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THE REV. DR. CAHILL AND THE CATHOLIC PERIODICAL THE "RAMBLER."

The Rambler—having rather severely commented upon a letter from Dr. Cahill to a Mr. Burns— which appeared in the TRUE WITNESS of the 13th January; and in which the writer endeavored to illustrate the miracle of Transubstantiation by analogies in the natural order—Dr. Cahill has published the following reply, which is to be followed by another in a similar strain. This dispute betwixt such men as the editors of the Rambler and Dr. Cahill, is most painful; and it is a pity that it was ever allowed to be made public. The topics discussed are quite unsuited for newspaper controversy; and the manner in which they are discussed is not the best for promoting Catholic charity. Dr. Cahill, however, was not the aggressor; and the bitterness of the Rambler against him may be, in a great degree, attributed, to his allusions to the immorality of the English Universities, in which, however, the learned Doctor was fully borne out by the published "Parliamentary Report":—

TO THE EDITORS OF CATHOLIC JOURNALS.

New Brighton, Feb. 14, 1854. Gentlemen—I am compelled to demand from you an act of kindness, while I place before you an instance of discourtesy and injustice towards me, from the editors of the Rambler, such as could not be much surpassed by the most hostile journals of this country. I shall endeavor to restrain my feelings within the bounds of moderation, in calling the attention of the Catholic public to a late article in the Rambler in reference to a public letter of mine, written at Whitehaven. In every paragraph—indeed, in almost every sentence—gross falsehood is asserted, palpable calumny is uttered, my clearly-expressed meaning is distorted with what I must call a malevolent ingenuity, and, above all, whole sentences are carefully suppressed, which could at a glance explain transparently the pretended difficulties of my malignant anonymous assailants. Gentlemen, you are acquainted with my style of rigid proof in whatever I advance; and I hereby undertake to demonstrate, beyond cavil from any quarter, that a clique of converted persons have, through the anonymous columns of their periodical, suppressed known truth, have, without any doubt, advanced culpable falsehood, and have, finally, distorted argument and illustration with precisely the same kind of perverse misrepresentation which is to be found in the most hostile writing and in the worst speeches of the parsons of the Protestant Alliance.

Gentlemen, the reason why I address you, rather than contradict through the pages of the same Rambler, the calumnies referred to, will appear from the following correspondence. An English clergyman, of eighteen years' standing, and a most particular friend of mine, feeling indignant at the injustice done to me, and at the misstatements made in reference to the clergy, determined to write an article to the Rambler on the subject. This gentleman, who ranks as high in virtue and learning as any priest in England, wishing to exclude me from this painful controversy, and to confine the whole case to the readers of the periodical which published the article, opened the correspondence alluded to, which is as follows:—

"TO J. SPENCER NORTHCOLE, ESQ., OR THE EDITOR, OFFICE OF THE "RAMBLER," 17, PORTMAN-STREET, LONDON.

"Saturday, Feb. 4. "Sir—Will you kindly inform me, if you are the editor of the little periodical called the Rambler; and again, if you have any objection that I should address a public letter to you through the columns of the Tablet, on the subject of an article written under the title of 'Dr. Cahill's Letter on Transubstantiation;' or, if you should prefer it, will you give me the same space in the next number of the Rambler for the defence of Dr. Cahill, which you have granted for what may be justly called an attack; and say what is the latest day in this month you will receive the article? I must tell you in perfect confidence, that the article alluded to has produced what may be called a wide-spread feeling of dissatisfaction amongst clergy and laity. It is considered unjust; and I propose to show by a single reference to the letter of Dr. Cahill, that his arguments have been misrepresented; and that an unjustifiable meaning has been attached to his words. I am the friend of Dr. Cahill. The article of your correspondent breathes a very hostile spirit; it certainly is a slur on the entire Episcopate and priesthood of England, Ireland, and Scotland who have invited him to their churches. And what renders the article most painful is, the suspicion that some recent 'converts' have formed something like a combined attack on him, since his late quotations of the evidence taken at the Oxford Commission on the immoralities of Oxford: If this suspicion ripens into public belief, it will do much mischief,

chief, especially if seized on by Dr. Cahill, who, without doubt, possesses vast stores of learning of all kinds, who is a formidable opponent, who has labored most zealously in our cause, and who has, I consider, the respect and the affection of both clergy and people.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant, "VERAX. "P.S.—I enclose a card, stating the name and address, where you are requested to send a reply."

On Monday, the 13th instant—that is nine days afterwards!—a reply was received from which I copy an extract, and which I publish for the inspection of any man of honor, to prove the injustice and the foul play of this clique, and to demonstrate the cowardice with which they assail my zeal and my labors by an anonymous slander, and then shrink from its honest and fearless exposure. In the reply which follows, which arrived after nine days' delay, Mr. Northcole avoids answering the question if he be one of the Editors; and he kindly gives two days to send a reply of eight pages, saying at the same time, "that there would be no chance of its insertion." But the next remarkable thing which the public will learn from these writers is, that when an injured man complains of their culpable conduct, this clique will give him "a hearing" (I suppose in London) and then, after two or three months' delay, they perhaps will condescend to contradict their own injustice, according to the "judgment" of the self-same calumniators. The extract is as follows:—

"Sir—Your note of the 4th instant has only reached me this morning, the 11th, and in reply I beg to state, that the insertion of any letter in the Rambler depends entirely upon its contents, of which it is impossible to judge before one has seen it. I believe I may safely add, however, that there would be no chance whatever of inserting a letter of eight pages in the next month's Rambler. No letter could be received later than the 16th of this month, the month being shorter than usual, but any letter received before that time should be inserted or returned, according to the Editor's judgment as to its contents. I mean that it is quite unusual for Reviewers to admit answers which only quarrel with their opinion or estimate of any literary production. If facts have been misstated, or arguments distorted, the injured party has of course a right to claim a hearing; and if anything of this kind can be shown, the letter should be inserted at any inconvenience.

"I remain, Sir, your obedient servant, "THE EDITOR OF THE RAMBLER."

Any one can see, from this communication, of nine days' delay, that the defence of my letter by the English clergyman, has been evaded, shifted, and clearly rejected. There is even a diplomatic stratagem, and a clear Exeter-hall duplicity in not replying till within two days of the 16th, the time named for the "hearing" at the court in Portman street! But who can fail to remark the loose writing of this famous critic of the language of others, when they read that part of the extract where the month of February this year "is shorter than usual" (!) Of course every one knows what this paragon of correct phraseology intends to say; but read his words through the fog of the nine days' delay, and learn that February, in the year 1854, is shorter at No. 17, Portman street, than ever it has been heretofore! The Lord protect the old Catholic Church from the advocacy of such blunders.—Hence, my friend being clearly refused the opportunity of contradicting the misstatements of the Rambler, he enclosed the correspondence to me on this day, Tuesday, the 14th, and has authorized me to publish it. This, then, gentlemen, is the reason why I appeal to you, to give to myself the opportunity which they refuse to my friend. This circumstance will of course widen this controversy; but the blame must rest with those who have gratuitously and unjustly commenced it.

In approaching the theological part of this letter, I feel unusual pain in being compelled to expose the want of truth on the part of the Rambler. God knows, I cannot rejoice in a triumph over the writers—victory in this case is defeat. Exposure of those who have joined my Church, at such personal sacrifice, is, to me, the bitterest pain; but they have forced me into this unwilling course by an inevitable necessity.

Before criticising my letter at Whitehaven, one should suppose that the writer would, as a Catholic, have sent to me a private letter, stating his objections, and demanding an explanation; but no such prudent letter came from the English Vatican, No. 17, Portman street, London—or, at least, one should imagine, that this model of logic, criticism, and grace would have read the original letter of the Rev. Mr. Burns, to which my reply was directed, and he could then understand the line of argument adopted against the objections made. Yet, strange to say,

this eminent censor has not read that letter: and, hence I shall, beyond all dispute, prove to the reader before I shall have concluded this letter, that this clique have mistaken their case, and that they have earned the crushing expression of public ridicule and public censure. Hear them on this point:—

"Of the letter of Mr. Burns, which has called forth this reply from Dr. Cahill, we know nothing more than is to be gathered from the extracts which the latter has prefixed to his rejoinder."

Now, if he had read that letter, he would have learned the direction of my answer, and have avoided the imprudent article he has penned. Hear Mr. Burns,—"I ask you, Sir, what can be the reason that Mother Southcott was thought crazy for pretending to give birth to the Messiah? and that you, a priest of Rome, can, without exciting ridicule, make a Messiah every time you celebrate Mass?—What is the extravagance of Joanna Southcott to the extravagance of the priests of Rome? . . . If God made man, the testimony of the senses is, the testimony of God; if the senses deceive me, then God, my Maker, is the deceiver. And thus your doctrine is incapable of being believed by any man under the influence of common sense."

In order to meet his appeal to his common sense, I ask him, how he can apply the rules of common sense, and of his senses, to the doctrine of the Trinity, Grace, Original Sin, the Incarnation, the Existence of the Soul, or even the Immortality of Man: and I conclude by inquiring how he could even explain the Transubstantiation which is every day elaborated by nature through almost every substance by which we are surrounded? Although my meaning could not be misunderstood by any one outside No. 17, Portman street, and although my words are clearly applied to the modal change in nature; and although I have adduced this section of my reply, as a mere illustration, a mere comparison, sub uno respectu, and not at all as an argument of demonstration, the writers in the Rambler, by introducing words of their own forgery, by suppressing whole sentences of my letter, and by an evil-designed ingenuity seldom surpassed, have devoted nine pages of deliberate falsehood and scandal to the palpable distortion of my clearly-expressed meaning. In order to convince the reader of the truth of my statements, I shall select only two extracts from my letter:—

The first is as follows:—"God has supplied us during four thousand years with this mighty, constant, universal evidence (i.e., of nature), in order to prepare us for the more mighty, the infinitely more stupendous evidence of the same principle in the new law, by the power and the word of Christ."

Now, I ask any candid, any honest man, if I have not in this extract pointed out the changes in nature as a mere preparation for a change infinitely more stupendous in the new law? Surely one thing infinitely more stupendous than another thing, cannot be the same thing. Now, gentlemen, hear the writers in the Rambler on this point so clearly expressed:—

"What, then, must we think of the snares which beset the 'popular' controversialist when we turn to the next paragraphs of Dr. Cahill's letter, in which he asserts that the miracle of Transubstantiation is 'a very common occurrence with God, and may be called one of the most general laws of nature?'—Again we say that we acquit him of intending anything approaching to that which his words imply.—He is carried away by that unfortunate desire to bring down the ineffable mysteries of faith to the level of human capacities, which is the bane of some minds; and which has here led him into statements which, viewed merely as rhetorical illustrations, are inaccurate and worthless, but if looked upon as a declaration of Catholic doctrines, are shocking to the last degree."

In the quotation just made, gentlemen, there are two cases of grievous injustice: firstly, it is clear that I have not identified the changes in nature with the mysteries of the Eucharist: I have clearly stated these two things as infinitely distinct; and yet the Reviewer would fain make me say that they are identified. But mark his hesitation while he writes: he says he is sure I do not intend it; that it is a mere illustration; and yet observe his dishonesty where he insinuates again, in the same hesitating style, that I have put forward these changes in nature as declarations of Catholic doctrines! On this point I shall leave the public to judge of the prudence, the candor, and the justice of the writers. But I have a heavier charge still to bring forward against this last quotation of the Reviewers. They have uttered a palpable falsehood in the extract adduced—they have forged a word which I did not use; and I therefore brand them before the public with the most dishonorable trick which I have ever experienced from the vilest characterless bigot of the enemies of the Catholic Church. The forgery is as follows, as you will soon see. Their words are: "Dr. Cahill as-

serts that the miracle of Transubstantiation is a very common occurrence with God, and may be called one of the most general laws of nature."

Gentlemen, I have not used the word "miracle": this is a plain forgery; any reader can see the truth of what I say. I was speaking, beyond all doubt, at that time of the laws of nature; they wish to distort my words as applied to the blessed Eucharist; I was not speaking then of the Eucharist; I did not write the word miracle in that or any other place. Although it is but one word, it is decisively applied to the Eucharist; it fixes irrevocably a particular meaning: I did not use it; they have forged it; and introduced it where it is evident I could not have employed it; and I have thus caught the malevolent clique in their own snares, from which, and I say it with sorrow, they can never extricate their honor as gentlemen or their honesty as Catholics, as long as they live. But, gentlemen, I have still a far more weighty charge against the ecumenical trio of Portman street. What will the public think of them when I shall quote extracts from their anonymous article, where they ask whether my meaning is such as they describe, and where they palpably distort it, and fix to it a sense of their own construction the very opposite of mine? And, gentlemen, what will the public think, when I shall prove beyond all contradiction, that these good Catholics, these pillars of the council of Portman street, have—with a duplicity, a perfidy, of which there is no parallel outside their former theatre of Exeter-hall—suppressed the very section of my letter which is a perfect categorical answer to the questions they put? Firstly, then, hear their own quotation—their questions:—

"For ourselves, we would ask Dr. Cahill whether he really means to insinuate that the change produced by the consecration of the sacramental elements is of the same nature as the chemical changes to which he has likened it; a mere natural growth from one form to another, an aggregation of additional particles of matter to an original substratum? He cannot mean it. We will not wrong him for a moment by the supposition. Why, then, does he employ this series of most profane and irreverent illustrations?"

In this passage again the writer utters his usual contradictory hints: he asks, "Can't I mean a certain thing?" then he says again, "I can't mean it": and yet he leaves the clear impression behind that I do mean to say that the change in the blessed Eucharist is of the same kind as the chemical changes of nature. Now, gentlemen, will you hear me while I make the extract from my letter, and while I inform the reader, through you, that this clique of parsons have suppressed the entire extract which follows: the very extract which is a direct answer to the perfidious questions which they put. Gentlemen, when you will have read over again the above quotation from the Reviewers, read the following extract of my letter: "I undertake to prove, as a chemist, that there are far more mysteries, but, of course, of a different kind, in a handful of clay than are to be found in the entire code of the Christian Revelation."

This extract was the concluding sentence of my illustration from nature: it is a perfect direct answer to the questions put by the Reviewers, and this extract they have suppressed. As I conclude this section of my reply, I charge the writers so far as I have gone, with an undeniable forgery, with a dishonorable suppression of the truth, with the hostile publication of a calumnious and scandalous article, and with the cowardly injustice of refusing to an English gentleman, an accomplished clergyman, the opportunity of making a defence for his slandered friend. But depend upon it they shall not calumniate me with impunity: and I finish this sentiment by exclaiming, "Oh, would mine enemy should write a book!"

In reference to these passages, in which the Reviewer speaks of "illustrations and metaphors," one is amused by the hesitations and contradictions which occur almost in every sentence. It is evident that he would fain find fault if he could: it is clear he comes prepared for censure, at all hazards: but not having sufficient data, he hesitates, advances, withdraws: says and unsays the self-same thing, in the same paragraph. Hear, now, this oracle of Portman street, on the self-same idea, in the self-same paragraph. "Many and many are the false and pernicious impressions which have been conveyed through the medium of illustrations, . . . powerful and beneficial, as is the effect of metaphors in theological writing, when they are critically correct and applicable. . . harmless, as they may be when employed uncritically on trifling subjects; and delightful, as is the charm they convey when springing from a deep, clear, and vigorous imagination, we cannot but think that the greatest caution is needed in their use when employed to illustrate those ineffable mysteries;" and in page 172 the same writer calls "illustrations profane and irreverent." I have read the passages quoted over and over again, to learn what is really