

DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

TO THE REVEREND THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN,

During my absence in a very remote part of the Diocese, not reached by any post office communications, a proceeding has been witnessed in one of the branches of our Provincial Legislature, affecting the interests of the Church of God, which is fraught with alarming presage, and warns us that, so far from looking for countenance and support from that body, in the furtherance of the cause committed to our hands, we must anticipate from its interference, only what is disastrous and destructive.

I refer, it must be needless to say, to the Address of the Legislative Assembly praying for the alienation of the Clergy Reserves from religious and the appropriation of them to secular uses.

It cannot, however, be our duty, before God or man, to acquiesce unresistingly in that policy which not only is opposed to all provision by civil authority for the maintenance of pure and sound Religion and declares war against the very remnant of any connection between professed Christian Governments and Christianity, but carries these principles to the length of actual spoliation: seeking to procure a violation of what may well be considered as solemn pledges given by authority to the Church, and endeavouring to overturn what may well be regarded as a compact for the preservation of the highest order of vested interests.

It is not here a question of dominant Churches or of Establishments—that question our opponents consider to be settled, and it creates no disturbance—it is a question of the confiscation of revenues appropriated for the support of Religion—of breaking down barriers and repudiating principles within the British dominions, which were honorably respected in the neighbouring republic even in the convulsions of the Revolution, and the rejection of the supremacy of the mother country. The lingering remains of protection and recognition which we receive from the ruling powers of the Empire, are, indeed, the traces and the evidences of that position which, without prejudice to the principles of toleration, or interference with the religious profession or principles or interests of any other body of men, it had been intended to assign to us, and to the occupation of which, we cannot but believe that we have clear and sacred claims. But that is not the question here. Whatever may be our position *de jure*, what it is *de facto* is sufficiently plain. And if it now be the will of God to permit that, after a series of measures injurious to our interests which will be matter of history hereafter, our very patrimony, small as it is, should be violently wrested out of our hands, we must only submit in faith and patience to so severe a dispensation of his Providence, and look through all the darkness of our prospects to the promise, that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church. We must endeavour, in such a case, as a Church, to take joyfully the

spoiling of our goods and to bear in mind that far sharper trials than this, even in the shape of the most terrible inflictions, would have no force to shake our faith or extinguish our hope. But professing as we do, in the highest and most illustrious empire here upon earth, the Religion of the Sovereign and the State, and pledged as is the State by its constitution to uphold, so far as depends upon human agency, the life of that Religion, and sacred as is the cause of evangelical truth and Apostolic order with which the system of that Religion is identified, it never,—with reference to the means provided and set apart for its perpetuation,—it never can comport with any conscientious discharge of our own obligations, to stand passively by while the work of demolition is going on, or to see the structure pulled remorselessly down without extending a hand to stay, if possible, the progress of the mischief.

It might have been thought that we have endured enough; and that those who carry an unfriendly heart towards our Zion or are led away, from a deficiency of firmness and independence of mind, by plausible theory and noisy declamation upon the subject of religious endowments, might have been content to stop at the point which has been already reached. We have not been left in an aspect or a condition to create any vast amount of jealousy and alarm. In little things as well as in greater, what man could do has been well nigh done to depress instead of to exalt the Church of England.

The motto of some of our adversaries in their proceedings towards the Church, appears to be nothing short of *Delenda est Carthago*. We, then, while we confide the issue to God, must not be wanting in what He enables us to do for ourselves: there ought to be no apathy, no backwardness, no faint-heartedness in the cause:—whatever may be the result, we must not lie under the everlasting reproach of having left undefended the most sacred interests of our people and our posterity—and we must enlist in our support, the names of all Churchmen who value their Religion,—reminding them that the time is rapidly approaching when the present system of payments from home, in any shape, for the support of the Clergy must be brought to its close, and that the most severe spiritual privation must, in many examples, await them and their children after them, if the predatory irruption into the sanctuary which is now threatened, cannot effectually be repelled.

I have therefore to call upon you, my brethren, in this emergency of our affairs, to hold meetings in the different places where you may officiate, in order to the support of Petitions to the Imperial Parliament against the measure for which the Legislative Assembly has forwarded its address; and in the language of the Archdeacons of Kingston and York, who, as I found upon my return home, have in the absence of the Bishop of Toronto in England, jointly taken steps to promote the same object within their jurisdictions,—“Every effort should be made to procure the signature of every male adult belonging to the Church, in every quarter which can by possibility be reached.”