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REV. DR. CAHILL.

Correspondence between Rev. Dr. Cahill and twenty-one Protestant Clergymen from Birkenhead.

TO THE REV. DR. CAHILL.

6, Moray Place, Birkenhead, Oct. 19, 1853.

Rev. Sir—As secretary to the local committee for special mission to the Roman Catholics of this place, I have, at a meeting held last evening, received the directions of the Clergy of Birkenhead and its neighborhood to write to you and notify their intention of calling on you publicly for proofs of your assertions in reference to the recent numerous conversions from the Roman Church in Ireland. A reiteration of charges, proved to be utterly unfounded and destitute of truth, on several occasions, especially in the correspondence between the Rev. Messrs. Wilberforce and Dallas, in which Mr. Wilberforce withdraws all charges against the west church missions in Ireland, might well have caused amongst us considerable surprise, were it not that we have been forced to confess, however unwillingly, that popular controversialists on your side have ever seemed more anxious to sustain their reputations by *ad captandum* arguments than by a strict adherence to real facts.

I beg to enclose a copy of the letter, which I have this day ordered to be printed, in reply to your own, and sincerely hope that as you have, unprovoked by us, brought charges against our Church and mission necessarily calling for controversy, you will not now shrink from that public test of their truth which you must consider as the inevitable result of your own acts of aggression.—I remain, Rev. Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY P. LINTON, Secretary,
Curate of Holy Trinity, and Divinity
Lecturer at St. Aidan's.

Copy of Public Letter to the Rev. Dr. Cahill from the Clergy of Birkenhead.

Rev. Sir—Having publicly announced by placards, that you are to deliver lectures in this town on the character of the Irish Church Mission to Roman Catholics, and also on points of controversy between the Churches of England and Rome, we, the undersigned Clergymen of Birkenhead and its neighborhood, beg to make to you the following proposals:

1st—If you furnish us with definite charges against the Irish Church Missions, giving names, dates, and other circumstances connected with your charges, we undertake to bring forward credible witnesses to disprove those charges, and to give you public opportunity of proving your assertion in the presence of those witnesses.

2nd—We are ready on our part to appoint a Clergyman to meet you before the same assembly to discuss the points of controversy between our respective churches.

Having come amongst us with charges seriously affecting the character of the united Churches of England and Ireland, and also assailing doctrines which we hold sacred, we feel assured that the propositions which we hereby make will be accepted as reasonable by all thinking men, and we also hope that they will meet with your concurrence.—We remain, Rev. Sir, your faithful servants.

[Here follows the names of 21 ministers.]

DR. CAHILL'S PRIVATE NOTE TO THE REV. H. P. LINTON.
Birkenhead, October 20.

Rev. Sir—On Tuesday evening I have been favored with your courteous note, calling my attention to the public letter of twenty-one Clergymen of your Church, and addressed to me.

I assure you that I feel rather happy in the distinguished position in which the united communication of so many eminent persons has placed so humble an individual as I am; and I trust I shall not, in my reply, depart from the example which is set before me in the politeness of their language.

I may here state that your letter has been conceived under some most unaccountable mistake, as I am not conceiving at this moment of having said or written anything to justify the position they have taken. Will you kindly grant me the favor of not requiring the manuscript of my letter, but be content with receiving the printed answer in the *Mercury* of next Tuesday?—I have the honor to be, Rev. Sir, very respectfully,
D. W. CAHILL.

DR. CAHILL'S REPLY.

St. Werburgh's, Birkenhead, Saturday,
Oct. 22nd, 1853.

Rev. Sirs—I have acknowledged, through your Rev. secretary, your public letter to me, of last Wednesday's date; and I feel bound to say, that the courteous tone of your communication, combined with the numerous distinguished names attached to that document, demand from me the sincerest expression of grave respect. I shall at once enter on the subject of that letter, by assuring you of my entire surprise at what I must call your most unwarrantable assumptions.

Firstly, then, I did not come to this town to de-

liver lectures "on the character of the Irish church missions;" and, secondly, I have never, either in this town, or in any other town or city in these countries, lectured "on the points of controversy between the Churches of England and Rome." It is my invariable practice to explain and defend my own doctrine against Protestant calumnies, but never to discuss or ridicule the creed of others. Such a mode of lecturing is at once opposed to my own feeling, and strictly prohibited by my superiors; and I have never in my numerous subjects departed from this rule, except occasionally on one doctrine, namely, whenever I maintain "the infallibility" of the Catholic Church, as distinguished from "the Bible" as a rule of faith. You, gentlemen, have fallen into the common mistake of editors of anti-Catholic newspapers, and of some Protestant clergymen, who are continually calumniating me, and who are really putting forth statements before the public which, in general and in detail, are one unbroken, unprincipled tissue of gross (and I am compelled to say), malignant falsehood.

I shall now place before the public the placards which invited Catholics, not Protestants, to my lectures, and the people of Liverpool and Birkenhead will thus, no doubt, form a correct judgment whether you have been justified, without reasonable data, and without waiting for a reply from me, in fixing on all the walls of your city and neighborhood the letter which appears at the head of this reply. There were two placards, as follows:—

"On Sunday, the 16th instant, the Very Rev. Dr. Cahill will preach two sermons (morning and evening), in Saint Werburgh's Church, in aid of the funds of the poor schools of this parish."

My subjects were—
1. "The parable of Dives and Lazarus."
2. "The casting out the dumb devil, and the return of seven other devils, worse than the first."

The second placard was as follows:—"And the Rev. Doctor will lecture in the same church three evenings of the next week—viz., Tuesday, the 18th, Wednesday, the 19th, and Friday, the 21st, on the following subjects:—

1. "On mortal sin. 2. On the triumphs of the Catholic Church over the world. 3. On Protestant conversions, or the late attempt at reformation in Ireland."

It must be borne in mind that your letter was delivered to me on Wednesday evening, the 19th instant—that is, two whole days before I discussed my last subject. And now will you give me leave, gentlemen, to ask, how can you account, before the impartial decision of honorable, peaceful, public opinion, for the clear, palpable misstatements of your letter? Where have I, as you say, "unprovoked," committed an "aggression" on your doctrines? where have I "attacked the character of the Irish church mission?" and, above all, how could you accuse me on Wednesday evening of charges which were to be made on the following Friday? How could you know on Wednesday what I should say on the next Friday? and how could gentlemen of education, character, station, eminence, and, I shall add, punctilious delicate honor (which I willingly admit) be guilty of deliberately writing and publishing statements which you ought to know (by referring to the placards) were an entire falsehood? With your own hands, therefore, you have written in large capitals your own blushing condemnation; and if you had printed your names in red ink, it would be a more suitable color to express the ridicule and scorn with which every one of you stands at this moment branded before the clear public decision. You would involve me in difficulties if you could (a position in which I would not certainly place you, or any one of you); and in your intemperate precipitancy you have overstepped common discretion, and you charged me with saying what I have never even intended to utter.

But, on the other hand, as you have the peculiar logical talent of drawing conclusions without premises, who knows but you took it into your heads to think that I was describing the genius of the Protestant church while I denounced the rich glutton; perhaps you indiscreetly fancied, as I shuddered at the eternal furnace where he was buried, that I was depicting the future condition of your archiepiscopate; and that, while I untold the rich drapery of purple and fine linen worn by Dives, or, while I described the sumptuous feast of the monster, as he gazed the while on poor starving Lazarus, ten to one but you have uncharitably understood me as painting your fat angel of Canterbury, or (what is more ungenerous) perhaps our own Apostolic Tom of Dublin? And, as you have the singular power of reasoning without any imaginable data, I dare say you believed my description of the unfortunate man repossessed by the seven devils as entirely applied to the members of the Protestant Alliance of England;

and it is not improbable that, in your jealous zeal, you conceived my graphic exposition of the evils of mortal sin as a mere allegorical subterfuge in order to cover a pointed delineation of the doctrines and practices of the Reformation Church. Gentlemen, you have originated this correspondence without any provocation whatever on my part, either directly or indirectly; and I think it will be admitted by the thousands who have seen the placards of my lectures, and heard me during the past week, that you made two unbecoming mistakes, first in making charges, in a clear ignorance of your case, and, secondly, in printing these charges without waiting for my reply.

I have been particularly struck with the first sentence in Rev. Mr. Linton's letter to me, where he styles himself "Secretary to the Local Committee for Special Mission to the Roman Catholics of Birkenhead." This announcement has led me to inquire, if the Catholics of this place had any connection with this society; and, after a minute and an accurate investigation amongst those whose office and duties enable them to form an unerring judgment, I am instructed to say that Mr. Linton's secretaryship is an office without a duty, a position without a place, and that "the mission to the Roman Catholics" is something like the echo of an imaginary sound. I have never read anything like this pompous announcement, except the inscription on the signboard of a London tradesman who within the last few years placed over his door in large capitals that he was "Barber and hairdresser to her present Majesty."—Now, this announcement could only gull the mere simple ignorant, as it is evident that this man never will or never can shave the Queen, and therefore the Birkenhead puff is the only parallel that can be drawn to the showboard of the absurd barber; since every man, woman, and child in this parish knows with a smile that no Catholic here ever receives one particle of these frothy Missionary ministrations.

But under other circumstances it is notorious that Catholicity supplies an abundant theme for the pulpit harangues of these Missionaries. The platform where you speak, the columns of the English press where you write, the festivals where you declaim, might be supposed to give a field wide enough for the display of your zeal and talent, against the tenets and discipline of the Catholic Church; but it is only in your pulpits that your oratory acquires the full bulk and growth of Protestant perfection, and where it is poured forth on all occasions in a devastating flood against the profession and the name of what you are pleased to call "Popery." The sober religious of your congregations, as I am credibly informed, look in vain on the peaceful Sabbath for some words of charity from your Reverend lips. They are deceived: there is only one subject at Birkenhead and Liverpool, viz., the errors of Popery; your race, being still true to the original instinct of your progeny, still, still protesting against the existing forms of our worship, without adopting permanently any fixed symbol of your own. These inflammatory speeches from your pulpits have produced the natural and expected result. Grace can never arise from calumny nor faith from falsehood; and hence your churches are empty, your ranks are thinned, and your professional character is weakened. Your statements are doubted, your assertions disbelieved, and while I am prepared to concede to your honor (as a matter of course) the highest and the most spotless truth on all social, commercial, and national subjects, I am reluctantly compelled to say that from your known and unceasing deviations from strict statement in matters connected with the Catholic doctrine and practices, it is now universally whispered, and (without wishing to give the slightest offence) it is the familiar adage at home and abroad, and throughout Europe and the civilised world, to brand the statements of your church, in reference to Catholicity, as "unscrupulous, unprincipled, Protestant lies." And while you have forfeited the public confidence abroad, you have beyond dispute infidelised your own country at home. From undeniable statistics it is demonstrated that one-half the Protestants of Liverpool never attend church; it is the same in Manchester and in all the manufacturing towns; the poor are never seen in the churches. The *Times* has lately stated that 50 persons are the largest number known to attend worship in any church within the city of London on Sunday. Rev. Mr. Jones, in his examination before a committee of the House of Commons, has proved the existence of forty-nine known conventicles of avowed infidelity in England; and he has demonstrated that Protestant laborers, and tradesmen, &c., to the number of at least 300,000, in London and suburbs, live and die without any practical religion, or any form of worship. In fact the entire Ecclesiastical Protestant records of this country prove at once the total failure of your Church Establishment, and publish the awful existence of a growing and wide-spread infidelity; and the impartial Ecclesiastical historian

will yet tell the sad truth that this most deplorable national condition is beyond all doubt to be ascribed to the teaching of the Protestant church, which, by breaking down all authority, removing the evidences of all antiquity, and taking away all checks from the heart, has flung the public mind on a troubled ocean of doubt, has unbridled human passion, and precipitated the national character into an inevitable demoralisation and a wild infidelity.

And not content with unchristianising your own followers, your Church has of late years, by a system of the most unparalleled vituperation and mis-statement, attempted to undermine the faith of the Catholics of these countries, and thus involve our creed in one common ruin with your own. The very falsehood under which your society has been organised contains in the first line a palpable and notorious falsehood. It exists on the assumption that the Catholic Church withholds the Scripture from her Faithful, and it is set in motion under the pretext of distributing amongst our people the Word of God. This assumption and this pretext are, without any exception at all, the most flagrant instance of unblushing imposition which has ever been practised on the public credulity, at any period of Christian history. It is the vilest calumny which Protestant malignity has ever forged; it is beyond all comparison the most unprincipled lie which English apostacy has ever promulgated. Now mark me, gentlemen, I disclaim uttering one syllable disrespectful to you personally; I have no reason to entertain towards you individually and collectively any other sentiments than those of exalted estimation; but I again repeat my utter abhorrence of the flagitious system which lives on falsehood, grows fat on calumny and claims the venerable spotless honors of sanctity from perjury to man and blasphemy to God. Beyond all doubt, there never was invented so gross a fabrication as the nauseating cant that the Catholic Church has never encouraged the reading of the Bible. In the early ages, she could not of course circulate the Scriptures with such efficiency as we can do at present, because the art of printing was then unknown; but she alone collected them; she alone decided their integrity and their authenticity, the Protestant Alliance not being well known in those days; she alone stamped them with her authority, without which they could not more vouch for themselves than a dead man could tell his name and parentage; she alone, like a witness before a jury, proved their inspiration before mankind; she alone by her infallible reputation chained the universal belief in them; and she alone preserved them amidst the wreck of the Roman empire, the convulsion of ages, and the changes of dynasties and races, and creeds and tongues. The sickening cant of the beardless strapping Clerics of the modern reformation conventicles asserting their claim to the Scriptures, is the same kind of humbug and imposition on the undiscerning mind of your dupes as if a green set of young English architects declared it was the Protestant Sir Christopher Wren who built and preserved the Pantheon at Rome; or that it was the present London School of Design which planned and kept in repair the Pyramids of Egypt! Of all the instances of audacious, barefaced, cool, imperturbable insolence of Protestantism, their claiming the Scriptures, as preserved by them and promulgated by them, is the highest point of wicked, exaggerated, extravagant misrepresentation to which the ingenuity of man could build up a lie. So unceasingly laborious, on the contrary, was the Catholic Church in making copies of the Bible, that she kept the Monks and the Religious of all countries continually writing them; and whoever will attentively consider for a moment the extraordinary labor of making even one copy of the Old and New Testament; whoever will visit any Ecclesiastical library and count over the folio volumes of Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, Saint Chrysostom, and all the Greek and Latin Fathers, and calculate then the difficulty of making unnumbered copies of these Greek ponderous volumes; and whoever will, like a candid man, reflect that all the profane and Church histories of these days, all the sermons, all the works on piety were all copied, recopied, and one thousand times copied by the Monks of the Catholic Church, the surprise of the generous man and the scholar amounts to a feeling of impossible expression how the Church could have been able to furnish copies of these vast accumulated biblical, and classical, and historical works to every part of the world, such as we know them to have existed before the Christian libraries were destroyed, and before the art of printing was discovered. And further, to prove this statement, the moment printing was discovered and made the vehicle, after many improvements, of communication between men, the Catholic Church, so early as the year 1412 (almost immediately after the discovery of printing and paper), published the Latin Vulgate, at once to circulate the Word of God, and that too in a language then most known to the whole