

The Syllabus of Errors: Canadian Reaction in the Secular and in the Protestant Press

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On 8 December, 1864 Pope Pius IX authorized the publication of his encyclical *Quanta cura*, a critique of the liberalism of contemporary European governments and, specifically, of their policies regarding church and state. Accompanying the encyclical was a list of eighty condemned propositions, the *Syllabus of the Principal Errors of Our Time*. This was an action that few would have foreseen in 1846 when, as a reforming pope, Pius succeeded Gregory XVI. Schemes to modernize the papal states were begun then, censorship was reduced and the laity were to be admitted to important positions in the government. The course of events prevented the full implementation of many of these reforms. The rift between the pope and the Italian unification movement widened to the point that, in November, 1848, he had to flee for safety to the Kingdom of Naples. His appeal for aid from the Catholic powers of Europe met no effective response until, in July, 1849, France took Rome and the pope was allowed to resume his throne. An uneasy calm obtained with the pope's security dependent upon the presence of foreign troops.

The *Syllabus of Errors* had its remote beginnings in 1849 when, partly at the suggestion of Gioacchino Pecci, bishop of Perugia and the future Leo XIII, a circular containing twenty-eight errors was sent round to churchmen and some of the laity. The *Syllabus* as we know it was eventually produced by culling extracts from Pius' own writings. Three events of the year 1863 hastened its long-delayed appearance: Renan published his *Vie de Jésus*, a prodigious success and an immense scandal; a congress for French-speaking Catholic intellectuals was held at Malines which publicly espoused complete religious tolerance and freedom of conscience, and other doctrines associated with liberalism; and, at a similar congress in Munich, the most *avant-garde* German Catholics under the leadership of Döllinger called for a new theology based on current historical and philosophical studies.

Public reaction to the encyclical and the *Syllabus* was immediate and violent. For one thing, the encyclical condemned, univocally and specifically, recent political actions such as press campaigns against Catholic dogma, the ban on religious teaching in schools and the use of the civil power against the Church. The simultaneous publication of the *Syllabus* added to the furor. Its propositions, quoted out of their context as they were, seemed to condemn freedom of conscience in itself, the independence of civil powers and even the advance of civilization. Society felt it was being attacked, and the proponents of liberalism and progress sprang to its defence. *Le siècle*, a French, liberal newspaper described the *Syllabus* as “a last challenge flung at the modern world by an expiring papacy,” and, like many others, vilified the person and the authority of the pope. The government of France intervened, not only by sending a formal protest to Rome but also by forbidding bishops in France to publish the encyclical to the faithful (although both documents had already been printed by the public press). The French bishops, like those throughout the world, remained loyal to the papacy and two of them defiantly read the whole encyclical in their cathedrals. By the end of January, 1865, however, Mgr. Dupanloup, the bishop of Orléans, had published an explanation of the documents and the circumstances of Rome’s actions in an immensely successful book, *La convention du 15 septembre et l’encyclique du 8 décembre*. This removed much of the disconcerting effect by simply reading the propositions of the *Syllabus* in their original context: The “liberalism” referred to was that which made human reason all powerful, without God; the “progress” Pius had condemned consisted of aggressive and impious revolution; “freedom of worship” was wrong if it was taken to mean that one religion was as good as another or that truth and falsehood are equally valid, and so on.

Among Catholics, long-standing divisions were exacerbated, although liberal Catholics were somewhat reassured by Dupanloup’s book and its approval by Rome. On the other hand, the Ultramontanists welcomed the documents and exploited them to the full. The most prominent among these was Louis Veuillot, editor of *L’Univers*, who criticized Dupanloup and his Catholic friends. For Veuillot, liberal and Catholic were incompatible terms.

Elsewhere in Europe the situation was similar to that in France. In Germany, Döllinger and his party felt personally affronted, but Bishop Ketteler of Mayence wrote a German equivalent of Dupanloup’s book. In Austria the government was bound by the terms of its concordat with Rome to permit their publication but, like Italy, (which also allowed them to appear) was unfavourable to the documents. And in England Her Majesty’s

government read them in a purely political light, an interpretation adopted, by and large, by the secular press. Catholic liberals, disheartened, saw their ideals condemned while Ultramontanists, especially Wilfrid Ward, were exultant. Newman, as usual, was cautious and precise, but with the Tractarians and their descendants (Catholic and Anglican) recognized in these documents condemnations he had himself made long before.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

In the mid-nineteenth century British North America was a newspaper-reading people. In 1858 there were twenty daily newspapers, eighteen published three times a week, fifteen twice a week and 156 weeklies in the Canadas alone.¹ I have made a selection from these and a few magazines based on their significance and their availability. Two of the most important were the *Globe* and the *Leader*, both published in Toronto. George Brown had founded the *Globe* in 1844 and it quickly became the voice of the Liberal Party and the most successful newspaper in Canada. In 1862 the circulation was 31,000 and many of these were sent by post across the country.² Its major rival, the *Leader*, was the organ of the Conservative Party, but claimed to represent true liberalism, with a small "l."³

The religious press was also very active in an age that depended mainly on reading for information and entertainment. Again, the number of newspapers and periodicals was vast.⁴ I have consulted some published by

¹ J. M. S. CARELESS, "Mid-Victorian Liberalism in Central Canadian Newspapers, 1850-67," *Canadian Historical Review* XXXI (1950), 221-222; R. A. HILL, "A Note on Newspaper Patronage in Canada during the late 1850s and early 1860s," *Canadian Historical Review* XLIX (1968), 44; W. H. KESTERTON, *A History of Journalism in Canada*, Carleton Library, No. 36 (McClelland and Stewart: Toronto, 1967), 39; H. ELLIOT, *Fate, Hope and Editorials: 1862-73* (Canadian Library Association: Ottawa, 1967).

² CARELESS, "Mid-Victorian Liberalism," pp. 222-223; *idem*, *Brown of the Globe* (2 vols.; Macmillan: Toronto, 1959-63), II, 68.

³ *Idem*, "Mid-Victorian Liberalism," pp. 223-230; *A History of Canadian Journalism*, ed. by J. R. BONE *et al.* (no publisher given: Toronto, 1908), 169, 177; A. ROBB, "The Toronto Globe and the Defence of Canada, 1861-66," *Ontario History* LXIV (1972), 65.

⁴ KESTERTON, *History*, p. 11.

Protestant bodies prominent in Canada in the 1860's.

THE SECULAR PRESS

In the days before the transatlantic cable, the arrival of a ship from Europe brought news for Canadian papers, duly published in columns headed "From Our European Correspondent" or the like. It was in these columns that most of the facts and opinions concerning the encyclical appeared. Often the Canadian newspapers reprinted foreign articles, from the British, the continental or the American press. Quite naturally, British sources predominated. Only in the selection of what was printed did editorial policy show itself. The effect of all this was to give the impression that the publication of the Roman documents was an almost exclusively political and European event. It also meant that the reaction given in Canadian newspapers was that of nineteenth century liberalism, a view that they had already publicly espoused. Thus the report published in the *Toronto Globe* (14 Jan., 1865)⁵ that "the Pope insists upon the absolute subordination of civil government to the authority of the Church," was a valid expression of its own view as well as a report of what its European source had said. The *Toronto Daily Leader* devoted more space to the matter than the *Globe* or other Canadian newspapers and had more editorial comment of its own, but for it as for the others, the publication of the encyclical and the *Syllabus* was a "purely political question" (14 Feb.).

By no means every newspaper reported on the encyclical. It was often mentioned in the *Toronto*, the *Montreal* and other papers, but the *Northern Advance* (Barrie), the *Nor-Wester* (Red River Settlement), and the *Yarmouth Herald* ignored it completely as, in effect, did the *New Brunswick Courier* (St. John) and the *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, both of which mentioned the documents only once.⁶ Perhaps there was a limited interest in Europe in the Red River Settlement, in 1865 very much Canada's frontier. Furthermore, where there was a significant number of Catholic readers opinions may have been tempered. In general, however, the secular press either opposed what it

⁵ All the newspaper articles referred to were published in 1865. Hereafter only the day and the month will be given.

⁶ *Courier* (18 Feb.): "The Pope's Encyclical Letter has been condemned by every Catholic Power except Austria. On the 7th of January the letter was publicly burned by the Students of the University of Naples." *Chronicle* (3 Feb.).

saw as the political implications of the Roman documents, or it ignored them

The *Leader* was the first to report the publication of the *Syllabus* in an article of 10 January, 1865:

The Pope has issued a bull condemning all modern religious and political errors having a tendency hostile to the Catholic Church, and exhorting the Bishops to confute them. The bull, which was signed on the 8th of October (*sic*) last, was drawn up by a committee of theologians under the presidency of Cardinal Caterini.

In fact, this was a relatively positive reception of the encyclical, but a severer attitude was adopted when news arrived from Paris dated 30 December, 1864 (*Leader*, 17 Jan.):

The letter condemns the establishment of liberty of conscience, liberty of religion, independence of the civil power as regards religious power, and rejects all the principles on which modern society rests, and renewing the anathema of 1832, issued by Gregory XVI. against liberal ideas, declares them incompatible with catholicism.

Here is a theme which was often to reappear in European dispatches. The papal bull was said to require exemption for the clergy from civil law, to contain teachings which threatened the constitutions of modern states, to enjoin religious intolerance and to deplore the “errors” of liberty of conscience and religious worship which had been recognized by national governments.

Closely allied to the above, and more commonly featured in these columns of European news was the political upheaval occasioned by the encyclical. Rome was treated harshly. In an article entitled “Beginning Right,” the *Sarnia Observer* (10 Feb.) said:

... So radical a measure [that of the Italian government suppressing all religious corporations] can be justified only on the ground that “all religious corporations” in the Kingdom are the Romish monasteries, whose abuses have been the curse of the land till, at last, it spues them out.

A very popular story concerned Cardinal D'Andrea.⁷ Readers learned that he advocated terms with King Victor Emmanuel, to the point of making of Rome a free city, and that he had defied the pope by refusing to return from Naples to Rome, even under the threat of losing the privileges of his rank. His opinions of the encyclical were given in an interview from Naples (*Globe*, 3 Feb.)

I am a Liberal, an Italian, and a man of progress ; consequently I regret the publication of the recent Encyclical ... I sympathize with the ideas of M. de Montalembert, M. de Falloux, and of M. Dupanloup, the eminent prelate. I think with a French bishop of great authority that M. Veuillot is an orthodox madman.

Widely reported was the reluctance of European Catholic countries to allow the publication of the decrees. Here was proof of their perversity, that even modern, liberal governments could not permit their free circulation. Interest centred on France because of its intimate connection with the Roman question, but also, perhaps, because it presented the only clear example of even a partial prohibition. Italy's reaction was slow and incomplete,⁸ Portugal was vague⁹ and Spain very late.¹⁰ In Austria they were published freely, but,

⁷ Details might vary but the gist of the story was always the same. His name appeared as Andrew, Andrea, D'Andrew, etc. He was a liberal, however, in all accounts.

⁸ "A Royal decree authorizes the circulation of the encyclical, without admitting propositions contrary to the institutions and legislation of Italy." "Arrival of the New York," *Leader* (1 March).

⁹ "We nevertheless hope, or rather we feel certain, that the Portuguese Government will not give the Royal authorization to a document the subversive doctrines of which threaten the basis of our Constitution and of all our rights." "The Encyclical in Portugal," *Globe* (14 Feb.).

¹⁰ "By a telegram received from Madrid this afternoon I learn that the Council of State has prohibited the publication of the encyclical letter in Spain. This act of resentment against the monstrous assumption of the Pope is rather a tardy one, I must admit; but the moral protest is not the less effective on that account." "Affairs in Europe," *ibid.* (24 Feb.).

alas, Austria was “helpless in the fetters of a most shameful concordat.”¹¹ France at least had been definite. The Minister of Justice could allow the bishops to publish part of the encyclical, but not the sections containing propositions which contradicted the very principles upon which the constitution of the Empire was based. The confusion of spiritual and political matters, confirmed by concordats, meant that such doctrines could not be promulgated from the pulpit with the approbation of the government; the pulpit, after all, is for the salvation of souls, not political controversy.¹²

Was prohibition the best weapon against these documents? Opinions varied. Some papers praised the French government for standing up for liberty, progress and modern civilization and for taking the only possible step when the foundations of society were threatened. Others suggested that a better policy would have been to encourage widespread publication, and to the ruin of the Church. How different things were in Protestant countries where liberty was in such high regard “that the poor old man’s thunder is as harmless as a fifth of November squall” (*Globe*, 14 Jan.). It was very much seen as a political affair of continental Europe, and editorials tended to follow their foreign sources, merely adding their own comments about the moral and religious questions involved.

The texts of the encyclical and the *Syllabus* were available to Canadians who had access to the major newspapers of Montreal and Toronto. The *Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette* published the entire text of the encyclical on its front page on 16 January, 1865 and the text of the *Syllabus* two days later. In the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Syllabus* was printed on 17 January. In Toronto, the encyclical appeared in the *Globe* on 17 January and the *Syllabus* in the *Leader* on 30 January. It may be assumed, then, given the wide circulation of the *Globe* and to a lesser extent of the other papers, that the editors of most Canadian newspapers and magazines would have seen the text of at least the encyclical.

Immediately apparent was the delight that the papacy had finally, publicly shown itself in its true colours:

the inherent spirit of the Romish Hierarchy never changes, however

¹¹ “Our London Correspondent,” *Daily British Colonist* (Victoria), (29 March).

¹² Cf. *Globe* (1 Feb.); *Colonist* (7 Feb.; 15, 21 March); *Montreal Herald* and *Daily Commercial Gazette* (21, 28 Jan.; 7 Feb.).

much it may adapt itself to circumstances – which hates religious liberty, denounces free schools, grasps at temporal power, and esteems heresy an offense deserving death. (*Observer*, 10 Feb.)

It goes almost without saying that the condemnations of the *Syllabus* were interpreted as a promulgation of their opposites and that precise statements were interpreted as wide generalizations. This was done everywhere, and the main reason appears to have been the technical and difficult language of the Roman documents which, even in translation, would have been unfamiliar to many readers. Few articles quoted from the documents, and usually readers were told both what they had said and what they meant: that no Protestant could be saved, that liberty was evil, that Scripture is an enemy and that civil governments should be under the pope. A striking instance of this appeared in the *Leader* (25 Jan.) in an article reprinted from the *New York Commercial Advertiser*. The article listed nine “errors” condemned by the *Syllabus*, conveniently paraphrased, and then proceeded:

From these condemned errors we derive the logical deduction that the Church, or at least, the Head of the Church ... holds...

1. That there should be a connection between the State and the Church ... the Catholic Church as Catholics do not admit the existence of any other.
2. That the State should tolerate no religion but the Catholic...
3. That liberty of conscience and of worship is not the right of every man, and should not be guaranteed by law.
4. . . . the civil law must give way to the ecclesiastical.
5. That the parent should not have the exclusive control over his children, and, least of all, should he have the right to educate them in his own way.
6. That popular schools open, without distinction, to all ... are not advantageous to civil society, and should not be allowed.

From the above it is clear that the propositions concerning liberty,

progress and modern civilization were almost the only ones commented on. A papal document is for the Church universal, they reasoned, and hence must be intended to have universal application. This was deduced from the universal reaction against these decrees that the European, and then the Canadian, press reported. In France, for example, their publication was seen as an attack on the bases of the empire, in England, as an attack on the principles of political society, in Europe generally, as “damnable errors” and in the United States as saying: “PROGRESS, LIBERALISM and Modern Civilization! These are the blots on the XIXth century” (*Observer*, 25 Jan.). Conspicuously absent in this most Italian affair, are any comments from Italy.

At the height of the debate Bishop Lynch, the Catholic archbishop of Toronto, gave three public lectures on the encyclical and the *Syllabus* in St. Michael’s Cathedral. The *Leader* published synopses of all three, the *Globe* of only the first.¹³ In this first address, delivered on 29 January, 1865, he examined the eightieth proposition and showed what the pope meant by the terms “progress,” “liberalism” and “modern civilization”:

reason is deified ... God's revelation is imperfect ... Protestantism is nothing more than another form of the same true religion in which it is possible to be equally pleasing to God, as in the Catholic Church. (*Leader*, 30 Jan.)

He then explained that reason must play an ancillary role for religion and that one religion is not as good as another, insisting throughout that the encyclical was not a political document. In the second talk, a week later, he violently castigated modern society and governments with specific references to the encyclical. Socialism, Communism and equal rights for women were condemned, clerical-liberals were called worldly, and Bible Societies were accused of mutilating and mistranslating the Word of God – the Bible being a book so difficult to read correctly that “even in the hands of a certain Bishop of the Established Church it is made to speak fables and lies” (*Leader*, 7 Feb.). Bishop Lynch supported the condemnation of secret societies because they are opposed to the common weal and injurious to the morals and faith

¹³ “City News,” *Globe* (30 Jan.). The *Globe* closed its factual account by observing that Bishop Lynch discussed only “that part of it devoted to spiritual matters.” The *Observer*, “The Pope's Encyclical Letter” (3 March) contains an indirect reference to these talks in an editorial reprinted from the *Canadian Independent*.

of their members. The final address explained propositions five to twenty in terms of the Catholic understanding of the Church: "... the Sovereign Pontiff condemns the doctrine which seeks to make the Church the handmaiden of the State, a sort of police to keep the subjects quiet" (*Leader*, 13 Feb.). The editor of the *Leader*, after congratulating himself for his tolerance in publishing the remarks of a Catholic bishop on the encyclical, immediately repeated the former criticisms, insisting especially on the political character of the decrees (*Leader*, 14 Feb.). To judge from the impression made on the public press, the archbishop had wasted his time. Comments from the archbishop of Montreal were also published in the *Leader* (1 March) and harshly criticized. Two of his remarks were quoted and then translated into "plain English"

The teaching of any opinions other than those which have the stamp of the Roman Catholic Church may be prohibited; an assertion which strikes at the root of religious liberty and free discussion ... This pretension of the Church to a right of interference in civil matters by the infliction of punishment is asserted without limit.¹⁴

This was the extent of Catholic participation in the press's reporting about the Syllabus.

Almost everything about the encyclical was criticized, and prelates and Catholics in general were pictured as either embarrassed and silent or as fanatical. Their discomfort was chronicled by the press in America and England, and these reports were reprinted in Canada. Every move of the French liberal Catholics, especially, was remarked on. The *Union de l'ouest* (Catholic), for example, was said to have been suspended for exciting hatred and contempt of the government, but the *International* (imperialist and Catholic) could think of nothing sadder than the appearance of the documents, and *La France* (of the same character) expressed its surprise and regret. Montalembert was said to have asked the pope whether it were possible to be a loyal French citizen and a good Catholic at the same time (*Globe*, 2 Feb.). Among the French bishops, Canadians read, the prudent were silent, realizing the enormous error of the pope (Archbishop Darboy of Paris and Bishop

¹⁴ There was no reference to this in the Montreal *Herald* or the *Gazette*, although the latter mentioned on 8 Feb. that the Bishop of Quebec had issued a pastoral letter on the encyclical.

Dupanloup were named) and only twenty – "fanatical Jesuits" – had expressed their approval. That the Archbishop of Besançon and the Bishop of Moulins had defied the government by reading the encyclical from their pulpits was reported, and while their prosecution was welcomed, their release was also praised, not for being just but for denying them the chance to pose as martyrs. But it was considered unfortunate that the bishops could protest the prohibition of the publication of the decrees while they were in fact secretly pleased because they were relieved of the impossible task of having to explain them. Even the pope was portrayed as realizing the mistake he had made in publishing these documents, given the precarious situation of the "Court of Rome" (a favourite expression used to underscore the political interpretation the documents received). He was said greatly to regret their appearance and bitterly to complain of the bad advice he had received from his counsellors. By February, it was reported, steps had been taken to soften them, the first being the famous *apologia* of Dupanloup.

The press stressed that much-needed explanations had been sent to every government. But this raised the question why such offensive documents had been issued at all. Many reasons were suggested: madness, judicial blindness, a desperate attempt to keep the temporal power of the pope and, behind them all, Jesuit machinations. Several secret histories of the encyclical were available, some reasonably accurate. According to one (*Leader*, 13 Feb.), the well-known Jesuit theologian, G. Perrone, had written it three years earlier, and, after much debate, it was finally published in the teeth of the Convention of 15 September. Others stated that it had been drawn up by a committee of eminent prelates and theologians, and was meant to be "taken, therefore, as the unadulterated essence of the entire wisdom and learning of Catholicity."¹⁵ Its origins were also ascribed to the Bishop of Perpignan who had forwarded a draft of the propositions to Rome in 1860. Significantly, readers were informed, the bishop did not live to see the completion of his action (*Gazette*, 13 Jan.). Whatever the reason, its publication was thought to be the falsest move ever made by the pope, the result of which would do serious harm to the Church's cause. Some predicted the imminent collapse of the papacy, a victim of those absolutely impregnable, political achievements of modern society: liberty and progress. Neither was this to be regretted, "for Rome is incapable of improving the future of mankind" (*Observer*, 1 April). Other, less extreme results were predicted: the separation of church and state throughout

¹⁵ E.g. *Leader* (18 Jan.); *Gazette* (13 Jan.); *Observer* (3 March).

Europe; an alienation of the French, leading to the fall of Rome; the disappearance of liberal Catholicism,¹⁶ even “a help to check the tide setting in favor of a bastard Papacy among our [English] upper classes” (*Colonist*, 15 March). American newspapers were concerned that Catholics in politics might obey these teachings (*Leader*, 25 Jan.). In Canada a similar concern was shown, and instanced by the predictable response to the divorce question at the Quebec Conference by the Catholic, French-Canadian press. The possibility that liberty would be lost by a Catholic majority eventually gaining power was raised and re-enforced by frightening statistics on the growth of the Catholic population (*Leader*, 31 Jan.).

Finally, a word should be said about the ungracious treatment directed against the person of the pope. Most of the references to him used the title “pope.” Sometimes he was sarcastically referred to as “His Holiness;” “The poor old man” and “poor old Pio Nono” were also common. “The Old Man of the Mountains,” it was said, had outlived his usefulness. Everything he did was of interest, from receiving cigars from Havana to censoring the emperor’s *Life of Caesar*. This tone of abusive pity was used for the encyclical as well. It was called an extraordinary specimen of bigotry, foolish, a fatuous and monstrous presumption, execrable, and, worst of all, it was mediaeval, comparable to the worst actions of an Innocent or Gregory. The *Sarnia Observer* (24 Feb.) reprinted a flippant poem from *Punch*, its summary of the whole affair. Here are a few stanzas:

Dear Pope, you warn us not to tread,
 Upon your reverend corns,

Bid us, on peril, not to take
 Your last bull by the horns;

Bold dogmas whole which we’ve been taught,
 Are snares to those who heed ‘em;

Renounce the faiths we’ve learned to view
 As keystones of our freedom.

¹⁶ *Observer* (7 April). It was assumed that the Pope would then leave Rome, perhaps coming to Montreal (*Observer*, 24 March).

In bar of such demands, although
Ex cadredra you toss 'emus,

In your own style, we can but plead
Non possumus – non possumus!

You bid us hold the Church's right
To dictate to our conscience,

Although it lay down black is white,
And sense condemn as nonsense;

Bid us believe the Pope supreme
O'er Law, and King, and Kaiser,

His dogmas above reason deem
His lore than science wiser

*Non possum us!*¹⁷

In all of this the secular press treated the encyclical and the *Syllabus* as political documents which primarily affected affairs in Europe and only then, in a secondary manner, those of Canada and the United States.

THE PROTESTANT PRESS

In its discussion of the encyclical, the Protestant press differed from the secular more in degree than in kind. The same points were made, but in stronger language. Hence, here too the accent was on the political implications, first in France and in Europe generally, and then throughout the world. There is nothing surprising in this because its sources would have

¹⁷ “Mr. Punch's Non Possumus,” *Observer* (24 Feb). It summarized its view of the affair with the phrase, *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat*. This quotation also appeared in the *Colonist* (21 Feb.), and may have been copied from the *Morning Advertiser* (London, England), (29 Dec., 1864), p. 4; cf. D. McELRATH, *The Syllabus of Pius IX: Some Reactions in England*, Bibliothèque de la revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, No. 39 (Publications Universitaires de Louvain: Louvain, 1964), 47.

been the same as those of the public press when they were not the public press itself

The encyclical and the *Syllabus* were greeted as fully confirming all suspicions about the real character of the papacy. It had shown itself as the foe of true religion and of the by now familiar values – liberty, progress and modern civilization. These decrees were said to represent the highest Catholic wisdom could reach, i.e., they were mediaeval. Here, too, secondary sources were common, and the bishops of France, the Catholic liberals and Cardinal D’Andrea again made their embarrassed appearances. As might be expected, the language was quite unrestrained; the pope was described as an old Italian priest whose narrow bigotry increased with his years, who was feeble, superstitious and suffered from childish hallucinations. The encyclical was presented as an appalling catalogue, shameful, outrageous, a doctrine of persecution and tyranny. Also, the same extrapolation was made here as in the secular press, by which the propositions, narrow and specific in their original context, became generalizations.

There was a vast difference in the space devoted to the encyclical among the Protestant papers and magazines. The *Christian Guardian*, an influential Wesleyan weekly printed in Toronto, discussed these decrees in detail. The first article concerning them was published on 25 January, 1865, and material was still appearing on 24 May. *The Presbyterian Witness and Evangelical Advocate* (Halifax), a weekly, provided a wide coverage. The *Christian Journal*, a Primitive Methodist weekly, represents another style of reporting; its coverage consisted of snippets of European news culled from other papers, but its attention was directed more to a report that the Catholic Church was collecting money to build a new floor in Purgatory than to the encyclical (20 Jan.). Among the monthlies, the affair naturally received less attention. They too, fitted the encyclical into a wide view of the papacy and the Catholic Church, selecting aspects that would appeal to their readers. For example, the Presbyterians linked it to the Tractarian movement and had:

no doubt at all that Oriel College and the Vatican have been exchanging signals while the genius of infidelity stands by and smiles complacently.¹⁸

¹⁸ “The Aspect of the Time Practically Considered,” *Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church* IV (1865), 199-200.

For the Anglicans it showed how illusory was:

the reality of the boasted unity of the Roman Church, and the value of a living infallible guide in the controversies and errors of the present day.¹⁹

No text of either document was printed in a Protestant publication that I have examined, but reference was made to their free publication in Canada, possibly referring to their appearance in Toronto and Montreal papers.²⁰ Many opinions, however, about the origins of the *Syllabus* not found elsewhere were printed in Protestant papers and periodicals. The *Church Chronicle*, an Anglican monthly newsheet, reported that a member of the Catholic hierarchy had combined a personal, defamatory attack on the *pape blanc* with a melodramatic accusation that the *pape noir* was using the encyclical to enlist fanatical and feeble-minded Catholics into a world-wide plot against society. Editorial comment merely pointed out the interesting contrast between this exposition and that of Bishop Lynch.²¹ The *Guardian* (8 Feb.) interpreted the documents saying, in so many words, that the pope had admitted that the pretention of favouring liberty had failed, and so he and the bishops must attempt a new approach by announcing boldly their true opinions, by repudiating liberty of conscience, by demanding absolute submission of the nations and by endorsing the duty of punishing heretics. At the same time, however, these ideas were to be expressed in so exaggerated a form that a plausible disclaimer would be at hand if results were too disastrous. To the *Canadian Independent*, a Congregational monthly magazine, the pope's intrepidity proceeded "from sheer blindness and fatuous vanity,"²² sentiments

¹⁹ "The Pope's Encyclical," *The Church Chronicle* III (May, 1865), p. 28.

²⁰ The *Christian Journal* (27 Jan.) said: "[since it] re-establishes many points in the Roman Catholic controversy that many Roman Catholics refuse to acknowledge and Protestants seem to forget, we intend to publish it entire in our columns, and begin with it this week." This intention was not carried out.

²¹ "The Abbe Guette on the Encyclical in the *Union Chrétienne*," *Chronicle* III (May, 1865), pp. 28-29.

²² "The Pope's Encyclical," *The Canadian Independent* XI (1865), p. 249. The author summarized his views by quoting a French newspaper "M. Louis Blanc writing in the *Temps* his impression of the effect produced in London by the Encyclical, describes it as a mixed feeling of wonderment and joy—of wonderment

repeated in the *Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church*, also a monthly, which described the document as madness and, like the *Sarnia Observer*, the pope by the phrase “*Quern Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*”²³

The Protestant press was very interested in possible consequences for Rome. That most eagerly and confidently expected was the disappearance of the papacy, but separation of church and state in continental, Catholic Europe and the loss to the Church of Poland through Russian reaction to the encyclical were also predicted. Less eagerly awaited was the effect it might have on the political behaviour of Canadian Catholics, especially when it was claimed that the pope had given Catholics permission to vote for the scheme of Confederation as a block. The *Guardian* was confident that the majority of the Catholic laity would ignore these decrees in practice, but it was less sure about the hierarchy who were bound by oath to place the aggrandizement of the Catholic Church before everything else.²⁴ The Protestant press was alarmed at the possibilities open to unscrupulous bishops and priests who, by clever use of a solid political minority, could attack the liberal institutions which had guaranteed the very freedoms they were abusing. No more specific action, however, than simply not allowing this to happen was recommended against these “servants of a foreign prince.”

FINAL REMARKS

One realizes, after reading through these old newspapers and magazines, how little journalism has changed in a hundred years. Newspapers, then as today, published what they wanted to and what would appeal to their readers. The *Syllabus* came and went with the final state of affairs pretty well what it had been to start with. The Church of Rome was mediaeval and intolerant; everyone knew that before the appearance of the decrees and everyone knew it still after they had been examined and discussed.

at the folly of the act, and of joy, because it is suicidal.”

²³ “The Pope’s Encyclical,” *Home and Foreign Record* IV (1865), p. 138. The quotation, *Quern Deus vult perdere...*, appears in this article and, in the same volume, on page 200 where the author mentions the “... madness of an Encyclical letter from the reigning Pope, in which the worst specimens of an ancient and, as it appears, incurable bigotry, are incorporated.”

²⁴ “The Encyclical Enforced in Canada,” *Christian Guardian* (12 April).

The awkward situation of the papacy was one of the major interests of the time, and it is not surprising that political factors in the origins and results of the *Syllabus* were presented to the exclusion of most others. Politically the publication of the *Syllabus* must be judged to have been a mistake. The encyclical appearing by itself, as one more papal document much like all the others, would have attracted little attention. But the propositions of the *Syllabus*, stark and out of context, invited the contempt of unsympathetic readers, and they were legion. Rome was little aware of the power of the press, and must have been surprised at the popular and widespread reaction against the *Syllabus* and, by a sort of spill-off, against the encyclical. The anomalous form of the *Syllabus*, without an address, a date or a signature, and the fact that it was meant for the bishops did not prevent the press and others from linking it inseparably with Pius IX and his encyclical, to the detriment of both.

Our study of the Canadian press has indicated how extensively religion and politics were intermingled in the 1860's. While the secular press emphasized the political aspects of the crisis in Rome, and the Protestant press, the religious ones, both viewed it essentially as political. Since the spiritual and moral authority of the papacy had been repudiated long before, it was assumed that political power alone assured the continuing existence of the Roman Church. As the decision of Pius to publish these documents was, quite correctly, seen as an irreversible move towards the disappearance of this political power, the subsequent disappearance of the papacy itself was expected. Only after the papal states had actually been lost was attention necessarily directed to the pope's moral authority. At first, the traditional hostility prevailed, but more recently, with changes in the attitudes of Christians to each other, interest and sympathy have begun to replace some of these old suspicions. Thus, in a paradoxical way, Pius IX may be called the first modern pope. His uncompromising attitude towards the anti-religious philosophies and political theories of his time contributed to the establishment of the modern papacy as a significant moral force in our society. Whether this episode represents the astuteness sometimes attributed to Rome or the power of the Holy Ghost to reap wheat where cockle has been sown I leave the reader to decide.