

# The True Witness

AND

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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J. GILLIES.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1872.

## ECCLIASTICAL CALENDAR.

AUGUST—1872.

Friday, 30—St. Rose of Lima, V.

Saturday, 31—St. Raymond Nonnatus, C.

SEPTEMBER—1872.

Sunday, 1—Fifteenth after Pentecost.

Monday, 2—St. Stephen, C.

Tuesday, 3—St. Louis, C. (Aug. 25).

Wednesday, 4—Of the Ferial.

Thursday, 5—St. Laurence Justinian, B. C.

## NEWS OF THE WEEK.

GENEVA, Aug. 23.—The report which has gained credit that the Board of Arbitration has awarded a lump sum of four millions sterling damages to the United States is pronounced premature, and the strictest secrecy will be maintained until the decision of the Board is officially promulgated.

LONDON, Aug. 24.—Great excitement exists in Drogheda; an outbreak is momentarily feared there. The military are confined to their barracks.

Quiet continues in Belfast. The Mayor has ordered that all public houses remain closed until Tuesday. The value of the property destroyed by the mobs is estimated at fifty thousand pounds.

Private telegrams from Belfast this morning reports that rioting has been renewed in that city, and several severe encounters between opposing parties have occurred. These reports, however, are not confirmed by despatches to the press.

MADRID, Aug. 24.—Fears are entertained by the Government of another insurrection in the provinces bordering on France, and preparations are being made to promptly repress any disorder which may occur.

BOMBAY, August 24, morning, via London, August 26, 10 p.m.—The cholera has appeared in the valley of the Cashmere and is reported to be raging with great violence.

Havana advices say the insurgents are massing all their forces to make a fresh movement on the Aueovillas. Havana is overrun with scoundrels of every description. Constant murders and robberies are committed, the police being seemingly powerless.

BERLIN, Aug. 24.—The American fleet has arrived in the Baltic. Admiral Alden with several officers came here to-day and took up quarters at the Royal Hotel. They will remain until the return of the Emperor William.

## To the Editor of The True Witness.

SIR,—I noticed in an article that appeared, now several months ago, in one of your Montreal papers, the *Northern Journal*, some remarks upon the grounds of faith, common to Protestants and to Catholics. I expected at the time that you would have commented on this article; but as it seems to have escaped your notice, I take the liberty of sending you the extract from the paper to which I refer, leaving it to you to deal with it as you may think fit.

OBSERVER.

The subjoined paragraph contains the extract to which our correspondent alludes, and to which he directs our attention:—

"Just as the Orthodox Protestant, refusing to receive his Bible from an infallible Church, must base its authority upon a verdict of his individual reason, so the Catholic, removing the difficulty only one step farther by accepting the Bible from the Church, must base the authority of the Church upon a verdict of this same reason. He believes in the Holy Catholic Church, not merely because his father did, or with an hereditary faith, but either because his reason tells him it is the true Church, which is Rationalism, or because he has had a special Divine Revelation of that fact, which is Mysticism. No matter what creed is adopted, it must ultimately rest upon a verdict of the reason.—There is no escape from Rationalism but Mysticism, and Mysticism is the highest form of Rationalism."—*Northern Journal*.

We are enjoined to be ever ready to give a reason for the faith that is in us, because the Christian revelation is addressed, and could only have been addressed, to a rational being. Reason, therefore, has its part to play, and it is our duty in matters of religion to exercise our reason, provided that we exercise the faculty within its proper limits—that is to say, within the natural order.

Certainly the Catholic can fairly be called upon to assign a reason for accepting, and unreservedly submitting himself to, the teachings of the body called the Catholic Church; and if

this be Rationalism we are all Rationalists; just as if he were to accept and submit to the teachings of 'the Church' without being able to assign a reason for so doing, we should be "Irrationalists," and, therefore, below the natural plane or order. For man is a reasonable being, and cannot abrogate his reason without degradation. This of course we admit.

But Rationalism, in the usual acceptance of the word, implies, not merely the subjecting to the verdict of the natural reason the question of the divine authority of the Church to teach, and therefore of man's duty to submit himself humbly and without further question to that authority: but the submitting to the examination of the reason the teachings of the Church themselves. Thus: the Catholic, before he can accept as a reasonable being the doctrine of the Trinity, must have a reasonable assurance that the body propounding that doctrine is infallible, because commissioned to teach by God; and in this sense the writer in the *Northern Journal* may call the Catholic a Rationalist, if he so pleases. But the Rationalist, according to the ordinary acceptance of the term, is one who, assuming authority, attempts to determine the truth or falsity of the doctrine itself, say the doctrine of the Trinity, by the exercise of his human reason on the dogma or thing propounded. This man is a fool, because he imposes on reason, a natural faculty, functions for which it is inadequate—to wit, the revelation of questions in the supernatural order.

The Catholic believes all that the Church teaches, simply because she so teaches; and because, by the exercise of his reason on questions within the natural order, he has come to the conclusion that she has received authority from God Himself to teach; and because the same reason assures him that God, Who is truth, cannot permit the teaching of a lie in His name. But why does the Catholic believe that the Church has authority from God to teach? For this he must be able to assign a reason.

From credible history he knows that there was once on earth a person called Christ, Who professed to be an envoy from God to man: that this Person was put to death upon the cross, and was buried: that on the third day He appeared again to many, and gave to them clearest proof of His having risen from the dead. From these premises, furnished by history, the Catholic, by the exercise of his reason, comes to the conclusion that the Person called Christ Who so died, and so rose again from the dead, must indeed have been what He professed to be—to wit, a divinely commissioned, and, therefore, infallible teacher; for, as from the miracle of the resurrection we conclude to the divine commission, so from the divine commission we conclude to the truth of the doctrines taught, and we accept them, as if from the mouth of God Himself.

From history again, the Catholic learns that as the one means of promulgating amongst all nations, and of perpetuating His divine teachings, the same Person called Christ appointed a body of men to teach in His name; promising to abide ever with them all days, so that they might be preserved from error by His supernatural assistance, and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit with which He also promised to endow them. From this historical fact, by the exercise of his natural reason, the Catholic draws two conclusions. First, that since Christ had a divine commission, so the body by Him commissioned is also divinely commissioned, and entitled to the same respect, the same obedience, as would be Christ Himself were He again to appear on earth, and to address us directly. Secondly, that, since Christ promised to be with that body all days to the end of time, it—the body with which He was to be present—must be in existence to-day, or else He could not be present with it, and His word would be a lie.

From the first fact then, that Christ, Himself divinely commissioned, appointed a body of men to teach in His name, promising to be in a peculiar manner ever present with them, thus assuring to them infallibility in their teachings; and from the second fact that unless Christ's promises have failed, and His work perished, that body must be in existence to-day, teaching in His name as having authority, challenging universal, unquestioning submission to all its teachings. Catholics, by the exercise of their reason, come to the conclusion that the body known in history as the Roman Catholic Church, is, and must be, the body so appointed to teach; and if that so appointed body, then that all its teachings must be true, and as much entitled to our respect as if they came to us direct from God Himself.

For, if the Roman Catholic Church be not that body, be not the divinely commissioned, and therefore infallible teacher, then of two things, one.

1. Either there must be on earth some other body or organised society, calling itself *par excellence* the Church, claiming to be infallible, because divinely commissioned to teach, and on these grounds challenging the submission of all

nations, and of all men of all degrees. But there is no such body except the Roman Catholic Church that puts forward any such pretensions.

2. Or, there is no such body, or organised society to-day on earth; no body with which Christ is present; none that is illuminated and guided by the Holy Ghost, and therefore authorised to teach in God's name, and to which therefore all are bound humbly to submit. But if such be the case, then were Christ's last words a lie, His promises a snare, and a delusion, and He Himself nothing but a silly enthusiast, if not a self-convicted impostor. From this alternative there is no possible escape; and therefore is it that the educated Catholic whenever he renounces the Catholic Church, becomes, and no matter what he may pretend to the contrary, must become, a renouncer of all Christianity. For the intelligent and educated Catholic there is no possible half way house betwixt Romanism and Infidelity. If on the other hand, the Church be the means by Christ Himself appointed for teaching all men; and if His promises to her be true, then is our submission to her as one having divine authority to teach the highest exercise of our reason or Rationalism, no matter how marvellous, how startling to human reason may be her teachings.

In this sense we admit the justice of the imputation to us of Rationalism. We are Catholics, that is to say we believe all that the Catholic Church teaches, has taught, or ever may teach, simply because we believe her to be the means, and the only means, by Christ Himself appointed for diffusing and preserving the knowledge of supernatural truth amongst men; and we so believe on purely reasonable or rational grounds. We disclaim all pretensions to any interior illumination, or special revelation on the subject. By the light of reason we examine into the claims to credibility in the natural and historical order of these books which profess to give an account of the life of Christ and circumstances attending the establishment of the Christian religion, and of the Catholic Church. By our reason we determine that the writers of these records, are fully worthy of all credit in all matters that came within the cognisance of their natural faculties; that they were honest men, honestly relating the things which they themselves had seen and heard; that their story of Christ's resurrection is as well established, at least as any fact recorded in history; that Christ was therefore a divinely commissioned teacher, and therefore as worthy of credit as God; that Christ appointed a body of men, or a Church, to continue His work on earth after His ascension into heaven giving to that body all that was requisite for the carrying out of its divine commission; that that body must therefore be in existence somewhere to-day, loudly and constantly asserting its divine commission, and its claims to universal obedience; that the Roman Catholic Church must be that body, since none other can be, since none other so much as professes to be; and that therefore all that the Roman Catholic Church has taught, teaches, or may at any time teach is just as much entitled to our respectful obedience as it would have been if propounded to us by God Himself. This is the chain of reasoning, and we defy anyone to find a flaw in it. Admit the divine commission of Christ, and you must admit the divine commission of the body by Him appointed to teach in His name. Admit the commission and you must admit the infallibility and continual existence of the body commissioned. Admit the existence of such a body, and you must admit that the Roman Catholic Church is that body, since none other so much as pretends to be so. Deny the conclusion and virtually you assert that Christ was an impostor.

## LESSONS IN ORANGE HISTORY.

Respectfully dedicated to the Orange Orator, be he Professor McLaren or James A. McLellan, Esq., LL.B., and Government Inspector of High Schools.

"Did King James II., violate the British Constitution in such a manner as to forfeit his right to the British throne?"

This is an important question. Professor McLaren (*Mail*) and Ogle R. Gowan appear to make it the turning point of the transfer of their allegiance from James to William. James, they assert, acted unconstitutionally, and therefore lost his right to the British throne. We have already shewn, that if James acted unconstitutionally William did so too; and that therefore, if James, the rightful sovereign, lost his right to the British throne thereby; William, the Usurper, could a *fortiori* never acquire one. What logical connection there can be between James' misdeeds and William's right to the throne, it is difficult to conceive; the more so especially as James had a lawful son and successor, who in the event of his father's death (political or physical) immediately became England's rightful monarch. If James was politically dead his son under a Regency became the lawful sovereign.

But let us examine James' alleged unconstitutional conduct, in order to see how far the accusation can with justice be sustained.

The Declaration of Rights enumerates in its preamble the alleged unconstitutional acts of James. The first it mentions is *his exercise of the dispensing power*. It is a remarkable fact, that William after mature deliberation with his advisers deemed it prudent to rest the justification of his invasion of England upon the single point of *James' delay in summoning a Parliament*, thus narrowing down materially the issues between James and his people, and giving rise to the suspicion, that the other points as recounted in the Declaration were deemed untenable. If William had any color of a right to interfere, it could only be on the supposition of grave acts of injustice on James' part. In defending his interference he would naturally then recapitulate all the unconstitutional acts complained of. He mentions only one. The inference is obvious. That one was the only one deemed tenable.

It may safely be affirmed that if the exercise of this dispensing power, had not been exercised in behalf of Catholics; if instead of relieving English Papists, it had given fuller religious liberty to French Huguenots, we should never have heard a word about it; a Dutch King would never have been called upon to usurp the British throne:—the exercise of the dispensing power would never have been declared unconstitutional. There is something supremely disgraceful in this one-sidedness, whilst there is something supremely intolerant in objecting to an act, which gave a freer religious freedom to Catholics and removed practically, if not in fact, those disgraceful penal laws from our statute books, which will be a reproach to our nationality as long as that nationality is known to have existed.

The exercise of the dispensing power complained of, was as follows. James had admitted certain Catholics to commands in the army. This through the intolerance of the age, was illegal. One would think, that the fact itself of such an intolerance existing, was a sufficient excuse for sweeping it off the statute books constitutionally or unconstitutionally. James seems to have thought so, and though he did not, because he could not, blot it out entirely, he yet rendered it in these particular cases nugatory by suspending its operation. Patents under the great seal were issued, discharging these officers from the penalties to which they were liable by the iniquitous statute of the 25th Charles II., and enabling them to hold their commission "any clause in any act of parliament notwithstanding." This is the dispensing power complained of. That every true lover of religious freedom now-a-days will applaud rather than condemn James' conduct in thus suspending that iniquitous law, we feel certain. All true Englishmen have long ago learnt to despise the fanaticism, that made those laws, and the bigotry that supported their execution. But that is not the question. Was James unconstitutional as the law then stood, in thus using the dispensing power? We think not. In the first place James was "Head of the Church." The same power, that enabled Elizabeth to change the religion of England, was vested in James, and must have enabled him to modify that religion. Elizabeth by the aid of an illegal and unconstitutional tribunal—the Ecclesiastical Commissioners—sent hundreds to a cruel death for denying her supremacy. This same power, as it existed in Elizabeth had been handed down to James. If Elizabeth could condemn by virtue of that power, James could certainly pardon by the same power. Either Elizabeth's power was unconstitutional or James' was constitutional. Protestant writers even of our own age, to their shame be it spoken, have endeavored to prove, that James did not possess the same ecclesiastical prerogative as Elizabeth. Macaulay says—"The ecclesiastical supremacy which had devolved on James, was by no means the same great and terrible prerogative which Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the First had possessed! The enactment which annexed to the crown an almost boundless visitatorial authority over the Church though it had never been formally repealed had really lost a great part of its force. The substantive law remained; but it remained unaccompanied by any formidable sanction (what does this mean?) or by any efficient system of procedure, and was therefore little more than a dead letter."

This is disgraceful. Such arguments will convince no one; and can only serve to cover with ridicule and contempt a writer who lays claim to no mean literary fame. If used on the side of Catholicity its hollowness would be detected immediately. The ecclesiastical supremacy existed; it was the law of the land—a disgraceful and foul law, if you like—but it existed; and it is the merest nonsense and twaddle in the world to say, that the use of an existing law is unconstitutional. As well say that a slumbering lion is no lion. The most that the people of England had a right to do was to abrogate the law; they could never declare that the exercise of it, whilst it was yet law, was unconstitutional. The fact is (and

Macaulay knew it) the front of James' offending consisted not in the unconstitutionality of the exercise of the dispensing power, but in its application to Catholicity and universal toleration. We have a superstitious reverence for the enactment that what is sauce for the goose shall be sauce for the gander. Macaulay and Protestant historians seem unable to understand this aphorism.

The expedient of the dispensing power had first been suggested to James in the reign of his brother by a high law authority (Herbert chief justice of Chester) who waited on the duke on his return from Scotland and informed him, that if he sought to resume the office of lord high admiral the test act could oppose no effectual bar to his desire because it was in the power of the King to dispense with that statute. Herbert's opinion was confirmed by Jeffreys. When the case against Sir Edward Hales was afterwards brought up as a test question, Herbert now lord chief justice, supported by nine other judges, and opposed only by two, delivered judgment in favor of the accused. The King of England was a sovereign prince: the laws were his laws; whence it followed that it was part of his prerogative to dispense with penal laws in particular cases and upon necessary reasons, of which necessary reasons he was the sole judge; and "that this was not a trust committed to him by the people, but the ancient remains of the sovereign prerogative which never yet was taken, nor can be taken from the Kings of this realm."

That Protestant historians, and notably Macaulay, should deny this power to James, shews how much religious bigotry can overcome their calmer judgment, and how little their opinions as historians are to be valued, whenever the great Protestant tradition is at stake. The lawyers of James' time admitted the principle, though they differed in opinion as to the particular cases in which it ought to be exercised; each being biased therein by his own particular political or religious leanings. Had James been a staunch Protestant, or had the dispensing power regarded any other matter than religion, James' claim would never have been disputed. It is exercised yearly *unchallenged* by Our Gracious Queen Victoria when she extends her royal clemency to unfortunates condemned for murder, or for political crimes. It is a remarkable fact that should not be lost sight of, that even the Declaration of Rights which the two Houses made at the time, when they tendered the crown to William and Mary did not deny the power of the sovereign to dispense, but more cautiously declared it illegal as it had been assumed and exercised of late. This is conclusive; the grumblers-in-chief, who would naturally make the most of their grievances, did not deny the power but objected merely to the mode of its exercise.

Macaulay's attempt to throw discredit upon the decision of the judges would do credit to an old Bailey lawyer, is disgraceful and dangerous. The whole he would have us infer is a plot—the judges rascals—the decision a sham. This proves too much for his cause, since if it be a true picture of the times, Protestantism had indeed done little for the morals of England and less for her judiciary. At a time when "that glorious Reformation" had had full sway over the minds of men during six reigns at least, England's lawyers were scoundrels! and her judges fools! or what is worse *venal!* Well! we never had much faith in "that glorious Reformation." We have said that Macaulay's conduct is dangerous. It is always a practice of doubtful expediency, though a tempting one withal for party bigotry, to try to asperse the character of one's adversaries. If the decisions of judges have to be set aside by accusations of sycophancy, &c. &c., no judicial decision will be safe for one moment. SACERDOS.

## WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.

### SHORT SERMONS FOR SINCERE SOULS.

No. XI.

"They have sacrificed their sons and their daughters to devils."—*Psalms* 105.

You are well aware, Catholic parents, that the whole world laments at the present day, the precocious wickedness of children. I know not whether wickedness is more rife than formerly; but this is certain—it is earlier rife. Vices which hitherto were not learnt until the boy had at least nearly arrived at manhood—cursing, lewd discourses, and a thousand other sinful habits—are now common amongst boys of the tenderest years. And what is true of boys, is true also alas! of girls. Love of dress, vanities and flirtations which formerly never entered the heads of the young, are now indulged in long before the girl has arrived at womanhood. And how is all this? Depend upon it, Catholic parents, it was not strangers that first taught your children these lessons in wickedness. It was you—their parents. The father, who ought to have raised up his son according to the maxims of the gospel, was alas! the first to scandalize him. From his lips the son first heard oaths and cursing, and lewd discourses; from him he first learnt to look upon dishonesty, as a mark of smartness and ad-