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THE LETTERS
OF
REV. JAMES MAHER, D.D.,
LATE P.P. OF CARLOW-CRAIGUE,
ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS;
With a Memoir.

EDITED BY THE
RIGHT REV. PATRICK FRANCIS MORAN, D.D.,
Bishop of Ossory.

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lost all knowledge of the Redeemer, all respect for the matrimonial vow, all faith in baptismal regeneration, without which neither the philosophy nor the wealth of the world can ever preserve a nation from lapsing into Pagan barbarity? Admire, as long and as much as you please, England's physical greatness—in all that you have nothing but what human legislation may effect; but look to her innumerable sects, her unsettled belief, her unrestrained concubinage, and incestuous marriages, her unbaptised progeny, her infanticides and suicides, and you behold what the want of Catholic faith has wrought amid that powerful and intellectual people.

Ireland, Sir, must be defended as a Catholic nation, and on Catholic principles. All other advocacy will prove ineffectual.

"I have the honour to be, yours truly,
JAMES MAHER."

VIII.

ON PROSELYTISM.

October 9th, 1851.

DEAR SIR—I have just read in the *Times*, an address to the people of England, signed by Charles Frewen, M.P., for East Sussex; by four Clergymen, C. Lighton, Vicar of Ellastone; A Hill, Vicar of Morebath; F. Scymour, Curate of Huntsham; Jeffery Lefroy, Rector of Loughbrickland, and Anthony Lefroy.

In the document they state that they visited West Galway, and are anxious to bear testimony to the truth

of the published reports as to the progress of proselytism in that quarter or, as they term it, "that dark and priest-ridden district."

The amount of Scriptural knowledge introduced by the Irish Church Missions into these dark regions quite surprised our visitors; and they have no hesitation in saying, that the schools in Connemara will bear comparison with the best conducted schools in England.

Notwithstanding these favourable circumstances, it is added—I abridge the passage—"that an opportunity is now afforded, which calls for public support, to enable the Society to carry on its work, as well as to extend it to other districts which are earnestly calling for its aid, and if not immediately taken advantage of, it may never occur again." They conclude by assuring the public, that a want of funds is the only obstacle to the evangelization of Ireland.

Money! money! more money! They have great faith in mammon. They feel that Christ can never prevail over the world unless mammon take him by the hand.

The hypocrisy of these men has had no parallel since the days of the ancient Pharisees, if even then. They come out of their own country—from amongst their own people, where ignorance, "Pagan Ignorance," and fearful immorality prevail to an awful extent, to buy up a few poor starving creatures in the far west, in order to be able to boast of services in the Church of England, and as a set-off against the conversions to the Catholic faith of the most disinterested, single-minded, and learned of their own body. They make no effort to win back the Unitarians or Socinians, to help their own out of the slough of infidelity—their only anxiety is to withdraw true believers in Christ (for such our poor people are),

from the ancient church which has preached, and will ever continue to preach, His divinity to the uttermost ends of the earth; and, coming from the bosom of an establishment (the mother and mistress of all heresies and errors), corrupted to its very core by its riches, they modestly ask for more money.

The *Christian Observer*, a good Protestant authority, calculates that there are amid the population of England "four millions"—does he exaggerate?—who know not the Saviour.

The *Times* itself, about two months since, described, with unaffected alarm, the wretched education which is being communicated to the masses in England through the medium of immoral and infidel publications; and that his fears were not ill founded is pretty evident, as well from the communications of Mr. Mayhew to the *Morning Chronicle*, as from the report of Mr. Francis Bishop, secretary to the Domestic Mission Society. The principal bookseller in Manchester in this branch of trade informed me, says Mr. F. Bishop, that his sale of a penny weekly periodical, recognised as the organ of unbelievers, edited with tact and power, and made up of short and taking articles, was 290 a week, and the sale of exciting and pestilent weekly romances of the *poison and dagger school*, such as "Captain Hawk," "Death Grasp", "Gentleman Jack," was 4,000 weekly of each; and numerous other similar publications in the same proportion.

Even the Bishop of London, in his very last charge, speaks of "multitudes of perishing sinners (I quote his words) who are suffered to remain in an almost worse than Heathen state."

The clergy of Devon and Plymouth in a report on the immorality of their districts, observe—"That in the

parish of St. Paul, amid a population of 9,000 there are 59 public houses, and 36 brothels. By far the greater portion of the people are in a most deplorable state of moral degradation; and the greater number of the children are unbaptized." "In St. Mary's parish, population 6,000, public houses 46, brothels 34; by far the greater part of the rising generation are unbaptized." "In St. Stephen's, the majority of the children are unbaptized, besides numerous adults." "Many of the streets exhibited openly in the day the most shocking profligacy." "St. James's, Plymouth, inhabited by the most loose and abandoned characters. Numbers of the poor attend an adjacent building, belonging to a denomination whom their followers style Prophets, by whom the most unscriptural doctrines are promulgated; such as the non-eternity of future punishments, annihilation of the wicked, &c., and in the school of the same, their children now are receiving the like instruction."

Has the Honourable Member for East Sussex, or have his reverend colleagues, seen anything like this in their visit to the dark and priest-ridden district of west Galway?

The Committee of the Church Pastoral-aid Society, which reckons among its registered patrons nine bishops, announces the fact, that "thousands upon thousands (it does not give the amount in exact numbers) in this professedly Christian land, are perishing for lack of knowledge, and living in worse than Heathen ignorance and vice."—The parliamentary reports from the Midland Mining Commission, containing the evidence of doctors and clergymen on the subject of "burial clubs," poisoning of infants, &c., presents a picture of crime and ignorance which has never been surpassed even in the worst stages of Pagan antiquity. The *Times* speaks of it thus, March 18, 1846:—

"By far the most serious feature of the age is the increase of infanticide. Not a day passes but the disclosures of an inquest or a trial establish the melancholy truth that human life is losing its value in England. We are relapsing into a criminal and vitiated system. What we were accustomed to read of with horror—the indifference to infant life in Lacedemon, in Rome, and other states of Heathen antiquity—in China, in India, and elsewhere—and what we have set down as the worst blot in their imperfect civilization, is becoming the characteristic of England."

Would it not be well if the Member for East Sussex and his travelling chaplains would take the beam out of their own eye, in order to see more clearly the mote in their neighbour's. Ireland, like every other country, is not exempt from great infirmity; but can any one truly lay to her charge the unnatural crimes, the sale of infant blood, and unrestrained concubinage, which characterises the haughty sister island? We have no reason to blush at the nakedness, and misery and poverty to which we are subjected; nor to feel mortified at the low estimate which the proud world has formed of us. The chosen people of God have been generally in affliction and humiliation, and have been held in contempt and detestation by their proud and prosperous, and Pagan neighbours. The early Christians are thus described by St. Paul—"Even unto this hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode (how like the poor every day leaving our shores). We are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it. We are blasphemed, and we entreat; we are made the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all, even until now"—1 Cor. iv. Poor Ireland cannot be more accurately described.

The itinerant parsons and the member for East Sussex announce in their address, that the influence of the priests from various circumstances is greatly impaired in West Galway. What a pity that they have not been more explicit! Whether the change, supposing it to exist, has been brought about by the circulation of slander, calumny, lying reports, or by bribery, we are not told. The manner of converting the Irish Papists, and of impairing the influence of the Catholic Priest is more boldly stated in another document, which now lies before me. It is the second report of the "General Irish Reformation Society," printed at Kirby Lonsdale, 1848. The committee, which reckons amongst its members, three earls, five lords, knights, baronets, members of parliament, and parsons innumerable, appeals to the public for money to carry on proselytism in Ireland. "If ever there was a time for England," they exclaim, "to make a great effort for the evangelizing of Ireland it is the present—the poor are ready—the great distress has softened the heart of the poor. A famine shows the poor Romanist the incapacity and tyranny of their priest, and the humanity and integrity of the Protestant clergy."

Whether this theology is from Heaven or Hell, I shall leave it to you, Mr. Editor, to decide. Was there ever such an exhibition of hypocrisy? These sanctimonious lords, earls, and parsons absolutely gloat with infinite satisfaction over the wretchedness of the poor, as affording them a hope of subverting their faith.

"Great distress (say these apostolic men) has softened the heart of the poor." Would to heaven we possessed the secret of softening the corrupted heart of the rich; and of purifying it from that pharisaical hypocrisy and lying, which have aggravated the sufferings of our poor people to an inconceivable degree.

The expenditure, from which we shall quote a few items, exhibits in bold relief the object of the society:—

The Rev. J. Alcock, for Cork Converts ...	£50	0	0
Miss St. George, for Orphan Converts ...	5	0	0
The Bishop of Meath's Daughter, for Converts at Kingscourt	10	0	0
Rev. T. O'Grady, Converts	10	0	0
Rev. T. O'Grady, for employing Converts at Kilcatherine Church	20	0	0
Ditto, for Ditto	10	0	0
Ditto, for Ditto	10	0	0
Mr. P. D. Hardy, for Mr. Miley, a Convert	10	0	0

"Many converts from Popery," they say at page 5, "have been kept from the grave, and very many sincere inquirers after the truth have been enabled to come out of Babylon through our protection." "Converts kept from the grave!" aye, the merciful missionaries gave them their choice, either to die of hunger or to apostatise for a little food. This is the grand work which the fanaticism and cruelty of England are now applauding in the *Times*, and all its other vile organs in the empire.

One of the agents of the party, who is styled the Rev. J. O'Callaghan, announced, the other day, in the London Standard, that he has now on hands forty starved converts.—"He keeps them back," he says, "on account of their dwarfish appearance, caused by famine and exposure to cold, which made them appear only ten or twelve years of age, when in reality they were fifteen or sixteen."

Whoever reads these reports with a heart in his bosom will at once resolve to aid the Defence Association, one of whose objects is to counteract this cruel system of proselytism. The fanaticism of the Established Church,

which, to its eternal disgrace, has suffered the name through which alone there is salvation to be unknown to millions of Englishmen, will, unless resolutely and zealously withstood, drive Christianity from the shores of Ireland.—I have the honour to be, yours,

JAMES MAHER, P.P., Carlow.

October 7, 1851.

P.S.—What has prompted the hon. member from East Sussex, Mr. Frewen, and his party of vicars and curates, to visit Galway?

In the report of the Ecclesiastical Commission for Ireland, printed by order of the House of Commons, April, 1851, it is stated that—

"The Commissioners have agreed to sell the advowson or right of presentation to the four benefices into which the Wardenship of Galway has been divided, to Thomas Frewen, Esq., for the sum of 2,000/. Considerable expense has been incurred in bringing these advowsons to sale."

Knowing nothing whatsoever of this transaction, I cannot help, however, asking whether the purchaser is of the family of the member for East Sussex?—and whether the English vicars and curates are to have any share in the benefices which this Frewen has purchased?

What are we to say to this shameless merchandise of souls in Galway? The 35th Canon of the Church of England declares the sin of simony to be the buying and selling of promotions, dignities, and livings—a sin "detestable and execrable before God."

Will the dark and priest-ridden districts of West Galway be enlightened and purified by the introduction of this soul-destroying traffic?

J. M.

IX.
ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

October 28th, 1851.

DEAR SIR—Your correspondent, who signs himself "C." in the *Dublin Evening Post*, has exercised his right to comment on my public letter of the 9th. I am glad that he has done so, as I am thus afforded an opportunity of exposing a second time the proceedings of those whom he designates "Protestant Missionaries."

He begins by complaining of what he calls my "intemperate and uncandid language." He should have recollected that I was dealing with societies, one party of whom announced, in their opening address, that they had reached the "dark and priest-ridden district of Galway," and the other informed their readers that the late famine had shown "the poor Romanists the incapacity and tyranny of their priests, and the humanity and integrity of the Protestant clergy." If such language, *mutatis mutandis*, was employed by Catholic Missionaries on visiting England—if they announced in their programme that they had come to that dark and parson-ridden country, and that the calamities of the times had shown the poor heretics the stupidity and tyranny of their parsons, and, at the same time, the meekness and honour of the new-comers—I should like to know in what words your correspondent would refute such insolence.

Englishmen, we all know, have a great reverence for the laws, yet, under such provocation, they would, I should think, feel it rather difficult to keep their hands off such visitors.

"My first objection (says your correspondent) to the

Missionary work and its supporters is, that a call has been made on the public for more money." "It is hard (he adds) to believe Mr. Maher serious in urging this." Not serious! I beg to assure your correspondent that I am quite so. Let us see how stands the case:

It will not be denied that millions, tens of millions, nay, hundreds of millions, have been already expended in preaching Protestantism in Ireland, and in seeking to subvert the ancient faith of the people. Now, with this fact in our recollection, may not one seriously object to the propriety of granting more money for such purposes?

The incorporated Protestant Charter Schools have been employed in the work of proselytism for more than a century. They were originally established at the suggestion of Primate Boulter, who, in his letter to the Bishop of London, 1730, observed, "that the great number of Papists in this kingdom, and the obstinacy with which they adhere to their religion, occasions our trying what can be done with their children, to bring them over to our church, * * * for, instead of converting those that are adult (he adds) we are daily losing many of our meaner people who go off to Popery." All this happened before they began to buy them up.

The expenditure of these schools up to 1823 (the date of the latest report I have seen), had been £1,612,138, of which sum £1,027,715 was derived from parliamentary grants, and the chief produce of the institution has been described by Mr. O'Driscoll in two words—"Prostitutes and Orangemen." The Rev. Mr. Lee, who inspected the school officially in 1810, describes the children as "frequently stunted in body, mind, and heart." The brutal treatment to which these poor children were exposed, whilst passing through these proselytising factories, was almost incredible.

But, besides these incorporated schools, we have others of Royal and private foundation, possessing large estates. We have had the Society "for Discountenancing Vice," enriched with immense parliamentary grants—the Hibernian Bible Society, the Church Education Society, the income of which, on last year, was £38,258.0s. 7½d.; the Irish Society, which is just now greatly in vogue, and London auxiliaries of every description, besides numerous other organisations for proselytising purposes.

But over and above all, we have a Protestant Church which has been established in the country for three centuries—the richest in the world, amid the poorest people—endowed with estates to the extent of 1,937,837 statute acres; together with a rent-charge which has been accepted as an equivalent for the tenth of the produce of the whole island. And to render this Establishment more efficient for the propagation of the Protestant creed, the Parliament of the United Kingdom granted, and continued to grant for sixteen years, £100,000 annually for the poor clergy of said Establishment; besides grants and loans of upwards of a million of money for the erection of Protestant churches and building of parsons' houses.

Now, with all those various agencies so long in full operation, and with such an unlimited command of funds for the spread of Protestantism, Protestant missionaries have the modesty to announce in 1851 that the want of money is the only obstacle to the evangelization of all Ireland. We have, I think, been justified in exclaiming that "the hypocrisy of these men has had no parallel since the days of the ancient Pharisees—if even then."

Would it not be well to ask what has this church or its missionaries, who now demand more money, ever done to indemnify the State, or the people, for the millions so

prodigally squandered upon it already? Its pride and avarice—its shameful neglect of the few duties which it had to perform, and the spirit of persecution which has ever dwelt within it, have caused six-sevenths of the people of this country always to repudiate it, as the administratrix of Christ's merciful dispensation to man. It has been known to us only as a huge, unscrupulous, money-making corporation, and nothing else, "signaling itself (as the *Times* once said) by more than concurrence with the tyrannical spirit of the civil government." It has taught neither religion nor morality, and instead of promoting peace, it is acknowledged upon all hands that the Establishment has been the perpetual source of hatred, injustice, oppression, and not unfrequently of sanguinary riots. The Rev. Sidney Smith states, in the *Edinburgh Review*, 1824, that the collection of tithe in Ireland cost, in all probability, one million of lives; and he wrote before the slaughter of the people at Newtownbarry, Carrickshock, Castlepollard, and Rath-cornac.

The Church has also made the gentry what they are—unkind, heartless, spendthrifts—neglectful of all their duties to their oppressed and now ruined tenantry, whom, as "Papists," they were taught remorselessly to spurn and trample upon: I speak of the landlords as a body, for amongst them there were some who, in the worst of times, nobly did their duty. Their extortions and vices have at length recoiled upon themselves, by driving out in myriads the people to seek a resting-place in foreign lands. The prophetic spirit of Grattan, more than half a century since, saw these evils, and others which, in due time, it is to be feared, will be realised. "Do you not see in America (exclaimed the great man) that range of territory, cheapness of living, variety of climate, and

simplicity of life—the drain of Europe? Whatever is bold and disconsolate, the oppressed, the outraged, the harassed, in every country, all, all, to that point will precipitate; and what you trample on at home, will sting you in America." Sir, it will surprise no man that we question the propriety of granting additional funds to the missionaries of the Church which has, in a great measure, contributed to bring about this state of things. Let your correspondent tell the world at once what amount of treasure is required to Protestantise Ireland. How many hundreds of millions will do? Is a sum equal to the national debt needed? Countless thousands have been already expended, and the work has not yet well begun. It might be well to ask whether the improved chances of gaining Heaven, by the adoption of any of the modern heresies of Protestantism, be worth, after all, such an expenditure of blood and treasure—such a loss of peace, in a word—whether it ought to be purchased by the destruction of an ancient and faithful nation? If justice and mercy ever obtain a complete ascendancy over prejudice and the lust of power in the United Kingdom, this question will be calmly examined and decided.

Lord Melbourne, in 1835, on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill, thus described the establishment from data furnished by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners:—

"There are," said his lordship (I quote from the *Mirror of Parliament*), "155 parishes in Ireland with an income of £12,000 a-year, which do not contain one protestant. There are 173 parishes, of which the income is £19,000 a-year, and in each of which the number of Protestants is under ten. There are 406 parishes, of which the joint income is £54,000 a-year, and in which

the Protestant population seldom exceeds fifteen, and never exceeds fifty. There are 975 single parishes, in each of which there are less than fifty Protestants, but of which the united income is £170,000 a-year."

At the head of this Establishment is Primate Beresford, whose see is endowed with 104,000 acres, although his income is rated only at £17,070. Would not the odd hundreds form a very proper income, if the incumbent was satisfied to live as a Christian bishop?

Now, with this picture before us, sketched by one of the Prime Ministers of England, one cannot help asking on what principle of justice, of religion, of decency, has such an Establishment been kept up amid a Catholic people?

Mr. Macaulay, who is no mean authority upon such a question, has expressed an opinion which will, ere long, force itself on the attention of Statesmen:—

"If there were (says this distinguished writer), in any part of the world a National Church, regarded as Heretical by four-fifths of the nation committed to its care; a Church established and maintained by the sword; a Church producing twice as many riots as conversions; a Church which, though possessing great wealth and power, and though long backed by persecuting laws, had, in the course of many generations, been found unable to propagate its doctrines, and barely able to maintain its ground; a Church so odious, that fraud and violence, when used against its clear rights of property, were generally regarded as fair play; a Church whose ministers were preaching to desolate walls, and with difficulty obtaining their lawful subsistence by the help of bayonets. Such a Church on our principles, could not, we must own, be defended. We should say, that the State which allied itself with such a Church post-

poned the primary end of Government to the secondary ; and the consequence had been such as any sagacious observer would have predicted. Neither the primary nor the secondary end is attained. The temporal and spiritual interests of the people suffer alike. The minds of men instead of being drawn to the Church are alienated from the State !”

Sir, there is not an unprejudiced mind in the country who does not agree with Mr. Macaulay, that for such an Establishment there is no defence—that it is a monster grievance without parallel in the history of the world—that it is sustained in bold defiance of the clearest principles of justice, of policy, of humanity. Sir, there are thousands in England, some even amongst its foremost men, who feel the full force and truth of what Mr. Macaulay has so eloquently stated. Archdeacon Paley, long since, laid down the rule that, “if Dissenters from the Establishment became the majority of the people, the Establishment itself ought to be altered and qualified.” Warburton, in his “Alliance between Church and State,” taught the same doctrine; and The Bishop of Cloyne (Woodward), in quoting Paley’s opinion, considers it “decisive against the Protestant Church in Ireland.”

Instead, therefore, of granting additional funds to the agents of this Establishment, under whatever name they assume, the Church itself should be called upon, in the language of Scripture, to render an account of its stewardship.

Your correspondent states that I have not established the charge of bribery against the Protestant Missionary Societies. Does he deem it necessary to prove, what candid and honest men of every class in the country have not the slightest doubt about? But a very few

days since, a Protestant gentleman in my parish told me that he had almost made up his mind not to go to church, being so utterly disgusted with this discreditable traffic in converts. I do not give the gentleman’s name, because I have not his express permission, although I have no reason to think he would hesitate to state before the world what he stated to me. The Protestant converts, on renouncing the faith of their fathers, obtain better dress, better covering, better food, than they had before. This, Sir, is a public, notorious fact; and it is equally certain that they obtained these things on the express condition of publicly abandoning the religion in which they had lived, and hoped to die. Is this mere conjecture? Sir, we arrive at the knowledge of these facts from the confession of the delinquents themselves, who come publicly to express their sorrow for their crime, and to plead starvation as the apology for their fall. Take, for instance, the late accounts of conversion in the diocese of Cashel, as given in the *Hull Advertiser*.

“The converts, we learn, are all poor people, in the receipt of weekly relief from funds provided by the proselytising zeal of persons in *this* country (England); and as it was apprehended that few of them would be found to stand the test of confirmation by the Protestant Bishop, new clothes were promised them in the event of their going through such an ordeal with becoming gravity. The Right Rev. Dr. Daly found the Church of Drumkeen filled with converts, sighing for the imposition of episcopal hands; and after the confirmation, the Rev. Dr. Darby, whose fold they professed to join, distributed among them plenty of warm clothing for the winter, not omitting some rather gay dresses for the females, brands snatched from the burning. But now begins the really painful part of the affair. On the following Sunday the

greatest portion of the converts, well-clad at the expense of their proselytising friends, presented themselves in the Roman Catholic chapels of Doon, Cappamore, and Necker, all chapels in the vicinity of Drumkeen Church, and solemnly declared before the assembled congregations that they only yielded to the pressure of cold and hunger, in feigning to be converted. Now (continues the Editor), this is altogether very lamentable. We greatly fear that many of our so-called Missionaries are about the most unscrupulous persons under the sun. If they can only make such a show of success as will enable them to extract money out of the pockets of a credulous people to support themselves in luxuries and ease, they are marvellously indifferent to the conditions of mind required in those to whom they give the name of converts."

These scenes, Sir, are really horrible, and would not be endured in any country in Europe but our own. They are calculated to degrade, to demoralize, to render utterly worthless, to ruin here and hereafter, the poor people upon whom such experiments are tried. The voice of every honest man in the country, Protestant and Catholic, ought to be raised against such iniquity.

If truth reside in Protestantism, and works conversions without a bribe, how does it happen that it is successful only amongst those who, on the very verge of starvation, are most exposed to such temptations. Protestantism, like the miasma of the "*grotto del Cane*," acts only to a certain distance from the ground; those who stand erect are in little danger, and the prostrate in the depths of poverty alone take the infection fully. Mark, on the other hand, the glorious progress of Catholic truth. It makes converts in every class, but especially amongst the learned, the thoughtful, and the

self-sacrificing; amongst men whose sincerity is well tested by the surrender of wealth and honours. Archdeacon Manning, and Oakley, and Maskell, and Faber, and Newman, and Smith, and Law, the brother of Lord Ellenborough; Wilberforce and Rider, and Allies, and scores of others, have each resigned several hundreds a year, some of them even thousands, to be admitted to the communion of the Catholic Church. Catholicism achieves its victories where the Catholic missionary is never heard, in the universities of England, and amongst the dignitaries and members of the ancient cathedrals which, since the reformation, have been in Protestant hands.—"Magna est veritas," it may be truly said, "et prevalebit."

If your correspondent, on carefully considering the opinion of Mr. Macaulay, still thinks that the Protestant Establishment in this country, or its missionaries, admit of a defence, we shall be glad to hear from him again. There may be reasons, but we confess we cannot see them, for asking money to Protestantise Ireland; a project upon which millions have been hitherto unsuccessfully expended.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

JAMES MAHER.

X.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

December 4th, 1851.

SIR—Your masked Correspondent, under the signature "C.," begins his last letter by asserting, that Mr. Maher has left several points of his former communication un-