

The True Witness

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G. E. CLERE, Editor.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 1873.

ECCLIASTICAL CALENDAR.

MARCH—1873.

Friday, 14—Holy Shroud. Saturday, 15—Of the Feria. Sunday, 16—Third in Lent. Monday, 17—St. Patrick, B. C. Tuesday, 18—St. Gabriel, Arch. Wednesday, 19—St. Joseph, C. Thursday, 20—Of the Feria.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

Reports are to the failing health of M. Thiers are in circulation, but lack confirmation. The man is however well advanced in years, and his death in the present unsettled state of French politics, would no doubt be a great disaster.

In Spain everything remains in a state of political chaos. With the exception of the Carlists, there seems to be no party with a well defined programme, or means for putting one in execution.

We have a report, by telegram, of a reply made by the Sovereign Pontiff to an address presented to him on the 8th inst. "Reconciliation with the Italian Government"—so the Holy Father is reported to have said—"was impossible. God would punish the invaders of his dominions. * * He had the utmost confidence in the ultimate triumph of the Church."

The legislature of the Province of Ontario has, on the motion of the Provincial Ministry, rejected a Bill for incorporating the Orange-men, on the grounds that Orangeism is a political institution. The brothers are, it is said, very indignant at this, but by their action in this matter the Ontario Ministry have established a claim on, we do not say the Catholic population, but on all who love fair play, and value the peace of the country.

THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW—January, 1873. Leonard Scott Publishing Co., New York. Messrs. Dawson Bros., Montreal.

It is as the exponent of Protestant thought, and of Protestant intellectual progress that the Westminster Review is chiefly valuable. Whither Protestantism is tending, and what of progress it is making and has made, can nowhere be so well studied as in the pages of that very able, and intensely Protestant periodical.

To the general reader the very able article on the political and social condition of France in the eighteenth century will be the most interesting; on the other hand, to the Protestant that on Christian Evidence will be the most suggestive. The Protestant Reviewer has the tenacity to call upon his brother Protestants to assign any valid reason for their professed belief in the Canon, and inspiration of Scripture, a challenge, which will not be taken up in a hurry we may be sure; one which has

often been thrown down, and which has never yet been taken up. Says the Reviewer:

"We cannot help expressing by the way our own personal conviction that adequate reasons for this belief have never been put before the world from the Protestant point of view. That it was held by the early Fathers and the early Church appears to us not to be an argument, but merely a way of accounting for the origin of the belief historically; not to speak of the danger and in some cases the impossibility of yielding our judgment to such authorities, since the most ancient that we could quote as witnesses to the Canon were also believers in the distinctive tenets of Romanism, as well as in magic, dreams, demoniacal possession, the heathen mythology, the early return of Christ * * * St. Augustine declared that he should not feel himself called upon to believe in the Bible, unless the Church had bidden him to do so."—p. 9.

The Reviewer is of opinion that amongst Protestants soon, very soon, except by a few illiterate persons, and old women, the belief in the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible will be rejected. Indeed the main Protestant argument against the infallibility of the Pope is a two edged weapon, and cuts away all rational grounds for believing in the infallibility of the writers to whom we owe what are called the Gospels. Infallibility is essentially and exclusively a Divine attribute, which it is blasphemous to attribute to a creature since the latter is thereby made equal to God; this is the argument against attributing infallibility to the Pope. But it is equally forcible against attributing infallibility to the men who wrote the several works of which the New Testament is made up; since these men also were only creatures; and since the attributing of infallibility to them would be the putting of them on a level with God—which is blasphemy.

Of course if it be replied that the Bible penmen were infallible, not of themselves, but solely in virtue of the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the Catholic rejoins that this is precisely what the Church teaches with regard to the Pope, who, if infallible, is so only in virtue of the divine assistance promised by Christ. By attributing infallibility to the Pope as teacher of the Church, the Catholic therefore no more puts a man on a level with God, than does the Protestant, who predicates infallibility of the writer of the work vulgarly known as the Gospel of St. Luke. This is obvious to the dull-witted intelligence; nevertheless in their anxiety to discredit the teachings of the Church, and to convict her of error, Protestants continue to urge an objection against Papal infallibility which if logically carried out, is fatal to the infallibility of the New Testament. The result is pointed out by the Reviewer:—

"It is certain that no part of the fabric of orthodoxy is more rapidly crumbling away than this—the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible—which has hitherto been its foundation stone."—p. 92.

In its Book Notices the Westminster Review has a very flattering notice of a Catholic novel Fleurange, by Mrs. Craven, and which the Reviewer contrasts with an evangelical Protestant tale, "Margaret," by a Miss Fraser Tytler. Here are the terms in which the Protestant Reviewer speaks of these two works, which are respectively, good exponents of the two religious systems:—

"Mrs. Craven's Fleurange like Miss Fraser Tytler's Margaret is a didactic story. But in the one case cultured Catholicism, and in the other raw Protestantism, leaves and informs the stories. In Fleurange there is not a word of controversy, whilst Margaret bristles with religious arguments. In short Fleurange is spiritual, Margaret 'goody.' And in reading the two tales—in spite of our natural leaning to Protestantism, in spite of all the noble services which it has rendered to humanity—we find ourselves almost echoing the famous saying, that Romanism is the only religion fit for the artist and the poet. If we could persuade ourselves to use the term 'dangerous' in the sense in which theologians use it, we should say that Fleurange is a most dangerous book. Miss Fraser Tytler's novel, although the heroine so easily and so triumphantly overthrows Materialism, is by no means dangerous. It will make no converts to Protestantism worth having. No one with the slightest sense will be convinced by the defeats of such a scare crow as Miss Fraser Tytler tries to frighten us with. On the other hand Fleurange is sure to make many proselytes. The unobtrusive piety, the real devotion, the wide charity, the culture, which shine out on every page, gradually win us to the writer's faith. If these are the results of Catholicism, then it is a religion which is worth something, the reader will say. And many a one dissatisfied with the coldness of Protestantism, the apathy of its 'professors' for anything but its emoluments, the bitter and barren squabbles about the merest trifles, will read Fleurange with a delight and a rapture which they will vainly seek for in our professedly orthodox novels."—p. 152.

In short the difference betwixt the one work and the other is just as the difference betwixt the Conventicle and the Church; Margaret fairly represents the first named; Fleurange gives an idea of the second, an idea only—but still how beautiful, how ravishing is this idea even to one who is but a stranger to her beauties. What then must she be to those who have found her—who have seen her—and to whom it has been granted to behold her heavenly loveliness? Of her we may say as the hymn says of Jesus:—

"Quam pius es potentibus, Quam bonus to querentibus, Sed quid inveniuntibus!" Vespers 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany.

MURDER.—A man named Joseph Benoit, has been arrested for the murder of his wife, a young woman of about nineteen to whom he has been married for only a few months.—Jealousy seems to have prompted him to the perpetration of the foul crime.

The Quebec election resulted in the return of M. Pelletier.

DOMINION PARLIAMENT.—The first Session of the Second Parliament of the Dominion of Canada was opened on the afternoon of Wednesday, the 5th inst., by his Excellency Lord Dufferin, Governor General, &c. &c. The first business was to elect a Speaker; and on the proposal of Sir John Macdonald, the Hon. James Cookburn was unanimously chosen to fill the post, which he had already during the previous Parliament occupied with credit to himself, and advantage to the country. On the same day the Hon. M. Chauveau was sworn in as Speaker of the House.

On Thursday, 6th inst., the Session was formally inaugurated by the Speech from the Throne, delivered by His Excellency the Governor General:—

Honorable Gentlemen of the Senate: Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

In addressing for the first time the Parliament of Canada, I desire to express the satisfaction I feel in resorting to your advice and assistance, as well as my deep sense of my own good fortune in being permitted to associate myself with you in your labors and aspirations for the welfare of this Dominion.

I rejoice to think that my assumption of office should have taken place at a period when the prospects of the country appear so full of promise, when peace and amity prevail amongst all neighboring nations, and when so many indications are afforded of the success with which Canada herself is consolidating her political unity and developing her material resources.

In accordance with the decision of Parliament, and to carry into effect the legislation of last Session, I have caused a charter to be granted to a body of Canadian capitalists for the construction of the Pacific Railway. The Company now formed has given assurances that this great work will be vigorously prosecuted, and a favorable state of the money market in England affords every hope that satisfactory arrangements may be made for the required capital. The papers and correspondence relating to this subject will be laid before you.

During the past year the surveys for the improvement and extension of our system of Canals, for which appropriations were made last Session, have been in active preparation; and I am glad to inform you that the plans specifications for the enlargement of the Welland and the construction of the Baie Verte Canals have been completed, and that the works can now be put under contract.

The surveys for the St. Lawrence Canals will, I am assured, be finished in time to commence the works at the beginning of next year. This will insure the completion of all these great undertakings at the same period.

It is gratifying to know that the efforts made to encourage immigration have met with a great measure of success, and that the numbers seeking a home in Canada have been greatly augmented during the last year. I do not doubt your readiness to make ample provision for the steadily increasing stream of settlers that may hereafter be annually expected to add to the population, wealth and strength of the Dominion.

The compilation of the first Census of the Dominion approaches completion, and this would, therefore, seem a fitting time to provide for the establishment of a proper system for the accurate collection and scientific arrangement of statistical information. I commend this subject to your attention.

It is important that provision should be made for the consolidation and amendment of the Laws, now in force in the several Provinces, relating to the representation of the people in Parliament. A measure for this purpose, and one for the trial of Controverted Elections, will be submitted for your consideration. Your attention will be invited to measures for the amendment of the Laws relating to Pilots, to Salvage and to the Trinity Houses of Montreal and Quebec, as well as for the improvement of the Laws generally, affecting our Merchant Shipping.

Experience has shown that the duties now performed in the offices of the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of the Provinces, may be readjusted with advantage to the public service. A Bill on the subject will be laid before you. Among other measures, bills will be presented to you relating to the Criminal Law, to Weights and Measures, and to the amendment and consolidation of the Inspection Laws.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:—

I have given directions that the accounts of the past, and of the first six months of the present financial year, shall be laid before you without delay. You will be gratified to learn that the finances of the Dominion are in a prosperous condition, and that there is no reason to doubt that the revenue will be sufficient to meet all contemplated charges upon it.

The estimates for the ensuing year, which will be submitted to you, have been prepared with as much regard to economy as is compatible with the efficiency of the public service; and I venture to hope that you will be of opinion that the supplies which my Government will ask you to vote, can be granted without inconvenience to the people.

Honorable Gentlemen of the Senate, Gentlemen of the House of Commons:—

Many of the subjects I have enumerated are of the greatest importance. It is with full confidence in your patriotism and wisdom that I commend them to your consideration; and I trust that a Gracious Providence may guide your counsels in whatever way may best promote the happiness of the people of Canada, and the welfare of the Empire at large.

We find in the selected matter of the Witness of the 4th inst., a paragraph which, whatever the intention of the writer, is not very complimentary either to Protestantism in general, or the Episcopalian sect in particular. The paragraph is to the effect that there has been some trouble in a Catholic Church at St. Paul; in other words the Pope has been weeding his garden, and has, as it is his habit to do, thrown the noxious things over his Protestant neighbor's wall. Not being certain of the truth of the facts narrated in the Witness, we suppress names, but give the substance of the story—which is simply to this effect. That one priest, casting his vows of chastity to the wind, fell in love and cohabited with his buxom housekeeper, whereupon he was degraded from his office, and as a natural sequence was received as a minister of the Protestant Episcopal church; and then by a singular fatality the successor of the degraded priest first mentioned, has gone the same way, and is expected also to join the same Episcopal church. We wish our friends joy of their unscrupulous converts, victims as Sam Weller would say of connubiality. Of such is the kingdom of * * * Our readers can fill up the blank for themselves.

LUTHER AND THE BIBLE.

To the Editor of the True Witness.

Sm.—I send you some extracts from an old number of Blackwood, which perhaps may help to show on which side the truth lies, in the question that an able correspondent of the True Witness has been discussing in your columns. That question is, as to the acquaintance of Luther with the Bible during that portion of his life when he was yet faithful to his vows of chastity; and as to whether it be true that his revolt against the Church, was the result of violent animal lusts, or to his stumbling across a copy of the Bible after he had been many years a monk?

The article to which I refer you, and from which I quote is to be found in the May number of Blackwood, 1853, in which the Protestant writer assigns his object to be to say "a few words about our great Reformer." Here then is what he says on the subject of Luther's intimate acquaintance with the Bible whilst yet a young monk:—

"Luther has not been without a Bible. This he has read unremittingly. 'It was bound'—he says, recalling it affectionately to memory—in red Morocco. I made myself so familiar with it that I knew on what page, and in what place, every passage stood." Next its influence on his mind in this Bible, and Dr. Staupitz, were the works of St. Augustine, which occupied him the third and last year he spent in the monastery of Erfurt.

"From Erfurt he proceeds to Wittenberg. He is full of biblical, scholastic, and patriotic learning. * * * He has read the Scriptures again and again, he has conversed with the evangelical Staupitz, he has edited a treatise of St. Augustine. Have patience! Our Luther is still the monk at heart, and, for his soul's sake, must make a pilgrimage to Rome."—p. 542.

You will thus see, Sir, that by his own showing Luther was intimately acquainted with the Bible for many years before his revolt, and whilst still at heart a monk and Papist. Still the silly, old woman's story about "Luther and the Bible" will be repeated by knaves, and believed by fools till the crack of doom.

Yours, respectfully; OBSERVER.

CATHOLICITY IN THE UNITED STATES.

The bold and fearless advocacy of the rights of the Church by His Lordship the Bishop of Cleveland, Ohio, has created some little stir amongst the good folks in the United States. In his Lenten Pastoral His Lordship asserts the supremacy of the Church, condemns State-Schoolism, discommunes mixed marriages, exhorts Catholics to insist upon their rights as citizens, closes the doors of the churches against all societies not connected with the Church, and unaccompanied by a priest—and prohibits the administration by laics of ecclesiastical property, of which the management is to be made over to the Bishop.

We are sorry to be obliged to retract the good opinion which upon false information, we expressed in our last of Governor Dix. It seems that he has consented to remit the punishment of hanging in the case of the murderer Foster, in whose case there is not one mitigating circumstance, to justify or palliate, this setting aside of the law. Can we wonder that ruffianism triumphs in New York, and that all rascalism is jubilant? Oh! the honest men of the United States may say—Oh for one hour of such a ruler as that good Pope Sixtus the Fifth!

We have to return thanks to the Revd. M. Lacombe for a copy of his very ingenious "Echelle Synopique de la Religion Catholique" intended for the use of the Indians of the far North West amongst whom he labors as a missionary. The object of this Echelle is to bring before the eyes of the untutored savage in a sensible manner the chief verities of the Christian religion, and their mutual relations to one another. Copies may be had at the Rev. Pere Oblats, the Grey Nunnery, and MM. Beauchemin and Valois, Librarians; price, 15 cents.

PENITENTIAL.—In an editorial notice of Dr. Marshall's last work, My Clerical Friends, the Catholic Review expresses the opinion that in so far as Catholics are concerned, its perusal is hardly fitted for Lent, "so exquisite is the enjoyment which its keen satire secures." The Reviewer thinks however that for the same reason, Anglicans might read it during Lent "in a spirit of mortification" and as calculated to arouse within them the very desirable sentiments of humiliation and contrition.

ORDINATIONS.—On Saturday morning of last week, in the Cathedral, Mgr. Pinsonneault, Bishop of Birtha, conferred the Holy Order of Priesthood on the RR. MM. Bourke, Larchelle, and Labis; and Minor Orders on M. Belanger, Director of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum.

ORDINATIONS.—On Sunday, 2nd inst., His Lordship the Bishop of St. Hyacinthe conferred the Holy Order of Priesthood on the Rev. MM. R. E. Casgrain, and C. F. Rourque, both of the Archdiocese of Quebec.

There is a rumor, we hope unfounded, that the Marquis of Lorne, and his wife, H. R. H. the Princess Louise, have separated on account of incompatibility of temper.

In Manitoba they have just passed a School Bill on the Donominational pattern. Provision is made for Catholic and Protestant schools, alike.

The Hon. Mr. McKenzie will, it is said, be leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons.

The Ontario legislature has passed a measure incorporating the Christian Brothers.

The Catholics of New Brunswick have presented a petition to their legislature praying that in the matter of schools they may be put upon the same footing as that on which the Protestants of the Province of Quebec are placed with respect to the Catholic majority.

THE FIRST SHOT.—The first encounter betwixt the Ministerialists and the Opposition resulted in a victory for the former; the numbers being as 95 to 79 in a full house of 174 members, the full complement being 200.—The Ministerial majority was sixteen.

WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.

SHORT SERMONS FOR SINCERE SOULS. No. XXVIII.

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL."

"Wo to that man by whom scandal cometh."—(Mat 18)

Having seen the enormity of the sin of murder from its own nature; having viewed its enormity in its distance from the Christian precept of the love of our neighbour; and lastly, having seen its enormity in its immense opposition to the command Love thy enemies, it becomes our duty to pass on to that greatest of all murders—scandal or the murder of the soul. If he who takes his brother's life is a murderer, he too is a murderer, and the worst of murderers, who takes his brother's soul. But how, you ask, can I take my brother's soul? By leading him into mortal sin. It is true, Christian soul, that the soul of your brother cannot be stabbed by sword or knife; that it is beyond the reach of bullet or of poison. But there is a sword more mortal; a bullet more deadly; a poison more noxious still. The sword of mortal sin glides fearlessly past muscle and vein and heart in its deadly passage into the soul of man, and having entered therein, lets out not the fragile fleeting worthless life of the body, but the eternal invaluable life of the soul. Christian soul! the crime of corporal murder is a terrible, a heinous, a hideous crime; but the crime of spiritual murder—the murder of the soul—is from its very nature more terrible more heinous more hideous still.

Scandal or spiritual murder is, according to St. Thomas "any word or deed even though only equivocal which affords to our neighbour an occasion of his spiritual ruin" (2.2. q 43 a 1) By "word or deed" we must understand not only every exterior action or word which provokes to evil, but also every omission of saying or doing which may lead him into sin. Under the expression "even equivocal" is included not only those words and acts which are bad in themselves, as cursing and swearing or holding immodest conversation, but also those acts, which not absolutely criminal in themselves, still have the appearance of being so, as for instance the frequenting the society of persons of ill-fame even when no sin or danger of sin arises; or the eating of flesh meat under a lawful dispensation in the presence of those who would not know of the dispensation. Not only are you bound not to do or say anything which is evil, but you are bound also not to do or say anything that to your neighbour has the appearance of evil. It is an Apostle that commands "Abstain from every appearance of evil" (1 Thess 5)

Scandal may be considered in two ways, first: as to the scandalizer and second: as to the scandalized.

Scandal as to the scandalizer may take place in three ways. 1. When the scandalizer does his act for the express purpose of damning his neighbour's soul. This is such a diabolical act; one so full of devilish malice that it would appear as though a human being could never be guilty of it. 2. When the scandalizer does his act not indeed for the express purpose of damning his neighbour's soul, but in order to gratify his own passions or to obtain some temporal advantage. 3. When the scandalizer does any action or says any word which he foresees may be an occasion of sin to his neighbour, although he does not do them or say them expressly for that purpose.

Scandal as to the scandalized is also of two kinds. 1. That scandal which arises in the soul from its own weakness. 2. That scandal which arises from the malice and bad heartiness of him who receives the scandal. This last is called Pharisaical scandal because it was that scandal which the Pharisees received from the actions of our divine Saviour, when he eat with sinners, and when he conversed with women.

The scandal of the scandalizer is joined to the scandal of the scandalized, whenever the scandalizer's act leads the scandalized into sin. But it sometimes happens, that the scandalized refuses the sin of the scandalizer. Does the scandalizer thereby escape from sin? We tempted to sin it is true; but they would not sin;—what sin therefore can we have committed? Alas! Christian soul, do not seek to excuse yourself thus. It will avail you nothing before the throne of God. For what sin is your escape? Your victim has escaped death it is true; but you are no less a murderer in intention at least, since you fired the shot with the knowledge that it was likely to kill. How then can you be acquitted else but a murderer? You committed the act, you acknowledge, which you knew was capable of producing the spiritual death of your brother's soul; his strength of purpose—his love of God was a steel cuirass against which your weapon failed; are you on that account less a murderer of your brother's soul? It is your brother that has escaped death; not you.

As the law of God commands us to have a care of our neighbour's life, so it requires of us that we have also a care of our neighbour's soul. This is the law of Charity which arises from the commandment which ordains that we love our neighbour as ourselves. Hence wherever scandal is given and received, the scandalizer sins against two precepts; the precept forbidding the sin which causes the scandal and the precept of charity, which forbids the giving scandal. He who causes his neighbour to blaspheme—or to steal—or to act contrary to chastity, sins against the commandment of the decalogue forbidding blasphemy, or stealing, or impurity, as the case may be, and also against the law of charity commanding us to have a care of our neighbour's soul. So also he who gives sinful advice commits one sin against charity and another sin which draws its malice from the sin which he counsels. To praise for sins committed or to blame for sins omitted, are also so many scandals, because they are incentives to commit those sins that are praised. But are we guilty of scandal, when those whom we scandalize are already disposed to the sins by which we scandalize them? When we urge a drunkard to drink or the lascivious to impure conversations are we still guilty of scandal? I answer yes; because although they are habitually disposed to their sin, they are not at the time you tempted them supposed to be in the absolute act of the sin. It is a greater scandal, I admit, to scandalize God's little ones, the innocent and pure of heart, but to scandalize the habitual sinner is still a scandal.

But what is to be said of those, who without intending to scandalize, still speak words or perform actions which they foresee will cause scandal to their neighbour. I answer that they sin, and I found my answer on the Sacred Scripture. When St. Paul laid down the law for the first Christians as to the eating of meats forbidden by the Jewish law, but which law had been abrogated by the Christian dispensation, he yet forbade them to eat them in presence of those, who would think it sinful to eat