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THE MUNSTER PROVINCIAL SYNOD OF 1853.

The first general congregation of the Prelates and dignitaries took place on Thursday morning, the 1st instant, at eleven o'clock in the cathedral, Thurles. At an early hour in the morning the Bishops of the several dioceses of the province, accompanied by their Theologians and Chaplains, assembled to meet his Grace the Archbishop of Cashel in the chapter-room of the college.

The Solemn High Mass of the Holy Ghost was commenced, his Grace the Archbishop of Cashel officiating as High Priest Celebrant.

The following is a report of the sermon delivered by his Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Slattery at the opening of the Munster Provincial Synod. The text was taken from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, c. 28:—

“And Jesus spoke to them and said—‘All power is given unto me in Heaven and on earth, and as the living Father hath sent Me, so also I send you. Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to do all things which I have commanded you. Wherefore I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.’”

My brethren, you are all aware that the Bishops of this province are assembled here in Synod, according to the practice and discipline of the Catholic Church, in order to deliberate and take counsel together on important matters connected with the interests of religion, and the spiritual welfare of the flock committed to their care. It devolves upon me to address a few words of instruction to you on this interesting occasion, and I do not think I could introduce what I have to say in words more appropriate than in those contained in the text which I have repeated to you, a passage of the Holy Gospel which contains a Divine commission, the commission given by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to His Apostles at the moment when, after having completed His mission of love and mercy upon earth, He was about to ascend in glory to the right hand of His Father in Heaven—a commission given to His Apostles by the Saviour of the world, and given also in their persons to the Pastors of the Church who were to succeed them throughout after ages. It is clear and obvious that if the Divine commission given by Our Blessed Lord to His Apostles was intended to be confined to them alone, the religion of Christ could never have been established on earth. The establishment and diffusion of our holy religion throughout every region and clime, remain a conclusive proof that the promise given to His Apostles by Our Divine Lord was not intended to be confined to them alone, but was to extend to their successors in the ministry to the end of time. This was the order established by Our Divine Redeemer, and according to that order we find that His Church was propagated first by His Apostles, and afterwards by a succession of Pastors, who derived from their Apostolic power and authority. We also learn from the Gospel itself, that when Our Redeemer was choosing the Apostles of the Church which He founded, and of which He Himself has declared He is the “chief corner stone,” He did not choose the Apostles of His Church from amongst the worldly wise, the great or the powerful of the earth. No, but as St. Paul says—“He chose them from the foolishness of this world to confound the wise, and from the weakness of this world to confound the strong.” He sent forth His Apostles into the world to proclaim to Pagan millions the Faith of God made man—of Him crucified. He sent them forth without scrip or staff to preach the Gospel, and they went forth and triumphed. Without the aid of human learning they confounded the learned and the wise, and without any other arms than the Spirit which is the Word of God, they overturned the idols of Paganism, and in their stead erected the standard of Christ crucified throughout the world. A few centuries after the establishment of the Church, the Faith of Christ was assailed by all the combined powers of earth and Hell, and was exposed to the most cruel persecution. In short, the history of the Church at that period is one of persecution, martyrdom, and blood. But the blood of the martyrs became the seed of Christianity, and the Faith, aided by the Divine protection, gloriously triumphed over all. At length by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine to the Faith, the religion of Christ was established throughout the whole of the Eastern empire, and extended from thence even to the remote nations and among the rest into Ireland. My brethren, our forefathers, at the period of which I have spoken—now some fourteen hundred years ago—were buried in the darkness of a barbarous idolatry, and in that benighted condition they would have continued if the Lord had not raised up for them an Apostle in the person of the glorious Confessor, the illustrious St. Patrick, and sent him, like the Apostles of old, to be a light to

the people, and to bear to them the glad tidings of salvation. This was a great and joyous event for all. And now I will endeavor to set before you, my brethren, a short sketch of the history of the Catholic Church in Ireland, from the days of St. Patrick up to the present time. I will not trespass upon your attention at any length, as I mean to condense the observations which I am about to offer for your instruction. The glorious Patrick, the sainted Apostle of Ireland, was sent by Pope Celestine to preach the Gospel to the people of Ireland. Immediately on his arrival he commenced his Apostolic career, and labored in the good work he had undertaken with a holy zeal that overcame every obstacle and surmounted every difficulty. He travelled successively into the various districts of this kingdom, at a period when progress from one quarter to another was a work of difficulty, danger, and hardship. He penetrated into wild fastnesses, made his way into places almost inaccessible, and succeeded in converting to Christianity a vast number of the native Irish, thus achieving a great portion of the purpose of his holy mission, and reaping the first fruits of the joyous harvest, the seeds of which had been sown by his true piety, his fervent zeal, and his noble example. He founded churches; he established Monks and monasteries, and consecrated virgins to the service of God. During a period of three-and-thirty years our Saint labored in the holy work of the Ministry with incessant zeal, hopeful patience, and untiring assiduity, and with such effect that before his death he enjoyed the happiness of witnessing for the fruition of his hopes and the achievement of his desires, the conversion to the true Faith of the whole people of Ireland.—At length, full of days and good works, this true servant of God terminated his labors on the 17th of March, in the year 465 of the Christian era, in the 78th year of his age, and went to receive the reward of his life of holy labor, sanctity, and suffering, in the enjoyment through a glorious eternity of the God he had served so long and so faithfully. St. Patrick was now no more, but the good he had effected survived him. So deeply had he imprinted the principles of faith and virtue in the hearts of the Irish people, that during long centuries after Ireland was known and pre-eminent as the sanctuary of learning, the abode of sanctity, and the shrine of Gospel virtue. It is a fact, pre-eminent and well acknowledged, that at the period I speak of Ireland was the abode of knowledge, the asylum of piety, and the Island of Saints. But Ireland, ever generous, did not seek to confine the advantages which she had thus gained to herself. No, she was always ready to impart to others the blessings of knowledge and wisdom crowded to her doors, which were ever hospitably open to receive and entertain the stranger.—Yes, Ireland was the seat of literature, and the school of the west of Europe. When other nations were plunged in impiety and barbarism of ignorance, the sun of learning and piety shone brightly on Ireland. This is undeniable, and is attested fully by the historical records of other countries in Europe, which still gratefully acknowledge that to Ireland they owe all that they now enjoy of the blessings of science and of civilisation. Thus was the generous zeal of our ancestors exerted in imparting to others the blessings which they enjoyed. Even to the present day—from north to south—from the rising sun to the going down thereof—devoted Irishmen—Missionaries of the true Faith, are spread over every clime and country—even throughout every part of the world, gaining new subjects to the kingdom of Christ, and extending over the earth the doctrine of the Gospel on the earth. Oh, happy would it be for Ireland if her children had retained this primitive piety, for which they were once distinguished. But, alas! by degrees relaxation of discipline and corruption of morals supervened, until the Lord, provoked to wrath by public crimes and private vices of the great and the powerful of the land, abandoned an erring people to the consequences of their disobedience; and as He did of old with His chosen, when they rebelled against His holy law, the Lord handed Ireland over into the hands and under the dominion of the stranger. Then, indeed, was Ireland first laid prostrate, her national independence was first extinguished, and her religion smitten down. Then came the period when it was sought to reform—as the ruthless deed was called—the religion of Ireland. Her Priests were struck down and slain, yea, on the very steps of the altar; her temples were pillaged and overturned, and her sanctuaries profaned. Yet, still yet, through all these horrors—throughout all these fearful oppressions and persecutions Ireland never, never lost the true Faith—never bent to the mammon of an unrighteous worship—never truckled to the Moloch of a lustful heresy. She preserved the Catholic Faith pure and inviolate. Her Hierarchy still remain intact, unshaken, and independent

—the only remaining monument of her national dignity. Yes, the Prelates and Clergy now assembled before me can proudly point to their election to their dignified office. They can trace their descent through a long line of illustrious predecessors from Saint Patrick, and through him from Celestine, the Chief Pastor of the Christian Church, and through that chief Pastor to St. Peter—the rock upon which our Church, the Church of the living God, has been erected by its Divine founder, whose holy word, and glorious promise we possess—that the “gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” Yes, your Pastors present themselves before you as the successors of the Apostles—not like those self-commissioned teachers who derive their sole mission and privilege from some obscure and perishable sect, and who seek to usurp the functions of men who have been called by the Most High to minister in His temple, and to approach the Holy of Holies. Your Priests are not like these climbers over the fold, who endeavor to intrude their vanities upon the dearest and most sacred feelings of Christians—who seek to rush into the sanctuary, and seize the censor from the very hands of the anointed servants of God. No, brethren—dearly-beloved brethren—your true Pastors are not of this description. They come before you as the chosen of the Lord, sealed with the chrism of their holy office—trained up in the doctrines of truth, and rich in the treasures of the Faith—faithful servants of God, and Priests, once and for ever, after the order of Melchisedech. They did not assume their authority. They have been called, even as Aaron was, to minister in the temple. They are the true and legitimate successors of these Apostles of whom Our Divine Lord was the teacher, and to whom He said, “As the living Father hath sent Me, so also I send you. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” In virtue of this high commission, your Priests are empowered to speak to you with authority, being, as Saint Paul says, “the ambassadors of the Lord God.” Christ himself, as it were, exhorting you; and it is in His name that they are authorised to claim your obedience in all things which regard your spiritual welfare. “Obey your Prelates,” says the same Apostle, “for they watch over you, and have to account for you to God.” But I will not do you the injustice, my brethren, of supposing that you will be wanting in obedience to your Pastors—an obedience for which the faithful people of Ireland have been ever remarkable. In the worst of times your pious ancestors revered and abided by their Pastors, as their only joy and consolation, next to God, in trouble and persecution. Nothing could shake that attachment between Priest and people—neither persecution, nor threats, nor tortures, could shake the devoted affection of your forefathers to their Clergy, and their reward was, that God has preserved to generation after generation of their children the blessing of the Faith. It is true, we have lived to see somewhat better times. The naked sword of persecution, it is true, is no longer unsheathed, but the hidden dagger still lurks unseen, and the specious poison of evil counsel is yet prevalent. Yes, the spirit of religious bigotry is still alive, and sanctions the enactment of new penal laws against you. We have a solemn duty to perform—it is our duty to protect the purity of our Faith. Our enemies may accuse us of seeking to establish the ascendancy of our Faith; but our simple answer to that calumny is, that it is untrue. No, but we seek to preserve the independence of our Church, and with the Divine blessing, we will maintain it. Yes, our Hierarchy shall be free. We may be afflicted with chains, or assailed by temptations, but neither chains, nor persecutions, nor all that the bounty of a ministry can bestow, shall ever purchase that freedom which we preserved through ages of tyranny. In weal or in woe, we, your Pastors, are with our people, and, in turn, will that people abandon us or cast us out? Oh, no!—the Catholic Clergy and people of Ireland were ever remarkable for mutual love and attachment, founded on a community of suffering through ages of woe. And ye, my beloved brethren, inheritors of the Faith, imitate, I beseech you, the piety of your sainted forefathers. Guard well that Faith which has been bequeathed to you—guard it as the apple of your eye—you will find it always your sweetest consolation here, and your surest hope for a happy hereafter. You must be Catholics, not merely in profession, but also practically; for without that mere profession is of no avail. It is true that “without Faith it is impossible to please God;” but it is equally true that Faith without good works is dead, even as the body without the spirit. Beloved brethren, see that you walk through life worthy of your Pastors as children worthy of the Faith. May God in His mercy this day grant you the graces of an enlivening Faith, a firm and truthful hope, and hearts inflamed with the Di-

vine charity of Our Blessed Lord. May He give you the grace to serve and love Him in this life by keeping His Holy Commandments, so that you may deserve to enjoy Him for ever in the kingdom of His glory, a blessing which from my heart I wish you.

THE SECOND SESSION

was held in the cathedral on Saturday, a very numerous congregation attending. The ceremonies were conducted in the same imposing manner as on the occasion of the opening of the Synod on Thursday. After High Mass had been celebrated the Right Rev. Dr. Delany, Bishop of Cork, delivered an earnest and impressive discourse which was listened to with breathless attention, and the Archbishop having given the benediction, the proceedings terminated.

THE BRITISH ‘GOSPEL MISSIONARIES’ IN IRELAND.

[Mr. O’Neil Daunt has addressed the following letter, under the signature of ‘A Western Catholic,’ to the editor of the *Cork Examiner*, and also to the editor of the *Glasgow Free Press*. We commend it to the perusal of the knaves, noodles, and bigots, who patronise the Protestant aggression upon Ireland]:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CORK EXAMINER.

Sir—I think the game is pretty well up with the horde of impudent adventurers who have been recently let loose upon this country for the purpose of disseminating Scotch and English ignorance and heresy amongst our people. Wherever they have gone, the Catholics have either let them preach to vacancy, or else laughed them out of the place; except in some cases where the insolence of their revivings proved rather too much for ordinary patience. In several towns they were totally unable to muster any audience, unless a few children, who were drawn by curiosity; and who, as soon as they discovered that their faith was the object assailed by the strangers, interrupted them by whistling and hooting. In Limerick the trampers had to fly for their personal safety. In various other places they were obliged to procure the aid of the police. In a word, their reception through the length and breadth of this Catholic kingdom has been marked with either the neglect, or the ridicule, or the horror and resentment of the people.

Now, sir, some of these gentlemen are considered great luminaries among the various branches of their schism. I fully expect that on their return to England and Scotland they will describe the Irish people as having greeted them with ardent enthusiasm. They will tell their gullied audience at Exeter Hall and elsewhere that the Irish people are eager to fling off the trammels of ‘Popery,’ and to embrace the blessed doctrines of that schism which they have the brass to denominate (I quote from their placards) ‘the gospel of Jesus Christ.’ Are there no means of disabusing the British mind from these misrepresentations, and of protecting our people from being again infested with a flying army of audacious bores?

I travelled lately with an English tourist, who, in the simplicity of his heart, seemed anxious to learn how or why it was that the ‘Missionaries’ were so ill received by those to whom they came to communicate the blessings of Protestantism. I told him that if they wished for a welcome in Ireland, Protestantism was the very last commodity they should come freighted with; seeing that we knew a vast deal more than we liked about Protestantism already, and had not the slightest curiosity to learn anything more of it. That we saw it developed in the robbery of the Catholic Church in every parish in the island; the ancient funds bestowed by the Catholic piety of former ages being now grasped by ministers deriving their spiritual mission from King Henry VIII. or Queen Elizabeth. That when famine overspread the land, when the productive powers of the soil were dried up, when crowds were perishing around us, and when landlords were obliged to lower their rents to meet the fall in agricultural interests, the corporate Protestantism of Ireland wrung out the tithe rent-charge with merciless rigor; extorting the last farthing that could be extorted, no matter who might be beggared and starved by the process. I told my English fellow-traveller that this was our bitter experience of Protestantism in Ireland; this, and vastly more than this. And that an attempt to thrust more Protestantism upon a country that already ached to the very marrow of its bones from the native supply of the article, was an experiment of which the impudence was only to be equalled by the folly. I added that, if the ‘missionaries’ visited me, I should beg of them in the first place to teach the parsons the common honesty of relinquishing their unjust monopoly of the Catholic Church funds. That as long as Protestantism should continue in every Irish parish thus incarnated in a living embodiment