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LETTER OF THE REV. DR. CAHILL.

DR. CAHILL'S PRIVATE NOTE TO THE REV. J. BURNS.

Whitehaven, Dec. 7.

Rev. Sir—Your public letter, published on yesterday evening in the *Cumberland Packet*, reached me last night. Many thanks for the kind expression of your good wishes for my salvation and for desiring the eternal welfare of all Catholic souls. I hope the public voice of this town will learn to appreciate the sincerity of these feelings, and to make you a suitable acknowledgment.

I beg to tell you, with great respect, that you are palpably unacquainted with our doctrine of the Eucharist; we do not 'create our Creator.' If this language were uttered by any other person but by one of your known liberality and acknowledged education, I should designate it as the lowest form of vulgar bigotry. Such words, coming from you, are simply a mistake; and your only fault in the present case is, your writing on a subject which, undoubtedly you have not studied.

The editor of the *Whitehaven Herald* will not keep his columns open for my reply to you longer than twelve o'clock on Friday; and hence I shall conclude this short note, and reserve any further observations on this subject for my public answer.

I have the honor to be, rev. Sir,

Your obedient servant,

D. W. CAHILL.

DR. CAHILL'S PUBLIC REPLY TO THE REV. J. BURNS.

Feelings of unmingled love and compassion for your soul and the souls of those who are misled by the Roman priests, constrain me to use every effort in my power to awaken in you and in them the dormant feelings of common sense, and to arouse you and them to attend to the voice of reason and the voice of God. I believe your religion to be false, and truth and duty compel me to publish my conviction. I seek to gain your soul, and, therefore, I write plainly, and let none of my fellow-men judge me an enemy because I tell the truth.

Every hour you consecrate a bit of bread, you create your Creator.

Grant me, sir, as a common ground of argument, that God Almighty made you, and gave you the faculties which you possess, and I will undertake to show, by self-evident truths, that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is subversive of the foundation of human belief, and, therefore, incapable of being proved by any evidence, or of being believed by any man under the influence of common sense. If God made man, then the testimony of the senses is the testimony of God. To seek to support this testimony is absurd, and to doubt it is to be mad.

Now, sir, in all controversy the proof rests on him who takes the affirmative side of the question.—If you wish me to receive your doctrine you must furnish me with the grounds on which to rest my faith. To justify me in rejecting your dogma I am not even obliged to produce direct proof of its falsehood. It is enough if I can show that the proof you allege is not sufficient. The doctrine is overturned if it be not proved. If I can show that every passage you bring forward is, according to the usual laws of language, fairly capable of another sense, I have overturned your doctrine; and if this principle be just, then the battle is won without my firing a single shot of direct disproof at all.

I think the soul can no more feed on flesh and blood than on bread. If, then, the body of Jesus be food to the soul, it must be so, not literally, but figuratively. The soul cannot eat His flesh in any other way than by believing on Him. It eats by faith, and not by teeth. See how hard it is to force Scripture to sanction what is false and absurd.

I beseech you, sir, to put all your trust in the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin, and renounce the vain effort of adding to its perfection.—Cease that blasphemy that represents the work of Christ yet unfinished, and keeps Him continually a sacrifice on the altar. Come to Him and He will give you salvation without money and without price.—*Vide Letter of the Rev. J. Burns.*

Whitehaven, Dec. 7.

Reverend Sir—I have selected some few passages of your courteous letter to me, to which I shall more particularly direct my reply; and if I were not made acquainted with the profession of the writer, I should have never supposed that the author of these extracts could have read even the elements of theology or moral philosophy; but, above all, I could not have believed that a clergyman of high character and station could make statements exhibiting such a deplorable ignorance of the fundamental principles of our common Christianity. Firstly, then, since you set up, in spiritual things, the evidence of the senses (as you call it), as the infallible standard of your faith, will you tell the world how can you believe in God who is a pure spirit, and therefore cannot possibly fall within the domain of the senses? Secondly, will you say by what evidence of the senses you discover three distinct persons in one God? Do, rev. sir, say how you arrive at the conclusion by the senses that

Trinity is Unity in essence and Unity essentially Trinity? Thirdly, will you kindly inform poor forlorn Catholic souls, how you detect the presence of divine grace by the senses, that is, how you can see, feel, taste, smell, and hear divine grace which St. Paul describes as 'the emanation of God' and 'the charity of God poured abroad'? Fourthly, will you say, sir, how you can even know you have a 'soul' by the evidence of the senses? Fifthly, will you tell the Romish priests where you did learn the existence of eternity, of heaven, or of hell, from the evidence of the senses? St. Paul tells us that 'neither eye hath seen or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived, this place;' and therefore will you be pleased to tell us how it has happened that the air of Whitehaven has so elevated the action of your senses that you and your congregation can behold, with an unclouded vision, what the tongue of St. Paul could not utter or the heart of St. Paul conceive? We poor Romish priests, educated at Maynooth, always fancied these things were known by 'faith' and not by the senses; and we have foolishly believed faith to be the "gratuitous gift of God," and not at all the philosophical result of the most perfect examination of the senses. Sixthly, will you be pleased to inform the senseless Catholics how you discover original sin in a new born baby by the aid of the senses? I venture to say that even a Whitehaven baby appears to the senses the very same, selfsame child before and after the Sacrament of Baptism? If, therefore, rev. sir, you will believe nothing but what can be proved by the senses, your act of faith must, beyond all dispute, deny every single word of the creed which you publish on every Sunday from your pulpit to your unfortunate congregation.

You seem very fond of employing the words 'common sense' while speaking of faith. They are not accidental terms in your mouth—they are scientific, official, professional phrases—and you so jumble together logical, theological, and elocutionary language that, in almost every sentence you have written, there is a scientific mistake, a misapplication of words, and a clear incongruity in theological terms. You reject everything which you cannot conceive in your common sense. This is certainly your statement. Firstly, then, will you therefore prove to us Romish scholars how does your common sense understand and explain that God had no beginning? Our Popish common sense cannot conceive any existing thing without a cause. Now, as you admit nothing which you cannot understand, pray tell us on what principle you understand an effect which is not an effect—a generation without being generated—motion, life, and power without a beginning? Secondly, the earth cannot be as old as God, as it would then be God; nor can it be made out of the substance of God, as matter would then be composed of spirit, and inanimate clay formed of the essentially living God. Hence the earth must come from nothing by a mere act of God's will. Will you say, in your science of your common sense, if you understand this natural mystery? If you do not understand it, of course, as you have said, you cannot believe it; and, therefore, you are bound, in vindication of your system, to state publicly, for the salvation of the Romish priests, and of all the Papists whose interests are so near your heart, that as you cannot conceive by common sense how matter was created, or how man was formed, that therefore there is no such thing as Protestant tithes—that the Scotch Kirk is a public delusion; that the sermons in your Church are baseless visions; and that the public letter lately addressed in this town to Dr. Cahill is a dreamy image, and a fantastic, ideal, deceptive sound. Thirdly, will you again explain the incarnation by your system? I have learned in the schools that divine faith cannot be tested by the rules of logic, much less by the common sense of the world. I have been taught that although there are three persons in the Trinity, each distinct, and each God, still it does not follow from these defined premises that there are three distinct Gods? Fourthly, will you be pleased, sir, to explain to me, by common sense, how the two distinct natures of God and man have only one person in Christ? how can there be a nature without a person? how can a finite human nature fill an infinite divine person? or how can an infinite divine nature be confined within the figure of a finite human persons? Will you kindly say whether the person was human or divine, or a mixture of both, half finite, and half infinite? Fifthly, pray explain again how God could become man, the incarnate unembodied Word could become flesh, how an eternal person could be born, how immortality could die, how an immaculate God could assume human guilt, how the mockery, the agony, the cries of the beloved Son of God could please the Father? Sixthly, will you say how it is that, although God is whole and entire in the million and tens of million places in space, there is still but one God? Ah! Reverend Mr. Burns, your loose

assertions, and unscientific statements, convince me of the truth of Lord Shaftesbury's report on the lamentable deficiency of Protestant clerical education, demonstrate that you can malign a creed without having studied its tenets, and circulate wounding misstatement under the cover and the imposition of religious zeal. Finally, will you explain the justice of God in charging on a child born in 1853 the crime of Adam's disobedience committed nearly six thousand years ago? It was metaphysically impossible that the free-will of this child could enter into this act of Adam as an accomplice, the soul of the child being not created at the time; and it was equally impossible for the same will to prevent or avoid this fault of Adam. Now the common sense and the common laws of Englishmen, to which you appeal in matters of faith, will not charge one man with the guilt of a third party, who was not, or could not, possibly be an accomplice. You have, sir, to account for this fact by your system of common sense, and thus settle this most vital question. The plain palpable result of this absurd and fatal misapplication of reason to faith is, that you have made your creed a mere wordly system; and you have forced even your friends to regard your religion as a human constitution sustained by the same kind of principles as you smelt iron, spin cotton, form railroads, and conduct commerce. Your public perfectly understand this system, and hence they have lost all confidence in your spiritual ministrations, and all respect for your profession. The laboring classes seldom enter the Protestant churches. Their common sense, they think, is as good as yours; and as they can read the Bible and 'eat faith' at home, they generally sleep till two o'clock on Sundays, and never listen to the parson till he has invented a story about a priest, a monk, or a convent, or the bones of a child being dug up, some time ago, somewhere, by somebody, in some nunnery. The total absence of all religious instruction in these churches, added to the constant teaching of doubting the entire evidence of antiquity, has converted the finest nation and the most generous people in the world into a ferocious multitude of bigoted infidels. Lord Ashley's report (which I have not read, but of which I have heard) reveals a state of religious ignorance in this country beyond the most exaggerated powers of credibility. His description of the factories and collieries awakens thrilling feelings of pain and shame in the bosom of every honest religious Englishman. Think of hundreds of grown girls who could not tell 'who was God, or Christ, or the Holy Ghost,' and who were sunk, at the same time, in the lowest state of immorality, too extended and too gross to be named in this letter. Hundred of colliers were never even once in a church—had never learned one word of their catechism, and perfectly ignorant of the cross. One man being asked who made him, answered 'My mother,' a second being questioned as to the number of Gods, replied, 'That there were seven, and that he was able to fight any one of them;' a third being pressed to tell who was Christ, said, 'He did not know him, as he had never worked in his pit;' a fourth being asked if he was afraid of God, replied, 'Na, na, but that it was the "other b—" he dreaded,' (meaning the devil); a fifth being interrogated if he was afraid of the punishments of the next world, appeared quite surprised at hearing of future punishments, and replied that, 'If his friends buried his pickaxe with him, there was no place made, even of the hardest rock, could keep him confined.' Why, sir, the history of the snake Indians or of the Boimen does not reveal such hyper-barbarian ignorance as can be met with in some districts, callings, and trades in England. How can the Protestant clergy, who receive annually eight millions sterling, look men in the face with the crimes of this barbarity on them? and how can the acute English nation continue to be gulled by the notorious lies of Irish conversions invented by hired calumniators, in order to divert the public mind from beholding the annual millions of this overgrown robbery, or canvassing the flagrant hypocrisy and the anti-Christian slander of this infidel conspiracy. The brutal murders, the wife-killing, the infanticides, and the arowed spreading infidelity, and the thousands of children whose deaths are daily concealed, are the frightful fruits of your system of the doctrine of the senses and your human faith. Was there ever heard such insane audacity as to assert that God could reveal nothing which the Protestant conventicle or the Scotch kirk could not understand! It is the same kind of rampant and ridiculous silliness as if a congregation of oysters or frogs denied that there existed such things as the truths of algebra, music, or photography, merely because some few elders of these tribes could neither see, hear, feel, nor understand the subject. This system will soon make all England infidel. Hired lecturers are now publicly delivering lectures on the opposition between what they call 'the secular Creation and the gospel Creation'

—that is, on palpable open infidelity. Depend on it, that your teaching will, at no distant day, sap the very foundation of social order in this country; that you will call into existence a generation of men who, if not checked, will threaten the very existence of English monarchy; and the throne of Great Britain will yet have to rely on Catholic allegiance and Catholic fidelity for its preservation and security.

You seem much captivated with the reasonableness (as you call it) of the figurative sense as being applied to the words used by our Lord at the Last Supper. Now, sir, I look on the Protestant doctrine of the Last Supper to be such an aggregate of incongruity, that if one were not certain of its being believed by a large section of persons in this country it could never be supposed that such an opinion could be seriously held by men who believed Christ to be God and to have uttered intelligible language. That doctrine states that 'the Last Supper is a memorial of Christ's sufferings and passions, where bread and wine being taken in faith, Christ is spiritually received.' The four terms, therefore, within which this doctrine is included, are the words 'memorial faith (bread and wine) and the spirit of Christ.'

As you, therefore, appeal to the standard of the Scriptures, and to the standard of language on this point, I shall for a moment meet that appeal by quoting some texts from the Gospel of Saint John, chapter the sixth:—

V. 52.—If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.

V. 53.—The Jews, therefore, debated among themselves, saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat.

V. 54.—Unless 'you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have his life in you.'

V. 25.—He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day.

V. 56.—For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

V. 57.—He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him.

V. 58.—As the living father hath sent me; and as I live by the father, so he that eateth me the same shall live by me.

In the foregoing texts our Lord uses the words—'eat my flesh' five times; and it must be well remembered that these words were employed four times after the Jews debated among themselves 'how can this man give his flesh to eat.' He heard their objection ('how can he?'); and, of course, according to all the rules of a public speaker to his audience. He replies to the difficulty which they proposed; and in place of retracting His words, or altering them into other clearer words, or making any change or explanation in His expression, He, on the contrary, becomes more emphatic in His manner, and repeats four times with evident increased energy the selfsame words. And it must not be forgotten that, in thus re-asserting these words four times, in the teeth of their contradiction, He also adds some new circumstances of vital interest to the question under debate—namely, in verse 53 He threatens damnation to the man who merely omits what He orders; in verse 55 He offers justification to the man who fulfils His statement; in verse 56 He asserts twice that what he has said is a literal statement (aluthos); in verse 57 He again declares that the man who corresponds with the conditions named is intimately identified with Him; and lastly, in verse 58, He utters two oaths—namely, 'by His mission and by His life' that what He stated would give eternal life; and finally, in all these assertions, threats, promises, and rewards, He uses the words, 'eat his flesh' with an unvarying consistency in reply to their objection.

Now, as the whole Jewish religion was made up of types and figures—and as a matter of course the Cappharnaites were perfectly acquainted with this fact—can any man believe that Christ would have held out threats of perdition, and would swear twice in order to make them believe the most known fact of their country?

Now, sir, by what authority do you, who seem so much attached to the Word of God, take it on yourself to change the clear, expressed words into a meaning certainly not asserted or affirmed in the written or spoken language. You reply that it must be received in a spiritual or figurative sense—from the impossibility, as your common sense asserts, of understanding these written words in their literal sense. You therefore assert that flesh means 'faith'—means 'figure of flesh'—means 'spirit'—means 'metaphor'—means 'image or memorial.' In the first place, this is—on your part—a most unwarrantable assumption, it not being affirmed in the words; and, secondly, it may turn out—as I hope presently to show—that your meaning must end in an absurdity of idea and in an