

**HIS DOMINION VS NEW IRELAND:
THE ONTARIO PROTESTANT CHURCHES
AND THE FENIAN INVASION, 1866**

by

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Second Reader

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Date: April 2, 2007

His Dominion vs New Ireland: The Ontario Protestant Churches and the Fenian Invasion, 1866

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In June of 1866 Canada was invaded by a group of Irish-American freedom fighters known as the Fenians. Canada was the closest, and most viable, location for an attack by the anti-British group. The Protestant churches in Ontario were not mute in their condemnation of the invasion and this thesis explores the reasons why they were so opposed to the Fenian mission. In 1866, Canada was not yet a nation and a large amount of Ontario's citizens were of Irish descent. Because of this, the Fenians actually anticipated support from within the Canadian-Irish population and were disheartened when they were met with muskets, and not parades. The Protestant response was unequivocally anti-Fenian and the religious press of the day used its significant influence to challenge and condemn every aspect of the Fenians and their intentions towards both Britain and Canada. Within these condemnations, a picture of what it meant to be both Canadian and Protestant emerged.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must begin by giving honour to Jesus. I thank Christ for getting me through this process, for granting me stamina and for reminding me to pray each time before I sat down to write (I am not saying I did that, but that is my deficiency, not His). I also owe Him my gratitude for keeping me and my wife safe on all our travels to various archives and churches around Ontario and Quebec, and for introducing me to some wonderful people who took a real interest in this project and helped me to find information and sources that I was unaware even existed. For these, and so many other, things I owe Christ more than I'll ever know.

The people who helped me along the way also deserve credit and no one deserves more than my faithful and loving wife. She lost her dining room table for a year under a disorganized mountain of papers and books (well, it looked disorganized, to the discerning eye everything was where it was supposed to be). She gave up vacation time to putter around for hours in strange towns and cities while I poured over microfiches and manuscripts in the basements of numerous archives and universities. She sat and listened to me ramble on time and again about the newest discovery, or listened to the latest re-write, or looked lovingly at me as I explained the subtle nuances of the Protestant world in nineteenth century Ontario. But, most of all, she loved and supported me and told me that I could do this. She was always there for me, even though she had more than enough on her own plate, and for that, and so many other things, she has my heart and my admiration.

Next, I must thank my first reader, Dr. Gordon Heath, for his insight and guidance throughout this process. He encouraged me and actually got me excited about spending

the next year of my life writing on one topic. I am not sure if I should thank him for that or turn my back on him forever! He gave me countless pep talks (especially about the importance of always picking your wife up from work on time), and really made me feel like a historian, and not just a student trying to get a degree. His insights and ideas were priceless and there is no way I could have done this without him. The books he lent me and the ideas he gave me influenced this paper, as well as my views on the nation of Canada and even my own faith. Thanks Gord, you really helped me.

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A special thank-you goes out to the staff of the Battlefield Museum in Ridgeway for giving me the use of their church files and that tiny desk for an entire day. I also want to thank Rev. Sally Ann Longfellow from People's Memorial United Church in Ridgeway for giving me a tour of the church, for showing me Malcolm McEachren's plaque, the various medals from the battle and for introducing me to Chris Riegel and Janet Boyce; both of whom were very helpful filling in the "personal" side of the tale.

Although I was unable to use many Catholic sources in this thesis I still want to thank Dr. Terrence Fay for his kindness. The fact that he took the time to write some graduate student from another school several emails and offer fantastic insights into the Catholic mindset in Canada around this topic was greatly appreciated. My one regret during the process is that I was never able to take him up on his invitation to have me over to his office to talk about the Fenians. I look forward to remedying that someday soon.

To the congregation and staff at Walton Memorial United Church I thank-you all so much for your help during this past year. I am so touched by all the people who asked me about the thesis, who prayed for me during the process and who went out of their way to congratulate me after my defense. I think fondly of those who even offered to read this thing simply to support me and let me know that I was never alone, and that you all “had my back.” I am thrilled to be a part of such a supportive community that is so willing to extend grace to both me and my wife; that has been appreciated more than words could ever express.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my family. To my grandmothers, both of whom act as the family historians and on whose knees I first fell in love with the stories about where we come from. So, to my Grandma Grannary (nee MacDonnell) and Grandma Robertson (nee Christie) this thesis is dedicated to you both for being such great historians in your own rights. I want to thank my cousins Robbie, Michael and Jamie (great name), my Uncle Bob and especially my Auntie Lynne for letting us crash at your house while we were in Montreal. While the trip was academically fruitful, the time spent reconnecting with all of you was priceless. Thanks to my kid sister, Jeni, who put

me up while I was staying in Toronto, fed me and gave me fantastic directions that compensated for my deficient internal compass and kept me from getting lost. I know I was there for school but my favourite part of the trip was watching movies with you. And to my parents who bought me a typewriter when I was eleven so that I could write down my stories and, in so doing, changed the course of my life. Thank-you for letting me know that my stories were good enough to be written down, that meant the world to me (still does).

Although this incident occurred over a century ago, the themes in this tale are present in the contemporary world. While Christians may differ in regards to taking up arms in defense of one's country, they all must be careful about painting other people with too broad, and too damning, a brush. While the churches condemned the Fenians for many good reasons, there is a noticeable lack of understanding and compassion for them. These were a group of men who felt that their way of life had been utterly destroyed by a dictator that was vastly superior in size and resources. In an attempt to find dignity and some level of respect, the Fenians resorted to the only option they felt was left to them: insurrection. They also spoke in the only language they felt their oppressors understood: violence.

While the idea of using physical force to achieve a desired result may seem repugnant, the churches could have spent more of their energy trying to understand this adversary; in this they might have come closer to the heart of the One they profess throughout their writings to serve. The lesson for the modern follower is to be slow to condemn and quick to listen. The church is seen by its followers to be, quite literally, the voice of God to the faithful and, as such, exerts enormous influence on its members.

Therefore, the power at the church's disposal should be used at all times to help create peace and understanding, and not to support political ideologies that demonize fellow human beings, regardless of their beliefs.

History is so important and stories like the Fenians and the Protestant Churches need to be told. They edify and inform us; they caution us and offer us insights into the traumas and dangers of our own time. I hope this thesis accurately captures the intentions of the people involved and honours the memory of those on both sides of the conflict who gave all for a cause they believed in: their homeland.

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INTRODUCTION

A young boy woke up early on a clear June morning in 1866 to the sound of incessant knocking on the door of his parent's farm house. Normally the sound would not have been enough to wake him but it had been going on for a while and he could hear his mother's voice downstairs; she sounded concerned. Rubbing the sleep out of his eyes the young boy made his way downstairs expecting to see a neighbour, or maybe a friend coming to call on him. Instead, he was greeted by the sight of a gruff soldier, dressed in green, carrying a rifle with a bayonet attached to the end, and asking his visibly shaken mother for some food for his men.

A short distance away another farm was also receiving guests similar in appearance and just as unexpected. The owner of this farm was a young Quaker and although he knew nothing of war himself he knew enough to be concerned for the safety of his newly-born daughter, his wife and his farm around men so obviously prepared to fight. Years later, when asked about this experience the peaceful Quaker simply replied that the men were polite and that they took care not to step on his flowers. The young boy echoed these sentiments saying that the men sat in the kitchen and outside the house eating pancakes and laughing before leaving just as suddenly as they appeared. Although the morning's events had been a surprise to both the young boy and the Quaker neither held any doubt as to what the appearance of these soldiers signaled: Canada was under attack.¹

¹ The story about the young boy is a paraphrase from the opening paragraphs of the following article: "The Fenian Raid of 1866: Some Personal Reminiscences Gathered From Persons Still Living Who Saw The Scenes Enacted at Fort Erie 42 Years Ago." *The Courier* (May 1908). The account of the young girl came

For the first two weeks of June in 1866 Canada was invaded by an army of Irish liberation fighters known as the Fenians who planned to capture Montreal and Toronto in order to take the St. Lawrence hostage and use this vital shipping lane as a bargaining chip to force England out of Ireland. Should England fail to comply it was pondered that British North America² could be renamed New Ireland and the Irish people could start again far from the reach of tyrannical England. The Fenians' invasion force was largely comprised of battle-tested and well-armed Irish-American Civil War veterans under the practiced leadership of General John O'Neil; in short, they were a military force to be reckoned with.³ The Fenians launched their assault at approximately two in the morning of 1 June by taking boats across the river from Buffalo and landing in Fort Erie. They then proceeded to capture the fort, burn the railroad tracks and cut the telegraph wires before camping at Frenchman's Creek for the night. Unfortunately for the Fenians word of the invasion did spread and three hours after the landing companies in Toronto, Montreal and Hamilton were already preparing to ship out to engage the enemy in combat. The attack, though shocking, was not completely unexpected, as most Canadians had been reading about the Fenian plot in the media for some time.

Writing in his journal on 1 June, James Croil—a Southern Ontario Presbyterian layman—wrote the following words, “Shall I ever forget this first day of June?”⁴ The fact

the author's interaction with a Ridgeway local by the name of Janet Boyce who was the Great Granddaughter of the Quaker. This story was passed down in her family and she passed it on to the author.

² At this time the name of Canada was fairly interchangeable with the name British North America although most papers referred to the nation with the former, and not the latter, name. Canada will be the name used for this paper unless quoting a source that uses the term British North America.

³ John MacDonald was impressed with O'Neil's military knowledge and made the following comment about the Fenian leader: “Gen. O'Neil's experience in the military campaigns of the Civil War had taught him many useful lessons...and the skillful disposition he made of his forces was commensurate with the ability of a high-class tactician.” John A. MacDonald, *Troublous Times in Canada: A History of the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870* (Toronto: W.S. Johnston and Co., 1910), 32.

⁴ James Croil, *Church Man's Diary 1866*, 69.

that he knew of the invasion on the very day that it happened proves just how quickly word of the attack spread throughout the province. Croil knew that it was only a matter of time before the hostile army would push further inland. That meant that he and his family were in grave danger and he conveyed that fear in his journal, "For the second time in my life I slept with a loaded revolver at my head."⁵ It would only take a day before Croil's fears would be realized as the invasion entered its second phase and the Fenian army pressed deeper into Canada.

Considering the impact this attack had on the people of Canada at the time it is strange to see that there is surprisingly little mention of it in the greater picture of the country's history.⁶ This is not a shortcoming of recent national records but a tradition that seems to have been with the event almost since its occurrence. Captain John A. MacDonald, a veteran of the Battle of Ridgeway, stated this very concern at the beginning of his personal journal in which he recounted the skirmish from a firsthand perspective, "It is a strange fact that Canadian authors and historians do not seem to have fully realized the gravity of the situation that then existed, as the event has been passed over by them with the barest possible mention."⁷ Considering this was written by one of the men who actually fought in the battle it appears that the answer to James Croil's question about whether or not the day would be forgotten was "yes".

Through the study of sermons, Synod reports, denominational newspapers, journals, correspondence and various other church-related writings from 1866 this thesis will record the opinions the Ontario Protestant Churches held regarding the Fenians

⁵ Ibid, 69.

⁶ "One of the most dangerous and critical periods in the history of Canada...It is a strange fact that Canadian authors and historians do not seem to have fully realized the gravity of the situation that then existed." MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 5.

⁷ Ibid, 5.

before and after the invasion.⁸ Although it is difficult to ascertain how accurately the Protestant press reflected the sentiments of its readers, the influence of the religious press cannot be overestimated. When possible, this thesis will refer to the writings of lay members of the churches in the hopes of providing a more rounded perspective indicative of the average person in the pews, and not just the editorials of the writers. While it would be a stretch to state that religious papers and denominational records spoke for all members of a certain church, the personal records of the time do indicate strong support for the positions espoused in the official literature.⁹

The Protestant churches' opinions deserve to be noted since they exerted tremendous influence over English-speaking Canadian culture at that time.¹⁰ On this position of power Phyllis Airhart states: "Pulpit and religious press combined to

⁸ For the purposes of this paper the term Protestant, unless otherwise specified, will be used to refer to the four largest, and most influential, Protestant churches in Canada at this time. These are the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist churches. Though there were other Protestant churches present in Canada (the Quakers were already mentioned) these four comprised over 90% of Protestants. See William Westfall, *Two Worlds: Nineteenth Century Protestant Culture in Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 10-11.

⁹ Peter Hennessy notes that papers were given over to editorializing and how accurately they portrayed the mindset of their readers must be scrutinized. For more on this see Peter Hennessy, "The Press and Broadcasting," in *Contemporary History: Practice and Method*, ed. Anthony Seldon (Basil: Blackwell, 1988), 20. Even though journalists cannot be expected to treat issues of the day with as even a hand as historians, the use of papers to help define the positions of certain people within a given community should not be underestimated. For more on this topic see Gordon Heath, "'Forming Sound Public Opinion: The Late Victorian Canadian Protestant Press and Nation-Building,'" *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* (forthcoming), footnotes 10 & 11; Roberto Franzosi, "The Press as a Source of Socio-Historical Data: Issues in the Methodology of Data Collection from Newspapers," *Historical Methods* (1987): 5-16.

¹⁰ For more on the influence of the Protestant Church in Canadian culture see Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 29-42; Phyllis D. Airhart, "Ordering a Nation and Reordering Protestantism, 1867-1914," in *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990*, ed. George Rawlyk (Burlington: Welch Publishing, 1990), 98-138; Michael Gauvreau, "Protestantism Transformed: Personal Piety and the Evangelical Social Vision, 1815-1867," in *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990*, 48-97; John S. Moir, "Who Pays the Piper: Canadian Presbyterianism and Church-State Relations," in *Early Presbyterianism in Canada*, ed. Paul Laverdure (Gravelbourg: Gravelbooks, 2003), 22-27; Harry A. Renfree, *Heritage and Horizon: The Baptist Story in Canada* (Mississauga: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1988), 59-68; Heath, "Forming Sound Public Opinion"; John Webster Grant, "The Impact of Christianity on Canadian Culture and Society, 1867-1967," *Theological Bulletin* 3 (January 1968): 40-50; John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Vancouver: Regent Publishing, 1988), 91-113 and 207-227. For the role of Catholic influence see Brian P. Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993.), 133-141.

galvanize public support for the nation which Protestants believed would become 'His Dominion'."¹¹ The religious fervour of the time coupled with a growing sense of Canadian nationalism caused many Canadians to look to the writings of the church to help inform and guide them:

As a medium for the communication of religious intelligence-as an education, refined and elevating-as a fireside preacher, quickening the intellect, expanding the heart, and bearing spiritual treasures to myriads of homes, the religious newspaper wields an influence with which society can ill dispense, and that no other moral force can so adequately supply.¹²

It is difficult to understand the influence of the Fenian invasion on Canada without reading what the Protestant churches in Ontario had to say about it.¹³ The denominational newspapers kept the people informed and educated and the official reports of the church revealed to the reader the national, moral and theological battle between the burgeoning ideas of Canada as God's Dominion and the "New Ireland" of the invaders.

If one were to attend a party where all the invitees spoke only about this topic in Canadian history one look around the room would yield a vision of numerous substantially different groups talking about the event from their own, unique perspective. The first group would be comprised of the eye-witnesses and no one would gather a larger audience than Captain John A. MacDonald, whose book *Troublous Times in Canada: A History of the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870* is, arguably, the most valuable resource on the Fenian Invasions of Canada. His tale is incredibly rich in details about the invasion, he cites multiple primary sources from both the Fenian and Canadian camps,

¹¹ Airhart, "Ordering a New Nation and Reordering Protestantism 1867-1914," 99.

¹² "The Religious Newspaper," *Canadian Churchman*, 13 June 1866, 1. This was also the case in official Baptist thinking of the time as the following quote shows: "The Canadian Baptist is the only exponent of our denominational views published...we recommend it to the lead of every family in the association." Rev. R. Pickard, *Minutes of the 8th Annual Meeting of the Huron Association of Baptist Churches*, 1867, 3.

¹³ See John Webster Grant, "The Impact of Christianity," 40. Heath makes the claim, "Many of these religious publications were concerned with more than just building a church or a denomination; they were committed to the task of building a new nation." Heath, "Forming Sound Public Opinion," 4.

and the fact that it was written from an actual eyewitness to both the 1866 and 1870 invasions makes it a priceless resource for any person interested in the tale.¹⁴ It was MacDonald's intent to tell people the events that transpired in that fateful June in as great a detail as possible. He accomplished this by writing from his own experience as well as including numerous correspondences, maps, journals, official letters, newspaper articles and detailed lists of the various soldiers and companies that participated in the battle on both sides. In his own words, MacDonald states that his book was designed to "give the reader a faithful account of what occurred on these stirring occasions."¹⁵ While the author did a fantastic job retelling the story of the Fenian raids his bias was obvious in that he wrote as a man who desired to highlight the bravery of the Canadian volunteers and invited his readers to "emulate their example."¹⁶ His book is an easy read and moves along quickly giving brief background on the major players and dedicating an almost even amount of space to the battles and skirmishes as it does discussing the social and political environment that helped to shape the events.

Standing next to MacDonald and interjecting when appropriate would be Francis Wayland Campbell, who was the Deputy Surgeon-General for the Royal Regiment of the Canadian Infantry during this time and he would be discussing the lectures he published based on the journals he composed during 1866 and 1870. The strength of his book *The Fenian Invasions of Canada in 1866 and 1870 and the Operations of the Montreal Military Brigade in Connection Therewith*¹⁷ lies in the fact that it, like MacDonald's

¹⁴ While the Fenians did attempt another raid in 1870 on the province of Manitoba, this event will not be referenced since the actions that transpired there, while interesting, are not within the scope of this thesis and occurred at a later date.

¹⁵ Macdonald, *Troublous Times*, 6.

¹⁶ MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 6.

¹⁷ Francis Wayland Campbell, *The Fenian Invasions of Canada of 1866 and 1870 and the Operations of the Montreal Militia Brigade in Connection Therewith* (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, 1904).

book, is written by an eyewitness to the invasion. In fact, his lecture was published a full six years before MacDonald's book and, as such, was even closer to the events than the more famous *Troublous Times*. However, the Surgeon-General could never accrue as large an audience as the Captain because the usefulness of this book is limited to the encounters that the Montreal militia had with the Fenians (which is none) so the reports of the Battle of Ridgeway are all second-hand. The fact that it is really just a record of various journal entries makes it easy to find certain dates of interest and the author's medical education makes it an interesting resource to see how various injuries were treated at that time.

Scian Dubh would have a large group as well, but his audience would be the people who love a good story more than the facts or dates of the event. Mr. Dubh's shorter book *Ridgeway: An Historical Romance of the Fenian Invasion of Canada*¹⁸ was written shortly after the famed battle and is useful in that it portrays the events from a decidedly more Fenian-friendly angle. Capturing the spirit of Irish storytelling the book is a fascinating read as the author seeks to shape the battle as some sort of dramatic story located in the tragedy-filled annals of Irish history. Dubh is no more useful as a source than any of the others already mentioned but he does grant one a rare insight into how someone would tell the story of the Battle like a novel as opposed to simply recording the facts. Also, Dubh seeks only to record the Battle of Ridgeway and does not care much to see the event as part of the bigger picture of Fenianism as the others are more prone to do.

¹⁸ Scian Dubh, *Ridgeway: An Historical Romance of the Fenian Invasion of Canada* (Buffalo: McCarroll and Company, 1868).

Anyone looking around the room would have their attentions frequently pulled off to one corner by the sounds of laughter. In that corner one might see a group gathered around Doscen Ganust, whose satirical account *History of the Fenian Invasion of Canada, with Numerous Illustrations*¹⁹ seems to have been written fairly close to the invasion and is an unapologetic mockery of almost every party involved. From lambasting the Canadian Generals Booker and Peacock for both incompetence and cowardice to stating that Cain, the fratricide committing son of Adam found in the Bible,²⁰ was the progenitor of the Fenian race, Ganust is a wonderful example of the satirical climate of the day but hardly a resource for solid, historical details. While he does quote newspapers of the day and footnotes certain legitimate sources, his intent is to entertain his audience with quips and stories like the one about Canadian General Peacocke awaking on the day of the Battle of Ridgeway to find the road inexplicably lengthened during the night, which made it impossible for him to make it to the battle on time.

Off to the side the careful observer would find other people also practicing the art of observation. These scholars would be watching and listening intently to the first-hand accounts of the aforementioned authors and then searching for ways to bring these dated accounts into the more recent framework of Canadian history. As far as recent study on the topic is concerned Hereward Senior would have to be Canada's eminent scholar on this invasion as he has written several works detailing the Fenians and their attack on

¹⁹ Doscen Ganust, *History of the Fenian Invasion of Canada, with Numerous Illustrations* (Hamilton: Wm. Brown and Co., [n.d.]).

²⁰ "The first establishment of the organization was at a period antecedent to what is now known as Noah's flood...That the oldest son of Adam was a Fenian can no longer be matter of doubt...After committing an act peculiarly, eminently Fenian in its character...It is doing no violence therefore to reasonable conjecture to put Cain down as the great original founder of the Fenian Brotherhood." Doscen Ganust, *History of the Fenian Invasion of Canada*, 5.

Canada. The books he has written on the topic include *The Last Invasion of Canada* and *The Fenians and Canada*²¹ along with numerous journal articles, these works have proven invaluable due to the information they have provided.

In *The Fenians* Senior dedicates the book to concentrating almost exclusively on the political aspects of the invasion in order to show how the Irish immigrants understood their place in North America and how that opinion helped to shape the “New World”. Senior shows how Fenian political rhetoric and activity in both Ireland and America influenced how this populace group in Canada acted and thought. In the author’s words: “Canadian Fenians and their sympathizers thought of themselves as part of an Irish nation overseas, their ideas and actions are difficult to understand without an extensive examination of the Fenian movement in Ireland and America.”²² It is difficult to understand the Fenians without seeing the deep connection they felt to Ireland and the influence of growing nationalism among Irish immigrants cannot be underestimated. Senior’s book stands apart in this respect and his knowledge of the Irish, Canadian and American political scene is a priceless asset. In his other book, *The Last Invasion of Canada*, Senior spends all his time talking about the actual military movements of the invasion. While useful, there are few facts in this book that cannot be found through a study of MacDonald’s writings.

Donald Harman Akenson is an expert on the Irish Diaspora and has written a great deal on the Irish in Canada with frequent references to Fenianism and its effects on the Canadian political scene. He would undoubtedly gather a large crowd around him as he explained the lifestyle of the post-famine Irish immigrant in Canada and throughout

²¹ Hereward Senior, *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991); Hereward Senior, *The Fenians and Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1978).

²² Senior, *The Fenians and Canada*, vii-viii.

the world and how their representation helped to shape modern North American society. With his book *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants 1815-1922 An International Perspective*²³ Akenson discusses Protestant and Catholic tensions among the global Irish community, but there is little research into what the Protestant Church in Canada wrote about this ordeal. His other book *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History*²⁴ gives tremendous information about the life of an Irish farmer but the Fenians did not enter into that story either.

The Irish historians Michael Kenny and John Newsinger²⁵ offer their insights into Fenianism but their focus is primarily on its impact in Ireland and there is little mention of the Canadian invasion in their writings. P.B. Waite's book *The Life and Times of Confederation: 1864-1867*²⁶ dedicates an entire chapter to the impact the Fenian invasion had on Canada's politicians moving towards confederation. Carl Berger's *The Sense of Power*²⁷ and C.P. Stacey's *Canada and the Age of Conflict*²⁸ both talk about the Fenian invasion and its impact of the Canadian scene but none of these ever mention the Protestant perspective. Therefore, while all these discussions are interesting and valuable to the topic at hand more attention must be paid to the religious aspect of the confrontation.

²³ Donald Harman Akenson, *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants 1815-1922 An International Perspective* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

²⁴ Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984).

²⁵ Michael Kenny, *The Fenians* (Dublin: The National Museum of Ireland, 1994); John Newsinger, *Fenianism in Mid-Victorian Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1994).

²⁶ P.B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation: 1864-1867* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

²⁷ Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studied in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

²⁸ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume I: 1867-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1984).

This leads to the final group at this party of early Canadian historians. This group is comprised of the historians of Christianity who chart and track the movements of Christianity within the culture. However, the invasion is not high on the agenda for discussion. Mark Noll's book *The History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*²⁹ only spends one paragraph talking about the invasion. Phyllis Airhart's article "Ordering a New Nation and Reordering Protestantism 1867-1914"³⁰ talks about a growing Canadian national identity within the Protestant Church but only after Confederation. William Westfall's *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario*³¹ is also an indispensable tool for understanding how Protestants understood their world at this time in history, but does not mention the churches' position on the Fenians. Brian Clarke's *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895*³² and Terrence Fay's *A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism, and Canadianism*³³ both invest pages exploring the religious influence on nineteenth century Canadian culture but their concentration is on the Catholic Church and not the Protestant influence. Neil Semple's work *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism*,³⁴ the collection of essays contained in Paul Laverdure's book *Early Presbyterianism in Canada*³⁵ and William Klempa's *Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow*³⁶ also present

²⁹ Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

³⁰ Phyllis D. Airhart, "Ordering a Nation and Reordering Protestantism, 1867-1914," 98-138.

³¹ William Westfall, *Two Worlds*.

³² Brian P. Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*.

³³ Terrence Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism, and Canadianism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

³⁴ Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

³⁵ Paul Laverdure, ed., *Early Presbyterianism in Canada* (Gravelbourg: Gravelbooks, 2003).

important pictures of the early Canadian religious landscape, but the Fenians do not enter into those works with any frequency either.

Therefore, this thesis will explore the Ontario Protestant Churches' response to the invasion of 1866 and explain why the churches so universally condemned this action taken by the Fenians. In the months leading up to the invasion the churches³⁷ felt the need to respond to the growing concern within Canada that an invasion was imminent and in the aftermath of the attacks the churches continued their assault on the Fenians and their cause. Although it would be inaccurate to state that the churches were of one mind on all issues relating to the Fenian invasion, it is possible to note some distinct similarities within the Protestant writings of the time regarding the Fenians. The reasons used by the churches to reject the Fenians forms the body of this thesis.

The first chapter of the paper will provide details about the altercations between Canada and the Fenians as well as some of the complicated political and historical issues that led to those fateful days in June of 1866. A brief overview of the Fenian organization and the Irish struggle for independence from England is necessary to understand why the attack happened in the first place and to place the situation in its proper historical context.

The second chapter will deal with the Protestant churches' disdain for the invasion based on their opposition to violence. The churches did not appeal to pacifism as the Christian solution but, rather, attacked the character of the men who were attempting to perpetrate the violence. The Baptists and Methodists spent a great deal of time and

³⁶ William Klempa, ed., *Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow: The Presbyterian Contribution to Canadian Life and Culture* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994).

³⁷ From this point on "the churches" will be indicative of the Protestant Churches in Ontario unless otherwise stated. Protestantism was not a unified movement and attention will be given to the differences between the various denominations when they arise, but in the interest of space and readability this term will be used for the majority of the thesis.

space printing stories about the misappropriation of funds within the Fenian hierarchy to paint the men as swindlers stealing from poor Irish immigrants. The Anglican Church stated that the selection of Canada as the target was unfair since the Fenian army's real struggle was with England and not Canada. Some even saw the Fenians as instruments of God's wrath against the Canadian people for their lack of piety.³⁸

However, church opposition to violence would not help volunteerism so the Fenian soldiers were condemned as pirates while the Canadian volunteers were lauded as heroes and, in some cases, even compared to biblical champions. Through these arguments the Protestant churches were able to condemn the Fenians while encouraging Canadian men to sign up to fight for the country. Giving the struggle cosmic and spiritual significance allowed the Protestant churches to compare Canada's struggle with the Fenians to Israel's battles with other nations and they reassured their people that Canada was God's land and had to be defended.³⁹

The third chapter shows the churches' attempts to place their Canadian nationalism in line with their mother country England. A study of Canadian national identity at this time is inadequate without realizing that many Protestants did not see the nation as distinctly separate from England.⁴⁰ Being Canadian meant being British and the churches wasted no time appealing to their parishioners to remain faithful to Britain and not to buy into the Fenian dreams of independence from Mother England. In this section "The Irish question" is raised and the churches, although sympathetic to the Irish plight

³⁸ Although he is referencing the Boer War (1899-1902), Gordon Heath also mentions this thinking within the Anglican Church in his article "Sin in the Camp: The Day of Humble Supplication in the Church of England in Canada in the Early Months of the South African War," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 44 (2002): 207-226. The Fenian invasion proved that the view of war, and especially loss of battles, as divine punishment had been prominent in Canadian church thought even earlier.

³⁹ For more on this see Rev. J. Gamble Geddes, "The Crisis," *Canadian Churchman*, 4 April 1866, 1; "Poetry: Warfare," *Canadian Churchman*, 2 May 1866, 1.

⁴⁰ See Berger, *The Sense of Power*, 259-263.

(after all many Canadians were Irish immigrants who had escaped the plight), remained steadfast in their loyalty to England and opposed the Fenians for their treachery to the crown.

However, tension also existed between loyalty to Britain and a burgeoning sense of Canadian nationalism which desired greater independence. The provinces referred to as British North America were beginning to consolidate even before Confederation and the threat of an invasion only sped up the process.⁴¹ Phyllis Airhart did credit the churches with helping to define Canadian culture but she says that this occurred post-Confederation and that there was little emphasis on nation-making before then.⁴² P.B. Waite argued that the Fenian invasion helped certain Confederation-resistant communities see the wisdom of joining together⁴³ and the writing of the time indicate that terms like “our country”⁴⁴ and “rising together as one”⁴⁵ pre-date Confederation and that the churches were writing and preaching about a unified, Protestant country as early as 1866.⁴⁶

Chapter five deals with the topic that was most controversial to the churches in Ontario at that time: the inactivity of the United States government during the Fenian uproar. There was no topic that received more attention than this. The churches were

⁴¹ “Canadian Imperialism rested upon an intense awareness of Canadian nationality combined with an equally decided desire to unify and transform the British Empire so that this nationality could attain a position of equality within it.” Berger, *Sense of Power*, 49. For more on the development of Canadian independence in a time of staunch Loyalism see Berger, *Sense of Power*, 49-77.

⁴² Airhart, “Ordering a New Nation and Reordering Protestantism,” 98-138.

⁴³ Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 263-282.

⁴⁴ William Stewart, *The Country's Troubles and the Christian's Consolation: A Discourse Suggested by the Late Lawless Invasion of Canada and Preached in the Baptist Chapel, Brantford* (Brantford: Brantford “Courier” Office, 1866), 5.

⁴⁵ Rev. John Strachan, *The Synod of 1866*, 14.

⁴⁶ For more on the churches’ writings about unity see “Eastern Provinces,” *Canadian Baptist*, 19 April 1866, 3; *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42; “The Canadian Volunteers,” *Christian Guardian*, 6 June 1866, 90.

outraged at what they perceived to be complicit consent offered to the Fenians by the Americans. Anger over Fenian disloyalty towards the crown turned to outrage at the idea that the Americans might use the Fenians to violate the Laws of Neutrality set up between the United States and Great Britain and steal Canada from Britain. The Protestant papers constantly accused the politicians to the south of pandering to the criminal Fenians in order to gain votes, and they accused the American papers of writing inflammatory stories designed to incite violence. The churches reminded Canadians to remain distinct from their neighbours to the south who seemed capable of the unspeakable act of allowing an invasion on innocent soil if it could be used for personal gain. Distinction from America was the most clearly defined Canadian trait in the writings of the time and the religious press offered numerous examples of perceived American debauchery and malice to increase their readers' desire to remain separate from the United States.

No discussion on this topic would be complete without at least a cursory look at the Protestant and Catholic relations in Canada at this time. The Fenians were comprised of predominantly Catholic Irish and historian Brian Clarke comments that during this time "everything Catholic became suspect."⁴⁷ While it is true that the churches' spent large amounts of space ranting about the ills of Catholic theology, they never correlated Catholicism with Fenianism. Although there was concern about whether or not Canadian Catholics would side with their American counterparts, the Protestant papers seemed almost magnanimous with regards to the treatment of the Catholic Church.

The invasion helped to galvanize the nation and bring independent provinces together to form one country. It also helped to galvanize the Ontario Protestant churches

⁴⁷ Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 188.

on this issue as they unanimously opposed the Fenians because of their politics, their character and, above all, their desire to invade Canada. Although the denominations had different emphases they were all adamantly opposed to the Fenian scheme and through the Canadian traits of loyalty, distinction from America and a desire to remain law-abiding they cried “foul” on the Fenian enterprise. This thesis will explore various Protestant writings of the time regarding the Fenians and will explain the reasons why the churches rejected the Fenians and tried to thwart these rebels and their attempt to conquer Canada.

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE STAGE

Although the attack on Canada commenced in June of 1866, the steps that led up to the invasion began on 17 March 1858 in Dublin, Ireland when James Stephens founded the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Stephens promptly named John O'Mahony as his American centre.¹ Early the next year O'Mahony gave the American wing the moniker "Fenians" after the Fianna: a race of warriors from Celtic folklore charged with protecting and defending Ireland from enemies. With this name O'Mahony not only communicated his mission and identity but also ascribed an almost mythic status to his organization which appealed to the wave of growing nationalism prevalent among the working class Irish in America.²

However, dark shadows loomed on the Fenian horizon as almost from the beginning Stephens questioned O'Mahony's honesty in relation to the appropriation of funds. Hereward Senior states, "Stephens complained that [O'Mahony] had secured only 40 [pounds] from the American organization, whereas his personal visit to the United States in the autumn of 1858 yielded 600 [pounds]."³ O'Mahony lashed back and defended his actions by questioning the effectiveness of Stephens' operation in Ireland and questioned whether or not sending money to Ireland was the best use of the newly-acquired capital. Perhaps seeing how seriously his American counterpart's complaints of

¹ Centre was the name given to the leaders of the individual Fenian chapters. The larger group was referred to as a circle with the centre as the leader. There were circles throughout America and each had a centre to lead it.

² MacDonald accorded the Fenians a high level of respect and argued that, "The [Fenian Brotherhood]...soon became one of the most dangerous and formidable revolutionary forces ever known in the history of any country." MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 7.

³ Senior, *The Fenians and Canada*, 20. This became important later as both Roberts and the Protestant churches level this same accusation against O'Mahony.

inactivity were being taken, Stephens came to America in 1865 to organize men and raise money for the long-awaited uprising. The Movement of '65, as it came to be known, was well received by the Irish-Americans and Stephens managed to raise \$200,000 in cash as well as a significant amount of weaponry for his mission.

However, dissenters split from O'Mahony and Stephens when British troops intercepted the Fenian ship "Erin's Hope" off the coast of Ireland. The newly formed "Senate Wing of the Fenian Brotherhood" stated that an uprising in Ireland was useless because the British were too close to their ample supplies of both weapons and soldiers.⁴ However, Canada's proximity to Fenian supplies and distance from British reinforcements made it an easier target. The proposed attack on Canada attracted many Fenians who were frustrated by the lack of tangible results under O'Mahony and were anxious to strike out at England in whatever manner possible. In September of 1865 the Senate met in Cincinnati and Colonel William R. Roberts was unanimously named as the President of the new republic. He then chose Colonel T.W. Sweeny to be his Secretary of War. Almost immediately the two started gathering money for their enterprise by issuing bonds for the Irish Republic. The Roberts/Sweeny wing was fervent and immovable in its intentions to invade Canada. Roberts believed that the invasion of Canada would achieve two necessary and desired results for the Fenian movement.

First, it would be an actual assault on British ground. The chronicles of British and Irish history possess no shortage of tales of Irish angst against their British rulers.

⁴ "No direct invasion or armed insurrection in Ireland would ever be successful in establishing an Irish Republic upon Irish soil, and placing her once more in her proper place as a nation among the nations of the earth." MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 9. The Protestant churches would use the "homeless" state of the Fenians as one of their major arguments against the legitimacy of the Fenian cause. Since they had no nation they were unable to legally wage war and could be seen as nothing better than pirates and marauders.

The Fenians desperately needed to add one to the win column and Sweeny mixed no words when he spoke about his intentions for attacking British North America:

To Irishmen throughout these provinces we appeal in the name of seven centuries of British iniquity and Irish misery and suffering, in the names of our murdered sires, our desolate homes, our desecrated altars, our million of famine graves, our insulted name and race—to stretch forth the hand of brotherhood in the holy cause of fatherland and smite the tyrant where we can.⁵

Second, with land in Canada the Fenians would receive legitimate status in their venture.

If the Fenians could own some land for themselves then they could legally declare war, attack British ships without fear of pirating charges and print Irish Republican currency.

In Canada the Fenians will establish a provisional government, and operate for the deliverance of Ireland. The United States will play the neutral game, precisely like Great Britain in our present contest with the rebels. Under color of neutrality the Fenians will send out a swarm of armed vessels to cruise against English merchantmen... This will all be perfectly proper under the precedent established by Great Britain... England will find, before many years, that the neutrality game is one that two nations can play at.⁶

The primary goal of the invasion was to capture the St. Lawrence and use it to bargain with England. However, a secondary objective also existed to simply start a new country named, appropriately enough, “New Ireland”. Without land of their own the Fenians knew that they could demand no international respect for their cause so the attack on Canada seemed a much easier way to forge an Irish nation.⁷

In a desperate attempt to win back influence within the Brotherhood, O’Mahony actually invaded Canada first when he launched an attack on Campo Bello Island during the early days of April 1866. Led by General Dorian Killian (who was actually the mastermind behind the plans for the invasion of the island) the Fenian troops hoped to take control of the island to prevent British reinforcements from sailing from Campo

⁵ MacDonald quoting Sweeny, 30.

⁶ “The Fenian Brotherhood and the Independence of Ireland,” *New York Herald*, 24 October 1865.

⁷ *Canadian Churchman*, 28 February 1866, 2.

Bello to Ireland when the next uprising took place. More than likely the attempt was made to stimulate financial donations to this wing of the Fenians and to refute charges of misappropriation of funds that had dogged O'Mahony from the beginning. Unfortunately for the Fenians the Canadian and American authorities were well informed by their spies and knew about the campaign long before it was made manifest in April.⁸ Canadian and American gunboats and soldiers were ready and waiting before the Fenian army even launched.⁹

Dejected and humiliated the Fenians turned away from what would have most likely turned into a rout anyway and the aborted invasion was another blow to the strength of the O'Mahony faction. John MacDonald said, "they left for their homes without accomplishing anything...bitterly cursing their leaders."¹⁰ With the failure of the Campo Bello invasion the rest of April and May passed quietly and the Fenian threat seemed to dwindle into memory.

However, on the morning of 1 June 1866 the Roberts/Sweeny faction, under the leadership of General John O'Neil, landed some troops and successfully invaded Canada. Launching from Pratt's Iron Furnace Dock the troops landed at approximately half past three in the morning just south of Fort Erie. Once the men leapt from the boats and unfurled their Irish flags a cheer went out which, according to John MacDonald, "was the first intimation that the people of the quiet vicinity received that an invasion had actually

⁸ Informers had always dogged most Fenian and Irish-freedom movements. A study of newspapers yields a surprisingly accurate recording of Fenian plans and activities. The only thing more shocking than the amount of "confidential" material in print was how the Canadian authorities were taken so completely by surprise, given all the information they possessed.

⁹ For more on the Campo Bello incident see MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 21-27; Senior, *The Last Invasion*, 45-59.

¹⁰ MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 24.

occurred.”¹¹ Since there were no soldiers anywhere near Fort Erie¹² the Fenians took it without incident. Then they proceeded to cut the telegraph wires to prevent communication and burnt the railroad tracks to prevent reinforcements from showing up. The remainder of the night was spent unloading supplies before catching some sleep at Frenchman’s Creek.

The Fenians caught the Canadians unaware but the volunteer militia sprang into action. Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton and countless small villages along the Niagara Peninsula and into the interior saw young Canadian men grab coat and shoes and run to help defend their land. Although there were numerous places for the Fenians to invade, “Ridgeway was the most serious encounter which the Canadian militia had with the Fenians.”¹³

Major-General Napier ordered troops dispatched to Port Colborne and St. Catharine’s in order to prevent the Fenians from capturing the Niagara Peninsula. Lieutenant-Colonel J.S. Dennis led the Queen’s Own Rifles of Toronto to Port Colborne with orders to hold that location and they arrived there around noon of the following day. While they waited there for word Lieutenant Colonel Booker arrived with the Thirteenth Battalion from Hamilton as well as the York and Caledonia Rifle Companies and, as the higher ranked officer, took command. At the same time Colonel George Peacocke brought Her Majesty’s Sixteenth and Forty-Seventh Regiments to their place in St. Catharine’s. The armies were moving into position and tensions were mounting.

¹¹ MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 28.

¹² MacDonald says the nearest soldier was well over twenty-five kilometers away. *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³ Francis Wayland Campbell, *The Fenian Invasions of Canada of 1866 and 1870*, 16.

While the Canadians mobilized the Fenians spent the day setting pickets and blinds and preparing to fight as word quickly spread that British soldiers were en route.¹⁴ O'Neil ordered his men further inland to prepare to engage the enemy. At ten in the evening on 1 June the Fenian column was put into motion and headed west along River Road towards Black Creek, once nearby they bivouacked and awaited reports from their scouts.

Peacocke received reports that the Fenians were at Fort Erie and set in motion a plan to unite his companies with Booker and Dennis at Stevensville to make a combined raid on the Fenians' base. He also reported that a gunboat had been commissioned to patrol the waters and aid in the assault. When the boat did not arrive at Port Colborne at the designated time Lt.-Col. Dennis commandeered the tug "W.T. Robb" and left with just over 100 men on the ill-equipped boat for Fort Erie. On the morning of the second Booker arrived in Ridgeway to prepare to march to Stevensville and combine his troops with Peacocke's.

As the Canadian soldiers disembarked from the train that had brought them to Ridgeway they began to march through the fields and farms of the surrounding countryside. The No. 5 Company of the Queen's Own formed the advance guard while the Caledonia Rifles brought up the rear. The growth of heather all around no doubt fueled memories for the Scottish volunteers of a distant homeland as they marched unknowingly towards battle at the break of day on that June morning. Other than the well-plowed farm land the ground was uneven and rocky covered by thick copses of

¹⁴ The Fenians never actually fought against British soldiers. All the skirmishes were fought between Fenians and Canadian volunteers. It has been reported that O'Neil was deeply impressed with the bravery and skill of the volunteers and actually mistook them for British soldiers. All the correspondence on the Fenian side shows fears of British attacks which is why the term is used in the paper.

waist-high grass which was just long and dense enough to conceal enemy skirmishers who preceded an army and could easily snipe two or three soldiers before making their escape to their waiting frontline. Conflicting rumours circulated throughout the troops that Fenians were in the area while others said they were still far off at Fort Erie.

O'Neil, already awaiting the volunteers in Ridgeway, sent skirmishers to the front to agitate the advancing enemy soldiers while the bulk of his army remained closer to the elevated position of Lime Ridge. Soon cracks of gunfire sounded in the distance and scouts came running to report that the Irish had engaged the British and the war had finally begun. The *Canadian Baptist* reported some of the events for its readers:

[The Hamilton Volunteers] had proceeded only a few miles when they encountered Fenian skirmishers, whom they drove in, and also the supporters for more than a mile. All at once, the brave Volunteers found themselves in the face of a superior force, supposed to be fully 1,500 strong. The Canadians did not hesitate, but continued to advance¹⁵

Bullets slammed into the brick farm house that was situated on the corner of Bertie and Ridge Roads. Just north of the home the Fenians were ducking behind their pickets and firing at the still advancing British hordes; they had lost a lot of ground this day and moral among the troops was getting low. From the time of their ambush they quickly lost the advantage of surprise. Their reinforcements had not shown and now word was spreading that enemy reinforcements were on the way.

The battle was going well for the Canadians and there was even some euphoria among the young soldiers. The first shots had been fired just over two hours ago and so far the untested Canadian soldiers had proven their mettle. However, when a shout of

¹⁵“Engagement Near Ridgeway Station,” *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3. For more information and anecdotes from the front lines printed in the religious press see also “Americans Moving,” *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3.

“cavalry!” tore through the ranks all this changed. Booker ordered his men to form into a box formation to repel the charge of horse and this decision would prove fatal for the Canadian cause. As the men moved closer together they presented themselves as a convenient target for the Fenian riflemen, who took full advantage of this tactical blunder.

Unbeknownst to the Canadians the Fenian “cavalry” was nothing more than a couple of rogues who had illegally procured some horses and had decided to ride them into battle for a better advantage.¹⁶ If their plan had been to pose as a cavalry charge and, in so doing, breed panic and disarray within the enemy ranks, then these men were military geniuses and should be regarded as such. Due to the confusion and blunders performed by both sides at the Battle of Limeridge it is more than likely that the Fenians simply caught a break that day; a break that won them the battle.

Although the box formation had hurt the Canadian cause, shouts of reinforcements spread through the ranks and many thought that Peacocke’s Sixteenth and Forty-Seventh Regiments had arrived to help them win the day. The frontlines retreated back to the forest where their help awaited only to find that the reinforcements were as legitimate as the Fenian cavalry. With his men horribly demoralized and scattered throughout the battlefield Booker ordered the retreat and the Canadian army fell back over the Garrison Railway tracks all the while hotly pursued by the Fenian invaders.

For some inexplicable reason Peacocke was fully two hours late for his rendezvous with Booker and actually took a longer route to Ridgeway than was necessary. He missed the battle completely and the words exchanged between him and

¹⁶ Doscen Ganust says that the animals were actually cows that had been won over to the Fenian side. At the time of writing his book Doscen said that the cows were still incarcerated and awaiting trial for their treasonous actions. Ganust, *The Fenian Invasion with Numerous Illustrations*, 22.

Booker ended poorly as Francis Campbell recorded in his journal, "This engagement gave rise to a bitter controversy between Col. Peacock [sic] and Col. Booker, and resulted in Col. Booker's resignation."¹⁷

None of what transpired in the morning was known to the crew on board the W.T. Robb as they spent the day patrolling the waters and picking up Fenian prisoners when they were able. Upon arriving at Fort Erie Dennis noted that the place was relatively empty and made yet another Canadian tactical blunder by ordering seventy men ashore to take the fort. With a small contingent of men Dennis remained on shore and prepared to engage and capture any Fenians who tried to escape.

Fresh from their momentous victory at Ridgeway the Fenians were taken aback when they came under fire within sight of their base of operations. They set up an advance guard and proceeded into their second skirmish of the day wondering if this was the earlier reported Canadian reinforcements.

As Dennis spotted the vast amount of Fenians returning to the fort he realized his mistake in attempting this mission with so few resources. Compounding his mistake he ordered the W.T. Robb away so as not to lose any of the prisoners he had caught during the morning! This completely trapped Dennis and his men between the lake and an army greatly superior in size. Seeing that all was lost Lieut. Col. Dennis abandoned his troops, hid in a local home and then made his escape during the night to find Col. Peacocke and make his report. The rest of his ill-fated crew was not so lucky and many were captured by the Fenians.¹⁸

¹⁷ Francis Wayland Campbell, *The Fenian Invasions of Canada of 1866 and 1870*, 17.

¹⁸ Although there is insufficient time to recount all the tales the various papers reported it is fair to say that the Canadian prisoners were treated quite well by their Fenian captors. They were shown respect and some of the wounded were even offered medical support. One example is the following remark: "[The captured

Although the day was won for the Fenians they were not in high spirits for long. The evening meal had depleted the food supply and the ferocity of the defenders they had faced during the day led them to believe that they needed significant help. They believed that the break of the next day would bring a substantial Canadian assault and if they were captured the hangman's noose loomed in front of the men like a specter. It was decided to cross back to Buffalo to gather reinforcements and supplies. On the trip across the U.S. Gunboat "Michigan" caught and captured the Fenians. And with that the invasion of Fort Erie concluded.

Although more Fenians crossed over in the Missisquoi Frontier shortly after Ridgeway there was no actual military engagement in that campaign and there is very little to report.¹⁹ The Fenians simply took some land and when they, like their Fort Erie counterparts, ran out of supplies they simply crossed back over the lines. Without the success at Ridgeway this invasion would be nothing more than a comic opera in a long string of failed Irish military campaigns.

However, the threat of a Fenian return loomed large over Canada for the remainder of the year as constant reports came from various places that Fenians were ready to make good on their promise of taking Canada. This report from the *Canadian Baptist* is one example of such fear, "The rumored concentration of Fenians at St. Albans, Malone, Ogdensburg, and other points, are doubtless well-grounded; but up to this time we have not learned that they have crossed the lines in force."²⁰ Although the Fenians fell

Private D. Junor and Corporal Ellis] speak in the highest terms of the treatment received at the hands of the Fenians." "Engagement near Ridgeway Station," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3.

¹⁹ For more on the failed raid on this area of Quebec see John A. MacDonald *Troublous Times in Canada*, 100-105; Francis Campbell *The Fenian Invasions of Canada*, 25-32; and Anonymous, *A Brief Account of the Fenian Raids on the Missisquoi Frontier in 1866 and 1870* (Montreal: "Witness" Steam Printing House, 1871)

²⁰ "Americans Moving," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3.

woefully short of any of their intended goals, and many of their people were captured and sent to trial, they were able to earn the respect and fear of the Canadian people. Although seen as thieves and brigands their success at Ridgeway insured that they would always be taken quite seriously within Canada.

CHAPTER TWO

WAR AND PEACE

William Stewart stepped up to the pulpit in the small Baptist chapel in Brantford and prepared to address the congregation. Attendance was up that Sunday as the people were waiting keenly to hear what this man would say about the violence that had gripped the land as of late. Stewart looked over the faces lined with concern and noted that some of the boys in the pews had recently volunteered; he recalled some of the conversations he had in the past week when people stopped him in the street or came by the church to lament about the future of “our country” should the Fenians keep winning. The loss at Ridgeway had been terrible news and although reports were coming in that the Americans had finally taken action and arrested some of the brigands responsible even more reports spoke of continued Fenian movement along the border. There was no telling when or where the next attack would come and many were positively sick with worry. William opened his Bible, cleared his throat and read from Psalm forty-six: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” and it struck William again how the Bible could speak to any circumstance a person, or even a nation, could find itself in and so he promised to calm these people about the war by simply speaking to them from the word.¹

There was no instrument more powerful for shaping popular thought in English-speaking Canada in the nineteenth century than the Bible. As Michael Gauvreau notes: “The Bible, which all Protestant Christians regarded as a sure and trustworthy record of God’s revelation, supplied the data of faith and the moral principles which directed the

¹ This is a loose paraphrase of the first few lines of Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 1.

conduct of both Christian believers and societies.”² Some in the Baptist church appealed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to support their opposition of the violent intentions of the Fenian mission. One article claimed, “It is true that war is diametrically opposed to the spirit of the gospel.”³ However, the churches conveyed that the Fenian invasion was ungodly for more than just the simple reason that violence was incompatible with a professed faith in Christ. They also condemned the mission based on the character of the men perpetrating the invasion. The churches argued that there was a theological difference between being an invader, who killed for an immoral cause, and being one of the invaded, who had to kill out of a sense of duty and responsibility to their country. The papers concentrated on showing how these Fenians were men of ill-repute and, due to their lack of moral character, had to be seen simply as “a lawless band of men,”⁴ not as heroes. Perhaps out of a growing fear that the Fenians might find support for their

² Michael Gauvreau “Protestantism Transformed Personal Piety and the Evangelical Social Vision: 1815-1867,” in *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990*, ed. George Rawlyk (Burlington: Welch Publishing, 1990), 54. See also Airhart, “Ordering a Nation and Reordering Protestantism,” 98-100; Bishop John Strachan, “Letter from the Bishop of Toronto to the Duke of Newcastle, 19 March 1853,” in *Church and State in Canada 1627-1867: Basic Documents*, ed. John Moir (Ottawa: Carleton Library No. 33/McClelland and Stewart Limited, [n.d.]), 238; Grant, “The Impact of Christianity on Canadian Culture and Society, 1867-1967,” 40-50.

³ “Our Late Troubles,” *Canadian Baptist*, 14 June 1866, 2. See also “Fenianism in Rome,” *Canadian Baptist*, 29 March 1866.; “The Fenian Invasion,” *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866; For the idea that the dead from Ridgeway were “victims” of the Fenians see James Croil, *Diary of Churchman 1866*, 54; also John Strachan, “Address to the Synod,” *Journal of the Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in the Diocese of Toronto: Fourteenth Session*, 1866, 14.; William Stewart, *The Christian Consolation*, 8-13.

⁴ “The Fenian Invasion,” *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 2. See also “Our Late Troubles,” *Canadian Baptist*, 14 June 1866, 3; William Stewart, *The Christian Consolation*, 13-14.; Doscen Ganust, *History of the Fenian Invasion of Canada*, 5; for a Methodist perspective see Rev. J. Gamble Geddes. “The Crisis,” *Canadian Churchman*, 4 April 1866, 1. Although there is insufficient space to further explore this, an interesting theme that exists throughout the thesis is the development of “the other.” As the churches continued their campaign against the Fenians certain traits were used to make them appear as repugnant to the readers of the religious press. Characteristics were attributed to the Fenians that would be considered unattractive in the hopes that people would reject them and their way of life. In creating “the other” the modern reader gets a profound insight into the values and norms of the Ontario Protestant mindset (at least the ones put forward in the press). Therefore, the creation of “the other” tells the modern reader more about the characteristics of the creators than it does about the ones they have “created.”

position among the Irish in Canada many papers and sermons began to call into question the moral integrity of the movement and the men involved.

As early as 1865 the Methodist and Baptist papers took an interesting perspective in their condemnation of the Fenians: they accused the group of poor stewardship. These Protestants took the side of the “little man” and complained that the movement was bleeding the already struggling Irish immigrant dry by playing on nationalistic sympathies for nothing more than a fictitious pipedream. For example, the *Canadian Baptist* stated: “To obtain money from these people is swindling pure and simple.”⁵ The *Canadian Baptist* also accused the American centre of using the gentry’s money to support a lavish lifestyle rather than the cause he professed to serve so whole-heartedly.⁶

The *Christian Guardian* also began to report similar stories early in 1866 on the internal strife that was plaguing the Fenian organization itself over this topic. One article read, “The real bone of contention [within the Fenian organization] seems to be about the funds, which the chief officers of the Society are accused of spending in extravagant living, instead of the deliverance of Ireland or Canada from the British yoke.”⁷ Statements like these communicated to the reader that the Fenian leaders were nothing more than con men out to score a quick dollar and did not care who they hurt along the way. Such accusations attempted to make the Fenian rhetoric and calls for Irish justice seem less sympathetic and more like a sales pitch. Arguments like that gathered more strength when the Fenians actually split due to growing frustration that O’Mahony’s

⁵ “Tough Nut to Crack,” *Canadian Baptist*, 29 March 1866, 3. For debate surrounding the validity of the press as a credible source for understanding public opinion see Introduction, Footnote 8.

⁶ “O’Mahony and his executive officers were having a fine time, spending the money which had been forwarded them from the various circles in the United States and Canada.” “The Fenian Brotherhood,” *Canadian Baptist*, 21 December 1865, 2. See also “The Fenians: Archbishop Cullen’s letter,” *Canadian Baptist*, 22 February 1866, 3.

⁷ *Christian Guardian*, 7 February 1866, 22.

leadership was getting the group nowhere and questions about fund distribution were brought up by the rival Roberts/Sweeny faction.

Through exposing poor Fenian stewardship the churches were able to accomplish two very important ends. First, articles like these helped deflect any suspected Irish-Canadian anger away from England, and Canada, and aimed it towards the Fenians. If it could be shown that they mismanaged funds then the Fenians went from being the romantic saviours of Ireland to simply another corrupt oppressor of the poor Irish peasantry. This was stated in the *Canadian Baptist*: "Ireland has the greatest reason to cry 'Save me from my friends!'. The boastful Fenians are doing more damage than long years of prosperity will repair."⁸ Second, the churches were able to proclaim their support for the Irish on the northern side of the border. Articles like these made it known that the Irish were respected in Canada and that their peaceful existence within this British province would improve their financial and social lot in life more than if they joined sides with shameful, financially irresponsible, rabble like the Fenians.⁹

While the Baptists and Methodists lamented the misuse of funds the Anglican Bishop John Strachan condemned the Fenians for the selection of Canada as their target:

This is indeed a most painful subject; for bad as the world may be, I verily believe that history can scarcely furnish any similar example of men pretending to civilization attacking a quiet, inoffensive people, who had never injured them in the slightest degree, in a manner so brutal and atrocious¹⁰

⁸ "Feniana," *Canadian Baptist*, 19 April 1866, 2. See also Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 171.

⁹ "Whatever may be the motives of the advocates of Fenianism, and of those who claim to be in favor of an Irish Republic, one thing is likely to prove true, and that is an increase of the want and destitution of the poorer classes at home." "The Effects of Fenianism," *Canadian Baptist*, 29 March 1866, 3. See also "The Fenian Invasion," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3; "American News," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 November 1865, 3; "The Fenian Demonstrations," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 3.

¹⁰ The Right Reverend John Strachan, "Address to the Synod of 1866," *Journal of the Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in the Diocese of Toronto: Fourteenth Session*, 1866, 14. See also "The Fenian Brotherhood," *Canadian Baptist*, 21 December 1865, 3; "Mr. Gladstone and the Fenians," *Canadian Baptist*, 26 April 1866, 3; "The Fenian Stockmarket," *Canadian Baptist*, 12 May 1866, 3; "Our Late Troubles," *Canadian Baptist*, 14 June 1866, 3; "Our Situation," *Canadian Baptist*, 30 August 1866, 3.

Most churches seemed to question the Fenian wisdom in regards to their invasion of Canada to pay back Britain. Shortly after the invasion the *Christian Guardian* quoted the famed, Catholic, Irish-Canadian politician Thomas D'Arcy McGee as saying: "a more wanton, immoral, unjustifiable assault never was made upon a peaceful people; and the fate of pirates and freebooters is the only fate they can expect."¹¹

As Fenian momentum seemed to gather the Protestant "Orange" Orders¹² made known their intentions should the invasion become a reality. The following lines came from a gathering of Orange men in Ottawa the week before the expected St. Patrick's Day Fenian invasion; although the invasion never materialized it showed the intent of Protestant Canadians to come to arms should a hostile force attempt to breach the border: "The men of the noble (Orange) order...would die for their country. (Prolonged Cheering)...The orange organization is a united phalanx and can be easily called to action in times of danger."¹³ As the possibility of armed conflict grew stronger the

¹¹ Thomas D'Arcy McGee. "The Duty of the Hour," *Christian Guardian*, 20 June 1866, 100. See also James Croil, *Churchman's Diary*, 54 and William Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 4, 6, 9.

¹² The name comes from the victory of the Protestant William of Orange over the Catholic James II in Ireland in 1691. Later Protestant para-military groups and social clubs of Protestant Irish used the name to both celebrate the day as well as exclude Catholic Irish from socializing with them. This victory is still celebrated in Protestant Irish communities throughout the world on Orange Day which takes place on July 12.

¹³ "The Orange Soiree at Ottawa," *Canadian Churchman*, 7 March 1866, 2. See also The Right Reverend John Strachan. "An address to the Synod of 1866," *Journal of the Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in the Diocese of Toronto: Fourteenth Session*, 1866, 14; "Miscellaneous Resolutions: State of the Country," *Minutes of Several Conversations Between Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada at their 43rd Annual Conference*, 1866, 76; *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42; Rev. J Gamble Geddes. "The Crisis," *Canadian Churchman*, 4 April 1866, 1. Berger writes about George Taylor Denison's belief that after the British removed most of their military presence from Canada it would be incumbent on the Canadian people to form a corps of volunteers to insure proper defense of Canada. Berger states, "Denison specified that the agricultural population would make the best soldiers and all inducements should be given to encourage them to join volunteer cavalry troops." Berger, *Sense of Power*, 15. Denison's predictions of a Post-Civil War American invasion proved uncanny in their accuracy. This will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter as national defense became one of the key issues in Canada asserting independence from Britain. For more see Carl Berger, *Sense of Power*, 12-48.

churches struggled to show that the Canadian side was biblically and spiritually superior to that of the Fenians.

To accomplish this, the churches cast themselves and the Canadian people as law-abiding citizens who had violence thrust upon them by scurrilous and immoral foes. Religious leaders tried to show the difference between the men who initiated the invasion and those who were forced to stand in the breach to defend home and country. One example of this tendency can be found in a Baptist sermon shortly after the attack on Ridgeway:

When a territory is openly invaded, and the inhabitants of a peaceful country are ruthlessly plundered, armed resistance and opposition to the invaders becomes an imperative necessity. No doubt every true Christian loves peace, and will ever pray for it; but every true Christian loves justice too, and will ever assert it. War is a tremendous evil, a last and terrible resort.¹⁴

However, there was a small but virulent group of people among the Methodists and Anglicans that saw the Fenian invasion as evidence of God's displeasure.

To this group Canada was no less guilty than the Fenians for the national distress. For example, E. Stephens wrote in the *Christian Guardian*, "we shall have *no occasion* to go to war *if* we observe and do, as a nation, all the commandments of God thus sustaining the character of the nation that is specially protected and exalted on account of its righteousness."¹⁵ The Anglican Synod of Huron was audience to a similar sentiment as expressed by Rev. E. Softley at the 1866 gathering:

this Synod cannot separate without recording its solemn apprehension of the present critical position of our country. That while we have confidence, under God,...we humbly recognise [sic] herein a deserved chastisement at the hands of

¹⁴ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 6.

¹⁵ E. Stephens, "A Short way of dealing With Fenians," *Christian Guardian*, 16 May 1866, 78. Italics part of the original quote.

Almighty God for our ingratitude as a people, for religious benefits, and our unfaithfulness to religious duties¹⁶

To these men the Fenians were nothing more than instruments of God's divine judgment and there was little point in condemning the men or their ideologies since God was merely using them to bring Canada's sin into view. Stephens wrote, "Fenian raids etc. will pursue a people just so far and no farther than God is pleased to permit, but that they are special scourges in the hands of a just God, which he brings upon a people as a punishment for their sins, and which, but for their sins, would never have known."¹⁷

Although Baptist preacher William Stewart gave credit to God for Canada's salvation from the Fenian threat, he said nothing about God causing the event to punish national sin: "How could the good man's consolation in troublous times be more strikingly indicated? 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore we will not fear'."¹⁸ Bishop Strachan also saw God's hand in the matter as simply an instrument of deliverance, not Divine wrath: "Happily, by God's blessing, peace and tranquility are again restored...Besides our deliverance from a cruel and unexpected enemy, we have also to express our unfeigned thankfulness to the Giver of all good for the bountiful harvest."¹⁹ And a quote from an article in the *Christian Guardian* by someone named Felix showed how some viewed this theology as unsound and not in

¹⁶ E. Softley, "Notices of Motions by the Rev. E. Softley," *Minutes of the Ninth Session of the Synod of the Diocese of Huron*, 1866, 206. See also Heath, "Sin in the Camp," for evidence of similar thinking within the Anglican Church during the South African War (1899-1902).

¹⁷ E. Stephens, "A Short way of Dealing with the Fenians," *Christian Guardian*, 11 April 1866, 59.

¹⁸ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 3.

¹⁹ Strachan. "Bishop's Address," *Journal of the Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in the Diocese of Toronto: Fourteenth Session*, 1866, 14-15. See also E.C. Sliter, "State of the Country," *Minutes of the Central Canada Baptist Association Assembled at Westport*, 1866, 5 for the following quote: "...the Association feels thankful to God for the preservation of our Government, liberties, and peace, when threatened by invasion by numerous bodies of armed man calling themselves 'Fenians'...we would beseech the great giver of all Blessings to grant to our rulers wisdom to take such steps as shall bring to confusion the lovers of anarchy and violence."

keeping with the ways of the world: "A devoted Christian man may be attacked, robbed, and even killed, by a godless villain, and, by extending that thought, may not a Christian nation be unjustly assailed, and plundered, by a reckless, lawless, rabble?"²⁰ Since the view of the Fenian Invasion as divine punishment was only written about by two people it appears that the position was held by a vocal, though small, number of clergy.

Based on numerous articles authored by many different people, the more popular opinion was that the Fenians were indeed violent criminals that needed to be combated should they ever enter into Canadian territory. One writer for the *Canadian Baptist* stated:

Uncalled for aggression is at all times a crime, by whomsoever committed; and disturbers of the public peace forfeit their lives the moment they enter upon their errand of iniquity and blood...The path of peace is the path of safety, and, for all legitimate purposes, the road to honor.²¹

Most of the literature of the time was fairly outspoken with the ideology that war was not only permissible for the Christian but, in this situation, was actually demanded. Refusal to serve in defense of Canada was considered comparable to cowardice and was, at best, faulty theology:

When our liberty and lives are endangered by a 'despicable horde,' it may do for Quakers and cowards to fold their arms and preach up, 'trust in Providence,' but the motto that will be adopted and acted upon by all loyal Canadians is, trust in Providence and do your duty.²²

The true Canadian follower was called upon to defend the law-abiding, Christian nation in the face of the evil threat that loomed just over the horizon. William Stewart claimed:

²⁰ Felix, "A Letter to the Editor: A Short Way to Deal with the Fenians," *Christian Guardian*, 25 April 1866, 67.

²¹ "Fenianism and Patriotism," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 3; "The Canadian Volunteers," *Canadian Baptist*, 6 June 1866, 90.

²² Felix, "A Letter to the Editor," *Christian Guardian*, 25 April 1866, 67. See also Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 6-8; "Poetry: Warfare," *Canadian Churchman*, 2 May 1866, 1; J. Gamble Geddes, "The Crisis," *Christian Guardian*, 4 April 1866, 1; Nathanael Burwash, "The Battle of Ridgeway," *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 94.

“On the principles of the New Testament, [war] can be defended and tolerated, only when it is physical might sustaining moral right.”²³ Comments like these indicated a strong notion that Canada was on the moral side of the conflict and the Fenians occupied the more sinister position. A writer for the *Canadian Baptist* stated: “Yet as there is power in right and the love of order, we may hope to rely upon the strength afforded by being placed in a just and truly defensive position.”²⁴

William Stewart called the young soldiers in his church “Davids”²⁵ and Nathanael Burwash instructed the Canadian people to hold up their soldiers in prayer just as Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands to guarantee Israel’s victory in battle.²⁶ By giving the battle biblical and spiritual significance the churches encouraged Canadians to see themselves as servants of God with their Divine King aiding them in the conflict: “He it is that fighteth for you as He hath promised. Take good heed therefore to yourselves that ye *love* the Lord your God.”²⁷ Canadian soldiers were encouraged to value the spiritual aspect of the fray as the article printed in the *Canadian Churchman* shows, “you are not only soldiers of an *earthly sovereign* but also soldiers of the *cross*-that you have been enlisted into the service of ‘the *great Captain of your Salvation*-that you bear on your foreheads the sign of the cross...manfully fight under [Christ’s] banner.”²⁸ And some of

²³ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 6.

²⁴ “Passing Events,” *Canadian Baptist*, 12 April 1866, 2.

²⁵ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 6.

²⁶ The biblical story is found in Exodus 17:8-15. Burwash’s statement is found in Nathanael Burwash, “The Battle of Ridgeway,” *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 94.

²⁷ J. Gamble Geddes, “The Crisis,” *Canadian Churchman*, 4 April 1866, 1; See also William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 4 for the following quote: “buried beneath this materialistic ethos [of Canada] rests a deeply spiritual vision. The biblical passages foretell a new type of society on the earth when the wilderness of sin and injustice will become the dominion of the Lord.” Westfall does masterful work communicating how the Protestant church viewed the intertwining of both the secular and the sacred. The call to pray and spiritually prepare for something as carnal as war would seem to support Westfall’s claims about the tensions that existed within Canadian Protestant culture of the time of an under-girding of spirituality in most aspects of Canadian life.

²⁸ J. Gamble Geddes, “The Crisis,” *Canadian Churchman*, 4 April 1866, 1

the poetry in the Anglican journals called soldiers into times of devout prayer to ask God for protection and courage:

But before we go to battle, let us humbly kneel and pray: for the armor that may help us in the fierce and bloody fray: Kneel, my child, before the altar, to be armed and clothed aright: Let the Captains of God's forces give the counsel for the fight. Then with blessings resting on thee hasten forward to the van; In the hour of fiercest conflict, be thou strong and play the man.²⁹

The young soldiers were reminded that their duty to Canada, should the Fenians invade, stretched far beyond the battlefield and that loyalty to the crown and bravery in combat were more than admirable character traits but were actually attributes that guaranteed rewards in this and the next life as well.³⁰

Pastors joined men at the front at Ridgeway and wrote to remind the faithful to lift up their soldiers in prayer. Methodist Minister Nathanael Burwash wrote several times to the *Christian Guardian*: "Day and night let us remember the spiritual as well as temporal necessities of our brave brothers who have gone forth to defend us."³¹ He also recorded details about the battle and shared his concern that the men's moral conduct could be impugned during the duress of battle. He wrote, "Might I say that our volunteers need the prayers of our Christian people. Profanity is fearfully prevalent, intemperance has its victims. Death upon the battlefield is a fearful thing even for the long experienced Christian."³²

The influence articles like this had on the average Canadian during the Fenian situation cannot be overestimated. For many people the religious paper was the only

²⁹ "Poetry: Warfare," *Canadian Churchman*, 2 May 1866, 1.

³⁰ "The Sovereign Ruler of heaven and earth will take you under His holy care and protection, and crown your devotion to your Queen and country in due time with its appropriate reward." J. Gamble Geddes, "The Crisis," *Canadian Churchman*, 4 April 1866, 1

³¹ Nathanael Burwash, "The Battle of Ridgeway," *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 94.

³² Ibid, 94. For a brief discussion of Burwash's life and involvement at the Battle of Ridgeway see Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989), 16-18.

source of information on political events and reading Burwash's command to pray for the spiritual well-being of the brave soldiers facing death on the field of battle gave the farmer or the housewife hundreds of miles away an inexorable link to the front line. With the call to prayer going forth the religious press was able to call upon the piety of the layperson and help unite them with the soldiers at the front.

As James Croil continued on in his travels of Ontario during this period he stopped in Toronto and witnessed the funeral procession of some local boys killed at Ridgeway, he commented that thousands of people line the streets to pay homage to the fallen soldiers. He reflected on the horror felt by many as the death toll grew, "Two more slain *victims*-making 9 in all."³³ It is worth noting that he used the word "victims" in his writings as if to confirm the idea that the Canadians saw themselves as tragic victims in the whole ordeal. While it is impossible to ascertain whether or not the press had a hand in creating this thinking, or if it simply reported the sentiment of its readers, what can be noted is the influence of the medium was utilized to reassure the citizens during times of crisis.³⁴ Shortly after the Battle of Ridgeway the *Canadian Baptist* issued the following statement to help ease the worried minds of its readers:

It is natural for a peaceable people, unaccustomed to seasons of commotion like the present, to be deeply moved. But...a very short time will suffice to show that the war tempest has subsided and the triumph of liberty and peace more permanently restored.³⁵

³³ James Croil, *Churchman's Diary*, 71. Italics added.

³⁴ Although referring to imperialism during the Boer War, Gordon Heath also analyzes the tension between the press' influence over the mindset of the Canadian people and its role of simply reporting facts. He writes: "Certainly the English Protestant press in Canada did more than just reflect the imperial sentiments of its readers. By publishing so many war poems the press was seeking intentionally to bolster imperial sentiment...Nevertheless, the passion for empire expressed in poems was also printed for the simple reason that it was sent into the editor." Gordon Heath, "Passion for Empire: War Poetry Published in the Canadian English Protestant Press During the South African War, 1899-1902," *Literature and Theology* Vol. 16 No. 2 (June 2002): 142.

³⁵ "The Fenian Invasion," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3.

There was no shortage of pressure put on the young Canadian men as this quote from William Stewart's sermon shows: "You may yet bear the scars of many a conflict, but [fellow Canadians] are sure you would rather die than disgrace your name and country and lineage."³⁶ The press also sought to inspire young people to volunteer and encouraged them to face the challenge with courage and dignity befitting a servant of the British Empire. Rev. Geddes wrote the following words in the *Canadian Churchman*:

our gallant youths, led on and encouraged by the British army, will emulate their conduct in the field, and by coolness, steadiness, unflinching courage, and implicit obedience to others, show that they are worthy descendants of those United Empire Loyalists whose devoted attachment to their King and country have endeared their memory to posterity³⁷

Such sentiments were used to remind the young Canadians to look to their British counterparts and learn what it meant to be a good soldier.

In conclusion, the churches wrote strongly about the abhorrent violence inherent in the Fenian mission by calling into question the Fenian character. However, they also showed that there was nothing un-biblical about fighting criminals to defend home and freedom. Canada was shown to be an innocent nation thrust into a violent confrontation and, as such, could be assured that it occupied the moral high ground in the conflict. Although some argued that the Fenians were proof of God's displeasure with Canada, others sought to communicate the spiritual implications of the invasion by reminding Canadians throughout the land to lift up the conflict, and the soldiers, in prayer. Implicit in this was the Protestant desire to unite the country under a banner of piety and religion and to insure that the future of the nation would be mapped out by those of similar beliefs. Finally, the churches appealed to the British example of loyalty to "King and

³⁶ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 4.

³⁷ Rev. J. Gamble Geddes, "The Crisis," *Christian Guardian*, 4 April 1866, 1.

country”³⁸ to inspire their readers. It is to the role of loyalty in the Canadian ethos that the thesis now turns.

³⁸ Ibid, 1.

CHAPTER THREE

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

John Webster Grant states that Catholic Canadians “were exercised over, but were generally unsympathetic to, Fenian attempts to gain Canadian support.”¹ While Grant is referencing the Irish Catholics the sentiment was equally pronounced in Protestant circles.²

What Roberts and Sweeny failed to grasp about Canada was that among English Canadians national pride was inexorably linked to the fate of Britain. To be Canadian was to be a loyal British subject and that meant a wholesale rejection of the Irish freedom fighters’ primary goal of independence from England.³ America’s culture of violent upheaval against Britain was not part of the Canadian story and was not useful currency to purchase support north of the border. To illustrate the chasm the Fenians had to bridge in order to win Canadian support one has to look no further than the comments made by the *Canadian Churchman*: “Gen. Sweeney and his followers will find [invading Canada] not as easy as they imagine, and any attempt will find, at least, two hundred thousand loyal volunteers ready to receive them.”⁴

¹ John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1998), 5-6.

² See Thomas D’Arcy McGee, *An Account of the Attempts to Establish Fenianism in Montreal* (Montreal: Post Publishing, 1882), 10; “St. Patrick’s Day,” *Canadian Churchman*, 21 March 1866, 3; “Fenianism a Failure,” *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 90.

³ “Imperialism was one form of Canadian nationalism.” Carl Berger, *Sense of Power*, 259. For more information on the centrality of imperialism in the Canadian national identity in the latter half of the nineteenth century, see Robert Page, “The Boer War and Canadian Imperialism,” *Canadian Historical Association Historical Booklet* 44 (1987): 3-23; Gordon Heath, “‘We Were in the Habit of Deifying Monarchs’: Canadian English Protestants and the Death of Queen Victoria, 1901,” *Canadian Evangelical Review* (Fall 2005-Spring 2006): 72-96. For an analysis of the Anglican view of Imperialism see William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 83-90.

⁴ *Canadian Churchman*, 28 Feb 1866, 3. See also James Croil, *Churchman’s Diary*, 53-55; “Fenianism a Failure,” *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 90; Thomas D’Arcy McGee “The Duty of the Hour,”

There was little indication that the Canadian religious press held anything but the highest esteem for the governance of England and the deepest contempt for the idea of Irish rule: "If those fanatics would only look at the present position of Ireland, under the glorious flag of our noble queen, they would possibly discover their native land was better off than they could make her."⁵ Ireland and England had been struggling for years and there was no shortage of Irish complaints against English rule. Although some of the Protestants seemed to indicate sympathy towards the Irish plight, as the following comments show, the idea of the Fenian invasion was still greeted with hostility: "No matter what sympathies we may have with the wrongs of Ireland no invasion of Canada by people like these Fenians can be anything but brigandage on a great scale."⁶ The following comments in the *Canadian Churchman* are indicative of the staunchly loyal Ontario Protestant writings of the time: "We are not to be swerved from our allegiance to the British throne. (cheers)."⁷

Although there were moments when the Protestant churches admitted that Britain often utilized violence to achieve its own ends, there was nothing like the loathing shown the Fenians' use of violence because England's causes were of a more noble ilk. As one writer claimed, "although England at times carried the bible with a sword she always maintained her dignity. (cheers)."⁸ Such an obvious bias towards maintaining England's character for doing the exact same things for which the Fenians were condemned were

Christian Guardian, 20 June 1866, 100; "The Fenians and Politicians," *Christian Guardian*, 18 July 1866, 114.

⁵ "Orange Soiree in Ottawa," *Canadian Churchman*, 7 March 1866, 2.

⁶ "America and the Fenian raids published in New York Nation," *Canadian Baptist*, 6 September 1866, 2.

⁷ "Orange Soiree in Ottawa," *Canadian Churchman*, 7 March 1866, 2.

⁸ "Orange Soiree in Ottawa," *Canadian Churchman*, 7 March 1866, 2.

hallmarks of the deeply imbedded loyalty to Britain that was a defining trait of the young colony of Canada.

The churches mocked the Fenian idea of attacking Britain as sheer folly and did not lend serious credibility to the idea that such “wild looking”⁹ men could defeat the acknowledged super-power of the day. The *Canadian Baptist* saw the Fenians as nothing more than attempted “Giant Killers”:

The plans and boasted strength of Fenians to humble British pride, and break up British Empire, remind us of the exploits of Jack, the Giant Killer...How can they administer soporifics to Great Britain, so that she will remain inactive while their plans are being consummated?¹⁰

They even went so far to say that America should take care not to align itself too closely with the Fenians out of fear for what Britain could do to it.¹¹ The Baptists frequently printed articles from England that allowed the Canadians to see that their “Mother Country” would not abandon them in this time of need:

I feel the fullest confidence that these men of British North America, who have proceeded from our loins...know well how to defend their homes, their wives, and children; and if, unhappily, the need arose, there is no resource possessed by [England] that she would not freely spend to assist them in their holy work. (Cheers).¹²

⁹ *Canadian Baptist*, 7 Nov 1865, 2.

¹⁰ “The Fenians,” *Canadian Baptist*, 8 Feb 1866, 2.

¹¹ “But should the resources of the North be called into active requisition in carrying on war with a first class power like Great Britain, then would the dismemberment of the Union be probable.” “Mistaken Policy,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 3. C.P. Stacey comments that during this time the exact opposite was true and that it was England who feared America. He makes the following comment: “There is a craven fear of the United States on the part of England.” Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, quoting Smith, *Treaty of Washington*, 25. The political tensions that existed during this time which caused the above statement to be made will be dealt with in the chapter on Canadian Nationalism.

¹² “Mr. Gladstone and the Fenians,” *Canadian Baptist*, 26 April 1866, 2. Note the understanding that Canada came from the “loins” of Great Britain.

Up until the Battle of Ridgeway the churches continually reiterated that allegiance to England would keep Canada safe.¹³ It behooved the churches to extol the British and remind the readers of the God-given power of Great Britain as reports of Fenian activity increased and rumours swirled that the invasion was to take place on St. Patrick's Day. Though the Fenians hoped to be greeted as liberators aiding Canada in its separation from the tyranny of England,¹⁴ the Protestant press of the time saw them as mercenaries sent to steal Canada from England.¹⁵ The churches were a deeply loyal group and seemed to have no desire to remove themselves from association with England.¹⁶ The Fenians could hope for nothing but failure because their very presence gave the religious papers the fodder to create fear among the masses which, in turn, drove them deeper under Britain's wings.

However, dogmatic loyalty to Britain changed in the months following the invasion as the Canadians realized that when the Fenians attacked it was Canadian volunteers, and not British troops, that took to the field. The *Canadian Baptist* articulated the frustration felt for the lack of British support during the battles and reminded people

¹³ "the strong British arm that we were assured, if need be, would be raised in our defence." Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 14. However, E. Stephens also comments about the Canadian tendency of trusting more in Britain than in God. He reminded the readers of the *Christian Guardian* that a true Christian finds security in the presence of God: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." E. Stephens, "Short way of dealing with Fenians," *Christian Guardian*, 11 April 1866, 59.

¹⁴ "I have often been asked what right we had to invade Canada, a people who had never injured us. We had not intention to invade the Canadian people or to interfere with their rights, but we desired to aim a blow at our ancient enemy where it would be done most effectively and Canada was that point. I maintain that we had as much right as Washington to send troops there during the Revolution. The Fenians went there to meet the soldiers who upheld the power of the British people, even the Queen's Own Rifles." John O'Neill, *Speech to the Nashville Circle of the Fenian Brotherhood Upon his Return from Buffalo, New York*, 12 June 1866, 2. This is an excellent quote to understand the motives of the Fenian Brotherhood in their choice of Canada as the target.

¹⁵ "[The Fenians plan to] invade our soil and wrest our country from the British crown." "Miscellaneous Resolutions: State of the Country," *Minutes of Several Conversations Between Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada at their 43rd Annual Conference*, 1866, 76.

¹⁶ "Canada is profoundly loyal to its government and constitutions, and entirely satisfied with its relation to the British Empire." "St. Patrick's Day and the Fenians," *Christian Guardian*, 21 March 1866, 46.

that the Fenian threat only existed because of Canada's allegiance to England: "it is not because we are Canadians that we are threatened, but on account of our connection with Britain. The real or imaginary grievances of the Fenians have not been authorized in Ottawa, but in England."¹⁷ While that statement was not overly inflammatory in nature it was indicative of a growing feeling among Canadians that the proximity of potentially hostile forces in the United States may outweigh the benefits of ties with distant England. The failure of the "British arm" to materialize during the invasion helped fertilize Canada's own dreams of home rule. One writer stated: "Still if [British troops] are not to be sent, let us have the powers of self-government, so that by legislation and treaty, our security may be preserved."¹⁸ Although the Baptists seemed quick to condemn the lack of British involvement during the raids, the Anglicans insured their readers that the Canadian plight was being viewed seriously in England:

The threatened raid by the Fenians into Canada has received serious notice on the part of the British Government, who are taking active precautionary measures. Three batteries of artillery have lately been sent to Quebec. It is gratifying to know that the Imperial Government is alive to the necessity of providing for the defence [sic] of Canada.¹⁹

¹⁷ "Our Situation," *Canadian Baptist*, 30 August 1866, 2. See also "The Volunteers," *Christian Guardian*, 4 April 1866, 4; "Confederation Advancing," *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42. Also note that the difference between Ottawa and England are coming into play here. The Canadians were aware that they had their own policies and own system of government that could stand separately from England. While this was not an overt statement for independence it was one of the earlier hints that a new form of Canadian independence was on the horizon.

¹⁸ "Our Situation," *Canadian Baptist*, 30 August 1866, 2.. See also P.B. Waite *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 163-173.; David J. Bertuca. *The Fenian Invasion of Canada, 1866*. (Ridgeway: Ridgeway Battlefield Museum, [n.d.]). 18-22; "Fenianism: The Country Prepared," *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42.; "The Volunteers," *Christian Guardian*, 4 April 1866, 54; "Mistaken Policy," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 3.

¹⁹ "Three Batteries of Artillery Sent to Canada," *Canadian Churchman*, 5 September 1866, 3.

The Methodist paper was also quick to print articles detailing Britain's pleasure with the Canadian response.²⁰ The churches wrote time and again extolling the Canadians to be proud of their actions in the battle and reminded readers that an event like that removed any doubt with regards to Canada's feelings about involvements in the Commonwealth.²¹ But it was in the mourning of the fallen that the loyalty of Canada was most prominently displayed.²² Brian Clarke mentions the services for the dead soldiers in Toronto as evidence of the Loyalist nature of Canada: "The funeral for the five Toronto volunteers killed at Ridgeway...became a public demonstration of the Protestant and British character of English Canada."²³

The foundation for the Fenian struggle was that of independence from Britain but the churches called into question the Irish ability to live successfully without supervision from England. The *Canadian Baptist* was especially brutal in its opinion of Irish leadership: "it is quite a natural thing for [the Irish] to get into difficulty; and we have no doubt that their leaders will leave them in handsome style, should their lives be placed in jeopardy, or failure attend their plans."²⁴ And they were almost relentless in their opinion that the Irish, as a race, were incapable of self-governance and any victory towards that

²⁰ "The enthusiastic loyalty lately exhibited by the Canadians has given the liveliest satisfaction in England." "The News," *Christian Guardian*, 18 April 1866, 62.

²¹ "The Canadians will be able for the future to appeal with justice to their conduct on this occasion, in proof of their sincere desire to maintain the advantages of their connection with Great Britain." "The British Press on the Fenian Raids," *Christian Guardian*, 4 July 1866, 107. For Canadian pride in their performance during the Battle of Ridgeway see "The Volunteers," *The Christian Guardian*, 4 April 1866, 54; "Fenianism a Failure," *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 94; "St. Patrick's Day," *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42; Rev. J. Gamble Geddes, "The Crisis," *Canadian Churchman*, 4 April 1866, 1. See also the words of lament over the dead in the sermon by William Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 9-13.

²² "And perchance the last prayer, from the brave hearts there, when death's missiles flying, and our soldiers were dying, was 'God Save the Queen!'" "Poetry: The Honoured Dead," *Canadian Churchman*, 20 June 1866, 4.

²³ Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 197.

²⁴ *Canadian Baptist*, 12 April 1866, 2.

end should actually be viewed as a failure for the Irish people.²⁵ As early as 1865 the *Canadian Baptist* printed an article from an American church that espoused this position as well and compared the Irish troubles to recent conflicts between Black and White Americans:

the majority of the American people do not deem (the Irish people) fit for self-government. The same objections to granting the elective franchise to the colored population of the South will hold good with reference to the question of Irish independence... Their destiny is involved in that of Great Britain, and all who have at their heart the best interest will prefer to have their condition ameliorated under English rule to deluding them with the hope of an Irish republic, which is sure to be blasted at the first attempt to realize it.²⁶

These comments reveal the level of contempt afforded both Black Americans and the Irish. It is also an interesting reference to Great Britain as being in control of the Irish destiny; which was an odd comment coming from an American source. In short, the *Canadian Baptist* took the stance that the Fenian goal was folly based on the inability of the Irish race to responsibly govern itself.²⁷ It is fortunate for the Canadian cause that these writings did not actually win some Irish-Canadians over to the Fenian cause.

In conclusion, one of the crucial disappointments for the Fenian movement was the lack of support it received in Canada. Bent on overthrowing English rule proved to be an unpopular venture that won the Fenians no friends. Canada was a British territory and the churches used their significant influence to insure that end. Although the churches

²⁵ "The onlooking world cannot forget that as Irishmen have never shown capacity for self-government, were the revolution to triumph, its very success would be its worst defeat." "What They Think of the Fenians," *Canadian Baptist*, 28 March 1867, 2.

²⁶ *Canadian Baptist*, 16 November 1865, 3. Italics part of the original quote.

²⁷ "It is a pity that failure should attend every step in favor of Irish independence; but as blunders are very frequently associated with a national tendency towards the ridiculous as well as the sublime, we find the same characteristics cropping out on American soil." "The Fenian Stock Market," *Canadian Baptist*, 12 May 1866, 2.

were growing in the “New World”,²⁸ they all seemed to remain attached to their parent churches in England. However, a tension also existed between the ideology of Canada as a British province and a growing nationality that demanded that Canada be viewed as a nation, loyal to England, but independent nonetheless. The tension between nationhood and imperialism is the topic of the next chapter.

²⁸ For more information on the growth and development of the four major denominations in Ontario during the late nineteenth century see Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 9-12.

CHAPTER FOUR

O, CANADA

Within the spirit of Canadian loyalty lay a tension with a growing sense of Canadian nationalism. As Berger states: "While [Canadians] admired many aspects of English society, they neither saw it as an unblemished model nor did they believe that Canada was a pallid transcription of it."¹ Although a distinct national identity was far too illusive a thing to assert dogmatically it would be equally incorrect to say that Canada was simply a British Province. Some historians argue that in this crucial time in the nation's history the churches used their impressive power to help forge the Protestant nature of Canada in the wake of Confederation.² However, the Fenian invasion inspired the church to unify Canadians even earlier under the banner of a Protestant "country,"³ independent from both America and Britain and possessing national traits that gave it a unique place on the global scene.⁴

¹ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 260.

² See Airhart, "Ordering a New Nation and Reordering Protestantism," 98-138; Heath, "'Forming Sound Public Opinion,'" 1-40; Grant, "The Impact of Christianity on Canadian Culture," 40-50; Gauvreau, "Protestantism Transformed," 48-97; Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 276-363; Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 3-50 and 82-125. Preston Jones argues that during this time in Canada, "no true religious consensus could be found." Preston Jones, "'His Dominion': Varieties of Protestant Commentary," 83-88 and therefore the notion that Canada was shaped by the dominant Protestant culture is inaccurate. It is the position of this thesis that the Protestant press of the time picked up on some traits that they believed defined Canadian culture. The character of these traits will be discussed over the course of the chapter but the strength in the argument comes from the fact that the aforementioned historians have cited similar traits independently of this author's research. Though it is difficult to truly categorize what it meant to "be Canadian" in the late nineteenth century it is just as difficult to prove that the Protestant churches did not assert significant influence over the social landscape in Canada. The churches, while differing on many points, arrived at many identical positions in their views regarding the Fenian invasion and in their attempts to discover/develop Canadian culture to counter the Fenian propositions.

³ "'Our Country' has been the watchword; and 'our country's safety' has been the wish of every man worthy of being called a Canadian citizen." Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 4.

⁴ "The history of Canada is the history of relations with two other communities: the United Kingdom and the United States." C.P. Stacey, *Canada in the Age of Conflict*, 7. Stacey's statement is most likely correct but in the wake of the Fenian attack a desire to construct a Canadian identity independent of both America and England was growing.

The failure of the Americans to act honourably in the months leading up to the attack further increased the desire to remain separate from the United States. It was also a set back for the pro-annexation party in the United States. The bravery and sacrifice of the volunteers at Ridgeway created a shared national story which united the Canadian people. The lawlessness of the invasion brought a sense of outrage in the press and, finally, the fact that the invasion was a result of Irish-English tensions created an increase in talks about home rule for Canada.⁵

While Irish nationalism thrived in the United States it never found the same prominence north of the border. Although the Toronto Hibernian Society (largely thought of as the legitimate front for Fenianism in Canada) enjoyed some support in the Irish Catholic community of Toronto, it was greeted with suspicion and contempt by the Protestant press, which suspected the group of harbouring ideas that were contrary to the health of Canada. The *Canadian Baptist* had this to say about the society: “the Hibernian Society-affirmed to be professedly benevolent in its objects and purposes-is little else than a nursery of treason...the conclusion is all but unanimous that the Society is both anti-British and anti-Canadian.”⁶

While the notion of annexation into the United States did not appear with any prominence in the Protestant writings before the invasion it is an entirely different story in the weeks following. The churches printed numerous articles that were definitive in their condemnation of annexation. The *Christian Guardian* claimed: “Recent occurrences

⁵ “The Canadians found the 1866 raids to be a boost to their nationalism. Their pride increased, and they more rapidly received home rule of their country from England.” David J. Bertuca. *The Fenian Invasion of Canada, 1866*, 18. See also C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 17.

⁶ “Feniana,” *Canadian Baptist*, 19 April 1866, 3.

have put all thoughts of annexation out of the heads of the few who might have entertained such thoughts.”⁷ Similar statements were found in Baptist literature.⁸

The Anglican paper *The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder* recorded the efforts of some Americans to rebuild the reputation of annexation supporters within Canadian territory. It announced, “The Central Canadian Annexation Club of New York has recently been holding meetings to organize for the grand political campaign of the 1st of September, when strenuous endeavors will be made throughout Canada to revive the old Annexation party.”⁹ But, in the same article, the attitude of the churches towards this notion came through clearly as the second part of the preceding quote shows: “It is utterly useless. They cannot get a dozen in all of Canada”¹⁰ To the Baptists and Methodists the United States’ reputation had been sullied during the invasion. The following quote from the *Christian Guardian* seems to summarize this feeling:

[The amount of volunteers that enlisted to defend Canada against the Fenian invasion will] finally dispose of annexations, and show the selfish and dishonest class of American politicians that Canada is entirely satisfied with her present relations; that neither the fear of lawless invasion, nor the loss of reciprocity, nor any kind of dishonourable courtship can lessen the attachment to British institutions and connection, or the satisfaction felt in the enjoyment of virtual independence.¹¹

Those who sought to re-establish the possibility of annexation in Canada failed to take into consideration that it was not the policy *per se* that caused such rancor in Canada, as much as the thought of actually joining with the Americans. In fact, during the hype around the suspected St Patrick’s Day raid the Methodists even cited this as one of the

⁷ “The Volunteers,” *Christian Guardian*, 4 April 1866, 54. See also “Confederation Advancing,” *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42; “Fenianism: The Country Prepared,” *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42.

⁸ “Peaceable annexation is now entirely out of the question.” “Mistaken Policy,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 3.

⁹ *The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder*, 8 August 1866, 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹ “The Volunteers,” *Christian Guardian*, 4 April 1866, 54.

reasons why they believed the Fenians were receiving support in the United States: “[The Fenians] think the prospect of annexing the British Provinces will be a temptation to some rich men in the States. In this they will find themselves mistaken.”¹²

P.B. Waite makes the claim that the Fenians did more than simply damage the possibility of annexation; they actually inspired the people of Canada to join together as one and forced even the most ardent opponents to finally submit to Confederation.¹³ The religious press of the time support Waite’s claims. The *Christian Guardian* noted that, “a loyal regard to Imperial wishes, and the force of circumstances, have suddenly produced a change in the prospects [of Confederation].”¹⁴ This article was written before the invasion and is evidence of just how seriously people were taking the threat.¹⁵

The Fenian invasion afforded pre-Confederation Canada the chance to realize the strength of a unified nation. Anglican Bishop Rev. John Strachan commented at the Synod of 1866 how impressed he was at the cooperation shown between the two provinces in coming together to defeat this common foe. He said, “The whole strength of the two Provinces flew to arms, as one man, at the first call of the Government.”¹⁶ The official stance of the Methodist conference meeting of that year yielded similar sentiments. In the conference it was stated: “We desire...to express our admiration and

¹² “Fenianism: The Country Prepared,” *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42. The Baptists also questioned whether or not the Fenian movement was not helped by Americans looking for more money and land. See “Fenianism and Patriotism,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 2 and *The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder*, 8 August 1866; “The Fenian Brotherhood and the Independence of Ireland,” *The New York Herald*, 24 October 1865; Berger, *Sense of Power*, 175.

¹³ “the Fenians ruined the anti-Confederate cause.” Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 273.

¹⁴ “Confederation Advancing,” *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42.

¹⁵ In Toronto in 1864 shortly after the Corpus Christi celebrations were nearly destroyed by Protestants a group of 400 Hibernians took to the streets in the middle of the night. This will be handled in the subsequent chapter “Pie or Cake?” suffice it to say that this armed demonstration by some local Catholics was one of the events that started people thinking about a possible invasion and inspired some of the Orange Orders to arm themselves.

¹⁶ The Right Reverend John Strachan, “Address to the Synod of 1866” in *Journal of the Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in the Diocese of Toronto: Fourteenth Session*, 1866, 14. For similar sentiments see the *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42.

gratitude for the united heart and energy with which the young men of Canada have seized the arms of defence [sic] and repelled the hordes of invading foes.”¹⁷ P.B. Waite states: “In Canada...the Fenians had their effect in that they tended to dissolve further resistance to Confederation.”¹⁸ Although Canada was not without internal tensions the thought of being overtaken by criminals proved to be enough to bring the nation together in the common goal of defense.

Although the Canadians lost at Ridgeway the nation was proud of its volunteers. Writing in his diary on 3 June 1866, James Croil practically exuded the burgeoning Canadian pride that this invasion brought about. He did not write of fear but of hope and pride in the Canadians in their hour of darkness. He wrote:

Excitement there was-enthusiasm, but panic there was none. Hope beamed in every countenance, hope that 10,000 Fenians would effect a lodgment and entrench themselves on Canadian soil. Assurance that if they did not one would survive to tell the tale of their merited punishment...martial music-enthusiastic cheering told that troops were marching to the frontier.¹⁹

The tone of his writing was to change a few days later as Croil found himself in Toronto on the day that the fallen soldiers of Ridgeway were arriving. Toronto united that day in outrage and anger that their countrymen had to die to defend the land. James Croil wrote: “4 or 5 of Toronto’s hope and pride had been brought home dead! 1000’s and 1000s lined the streets and wharves and swore by Him Who liveth for ever and ever to avenge the atrocious murder of these brave boys of ‘The Queen’s Own’.”²⁰ The invasion provided a shared story of pride and injustice that Canadians rallied around and used to distinguish fellow Canadians as “us” and the American Fenians as “them”. William Stewart captured

¹⁷ “Miscellaneous Resolutions: State of the Country,” *Minutes of Several Conversations Between Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada at their 43rd Annual Conference*, 1866, 76.

¹⁸ Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 263.

¹⁹ Croil, *Churchman’s Diary*, 54.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

this sentiment in his sermon when he said: "But that the best and bravest of our young country's sons should be shot down by an armed bunch of desperadoes-it is this thought that renders our indignation all the more intense, and our sorrow all the more heart-rending."²¹ Coupled with the outrage over the soldiers' deaths was pride at the Canadian bravery and loyalty. Rev J. Gamble Geddes wrote with pride about the volunteers: "A spirit of *patriotism and loyalty* pervades the people, and the alacrity with which the *volunteers* have responded to the call is a ground of comfort and assurance."²²

The churches also celebrated that their predictions of Canada's unified rejection of the Fenians proved to be true. The *Christian Guardian* commented, "Canadian patriotism has perhaps rarely, if ever been surpassed in the history of the world."²³ The Fenians found no support among the Irish in Canada and the nation's young men proved skilled in battle and well-worth the pride of their fellow countrymen. The following eulogy of Private McEachern, who was the first Canadian killed at the battle of Ridgeway, was an example of the pride the churches took in the bravery and spiritual maturity of their people:

I am a Christian...I die happy. I die a Christian. Tell my dear wife, my dear Caroline, that I love her; and my dear, dear children, I love them. He then named them one by one, and commanded them to God. Thus lived and thus died Malcolm McEachren, but his memory shall grow greener with the years, and not

²¹ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 9.

²² Rev. J Gamble Geddes, "The Crisis," *Canadian Churchman*, 4 April 1866, 1. As important as this moment was for the unification of Canada in this time of national sorrow it bears mentioning that similar feelings existed even earlier as this quote from a March issue of the *Christian Guardian* shows: "Cowardice and a want of patriotic feeling are certainly not characteristics of Canadians; and never was there such a universal indignation as is felt throughout the country at the unprincipled...threats that have been uttered. The whole country...would rise as one man, if the Fenians should allow their leaders to persuade the engage in such wild and wicked enterprise." *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42. See also "Speech of the Governor to the Volunteers," *Canadian Baptist*, 19 April 1866, 3; "Eastern Provinces," *Canadian Baptist*, 19 April 1866, 3.

²³ "Fenianism a Failure," *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 94.

until pure patriotism loses its charm, and noble deeds their worth, will his name be forgotten by his countrymen.²⁴

McEachren became the embodiment of the Canadian volunteer: a devout and brave family man embroiled in a battle that was not his and the fact that his obituary appeared in several religious papers showed that the nation mourned the loss of such a man.

The churches also appealed to the laws of the land that afforded Irishmen the same rights as any other citizen of Canada. The *Canadian Baptist* attempted to appeal to the equality of Irishmen's status in Canada in this statement: "The Fenians have not a shadow of grievance against the Canadians. Their countrymen enjoy equal rights with others in our land."²⁵ Canada was portrayed as a peaceful, law-abiding place that did not discriminate against immigrants and was not as volatile as America. The love of peace, stability and order allowed the churches to illustrate the superiority of the Canadian position and strengthen the claim that God was on the side of the volunteers. The

Christian Guardian stated:

Like very brave people they are peacefully inclined, never giving unnecessary offence or provocations to any. But they are high-spirited, and will be found when duty and patriotism really call for it, ready for whatever is required of them. Let all christian [sic] people offer up prayer in behalf of our valiant defenders, and

²⁴ W. Stephenson, "Ensign McEachern," *Christian Guardian*, 27 June 1866, 102. This eulogy of Private McEachern was written by Nathanael Burwash and is worth noting because it appeared in Anglican and Methodist papers. While this is not extraordinary in and of itself it is interesting that both denominations claimed him as their own. The author has seen the plaque with Private McEachern's name inscribed in a United Church in Ridgeway. This would tend to support the Methodist claim as the United Church came out of the Methodist tradition. However, there are other young men on the plaque that are not Methodist in their faith so the evidence is by no means conclusive. Also, it was reported that Private McEachern was shot in the neck and it seems unlikely that he would have been able to form such eloquent words. While this is not conclusive either it is worth noting whether or not this tale was embellished to accentuate the tragedy of the battle or if it was someone simply reporting what the Private said in his final moments. There is insufficient evidence to support the latter position so the former must be upheld. For more on Burwash and the Fenian invasion see Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind*, 17, 61.

²⁵ "Our Late Troubles," *Canadian Baptist*, 14 June 1866, 2. See also "Mr. Gladstone and the Fenians," *Canadian Baptist*, 26 April 1866, 2; "The Fenian Stock Market," *Canadian Baptist*, 12 May 1866, 2; "Our Situation," *Canadian Baptist*, 30 August 1866, 2.

especially pray that God may direct and overrule present events for the permanent welfare of the province, and to the bitter confusion of wicked men.²⁶

Although peaceful in character, the churches applauded the Canadian characteristic of bravery when duty called and took tremendous pride in the volunteers' moral integrity.

One of the more interesting aspects of the burgeoning Canadian identity was a growing move away from Britain and towards home rule for Canada. The close proximity of the Fenians only reinforced the distance between Canada and Great Britain and with this came the awareness that England's troubles were more than likely to find their way to Canada's doorstep if the Canadians did not start distancing themselves from their "motherland." The *Canadian Baptist* printed the following: "it is not because we are Canadians that we are threatened, but on account of our connection with Britain. The real or imaginary grievances of the Fenians have not been authorized in Ottawa, but in England."²⁷

The distance between England and Canada was further magnified when accusations began that the British people had treated the Canadian crisis with an offensive level of disinterest. The Methodist Church was one of the first to make mention of the changing political tides and commented that the lack of interest expressed by the citizens of England had a negative impact on the people in Canada. An article in the *Christian Guardian* read: "The public mind, we are persuaded, is undergoing a change in Canada-especially is this the case since the recent pollution of our soil was regarded as of such trivial moment by the commercial classes of the English people."²⁸

²⁶ "The Canadian Volunteers," *Christian Guardian*, 6 June 1866, 90.

²⁷ "Our Situation," *Canadian Baptist*, 30 August 1866, 2.

²⁸ "The Canadian Volunteers," *Christian Guardian*, 6 June 1866, 90. William Stewart echoed these thoughts in his sermon *Christian Consolation*, 4-6, 9. Though it may be surprising to read such anti-British ideas in an Ontario Protestant publication the *Christian Guardian* was singing this tune even in the days

These ideas and writings did not come out of any poor feelings towards England but rather, from a growing awareness that Canada was very much removed from the protection it had always counted on from England and some began to see that the risks of association with Britain outweighed the rewards. The *Christian Guardian* stated, “we shall certainly consider that independence is preferable to a connection fraught with danger, without corresponding protection.”²⁹ The Protestant press was unapologetic in both its loyalty to the empire and its desire for greater Canadian autonomy. Although this may seem like an irresolvable tension it is in the existence of that tension that Canada found one of its most unique national traits.

Although it is a stretch to assert that the Fenian Invasion of 1866 forced the Protestant Churches of Ontario to unite and forge a nation, the statement is not entirely without merit. The mixture of the influential religious press with the excitement of the time created some interesting and dynamic reading. The people looked to their spiritual leaders and those leaders, in turn, offered their people hope that the land of Canada was something worth protecting. Although the Canadian identity was still anomalous the churches attempted to unite people together under one banner and urged those people to call themselves Canadians. According to the religious press, Canadians were law-abiding and peaceful people who had been the victims of war-mongers intent on forcibly removing Canada from its place in the British Empire. The Battle of Ridgeway unified the people in shared grief and the performance of the soldiers gave the Canadians some

before the invasion: “And, we feel sure that, from this time, the conviction will be stronger, that it will be best for Canada, in every respect, to go on building up her own institutions and developing her own resources, offering honest reciprocity to all and feeling dependence upon none.” “The Volunteers,” *Christian Guardian*, 4 April 1866, 54. This article was fairly extensive in its criticisms of union with Britain and was left on an interesting note when the author referred to the current Canadian political climate as “anomalous.” Ibid, 54.

²⁹ Ibid, 54.

military pride. Although the press was loyal they were also beginning to express desires to emerge as a separate nation from England as well. William Stewart included in his sermon the growing awareness that it was in joining together that Canadian citizens would find their hope in the situation as well as any future incident that may trouble the shores of the Canadian nation. He stated:

can we not already see, that as one of the best results of the present commotion, a sentiment of nationality that will shortly bind the Provinces of British North America in one grand Confederation, and a feeling of loyalty and love to British Institutions and Britain's Gracious Queen...these will prove to be the best sheet-anchor to our country in all future storms.³⁰

In this sermon one can see the hope of Confederation coupled with the love of England and it was in the mixing of that independence and loyalty that the nation of Canada was created.

³⁰ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 10.

CHAPTER FIVE

DAMN YANKEES

With the growth of Canadian nationalism came the awareness that to be Canadian meant not being American.¹ This chapter will explore the growing anti-American sentiment within the churches and explore the different reasons why the Americans were chastised in the press. The first, and most common, criticism was the failure of the government to take any action to prevent the Fenian invasion even though their plans were well known. In the months leading up to the attack the churches speculated about American intentions and while some denominations were cordial others were deeply suspicious of the United States' motives. Some took issue with the politicians south of the border and accused them of pandering to these criminal Irishmen for personal, political gain.² The American press was also criticized for its perceived lack of objectivity and for printing inflammatory rhetoric designed to encourage the Fenians and incite violence against Canada. The churches also communicated disappointment with the American people and wondered throughout the year whether or not the United States was allowing the Fenians' attack out of some desire for retribution for Canadians who took sides during the Civil War or for the St. Alban's Day Raid.³ The chapter will conclude with a look at the more favourable articles written about the Americans during this time.

¹ For an excellent review of the multiple reasons why Canada saw itself as distinct from America see Carl Berger, *Sense of Power*, 153-176.

² "The major component of the Canadian image of the United States was the idea that the British constitution was superior to republicanism." Carl Berger, *Sense of Power*, 155. Berger correctly goes on to explain that the Canadians viewed the American system as greatly inferior to the British model. This will be dealt with more completely later in the chapter.

³ In 1865 some Confederate soldiers held up three banks in the Vermont Town of St. Albans and then made their way across the Canadian border with approximately \$200,000. However, they were so well represented that the charges were dropped and the Canadian bank that was holding the money returned it to

Nothing pertaining to the invasion received more attention in the religious media during 1866 than the perceived lack of activity by the United States government. Early on the churches were confident that the Americans, not wanting to incur the wrath of Great Britain, would not allow the Fenians' plot to materialize. The *Canadian Baptist* claimed:

However deeply Americans may sympathize with the people of Ireland touching the injuries received at the hands of the English Government, they are not such fools as to encourage open resistance on the part of the poor peasantry of the Emerald Isle against the gigantic military power of Great Britain.⁴

But as time progressed, and America appeared to be acting with undue benevolence towards the Fenians, the Protestant press began to record a growing frustration with their neighbours. As the *Christian Guardian* noted: "the government does not regard the evidence sufficient to warrant interference.' If this be true the Washington Government is not disposed to do its duty."⁵ Historians P.B. Waite, Carl Berger and Brian Clarke all report that there was a distinct feeling of distrust held by the Canadians towards their counterparts in the south at this time.⁶ Clarke notes that the greatest condemnation of the

them. This caused outrage in the United States and the Canadian government was forced to re-arrest the men. Troops were also ordered to the border to make sure that some American officials did not make good on their threats of crossing the border and taking the men by force. For more on this event see Josephine Phelan, *The Ballad of D'Arcy McGee: Rebel in Exile* (Toronto: MacMillan of Toronto, 1967), 68-71.

⁴ "A Nut for the Fenians to Crack," *Canadian Baptist*, 16 November 1865, 2. Note this is an example of Canada's acknowledgement of British culpability in Ireland's suffering. See also "The Fenians in America," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 November 1865, 2; "Correspondence," *The New York Times*, 25 September 1866, 1.

⁵ *Christian Guardian*, 7 March 1866, 38. See also "News," *Christian Guardian*, 7 February 1866, 22; "The News," *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42; "The News," *Christian Guardian*, 18 April 1866, 62. The Baptist perspective on this is found in "The Fenians in America," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 November 1865, 2; "American News," *Canadian Baptist*, 21 December 1865, 2; "Fenianism and Patriotism," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 2; "Mistaken Policy," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 2; "The Fenian Invasion," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 2; "Americans Moving," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 2.

⁶ Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 168-198; Waite believed that the Fenians were simply tools used by the American Government to help perpetrate their own national ideals, something that made Canadians just as uncomfortable, as this quote shows, "By 1866 part of the [Fenian] movement in the United States had taken up aims directly consistent with American continental ambitions: the conquest of British North America." Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 28-35. The churches also wrote about the American nationality of the Fenians. The Methodists made the following comment: "the Conference gratefully records the expression of its humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God for preserving the government, liberties, and peace of our country when threatened and invaded by multitudes of citizens of the *United*

Fenians among the Irish Catholics of Canada came from their association with America. He writes, "In June 1864, Bishop Lynch once more publicly denounced the Fenians, but the impact of his censure was muted by his statement that the Fenian Brotherhood was an American organization."⁷

The *Christian Guardian* also downplayed the Irish connection of the Fenians but drew attention to the American connection as if to say the greater national sin belonged to the United States and not to Ireland. It stated: "The majority of course were Irish Fenians, but they were citizens of the United States."⁸ While the American Irish were seen as marauders, the Canadian Irish were held up as bastions of loyalty. For example, the *Christian Guardian* wrote, "St. Patrick's Day will show American Fenians that they need not expect help from Irishmen in Canada...the Irishmen of Canada are too loyal not to join in repelling a wicked invasion."⁹ The Presbyterian layman, James Croil, seemed to capture the fear and loathing within the Canadian people at this time with regards to the Americans when he declared: "The Yankees glorying in our fear: mocking at our calamity."¹⁰

During his sermon following the Fenian raid William Stewart could not contain his disbelief at the actions of the United States government:

States." "Miscellaneous Resolutions: State of the Country," *Minutes of Several Conversations Between Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada at their 43rd Annual Conference*, 1866, 76. Italics added for emphasis. Carl Berger states that the Canadian dislike of America was indicative of nationalism more than anything else, "Canadians also could most effectively describe those possessions which they felt made them a distinctive people by contrasting them with what existed in another country, especially since that country was founded upon principles diametrically opposed to everything they held dear." Berger, *Sense of Power*, 176.

⁷ Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 185.

⁸ "The Fenian Invasion Commenced! Failure of the First Attempt," *Christian Guardian*, 6 June 1866, 90.

⁹ "St Patrick's Day and the Fenians," *Christian Guardian*, 21 March 1866, 46. See also Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 268; Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 194; "St. Patrick's Day Address," *Canadian Churchman*, 14 March 1866, 2; "St. Patrick's Day," *Canadian Churchman*, 21 March 1866, 3; "Manly Words from Bishop Farrell," *Canadian Churchman*, 21 March 1866, 3; "Denouncing the Fenians," *Canadian Churchman*, 21 March 1866, 4;

¹⁰ James Croil, *Churchman's Diary*, 54.

[The Fenians] have done all [their planning] throughout the length and breadth of the territory, and with the full knowledge of the government of a professedly friendly nation...Senators of the nation harangued the unwashed mob, the very scum of their cities and offscouring of their society; magistrates and officials presided at their meetings and merchants subscribed of their wealth to their cause...What wonder that the misguided men, surrounded by such helpers and sympathizers, should imagine that they had on their side, both the material and moral support of the nation?¹¹

Stewart was not alone in his feelings of betrayal by the American Government; the *Canadian Baptist* printed the following: "We have been at a loss to account for the apathy with which the American Government has viewed the preparations and menacing attitude of the Fenians towards Canada."¹² The churches were frustrated that Canada was being forced to assemble volunteers and train young men to fight when, if the American Government did what it was supposed to do, none of that would have been necessary. The *Christian Guardian* recorded this frustration: "It is reported that the Washington authorities have sent instructions to have any arms or ammunition seized which may be designed for these outlaws. The truth is if that government did its duty we should have nothing to do with making any preparations."¹³

The Methodists were more supportive of the American stance and credited the nation with wisdom and patience. They stated that the perceived lack of American

¹¹ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 4-5. The perceived support for the Fenians within America was also addressed in the following articles: "The Fenian Invasion," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 2; *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42.

¹² "Americans Moving," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3. See also "Political Morality," *Canadian Baptist*, 23 August 1866, 2; "The Fenians: Archbishop Cullen's Letter," *Canadian Baptist* 22 February 1866, 2; Thomas D'Arcy McGee, *Fenianism*, 10; Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 4-5.

¹³ "The News," *Christian Guardian*, 18 April 1866, 62. The churches also wondered how their neighbours thought they could allow the Fenians to go about their illegal business without bringing the wrath of Britain down on their collective head as this comment from the *Christian Guardian*, shows: "[The Fenians] only hope of possible success must arise from the belief that they will obtain large aid from sympathizing Americans, that the United States Government will not interfere, and that they possibly produce such difficulties as to cause a rupture between the United States and Great Britain." *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42. The *Canadian Baptist* tried to ease the minds of its readers by showing that the United States was in no place to engage England in a battle: "the American Government would actively interfere to frustrate [the Fenians], for they could not do otherwise without declaring war against Britain; and the American people have had enough of war for some time" *Canadian Baptist*, 21 December 1865, 2.

movement was no more than evidence of a keen interest in jurisprudence and a desire to collect enough evidence to insure that the Fenians would get away with nothing:

It is believed that the American Government is only apparently an indifferent spectator of the Fenian manifestations; that it will be ready to prevent the first movement towards the invasion of any of the British Provinces... We therefore think that the policy of waiting by the American Government for more active demonstrations by the Fenians may have all the effects of connivance, if not collusion.¹⁴

The Presbyterian perspective was somewhat more cautiously optimistic. James Croil wrote in his journal: "Is the American government in earnest? We give them the benefit of the doubt."¹⁵ After the suspected attack on St. Patrick's Day failed to materialize, the *Christian Guardian* used this as evidence to comfort its readers with the notion that America would not let anything of consequence occur to Canada. It declared, "it is probable that before long the American Government will be prepared honestly to do its duty."¹⁶

The mood changed dramatically in the wake of the attack. After the attack the churches went on the offensive and blamed the United States for allowing the Fenian invasion threat to come to fruition. Ironically, the Fenians actually blamed the Americans for the failure of their mission. John MacDonald quoted a source from inside the Fenian camp in the wake of the invasion: "I had hoped to lead you against the common enemy of human freedom, viz., England, and would have done so had not the extreme vigilance of

¹⁴ *Christian Guardian*, 7 February 1866, 22.

¹⁵ James Croil, *Churchman's Diary*, 58. This comment was made in relation to seeing American ships patrolling the waters between Buffalo and the Niagara Peninsula in the time between the Battle of Ridgeway and the growing fear that another invasion was imminent.

¹⁶ "St Patrick's Day," *Christian Guardian*, 21 March 1866, 46.

the United States Government frustrated our plans. It was the United States, and not England, that impeded our onward march to freedom.”¹⁷

The churches jumped at the failure of the United States to act in support of Canada as demonstrable proof of the corrupt nature of their idea of democracy.¹⁸ William Stewart expressed the feelings of resentment held by many Canadians regarding the increasingly corrupt American political system when he said: “I...deliberately ask these questions and make these charges not for the purpose of stirring up strife between two neighboring nations, but to lay the guilt of our troubles at the door of those to whom, in part at least, it is justly chargeable.”¹⁹ The Methodists showed their disgust in one article from the *Christian Guardian* that read in part: “The Fenians have of late had an appalling exhibition of the sympathy of the executive of the United States.”²⁰

Chief among the criticisms was the seeming willingness of the American politicians to court any people group, regardless of their moral repugnancy, if such courting could attain votes. This perceived behaviour invited criticism like this one from the *Canadian Baptist*, “Considering the character of electioneering tactics in the

¹⁷ MacDonald quoting Brigadier General of the Irish Army in Buffalo. M.W. Burns, *Troublous Times*, 93. Despite the actions of American the *Canadian Baptist* was less than comforted by the promise of increased American diligence. The paper stated: “The United States authorities are said to be on the alert, to prevent further invasion; but if their coming zeal and efficiency is akin to the past-asleep when they should be awake, and awake when they might as well be asleep-we shall be compelled to form a rather low opinion of the integrity of the officials of a government so much under the uncertain influence of popular impulse.” “The Fenian Invasion,” *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3. Similar sentiments were expressed by the *Canadian Baptist* even earlier in the year. See “Fenianism and Patriotism,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 2 and “Mistaken Policy,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 3.

¹⁸ For more on the Canadian perspective on American republicanism see Berger, *Sense of Power*, 153-177; Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 17-52; John Moir, “Who Pays the Piper,” 67-83.

¹⁹ Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 5.

²⁰ “Fenianism a Failure,” *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 90. For more Methodist outrage with regards to American support of Fenianism see articles printed in *Christian Guardian*, 7 March 1866, 38 and the *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1866, 42; “The News,” *Christian Guardian*, 18 April 1866, 62. The Baptists shared similar feelings as is evidenced in the following articles: “Mistaken Policy,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 2; “The Fenian Invasion,” *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3; “Americans Moving,” *Canadian Baptist*, 7 June 1866, 3.

neighboring Republic, where any convenient *ruse* is adopted to obtain increased party support, we were not surprised at some men of influence giving countenance to the Fenian banditti.”²¹ The offense, from the Canadian churches’ perspective, was not simply politically irresponsible but was actually seen as a spiritual failing on the part of the Americans. The *Canadian Baptist* was especially adamant about this. It wrote: “Where high christian [sic] principle might reasonably be expected to be blended with civilization and progress, we are disappointed in finding men willing to make shipwreck of the former for the sake of party strength and advantages.”²²

The Baptists and the Methodists even went so far as to critique one of the political parties. The Democrats were seen as the most culpable as their sympathy with the Irish plight and the Fenian struggle were well known on both sides of the border.²³ The *Christian Guardian* even used the American civil war as further evidence of the corrupt nature of this party. It declared: “we believe that those who encourage the Fenians are chiefly of the Democratic party, the same that sympathized with the South in its fight for the protection of slavery.”²⁴

The churches lambasted the American politicians for their failure to act in the past and reminded their readers that such a failure not only assisted the invasion but could also lead to future invasions: “We do not wonder at [the idea of a second invasion] when the American politicians of both sides have patronized them so much.”²⁵

²¹ “Fenian Sympathy,” *Canadian Baptist*, 28 June 1866, 2.

²² “Political Morality,” *Canadian Baptist*, 23 August 1866, 2. The churches also commented on how such behaviour would reflect on America’s international reputation, “the tolerance and harbouring of such an unparalleled conspiracy as that of the Fenians, will disgrace them for ever, and prevent any nation ever trusting to their good faith.” “Attacks at Other Points,” *Christian Guardian*, 6 June 1866, 90.

²³ “Doubtless, the present movement of this body is countenanced by some influential and wealthy Americans of the Democratic school.” “Fenianism and Patriotism,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 2.

²⁴ “The Fenian Invasion Commenced! Failure of the First Attempt,” *Christian Guardian*, 6 June 1866, 90.

²⁵ *The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder*, 8 August 1866, 2.

This sentiment put forward by the religious press was the most damaging in that it played on the fear that the average Canadian felt at the thought of another invasion. No longer was the press able to calm their anxious readers with assurances that the Americans would leap to their defense. Instead, the religious press reminded its readers that any country whose leaders would court people like the Fenians for their own advantage could not be trusted:

we find prominent public men in the United States petting and cajoling the leaders of an organization which is a disgrace to their country, and which in other lands would be summarily put down by the force of public opinion...for the most part homeless vagabonds, the scum of American society, finding countenance and warm support within the walls of Congress, is indeed cause for national humiliation.²⁶

The religious press let barrage after barrage of condemnation loose from the pages of their influential papers. Nowhere is the contempt for American leadership better shown than in the following editorial from the *Christian Guardian* aimed at the highest office in the United States. This editorial about President Johnson's remarks at the end of the year show that the rift between Canada and America was not going to be healed any time soon and that many of the churches had already given up hope of any kind of reconciliation with their neighbours:

[President Johnson] strangely declares that the complaints of mis-government in Ireland 'must necessarily modify' the 'opinions' they 'might otherwise have entertained' of the Fenian 'expedition' against Canada!! Who ever before heard of a government thus referring to the domestic affairs of another country as furnishing an excuse for a breach of its own international duties of good faith? for [sic] allowing its own citizens to violate all law by invading Canada from the United States-out of pity to Ireland!...so that American citizens may be

²⁶ *The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder*, 8 August 1866, 2. See also P.B. Waite's interpretation of the Canadian views of the American political system: "there was a nearly universal dislike of American political practice. The elected executive, the elected judges, the wide suffrage were associated by British Americans with bowie knives, uncut hair, ignorance, buffoonery, and they believed that American practice had produced what they regarded as the chronic subservience of American politicians to a corrupt and depraved electorate." Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 34.

unmolested in their lawless and murderous raids into a peaceful and contented neighboring country...Mr. Johnson got the Fenian vote in the late elections-and he is grateful.²⁷

Carl Berger correctly identifies one of the most prominent differences between Canada and the United States in the late nineteenth century was governmental structure. Although he never cites the Fenian raid, the religious press of the time seems to support his claim that Canadians held little respect for the American Government.²⁸

The Protestant press did not use all its space attacking American politicians but also reserved harsh condemnation for its counterparts in the south. The *Canadian Baptist* printed this article about the character of the *New York Herald*: "The New York Herald, perhaps, has been the most vicious of any journal in exciting border hostility and plunder."²⁹ It was argued that the Fenians received a lot of their encouragement and hope for the success of their mission by reading articles written in various newspapers.³⁰ Although few quotes from the American media are captured in the religious papers from Ontario, the opinion that the press had "prostituted"³¹ itself in the cause of stirring up

²⁷ "President Johnson's Message," *Christian Guardian*, 12 December 1866, 198. For further evidence that the Fenian invasion significantly tarnished the American system in the Canadian perspective see P.B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 28-35, 263-282; Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 185; Stewart, *Christian Consolation*, 4-5; "Miscellaneous Resolutions: State of the Country," *Minutes of Several Conversations Between Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada at their 43rd Annual Conference*, 1866, 76; "St. Patrick's Day," *Christian Guardian*, 21 March 1866, 46.

²⁸ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 174-176. C.P. Stacey also makes an interesting claim that Canada's identity as a country was as a part of a triangle where England and America made up the other two points of influence. England's influence kept Canada different from America and America's influence kept Canada different from England. He argues this point in relation to how external structures helped to shape the character of Canada in the late 1860's. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 7-13.

²⁹ "Political Morality," *Canadian Baptist*, 23 August 1866, 2.

³⁰ "The Fenian organization could not possibly have assumed its present formidable dimensions, had it not been for the co-operation of the press" *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 3.

³¹ "When the press is prostituted to arouse the bitter feelings of ignorant men, there is a great evidence of loose ideas as to public position and the obligations to repress faction. To expect evil from such instrumentality would but be natural. If averted, it must be attributed to God's mercy and the wise precautions set on foot to prevent it." "The News," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 3.

international trouble is just as evident as the Ontario Protestants' opinion of the character of those who would write such inflammatory rhetoric.³²

The invasion not only succeeded in driving a wedge between the Canadian people and the American leaders but the Ontario Protestant papers also reported their displeasure at the attitudes of the American people. The *Canadian Baptist* questioned whether or not their southern counterparts desired a more successful outcome for the Fenians in order to bolster their own economy.³³ The general feeling among the churches was a growing suspicion that the American people immeasurably aided the Fenian cause. For instance, the *Canadian Baptist* stated: "The Fenians would be powerless for evil were it not for sympathy and material aid extended to them by American citizens and officials."³⁴

The Protestants seemed to fear that a Fenian victory would be viewed as a ticket to more land for the Americans.³⁵ According to P.B. Waite the imminence of Confederation struck a chord within the American mind as the independent United States wondered whether or not a unified nation loyal to Britain for a neighbour could be a threat to their way of life. Some of the American journalists wrote that the Fenians could be an excellent tool to disrupt Canadian unity:

it will be well for our government to watch this confederation movement in Canada, and see whether it does not portend evil...It will, however, only be necessary to utter a word of encouragement to the thousands of Fenians who are eagerly awaiting an invitation to invade Canada, for our government to settle the

³² "[The American Press'] spirit at this time is neither manly nor honest." "St. Patrick's Day," *Christian Guardian*, 21 March 1866, 46.

³³ "There is a growing conviction in the public mind of this country, that the American people have an object in giving encouragement to the Fenians in their attempts at invasion" "Correspondence: Supposed Sympathy with Penianism [sic]," *New York Times*, 25 September, 1866, 1.

³⁴ "Our Situation," *Canadian Baptist*, 30 August 1866, 2.

³⁵ Although this thought was countered in the following quote, "The Americans don't want Canada, although the English think we do. We have enough soil already." "The Fenian Brotherhood and the Independence of Ireland," *New York Herald*, 24 October 1865. Berger also discusses the idea that Canadians feared Americans were always going after land; see Berger, *Sense of Power*, 175.

question of a Canadian monarchy with an English Guelph upon the throne, promptly and forever.³⁶

There is insufficient evidence in the writings of the time to prove exactly what the churches truly believed about the American motives but the fact remains that the *Christian Guardian* recorded the obviously anti-Canadian reaction of some American citizens on the day of the attack. While Col. Dennis' meager battalion fought against overwhelming Fenian numbers at Fort Erie, it appears that many citizens of Buffalo took the opportunity to sit on their side and cheer the battle.

Immense crowds of the citizens of Buffalo watched events from the American sphere, and cheered the Fenians with frantic eagerness. The Government of the States may wake up to its duty at last; we cannot believe that its public men will disgrace themselves in the eyes of the world; but it is certain that many of the people and newspapers have not shown an honourable spirit.³⁷

Given the gravity afforded the conflict in Canada, to hear that the Americans viewed it as akin to a sporting event (and even cheered for the other side!) would have done little to increase the esteem of Americans in Canadian eyes.

However, some of the churches did actually maintain a fairly positive view of the Americans and their response during this time. The Anglican press, unlike the other three, did not condemn the Americans.³⁸ However, several articles were printed in the *Canadian Churchman* later on in 1866 that showed how some American clergy viewed

³⁶ P.B. Waite quoting *New York Herald*, 15 March 1866 in his book *The Life and Times of Confederation*, 264. The irony of this is that Waite saw the Fenian invasion as one of the greatest catalysts to bring about confederation in Canada.

³⁷ "The Fenian Invasion Commenced! Failure of the First Attempt," *Christian Guardian*, 6 June 1866, 90. John MacDonald corroborates this story: "While the battle was in progress the American shore was lined with spectators, who cheered the Fenians lustily whenever it appeared to them from a safe distance that the Canadians were suffering losses or being defeated." MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 70.

³⁸ Though there is no evidence in the Anglican press one way or the other as to why this is C.P. Stacey does mention the English fear of America and their hesitancy to engage in combat with the United States. Though no reason is ever explicitly given for the Anglican's lack of American condemnation it is not unreasonable that the Anglican Church in Canada was acting in accordance with the desires of its parent church in trying to maintain cordial relations with the Americans. After all, it was much easier for the United States to invade Canada than it was for England to send supplies across the Atlantic. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 24-27.

the Fenians. One author wrote, "I am glad to see that the Fenian movement against the peace of the Province has come to a disgraceful end. It was a most wicked enterprise and I know of none in these parts who felt the slightest sympathy in it."³⁹

Although strong in its condemnation of the United States, the Methodist paper the *Christian Guardian* re-printed the following quote from a British source titled "The British Press on the Fenian Raids":

If we have sometimes thought that the American Government was tardy in their discerning sufficient grounds for their interference, we must now acknowledge that, when the occasion occurred they have acted in a manner which even exceeds anything that could reasonably have been expected from the most friendly nation.⁴⁰

This quote came from an article designed to communicate the fact that when the Americans used General Meade (a close associate and right-hand man of the famed Civil War General Ulysses S. Grant) they displayed their desire to not only stop the Fenians but to demoralize them. This, according to the British Press, was a step taken by an incredibly friendly nation. Articles from England were much more sympathetic to the American position than the Canadian articles. Sometimes the British press even made extraordinary claims about the American response to the Fenians. An example of such a claim was found in the *Christian Guardian*: "This energetic action [taken by the Americans] has, to a large extent, *superseded the exertions of the Canadians*"⁴¹ Although there was no commentary one must wonder how Canadians, who had lost people fighting the Fenians, viewed a comment like that from Britain.

³⁹ Rev. Dr. Goodrich, "Southern Opinions on the Fenian Movement," *Canadian Churchman*, 29 August 1866, 2. In the same article the *Churchman* also recorded the response of the Anglican bishop of Texas, "The Fenian invasion was a monstrous wrong, and the work of designing men, I am persuaded, to put money into their own pockets. It was universally condemned by your friends in the South." Ibid., 2.

⁴⁰ "The British Press on the Fenian Raids," *Christian Guardian*, 4 July 1866, 107.

⁴¹ Ibid, 107. Italics added for emphasis.

Even the ardently anti-American musings of the *Canadian Baptist* took a break every once in a while. Although the articles and editorials opposing the Americans greatly outweighed the pro-American ones, it is worth noting that the *Canadian Baptist* did re-print this article from an issue of the *New York Nation*. In this article the *Nation* instructed its readers that there is nothing good to be gained in siding with the Fenians:

We are a Christian people, and no matter what the Canadians have left done or undone, we owe it to our own souls not to let bands of ruffians leave our shores for the purpose of killing their young men and desolating their homes. There are some forms of retaliation to which we cannot descend without guilt, and connivance at or sufferance of Fenian raids is one of them. No matter what sympathies we may have with the wrongs of Ireland no invasion of Canada by people like these Fenians can be anything but brigandage on a great scale.⁴²

This article, though not wholly complimentary to Canada, did show the awareness that Canada was not responsible for the woes of Ireland.

In conclusion, the relationship between Canada and America was greatly strained over the Fenian invasion. The churches issued numerous articles lamenting the American involvement in the incident and questioning the integrity of a nation that could allow pirates such free reign. One of the defining traits of Canada at this early stage of the country's history was an awareness that Canadians and Americans were fundamentally different. Carl Berger makes the following comment:

Canada possessed certain attributes, especially a stable form of government and a law-abiding character, which differentiated her as a nation, they found they could most easily explain these things...by comparing them to the institutions of their neighbours which they felt were not only different but obviously inferior.

⁴² "America and the Fenian Raids," *Canadian Baptist*, 6 September 1866, 2 quoting article originally published in *New York Nation*. It is interesting to note that this paper also references an American desire for revenge against Canada for things "done or undone" without specifically mentioning what those things might be.

Although Berger is not referencing the churches' response to America in light of the Fenian invasion, it is easy to see how the attack deeply offended the newly forming Canadian sensibilities; sensibilities that the Protestant churches defined themselves throughout their literature and held as important characteristics for a Christian nation.

CHAPTER SIX

PIE OR CAKE?¹

Although the scope of this thesis has been on the Protestant response to the Fenian invasion, a proper understanding of the topic requires a look at Protestant and Catholic tensions that arose in Canada as a result of this event. Terrence Fay mentions that there are noticeably few Catholic resources from which Canadian historians can draw to paint an accurate picture of the Catholic response to the Fenian invasion.² Fortunately, many of the Protestant papers were given to reprinting articles and correspondence from Catholic sources. It must be noted that all the articles printed were used to reinforce Protestant points regarding the Fenians and so should be better understood as the Protestant opinion of what the Catholic position was instead of simply seeing them as wholly indicative of the Catholic mindset regarding the invasion.

It was no small matter what the Catholics thought and felt about the invasion because not only were the vast majority of the Fenians professed Irish-Catholics³ but a large number of Canadian citizens hailed from Ireland: “In 1867....the Irish were the largest ethnic group in the Anglophone population, making up 40.1 percent of persons”⁴

¹ This is a slang term the author is familiar with. If someone is “pie” that means they are Protestant; likewise Catholics have the nickname “cake”. These pet names were not designed to be cute or endearing but to quickly assess a person’s religious persuasion. If the wrong answer was given usually a beating was sure to follow.

² Terrence Fay, *History of Canadian Catholics*, 5.

³ While there is one incident of an Episcopal minister posing as a Roman Catholic priest so that he could give Last Rites to the Fenian soldiers at Ridgeway, the group seems to consist of Irish Catholics. This quote from *The Canadian Baptist* lends support to this statement: “As most of those, unfortunately, who are connected with this movement [Fenianism] profess themselves to be Catholics, I feel it is my duty to beg of you to admonish and exhort your people to take no part in what must be regarded as an open profanation of the Lord’s day...Such an act can hardly fail to provoke the anger of God no less than the sorrow and indignation of all sincere Christians.” “The Fenian Demonstrations,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 2.

⁴ S.J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History: New Edition* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 70-71.

Although a large Irish population did not guarantee Fenian support it did open the door on the age-old Irish problem of Catholic/Protestant tensions. Several months after Ridgeway an article in the *Christian Guardian* reflected on the potential the raid had to destabilize the religious climate of Canada: “[If the raid had been successful] the fierceness of the struggle would have become fearfully exasperated by religious passions, for it would not only be a war of races, but a war of religions, of Popery against Protestantism.”⁵

The Protestant press frequently referenced Irish-Catholicism in Canada and the United States during this time. The overarching fear in the early days of 1866 was that the Fenian position would find roots within the Irish-Canadian Catholic community. The *Christian Guardian* stated: “The reports of the Fenian intention, either to invade Canada from the States or to effect an outbreak in some of our cities and town.”⁶ The Protestant papers were obviously aware of the differences between Irish Catholics and Protestants and were quick to inform their readers that religious differences were much stronger than national unity and that an Irish Catholic was a far different creature than an Irish Protestant. One writer for the *Christian Guardian* wrote: “While there are no men who make better citizens in all respects, than the Protestant Irish, the American people are rapidly becoming convinced that the Irish Papists are the last men who should claim the partiality of our statesmen.”⁷

When Catholic clergy began to print about and speak openly against the Fenians they found no greater audience than the Protestant press. The Anglican paper the

⁵ “The Fenians and the Politicians,” *Christian Guardian*, 18 July 1866, 114.

⁶ “On St. Patrick’s Day and the Fenians,” *Christian Guardian*, 21 March 1866, 46.

⁷ “The Fenians and Politicians,” *Christian Guardian*, 18 July 1866, 114.

Canadian Churchman was especially fond of publishing articles that featured Catholic leaders denouncing the Fenians. One article read:

We deeply deplore the uneasy feeling and excitement caused by a threatened invasion by lawless men, who, pretending to remedy the ills of Ireland, would inflict dreadful injury on the peaceful inhabitants of these provinces...pray that...[God's] divine mercy would change the disposition of those misguided men who pretend to remedy the evils of Ireland by anarchy and bloodshed...We hope that the Catholics of our diocese and especially the city of Toronto will conduct themselves during those days as becometh pious Catholics and loyal subjects.⁸

Although the Protestants found supporting the British government fairly easy to maintain, the Catholics could not say the same. Historically, Catholics in Canada did not have a cordial relationship with Britain but the Fenian invasion actually put the Roman Catholic Church on the side of the Protestant British Government.⁹ The *Canadian Churchman* revealed to its readers that the ideology of the Fenians had gotten them excommunicated from their own church. It stated:

his Lordship Bishop Farrell ascended the pulpit, and in a forcible and eloquent address, exhorted all true Roman Catholics to do their duty towards their Queen and Country....he made allusion to the fact that the leaders of that treasonable organization styled Fenians, were not Roman Catholics, neither were any of their members, because they were discarded by the church.¹⁰

⁸ Bishop Lynch, "St. Patrick's Day Address from Bishop Lynch," *Canadian Churchman*, 14 March 1866, 2. There were numerous quotes and examples of other Catholic leaders condemning the Fenians printed in the *Canadian Churchman*. The following is just one example: "We understand that the Rev. Michael Brennan, pastor of the Roman Catholic Church, Belleville, took occasion on Sabbath last to allude to the Fenians, whom he denounced in unmeasured terms...He pronounced the Fenians enemies to God...and urged his hearers to discountenance them in any manner possible...These sentiments, we need scarcely say, do honor to the priest who uttered them" "Denouncing the Fenians," *Canadian Churchman*, 21 March 1866, 4.

⁹ This is a fascinating turn of events and for this insight the author is indebted to Dr. Terrence Fay. Catholic reaction to the Fenian invasion would prove fascinating but is beyond the scope of this thesis and, sadly, the primary sources are not as bountiful as their Protestant counterparts.

¹⁰ "Manly Words from Bishop Farrell," *Canadian Churchman*, 21 March 1866, 4.

In the same issue the *Canadian Churchman* also mentioned another Bishop by the name of Dr. Power who used the criticism of the Fenians as a chance to extend an ecumenical olive branch to the Protestants:

Another opponent of Fenianism has arisen in the person of Dr. Power, Roman Catholic Bishop, who has described it to his congregation as ‘a most rascally and mischievous institution...calculated only to uproot law and order, and disturb that solid Christian feeling which should exist between the people of all classes and denominations.’¹¹

However, the article then went on to be critical of the Bishop and stated that he did not “go far enough” in his criticism and feels that he should have called on the Fenians “to firmly and earnestly...relinquish all public demonstrations for this year.”¹² While this opinion was not overly volatile it did indicate a lack of understanding on behalf of the Protestants regarding the kind of political tight-rope some of these leaders in the Catholic community were walking.¹³

Although the Roman Catholic Church officially denounced the Fenians, their impact was lost as the Catholic community exhibited growing independence from the clergy. The *Canadian Baptist* expressed concern: “the Catholic clergy, who usually have some influence over their misguided adherents, are powerless in the present crisis to do them good.”¹⁴ The initial happiness at the Catholic stance gave way to despair as the Protestants realized that the traditional Catholic Church structure of authority was proving useless in regards to the Fenians.

¹¹ *Canadian Churchman*, 21 April 1866, 3.

¹² *Ibid*, 2.

¹³ In addition to this the growing feeling within Fenian circles was to ignore the words of the church altogether, “[The Fenians] disregard the threatenings of their spiritual guides” “Fenianism a Failure,” *Canadian Baptist*, 13 June 1866, 94.

¹⁴ “Fenianism and Patriotism,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1866, 2.

The Canadian Irish had more freedom of thought than their relatives back home and, as such, a feeling began to grow that the future of Ireland could be decided on Canadian soil, away from the power of Britain.¹⁵ The Catholic paper the *Irish Canadian* wrote that Fenianism was the beginning of a new day for the Irish and that, with a little patience, it could yield a harvest of independence: “[Fenianism] is the germ, the hope, the means of a *future* harvest, that shall give us life, strength, and health.”¹⁶ In studying the Catholic community in Toronto at this time Brian Clarke has done masterful work isolating the famine motif as the great unifier within the Irish community. Clarke writes:

the significance of the famine for Irish nationalists lay in its power as a cultural symbol. According to Kerby Miller, the language of exile that grew out of the famine was an example of the estrangement that results when a people from a traditional culture attempt to cope with the mores and expectations of the modern world...The image of the Irish Catholics abroad as exiles driven from Erin was undoubtedly an important motif for Toronto’s Irish nationalists. Yet the motif did not come into common use in the city’s Irish-Catholic press until the late 1850’s...and it became a staple theme in the nationalist speeches only in the early 1860s.”¹⁷

Just as the Battle of Ridgeway helped to unite Canadians around a shared tragedy so, too, did the famine accomplish this for the Irish. Words of warning echoed throughout the insurrectionist press, “the only alternative that remains...is an appeal to the sword.”¹⁸ Protestant papers reported the Catholic hierarchy’s admonishments against forming underground movements in Canada and stressed the rejection of such ideas at the highest level of the church. The *Canadian Baptist* printed this comment:

To convince the faithful of the dangers of secret societies, it will be most useful to remind them frequently that our present Holy Father, on the 25th of last

¹⁵ Brian Clarke recorded this sentiment, “the destiny of Ireland is...in the hands of her children on this continent,” Clarke quoting *The Irish Canadian*, 10 May 1865, in his book *Piety and Nationalism*, 175.

¹⁶ Clarke quoting *Irish Canadian* 9 Aug 1865, in his book *Piety and Nationalism*, 175. Italics part of original quote.

¹⁷ Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 174.

¹⁸ Clarke quoting Boyle in the *Irish Canadian*, 18 September 1863, in his book *Piety and Nationalism*, 172.

September, issued the severest censures against all such societies, and condemned them as being the source of innumerable evils.”¹⁹

But, as the Church increasingly lost its grip on the Fenians, even warnings from the Pope did little to turn the tide.

Throughout all the writings and editorials on both sides it was the arrest of Michael Murphy and crew that proved to be the greatest disaster to the Irish Nationalist and Fenian cause. Murphy was the head of the Toronto Hibernian Society during this time and while many suspected the organization of being nothing more than a Fenian front the Hibernians consistently maintained their innocence and no one could prove that it was anything more than a social club for Irish immigrants.

The Hibernian Society did mirror some aspects of the Fenian movement. They were supportive of bringing Irish together in a spirit of camaraderie and respect. Clarke writes, “The Hibernians’ appeal to Irish-Catholic self-respect-and its seeming corollary, defiance of Britain (frequently expressed in terms of hatred of all things British) created a ground swell of sympathy for Fenianism.”²⁰ They demanded to be acknowledged as equal citizens of Canada. They even shared a similar disdain for the Church and existing structures whose policies were defined as contrary to the goals of the organization.²¹

Murphy had a complex relationship with the Catholic Church, the Irish community and the loyalist land in which he lived. He could not openly support the Fenians for fear of aligning himself with an organization that was not well-respected in Canada, and he constantly combated rumours of his association with a potentially violent

¹⁹ Archbishop Cullen, “The Fenians: Archbishop Cullen’s Letter,” *Canadian Baptist*, 22 February 1866, 2.

²⁰ Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 78.

²¹ Clarke writes, “The self-assertiveness of the Hibernians also led them to insist on their autonomy from their social superiors and the clergy in the conduct of their social life.” Ibid, 183. Clarke also goes on to make this statement regarding the role of the Church in the lives of Irish Nationalists, “Radical nationalists defined an area for lay leadership and initiative in which the clergy were to play a supportive but ancillary role.” Ibid, 183.

force. Paranoia in Toronto around Catholic insurgency sprang up periodically and the Hibernians were always watched closely by Protestant and loyal factions. This comment from the *Canadian Churchman* showed the concern about the secret nature of the group, its activities and its numerical size: "There was no demonstrations at Ottawa or Toronto of the St. Patrick's Society, but at the latter place the Hibernian Society, (secret) numbering six hundred and eighty strong, marched through the principal streets."²²

While Protestant distrust of Catholics was nothing new, one incident in particular brought tensions to the surface. In downtown Toronto in May, 1864, Protestants interrupted an annual Corpus Christi celebration, violence and fighting ensued and the city police did nothing to prevent the mayhem. In November of the same year the Hibernian Society, about 400 strong, marched into the streets of Toronto at around midnight with revolvers and shotguns and rifles. They split into groups and stood on several key city streets. At about two in the morning the Hibernians on the west side fired some shots, which were echoed by those on the East, and then they disbanded and returned home. When people woke in the morning to hear that their streets had been occupied by "irresponsible and blood-thirsty bigots," as *The Leader* on 6 November 1864 called the Hibernians, they were terrified. This event also proved to fuel Protestant fear of a Catholic attack.²³

As the Fenian Brotherhood split, and the intentions of the Roberts/Sweeny wing came to be known in Canada, the Toronto Fenians and Hibernians threw their lot in with

²² "St. Patrick's Day," *Canadian Churchman*, 21 March 1866, 3.

²³ "The Hibernians' escapade, however, raised among Protestant Torontonians a Fenian scare which was to grip the city periodically." Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 188.

O'Mahony.²⁴ This way Murphy could maintain ties to the Brotherhood without bringing the charge of treason down on his head. Clarke notes, "Irishmen in Canada had more scope than those in Ireland to express radical nationalist sentiments without incurring the charge of sedition."²⁵

Unfortunately for Murphy, in April 1866 any chance of being viewed as a loyal Torontonion disappeared as he and some friends were arrested on their way to join the Fenians for what would have been the assault on Campo Bello Island. The *Canadian Baptist* reported, "It appears that the head [of the Hiberian Society of Toronto], an individual by the name of Mike Murphy, and five of his confederates, while on a journey to Boston to join the Fenian brotherhood, were arrested...by order of the Canadian Government at Cornwall."²⁶ Although it could be argued that they were simply going to Boston to see some friends, the fact that they were arrested in possession of weapons on the way to a known Fenian stronghold on the eve of a planned invasion did little to help his case in the pages of the Protestant press. The *Christian Guardian* said, "They had tickets from Toronto to Boston, were well armed with revolvers and knives, their baggage at Montreal contained arms and ammunition, and they were probably on their way to join the Fenians in Maine, in an attack on some part of New Brunswick."²⁷

Although no conclusive proof ever existed that the Hibernians were an organized front for Fenianism²⁸ the arrest of Murphy strengthened the position of those who saw the

²⁴"When it became apparent that the Roberts' wing was set upon a Canadian invasion, the inner circle of the Toronto Fenians freely gave their support to the O'Mahony wing of the brotherhood, whose military objectives were limited to Ireland." Ibid., 194.

²⁵ Ibid, 171.

²⁶ "Feniana," *Canadian Baptist*, 19 April 1866, 2.

²⁷ "The News," *Christian Guardian*, 18 April 1866, 62.

²⁸ This is not to say that members of the Hibernians were not also Fenians. For it seems highly unlikely that there were not at least a few Fenians in Canada. However, it does not appear that the Hibernians acted as an official front for the group. Though many would have been sympathetic to the Fenian position those who

Catholic influence in Canada as incredibly dangerous. Historians cite the Fenian invasion as the incident that gave many Protestant authorities the power to treat Catholics like hostile combatants.²⁹

Although some historians argue that Catholics were abused and treated with suspicion during this time it is worth noting that the Protestant press never blamed the Catholics for the Fenian raids. Even the strongly anti-Catholic paper *The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder* complained about the “Romish Hierarchy” and its attempts to find equality in the schools but it never compared the Catholics to the Fenians. An 8 August 1866 article under the heading “General Miscellany” spoke about a renewed Fenian threat and then went on to speak about the Upper Canada school scandal before returning to comments about the Fenians again. Not once in all that time did the writer speak about the Catholics being responsible for the invasion. The paper was much more inclined to place blame on the American Government than on the Catholics.

Although it may be an argument from silence, there are noticeably few writings regarding the evils of the Catholic Church in Protestant publications. The articles that do condemn the Catholics do so, not on the grounds of being Fenian, but because of their theology.³⁰ There was anger and scorn at the perceived Popish influence over the

were actually members more than likely kept that information secret. It is possible that an unofficial circle existed within the ranks of the Hibernians but that is all that can be concluded based on the evidence at this time.

²⁹ “When members of this American-backed group mounted a comic-opera invasion of Upper Canada in 1866, Protestant outrage again ran high.” Mark A Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 257. “Immediately after the 1866 raids, Canadians persecuted Irish and Catholics in their own country, often without just cause.” Bertuca then goes on to make the following observation: “The Canadians were only slightly tolerant of the Catholics in their country before the Fenian activities. During the Fenian crises, many public persecutions took place. It is ironic to note that, the two antagonists in the Fenian invasion, President William Randall Roberts and General Thomas W. Sweeny were not Roman Catholics.” Bertuca, *The Fenian Invasion of Canada*, 17 n29.

³⁰ “The most formidable foe of living Christianity among us is not Deism or Atheism, or any form of infidelity, but the nominally Christian Church of Rome.” Noll, Quoting Robert Murray of Halifax, *History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 257.

Protestant church, and the ecumenical movement that was beginning to be embraced in England was being met with staunch criticism in Canada. However, as the press maligned the Catholic Church and attempted to prevent the Protestants from seeking common ground with the Catholics there were still no comments about Catholicism being responsible for the Fenian outrage. Whatever aggression was aimed at the Catholics was not spread through the Protestant press nor was it officially sanctioned in any Synod report or denominational writings.

In fact, the majority of the writings of this time sought to show the loyalty and patriotism of the Irish of Canada, both Catholic and Protestant. No Irishman in Canada stood taller in this time than Thomas D'Arcy McGee³¹ who saw the difficult position the Fenians put on Irish Catholics in Canada. He wrote frequently and passionately denouncing the Fenians and was well respected within the Protestant press. His astute awareness of the political scene in Canada and his involvement in the highest levels of government made him an invaluable resource. In June 1866 the *Christian Guardian* printed a quote from McGee talking about the new role that Catholics must undertake in the wake of the Fenian attack:

[Catholics] have a duty additional to the duty of others. We are belied as a class, we are compromised as a class, by these scoundrels; and as a class we must vindicate our loyalty to the freest country left to Irishmen on the face of the globe...Let no class have it hereafter to say that you failed your country in the hour of danger.³²

³¹ McGee has the undesirable title as the victim of the first political assassination in Canadian history. Patrick James Whelan, the man tried and hanged for killing McGee, was a suspected Fenian though this was never proven. McGee spent his early days as a radical revolutionary in Ireland. He was even forced to flee Ireland out of fear of British reprisal. He went to Boston where he became the editor of the Catholic paper the *Boston Pilot* where he lobbied for the independence of Ireland and even the annexation of Canada into the United States! His opinions and politics changed dramatically and he became one of the fathers of Confederation. He wrote adamantly against the Fenians and this change of heart made him very unpopular in the Fenian camp.

³² Thomas D'Arcy McGee, "The Duty of the Hour," *Christian Guardian*, 20 June 1866, 100.

Hereward Senior wrote that the Fenian dream of Irish Catholic Canadian support was met with indifference: “[Irish Catholics in Canada] were, for the most part, indifferent to Fenianism.”³³ The *Christian Guardian* also wrote to its readers that the unifying of Protestants and Catholics against the Fenians was proof that the Fenian dream of breeding insurgency within Canadian borders had all but vanished. The *Guardian* wrote:

On this side of the lines what vestige of hope remains? The universal outburst of the patriotism of the community from all nationalities, Catholics and Protestants, must unmask the delusion that Irish Canadians are ripe for revolt...[the Canadian Irish] have won unfading laurels; and there is no reason why confidence should be withheld from them in this present emergency.³⁴

These comments showed that while the Protestants had reason to fear Catholic sympathy for the Fenians they appeared to have seen the Irish Catholics in Canada as theologically misguided but loyal nonetheless. The *Canadian Churchman* confirmed this sentiment when it declared:

The speeches [on St. Patrick’s Day] were national and loyal, and from the manner in which the speakers were received, there is no doubt as to the loyalty of the Irishmen of Montreal, or that they will be foremost in the ranks to resist the invaders³⁵

³³ Hereward Senior, “Quebec and the Fenians,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 48 (1967): 28.

³⁴ “Fenianism a Failure,” *Christian Guardian*, 13 June 1866, 90.

³⁵ “St Patrick’s Day,” *Canadian Churchman*, 21 March 1866, 3.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown the reasons why the Protestant churches in Canada universally condemned and opposed the Fenian invasion of 1866. There is no evidence to show that any of the major Protestant denominations ever wavered in their commitment to oppose the Fenians. Although it is not accurate to classify the four major Protestant denominations as one (given the significant differences between each church) there does appear to have been a general consensus regarding the major concerns which occupied the Protestant press and denominational writings of the time.

The most obvious problem the churches had with the invasion was the violence that would, no doubt, occur during the attack. The churches appealed to the Gospel to encourage their readers to oppose the Fenians' plan and set about showing the corrupt nature of the Fenian mission and how it was in opposition to the ways of Christ. The appeal to scripture was used to strengthen the Protestant position, but it also implied that using the Bible to guide political decisions was acceptable.

The Baptists and Methodists chronicled their outrage that the Fenians took money from the already impoverished Irish immigrants and the Fenian leaders were shown to be con men living well off the money supplied by the poor gentry they professed to be helping. Accusations of misappropriation of funds were common in the *Christian Guardian* and *Canadian Baptist* and both papers were quick to report any quibbling around this topic within the Fenian ranks. The Fenians' lack of proper stewardship in matters of finance irked the churches and numerous articles were dedicated to calling into question the moral integrity of the entire group.

The Anglican Bishop of Toronto spoke out that Canada had done nothing to the Fenians and, as such, should not have been targeted. The Fenian cause of liberation from England was seen to be irrelevant as it pertained to Canada. The Protestant press expressed outrage that Canadian soil would be the stage for a battle between two warring nations, neither of which was Canada. The churches accused the Fenians of assaulting an innocent nation and threatening the lives of innocent men that had never done them any wrong.

However, as 1866 continued and the likelihood of an invasion grew, the churches realized that Canadians might be called into duty to protect the land. Therefore, the churches set about showing their readers how violence used in defense of one's home was different than the violence perpetrated by the invaders. Others argued that the Fenians were God's instrument of wrath for national sin and a lack of piety. While most of the church writings preferred the former opinion, both positions led to the confrontation being viewed with cosmic significance. The battles were not simply physical skirmishes but were spiritual battles of good versus evil and freedom versus tyranny. Once again, the biblical narrative became the lens through which the churches interpreted the world for their parishioners.

The Presbyterian Church was fond of writing to its people and reminding them to pray for the souls of their soldiers and to pray that war would not hinder their spiritual growth or Christian morality. Canadians were reminded that since they were innocent victims of the invasion their position was favoured by the Lord. Readers of denominational literature were called to remember that their role in the conflict was as spiritual warriors and it was only through their prayers that the Canadians could hope to

be successful. All four denominations compared the Canadian cause to the battles of Israel and the soldiers were often compared to David or other warriors of God. Through the religious press people were able to learn about the events at the front lines and the admonitions to pray for the soldiers helped to create a bond between the men on the battlefield and their fellow Canadians around the province.

The Anglicans also reminded their people to look to English soldiers as examples of Christians nobly fighting in war. While violence was deplored by all the churches, it was considered worse to not stand up and fight for Canada. The churches established Canada as a welcoming place for the Irish, a land where people were treated fairly and with respect and, above all, a land that was innocent of the bloodshed that the Fenians were attempting to avenge.

Besides their displeasure with the carnality of war, the Ontario Protestant churches of the time were faithful to England while the Fenians' cause was bent wholly on overthrowing Great Britain. Unlike the United States, Canada did not have a revolution as part of its collective history and, as such, had become the desired homeland of those who remained loyal to the crown. The Fenians wrongly assumed that Canada was home to those who were British citizens out of obligation and did not realize that many lived in Canada out of love and support for the British monarchy. While loyalty to the monarchy could be expected among the Anglicans, there was also no shortage of loyalty to the Crown in the Methodist, Presbyterian or Baptist churches. For many in the churches, to be Canadian in 1866 was to be British, and that posed a serious problem for the Fenian cause.

Although most of the Canadian churches functioned independently of their parent churches in the “Old World,” they still owed their origins to English missionaries and colonization. The Ontario Protestants frequently referred to articles printed in England and all of them seemed willing to bolster their positions with quotes from the British press. The American Revolution had witnessed many Loyalists fleeing to British North America and the ethos of fidelity to the crown was one of the foundational characteristics of Canadian churches, even a century later. The churches had no desire to remove themselves from their heritage of loyalty to England in lieu of a new relationship with the Fenians.

The Protestants also had a vested interest in maintaining British connections in Canada because the burgeoning nation saw the benefits of having the world’s superpower as an ally. Without British soldiers on its soil Canada was a wide-open expanse with little hope of defending itself against potential invaders. While Britain was lauded as a force to be reckoned with, the Fenians were seen as upstarts and rebels and their desire to overthrow England was frequently mocked and ridiculed in many Protestant articles.

However, that opinion underwent a serious change in the aftermath of the Battle of Ridgeway when the only soldiers who took to the field were Canadian volunteers. Despite the disappointment at the lack of British military support, and some scathing articles that accused the British commercial classes of gross indifference to the Canadian plight, the Canadians still did not trust the Fenians’ leadership abilities. Throughout the press the character and integrity of the Fenians was constantly called into question and there was no evidence that the Ontario Protestants saw them as anything other than swindlers, pirates and buffoons and there was no desire to become a citizen of their “New

Ireland.” The Protestant churches had been built on imperial loyalty and continued to push that agenda in the face of the Fenian threat. Although sometimes critical of England, no Protestant church was anything other than loyal and the writings were unanimous in their declaration that fidelity to the crown was essential to repel the Fenians.

When the Fenians crossed the border they wrote that they were hopeful to meet fellows, but instead, they were met with foes. Hidden within the imperialism of Canada was a growing nationalism that was deeply threatened by the invaders from the south. The churches viewed the Fenian threat as a threat against their way of life. Although the invasion pre-dated the official beginning of Canada as a nation there were some distinctly Canadian traits upon which the churches built their arguments against the Fenians.

The churches expressed their distaste for the Fenians largely because they were seen to be American. Although many of the Fenians hailed directly from Ireland, the Protestant press quickly labeled them as citizens of the United States. While Canadian nationalism was still in its infancy and was largely unable to say what it was, the churches were clear in saying what a Canadian was not: an American. The official stance of the churches was loyalty to the Crown and that was not a characteristic of their neighbours to the south. There was tremendous pride in being separate from America and the Fenian invasion was seen by some as opening the door to the possibility of the United States attempting to conquer Canada.

Although some American papers reported the desire to see the Annexation party in Canada re-emerge, the Canadian press scoffed at the mention of such a thing. In the wake of the invasion some wrote that the idea of a peaceful annexation had died on the

battlefield of Ridgeway. Although annexation into the United States would come up throughout Canada's history, the Fenian invasion proved to be a hindrance to its cause.

After the Battle of Ridgeway the loss of Canadian lives succeeded in forming a bond between Canadians. The shared tragedy united Canadians in common horror and grief and did nothing to win support for the Fenian side. The Protestant press portrayed these soldiers as law-abiding Christians who were killed defending the sanctity of their home against the foreign foes. The press' reports of the battle had the double effect of uniting the Canadians in grief but also uniting them in pride that such decent people could prove so great an obstacle to the war-mongering Fenians. The churches juxtaposed the Canadian love of peace and order with the perceived Fenian penchant for war and greed and helped create an "us" and "them" mentality.

However, one of the more surprising side-effects of the invasion came later on in the year as the Baptists and Methodists both communicated their awareness that it was the association with Britain that brought the Fenian crisis. This understanding coupled with the lack of British military support during the actual invasion gave strength to the position that perhaps Canada would be better asserting more independence from its parent country. Within the tension to remain loyal to England and a desire for independence Canada found one of its most unique and enduring national traits. The Fenian invasion could be seen as one of the stronger catalysts that pushed Canada towards Home Rule and the Protestant writings showed that the churches were on the forefront of the movement.

However, nothing received more attention in the Protestant press than the actions of the United States during this time. The Baptists and Methodists were especially vocal

on this point and frequently condemned the American government for its inactivity. Early on the Methodists seemed to believe that the United States' government was simply biding its time and waiting to gather enough evidence to arrest all the Fenian culprits. However, as more of the Fenian plot was discovered and the American authorities still had not acted the optimism of the Methodists turned into confusion, feelings of betrayal and anger. American motives were questioned and the lack of activity became another example for the churches of why Canada should remain separate from the United States.

The Anglican and Presbyterian Churches were not as critical but that could have been due to the British desire to maintain peace with America. The Anglican Church maintained close ties to England and it is not too much of a stretch to think that the Church of England was simply being diplomatic in its writings about America in order to avoid an international incident. However, all the churches critiqued the American political system and condemned the politicians for pandering to criminals to garner more votes. These critiques undermined the American form of government and strengthened the claim that the British system was preferable.

The American press was also blamed for inspiring the Fenians' raid by (inaccurately) reporting the weakness and vulnerability of the Canadian defenses. Though the Canadian religious press was just as prone to editorializing, the Americans were criticized for printing inflammatory rhetoric in their papers. Once again, the American press proved to the churches that the Fenians must be stopped or else the corrupted American sense of morality could take over in Canada. The churches seemed concerned to show their people the lack of decency displayed in American culture as a way of

instilling in Canadians a sense that their nation was superior because it possessed greater moral strength.

At the Battle of Ridgeway some Americans on the Buffalo side made a picnic and watched the fighting between Colonel Dennis and the Fenians at Fort Erie. They cheered when the Fenians did well and booed when the Canadians appeared to be winning. This upset the Ontario churches because the perceived disrespect the Americans had for human life was seen as appalling. The churches had speculated that the Fenians were receiving support from the American people to attack Canada and the actions of the Americans that day strengthened the churches' claims.

Although there were some reports printed that were favourable to the United States, these were in the minority. Articles that defended the American's inactivity in the days leading up to the invasion as strategic appear to have done little to change the minds of the disillusioned and frustrated Canadians. Although the *Canadian Baptist* reported on England's pleasure with the American response to the invasion, most articles that year related Protestant disgust at the character of the Americans.

In addition to the concern over the Americans was the concern that the Fenians might receive support in Canada. The Protestant churches were well aware of how many Catholics resided within Canada. Since the Fenian organization was predominantly Catholic and opposed to Britain there was a fear that support for the Fenian cause could be found throughout Quebec or in any number of the Irish or Catholic communities in Ontario. That fear was increased when Michael Murphy and several of the members of the Toronto Hibernian Society were arrested allegedly trying to join up with the Fenians responsible for the Campo Bello fiasco. Protestant/Catholic tensions had come over from

the “Old World” and had always existed in Canada. Although not as serious as the French/English tensions, the Protestant churches kept a close eye on the Catholics inside of Canada.

Although some historians argue that the Fenian invasion inspired a volatile reaction within Protestantism towards Catholics, the reaction of the press of the time does not support that conclusion. There were numerous references to the perceived theological shortcomings of the Catholic faith, but nowhere did the papers, denominational reports or correspondence ever compare Catholicism with Fenianism. Although there was no shortage of anti-Catholic rhetoric, most of it was reserved for the religious schooling debate and the perceived “Romanism” occurring in Protestant circles due to an increase in ecumenical thinking taking place in England. Even one of the more staunchly anti-Catholic Anglican papers did not connect Fenianism with Catholicism during a heated editorial condemning the Church of Rome. Many of the Protestant papers were actually quite supportive of the Catholics, and all the denominations encouraged their readers to note that the Irish Catholics were as loyal to Canada as anyone. The Protestant churches lamented that the clergy were unable to stop the Fenians’ plan, but they did not hold the ecclesiastical leaders responsible for that.

In conclusion, the religious press was one of the only sources of information for most Canadians in the nineteenth century. It was not simply a collection of sermons, children’s stories, advertisements or Bible studies, but a portal to the world. The religious press reported on events that were occurring around the globe and the writers of the various papers gave their thoughts and helped shaped the tone and content of the papers. Since not everyone read the denominational reports and letters were only read by the

intended recipients, the religious press had the widest sphere of influence within church writings. The attitudes and opinions recorded in the press had the awesome power of shaping the way the average Ontario Protestant thought about the world in which he or she lived.

As the religious press reported on the Fenian invasion several widely shared opinions came through. The churches did not approve of the moral character of these “freedom fighters” and did not hold them up as noble heroes but as villains who stole from the poor, engaged in war-mongering and were untrustworthy as leaders. The churches appealed to the Bible as the source of their policies and asserted Canada’s innocence in the Fenian plight. They applauded the men who fought and died to defend the land against such aggression. The churches called their readers to remember the Canadian ties to Mother England and to honour the country’s proud heritage of fidelity to the Crown. The churches also decried the American attitudes and asserted their opinions that Canada should remain separate from a nation that could support a group like the Fenians. The widely-held beliefs of submission to law, love of peace, desire to remain both loyal to Britain and separate from America provided the reasons why Canadian Protestants stood up against the Fenians and those same reasons spelled doom for the Fenian cause even as the churches breathed life into a burgeoning sense of Canadian identity.

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