

Protestants who think they do God a service, when, by unworthy artifices, they can succeed in thrusting their tracts, and their version of the Scriptures, into Catholic families. They are not satisfied to allow the Catholic to follow the dictates of his own conscience, but they must confer upon him benefits, as they suppose, which his conscience obliges him to refuse. Catholics have the Scriptures, approved by their own Church, published in every form, to suit their circumstances; they should therefore refuse politely but with firmness and independence, the offer of every version which they regard as spurious; and if, after such refusal, those obtrusive Bible distributors should force into their dwellings such copies I would regard them as justified in hurling the copy out of doors after him who had left it. Thus, as the laws of the country now stand—If Congress should pass an act declaring the version of King James to be the true translation of the holy Scriptures, then indeed the Bible distributors may claim the authority of the state for proceedings which, as things now are, cannot but be regarded as extremely impertinent on their part, in reference to their Catholic fellow-citizens.

Catholics, therefore, cannot, in conscience, receive that spurious text; but they can never correct the error of having received it, by burning it afterwards! And Protestants, if they wish to see the rights secured by the constitution fairly carried out, will distribute their Bibles among their own people, instead of attempting to smuggle them into Catholic families, who do not wish to receive them. We never force our Tracts, or our peculiar doctrines on any denomination differing from us in religious belief; and we claim the reciprocity of courtesy from other denominations.

I regret, sir, to perceive in the proceedings of the meeting, evidences going far to prove that the reverend gentlemen who took part in it, were actuated more by ill will towards their Catholic fellow-citizens, than by sincere Christian respect for the Holy Scriptures. They speak of the real or supposed burning the Bibles, as having been done by "the Roman Catholic Priests." Why did they not mention the names of these priests? Why did they not mention the time when the thing occurred; the place, the circumstances? So as the public might distinguish between "the priests" who were guilty of this offence, and the others, who had nothing to do with it? Why, if they are honest men, did they not give names, and dates, and particulars, by which the party guilty of the offence could be distinguished from the mass of Catholic priests and Catholic people of the United States? I ask very naturally, this question, why was it so? and I find no answer except in the supposition that they wished to impose on the honest feelings of their countrymen, and excite a general persecution against ALL who are "priests," or all who are "Catholics."

It was once my duty in Philadelphia, to attend a member of my communion, in the last stages of consumption. Poverty and disease had left her for a long time dependent on the benevolence of a few charitable persons, who were acquainted with her situation. Among these was a committee of Ladies, from a Protestant Benevolent Society—persons naturally of most tender and humane feelings. They had been exceedingly kind to her, mingling their ministrations of comfort with the most pious exhortations; but for several weeks immediately previous to my visit, they had made it a point to supply the suffering victim with a bowl of meat-soup on each successive Friday. She might have been hungry; but on seeing the choice which they had made and the time which they had selected for making, "she had no appetite," she said; not wishing to offend them by a more direct refusal! for

she had received many benefits from them for which she was grateful. In her situation it would have been no violation of her Catholic duties to have taken soup or meat on any day; and yet I could not but admire and reverence the independence of conscience manifested by this dying sufferer, when the assault was made upon it through her poverty and destitution. Those good ladies at length were determined not to be disappointed in their benevolence, and insisted on waiting till she should have taken the soup, in their presence. She then told them that she was a Catholic, and it was Friday; and after ejaculating a few expressions of pious horror at the blindness of her heart, left her and—returned no more.

Alas! thought I, if this be Protestantism, it has not the spirit of the good Samaritan, and I am not surprised that it makes so little impression; and yet the ladies to whom I have referred, were among the most respectable, kind and benevolent of that philanthropic city.

Now, sir, it is to be feared, that the benevolence and philanthropy of Protestants are too often under the guidance of a similar spirit; it is to be feared that this spirit has presided too much at the meeting to which we have referred. I blame the Catholics for their contemptible pusillanimity and want of principle, in admitting into their possession copies of the Scriptures, which they hold to be spurious; I blame them equally for their indecent disregard of what is due to the religious feelings of their fellow citizens in taking those Bibles and publicly burning them afterwards. I condemn and disavow this act in the name of the Catholic clergy and laity of the diocese of New York. And, if it was done, let the individuals concerned in it, whether priests or laymen, be held answerable for their unbecoming proceedings.

In the meantime, however, not having any knowledge of the transaction, except what is contained in the bad spirit of the proceedings of the meeting held in the Methodist Episcopal Church. I am unprepared to believe that report, until it be attested by more minute and circumstantial evidence; and in order to satisfy the public mind, and to test the accuracy of these proceedings, I would request that any two Protestant gentlemen of good liberal feelings, would join two Catholic laymen, and proceed to the place, for the purpose of preparing a report which shall contain the fact, if the fact has occurred, the name of the parties, the time, place and circumstance of this extravagant proceeding. I will be willing myself to pay the expenses of the Catholic gentlemen, or, if necessary, of them all. In this way an odium, which would be as unjust as it is merited by the Catholic body of the United States, will be repelled; and the individuals who are culpable of the alleged outrage, will be held up, in their proper names, to the reprehension which, if the report of the meeting alluded to be correct, they so unqualifiedly deserve.

† JOHN HUGHES.

Bishop of New York.

New York January 1, 1843.

From the Rochester Daily Democrat.

#### BURNING OF BIBLES.

SIR—Though my opinion of the Champlain "Auto de fe" may be deduced from my note published in your journal of 13th ult., yet as facts since ascertained have placed what I then considered improbable beyond doubt, I deem it proper to place again my view of the matter, in a more explicit form, before my fellow citizens.

I at once, and in the most unqualified manner, pronounce the burning of the Bibles at Champlain by a Catholic Priest from Canada, a gross outrage on feeling, opposed to the spirit and genius of Catholicity, and deserves to be reprobated throughout the land.

The weak and imprudent author of this outrage occupies, as regards Catholicity, the same category with the imprudent of any sect, who might attempt to correct abuses or enforce principles by a resort to violent measures.

This, Sir, is an individual, not a Catholic act; consequently the individual, not the body reprobating it, must bear the odium of the outrage.

As this is a concurrence of the distribution of the Protestant Bible amongst Catholics, I deem it proper to consider here the policy of persisting in a procedure always offensive to the Catholic, and terminating, in this instance, in the outraging of feeling generally.

Catholics cannot, for two reasons, entertain for the Protestant Bible that respect to which Protestants consider it entitled.

1st. Catholics consider it an imperfect copy of the Sacred Scriptures. Protestants having excluded from it several books deemed by Catholics inspired.

2d. The imperfect copy received is rendered still more imperfect, by an erroneous translation, particularly in several doctrinal points.

This being the Catholic belief in the matter of the Protestant Bible, it must appear evident that an effort for its distribution amongst them can scarcely have other effect than that of wounding their feelings, and inciting to retaliation in some form. I can scarcely conceive an act of more imprudent insolence, than that of an individual in the capacity of a Bible distributor intruding on the privacy of the domestic Catholic circle for the purpose of soliciting their perusal of a work which they deem spurious, and suited solely to the genius of modern errorism. Did Catholics thus act towards their Protestant fellow citizens, I would not regret to find that their feelings, outraged by such unwelcome intruders, had taught them the propriety of confining their zeal to the reformation of their own people. If Protestants could be induced to imitate the sublime example given by Catholics in this matter, much of that bad feeling occasionally manifested would be allayed, conscientious convictions would be respected, and acts offensive to religious feeling, meeting with general reprehension would soon cease to meet the eye of the Christian philanthropist.

We never intrude on the privacy of our fellow citizens for the purpose of denouncing their errors or soliciting their acceptance of a work condemnatory of the faith of their affection, or unsolicited for any religious purpose whatever. We neither compel or claim the attendance of those of a different faith depending on us, at our public or private worship; we respect conscience though erroneous, and believing that an act opposed to it cannot be accepted of God, we leave man in the enjoyment of his inborn conscientious freedom.

Having now vindicated outraged feeling, I may be permitted, being the first to move in the matter, to call on Protestants generally, and particularly on Protestant ministers, to reciprocate Catholic generosity and justice, should any event calling for it occur, and to aid at present by a firm and general expression of opinion in obtaining justice for the Protestant outrage in Boston, from the Protestant Legislature of Massachusetts.

From Bunker Hill, now being crowned by a magnificent testimonial to American heroism, is seen the ruins of Mount Benedict house, long the asylum of virtue, literature and science, the peaceful home of eminently accomplished ladies devoted to the mental improvement and moral training of their sex, yet fired in the still loneliness of the midnight hour by a coward banditti, who, mocking female weakness, aged helplessness, the moving entreaties of the sick and dying, left, in the midst of the American Athens, this afflicting monument of triumphant Vandahsm. The restoration of this home to its deeply injured proprietors becomes a Protestant duty, Protestants having committed, and some Protestant ministers having indirectly incited this outrage of arson, plunder and murder. It announces to the stranger and traveller from other lands, a tale of barbarism reflecting deeply on American character and feeling. The tourist speaks of it in indignant terms; the friend of popular institutions reads of it and doubts the successful issue of his favorite theory; the philanthropist mourns over the evidence it affords of man's proneness to deeds of barbarism. Massachusetts alone wears without a blush this badge of her dishonor, and in the ruins of Mount Benedict house, leaves to posterity a monument of her injustice and anti-Catholic hatred.

Let Protestants do in this, and occurrences similar, as Catholics have now done; let them denounce the abettors of this cowardly outrage and shame Massachusetts into an act of justice, the compensating those injured females for the loss at least of home and property, and thus wipe off the deep intolerance which this act has affixed to Protestantism.

If there must be occasional hostility between Catholics and Protestants, a matter to be deprecated, let it always be of an honorable kind, as I remarked on a former occasion; let physical violence—brute argument—be left to the bloody heroes of the battle field, whilst Christians with mind solely arrayed against mind, contend as Christians for the noble supremacy of truth.

The Rev. gentlemen of Clinton county who doubted the justice of Catholicity, will now learn that it is possessed of magnanimity even for its enemies. If moved to what they said by a proper spirit, they will not feel dishonored by recalling what they have rashly and unjustly written, and bearing that testimony now due from them, to Catholic practice and principle.

The dogmatic editor of the Journal of Commerce may also learn, that a Catholic Priest is as ready to vindicate Protestant feeling outraged by a Catholic, as he is to meet, in the field of argument, the avowed impugner of his faith; and that the witticism of his "Mount Rialto" is, in the present instance, applicable to a certain editor, charged before his fellow citizens with having fabricated anti-Catholic statements to serve his purpose; as also that a journal, claiming credit for unexceptionable veracity, must first have established, in the matter debated, a character for truth.

BERNARD O'REILLY,

Pastor of St. Patrick's Church.

Rochester, January 12, 1843.

CONVERSIONS TO POPERY.—We observe the following item in the New York Albion of the 24th ult.—"The Drogheda paper states that within the last month upwards of one hundred Irish teachers have publicly abjured the Church of Rome, and received the Sacrament in the church of Kings-court according to the rites of the church of England."

The title of the above scrap is literally from the *Banner*. The mistake of the editor, compositor or printer's evil genius, is somewhat amusing, at this time especially, when the rites of the English establishment are fast approximating to the Roman ceremonial. The simultaneous desertion of one hundred Irish teachers is amongst the incredible tales, which we prompt to believe, when we shall have some more satisfactory specifications. Were the National School system conducted in such a way, that conformity to the Establishment, as in days of yore, were an indispensable qualification for teaching to read, we might suspect that some hungry literati, with more regard to their stomach than their consciences, had simultaneously resolved to renounce the Catholic Religion; but as these times are past, we cannot imagine any possible inducement, or combination of circumstances to account for the apostasy of one hundred individuals of this class, and therefore we await the confirmation of this extraordinary statement: *Catholic Herald*.

HUNGARY.—It would seem that Russian influence is diligently labouring to insinuate itself in all parts of the Austrian dominions. The *Presburg Gazette* of the 21st of October informs us that "the proposition recently broached in the Assembly of the Province (comitat) of Bacs, to detach the Hungarian clergy from the see of Rome, was received with universal indignation. The reading of this proposition and of the reasons on which it was grounded, was several times interrupted by violent clamours, which opposed its being sent back to its originators. The States have declared their opinion, that the memoir is a torch intended to light up the brands of heresy; others termed it an insidious diatribe against the Catholic clergy."