

The men who rule France to-day make no concealment of their

Hatred and Contempt for Christianity, and its Founder. "You are like Jesus Christ," said M. Clemenceau to M. Jaures the other day. Who thought He was going to set the world right with His theories; and who only succeeded in conjuring up an era of violence and blood. Less violent in tone, but even more illuminating, was the declaration made a few days ago by M. Aristide Briand, Minister of Justice and Education, to a congress of teachers at Amiens, for he told them that the time had come to root up from the minds of French children the ancient faith which had served its time and to replace it with the light of Free thought. "Il faut en finir avec l'idée Chrétienne." (It is time to get rid of the Christian idea.) The English press in general suppresses such interesting exhibitions of the attitude of French Republicanism to Christianity, which did space permit, we could multiply ad nauseam from the speeches of the present day rulers of France. We have no concern here with the political policy of these anti-Christian statesmen. They are, for what reason we will not inquire, apparently anxious to cultivate friendly relations with Great Britain.

Were Englishmen a little more logical, they would see the absurdity of allowing this absolutely irrelevant fact to affect their judgment of the struggle between Church and State in France. There is no question here of differences between Anglicanism and Catholicism, or indeed between Catholicism and Protestantism. The Pope in this matter is

Fighting the Battle of Christendom.

The secularist will, of course, be on the side of the French Government against the Church; so will the narrow and paltry type of Protestantism that can see no good in any form of religion but its own. This sort is quite content that there shall be no Christianity at all so long as there is no Rome. But the sober, moderate English Christian can not possibly doubt with which side his sympathies will be. Especially if he be a Conservative engaged during the last few months in denouncing our Government's Education Bill as an attack on religion, he can not for very shame approve a policy on the other side of the water which magnifies a hundredfold every vice he had been objecting to in the education and ecclesiastical policy of the Government here. A century ago, when English Protestantism and English politicians still had some regard for the common heritage and the common good of Christendom, English opinion in the majestic tones of Burke, held up the sacrilege and atheism of the first Jacobins to the scorn and detestation of Europe.

CHRISTIAN BURIAL

(BY THE REV. J. GOLDEN, KAIKOURA)

[Concluded]

Now comes the question of the burial service. All aglow and bubbling over with zeal are now the relatives of the deceased. What do they want? The burial service. It is easy to send a telegraphic mandate: "Come to the burial to-morrow." The priest, in a certain case, was some thirty miles away on Sunday duties, having also other pressing engagements for Monday. Deceased was an old man, the only Catholic in the family. He had been ailing for some time, but no information was given the priest. Some of his daughters were at a ball the night of his death. On their return from the jading revelry they found their father a corpse! He was allowed to die without the life-giving rites of his Church; and nobody could tell when he had complied with his Christian and Catholic duties. He had not renounced the faith. Very little else could be alleged to his credit. Behold a typical case of indolent Catholics—making allowance for a large margin of variety. Unnatural unions, called mixed marriage, are accountable for many a death of the type just recorded. Other forces, such as intoxication, bad company, and unchristian literature, lead up to unholy endings.

Now, the friends of most of such spendthrifts of time and grace, regard their unfortunate death with the utmost composure. If they call in medical aid, they flatter themselves on having done their duty to the man sick unto death. When the patient has breathed his last, they quite composedly cry out: "Happy release. He's better off. He's happier now." Possibly they were anxious for the poor sinner's death, so as to be rid of trouble with him. And then come the

Urgent and Nervous Messages

for the burial service. No interest whatever had been taken in the immortal soul. Human respect is now supreme and most exacting. To refuse Christian burial would be high treason. Nor would it be a less grievous offence to omit the same because of more imperative duties. The people who had impiously neglected to secure the consolations of religion for the departed, are the most clamorous of all for funeral rites. This is a great abuse, the dictate of human pride and human respect.

The poor disembodied soul was in dire need of the last Sacraments. At the supreme hour of death there is the utmost need of Holy Viaticum, and the most virtuous cannot afford indifference to its reception. How much more the need for the sinner, after his reconciliation through the Sacrament of Penance! "Unless you eat of the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink of His Blood, you shall not have life in you," are the words of Him who commands the reception of Himself in the Holy Eucharist. His command is most pressing at the approach of death.

Can the sinner afford to forego the strengthening and cleansing effects of Extreme Unction? St. James, an inspired apostle, admonishes: "Is any one sick among you? Let him call in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." (St. James v. 14, 15).

At the approach of death, the supreme hour of life, everyone anxious for his salvation seeks the invaluable benefits of absolution from his sins, of the Holy Viaticum, and of the Extreme Unction. Satan is then come down with great wrath, knowing that his time is short. The wily tempter, with ages of experience at his back, exerts his utmost strength and strategy to capture the dying Christian. The devoted Catholic will not rely on his own unaided powers, which are of no avail against the relentless foe. He will sedulously employ the weapons entrusted to the Church for his safe guidance from temporal to eternal life. He will carefully and seasonably receive the holy Sacraments, those divine channels of grace, which heal and sanctify the soul through the application of the Precious Blood. He will resign himself to the adorable will of his Maker. He will confidently commend himself and his eternal interests to the Sacred Heart of his Redeemer. Every prayer and aspiration are towards his God. The priests, and the friends around will engage in reciting the soul-moving prayers and litanies for the dying. The chamber of death will breathe the fragrance of faith and hope and religion. In the midst of such surroundings, and with crucifix in hand, the faithful Christian will yield his soul to his Maker and Redeemer. There are tears of deep gratitude on the part of the survivors, and the chamber is converted into a sanctuary of prayer and devotion for the assuagement of the liberated soul.

In the midst of natural grief, the friends are consoled with the cheering thought derived from the Book of Wisdom: "The souls of the just are in the hands of God. . . they are in peace." And in the Book of Revelations we read: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Does not the Holy Ghost call the death of the just a refreshing sleep? The Lord said to Moses: "Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." (Deut. xxxi. 16). In the tenth chapter of the second Book of Kings, the demise of David is recorded thus: "So David slept with his fathers." Happy the soul that departs life adorned with the nuptial garment of sanctifying grace! They are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb to be celebrated in heaven.

How confidently the priest can speak of

An Edifying Death!

How naturally and joyfully he unburdens his mind to the congregation respecting the departed! The happy death has left a sweet fragrance in the parish. Many a heart feels the thought and expresses the same in earnest prayer: "May my last end be like unto his. He has found peace with his God." How confidently, also, the priest offers the Requiem Mass for the departed. How meaningful the prayer at the obsequies: "Come to his assistance, all ye saints of God; meet him, all ye angels of the Lord, receiving his soul, presenting it in the sight of the Most High!" And again: "May Christ receive thee, who has called thee, and may the angels conduct thee into the bosom of Abraham."

And the faithful, how free and devout their prayers for the departed! They feel impelled to succor him according to their ability. He had won their confidence, and now he gets their prayers. If Purgatory be his temporary abode, the charity of his generous friends will assuage his pains and hasten his release.

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