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DOES THE LOSS OF THE NATIONAL TONGUE IMPLY THE LOSS OF DIVINE FAITH?

The *Verite*, a French-Canadian weekly of great merit, continues a controversy between it and some Irish-American journals, on the dangers to which the French-Canadian emigrants to the United States are exposed of losing the faith by being compelled to learn and speak English. The *Verite* maintains that a change of language for the French-Canadians induces a change, or rather a loss, of the Catholic faith. The Irish-American journalists take issue with the Quebec weekly and maintain the contrary. In proof of their contention they instance the Irish people who, for the most part, have lost the use and even the knowledge of the national language—the Gaelic—and yet have preserved their faith. They say: If the Irish people as a body have been robbed of the mother-tongue, and speak English, without having lost the faith of their fathers, why is it not possible for the French-Canadians to speak English and yet remain Catholics? The *Verite* denies the parity, and still argues out its point after, what we consider, a very unsatisfactory fashion. It says:

"The Irish people no doubt have given up the national language, the Gaelic (Irish) being spoken only by a small number of Irishmen, but it cannot be said that in its entirety English has been adopted. In the cities, of course, among the wealthy, and educated classes, a very pure English is spoken; but go into the rural districts, among the poorer classes, in the South and the West, and you will find that the language in use can scarcely be called English. Even educated Irish people preserve a peculiar pronunciation—the *beogus*—pleasant enough to hear, but which distinguishes them from the English, the Scotch and the Americans. The Irish people, notwithstanding the loss of their national tongue, have not lost altogether the national impress (*son cachet*) in speaking, since they have preserved a peculiar accent of their own. The example, then, is not well chosen to prove that there is no relation between the national language and faith and that a people may be despoiled of the former without danger to the latter."

The editor of the *Verite*, although a thorough Frenchman and writing in French for a French-speaking nationality, seems to know all about the Irish and their national brogue. In his late European tour he spent a few days in Cork and Killarney, and addressed some questions to the boys and girls who were selling sprigs of shamrock and goat's milk to the American tourists, and the inference he drew from their replies was that the language spoken in that part of Ireland, although not Irish, can scarcely be called English.

We can assure the *Verite* that had he a little more extensive experience of the Kerry people, and their brogue, he would be convinced that the English spoken in that county, or any other county in Ireland, differs as much from the Gaelic as the Greek language differs from French. It must be admitted that all classes in Ireland, whether educated or otherwise, who have lost the Irish language, have lost it completely, and that whether they have a peculiar accent or not—whether they speak with a broader or less pronounced brogue—their language is purely English, and has no relationship whatever to the Gaelic or national tongue. The *Verite's* argument, then, falls to the ground. The Irish people, as a nation, have lost their maternal language and yet have preserved their national faith.

The *Verite* continues its argument by maintaining that the introduction of English had disastrous effects, and caused the perversion of Irishmen whose fathers had been evangelized by St. Patrick.

Could the *Verite* discover no other cause for the perversion of some Irishmen than the language that was forced on them? What about the penal

laws? What about the bribes? What about three hundred years of incessant persecution? Has not the *Verite* heard or read of the law that gave the right to any young scapegrace who turned Protestant to possess himself of his father's estates, to the detriment and prejudice of his older brothers or sisters? Aye! even of his own father and mother! How is it possible that a whole people could resist, or that some few should not fall by the wayside?

If the adoption of the English language must be considered an efficient cause for the perversion of some Irish Catholics it is surprising what numbers have escaped the dreaded consequence of losing the mother tongue. There are millions of Irish people, both at home and abroad, who speak English fluently and gracefully and who are as fervent Catholics as the men in the South or West who still adhere to the Gaelic.

The *Verite* does not believe this, but persists in saying that perverts are found only in the East and the cities where the Gaelic is not known. In fact Mr. Tardivel is of opinion that in Ireland the educated classes alone are exposed to the danger of apostasy. This is a very poor compliment to Catholic faith, and, if it were true, would be a formidable weapon in the hands of those fanatics who maintain that the priests keep the people in ignorance in order to hold them subservient to "the teachings of Rome."

The tract-distributors, bible-readers and sowers in general, who have for mission the perversion of the Irish, are scarcely ever found in Leinster in the east, or in the large towns or cities. Their favorite camping-ground is in the extreme south and west of Ireland, where Gaelic is exclusively understood and spoken. In these localities *only* do they expect to impose on the ignorance and exploit the poverty of the aborigines. The Irish people who speak English—even the poorest—can meet them on their own ground, appeal to history and quote Scripture to their utter defeat and confusion.

The knowledge and use of the English language, far from being a source or a means of perversion from the Catholic faith, are, in the hands of the Irish people, the weapons most dreaded by the sowers.

We might ask the *Verite* who are they who lose the faith at Pointe-aux-Trembles, in the Province of Quebec? Are they not people who never heard or could pronounce a word of English, until they were caught in the meshes of the proselytizers? Who were they who apostatized at Konkakee and other places at the preaching of Chiniqui and others? Was the English language the cause or the occasion of their apostasy?

There are Scotch Calvinists in certain districts of Ontario who understand the Gaelic and speak it and insist upon having the gospel expounded to them by preachers who can talk to them glibly in their own native tongue. The inhabitants of Wales have lost the Catholic faith of their ancestors, and yet adhere to the old Cymrian language, in which the gospel was first made known to their fathers.

We might say with the poet who wrote of the flowers that bloom in the spring that language "has nothing to do with the case." It would have much to do with it, however, if, before emigrating, or even after emigrating, to the United States, the French-Canadians would make themselves masters of the English language. Then would they be armed with ready weapons wherewith to repel the assaults of the proselytizers and to convert their arguments and sophisms.

The cause of defection from the faith of some of the early Irish settlers in America was not the loss of their mother-tongue, but the paucity of Catholic missionaries and the want of parochial or Catholic Separate schools. The New York Catholic *Verite*, quoted so triumphantly by the *Verite*, admits no other reason for the loss of Catholic faith and practice in the United States than the causes assigned by us.

It says: "During fifty years the Catholics of the United States have lived in the midst of Protestant tradition without schools to protect their children, without Catholic papers or periodicals to protect the parents, against the repeated assaults of this tradition, against its far-reaching power. . . . It would be folly to suppose that a people, however solidly established in the faith, could, under such circumstances, be completely safeguarded from all error."

But those obstacles to the perpetuation of Catholic belief and practice in the United States are fast disappearing. Parochial schools and Catholic academies, magnificently equipped, are

found in every town and city. The Plenary Council of Baltimore has made them a necessity in every parish. So that we can see no adequate reason for the cry of alarm that the *Verite* has been raising in its late numbers about the dangers which threaten the French-Canadian populations, whom necessity, or even a desire to better their condition, is forcing annually across the borders.

Let it not be understood, however, that we favor in any way expatriation to the Irish or the French; but we are willing to maintain, since they do emigrate, that a thorough knowledge of the English language and a fair acquaintance with Butler's catechism, instead of being a means of perversion, as the *Verite* persists in saying, would, on the contrary, be the most powerful and most efficient arm of self-defence against proselytism or the danger of being argued into apostasy.

THE TROUBLE AT BETHLEHEM.

The Sultan of Turkey has been obliged to place a larger guard than formerly at the Bethlehem grotto, where the Church of the Nativity has been erected at the spot where our Lord and Saviour was born. This action has been taken in consequence of unseemly quarrels which have taken place on the stairways leading to the grotto of the Nativity.

It is unfortunately true that there was recently one of these quarrels between the Catholics and the Greek schismatics; and the anti-Catholic press, both in Canada and the United States, have represented the matter as if the Catholics were entirely to blame. The sympathies of the so-called religious Protestant press are invariably against Catholics, whoever may be on the other side, whether Greek, Pagan, Jew or Mahometan. But in the present case the facts show that the violence and aggression were altogether on the part of the Greeks, who, relying on the protection of Russia, have for years taken every opportunity to encroach upon the rights of the Catholics; and that this is the case is proved by the action of the Turkish authorities themselves, who, after having examined into the circumstances, decided that the Franciscan Fathers were entitled to all they claimed as regards the exclusive right to use their own staircase in public celebrations. The guard have, therefore, been instructed to prevent the Greeks in future from attempting to make public use of the stairway which is reserved for the Catholics.

From time immemorial there have been two stairways leading to the grotto, one of which, namely that on the south, has been reserved for the exclusive use of the Greeks, while the other is recognized as belonging to the Latin Catholics and schismatic Armenians. The Greeks, however, not satisfied with using their own rights, have constantly endeavored to abridge the rights of the Catholics, and, owing to the apathy of the representative of the Infidel French Government, they have succeeded in doing this to a considerable extent. Thus, about ten years ago, the Greeks placed a ladder, and followed up their usurpation by placing pictures around part of the Latin portion of the Basilica of the Holy Nativity, after which they actually claimed the place as their own and forcibly ejected the Catholics from it.

The Franciscans, representing the Catholic claims, appealed to the French Consulate and the Turkish Government for protection in their rights, which had been guaranteed by treaty, but they obtained no redress to this day. They have, therefore, discovered that it is necessary to be constantly on the alert to prevent encroachments upon the old treaty which was made by all parties concerned to prevent disturbances, and it was a breach of this treaty which caused the recent strife, which was indeed a deplorable desecration of so sacred a spot.

The Greeks, and all others, were allowed to use the staircase of the Catholics privately, but not for public celebrations, nor were they allowed to interfere with the Catholic or Armenian services; and, if the latter would allow this, the Greeks would soon claim exclusive right to it, as they have done with many Catholic churches which have been erected by Catholics in the East.

The direct occasion of the recent broil was an effort made by the Greeks to take possession of the stairway of the Catholics. They actually used it by making one of their processions by it as early as December 6 of last year, and since then they did so offensively several times. The Franciscan Superior made a formal protest to the Pasha of Jerusalem against this aggression,

but no attention was paid to this, as the Pasha was bribed by the Greeks. But the matter culminated on the 24th of May, when the Franciscan Sacristan saw the Greeks again take possession of the stairway of the Catholics. He told them in gentle words to pass by their own stairway on the opposite side, whereupon a Greek deacon attacked him with a dagger which tore his garments to shreds, as the deacon made four blows at him in attempting to stab him, though, providentially, he sustained but slight injury himself. He was, however, then assaulted by the whole company of Greeks, and he would probably have been seriously injured, perhaps killed, had not a number of the Fathers and Brothers come to his rescue, whereupon the Greeks fled from the scene. The Greek deacon, who was the first aggressor, received a blow on the head in the melee, but was not seriously injured. The authorities, who made enquiries into the affair, decided that the Franciscans were defending their just rights, and hence the decision that the Greeks should no more use the stairway of the Catholics.

We agree perfectly with our Protestant contemporaries of the United States and Canada that the transaction was a disgraceful one, but it was disgraceful to the aggressors, and not to the Franciscans, who acted solely in self-defence, in the only manner in which they could have preserved their rights intact.

THE PROSPECT FOR HOME RULE.

There seems to be but little doubt that the Salisbury Government intend to bring in a measure during the next session of Parliament for the local Government of Ireland on lines resembling those on which England and Scotland enjoy the same. Mr. Balfour has said that such is their intention, and Conservative members who are most cognizant of the secrets of the Government declare that the Irish Secretary is sincere in his promises on this subject.

It is true that on several occasions Lord Salisbury has declared in emphatic terms that Home Rule cannot be granted, and so recently as Wednesday, the 29th ult., he said that "It is necessary Ireland should be governed resolutely, and that those who had served Mr. Balfour efficiently will be supported and not handed over to their enemies." This is equivalent to saying that the Ulster Tories will be left to govern themselves, and that the police and the resident removable magistrates will be secured in their positions, out of gratitude for their readiness to carry out all the provisions of the Coercion Act, with that severity which the Government desired them to exercise. This shows, of course that the Government has no intention to let Ireland govern herself in reality, by means of an Irish Parliament. On this point the Premier was quite clear. He said: "England in the last election declared against the severance of the bond, and I believe the decision is irrevocable."

There is no desire on the part of the Irish Nationalist party to discover the bond which unites the two countries, if only the people of Ireland be dealt with justly. But if the consequence is to be that with the bond in existence Irish needs are to be neglected by the rulers of the country, Ireland must demand that the bond be severed. It were better that the bond were irrevocably sundered than that the population of the country should be decimated every decade, as is the case under the present regime. But the pretence that the measure of Home Rule demanded by the Irish party will sever the bond is a very transparent sham. The bond may remain much stronger than that which binds England with Canada, and yet an Irish Parliament may make laws for the Government of Ireland which will tend to the material advancement of the population. The main difficulty has been in the past that the British Parliament paid no attention to bills introduced for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of the Irish people, and nothing more strikingly exhibits the cruelty of such conduct than the wholesale rate at which the population of Ireland has been diminishing.

Will it be said that Ireland cannot support her population in comfort? It is well known that such a pretext has no foundation in fact. The fruitfulness of the Irish soil is proverbial; but if the land is to be allowed to go to waste, and to grow only thistles and other noxious weeds, of course it will not support its population.

It has been the result of the policy of the Government to leave whole dis-

tricts desolate, and of course the people have been forced to look to other lands for means of sustenance; and such has been the blind policy, not only of the Salisbury Government, but of all the Governments, Liberal as well as Conservative, which have hitherto held sway.

We ought, perhaps, to except the last Government, over which Mr. Gladstone presided; but as its rule was so short that it was unable to do more than to propose a remedial measure it is scarcely worth while to make an exception for this case. It was on this remedial measure that the last Liberal Government was defeated, so that, like all the Governments which went before, it did nothing for Ireland. The fact is that until the last three years the people of England would not so much as bestow a serious thought upon the question of legislating for Ireland's good. They were willing to pass Coercion Acts, penal laws of every degree of hardship, at any time since the union; but the Liberals of the past were just as blamable as the Conservatives for legislation which oppressed, instead of bettering, the condition of the people.

To Mr. Gladstone we accord all the credit due him for having taken to heart the cause of Ireland, and for having called the attention of Englishmen to the injustice which they have hitherto been inclined to commit against their sister island. But Mr. Gladstone has been himself one of the most outspoken of English statesmen in acknowledging the injustice of which he himself in common with other English legislators has inflicted upon Ireland in the past.

The proposal which Mr. Balfour intends to introduce during the next session is understood to be to give large powers of local government to County Councils. This will enable the Government to maintain that they preserve their consistency, while they recognize that the elections have shown that the people of England are now disposed to give partial justice to Ireland. A gain of eighteen seats for the Liberals, and a consequent loss of thirty-six votes on a division in Parliament, is an unprecedented manifestation of the drift of public opinion, especially when it is considered that the Government has not hitherto seriously departed from the policy which it was elected to carry out. It is a demonstration that the people of England recognize that they have been hitherto unjust towards Ireland, but that they are now willing to make reparation. Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour cannot but see that this is the case, and if they are now prepared to concede something it is because they cannot help themselves.

In reference to the great Liberal victory in the recent election at Wisbech, Lord Salisbury said that a bye-election is no indication of the will of the people, and that the Government cannot change its policy on account of such an event. This would be very correct if Wisbech were the only constituency in which the electorate had spoken, and if Cambridge were the only county in England which had made itself heard; but one hundred and fifteen constituencies have been similarly heard from, and in almost every case there has been a Liberal gain. Liberal constituencies have given increased Liberal majorities, whereas Conservative constituencies have shown reduced majorities for the successful Conservative candidates, and the net gain to the Liberals has been eighteen seats. It cannot be said that this is no indication of a change in popular sentiment since 1886. These bye-elections have been in all parts of the country, and may fairly be considered as exemplifying what would occur if there were to be an election immediately, and if this be the case Mr. Gladstone would have a majority of over one hundred in a new Parliament.

The members of the Salisbury Government are undoubtedly convinced that such is the case, and this accounts for their wish at the last moment to concede something to Ireland in the hope that they may not be compelled to grant all that is demanded. Mr. Gladstone has acknowledged that the Tories will have less difficulty than himself to make concessions, for, opposed as the Lords are to granting Ireland's demands, they will grow even when Lord Salisbury proposes concessions, but they will bear them as inevitable; but they would veto them if proposed by himself. It would be necessary for him to resort to extreme courses to secure the consent of the Lords.

Through Mr. Timothy Healy the Irish party have stated that they will accept any good measure which Lord

Salisbury may propose; but this will not affect their good understanding with Mr. Gladstone; for they know that it is only because Mr. Gladstone adheres to his resolution to grant Home Rule that the Tories hope to take the wind out of his sails by granting a smaller measure of self-government. But Lord Spencer has declared that the Liberal party will not abandon their intention to grant all that is requisite to make Ireland prosperous and free. With a re-united Irish party the victory is certain, and in spite of the recent dissensions in the camp of the Home Rulers, Ireland may safely look forward to the next election as the moment when England, Scotland and Wales will confirm that union of hearts which will arise from their readiness to grant redress of grievances to their sister nation.

Concerning the Wesbech election even the London *Times* has said, "This defeat is the worst the Unionists have sustained. Mr. Gladstone has at length obtained an argument supporting his predictions of a Liberal success at the general election."

It continues by asserting that the victory is not due to the popular adoption of Home Rule, but to the withdrawal of Liberal-Unionist votes from the Conservatives on general Liberal principles. Even if the latter part of this statement were correct it would still be true that the victory is for Home Rule, for there is no part of the Liberal programme to which so much prominence has been given as to this principle. The adhesion of the people to the Liberal policy in general, therefore, must indicate, above all things, adhesion to Home Rule.

THE REREDOS QUESTION AS AFFECTING DOCTRINE.

The Anglican Bishop of London, England, has been sustained by the Court of Arches in the suit which was brought against him to oblige him to remove the image of Mary and her Divine Son from the reredos of St. Paul's Church. The suit was brought by some very Low churchmen of the great metropolis, who can endure to see the Lion and the mythical Unicorn placed in the most prominent position in the church as an object of popular adoration, but not any Christian symbol, or the representation of an event so thoroughly Christian as the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin. But the images are to remain where they are.

This decision of the highest ecclesiastical court of the Church of England effectually disposes of the pretence of the thorough-paced Iconoclasts which Protestantism has produced, that it is idolatrous to place pictures and images of Christ and the saints in the churches as objects of respect and veneration. All the Calvinistic influences which were brought to bear when the thirteenth articles and liturgy of the Church of England were composed, to bend them to the Genevan and Scotch Presbyterian ideal of Protestantism, were not able to introduce into the Anglican standards of belief a condemnation of the use of sacred images, and it is now proved that English Protestantism maintains as lawful many of the ancient Catholic practices which hatred of the Catholic Church leads the still more modern Protestants of the same denomination to reject as unlawful.

But the consequences of this decision are still more far-reaching than we have indicated yet. It has been very generally maintained by the secretaries that the second commandment of God, as found in the Protestant Bible, absolutely forbids the use of these images, as inconsistent with the honor which is to be paid to God alone.

As the King James version of the Bible is essentially the work of Church of England divines, and as the translation was made purposely to uphold Church of England doctrine, we must infer that these-called second commandment of that version, on which the secretaries rely as a condemnation of all making of images, was never intended by the translators to mean what the secretaries would infer from it. Only those "graven images" which are to be adored as gods, that is to say "idols," are forbidden by the Scriptural commandment. We do not intend to deny that the translators expressed the meaning awkwardly, and even that they purposely introduced the word image, in order that those Protestants who wished to do so might have a *prima facie* case against Catholic practice; but certainly neither King James I. nor the episcopal authorities imagined that the passage condemned what the supreme authority in the Church of England now tells us the Church never intended to condemn, otherwise, we may reason-