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 By HENRY CHAPMAN & Co.,
 St. Sacramento Street,
 Montreal, February 9, 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
 AND
 CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 1854.

OPENING OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.

On Sunday, was celebrated in the Metropolitan Church of Quebec, the First Session of the Second Provincial Council of the Ecclesiastical Province of Quebec. At half-past 8 o'clock, the procession issued from the Archbishop's Palace, and proceeded to the Cathedral, where High Mass was celebrated by His Grace the Archbishop of Quebec. Mass being over, the Archbishop took his place in front of the altar, on an elevated seat prepared for him, the other Bishops being arranged in a semicircle around him; in the midst, on a lofty throne, was placed the Holy Bible, to which also was attached the Archbishop's cross.

Then, kneeling before the Altar, the assembled Prelates, accompanied by the whole congregation, offered up their supplications to the Throne of Grace, for the aid of the Holy Ghost, to assist, enlighten and direct them in all their deliberations. The Psalm, "Salvum me fac Deus," with its Antiphon, was followed by the Litany of the Saints; then came the reading of an appropriate Gospel, after which was sung the "Veni Creator Spiritus." An Allocution from the President, succeeded by a discourse suited to the occasion, delivered by the Bishop of Montreal, terminated this part of the proceedings.

The Promoters of the Council next addressing the President, requested leave to read the Decree, "De aperienda Synodo." This Decree having been read by the Secretary, and the consent of the Fathers having been formally given thereunto, the President arose, and announced the commencement of the Council; and then turning towards the Altar, intoned the "Te Deum." In like manner, the Decrees—"De modo vivendi in concilio," and "De Professione fidei emittenda"—were publicly read, and assented to, in the following form. The Decree having been read, the Secretary, advancing towards the President, asks if he approves thereof; to which, if in the affirmative, the reply is "Placet." Then turning towards the other Prelates, and commencing with the eldest, he asks a similar question of each in particular, and the suffrages having been thus obtained, the result is proclaimed aloud by the President.

The Decree, "De Professione fidei" having been adopted, the Secretary read aloud the Profession of Faith of the Council of Trent. Then laying aside his mitre, and kneeling, with his right hand placed upon the Holy Evangel, the President made his solemn profession of adhesion to the Tridentine symbol.—After which, sitting upon his throne, and holding the sacred volume in his hands, the President received the same solemn and public Profession of Faith from each one of the Fathers, who, each in his turn, knelt before him, and with hands placed upon the Book, declared before God and men, his assent to all the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church. A similar Profession is also required of all the officials of the Council. Finally, the Session having been adjourned, the Episcopal Benediction was given by the President, accompanied by the proclamation of forty days' indulgence to all who had assisted at the ceremonies.

The Council is composed as follows:—
 His Grace P. F. Turgeon, Archbishop of Quebec.
 His Lordship G. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal.
 " P. Phelan, Bp. of Carthage, Administrator of Kingston.
 " B. Guigue, Bishop of Bytown.
 " Armand F. M. Comte de Charbonnel, Bishop of Toronto.
 " T. Cooke, Bishop of Three Rivers.
 " T. C. Prince, Bishop of St. Hyacinthe.
 " P. Baillargeon, Coadjutor of the Bishop of Quebec.
 " C. La Rocque, Coadjutor of the Bishop of Montreal.

APPROPRIATE CONGREGATIONS.
 Of Decrees.—H. L. Bishop La Rocque, President; Very Rev. Aug. MacDonell, V.G. of Kingston; Father Schneider, Rev. Mr. Villeneuve, Secretary, &c.; Rev. Mr. Kelly.
 Of Doctrine.—H. L. Bishop Guigue, President; Very Rev. Mr. Gordon, V.G. of Toronto; Father Aubert, Father Santoni, Rev. Mr. Parant, Rev. Mr. de l'Age, Secretary.
 Of Discipline.—H. L. Bishop Bourget, President; Very Rev. Mr. Demers, V.G. of St. Hyacinthe; Rev. Mr. Bessemer, Very Rev. Mr. Ternot, Rev. Mr. Ferland, Secretary; Rev. Mr. Labelle, Rev. Mr. Harkin.
 Of Education.—H. L. Bishop de Charbonnel, President; Very Rev. Mr. Casault, V.G.; Very Rev. Mr. Raymond, V.G.; Father Martin, S.I., Secretary; Rev. Mr. Harpor.
 Of Liturgy.—H. L. Bishop Prince, President; Rev. Mr. Pincioneault, Archdeacon; Very Rev. Mr. Loran-

ger, V.G.; Rev. Mr. Auclair, Rev. Mr. Langevin, Rev. Mr. Hamelin, Secretary.
 It is expected—though it is not quite certain—that the Council will close on Sunday next.

At the risk of being tedious, we reply to certain questions put to us by the *Minerve* of Tuesday the 23rd ult. We might indeed refer our cotemporary to the columns of the *True Witness*, wherein he would see his questions fully answered; or rather, his objections anticipated; but it may perhaps be as well to give him, *once for all*, a definitive reply, lest we should be taxed with "shirking the merits of the question."

After citing the *Globe*, to the effect, that the *True Witness* opposes "secularisation"—"maintaining that the principle applied to the Reserves might equally well be applied to Catholic endowments—*dotations Catholiques*—the *Minerve* asks:—

"But is it true that the *True Witness*, and the *Journal de Quebec*, think that the principle, applicable to the Reserves, is equally applicable to the endowments of the Catholic Church? Or, in other words, do they believe, as the *Globe* would have its readers imagine, that, if they ('the secularisers') have the right to secularise the Reserves, they have an equal right to secularise the property of the Catholic Church in Lower Canada?"

We answer for the *True Witness* only; though we flatter ourselves that, in no material point, will our answer differ from that of our respected cotemporary the *Journal de Quebec*.

To the first question—as to the applicability of the principle of secularisation, which the *Minerve* recommends for the Reserves—we reply that we do think—nay that we are firmly convinced—that that principle, if applied to the Reserves, will be applied to titles and the other endowments of the Catholic Church; and therefore we do, in one sense, think that the "principle applicable to the Reserves is equally applicable to the endowments of the Catholic Church?" That principle being, that all endowments, or State assistance, in aid of religion, are evil; and that the support of a Clergy should be left entirely to the Voluntary contributions of the people. This principle, if true for Upper Canada, must be true also, and therefore to be applied, in Lower Canada.

That, in the opinion of our rulers, the principle of "secularisation" is as applicable to Catholic endowments, as to the "Clergy Reserves"—and that the Imperial Government has no objection to seeing that principle applied to both, impartially—is evident from the language of the leading members of the Aberdeen Ministry during the debates in the House of Commons, in the early part of last year, on the "Canada Clergy Reserves Bill." Sir William Molesworth's speech upon that occasion—a printed copy of which is now before us—may be taken as containing a full avowal both of the Colonial policy of the Imperial Government, and of the intentions of the British Legislature with regard to Catholic endowments in Canada.

In this speech, then, in support of the second reading of the above-mentioned Bill, Sir William Molesworth distinctly laid down the following propositions:

"That the Legislature of Canada had the power to repeal titles; and that no statutory provision prevented it from dealing with all Catholic Church property, in any way it might think proper."

"That the Act 31st George III., c. 31"—(which is the Act to which the advocates of "secularisation" appeal in proof of the right of the Legislature to secularise the "Reserves")—"provided also—that the same Legislature should have the power to vary, or repeal the provisions of that Act respecting the allotment of lands, and also to abolish titles."

"That the State is not bound to respect an endowment, by any obligation arising out of the principle of property."

"That all questions respecting religious endowments in the Colonies ought to be dealt with by the local Parliaments."

And finally:—
 "That the Bill once passed, the power of the Canadian Legislature, over Protestant, and over Catholic endowments, would be precisely the same."—*Vide printed Speech.*

We quote this speech, not as approving, or as admitting the truth, of the propositions therein laid down; but as conclusive to the fact—that, in the opinion of the Imperial Government, the principle of secularisation is as applicable to all Catholic endowments, as to the "Clergy Reserves." That it will be applied to the former, as well as to the latter, no sane person can doubt.

As to the second question—as to the "right" to secularise Catholic Church property in Lower Canada, if the "right" to secularise the Reserves be accorded—it is sufficient for us to repeat what we have often said upon this topic. No power on earth, has, or ever can have, the right to secularise the property of the Catholic Church, without her consent; but as to its "might" so to do, we have no hesitation in answering that the "secularisation" of the Reserves will have the effect, of so strengthening the hands of the rabid, Ultra-Protestant and democratic party in Upper Canada—and also of so irritating the minds of the more moderate and Conservative portion of the Protestant body, who will be thereby dispossessed of their endowments—that it will be impossible for the Catholics of the Province to oppose any effectual resistance to their combined aggressions upon the endowments of the Catholic Church. To talk about "rights" in such a matter, is but contemptible twaddle. In politics, as in war, "might" only are "rights"; and he who has but the latter to plead, is a poor miserable driveller, the object of the scornful compassion of all intelligent men. Alas! that it should be so, but so it is; and it is in vain for the *Minerve* to repine against it.

"Not that thou and I have promised to each other"—says Carlyle truly—"but what the balance of our

forces can make us perform to each other; that, in so sinful a world as ours is the thing to be counted on."

Thus our right to protect our own from the spoiler, alone constitutes the right upon which we can prudently rely. Vain is all faith in promises, pledges, treaties, or contracts. For, as Carlyle observes:—

"If all men were such that a mere spoken or sworn Contract would bind them, all men were then true men, and Government a superfluity."

Let then this answer, suffice the *Minerve*. We admit no "right" on the part of the Legislature to touch one penny of our Catholic endowments, whether the Reserves be secularised, or remain unsecularised; under either contingency, the rights of the Legislature will remain the same, though its mights will be very different. Our cotemporary must know, if he has ever read history, that, when a Legislature—of which the majority is Protestant, animated with the bitterest hatred against the Church, and jealous of her power, wealth and influence—and whose ranks will be still further swollen by bad, time-serving, and lukewarm Catholics—has the "might" to strike a blow at the Church, and to "secularise" her endowments, it will not fail to do so, without stopping to enquire about its "rights."

Our cotemporary having done questioning, philosophizes as follows:—

"It is certain that if all the journals of Upper Canada called for the secularisation of the Clergy Reserves in the same manner as does the *Globe*, there would not be a voice in Lower Canada to echo back the cry, with the exception of that of the *Montreal Witness*. There would not be in Lower Canada a single voice for the secularisation of the Reserves, were it necessary to recognize that the property of our religious corporations are subject to the same treatment."—*Minerve.*

True. All the secularising journals of Upper Canada have not as yet thrown off the mask; all have not as yet had the frankness to adopt the "manner" as well as the policy of the *Globe*; but it is no less certain that they all look forward to the spoliation of all ecclesiastical property as the inevitable result of adopting that policy. Nay—the great majority of the Protestant press scarcely seek to conceal their ultimate designs; and if they blame the *Globe*, it is for its over frankness, for being too faithful an expositor of their common sentiments. They condemn Mister George Brown, not for pursuing secularisation of the Reserves as the means to an end, but for his want of prudence in proclaiming his, and their, ulterior designs. Hear, for instance, the *Bathurst Courier* upon this very point; and do not forget, oh! *Minerve*, that by the *Courier de St. Hyacinthe*, this Bathurst journal is pronounced to be the organ of Dr. Rolph. The *Bathurst Courier*, then, strongly condemns the "manner" in which Mister George Brown advocates "secularisation;" had he been a wise and prudent, as well as an honest politician, he would, for the present, and until the Reserves were secularised, have said nothing about an attack on Catholic endowments:—

"He would say—'Let us say nothing about Lower Canada Church property in the meantime. Let us get the Reserves settled first, which we cannot do without the aid of the French Canadians; and that done, the Church property in Lower Canada can be discussed afterwards.' Such"—says the *Bathurst Courier*—"would have been the course of a wise politician desirous of securing the triumph of his avowed principles."

We will not dwell upon the deep significance of this passage; nor insist upon the contempt therein expressed for the intelligence, or good faith, of the "French Canadians," who are to be made tools of, because "without their aid" the Reserves cannot be settled. We quote it chiefly with the view of showing how it is that all the "secularising" journals of Upper Canada have not as yet adopted the "manner" of the *Globe*; its matter, its policy, they none of them, repudiate; but its "manner" is objectionable, as too outspoken for a "wise and prudent politician."

We are glad to see that the writer in the *Canadian* has the grace to avow his grievous error in insinuating doubts as to the indissolubility of marriage, and the immorality of divorce. "I repudiate utterly the anti-Catholic doctrine of divorce," he says now "and I acknowledge the indissolubility of marriage." So far good; there is an improvement in the tone of the *Canadian*; for had the writer alluded to, always held the same sentiments on the subject as he professes now, he would not, a few days ago, have referred the *Journal de Quebec* to the *Repartoire de Jurisprudence*, for further information as to the immorality of divorce, and the indissolubility of marriage. That he did so, is a proof that he did not then, repudiate utterly the anti-Catholic doctrine of the one, and did not then, acknowledge the indissolubility of the latter.

As to the question of the duty of a Catholic member of Parliament, towards a Divorce Bill, when brought before the House, we admit that there are difficulties arising out of the peculiarities of our political condition; and we do not feel ourselves either called upon, or competent, to lay down any rules thereon. It is a matter to be decided by the Ecclesiastical authorities. But if it is not easy to say what the duty of a Catholic Legislator under such circumstances, is—it is very easy to say what is duty is not; or rather what it is his duty not to do. He cannot vote for a Divorce Bill: he cannot sanction immorality, or give occasion to the perpetration of adultery. Whether it be permitted to him, under such circumstances, to abstain from voting at all, is a question for the accomplished theologian to decide. We have not the arrogance to offer our opinion upon the subject, though we confess that we do entertain a very strong one, to the effect—that he who allows a wrong to be done, which he might, in the exercise of a sacred trust reposed in him, prevent, is *particeps criminis*. Still we admit that there may be a differ-

ence betwixt "not preventing" and "aiding and abetting." There is no doubt as to the sinfulness of the latter.

There are, however, in the last article from the contributor to the *Canadian*, two points on which we would venture to differ with him.

"All that I desire, and look upon as essentially necessary for the future of Catholicity in Canada, is, that we Catholics, refuse not to our Protestant fellow-countrymen, laws in conformity with Protestant ideas, in general, whether it be on the subject of divorce, or any other point of religion."—*Canadian*, 24th ult.

There is a vagueness in the expression, "Protestant ideas in general"—to which we most decidedly object. That Catholic and Protestant should enjoy perfect equality of civil rights, that the State is bound to treat both with perfect impartiality, we cordially admit. But when "Protestant ideas" are repugnant to morality—and, if allowed free scope, would imperil the whole social fabric, by striking at the basis on which society rests—then, indeed, the principles of our friend of the *Canadian* are inapplicable. Protestants feel, and by their acts, acknowledge this themselves. Thus, though polygamy is as much a Protestant institution as divorce—though the lawfulness of polygamy to the baptised Christian, was asserted by Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and the great leaders of the Protestant Reformation—and though at the present day it is generally practised, and its conformity with the law of God, asserted, by a numerous and rapidly increasing Protestant community—still, in spite of the dogmatism of Luther, the practice of the "Latter Day Saints," and the "right of private judgment," Protestant States treat polygamy as a crime, and visit the practice with the pains of felony. Now, divorce is as immoral, as anti-Christian, and as repugnant to the revealed will of God as is polygamy. Instances of the toleration of both may be cited from the Old Testament; but there is no doubt that both are alike prohibited under the new dispensation. If our friend of the *Canadian*, will but tell us how he would act, if, as a member of the American Congress, he were called upon to assent to a Bill legalising in the Territory of Deseret, or the future state of Utah, the practice of polygamy—upon the principle that it was a law "in conformity with a Protestant idea and a Protestant practice—we shall have no difficulty in telling him how, upon the same principle, he should act, as a member of the Canadian Legislature, towards a Bill authorising the divorce of man and wife, and giving to both the right to contract new sexual unions.

The *Canadian* also argues that in the eyes of Catholics, there can be no harm in the Canadian Parliament declaring the marriage of Protestants void, because they are already void in the eyes of the Church:

"Why such a noise on the subject of divorce from Protestant marriages? Does not the Catholic Church reject such marriages as null?"—*Id.*

No, Sir, she does not; and we recommend you, seriously, to consult with your spiritual advisers, ere again you have the presumption to write upon such important and delicate subjects as marriage and divorce. The Church acknowledges the validity of Protestant marriages, in cases where there existed no natural impediments to the union of the contracting parties. Chaste, and honorable are such unions; valid marriages, and therefore indissoluble. In proof whereof we would refer you to this simple fact—that when married Protestants are received into the Catholic Church, their unions are always recognised as good and valid marriages; and this, whether both, or only one, of the parties become Catholics. Did the Church reject their marriages as null, she would insist, either upon their re-marriage, or upon the immediate separation of the parties. Again, we refer our friend to his Ecclesiastical Superiors for information upon these points.

The obstinate persistence of the writer in the *Canadian* is melancholy in the extreme. Again, on Monday last, he returns to the charge; and in spite of the correction of the *Journal de Quebec* reiterates his assertion, that the Catholic Church rejects Protestant marriages as invalid, and quotes Dr. Brownson in support of his position:—

"This gentleman, in the presence of an audience composed in a great measure of Protestants thought it his duty to tell them that the marriage of Protestants was not valid; and that in fact it could not be looked upon otherwise than as concubinage."

This monstrous calumny against Dr. Brownson originated with the Protestant press; but we did not expect to see the foul slander reiterated in the columns of a professedly Catholic paper. We trust that the writer in the *Canadian* has erred through ignorance, and not through malice; and that the *Canadian* will give an immediate and formal contradiction to the mendacious accusation against the learned gentleman so cruelly maligned in its columns. Dr. Brownson never did pronounce Protestant marriages invalid, never did he stigmatise them as concubinage. He is the son of Protestant parents, and does not deem himself illegitimate. As a Protestant he was married, and he does not look upon the mother of his children, as a —. We will not write the loathsome word; we cannot so insult the great and good man against whom the writer in the *Canadian* vents his imperfections. Has the *Canadian* then been hired to misrepresent the doctrines of the Church, to insult Dr. Brownson, and to offer an apology for the obscenities of Gavazzi? We hope not; but it looks exceedingly like it.

The condition of the Irish Catholics of the Upper Province, can never be a matter of indifference to Catholics and Irishmen in the Lower. We have seen it stated, however, that the "School Question" of Upper Canada interests Upper Canadians only;