

## The True Witness

AND

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 1871.

## ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.

JANUARY—1871.

Friday, 6—EMPHASIS, OBL.  
Saturday, 7—Of the Octave.  
Sunday, 8—Sunday within the Octave.  
Monday, 9—Of the Octave.  
Tuesday, 10—Of the Octave.  
Wednesday, 11—Of the Octave.  
Thursday, 12—Of the Octave.

To OUR SUBSCRIBERS.—We wish our friends all the compliments of the season; and take this opportunity of mentioning that Mr. Gillies is about to set out on a collecting tour in the Ottawa District, where we trust that he may be well received.

## NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The bombardment of Paris, or rather of one of the outlying forts, Mount Avron, which forbid approach to the City, has it will be seen actually commenced; and a Prussian despatch dated from Versailles, 29th ult., announces the abandonment of the Fort by the French, after one day's bombardment. What advantage of position this will confer on the besiegers we are not told; but from the little resistance which Mount Avron offered, we can hardly suppose that it was a post of much importance to the defence of the City. The cold has been severe all over France, and in consequence there has been much suffering amongst the German troops, amongst whom also a very virulent form of ophthalmia is said to have broken out. We are unable to speak with any degree of certainty as to the actual state of the besieged. If their provisions can hold out, they will no doubt be able to prolong their heroic resistance. All depends upon that.

Affairs in Spain appears stormy and bode no quiet reign to King Amadeus. Gen. Prim has been shot at, and wounded, and it is said that an extensive conspiracy, comprising both republicans and Carlists, exists, to drive out the Italian prince, should he ever set his foot in Spain. From Rome there is nothing new to report, but a great flood of the Tiber is said to have caused much damage to property. Though men may laugh, as the first Napoleon laughed, at the Papal Excommunication there can be no doubt that the sentence which Christ's Vicar on earth has just pronounced upon the assailants of the Holy See, and the spoilers of the Estates of the Church is treated as a serious matter in Italy. "We will assume the responsibility before the Great Powers," Solta is reported to have said at a recent Council of Ministers—"That is all very well Signori," replied Victor Emmanuel, who fears the Devil even though he fear not God—"that is all very well, but will any of you assume the responsibility as before the Devil." Another effect of the Excommunication is noticed in the resignation *en masse* of the officials in the Finance and Treasury departments at Rome. Who lives, will see whether an Excommunication be a jesting matter or no.

By later reports from Spain, we learn that General Prim, one of the prime movers in the revolution which distracts that unhappy country, is dead from the effects of wounds by him received. The Duc D'Aosta will meet with a warm reception at Madrid, and will be lucky if he leave the City alive. The King of Piedmont paid a flying visit to Rome, but left again on the 1st instant. It would seem as if the Prussians were bent upon provoking Great Britain to war. Again they have sunk British ships in the Seine, and Bismarck justifies the act. At the same time Russia is displaying her contempt for Treaty engagements by carrying out her design of placing armed ships on the Black Sea. With all these outrages and insults Great Britain must tamely put up.

The so-called siege of Paris still continues, but no effective bombardment has yet commenced. Hunger may force Gen. Trochu to capitulate, but not till his food be exhausted

will Paris allow an enemy within its wall.—Perhaps before the end of this month the Prussians will be in full retreat, for everything indicates that their attack upon Paris was a blunder.

**THE ART OF SHUFFLING.**—The Montreal *Witness* is a thorough adept in this art, so essential to the evangelical journalist. Some troublesome correspondent has, it seems, addressed to him two questions,—questions which though often put to the evangelical world, have never yet been answered. These questions are:—

(1.) How is the Canon of Scripture to be ascertained without an infallible authority?

(2.) And when ascertained, who is to interpret Scripture without the same authority?

Let us see how the *Witness* evades these questions. To the first, "how is the Canon of Scripture to be ascertained?" he replies:—

"A correspondent asks how the canon of Scripture is to be ascertained, (i.e., whether or not the Apocrypha is part of the Bible) without an infallible authority; and, when ascertained, who is to interpret Scripture without the same authority? We reply, the Jewish nation was the custodian of the Old Testament, and it did not recognise the Apocrypha as a part with the canonical books. The Reformers carefully investigated the question, and rejected the Apocrypha, and it was not until the Council of Trent that the Church of Rome itself declared it canonical."—*Witness*, Dec. 28th.

His reply to the second question "When the Canon of Scripture is ascertained, who is to interpret Scripture?" is equally straightforward, and intelligible:—

"As for the other branch of the question, the Scripture is given to man not as an enigma, to be solved by some new *Edipus*, called a Pope, but as a code of laws and instructions, intended to be prayerfully studied and understood by all devout believers, and even, to a very great extent by those who are not yet believers, but who are meek and willing to learn."

We do not propose to open up here the question as to the right of, what the *Witness* calls, the *Apocrypha*, to a place in the Canon of Scripture; for that is not the question that the *Witness* was asked; he was asked "how the Canon of Scripture is to be ascertained?"—Granting, however, for the sake of argument, that we can ascertain the Canon of the Old Testament from the testimony of the Jews, still the question remains "How is the Canon of the New Testament to be ascertained?" We for the present waive, we say, the question as to the Canon of the so-called *Apocrypha*; but we reiterate the question "How is the Canon of the Christian Scriptures to be ascertained?" Now this is a question to which no Protestant can return an answer, which does not expressly make an appeal to tradition, or to some authority outside of the Bible; and which does not also imply the existence on earth, at some epoch of the Christian Church, subsequent to the Apostolic age—(since none of the Apostles have left us a Canon of Scripture)—of a body competent to declare with authority what writings were, and what writings were not, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and therefore entitled to a place in the Canon of Scripture. Now such a body must have been infallible, and infallible in the supernatural order. The question whether a person called Luke for instance, wrote a particular work? is a question in the natural order, which natural reason is competent to deal with; just as it is competent to sit in judgment on the question "Was Sir Philip Francis the author of *Junius*' letters?" But the question—"Was the person called Luke inspired, and supernaturally assisted by the Holy Ghost, in the composition of his Gospel?" is a question which natural reason is utterly incompetent to deal; and in the discussion of which human criticism finds itself altogether at fault. We conclude therefore that none but an infallible authority, and one infallible in the supernatural order, is competent to define the Canon of Scripture—or, in other words, to determine what writings were composed under the supernatural assistance of the Holy Ghost.

Now what in substance is the nearest approach to an answer to the question—"How is the Canon of Scripture to be ascertained?" that the Protestant can make? He will reply:—"The Christians of the first centuries, the early Church, accepted such and such books as Canonical; therefore." \* \* \* Well! What then Sir? If these early Christians, if this Church of the first centuries, were not, was not, infallible in the supernatural order, their reading of certain writings in their religious assemblies, their acceptance of those writings as inspired by the Holy Ghost, proves only that they believed them to be inspired—not that the writings actually were inspired.

If we are wrong, if Protestants can, without an appeal to tradition, and to an infallible authority, "ascertain the Canon of Scripture"—we challenge the *Witness* to convict us of error; and to show us how he ascertained the right of the short biography of Christ commonly known as the "Gospel according to St. Luke," to take a place amongst the inspired writings, or in other words in the Canon of Scripture. We will stick to one work at a time, for every book of the Bible must stand on its own merits.

Should the *Witness* see fit to reply to this call upon him, we will publish his answer in our columns, if it be not inordinately lengthy.

The concluding portion of his article in reply to his troublesome querist as to how,—the Canon of Scripture having been ascertained,—the one true meaning of Scripture is to be determined from amongst the many contradictory interpretations put upon it by Protestants—as for instance by Trinitarian Protestants, and Unitarian Protestants?—we must postpone for the present.

**A TEXT.—A SERMON.—AND ITS APPLICATION.**—Our text is taken from the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, eight and following verses (*Protestant version*):—

"The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, *Get thee hence Satan!*

For the appropriate sermon on this text we are indebted to the columns of the Montreal *Witness* of the 27th ult.:—

"Nearly the whole of the Teutons are Protestants; and there has long been in operation a fixed law by which the Protestant powers have been rising in the world, while those under Papal influence have been on the decline. There are certain great crises in the history of nations and of individuals when on their conduct for a comparatively brief period their whole future turns. This is a rule happens when truth and error are, in the providence of God, presented to them side by side, and they are asked to state which they prefer. France rejected Protestantism and embraced Popery, and she has been starting for her choice ever since. When the so-called 'Invincible Armada' threatened the overthrow of Protestant England, Spain could boast of 43,000,000 inhabitants; she has now only 14,000,000. Heaven has stricken her in her first born as it smote the Egyptians. With the growth of Protestantism in Ireland prosperity is dawning upon that unhappy land; yet within our times Ireland has lost upward of 2,500,000 inhabitants, more than one-third of the whole. Left under the dominion of the Papacy the logical demonstration is that these countries will become, like the deserted Palmyra, Thebes, or Memphis, howling wildernesses, residences for the wolf, the bat, the wild, and the serpent.

"Looking at Protestant nations, Great Britain had 10,800,000 when the Armada came; she has now 32,000,000 in these islands. Besides this, she has largely peopled America, India, Australia, New Zealand, and other islands of the South. She has centupled her wealth; she has seen her children grow from ten million to ten times ten millions, and has spread the Bible over all the world.

"Look at Prussia. Only a century and a half ago the title of the King of Prussia was first assumed. But Protestant truth was offered to it and accepted, and, amid struggles, it spread. Blessed with a succession of able Electors, and then of Kings equally distinguished, Prussia became a formidable kingdom.

As an application of this Sermon, or in illustration of the moral and material prosperity of Protestant Great Britain, we may be permitted to quote two high Protestant authorities: the first that of Mr. Spurgeon (Evangelical), the other that of the *Westminster Review*, (Liberal Protestant.) The former's testimony is given as under:—

"The Church of England seems to be eaten through and through with sacramentalism; but Nonconformity appears to me to be almost as badly riddled with philosophical infidelity. Those of whom we thought better things are turning aside one by one from the fundamentals of the faith. At first it was the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment that had to be given up; now it must be the very doctrine of the Fall—first one thing, then another, the whole must go. They treat our doctrines as though they were all to be knocked down at their good pleasure when they choose to amend our theology. Through and through, I believe the very heart of England is honey-combed with a damnable infidelity which dares still to go into the pulpit and call itself Christian."

The *Westminster Review*, October 1870.

p. 114, in like manner bears its witness to the glorious physical, mental, and moral condition of the people of Protestant England:—

"A few facts will go far to explain the degeneracy physical and mental, of our rural population. In the year 1853 the Privy Council directed a medical inquiry to be made into the food of the poorer classes in England; and Mr. Simon, the gentleman appointed to conduct the inquiry, found, on actual examination, a very alarming deficiency. The standard adopted was that obtained from experience during the Lancashire cotton famine, under the influence of which 'starvation diseases,' as they are called, were proved to supervene. This standard, in the case of a man, was 4390 grains of carbon and 200 grains of nitrogen. Now, as regards the agricultural population, it was found that more than a fifth had less than the estimated bare sufficiency of carbonaceous food, and that more than a third had less than the estimated bare sufficiency of nitrogenous food; and that in the three purely agricultural counties, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Somersetshire, insufficiency of nitrogenous food was the average diet.

So much for the physical condition of the agricultural labourer. His mental condition is no better. It is vain to talk to him of the necessity of life insurance, annuities for old age, or for making a provision for his wife and children. He barely manages to obtain subsistence from day to day, and all his efforts are devoted to that one object. Life with him is a constant 'struggle for existence.' To talk of educating him under such circumstances is absurd. He has neither the time nor the means for indulging in such a luxury as education, and his children are not likely to be any better off than himself in this respect. Bad as is his condition in the present, his future prospects are still worse. The next grade above him is too high for him ever to have a chance of reaching it. He has no ambition because he has no hope. He must drudge on in his own dull way to the dreary end, and that end is the goal or the workhouse.

With the lower stratum of society in such a state of physical and mental degradation, we need not wonder at the prevalence of crime. Physical privation means moral degradation. Insufficiency of food implies deficiency of everything that is necessary to the comfort and decency of domestic life. Can we expect the moral condition of those to be otherwise than low, whose constant care it is to earn a bare subsistence? Unfortunately we are not left to infer that such is the case. We are supplied with an overwhelming mass of evidence on this point which puts the matter beyond dispute. This evidence proves but too conclusively that crime and immorality prevail in England to an alarming extent. If

\* Where did our contemporary get his figures? Hallam puts the population of England in the XVI. century at about 4,400,000. See *Const. Hist.*

we are to believe the official reports that have from time to time been laid before Parliament, if we are to believe the statements of clergymen who have had ample opportunities of ascertaining the condition of the several parishes in which they reside, or of gentlemen well known for their truthfulness and philanthropy, then indeed we cannot resist the conclusion that this country has reached a depth of degradation that is perfectly appalling. An agricultural labourer's cottage sometimes contains three, but often only two rooms, and in a great many cases only one room, which is used as a living and sleeping chamber for the whole family. Sometimes in an ordinary sized room there may be found sleeping in close proximity father and mother and grown up sons and daughters. It is said not to be an uncommon thing even to find young men received as lodgers where only one room is available for the whole family. The consequence of this state of things on the rising generation may be imagined. In some parishes the number of illegitimate children exceeds that of those born in wedlock.

Perhaps this testimony as to the degraded physical, intellectual, and moral condition of the laboring classes in Protestant England, may suggest to some that it would have been well for England if in the sixteenth century she too had replied to the tempter in the words of the Lord in our Text "*Vade Satana!*" and had remained true to the ancient Catholic Faith of her fathers.

\* S. G. O., in a letter to the *Times* newspaper, says:—"Sad and lengthened experience has convinced me that the producer of bread by the sweat of his brow, for his body's sake and his soul's sake, can be placed in no worse position than he is at home—in merry England, Christian England, England the nurse of industry, the very hotbed of philanthropy. Late, very late experience—knowledge acquired far and near, from those in whom I can put trust—facts of which I am cognizant from sources which defy contradiction—all prove to me that in hundreds of our villages the social condition of man is below that of any country of which I have ever read."

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES.**—Translated from the French of Henri Lasserre. D. & J. Sadlier, Montreal.

This is a charming work: charming, not only because of the subject with which it deals, but because of the manner in which the writer treats his subject. The book is sparkling with wit, *petillant d'esprit*, and at the same time elaborately argumentative. Though we do not pretend that the miracles, or supernatural events therein narrated are to be accepted as of faith, or that the Catholic is bound under pain of sin to admit them, we see not how they can be contested except by arguments which would prove fatal to the miracles recorded in the Gospels. Can a miracle be established by human testimony?—and if so under what conditions? The Christian who believes in the Resurrection of the Lord cannot but give an affirmative answer to the first query, and so also to the second, we say, of the conditions requisite for the credibility of human testimony to a miracle,—not one in the case of the Apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes is wanting. These miracles were done publicly: the witnesses thereunto, of whom many are still living, are well known not only in France, but throughout Europe, and amongst them may be reckoned persons from all ranks in Society. The story of these miracles was published and believed *there and then, where and when* they are said to have occurred. The facts are attested by eyewitnesses, literate and illiterate, by non-professionals, and by medical men eminent in the profession. The waters of a spring which suddenly gushed forth from a rock previously dry, as in the days of Moses, were subjected to careful chemical analysis by distinguished chemists in France,—amongst others by M. Filhot, Professor of Chemistry at Toulouse and Chevalier of the Legion of Honor: the civil authorities made the most searching investigations, in the hopes of bringing to light imposture somewhere, but failed signally in their attempts; and in a word there is no better natural evidence for the truth of any of the supernatural phenomena connected with the propagation of Christianity, than there is for the truth of the miracles said to have been wrought by the miraculous intervention of the Blessed and Immaculate Mother of God at Lourdes. To those who doubt, we say, read the evidence, and then, but not before, pronounce your verdict.

If Protestants and non-Christians reject this evidence it is because it establishes not only the truth of Christianity as a fact in the supernatural order, but because it establishes the truth of that form of Christianity called *Romanism*, *Popery*, or *Catholicity*. All Protestants argue from the premiss of the falsity of this religion, to the falsity of the miracles which attest its truth. With a marvellous inconsistency they will deny the miracle in which God, the Blessed Virgin, and the Angels intervene, but will admit those in which the Devil and his infernal host are the chief actors. Turning tables they will trust, and in spirit-rapping and in *Planchette* they will place their faith; but the report of a Catholic miracle arouses only their indignant incredulity. The diabolic supernatural they recognise as at work amongst them; the angelic supernatural they hold to be impossible.

The work is very well translated by a Lady of the Holy Cross; the spirit of the original has been admirably preserved, as well as its literal meaning. The price of the book is \$1.60, sent free by mail in Montreal; and \$2 is the New York publishing price.

The terrible war in France has had this good effect, that it has given the Catholic Clergy, the Catholic Sisters of Charity and the Religious generally, opportunity to refute, by their noble heroism, the foul slanders of the Liberal press. The malignant *partie pretre* it is now seen and admitted, is the first and foremost in the field; wherever there is danger, wherever there are the wounded to be relieved, or the dying man to be administered, there for the post of danger, in the thickest of the fire, cool and undismayed is the priest, the consecrated virgin to be seen, extorting the admiration of their enemies.

The following eulogy upon the *Christian Brothers*, whom we all know and respect in Canada as the exemplary teachers of the rising generation, but who in France are mainly engaged in carrying aid to the wounded on the battle field—is from the pen of the Special Correspondent of the London *Times*:—

But the *infermiers* themselves seemed to me most creditably free from any tendency to shrink from duty, considering that they have not the excitement of fighting, nor the prospect of crosses, pensions, or promotion to keep their courage up to the mark. As for the *Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes*, who are, as it were, the crack corps—the Old Guard—the *infermiers*, their pluck is prodigious. They were conspicuous in their round flapping hats, white bands, and long black coats, in all parts of the field, ready to confess the dying (?) carry the wounded, bury the dead—in fact, to do any duty required of them, at once the gentlest and bravest of men. I saw one of them pick up an *obus*, and when a soldier shouted to him to take care, as it was a fresh one and might still explode, instead of dropping it, as I fancy nine of ten civilians would have done, he had the presence of mind to put it slowly on the ground, as coolly as if it had been an egg; and then, turning round to us, who had made a most undignified rush from him, not being, perhaps, quite as well prepared for being blown into fragments heavenwards, he remarked that it "was very dangerous to let these things fall hard, as the concussion might make them explode."

If France is to be saved, it is by men of this stamp, by men inspired with the true spirit of the Christian soldier, that her salvation will be worked out—not by the obscene followers of Garibaldi, and the uclean rabble of the revolution.

As a contrast to the behavior of the *Christian Brothers* we copy from the correspondence of a Hamburg paper, published in the Montreal *Herald* of the 2nd inst., some particulars as to the way in which the Garibaldians and their chief comport themselves in action:—

They—the Garibaldians—advanced with theatrical effect. The beating of drums and ringing of bells formed the chief music, and Garibaldi's hymn was also sung. The well-aimed rounds of the Bad-ones soon silenced them, and they retired with considerable loss on finding that we were well prepared to receive them. Night favoured their retreat, and next morning showed that they had suffered much more than we had supposed. The road was strewn for miles with knapsacks and weapons. The finest weapons of precision were lying about—Sniders, Remingtons, Peabodys, &c. According to a captured officer, a Nizard, Garibaldi commanded in person, and in spite of his gout was an hour on horseback, but when the affair began to go wrong the Staff and the General went off. The inhabitants of Dijon, while the fight was going on near the town, plundered some wagons, and were punished by a fine of £20,000. Six Garibaldians, who had escaped, were discovered in a muddy canal in the town where they had passed the whole day. Amid great merriment they were drawn out.

Professor Blackie of Edinburgh writes to the *Scotsman*, under date Oct. 27th, pointing out the moral excellencies of D'Israeli's late work *Lothair*, as an antidote to Popery. The learned Professor with keen eye quickly detects the purport of that work; and nicely appreciating the characteristics of Catholicity and Protestantism respectively, he points out that the best means of counteracting Papal aggression in England, is the calling in the aid of the lusts of the flesh. Sensuality, not logic, is the weapon with which Romanism must be met, and conquered; all other weapons are unavailing against it.

And so the Professor having pointed out how *Lothair*, the hero of D'Israeli's romance, had almost been made a Catholic of by appeals to his spiritual nature—shows how he was rescued from the peril by potent appeals to his animal nature. He thus analyses, with great accuracy the several results of these two opposite modes of treatment—the spiritual or Catholic process, and the animal or Protestant process:—

"Our hero is submitted to an altogether different treatment in the person of the beautiful Greek girl, who are always singing when they are not laughing, and always laughing when they are not singing.—Than this embodiment of graceful Hellenic sensuousness, and hilarious juvenility of temper, nothing could be more suitable to counteract the effect of the austere and celibate virtues which are the prime theme of Popish eulogy."

Protestant missions to Papists will, if wise, profit by the hint, and will henceforward adopt the philosophy of D'Israeli. Instead of tall-faced, obese "men of God" in rusty black, and dingy white chokers, let them engage a lot of jolly girls always laughing and singing, to go amongst the blinded devotees of the Romish superstition, as the Apostles and Evangelists of the new religion; to preach up the delights of sensuality, to insist on the claims of the flesh, and eloquently to denounce the austere virtues of Popery. Nothing, as Professor Blackie observes, more potent than agencies such as these to counteract the tendencies of Popery.

Under the caption *An Unnatural Son*, the annexed telegram is going the rounds of the press:—

AN UNNATURAL SON.—NEW YORK, Dec. 29.—A