

sister isle. Well, the Canadian Conference embraced almost as many preachers of Irish birth as were contained in the entire Irish Conference, and they did not number a third of the whole; besides this they had a large number of earnest and enterprising Irish laymen to whom Canada had furnished a home, and who infused their characteristic energy into Canadian institutions and gladdened the Canadian Church with the warmth and fervour of their religious life. They had also a large number of Irish of another sort, of whom he he could not now speak particularly—except to say that they would gladly ship them back again by a fleet of very early and rapid steamers, that they might cry “Ireland for the Irish” to their own hearts’ content, and theirs. The Conference had just listened to and welcomed a French representative, and their hearts were going out in sympathy for the trampled land and suffering people of France. They had in Canada nearly a million souls who were French in feeling, habitude, and language, held down by a superstition whose tyranny enthralled the mind, and watched with a jealous watchfulness which knew no interval of slumber. They had also a large and constantly increasing German population, thrifty, industrious, enterprising, but needing sorely to be instructed in religion—to have life infused into their effete Lutheranism, and restraint put upon their tendencies to lager beer. In addition, there were roaming the plains and threading the forests various tribes of Indians, to the number of about 100,000, fast decaying out of life, and needing much the consolations of the true faith to illuminate their western hour.

Among such a motley population they might expect that there would be found almost every possible variety both of speculative and practical error. They had to mourn over men’s indifferentism—that most dangerous and least impressible state, in which men had reasoned themselves into quiescent unbelief. They had among them, as he believed, the most compact, well-organized, earnest, sleepless Popery in the world. They had numbers who, in wilful oblivion of former privileges, had lapsed into the worst of all paganisms—the paganism of forgotten Christianity. In addition they had in the midst of them heathenism proper, manifesting itself now in cruel and now in eccentric developments. There were those yet among them who, in barbarous ceremonies, indicated their belief in the power of the “medicine man” to save, who sacrificed to the white dog, and held frantic bacchanal of dance and feast around the altar. There were those who had a strange weird belief concerning former existence in inferior shape, leading him to the conviction that Mr. Darwin’s theory of the descent of man