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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 14, 1853.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

We would respectfully request of our city subscribers, who are in arrears to this office, to call and pay the amount of their subscriptions due.—The beginning of a new year, is a fitting time to clear off old debts, and one which we trust our friends will not allow to slip by unheeded and unimproved.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

It is admitted by all parties, that to the Irish Brigade is due the expulsion of the Derbyites from office. On Monday, the 18th ult., a meeting of the Irish members, to take into consideration what course they should adopt on the division upon the Ministerial Budget, was held in one of the Committee-rooms of the House of Commons. Lord Derby's explicit declaration in the House of Lords, in answer to a question from Lord Roden, "that it was not the intention of Her Majesty's Ministers to sanction the principle involved in Mr. Sergeant Shee's 'Tenant Right Bill,'" was discussed, and severely commented upon. The result was, that the Irish members determined, in pursuance with the resolutions adopted at the conferences held previous to the meeting of Parliament, to vote against Government, and in consequence on Thursday night, the Derby Ministry received its coup de grace. The Irish Brigade has now shown its power, and we trust will, on every occasion, make the people of England feel that power. No ministry can stand against the combination of 52 independent members, firmly determined to oppose, on every question, every ministry that will not do full justice to Ireland, and to the true Church of Ireland, and that will not deliver her from the foul incubus of the Parliamentary Establishment.

Immediately after the division on Thursday, Lord Derby tendered his resignation, and that of his colleagues, which were most graciously accepted. On the 20th, to which day Parliament was adjourned, Lord Derby in the House of Lords, and Mr. D'Issraeli in the Commons, officially announced the fact, and both Houses again adjourned until Monday, the 27th ult. By the arrival of the *Baltic*, we are put in possession of the following list which, we believe, may be relied upon as correct:—

Premier—Lord Aberdeen.
Lord Chancellor—Lord Cranworth.
Foreign Secretary—Lord J. Russell.
Home Secretary—Lord Palmerston.
Chancellor of the Exchequer—W. G. Gladstone.
Secretary of the Colonies—Duke of Newcastle.
Secretary of the Admiralty—Sir James Graham.
Secretary of War—Hon. H. Herbert.
Secretary of Board of Control—Sir C. Wood.
First Commissioner of Public Works—Sir William Molesworth.
Marquis of Lansdowne—A seat in the Cabinet, without office.

These form the Cabinet.
The sub-offices are mostly to be filled by experienced persons, who have previously acted, either under Sir Robert Peel or Lord J. Russell. The Vice-Royalty of Ireland is to be given to Lord St. Germain.

With regard to the policy intended to be pursued by this Administration, Lord Aberdeen last night, in the House of Lords, gave a summary of the principles upon which it is based, and Lord John Russell, in an address to the electors of London, has adopted a similar course—Commercial and legal reform—the extension of education—the removal of Jewish disabilities—a reform of the representation system—and, of course, the abolition of all the remaining impediments to Free Trade, constitute the promised system of action. These declarations have given increased confidence to the public.

From the above list it appears that the Cobden party, or Manchester school, is not to have any representative in the new administration; it is said that not one of that party has been spoken to about the acceptance even of a subordinate office. It is rumored that one of the very first acts of Lord Aberdeen's government will be to dissolve Parliament, and, publishing a manifesto setting forth the principles of its future policy, to appeal to the country; this we think is doubtful. Party spirit runs very high in England; both on account of the late vote on the Budget, and the detection of the guilt of Major Beresford, late Secretary-at-War, and Derbyite whipper-in. Though the Report of the Committee on the Derby-bribery case did not positively tax the hon. gentleman with corruption, there can be no moral doubt of his guilt—there can be no doubt that the letter signed "W. B." was written by Major Beresford to John Frail; that, in the words of the Report—"an organised system of bribery was proved to have existed," and that "the equivocal expressions of the letter ought to have suggested to him"—Major Beresford—"an idea of the improper use to which that letter might have been, and, in fact, was applied, and that it exhibited a reckless indifference, and disregard of consequences which they"—the committee—"cannot too highly censure." There can be no doubt, in fact, that Major Beresford

was guilty of—in the words of the *Times*, who insists upon a fresh investigation—"a regular conspiracy to vitiate the returns to the House of Commons by a system of habitual and premeditated bribery." The Carlton Club however were highly pleased with the quasi acquittal of their hero, the great champion of the Protestant church, and Protestant faith, and treated him to a banquet in consequence. The same evening Mr. Gladstone, likewise a member of the same Club, but whose votes and speeches have made him very unpopular of late, together with Lord Mahon, entered the reading-room of the Carlton Club; some of the Beresford banqueters coming into the same room, a scandalous scene ensued—the latter expressing their surprise "that any of the d—d Peelites should presume to come into the Club, after aiding in the overthrow of the Derby administration." Another gallant gentleman proposed to pitch Mr. Gladstone out of the window; in fact, the language used upon the occasion was anything but Parliamentary, and the conduct not much better; some, it seems, went the length of praying for a gallows whereon to hang the Peelite. At all events, a break up of the Carlton Club, the head-quarters of the Tory party, seems inevitable, and some serious consequences to the chief actors in the late disgraceful scene are anticipated. The object of the ejected ministry seems to be to get up a "Church is in danger" cry, to go to the hustings with; it is a good cry, only rather thread-bare.

The defeat of the Derby Ministry has caused much joy amongst the Catholics of Ireland, who have not forgotten the noble Earl's insults to their religion, and the brutal results of his "Proclamation" against Catholic ecclesiastics. In Lord Aberdeen, it is to be hoped that the Church will find, if not a friend, at all events not quite such an envenomed enemy of Catholicity as was his predecessor; it is remembered also, to the advantage of the former, that he, and the majority of his party, opposed the "Ecclesiastical Titles Bill," and took no part with the No-Popery zealots of 1851. But it is not in Ministers, nor yet in members of Parliament that the Church puts her trust. The Irish Brigade, if honest, if faithful to their old pledges, if only half as much in earnest for the cause of "religious liberty," as they are for mere secular matters of far less real importance, may do great things; but then they must faithfully resist the blandishments of the Ministry, far more to be dreaded than its threats; and they must remember, that the cause of the Church should take precedence of every other question—that it is as Catholics, as the advocates of the rights of the Church, and not as the defenders of any particular form of human policy, or man's rights, that they can hope to be of any consequence in the eyes of Catholics, or to merit the blessing of God upon their labors. God send they may remain honest and united.

The case of Mr. Kirwan, lately sentenced to death for the murder of his wife at "Ireland's Eye," is exciting much interest, and now that the jury have given their verdict of Guilty, people are beginning to ask one another—upon what evidence was that verdict founded. The body of Mrs. Kirwan was found lying on a rock a little above low water mark, and in a cove where she was in the habit of bathing; it presented no marks of violence, and no appearances which could not be accounted for on the supposition of death, by drowning, or epilepsy. But Mr. Kirwan was an immoral man, and had long lived in a state of adultery with another woman; this fact told strongly against him on the trial, and, no doubt, had its influence upon the minds of the jury. The unfortunate man, who protests his innocence, is under sentence of death, which however, from the tone of the public press, will not, we think, be inflicted.

From France the news is of but little interest.—The most exciting question at the present moment is—"Will the Pope assist at the coronation of Napoleon the Third?" The correspondent of the *Times* affirms that the visit of His Holiness to Paris is decided upon, but that, in order to guard against any attempts on the part of the French Government to take advantage of the presence of the Pope, and thereby to obtain from him unworthy concessions, Pius IX. intends taking the precaution of leaving his abdication with the Sacred College, so that, in case of emergency, the majority of the Cardinals might proceed to a new election. It is generally admitted that the Pope would be well received in France, and that his visit would have a good effect upon the public mind. France is no longer the infidel, or Protestant, France, of the last century, or even of Louis Philippe. Catholicity once more exerts her benign sway over the people; even the populace of Paris acknowledge her influence, and in the departments the people have long been sick of infidelity. "The crowds that throng the churches of the capital on even ordinary occasions, but most on those of great solemnity, show, as much as external signs can do so, that scoffing and infidelity are no longer the fashion." France indeed furnishes the only instance on record of the return of a nation to the Faith, after its having once abandoned it. Sixty years ago, France was the most thoroughly Protestant country, and Paris the most Ultra-Protestant city, in Europe; in no other country have the principles of the great Revolution of the XVI. century been so fully, and consistently, carried out as in France; it is perhaps because those principles have been so fully and so fairly carried out—because Protestantism has had a full and fair trial, in France—that the mass of the French people, saddened and disgusted at the sight of the crimes of their fathers, are now prepared to return with joy and gladness to the shelter of the one fold where alone true peace can be found. To another apostate country—England—the same grace has been offered. Long blotted out from the list of Catholic and Christian countries, she too has had her day of visitation; but alas! unlike France, she has not known how to profit by it—she closed her eyes

and would not know the things which belonged unto her peace; unlike France, she has spurned the proffered salvation; like stubborn Jerusalem, she has persecuted the prophets of the Lord, and abused them which have been sent unto her. May we not fear lest upon England also is pronounced the curse, of old pronounced upon Jerusalem?—

"Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

We quote from the *Montreal Witness*:—

"We cannot afford space for tedious and hair-splitting controversies; but when he—the *True Witness*—shows us intelligently where the *Ecclesia Docens* is, and what claim it has to infallibility, we will return to the subject."

That is to say, our cotemporary having challenged us to state our argument in favor of the existence of an infallible authority, or witness, as to the revelation made by Christ, feels himself unable to reply, and therefore seeks to shuffle out of the controversy. By "hair-splitting" he means the distinction that we draw betwixt the natural order, and the supernatural order; and by the employment of such an expression he shows that he is incapable of entertaining any distinct idea as to wherein consists the value of evidence, or of understanding, how a witness may be a perfectly competent witness in the first, and yet quite an incompetent witness in the second, of these two orders. Were he capable of reasoning logically, he would perceive the absurdity of his demand—"to show him where is the *Ecclesia Docens*" before such time as it shall have been proved that there is an *Ecclesia Docens*: its existence must be established before we can logically treat of its manner of existence. Thus, before A can be indicted for the murder of B, it must be proved that there was such a person as B in existence. Our thesis is—"There is an *Ecclesia Docens*"—of the "where," and the "how," we have as yet said nothing, for we must first determine the existence, ere we can predicate place, or mode, of existence: because that which does not exist cannot be made the subject of any predicate.

"We may, however, remark that there is one singular absurdity running through all our cotemporary's reasoning which may be briefly stated thus:—He requires the testimony of an infallible Church, in order to vouch for the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures, but he requires no voucher whatever for the infallibility of the Church."

Our opponent must be either a very stupid, or a very dishonest, arguer; perhaps he is both. We do require a voucher for the infallibility of the Church; and we have shown him what that voucher is, viz:—"the divine commission 'to teach.'" As from Christ's miracles the Apostles logically concluded to Christ's divine mission—and from His divine mission to His infallibility—so also do we—deducing from genuine, but not necessarily inspired, history, the commission of Christ to a body of men "to teach"—with the promise of His continual presence with that body "until the consummation of all things"—logically conclude, from that commission, to the infallibility of the commissioned body. The voucher for the infallibility of the Church as a teacher, is her divine commission "to teach."

"The evidence of the Church Universal to the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is extremely valuable testimony, but it is by no means the only testimony to their truth."

The Universal Church is either a witness in the supernatural order, and therefore supernaturally credible—or it is not, and therefore is not supernaturally credible. The inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is a fact in the supernatural order, to which none but a witness in the same order can testify. If the "Universal Church" be a supernaturally credible witness, then its evidence to the inspiration of Scripture is conclusive, its authority absolute, and we can require no other testimony; and in that supernaturally credible "Universal Church," spoken of by the *Montreal Witness*, we shall have the supernatural or super-human, authority, in matters of religion, which Protestants reject. If the "Universal Church" be not a supernaturally credible witness, then is its evidence as to the inspiration of Scripture—a fact in the supernatural order—utterly worthless.

"The internal evidences and observed effects of the Scriptures are also, in their respective places of very great value, and all three combined, establish the point of their authenticity beyond the reach of doubt."

The "inspiration," and not simply the "authenticity," of the scriptures is the point at issue; and in leaving out the word inspiration, our cotemporary is guilty of an artifice, very common with incompetent and dishonest arguers. The "internal evidences" of the Bible can prove nothing in the supernatural order, unless the supernatural credibility, or inspiration, of the book itself be assumed; but it is not a logical process to assume the inspiration of the Bible, in order subsequently to prove the inspiration of the Bible. As to the "observed effects" of reading the Bible, they are manifold, and different observers have observed such very different effects, that it is impossible to draw any positive conclusions from the effects so observed. As far as our observations go—we don't pretend they are worth much, but we can only deduce conclusions from our own observations—we have almost invariably observed the most disastrous effects, both upon faith and morals, produced by the reading of the Bible, according to the Protestant principle of "private judgment." We never knew an infidel, and we have known many, to whom the Bible was not the great armoury from whence he drew all his weapons against revealed religion; we never knew a libertine who did not find in the Bible, and in the history of the men described as being after "God's own heart," examples to justify his immorality: he would cite Lot, David, and the Patriarchs, in justification of concubinage, and polygamy; and palliate treachery by the example of Jacob depriving his brother Esau of the blessing. The only "effect" we ever saw produced upon youngsters at school, by the indiscriminate use of the Bible, was that it made them scoffers, and adepts in all kinds of blackguardism. The chief use that is made of the Bible amongst

boys, is to find out the "obscene" passages, which according to Mr. Archibald MacLay, abound therein; and we remember well that he who had discovered a new obscenity was always esteemed the most apt scriptural scholar. It is very naughty to say this; and we suppose that the *Montreal Witness* will try and raise an outcry against us; but he knows, and we know that he knows, and every body else knows, that it is perfectly true, although very shocking. If there be a man, who can lay his hand on his heart, and protest before God that, neither as a school-boy, nor in after years, he did any of these things, let him throw the first stone at us.

If we speak respectfully of Unitarian Protestants, it is not because we have any sympathy with one form of Protestant theology more than we have with another. We speak of them as of men distinguished amongst Protestants for their high intellectual endowments, and for the practice of a high morality—as of men who are as much the superiors of the self-dubbed orthodox, in courtesy, and intelligence, as they are in integrity and dialectic ability. In other respects, we recognise no difference betwixt any of the Non-Catholic sects.

REPORT OF DR. WOLFRED NELSON ON THE PRESENT STATE, DISCIPLINE, MANAGEMENT AND EXPENDITURE OF THE DISTRICT, AND OTHER PRISONS IN CANADA EAST.

Printed by order of the Legislative Assembly.

In March last a letter was addressed by the Provincial Secretary to Messrs. Wolfred Nelson, and Andrew Dickson, Inspectors of the Provincial Penitentiary, informing them that his Excellency the Governor, being desirous of obtaining a detailed account of the state of the prisons, had thought fit, for that purpose, to avail himself of the services of the said Inspectors. Dr. Nelson immediately set about the necessary investigations, and the result of his labors we have before us in this admirable, and well arranged "Report."

The first part of this document gives us the state of the gaols as they are; the second, as Dr. Nelson would wish them to be. In the replies to a circular addressed to all the Sheriffs, and Prison Officers, of Lower Canada, we have a large mass of valuable statistics, setting forth—the number of prisoners confined in the different gaols—their religion, and national origin—their cost to the country, and the modes of treatment adopted towards them. Beginning with Montreal, wherein is situated the District Prison, the most extensive gaol in the Province, we obtain the following details:—

"The total number of prisoners during the year was 1612.—Answer to the 4th question."

"The total number at the time of the investigation, 222—of whom 142 were male adults—6 boys—and 104 female adults—2 female children were in gaol with their mothers, but not having been committed, they were not included. Of the male prisoners, 82 were Catholics and 45 Protestants; of the females, 71 Catholics, and 21 Protestants. Their national origins respectively, were as follows:—Ireland 116—Canada 55—England 31—Scotland 10—United States 4—Germany 2—Bermuda 1. Mr. McGinn, the head gaoler, explains likewise how it is that so many of the prisoners are Irish and Catholics. The Montreal gaol is not only, a Penitentiary or place of punishment, and a house of detention for untried offenders, but it is also "in some sense, an asylum for homeless and friendless persons, who from age, decrepitude, blindness, or other infirmity, are unable to maintain themselves; and these not only from the different parts of the district, but not infrequently from the other side of the Atlantic, by emigration. . . . But again, the gaol is made a Hospital for incurables, who have been discharged from other Hospitals, a lying-in Hospital. . . . And in his answer to the 10th query of the circular—"What were the offences committed?"—the same gentleman replies—"The offences committed include every species of crimes—felonies, misdemeanors, and even misfortune. It is quite common to have persons committed who are merely homeless and destitute. The aged, the sick, the cripple, and the lunatic, are frequently committed under the very comprehensive charge of 'loose, idle, and disorderly.'" No one who has stood upon our wharves, of a summer morning, and witnessed the stream of "homeless and friendless persons"—poverty-stricken, fever-stricken, Irish Catholics, issuing from the hold of the emigrant ship, can wonder that so many of them should, in a few weeks, be glad to find an asylum in the District Prison, and accept eagerly the gaol ration of bread as their last resource against starvation. Alas! poor creatures, they have no alternative betwixt the gaol and the grave, betwixt the magistrate's committal to prison, and a Coroner's verdict—"Died from want of the common necessities of life." Our Catholic hospitals are always full—our convents and other charitable Catholic asylums are crammed; the pecuniary resources of our Catholic population are taxed to the uttermost; but the amount of misery far exceeds all the means of relief. For we have in Montreal not only to support our own poor, and the poor of the adjacent districts, but we have to provide for the pauperism created by Orange landlords, and aggravated by long years of "Protestant ascendancy" in Ireland. Some idea of the amount of destitution in Montreal, especially during the winter months, may be formed, from the fact, that, often no less than 1500 poor Irish receive their daily bread at the gate of the Grey Nunnery—one only of our many Catholic charitable establishments.

Mr. McGinn complains of the "construction of the prison" which "has hitherto set at defiance every attempt at classification in a manner at all worthy of the name, and consequently classification has not been attempted beyond the separation of the sexes, and of the untried prisoners from the convicts." In the female wards the effects of this indiscriminate