

necessity of proving the negation of them,—the difficulty of which every one must acknowledge, considering the latitude of the charges,—or at least the necessity of explaining how prejudice may distort simple and legitimate actions devolved upon the Committee. Thus Mr. Smith, the Secretary, accomplishes this task :

Catholic Institute, 14, Soho Square, London,  
23d October, 1844.

Sir—The Committee of the Catholic Institute have directed me to acknowledge your letter of the 9th inst., and to inform you that an accident has delayed the present reply. They desire me to convey to you in the first place their thanks for the openness and candour with which you have met them, and while they do most strenuously protest against some of the opinions you express, they are not without hope that a little reasonable explanation will tend considerably, if not altogether, to remove the points that are at issue between you and them.

At the outset they cannot but demur to the reason you assign for not making known to them the evidence on which some of your statements are founded. More than one member of the committee has resided in Rome, and conceives himself to be tolerably well acquainted with the usages and practices of the Holy City, and they desire me to say they believe you are misinformed in this particular. They know, indeed, that there are classes of persons in that city who notoriously make a trade of imposture upon the English visitors by whom Rome is thronged; who, believing Englishmen to be *prima facie* Protestants, and bitter haters of the Holy See, take advantage of their credulity, and palm off upon them for gold the most unblushing and impossible inventions. The Committee are aware that the characters and calling of these wretches are of public notoriety in Rome, and they know of instances in which by mistake they have vented their lies upon Catholics instead of upon Protestants; but they never yet heard of any punishment inflicted for this wickedness. Knowing these facts to be both true and notorious, they feel perfectly certainly that you have been egregiously deceived, as have many other well-meaning persons before you. But, in the present instance, they hardly conceive it needful for them to rely even on this explanation, or at all to press this matter further; because they are persuaded that your candour will co-operate with your endeavours in rendering any actual enquiry unnecessary.

(1) First : as to the letters from the Devil and the Virgin Mary. The committee wish to draw your attention to the plain distinction between the *system* of the Catholic Church and *abuses* of its system.—That abuses exist in the Church as well as in every other institution of which men are the members, the committee have no difficulty in admitting; and they are equally willing to admit that a community numbering 150 millions of souls, scattered over nations

of all degrees of civilisation, morals and intelligence; a Church whose discipline is often paralysed by State control and secular ambition, may contain in its bosom some instances of profligate priests, and deplorable crowds upon whom unprincipled teachers may practise their powers of Jeception. The Committee do not feel themselves called upon either to dispute or to inquire into any instance of mere abuse which may be cited within their Church; any more than they would think it charitable to create a controversy out of the irregularities of the clergy of the Established Church or dissenting ministers. Cases of this kind may often be charitably mentioned to procure correction by the interference of authority, or to produce amendment by shame; and if the Committee thought that either of these was your object in detailing the supposed facts in question, they would not quarrel with your intention. But it can never be charitable or candid to use as argument against the being of a Church instances of abuse which her whole system condemns and labours to eradicate. In conformity, then, with this distinction the Committee beg to inquire of you whether you charge the letters now in question as specimens of the essential *system* of Catholicity, or speak of them as some of those unfortunate *abuses* which (for aught you know) the Church may wish to eradicate, but which the frailty of man prevents her from entirely destroying? In the former event they beg you, on the supposition (made only for the sake of argument) that the *facts* are true, and are not susceptible of any reasonable explanation, to furnish them with some proof that such facts as these are parts of our Church system; and when you attempt to bring such proof they are prepared most fully to rebut it. Until this point is settled it would obviously be a mere waste of time to inquire into the truth of the facts. If, on the other hand, you mean to treat these letters only as abuses, unsanctioned by our Church system, the committee beg to say that they feel no particular motive for entering into any discussion in their regard. The fall of Judas, the prevarication of Peter, were not grounds for refusing obedience to the Apostolic College; neither will abuses at Girgenti or at Messina shake the rightful authority of the successors of the apostles.

(2) "The Pope received recently from the King of Naples sums amounting to £10,000 for making a woman a Saint." On this point also the Committee request a little explanation. It is very possible you may not be aware of what "making a woman a Saint" really is. If you wish, however, for the most authentic information on the subject, the Committee can refer you to a well-known treatise by one of the most learned Popes that ever occupied the Holy See—the treatise "*De Canonizatione*," by Pope Benedict XIV. In that treatise, or in the French abridgment of it by Beaudeau, you will see the entire process of "making a person a Saint" described, and you will there find that this process is in reality a very long and expensive lawsuit, protracted through a considerable series