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 HENRY CHAPMAN & Co.,
 St. Sacramento Street,
 Montreal, December 14, 1854.

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,
 PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY AFTERNOON,
 At the Office, No. 4, Place d'Armes.
 TERMS:
 To Town Subscribers. . . . \$3 per annum.
 To Country do. . . . \$2 1/2 do.
 Payable Half-Yearly in Advance.

THE TRUE WITNESS
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CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.
 MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1855.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Baltic confirms the telegraphic reports of last week. The French had made themselves masters of the "Mamelon" and "White Tower" works; from whence they were able to shell the shipping in the inner harbour. Five hundred prisoners, and 62 guns, were the trophies of this brilliant exploit, which however was not obtained without great loss on the part of our brave Allies. In the Sea of Azoff fresh successes have been obtained.

Our rulers are men to be pitied. Like the amiable old gentleman and his sons with their ass, they have tried to please every body; and, in return for their pains, have reaped only a rich crop of universal discontent. This comes of trying to "please." Had they—the Canadian Ministry, not the old man and the ass—been intent only on doing justice, their success would have been different, and their organ, the *Montreal Pilot*, would not have had to mourn over the failure of the School Bill, and its amendments:

"State Education is on its trial in Canada," says our cotemporary. "We are beginning to fear that it will prove a failure. The support of State Schools, like the support of State churches, will, there seems some reason to doubt, have to be abolished in Canada. The Ministry, . . . by an earnest desire to please all parties, passed at the close of the session a school bill professing to conciliate and give justice to the Catholics of Upper Canada. But, if we are to judge from the tone of the press, this bill, while attempting to please all parties, has pleased no party. The Catholics also are dissatisfied with the measure, and are threatening further agitation."—*Pilot*.

And how can it be otherwise?—or how can Catholics be satisfied with a measure intended "to please all parties?"—the tyrannical admirers of the slavish school system of Massachusetts included. Ministers themselves, by introducing, and forcing through a second reading, a School Bill essentially different from that which in the last moment of the Session they agreed to pass, have admitted the reasonableness of our dissatisfaction. Either the Bill which they first introduced and supported, gave to Catholics more than the latter were in justice entitled to ask; or the Bill, as it actually passed, gives less. We cannot so stultify ourselves as to admit, that we asked for more than we had a right to ask for; neither can we, as Catholics, asking only justice for ourselves and our schools, be such fools as to be content with less than we have a right to ask for; and therefore we cannot, without admitting ourselves to have been exorbitant and unjust in our first demands, be satisfied with a Bill which does not concede them. The Ministers themselves, we say, who drafted the School Bill as it originally stood, did thereby acknowledge the justice of our demands, and the propriety of conceding them; they have therefore no right to complain if we are dissatisfied with a measure which they themselves have thus admitted does not do us justice.

"Under these circumstances," continues the Ministerial organ, "what is to be done? Are our politicians, to go on year after year passing new bills and patching up old ones? . . . or must they be driven to the alternative of doing with State schools what they were forced to do with State churches—abolish them altogether? On a calm review of the matter, this latter result seems almost to force itself upon the candid, unbiased mind. . . . State-schoolism, like State-churchism, in Canada, seems not likely to work well. As legislation on the latter question, though designed for the purpose of pleasing everybody, pleased nobody; so it is to be feared will be the finale also of State school legislation among the strange mixture of creeds and races which make up the population of this Province."—*Pilot*.

We confess that we do not see that the total abolition of State pecuniary assistance to educational purposes, is the only alternative left to the Ministry; for we see in Lower Canada a school system which is not that of the Upper Province, and which is supported by the State, in full operation, and working harmoniously amongst races and creeds as diverse as any that are to be found in the Upper Province.—Why should not a similar system be introduced there?—and why, if introduced, should it not work as well there as here? We can see no reason, unless it be that the Catholic majority in the Lower Province have no desire to impose upon the Protestant minority an educational system distasteful to the latter; whilst in Upper Canada, the Protestant majority think themselves aggrieved, unless they can compel the Catholic minority to pay for schools to which they are sincerely and conscientiously opposed as are the Protestants of Lower Canada to Popish schools. We agree with the *Montreal Pilot*, that

it is of little use to go on tinkering away any longer at such a rotten old kettle as is the present Upper Canada School Law; and that no amount of amendment will ever make it serviceable. But we do not therefore see that it is necessary to abolish all State aid, for educational purposes, or that it is impossible to establish a new, and entirely different system from that which now prevails; a system, which, recognising the fact, that there do exist irreconcilable differences betwixt the different religious denominations, shall do equal justice to all, and show no favor to any. Such a system, of which we have a specimen in Lower Canada, would be preferable to the plan hinted at by the *Pilot*. The old gentleman, and his sons, to whom we alluded above, did not cut their donkey's throat, because they could not please anybody or everybody.

A Common School system, or rather the Massachusetts' system, is indeed impracticable in Upper Canada; and can succeed nowhere, save under governments absolutely despotic, and where the rights of the individual are ignored. Let us then try the Denominational system; not as the best conceivable, but as the only system practicable, "among the strange mixture of creeds and races which make up the population of this Province." Such a system will not "please" indeed, the Brownites and their brother bigots. These men have no idea of liberty, save that of the right to "wallop their own niggers;" and value freedom for themselves only in so far as it gives them the power of tyrannising over, and oppressing others. To attempt to conciliate these men will be in vain; for they will not be satisfied unless they are permitted to trample upon their Catholic fellow-citizens. The latter however, who desire no ascendancy for themselves, but merely civil and religious equality—who ask only this—that they be not taxed for schools or churches to which they are conscientiously opposed; and that they shall be entitled to share equally with their Protestant brethren in all sums granted by the State out of the public funds for religious, or educational purposes—will well know how to appreciate and how to support the Ministry which, despising the ravings of a parcel of canting demagogues, shall dare boldly to do justice to their equitable demands. If, as is true, we are dissatisfied, the *Montreal Pilot* may rest assured that it is not from any spirit of factious opposition to the present Ministry, or from any sympathy with their political opponents; but simply because our rights are withheld from us, and gross injustice is still inflicted upon us in the name of law.

"The difference in the religious character of Britain and France is strongly presented in the Industrial Exhibition now being held in Paris. The London Exhibition was closed upon the Sabbath, and the building bore upon its front the inscription, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof,' a beautiful instance of the national recognition of a great truth. At the Paris Exhibition the irreligion of France is made manifest before the world. The Palace of Industry being open on the Sabbath."—*Montreal Witness*.

Yes—the difference betwixt the religious characters of the two countries is strongly presented in the above little paragraph from the *Montreal Witness*; the piety of the one, all outward show and pretence; the other, contenting itself with unostentatiously practising the precepts of the Gospel. Yes—if religion consisted in a gloomy exterior, in a great outward demonstration of piety before men, in rag ends of scripture ever on the lips, in enlarging the borders of one's garments, and in making broad one's phylacteries—if prudery is the synonym of chastity—if austerity of manners be identical with purity of morals—and a sour face, the sure sign of a good heart—then indeed it must be admitted that to the great British people belongs the credit of being the most religious, the most pure, and the most moral people on the face of the earth. They close the Exhibition on a Sunday! and stick up a quotation from the Bible over its principal entrance!! Oh, highly moral and religious people! What if on the same day, vice stalks abroad in all its rank deformity—what, if from every crowded lane, and reeking alley, the voice of blasphemy rises up to heaven, and the air is heavy with the stench of unutterable abominations. The Industrial Exhibition is closed; the only place where thousands of honest hard-working artisans with their wives and children—to whom a holiday, on any day, except Sunday, is an impossibility—might find amusement and instruction, is shut up; and they, the children of toil, for whom earth has so few pleasures, and in whom it is so important to awaken and cultivate a taste for intellectual enjoyments, are deprived of their sole chance of partaking of an amusement, not only innocent, but instructive, and ameliorating.—And this abominable humbug, this cruel disregard for the pleasures and welfare of the humbler classes of society, is perpetrated by the wealthy Pharisee, in the name of Him Who was the friend of publicans and sinners; and is defended upon the pretence that it encourages religion and morality. Yes—it encourages morality by driving men to the gin shop and the brothels; it promotes religion by converting the Lord's Day into the devil's festival. Yes—in London they close the Industrial Exhibition with all its ennobling and civilising lessons—lessons better and more needed than nine-tenths of the rapid compounds of cant, blasphemy, and fustian doled out hebdomadally from the pulpits of "Little Bethels" and "Ebenezer Chapels;" but they leave open—and they force open, as it were—the doors of thousands of haunts of dissipation, where the agents of Satan drive a roaring Sabbath trade. May we not say to these Pharisees, as of old it was said to them of Jerusalem?—"Woe unto ye hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but within ye are full of extortion and excess." The piety of Britain is manifest in this—that over its Industrial Exhibition is inscribed in large letters,

so as to be seen of men; a text of scripture. Truly, an easy virtue this; one too that the devil can practice; for he too can quote scripture for his purpose with any minister of the conventicle. "A pleasant virtue too, forsooth; for it entitles its possessors to look down upon others, and to thank God that they are not altogether as other men are—as these Frenchmen—who don't close their Exhibition on Sunday, and who don't bedaub its walls with Biblical phrases.—Marvellous proficients were the Scribes and Pharisees in the days of Our Lord in the practice of this virtue, and much did they reproach Him for His neglect of it, as a profane man and a Sabbath breaker. "Ye hypocrites," was all the answer Our Lord deigned "well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying—this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

For professing these opinions we shall be ranked as infidels by the saints of the conventicle, and accused of advocating the desecration of the Sunday. It may be said that—"Popery does not inculcate the duty of sanctifying the Lord's Day, and tolerates the breach of the commandment which enjoins the keeping holy the Sabbath." This is false. The Catholic Church permits no desecration of the Lord's Day; but she does not teach that innocent amusements, which give no occasion to sin, which impose the necessity of no servile work, and which do not interfere with the performance of our religious duties, are a desecration of the Sabbath. The Protestant will, without scruple, on the Sabbath administer to the wants of his body; he will pamper the flesh, thinks no harm in a good dinner, and does not feel himself bound to abstain from roast beef or a glass of wine; and in this there is no harm, if indulgence be not pushed to excess. But the mind has its wants, its legitimate wants, as well as the body; and it is no more a sin to gratify these wants by innocent recreation on the Sunday, than it is on the same day, to yield to the demands of our lower, or animal nature, for food or sleep.

We can tell the *Montreal Witness* of a better test of the comparative religion and morality of the two countries—France and Britain—than is to be found in external Sabbath observances or public inscriptions. We would refer him to the criminal statistics of the two countries; we would tell him to compare and contrast these; to reckon up the number of murders, thefts, fraudulent bankruptcies which these disclose; we would bid him consult the archives of the Police courts, and the records of the jails and Penitentiaries. From these he will learn, that rigid Sabbatarian observances, far from affording any reasonable grounds from whence to conclude to the piety and morality of a nation, do for the most part prevail amongst the most depraved, impure, and God-abandoned people; just as amongst individuals, the most violent prudes are ever at heart the most filthy and licentious rakes. This fact is so well substantiated by the Police records of Great Britain on every Monday morning, and is so well known to every magistrate, that it is not worth while adducing statistics in support of it. Who is there, who has ever spent a Sunday in England or Scotland, who does not know that there is more drunkenness, more bestiality of every description perpetrated betwixt the Saturday evening and the Monday morning, than during the whole of the rest of the week, from the Monday forenoon to the Saturday evening?

And America is a great Protestant and Sabbatarian country; where till of late it was punishable with fine and imprisonment for a man to kiss his wife on the Sabbath day. How fares it with religion and morality in the land of the Puritans? Let the following extract tell; we copy from an American paper, the *Troy Times*:—

"It is estimated that the number of criminal outrages committed upon females in the United States during the past year have been 2,300. In forty-eight cases, the victim was either murdered upon the spot, or death subsequently resulted from the injuries inflicted upon her. The number of suicides of females was 153—in eighty-seven cases, the poor self-murderers had been the victims of seduction or outrage. This is a horrid catalogue, and one may well be surprised at the apathy with which a crime so fearfully prevalent is regarded. And yet we venture to say that not one half the truth is known. If the wrongs which are borne and suffered in secret were brought to light, and the calendars of our criminal courts thoroughly searched, we should find them footing up an aggregate with which the above figures would bear scarcely a comparison."

To these calendars finally would we refer our cotemporary, as a far better test of the comparative morality of Protestant and Catholic countries, than that afforded by closing places of innocent amusement on Sundays, and scriptural inscriptions, over public buildings. Any moderately skilful stone mason, can carve such inscriptions.

"This we believe was one of the provisions of the 'Blue Laws.'"

We read in the *Montreal papers* of an attempt, apparently an abortive one, to bring about a union between two of the different sects into which Presbyterianism is split up. The duty of the State towards the Church—or the extent to which the temporal power is authorised to interpose in things spiritual—is the rock upon which they split apparently; but we admit that it is not easy for any one not immediately interested in the disputes of these rival sectaries to get at a clear understanding of the subject of dispute betwixt them. And, after all, to Catholics it is of very little consequence.

It is amusing, however, and, at the same time, not a little edifying to see how our separated brethren, in controversy amongst themselves, urge the very arguments, and build upon the same principles, as do Catholics when arguing with Protestants; and which same arguments and principles, when used by Catho-

lics, are denounced by Protestants—as favoring persecution, and as involving the duty of visiting spiritual offences with temporal punishments. "Liberty of conscience" however, has its limits assigned to it by the Protestant as well as the Catholic; and the duty of the magistrate to repress everything contrary to religion, is affirmed as strongly by the former as by the latter. Thus, in the report of the proceedings of the Synod of the "Presbyterian Church of Canada," as given in the *Montreal Herald* of the 20th instant, one gentleman, the Rev. Mr. McAllister, delivers himself as follows:—

"Liberty of conscience ought to be protected by the civil power; but protection cannot be claimed in behalf of principles or practices obviously hurtful to the interests of civil society, and still less, in behalf of those who would subvert its existence."

There are, therefore, "principles," as well as "practices," which it may be the duty of the civil power to repress by the sword of the magistrate, according to the Protestant theory of "Liberty of conscience." This liberty does not extend to the right of preaching or promulgating "principles" hurtful to the interests of civil society, or which menace to subvert its existence. We fully accept this limitation of "Liberty of conscience," and find therein a full justification for the interference of the civil power with the heresiarchs, heretics, and religious reformers of the middle ages. Their principles were directly subversive of the existence of social order, and were therefore justly treated as crimes against civil society.

Protestants are loath to admit this; partly because they are unwilling to do justice to the Catholic Church, and because, for the most part, they are profoundly ignorant of the teachings and principles of their spiritual ancestors. They know only that these men declaimed against Rome; that they denounced the Pope, and clamored for a Reformation; that they often quoted the Bible, and generally rejected the authority of the Church. But rarely do modern Protestants give themselves the trouble to enquire—what were the positive doctrines of the men whom they delight to represent as the innocent victims of the blood-thirsty Church of Rome?—what the obvious result of their "principles"—if carried into practice—upon civil society and European civilisation.

What, for instance, were the teachings of Wickliffe and his disciple Huss? Were not their "principles" directly subversive of all social order, of all civil government itself? With their merely theological errors, we have no concern; and without discussing the question, whether the civil magistrate had any right to interfere with these, there can be no doubt that he was justified in repressing the social and political "principles" of which these men were the promulgators. Their great "principle" was, that the obedience of the subject was not due to the civil magistrate, if the latter was in mortal sin; and that, of course, the former was justified in resisting the commands of the latter, by force. These "principles" were acted upon, and carried into "practice" by their deluded followers; especially by the sect of Hussites, known in history as the *Taborites*; and of whom the learned Protestant historian of the "Middle Ages" pronounces the following opinion:—

"We cannot estimate the Taborites, and other sectaries of that description, but as ferocious and desperate fanatics."—*Hutton's Middle Ages*, c. ix., part 2.

As advocating "principles obviously hurtful to the interests of civil society," and inculcating the duty of rebellion against the duly constituted authorities, these men were therefore, according to Protestant principles, justly punished by the sword of the civil magistrate; who is not only bound to punish offences against the State, or the temporal power—but as the Rev. Mr. McAllister goes on to say—"is also bound"

"To put down everything contrary to religion—such as blasphemy, the profanation of the Sabbath, and all similar offences."—*Montreal Herald*, June 20th.

There is but one exception to be taken to this proposition; and that is, that, unless the civil magistrate is an infallible judge in matters spiritual, we see not how, in Protestant countries, he is to discharge the functions therein assigned to him. To "put down everything contrary to religion," he must first know with infallible certainty what is true religion. He must be master of all revealed truth, lest in his "putting down" he should make some desperate mistakes, "putting down" truth, and upholding error. If the Catholic assigns to the magistrate in certain cases the duty of "putting down" things contrary to religion, he may do so consistently; because, in the Catholic Church he has, or believes that he has, a judge competent to distinguish religious truth from religious error. But unless the Protestant claims for the civil magistrate that infallibility in things spiritual, which Catholics claim for the Church, we do not understand how the former can assert it to be the duty of the civil magistrate "to put down everything contrary to religion."

All false doctrine, all heresy, and schism, are "contrary to religion." If Christ be God, to deny His supreme divinity must be blasphemy; if He is not, it must be blasphemy to assert it. What then shall the civil magistrate do? Must he "put down" either the Unitarian or the Trinitarian, or shall he tolerate both?—and if he must tolerate errors so "contrary to religion," upon what grounds is he bound to enforce the obligation of observing the first day of the week as the Sabbath? There is no end to the absurdities in which the Protestant will find himself involved, who asserts the duty of the civil magistrate to "put down everything contrary to religion."

We are glad to see that in some very important points, however, we can fully agree with the Ministers of these Presbyterian sects. On the question of education there seems to be amongst them but one opinion—that education is only "in so far advanta-