

***The Relation of French  
Protestantism to the  
Quebec Problem***



ADDRESS BY  
**REV. CALVIN E. AMARON, M.A., D.D.**

AT THE MEETING OF THE SYNOD  
OF MONTREAL AND OTTAWA  
MAY 14th, 1913

—  
**PRESCOTT, ONT**

BX 9458

C 3

A 8

The Relation of French  
Protestantism to the  
Quebec Problem

#### INTRODUCTION

**I** am glad and thankful that the Synod's  
Committee on Conferences has seen fit to  
select as one of the questions for discussion  
this evening, *French Protestantism and  
French Mission work in Canada.*

REV. CALVIN I. AMBURY, M.A., D.D.

AT THE MEETING OF THE SYNOD  
OF MONTREAL AND OTTAWA  
MAY 1911, 1912

PRESCOTT, ONT.

**F**  
I a  
the n  
the  
Cana  
treno  
tion  
I m  
had  
geliz  
tent  
It  
mee  
beco  
icy  
on c  
mitt  
pelle  
unm  
to s  
Can  
now  
Mis  
Fre  
with  
one  
feel  
ticu  
spe

v

---

---

## French Protestantism in Canada

I am sure that all those who have followed the unification movement in connection with the various phases of missionary effort on Canadian soil, and who have watched the trend of things since the happy consummation of this God-inspired project, will rejoice. I must confess that I was one of those who had some fear that the work of French Evangelization might not get its due share of attention.

It has been sufficient to attend two meetings of our Board of Home Missions, and become familiar with the statesman-like policy which has been adopted for the carrying on of the gigantic missionary enterprise committed to our Church, to have all my fears dispelled once and for ever. It is therefore with unmingled pleasure that I stand here to-day to say a few things bearing on the French-Canadian problem and French mission work, now become an integral part of the Home Missionary enterprise of our Church. As a French-Canadian worker, I feel I can speak with greater freedom, not appearing to pit one interest against another. We must all feel that we are not grinding our own particular axe, when we lay emphasis on any special branch of work.

## ONE UNITED CANADA.

We must have one Canada, strong and undivided, and that Canada must be Christian, in the real sense of the word. As things have developed in generations past, and as they are now developing in French Canada, this country cannot reach the Christian ideal set before us by our Lord and King.

We must rise to the conception that the Missionary enterprise on Canadian soil is one; it is a whole which we cannot divide. It cannot be split up into different parts, some of which we can look upon as negligible quantities that can be ignored. This enterprise holds together, and no one who is familiar with the history of Canada, with the history of the religious and educational movement in French Canada, can for a moment doubt, that it is impossible to make and keep this country Christian independently of a strong, viril, active and aggressive French Protestantism.

### THE ROLE OF FRENCH PROTESTANTISM.

The French Protestant Church has a great role to play; it has a mighty influence to exert on the destinies of Canada. It must be the connecting link between Western Canada, that is sure to be Protestant Christian, and the Maritime Provinces. We should have no

humbler aim than to win over Quebec to Evangelical Christianity.

At this period in the history of French missions in Canada, it would almost be a loss of time to endeavor to vindicate the conduct of the men and women of courage and faith, who endeavored, I will not say to introduce French Protestantism in Canada, but to restore it.

### FIRST ON CANADIAN SOIL.

Did you ever realize the fact that French Presbyterianism planted its banner on Canadian soil before the sturdy Presbyterian Scotchman planted his? Did you ever realize that comparatively strong Huguenot colonies flourished for a considerable length of time in New France; that at one time the Protestant and Roman Catholic parties were equally matched and that the former were certainly much stronger religiously and in all that counts in the building up of a nation?

If our Huguenot fathers had been treated with the same fairness as England showed to the people of the conquered colony, there would never have been occasion for French-Canadian Missionary Societies or Boards of French Evangelization. We would have in Canada a great French Protestant Church, active in every good work, sending its missionaries all over the world.

## ROME'S FAILURE.

It is not our fault that the Church of Rome should have so lamentably failed in making of the French colony an educated, prosperous, thrifty and enlightened people. She had the opportunity to do it. She was in far better circumstances to do it effectively than were the Protestant Pilgrims and Puritans who landed on Plymouth Rock and founded in 1620 New England, and gave rise to the powerful Protestant republic at the south of us.

Surely we have no reproach to make to the Christians of Europe for restoring French mission work in Canada; we only regret that they did not begin sooner. For at the time the first serious efforts were made to restore Gospel truth to French Canada, profound ignorance prevailed, ninety per cent could not as much as read and write, superstition was rife and mediæval darkness brooded over the surface of the land.

It would be idle to attempt to deny that under French Roman Catholic rule, New France had been sadly neglected, educationally and religiously, that the people were two centuries behind their Protestant conquerors, not by want of natural ability, but because of the slavery, intellectual, moral, religious, political and commercial in which they had been held.

## HISTORY SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.

We are found fault with by a section of the Roman Catholic press, and by too many Protestants, because we refuse to falsify history, or because we justify our contention that every nation that has been left to the tender mercies of the Roman Catholic Church, has suffered irreparable loss. But we regret our inability to remain silent or take any other attitude, because we give first place to Christ's declaration. It is full of wisdom and common sense: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

## THE MISSION OF FRENCH PROTESTANTISM.

It is the mission of French Protestantism to do for French Canada what Rome has failed to do, what she is failing to do now. She has done no more for French-Canadians than for the unfortunate Italians, Ruthenians, Poles and others who are coming to us in such large numbers, in their intellectual and religious poverty. Ask the H. M. Board if it can leave these as they are? Would it be Christian, would it be safe, would it be patriotic? Where is the Christian, where is the patriot, who could sleep at peace on an easy pillow, whilst leaving alone a problem such as Roman Catholic teaching or neglect of right teaching, has created for us? The fruits of Romanism have been the same the wide world over.

We must quit ourselves like men. Let us, *once for all*, put aside this effete sentimentalism, this mongrel and illiberal liberalism, which has back of it so much cowardice,—which would bid us leave undisturbed these multitudes that are deprived of the blessings of a pure Gospel, hundreds of whom are tumbling over into the abyss of irreligion, anarchy and immorality. We owe it to these immortal souls, we owe it to ourselves and to our country to give them the Evangel of love.

#### THE GOSPEL IS NEEDED.

It is possible that there are those who still cling to the idea that we have no mission to the people of French Canada, because they have a clear enough conception of the Gospel to lead them to Heaven.

This is not the place, nor have we the time to discuss this question. For me it has been solved by Paul when he said: "They have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge," and by Christ's declaration: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

#### CHANGED CONDITION OF THINGS.

But I would call attention to the fact that if men were ever justified in taking the attitude just referred to, and find ease for their conscience in it, that it is no longer possible



for them to stand on that ground with folded arms.

We are living in the 20th century in Quebec, in many respects we are living in a New Quebec. The wind of reforms is blowing upon us, the spirit of the age is affecting us as well as other parts of Canada.

### RESULTS OF GOSPEL WORK.

He who would imagine that the faithful work of colporteurs and missionaries these seventy-five past years has produced no results, would need place little reliance on the power of God's word to dispel darkness, he would need be a disbeliever in the divine declaration: "The entrance of Thy word giveth light." Who could imagine that in our Pointe-aux-Trembles and other schools, we have been dispensing Christian education for over sixty years to thousands of boys, girls, young men and young women, who are now in the walks of life, in our province and elsewhere, without effecting great and radical changes, of a far-reaching character? We have created a spirit of inquiry, a spirit of independence which makes it impossible for the old system to coerce and tyrannize the people as in the past. I could speak for an hour on these lines, but I refrain. There is dissatisfaction on all the line and clerical authority is discredited.

## A SERIOUS FALLING AWAY.

Are we to rejoice at this? Should we not regret it? All depends on what we are prepared to do. Even if we would prevent this breaking away from grinding absolutism, we can't, any more than Italy, France, Portugal and Spain have done. The reaction is inevitable, it has always led to religious indifference, infidelity and immorality.

Roman Catholicism has been weighed in the balance and found wanting by thousands of men and women in Canada.

Let me quote one sentence from a recent work by M. Louis Arnould, a former professor of Laval University. He says in his book, "Nos Amis les Canadiens":

"The great majority of those who practice are, let it be said, sincere, and the fulness, frankness of their faith is touching, especially in the country; but among the educated classes in the cities, such a faith has become insufficient, it has become an obsolete faith, which has lost cast among the educated men of the present day."

We cannot stop the wheels of progress in order to prevent the decadence of the Roman Catholic system. Being instrumental as we are, through our papers, our schools, our advanced movements of thought, in undermining this inadequate and unscriptural system of education and religion, we are in duty bound to replace it by the Gospel of Jesus Christ which has been revealed unto us.

## OUR GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

Therefore we can easily see what is the role of French Protestantism, of French mission work in this country. There has been no time in the history of Canada when we were more loudly called upon to put forth well directed efforts to give Evangelical Christianity to French Canada. There is no use thinking that we can ever have a great Christian country short of this.

God is opening the way to us. There is a demand for more education and education of the right kind.

There are thousands of enlightened men in French Canada who are absolutely out of sympathy with the old régime. Too many of them have become indifferent to the things of religion, and not a few are to all intents and purposes skeptics. They cannot be easily brought to our Protestant churches, but they are prepared to send their children to our bilingual schools; I mean by that, to institutions like Pointe-aux-Trembles.

I know of the Mayor of a Roman Catholic town who passes by a large Catholic college in his town and sends his boy to our school.

## RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS NEEDED

We have spoken very often of the advisability of creating other educational centers, one

in Quebec, one in Ottawa, one in North Bay, not only for French children, but especially in the Quebec district, for our English-speaking Protestant children, who for lack of educational facilities, are forced to go to Roman Catholic schools, at the peril of their faith.

The time for action has come. We have every assurance that every encouragement shall be given by our Board of Home Missions to a well thought out educational policy and funds to carry it out will be forthcoming.

Let us lose no time. We are living in a grand and awful age, an age on ages telling, and to-day, not to-morrow, is the time to take action.

Christian education is one of the strongest factors in the building up of Christian manhood and womanhood. Let us establish at once the additional schools which the present condition of things in the Province of Quebec renders absolutely necessary.

9554/18