

## The True Witness

## CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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TERMS.  
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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DEC. 20, 1861.

## TO OUR READERS.

Mr. Gillies, of the True Witness office, is now on a collecting and canvassing tour through Canada West. He has full authority to receive all monies due to this office, to give receipts, and to make such arrangements as he shall deem most convenient. We would respectfully bespeak for him a good reception from our numerous, delinquent subscribers.

## NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The all absorbing topic of the week is the announcement of the effect produced in England by the receipt of the tidings of the capture of Messrs. Slidell and Mason. The news was received with one universal outburst of indignation; and it was universally agreed that the outrage was one to which no nation could submit, and for which prompt and ample satisfaction must be demanded. On this point there could be no difference of opinion amongst intelligent men; for whilst no one contests the belligerent "right of search," no one acquainted with international law can recognise the "right of arrest," which in the case of Mason and Slidell, the Federal Government claims for its armed cruisers. The two things must not be confounded, for they are essentially distinct. A belligerent has, by the usages of nations, the right to stop and search neutral vessels on the high seas in order to intercept arms, and other contraband of war; and had the *San Jacinto* merely exercised this right over the *Trent*, no voice in England would have been raised against it; though, in its own behalf, and against British cruisers, the Government of the United States has always denied even the "right of search." It has in this respect two contradictory codes of maritime international law; one of which it applies to itself, the other to its neighbors.

But the question at issue is not the "right of search," but the "right of arrest," i.e. the right of a Government to seize, upon the high seas, and from under a neutral flag, those whom it claims as political offenders. For instance, if Mr. Smith O'Brien in the *US* had eluded the vigilance of the British authorities, and escaped to France; had he thence taken his passage in an American regular packet steamer for New York; and had that vessel, when half-way across the Atlantic, been stopped and searched by a British man-of-war, and had Mr. O'Brien been forcibly dragged from under the "Stars and Stripes" to the deck of the latter—we should have had a case precisely in point, identical down to the most minute particular, with that of the *Trent*. Can any one be at a loss as to how the authorities at Washington would have received the tidings of such an outrage upon the flag of the United States.

It can excite no surprise therefore that the British Government has received with the utmost surprise and indignation, the news of the outrage perpetrated by the *San Jacinto*; and that it has sent instructions to Lord Lyons at Washington, to demand the restoration of Messrs. Slidell and Mason to the protection of the British flag, and a repudiation of the high-handed act of Captain Wilkes. It is also said that arms, ammunitions and troops are on their way to Canada, in the prospect of the hostilities which must inevitably follow a refusal on the part of the Federal authorities to comply with the ultimatum of the British Government. This is the substance of the tidings by the *Europa*, the *City of Washington*, and the *Jura* steamers—though on matters of detail there are some slight discrepancies betwixt their several budgets of news. We are told that public opinion in France is altogether on the side of Great Britain in the present dispute, and that Louis Napoleon has tendered his good offices as arbiter—that active preparations are going on in all the British arsenals—that a Royal Proclamation has prohibited the exportation of arms and of saltpetre; and that the war party in England comprises almost the entire community. We are also told that in case of the refusal of the Washington Cabinet to give the required satisfaction, Lord Lyons has instructions to demand his passports; and that in conjunction with France, Great Britain will officially recognise the Southern Confederacy, and raise the blockade—leaving it to the

Federal Government to take such action thereupon as it pleases. There is, not, however, at the moment of writing, any certainty as to details; and possibly it may turn out that Lord Lyons's instructions are such as to leave an opening for an amicable adjustment of the matter in dispute.

That such an adjustment may be arrived at every one will pray, though it is impossible to feel very sanguine as to the result. The misfortune is, that by its foolish and precipitate action the House of Representatives in Congress has given a quasi official approbation of Captain Wilkes's act, thus making it difficult for the Executive to condemn that officer's conduct. Still a pacific solution is not impossible. Without loss of honor or moral prestige, the Washington Cabinet might still make the *amende honorable*; and whilst giving up Messrs. Mason and Slidell, might insist upon the formal recognition by the British Government of a principle in maritime law for which it has always, in its own behalf, stoutly contended. This course would be politic and dignified, and one which a great and powerful nation should not shrink from pursuing. No one can doubt the naval and military prowess of the people of the United States; no one can doubt their ability to ward off insult or outrage to their flag or shores; and no one can doubt that to such a Power an acknowledgment of error would be neither injurious nor dishonoring; on the contrary, it would elevate the character of the Washington Cabinet in the opinion of every intelligent person. The issue however we must leave to God; and in the mean time we should pray earnestly that the horrors of war may be long averted from our happy land.

Yet it behooves us to take all necessary precautions; and to act—even whilst praying for, and believing in, the preservation of peace—as if war were certain. Too long have our defences been neglected, and it is now high time that people and rulers should shake off their lethargy, and give signs of life. Indeed the most likely chance there is to preserve peace is, to show our neighbors that we are ready for war, that we are united amongst ourselves, and determined to maintain our national independence. We are therefore happy to record that whilst every one earnestly deprecates war, the people of Canada from one end of the Province to the other, are enrolling, arming, and drilling for the defence of their country. It is confidently hoped that ere long 100,000 men shall be under arms; and if proper attention be paid to organising and disciplining the large numbers who will rally around the country's flag, there is no cause to doubt that we shall be able to hold our own, until the arrival of the expected reinforcements from home shall have secured us against the dangers of an invasion. Let us then be up and doing.

The following is the substance of the latest telegraph dispatch from the U. States:—  
WASHINGTON, Dec. 19.—A rumor is afloat that the Government has decided to return Mason and Slidell, but we are satisfied after inquiry, that this is untrue. The question would not be decided in advance of Mr. Adams's despatches.

There has been no Cabinet meeting since yesterday.

The *Africa* will carry to England a despatch from Lord Lyons, containing the intelligence that he has received and delivered to the American Government his instructions from the Foreign Office.

It is a fact that the Government is not alarmed at the Mason and Slidell imbroglio. By the numerous dispatches which have been received to-day, a fear is expressed by the people in different parts of the country that the government may be induced by some diplomatists to give the traitors up. To dispel this feeling, I venture to assert I have the highest authority of the impossibility of the surrender under any circumstances. The President is fixed and immovable on this point.

[New York Times Special.]

A Cabinet meeting was held to-day, in which the English question was discussed, of course informally, as the nature of the despatches brought by the Royal Messenger has not been made known.

There was one sentiment prevalent, and that was that no quarrel with England must be permitted to interfere at this moment to stay the reduction of the Southern rebels.

I have the best authority for saying that the demands of England will be met in a spirit of conciliation which will stop the calamity.

Capt. Seymour, Mr. Adams's messenger, has arrived. Nothing can of course be known, the matter will be considered in Executive Session.

"Canada expects that every man will do his duty." This is the only rule applicable to our present circumstances, and to those in which we may probably soon find ourselves involved.

To do one's duty, is the noblest work of man. Let others talk of honor and of glory; it should be the great ambition of the honest man to do his duty, and to leave consequences to God.

What then is the duty of every Canadian, of every subject of Queen Victoria in North America, at the present crisis?

This question should present no difficulties to any conscientious man; above all, no Catholic should be for one moment at a loss how to answer it. The simple duty of every man in Canada, who, under the protection of the British Government, has enjoyed the blessings of civil and religious liberty, is to be prompt to defend that Government, and to uphold that rule from which he has derived so many invaluable blessings.

Thank God! in the present crisis, there is, and can be, no collision either betwixt our duties and our interests, or betwixt those duties which as Catholics we owe to our Church, and those other duties which as British subjects we owe to our beloved Queen. The law which

obliges us to loyalty to our temporal sovereign, is the law of God; and he who violates that law is not only a bad subject, but he is a worse Christian, and altogether unworthy of the name of Catholic.

As Catholics we have ever insisted upon perfect equality of rights with Protestants; we must therefore, as the consequences of our own loudly proclaimed principles, be prompt to acknowledge an equality of duties—no matter what burdens those duties may impose upon us. Here, in Canada, we have received only benefits from the hands of the British Government. It has protected us in our persons, and in our properties; it has secured to us the most perfect freedom, and a greater amount of liberty, religious, political, and personal, than has fallen to the lot of any people upon earth. Shall we then be ungrateful of these benefits?—or shall we approve ourselves ungrateful for, and therefore unworthy of, the advantages which our position as British subjects has hitherto secured to us? God forbid! We are not the vilest, the meanest of men. We will therefore do our duty; and by so doing, silence and put to shame the paltry clique who try to raise prejudice against us, as deficient in loyalty to our Queen.

There is another aspect under which our "duty" presents itself to us at the present moment. Union amongst all British subjects—no matter what their creed or national origin—hearty and cordial union, is our duty, and shame be to him who neglects or violates this sacred duty. Such union implies no dereliction of principle, no sacrifice of conscientious convictions or of national attachments: it means merely that we should lay aside for the season our sectional strifes and jealousies; that we should be prepared to forgive and to forget all harsh words that may have been spoken, all unfriendly acts that may have been committed; and that recognising every one as a friend who is prepared to defend in person and in purse, the common country from the menaced invasion, we combine heart and soul for the attainment of that common object. Let us not imitate the folly and wickedness of those who, when the enemy was thundering at their gates, provoked their doom by their monstrous and unnatural contentions. A firm face towards the foe, and the kind word and the outstretched hand towards all our fellow-subjects, irrespective of creed, politics, or national origin—these things constitute our duty; and that duty, well performed, will promote both our secular and spiritual interests, and will secure to our children those blessings which under our actual regime we so largely enjoy.

The war which now alas! seems but too imminent, means to us Catholics a war *pro aris et focis*, for our altars as well as for our domestic hearthstools—a war for our religious, as well as for our civil, liberties, and our national independence. Our particular interests therefore urge us to do our duty, for we are called upon to defend every thing that is, or should be, most precious to us. Not to say it profanely, a war to hurl back the invasion of our neighbors, upon our free soil, would be almost a holy war; and the blood shed by the soldier on the battle field in such a war is sweet, and precious in the sight of heaven, as the blood of the martyr. When our own soil is menaced with invasion, our Church with pillage, our Religious with outrage, our sanctuaries with pollution, and the altar of the living God with desecration—can any Catholic for one moment doubt what his interests in the struggle, or what his duty!

When the *British Whig* took the True Witness to task for qualifying as blasphemous the tenets of Calvinism which represent God as a capricious tyrant, he was probably not aware of the estimation in which those tenets are held by Non-Calvinist Protestant sects; and we think that he would have been more moderate in his strictures upon the language of the Papist, if he had known that denominations calling themselves orthodox and evangelical, repudiate those tenets of Calvinism to which the True Witness alluded, as strongly as did the offending Romish journal. For these reasons we respectfully invite the attention of the *British Whig* to the following remarks upon Calvinism, which we extract from the "Selected Matter" of the Toronto *Christian Guardian*, (Methodist), of the 11th inst., which lays them before its readers as expressing its opinions upon the matter in dispute. The article from which we make these extracts, is headed "Infant Reprobation," and is by the *Christian Guardian*, copied approvingly from the *Canadian Day Star*:—

INFANT REPROBATION.—Some time ago we had a long conversation with New England Calvinistic Minister on the Calvinistic controversy. The doctrine of infant reprobation was talked over at considerable length. He stoutly and strenuously denied that Calvinists held any such dogma as infant reprobation. We, on the other hand, maintained that John Calvin held, and that all who deserve the name of being his followers, must hold infant reprobation and damnation.

That John Calvin and many other Calvinistic divines of that day held and plainly preached the horrible doctrine of infant damnation is abundantly evident from their writings. Hear Calvin himself on this point. He says:

"Again I ask, how came it to pass that the fall of Adam did wrap up in eternal death so many nations with their children being infants without remedy, but because it so pleased God? Here their tongues which are otherwise prattling, must of necessity be dumb. It is a terrible decree I own; yet no man shall be able to deny, but that God foreknew what end man should have, ere he created him, and therefore foreknew it because he had so ordained it

by his decree." [Institutes published in Glasgow, 1762. Book III. ch. 23. sect. 1.]

Hear him again in Book IV. of his Institutes:

"Yes, and very infants themselves bring their own damnation with them from their mother's womb."

Those who remonstrated with the Synod of Dort in the year 1619, in quoting the opinions of their Calvinistic adversaries took up their views on the subject of infant reprobation and showed that the divines who composed that Synod, and who were there met to condemn the doctrines of Arminius, and denounce as heretics, all his followers, believed in the terrible decree of infant damnation. One says:

"The condition of those infants who die in Christ before that they have been able to perform any act is different, for they will, as others, either be saved merely as the result of grace, or damned according to nature as children of wrath."

Another says:

"For since this promise is not so general as to comprehend all, therefore I dare not positively say that any so dying [without baptism] will obtain eternal salvation. For there are some children of holy people, who do not belong to those who are predestinated to eternal life."

This is surely plain enough, and, if true, fitted to fill the mind of every pious parent who has buried little ones with doubt and despondency. Blessed be God it is not true; reason condemns it, and He who gathers the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom, condemned it when he said:

"Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

O Calvinism, thou art much more gloomy, and cruel than the grave.

A third of the Dort divines says:

"There are many infants of pious parents, who, dying before they have the use of their reason, nevertheless on account of original sin, will be damned."

A fourth says:

"The execution of the decree of God against reprobate infants is this—As soon as they are born they are reprobated to eternal death; being left to themselves when dying, on account of the guilt of native and original sin."

Indeed if Calvinism be true, it is as just, and right, to reprobate sinless infants, as to reprobate *Barabbas*, or *Nero*, or *Judas*, or any other wicked character.

Unconditional reprobation is one of the foundation stones upon which the Calvinistic system of theology rests; and it is absurd to speak of bad men being reprobated, or punished for their sins if Calvinism be true? But is it true? Can it be true? We throw not.—*Canadian Day Star*.

If the *British Whig* has read the above attentively he will perceive, and we trust will have the goodness to acknowledge, that the True Witness in qualifying the peculiar tenets of Calvinism on the subjects of "predestination" and "infant damnation" as "blasphemous" has merely said in one short word that which Protestant evangelical writers have asserted of the same tenets at length. The writer quoted by the *Christian Guardian*, speaks of the doctrines of Calvinism as "horrible," as "much more gloomy and cruel than the grave," and concludes with the expression of his opinion that if Calvinism be true—which he thanks God it is not—then it is absurd to speak of God as just, as the punisher of the wicked and the protector of the innocent. But a religious system whose views of the dealings of God with His creatures are "horrible," and "more gloomy and cruel than the grave," is and must be "blasphemous;" because to misrepresent God, to represent Him in "horrible, gloomy and cruel" colors is, of all kinds of blasphemy, the most outrageous, the most revolting, and the most dishonoring to God Himself. We call therefore upon the *British Whig*, as he loves fair play, either to acquit the True Witness of injustice towards Protestantism, or to pass a sentence as severe as that which he passes upon us, upon the equally offending Methodist journal.

We contend, however, that neither the True Witness nor the *Christian Guardian*, in their several criticisms of Calvinism, has transgressed the limits of honorable and Christian controversy. It is of the system that we speak, and not of its adherents; and with Protestants this distinction may, and must, be drawn, because Protestants are rarely logically consistent, and seldom dare to follow out their principles to their legitimate conclusion. They know not whether those principles lead; and in this happy ignorance, they really believe that God is good, just, and that his mercy endureth for ever, whilst at the same time professing themselves adherents of the "horrible, gloomy" and "more cruel than the grave" system of theology broached by the French heresiarch. Thus we may say that Calvinism is "blasphemous," without imputing the sin of blasphemy to all who call themselves Calvinists; and we may, as we do, recognise that amongst the latter there are numbers of excellent, upright and most amiable individuals, without modifying one syllable of our strictures upon the "horrible" and "gloomy" system of religion which they profess.

All Protestants, in short, at their worst, are better than their religious system at its best; just as all Catholics at their best are but poor and unprofitable servants, and fall very far short of the requirements of their religion. The feelings of the worst and most vicious Protestant when he compares himself, and what he is, with his religious system, that is to say, with Protestantism, must be those of pride and self-complacency; he cannot but say to himself "how good, pure, and holy I am." When the Catholic, on the contrary, compares himself with his religion; when he contrasts what he is, with what his Church requires him to be, with what he might have been had he faithfully corresponded with the means of grace within his reach, he must always feel depressed and humiliated—and smiling upon his breast must still exclaim, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." The man, in whose bosom any sentiment of honor, justice and humanity exists, must feel that he is better, infinitely better than, and

morally the superior of, the cruel, capricious, and omnipotent monster—the creature of Calvin's own imagination—to which the latter blasphemously applied the name and attributes of God; and although therefore Calvinism has done much not only to degrade God, but to degrade human nature, yet that nature has proved itself to be too good to be entirely corrupted and degraded even by the horrible, cruel and gloomy tenets of Calvinism. The poison has not produced all its effects; and in consequence, in spite of their system, we find good honest and amiable men even amongst Calvinists.

If the *British Whig* asks us, why and upon what authority we term the peculiar tenets of Calvinism corrupting and degrading? we refer him to the Methodist testimony by us already quoted. We contend that tenets which tend to confuse right and wrong—or rather to obliterate the distinction—are and must be degrading; and that such is the effect of Calvinistic tenets, the Protestant writer by us quoted asserts:—

"Indeed if Calvinism be true, it is as just and right to reprobate sinless infants as to reprobate *Judas*, or any other wicked character."

This then is our defence. That we as Catholics have said upon the subject of Calvinism, nothing worse than is to be found in the columns of our Protestant and Methodist contemporaries; whilst we deny having made any personal attack upon Calvinists, whom we respect as being always better than their system, and amongst whom we cheerfully recognise numbers of good citizens, and amiable members of society. Their system is indeed "horrible, gloomy, more cruel than the grave" and therefore "blasphemous;" but we do not necessarily look upon Calvinists as horrible, cruel, or as blasphemous, because they are fortunately most illogical, and do not carry out their principles to their legitimate conclusions.

STATE-SCHOOLISM.—Again we say that the Catholics of Canada, and the Catholic minority of Upper Canada especially, have abundant reason to be thankful that they are British subjects, and not the citizens of a "free and enlightened Yankee republic." We may have some petty grievances to complain of—for when were mortals without a grievance?—We may have some little wrongs to redress—for perfection is not easily attainable upon earth; but so long as we remain British subjects, so long as we can keep our necks clear of the yoke of Yankee democracy, we shall never be altogether enslaved; so long shall we still remain in the enjoyment of those blessings of civil and religious freedom which the Catholics of Canada enjoy to a degree unequalled by any other political community in the world.

Every aggression attempted upon our liberties—every outrage upon our rights as parents over the education of our children, is, and must be, in defiance of British principles, and British traditions; whilst every such attempted aggression and outrage is justified and defended by an appeal to Yankee precedents, and the customs of the United States. If Great Britain be the armoury from whence the champions of Freedom of Education must draw their constitutional weapons, so, in like manner, the advocates of State-Schoolism must "look to Washington," or more strictly speaking to Connecticut and Massachusetts, for the munitions of war wherewith to carry on their onslaught, upon the civil and religious liberties of their Catholic fellow-subjects, upon the parental rights of the Catholic father, and upon the faith and morals of the Catholic child.

In illustration of our meaning we would refer our readers to the proceedings at a recent meeting of the Board of School Trustees of Toronto published in the *Toronto Globe* of the 13th inst. The object of the meeting was to adopt measures for making attendance upon the State Schools compulsory; and the arguments of the supporters of this object, and the precedents which they cited in justification of their conduct, are worthy the serious attention of all. To the Catholic minority of Upper Canada they offer the clearest evidence of the truth of our assertions respecting the benefits which we Catholics enjoy in virtue of our actual status as British subjects; and of the total loss of all our civil and religious liberties, which would inevitably be the result of any change which should assimilate our political and social condition to that of the people of the United States.

The principal speaker on the occasion alluded to was a Mr. Henning; who may be taken as the exponent of the views of that anti-British, anti-Catholic, and more than half-Yankeed, subsection of the extreme Protestant section of the population of Upper Canada; which, conspicuous rather for its hostility to Popery, and the ardor of its aspirations after "Protestant Ascendancy," than for the possession of any other quality, sees no chance for either fully gratifying its hatred, or for realising its fondly cherished dreams, except in the assimilation of the political and social conditions of Upper Canada to those of New England. Henning is therefore, a warm advocate of the Yankee principle of compulsory education, or of