

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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PERNICIOUS LITERATURE.

A writer in an American periodical, speaking of pernicious literature, justly remarks that "it is a disease which is eating at the roots of our social system." Every boon that our human race seems to have ever received has been accompanied by some kind or other of danger or drawback. It is apparently the punishment due to sin, in one of its phases, and it teaches us that nothing finite can be perfect. Of the many inventions that have scattered comparative happiness and light over the world, we might say, the art of printing holds a place in the first rank. By its medium knowledge is soon broadcast upon the fields of the intellect, and science has become the handmaid of everyday life. Teach a child twenty-four magic letters and he can in due time pass from end to end of the world, ascend and descend the ages, dive into the secrets of nature, or tread the winding labyrinths of history; thus armed the human mind can live with the great men of old, can associate with the grand natures and noble spirits that flash upon the universal sky of literature, by means of these few conventional signs, the child of our day can move, at will, from the mythology of Egypt to the Epics of Milton, from the Argonauts to the Afghans, from the woveled mathematics of La Place to the lyrics of Burns; in a word, all the past is revealed to him, and he lives and moves with the souls of men who swayed the destinies of empires and continents.

What a glorious advantage! What a splendid privilege!

But side by side with that great advantage, hand in hand with that noble privilege, move the dark shadows of incalculable dangers. Dangers to the mind, to the heart, to the soul. The same press that flings out its thousands of pages daily of the best, the grandest, the loftiest literature, also casts to the four winds of heaven by the millions the seeds of social disorder, moral contamination, religious infidelity. From the same source come forth two streams—the pure and limpid waters of good, and the murky, poisonous and pestilential wavelets of bad literature.

No matter what evil appears in our midst, that instinct of self-preservation, so peculiar to man, at once suggests an antidote or a remedy. Let the plague sweep over a city or a country, and a thousand brains will be set to work devising preventatives and cures. Here, then, is a pestilence more fierce than the cholera, more relentless than the fever, more fearful in its effects than the leprosy. They may strike, injure, kill the body; but it blackens the heart, dulls the mind and slays the soul. A moral, social and religious leprosy against which there is no quarantine in any land, and for which the remedies are few and difficult to procure.

To suppress pernicious literature completely is not possible. "As long," says a Catholic writer, "as there are minds that revel in filth, so long will there be a demand for filth, and so long will there be those who will supply it." Still the evil can be lessened to a certain degree. The law can, and should, and must, move pictures from the bulletin boards, and books from the show windows which the interests of common decency demand removed. But the law cannot reach the root of the evil. Who should take the first steps towards the erasing out of that fearful curse? The press may do much, it is true; our public speakers may suggest and warn, no doubt; our legislators may enact and comment, beyond all question; still the evil goes on! The article of the writer is sneered at, the words of the orator ridiculed, the effort of the legislator set down to petty self-interests; still the evil augments! The work of wiping out, as much as possible, the bad literature that floods our country, must be commenced by the parents, the heads of the household, the fathers and mothers. They don't seem to know, nor do they seem to care, what books fall into the hands of their children. There is no supervision; and even if there is a pretence for such, it is merely an occasional raid on the child's pocket and a half-hearted reprimand; the book is flung in the fire, and they have taught the child to hide his volume more carefully the next time, that is all the good that has been done, a very questionable good at best.

The way to crush out pernicious literature is to cultivate, from the very beginning,

the mind of the child. Boys and girls must read and will read; if they don't have good books they will procure bad ones. Let them read works that can be put upon a parlor table; books that are in accordance with their years. Stories, romances, tales of adventure, such like, of the pure and elevating kind, are to be found everywhere. The child becomes accustomed to this species of literature, the boy or girl continues to like it, the youth follows it up, the man or woman seeks to trace it higher and higher towards its fountain-head, the future father or mother instills it into the mind of the child of another generation, and it becomes the light of youth and the consolation of age. Parents—Catholic parents—for God's sake, see to the training of your children's minds, hearts and souls; it is more important, both for time and for eternity, than even the procuring of stylish clothes and rich ornaments for their bodies. Neglect this duty and perform every other one towards your child and you will be simply raising up a being destined for deceit and error in this world, and for misery and endless desolation in the next. As you would guard your child against the plague, as you would save him from an untimely end, so shield his soul against this moral leprosy and an eternal death. Pernicious literature is the curse of this century!

RELIGION AND POLITICS.

All human authority has a Divine sanction and emanates from God. But the moment human authority acts in contradiction to the will and command of God, its Author, it at once becomes purely human, consequently no authority at all. The king, no matter what his creed may be, has a right vested in him by God, an authority granted him in his quality of Ruler but not in his quality of individual. But so soon as he makes use of that authority to counteract the will of the Supreme Being, ipso facto that right falls from him and he becomes a usurper. And as no loyal and patriotic subject is obliged to obey a usurper, no loyal or patriotic man is bound to submit to that person who by his very command, divests himself of his authority.

Consequently, when the Church of God, His infallible organ and the unerring exponent of His laws and commands, ordains such and such an action to be performed, and the State, that is the King and Parliament, the Emperor and Council, the President and Assembly, (as the case may be), commands the contrary the subject is not only free to disobey the State, but he sins if he fulfills its commands. Why so? Because, in so doing, he places the State before the Church, human authority above Divine authority, the world before God, the flesh over the spirit, Politics before Religion.

One of the great objections to the authority of Rome in temporal affairs, brought forward by the "true, loyal and patriotic class," is to what they call the claim of the Church to the right of deposing temporal sovereigns, absolving their subjects from their allegiance and punishing heretics. Here they place the State before the Church, heresy before orthodoxy. To this their idea no true Christian can subscribe and we will now give a few reasons why they are in error and how they deny the Church the right which she, really and truly, has from Divine Authority, the very same power which they themselves often usurped and used, despite the fact that they deny it to the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church has not the right, nor does she claim it, of placing upon thrones those she likes and casting down every monarch she objects to, without that such monarch or ruler was acting or acts contrary to the Law of God and thereby forfeits his claim to the position he holds. But the Church is universal, Catholic for all nations, and her jurisdiction is confined to no one place, or country, or climate, or people. And since she holds her high mandate from God to watch over the interests spiritual of His children, when the ruler, or master, or temporal leader, of any branch of that Catholic family chooses so to act so that their temporal interests clash with their spiritual interests and seeks to make the former prevail, it is then time for the Church to put forth her great arm and protect the spiritual interests consequently the temporal interests of her children by declaring their ruler no longer a ruler, and absolving them from their allegiance towards him. It is not only her right to do so, but it is also her duty.

But they tell us the Church should not do so, for the State must be respected, authority be inviolate, and freedom of conscience be granted to every man. How do such would-be philosophers relish the following reasoning? Here again does our opponent in the argument become heretical, because he places the State above the Church, politics before religion, man before God, and judges the infallible by the fallible, asserts what is not authority against what is authority, confronts right with error. He does more; he upbraids the Church with doing, upon her Divine authorization,

what he has done upon human authority alone. He denies that he ever deposed a sovereign or absolved a people from their allegiance!

We appeal to history, and call upon the phantom of the Long Parliament to appear, we summon the spirit of Oliver Cromwell to the bar and ask of them an account of Charles the First. We appeal to the shades of these revolutionists of 1688 and ask them to answer us whether ever our condemner of Catholic authority deposed a monarch or changed a system or not? He goes further, for he accuses the present sovereign of being a usurper, if his reasoning and that of "loyal men" be right. Who called in Dutch William to chase James the Second from the throne and into exile?

Ah! now it is no longer the patriotic loyalist that upholds this argument, it is the hero of Radicalism, the supporter of Socialism, the friend of Liberty that denies the Church because she claims a right to depose Kings and to absolve subjects. Where did you get your right to drag Louis XVI. from his palace to the scaffold? Cast your eye over the bloody page of history that tells of the "Reign of Terror" and answer—who gave you authority to depose monarchs, to absolve their subjects and to declare a new order of things? We see now, you refuse to accept the Church of Rome, because upon Divine authority she claims what you claim, by your actions, upon no authority save your own will! You change your battle-ground and tell us that you cannot subscribe to the Church of Rome because she will not tolerate heretics. You place heresy before orthodoxy, therefore you claim "liberty of religion," that is permission to deny all religion if you like, dethrone God if it suits you, renew paganism if you so desire, be a true Protestant if you deem well. This is to place the Religion you admit to be good at the bar of your politics and to judge it by your own laws and condemn it to be "hanged, drawn and quartered" without appeal.

You say that the Church should not punish heretics and you claim that the State should punish traitors. You tell the Church that she is intolerant because she anathematizes her rebellious children and you at the same moment sanction the massacre of Geneva, the penal laws of England against Ireland and the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill! Keep on, you are doing well with your arguments!

We wonder if this truth ever flashed upon the minds of the revered dignitaries of Anglicanism, that the power that makes or creates an object alone can unmake or destroy the same. God created the world, and He alone can destroy it. God established His Church and He alone has the right to give it laws and to point out the day of its termination. The State established the Church of England, the State must give it its laws, the State can destroy or dismember it as the State sees fit. It is a pure creature of the State and must live or die by the will of the State. It is a political institution, regulated by political laws, and must cease to be when those political laws cease to govern it. Like the Department of Foreign Affairs, of War, or any other department under the crown—it is called the Religious department. In the Religion of Christ, God chooses His ministers and priests, just as he named them of old to the Jews. In this kind of political establishment, called a religion, the State names the ministers as it did in the Pagan days under the Emperors. The State can discharge them as well as any other State official may be cast aside; as the first minister of the crown is at the mercy of the political currents so are the ministers of that church. It must then conform itself to the State and to politics. Therefore "the consistent Protestant confirms his religion to his politics." The moment he ceases to do so he ceases to be a Protestant—he becomes a Catholic or else falls into the arms of Paganism and is an atheist! Conversely, the consistent Catholic conforms his politics to his religion.

THE UNION OF THE SECTS.

The editor of the Review of the Churches is engaged in promoting a novel, and from one point of view, a very promising scheme for effecting the reunion of Protestant Christendom. He is arranging for an expedition to Grindelwald in the Bernese Alps next summer, which is to be joined by many representative Anglicans and Nonconformists, possibly also by some Anglican Bishops. The Rev. Canon Willberforce writes enthusiastically of this scheme that "all theological hatchets will find a grave in the Grindelwald Alps." The London Universe commenting upon this new move says: "These gentlemen are to spend fourteen happy days in mountaining, the evening of the days being devoted to dining and to the discussion of the various theological points which separate Protestants into so many sects. It is hoped that the genial influence of holidays, mountain air, good living, the whole excursion, hotel bills included, is to cost about ten guineas per head—and pleasant companionship will dissipate the fogs which

have hitherto separated Churchmen from Dissenters and pave a way for a final reconciliation."

It is a pity that such an easy and certain means of solving religious difficulties had not been thought of long years ago! "What rancours, what persecutions, what burnings, and imprisonments, what dools of abuse and of misdirected learning might have been prevented!" If this method proves a success it would be well for the whole Protestant world to adopt it. Sooner or later we might then expect to see them cease brandishing the taintments of a broken creed against each other. But in all seriousness, in down right sober earnest, the Catholic Church would rejoice to behold aught that might indicate a possible union of the different sects. At present they are united upon only one point and that is their enmity towards the Church of Rome; on every thing else no two can agree. They believe that as "union is strength," and as the Catholic Church knows it from long experience, that she would dread a cementing of the different particles of Protestantism. Not at all. It would be her joy, her happiness to behold them coming together. And why? Simply because Truth is one and cannot be divided, the more united they become the closer will they approach Truth, and as she springs from the fountain of Truth, and holds the very principle of Truth, and is based upon Truth, so the closer they unite the nearer to the Church of Rome they must come. Were all the sects, tomorrow, to bow down to one interpretation of the scriptures, to accept one system of philosophy, to profess one theological dogma, to have but one end and the same means to attain that end, they would be one in their Faith, one in their creeds, one in their sacraments, one in their doctrine, and that could be no other but the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore it would be with inexpressible joy that Rome would look upon a union, or even any approach to a union of the sects that belong to the Protestant world. However that day is long distant, if it is ever to come and certainly as long as one sect remains outside the Church of Rome so long will union be an impossibility with them.

HARD TO UNDERSTAND.

The Rev. M. J. Savage, pastor of the Church of the Unity, in Boston, preached a sermon on the 25th of February upon the "Present Worth and Use of the Bible." After explaining how the Bible is a book of history, of prophecies,—both in their announcement and fulfillment,—of miracles and of reason, he said: "The Bible does not mean what the words can be tortured into saying by being torn out of their connection; it means what the writer meant at the time. People are taught that the Bible is a plain, simple book, easy to understand on the part of the average reader. This is not so; it is a difficult book to understand by the ordinary educated man. Read, then, these books in the light of the history of the times, trying to comprehend the problems and labors of that age, and you come into sympathy with the life that produced them."

This is exactly what the Catholic Church contends. If the Bible were easy to understand we would have no need of an infallible interpreter; we would require no guiding hand, no torch to light us through the windings of its labyrinth. The Catholic Church is accused, by the way, of being too "big," of being too "opposed to the Bible." She is not so; it was those monks, collected all the fragments of that volume and transferred and preserved them. She teaches her faithful to study the Holy Scriptures. Out of them she draws the Catholicism she teaches her children; out of Holy Writ does she take her texts for all the truths that her ministers announce to the people; in the pages of the Bible does she procure the very gospel and epistles of the Mass. Moreover, our separated brethren have only a part of the Bible, while every book of it, Matthew's, Mark's, and a score of others which they reject, are embodied in the Catholic Bible. Our church respects, venerates, loves, and teaches the Bible. But the difference is that the Christians of other denominations look upon the Bible as the sole teaching of Christ, as the only basis of religion, and they believe each individual has the right to interpret that Book according to his own lights; while the Catholic Church considers it to be an inspired history of religion—the history of the pre-Christian period as well as of the new dispensation—but not the only foundation of Christianity, the only guide to heaven, the only lamp of faith; and she does not admit of individual interpretation.

If the Bible were what Protestants assert, what must have become of the thousands of Christians who lived before it was ever completed? What about the millions who never were able to procure a Bible before the days of printing? What of the tens of millions who do not understand it today? If Christ never ordained that one should perform anything without having firstly given us the means and graces of fulfilling His command, it stands to reason that He never would have trusted His whole religion,

His divine Faith to the uncertain channel of a Book, without giving each one an infallible light whereby to properly understand that work and to take the proper meaning from its expressions. Since no two individuals can agree upon the meaning of any given number of passages in the Bible, we must conclude that He did not give each one the power of comprehending its secrets or its language. And if Christ is Truth, and Truth cannot be other than One and Undivided, the Bible cannot be the sole basis of our religion, nor the only medium of communication between Christ and man. Upon these two potent facts is built up the undeniable dogma of the infallibility of the Church; firstly upon the necessity of a truthful and infallible means of communication between Christ and the Christian; secondly, upon the impossibility of finite and uninspired minds comprehending the Bible. Such an infallible medium must exist; the Bible cannot possible be that medium, since it is susceptible of different interpretations; therefore the only one remaining is the acknowledged successor of St. Peter—who was the envoy of Christ, and Head of His Church.

MISSIONS.

Now that the long-since announced and anxiously looked forward to Mission by the Paulist Fathers, in St. Patrick's has commenced, and that every effort is being made on the part of the pastor and priests of the parish and by Rev. Father Elliott and his four assistants to make it a success, it is proper that we should once more draw attention to this grand event, and then say a word upon the important subject of Catholic missions in general. It is to be hoped that full advantage will be taken of this splendid opportunity and that the Mission may be fruitful in every acceptance of the term.

Before leaving them to ascend into His glory, Christ bade His Apostles, "and through them their successors until the end of time—go forth and teach all nations." He gave them and their successors the duty to teach His doctrine, to establish His Church, to cleanse the soul from original sin in the waters of Baptism, to absolve the repentant sinner in the fountain of Penance, to give to His followers the Bread of Life, to confirm the Christian in the Faith, to unite man and woman in the indissoluble bond of Matrimony, to perpetuate His Church by the transmission from one generation to another of Holy Orders, and to prepare the departing soul for death by Extreme Unction; also He empowered them to perpetuate upon the altars of His temples, in an unbloody manner, the great and dread sacrifice of that first Good Friday; and He promised to be with them "even unto the consummation of the world."

Christ returned to His Father; and His envoys upon earth began immediately the first great mission of the new dispensation. To convert the sinner and to increase the extent and enlarge the confines of God's Church upon earth, to draw souls to Him and augment His glory here below became their duty—and with a will they set themselves to the glorious task. And the missionaries went forth, and still do they go abroad, fulfilling that command of the Redeemer. Some we heard in the Temples of the Sun, other in the palaces of the Emperors; their voices were raised in every civilized land beneath the sun, and the echoes of the "Forest Primal" awoke to the sound of their invocations; upon the shores of Britain and in the bleak regions by the Caspian; away where the Esquimaux read their letters and lip their first prayers beneath the sternness of the Aurora Borealis; afar where the Southern Cross hangs over the home of the New Zealand savage; in India, in China, in Japan; to the Zulu hut and the American wigwag; in all lands, under a sky, the Missionaries of Christ have, ever since His departure from earth, faithfully carried out that great and sublime mission.

But other obstacles than those of paganism arose and had to be overcome. Heresy, by and by, sprang into existence; infidelity, wicked and determined, appeared upon the scene; Indifferentism, that cold-blooded precursor of Irreligion, crept into the body of the church. At once it became the duty of the missionary to combat heresy, with the great weapons of Faith, Hope and Charity; to crush infidelity with the sword of Truth; and above all, to root out Indifferentism, and to replace it in the hearts of the Faithful, by planting seeds of fervor and pure devotion. In the last mentioned case, the missionary is obliged to call back to duty the wayward, to stir up the negligent, to enliven the awoke, and to infuse a fresh spiritual activity into the careless; this, then, is the species of mission, this, the branch of that great work which falls to the lot of the good priests, who go from city to city, carrying the faithful together and stirring into burning flames of practical religion the embers that have been a slow long time smouldering. It is a mission of this nature that the

people of Montreal are invited to attend, during the four weeks from now till Easter, in St. Patrick's Church.

Who is there amongst us who feels not the need of such an assistance? On such occasions the fervor becomes contagious, and the more we come in contact with our neighbors, bent upon the same object, the stronger grows our ardor. We have all faults to correct, mistakes to repair, errors to rectify; none of us but has need of assistance from above in order to "fight the good fight" and to conquer in the struggle; each one requires more or less, graces of a particular kind; some need an incentive to stir up their lagging energies; others want consolations in the midst of their miseries and tribulations; every one requires instruction in the great truths of his religion, in the theories of Faith; all without exception, want greater perfection and final salvation.

In the words from St. Paul, with which the Mission is announced, we might say, to each and all, "Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the time of Salvation."

EXTREME CATHOLIC.

Sometimes people make use of expressions the full meaning of which they do not understand, or else they use them in a sense that is far from correct. In speaking upon matters of religion we cannot be too exact. In a letter from a good Catholic subscriber we met with the following words: "Your paper I see is becoming extreme Catholic." The intention of the writer was to convey the idea that our organ is becoming thoroughly Catholic. A man who professes to be a true Catholic must believe that ours is the only true church, that she is truth itself, or at least "the pillar and ground of truth." Might he not then as well say, "you are in possession of Extreme Truth." If we have Truth we have not Falschhood; if we have Falschhood we have not Truth. There is no midway. There is no agreement between them no more than can there exist a compromise between God and the Devil. We are either right or wrong. If we do not go far enough to reach Truth, we are in error and falsehood. If we go not far enough to become Catholic we are Anti-Catholic. If we go beyond Truth we fall over the other side of the hill into the abyss of error and falsehood; if we go beyond Catholicity we become Anti-Catholic. Therefore, if we are in error and Anti-Catholic we cannot be right or Catholic at all. If we are Anti-Catholic we cannot be Extreme Catholic or Catholic of any kind. There is no expression to qualify Truth or qualify Catholicity. Truth is or is not; Catholicity exists or does not exist. There is no medium; consequently there can be no extremes or extreme. Therefore we call the expression a wrong one. In what we write, or speak, or do, we are either Catholic or Anti-Catholic. If Catholic at all we are wholly, truly and solely Catholic; if not, we are the very opposite. In saying we are extreme Catholic our friend would be merely saying that we are Anti-Catholic. This we deny. We merely draw attention to this simple expression in order to illustrate how careful we should be in our language when there is question of the most important of all matters—That of religion.

IRELAND AT CHICAGO.

By a London despatch, which we publish this week, it appears that Ireland will have a good show at the coming Chicago exhibition. This is as it should be. The chance of competing with the other nations, upon an equal footing and before the eyes of the world, is all that Ireland requires. In the sphere of letters, in the walks of statesmanship, in the annals of heroism, in every branch her sons have proven themselves equal, and in many instances superior, to the bright lights in the histories of sister countries; but Ireland herself, as a nation, has been hampered in every way. We speak of the resources, the physical advantages, the commercial capacities of the different countries, both in the old and the new world; but seldom or ever do we find Ireland ranked among them. Under unjust legislation her industries were crippled, her commerce almost destroyed, her grand mineral and other resources ignored, or left to lie dormant. Famine drove her sons into exile, and coercion at home handicapped their every industry. It was this sad truth that inspired Denis Florence McCarthy, in 1847, to exclaim: "List! scarce a sound can be heard in our thoroughfares; Look! scarce a ship can be seen on our streams; Hear! bowed, disconsolate, soul-broken, irresolute, Ireland but lives in the by-gone of dreams?"

But were McCarthy alive to-day, he could tune his lyre to another air, and with hope he might sing of the coming legislative independence of the land, when not only her people will be free and prosperous, but when the clang of machinery and the hum of industry will resound throughout the island. This grand step, in the direction of showing to the world the natural and manufactured products of Ireland, will lead to greater