Christ—the Founder of a spiritual kingdom, an abiding Institute, as palpable and organic fact. The Church of Rome is not a sect, or even a church among churches. It is the Church Catholic—Universal—the pillar and ground of truth. It teaches as did its Master, "with authority." Without advancing any of the abundant proof there is for this stand which the Church takes, and rightly, let me discuss a portion of English history.

From the time of Elizabeth down to 1778, a period of two hundred years, millions of Catholics suffered persecution, cruel, bloody and continual. A brief respite occurred during James the Second's reign, who suspended the penal laws and granted liberty of conscience to all his subjects. This toleration cost James his crown, and placed the Dutch Stadholder, William, upon the throne. Cardinal Manning says England did not apostatize: she was robbed of her faith. Cardinal Newman thus describes the process. "Protestantism was established by law in the widest sense of the word, it was forced upon all persons in station or office under sanction of an oath. Catholics were put under crushing laws. Priests for saying Mass were imprisoned for life: if a foreign priest the penalty was death, and to all who harbored or assisted them the same, torture and death. No Catholic could inherit property or purchase land or keep school, or even send their children abroad to be educated under penalty of loss of life or liberty and property. Catholics could not vote at elections. If a son said he was a Protestant he could take all the property from the family. Elizabeth and her great men and her preachers killed and drove away all the Catholics they could; knocked down the remainder; and then at their leisure proved unanswerably and triumphantly the absurdity of Popery, and the heavenly beauty and perfection of Protestantism. Protestantism being taught everywhere, Protestant principles were taught with it, which are necessarily the very reverse of Catholic principles."

These are the two special daughters of the Protestant Tradition, Theory or Assumption on the one hand, and Prejudice on the other—Theory which scorns, and Prejudice which hates us. Theory lives on its own thought, but Prejudice is ever craving for food which is served up constantly, Titus Oates, Maria Monk and Jeffreys being the purveyors, and platform and pulpit speakers being the cooks. Such is popular Protestantism considered in its opposition to Catholics. Its truth is establishment by law; its faith is Prejudice; its facts are fictions, its reasonings fallacies, and its security is ignorance about those whom it is opposing. The law says that white is black; ignorance says, why not? Theory says it ought to be; Fallacy says it must be; Fiction says it is, and prejudice says it shall be."

I do not make this long quotation in any spirit of aggression, to expose their tyranny and injustice, but to prove that England was not converted,

but was robbed of her Catholicity by violence. It is but just to state that Catholics at the present time enjoy freedom of worship in England.

That clever cynical Jew, Isaac D'Israeli, gives a peculiar view of the great cause of religious persecutions. He says. "The subject of political religionism is as nice as it is curious. Politics have been so cunningly worked into the cause of religion that the parties themselves will never be able to separate them. An impenetrable mystery surrounds the conduct of men who profess to be guided by the gentle code of Jesus, but try them by a human standard, treat them as politicians and, the motives once discovered, the actions are understood." If we apply this test to the course taken by Queen Elizabeth who had no religious convictions, the desire to reign at any cost being her ruling passion, we should discover the secret motive which actuated her and the powerful and eminent men who supported her, was really a political one. In further support of D'Israeli's theory the fact that in 1778 when the Americans unfurled the Standard of Independence thereby setting an example of courage to all oppressed people, there took place a great relaxation of the penal code. Within fifty years Catholics could breathe their native air in freedom and safety. Thus fear quickly obtained what was denied for two hundred years to the pleading of justice and humanity.

The Catholic Church is accused of aggression. Be it not forgotten that Protestantism of the 16th century was an innovation, an encroachment, an aggression upon a constituted order of things which had existed for ages, and which was vitally connected with every fibre of the social system. Ranko says, "The questions which Protestantism affected were not merely ecclesiastical but on account of the connection between Church and State upon which the whole system rested in the highest degree political also."

Judging from these premises political religionism is the main spring of the P.P.A. conspiracy. This conspiracy is formed to curtail as much as possible the rights of Roman Catholics both civil and religious, to force upon them the system of Godless schools which are proving a curse wherever they are instituted to the poorer classes especially. They are seats of atheism and infidelity and also anarchism. It is of such that the old Duke of Wellington spoke when he said, "Education without religion makes men clever devils." Though we are only one-fifth of the population of Ontario the P. P. A. will not succeed for as the prophet Elishus said, "There are more with us than with them." This P. P. A. is like the wolf in the fable, always accusing the poor lamb of disturbing the water, of slander or something, and all for an excuse for drowning the lamb. I think what Pope wrote in "Ethical Epistles" on the monument of London, Eng. is most applicable to the newspaper articles of the P.P.A. and the whole cabal of their aiders, abettors, etc. The inscription on the Pillar accuses the "Popish Faction" of causing the great fire of London in 1666 which destroyed 13,000 houses. Pope says of the Pillar, "Like a tall bully it lifts its head and lies." The Bargains that trouble Col. O'Brien is that "Quebec Act" which was passed by the British Parliament at the time of the revolutionary war when the descendants of the Pioneers of New France demanded the fulfilment of British pledges. I must ask Col. O'Brien to call to mind a period prior to that date, when another bargain was made by the British Crown. As Festus said to St. Paul "Thou hast appealed to Cæsar and to Cæsar thou shalt go." From 1534 when Jacques Cartier planted the cross at Gaspe in the name of France down to the time when

Canada was ceded to Great Britain by the Treaty of Paris, Canada belonged to France. In 1608 Samuel de Champlain founded the city of Quebec. In 1612 Montreal was founded for the propagation of the Catholic faith in Canada. The Right Rev. Francois de Laval was appointed Vicar Apostolic of New France. By the Treaty of Paris it was stipulated. 1st. That the French Canadians should be allowed the full and free exercise of their religion, 2nd. Should be governed by their own laws; 3rd. That they should not be dispossessed of any of their property. This Treaty solemnly signed and sealed was dishonorably broken by George III., who issued a proclamation abolishing French laws and substituting those of Great Britain. Even the iniquitous Test Oath adjuring the principal dogmas of the Catholic religion was forced upon this country. This oath of course excluded Catholics from office and from a seat in the Assembly though they were as 150 Catholics to one Protestant. George III. in breaking the Treaty of Paris followed the example of William III. who in 1691 signed the Treaty of Limerick after the surrender of Gen. Sarsfield. This treaty guaranteed complete civil and religious liberty to Irish Catholics, but before the year was passed William basely permitted it to be broken by his government: and the Penal Laws cruelly enforced. This breaking of treaties with Catholics seems to be a pet foible of the British Government. The French Canadians suffered for nearly 14 years under the arbitrary laws of Great Britain when in 1774 the political exigencies of the time induced the Crown to come to terms and make the bargain fearing that the oppressed Canadians would join in the rebellion of the American colonies. The British Government passed the Quebec Act, which confirmed the rights and privileges guaranteed the French Catholics by the Treaty of Paris 1663, and which had been violated. The Quebec Act exempted them from the execrable Test Act, provided for the maintenance of the Catholic clergy, restored the old civil law allowing English law in criminal cases and established a Legislative Council. This Act conciliated the French Canadians, so that they rejected all overtures of the Americans and refused all appeals to join in the rebellion and bravely resisted the American's attempt to conquer Canada. Had not Britain made the *Bargain* it is probable that Canada would have become a part of the neighbouring Republic. But other acts of robbery and tyranny on the part of British emissaries have been until recently without redress. In 1800 the whole property of the Jesuit Order in Quebec was confiscated to the Crown, thus infringing on the provisions of the Quebec Act. In 1776 the Jesuit Colleges were converted into barracks. In 1806 Solicitor-General Sewell attempted to give the Catholic parishes to Protestants, but the Roman Catholic Bishop Plessis was firm and determined and showed the Government the impudence of making any further breaches in the Quebec Act. When the Act of Legislative Union was passed in 1840 the French Canadians justly complained, that after paying off their own public debt they were forced to assist in paying off that of the Upper Province. These historical facts prove clearly that it is Protestant ascendancy which has been the aggressors in this country as well as in Great Britain and Ireland. The Catholic Church is only aggressive in matters of Faith and conscience, through obedience to the voice of God, "magna est veritas et prevalebit." To the liberal-minded Protestant I address these words. Read the Catholic side of the question, "audi alteram partem." You have heard a little of it now.

PETRONILLA.