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REV'DS. I. E. BILL & R. THOMSON,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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From the London Christian Times.

*Catholics in the United States, their political organization—Spirit of the Catholic Press—Influence of the Free Schools in counteracting their designs—The position of the Catholic Priesthood and Press on the subject—Late Catholic outrage in the City of Cincinnati, Ohio—Prospects of the season.*

OHIO, May, 1853.

According to official statements—Catholic, of course,—there are now in the United States, in connexion with the Romish Church, six archbishops, twenty-six bishops, 1,471 priests, and 1,545 Churches, distributed among thirty-four dioceses, and two apostolic vicariates. The total number of Catholics is about 2,196,000. This, of course, includes all the members of Catholic families, old and young. I think the gross number is very considerably—from 500,000 to 1,000,000—over-estimated, and to this opinion I am led by all former estimates that I have met with. I give the figures, however, just as I find them in the public prints, which have derived them from the source referred to. The rapid augmentation of the numbers of this sect, within the last five years, you are well aware, has been wholly occasioned by foreign emigration. They have now become a powerful body among us, and all the wisdom and cunning of the priesthood is everywhere directed to one end—the perpetuation and increase of the power thus thrown into their hands. As a means of accomplishing this purpose, one of the first things done was the complete political organization of the Catholic voters in the United States; their organization, not in connexion with any one political party, but as one body to move in unbroken columns, in any direction which the ruling spirit might indicate, and the exigencies of the moment might, in their judgment, require. Such an organization, it will readily be seen, not only throws an immense political power into the hands of the priesthood, in controlling our national politics, but tends, more than almost any other means, to preserve the body intact from the encroachments of Protestantism, as each individual now is held to "the Mother Church," not only by all his early religious associations, but by the influence of an overpowering political combination, and by a visible encirclement of an almost omnipotent public sentiment. The special design of such organization is, no doubt, to prevent apostasy from said Church, an apostasy which has been going on for many years, with astonishing rapidity, through the silent, but irresistible action of the social principle. The children of Catholic parents, by simple association with those of Protestants, insensibly imbibe the spirit of freedom, and then throw off the "yoke of bondage" by which their ancestors have been held down in intellectual, moral, religious, and political degradation. But for this one cause, there would now be in this country from five to ten millions of Catholics, instead of the present number. Take a single family in illustration. "I feel sad," said an aged Irish patriarch, the father of from five to ten children, the precise number I forget; "my wife feels sad with me, we have ever been faithful members of 'the Mother Church'; we educated our children in the Catholic faith; yet they have every one of them married Protestants themselves. Not one of them remains with us in connexion with 'the Mother Church.'" This may be said to be a general rule with Catholic families of all nations when they have once acquired our language, and their children follow under the silent but all-powerful influence of the social principle. To counteract this influence is, no doubt, one of the great aims of the organization above referred to.

Another means of attaining this end is the most thorough imbuing of the entire organization with the *esprit de corps* for the maintenance and propagation of the Catholic faith, in

all its leading peculiarities; hence, in no nation on earth do the organs of that Church more openly and boldly affirm such peculiarities, and more fully glory in them, than in this country at the present time. In all their organs alike, the right of private judgment is denied, the absolute authority of the Church in all matters of faith, the criminality of dissent, and the right of Government to punish it as such, where the power exists, are affirmed without disguise. The extreme measures of European despots, in their attempts to suppress free thought and speech, are also boldly advocated and defended. Napoleon the Third, says one of these organs, has now, by the interposition of Providence, "got his feet upon the necks of the enemies of God;" and then a fervent wish is expressed that the same Providence may enable him to keep them there. The object of such influences is not doubtful. It is to consolidate the Catholic population into such a serried phalanx that Protestantism cannot pierce it, or break its unity.

The greatest barrier to the existence, and, more than all, to the progress of Catholicism, in this country, is, our system of schools. In them the children of the rich and poor meet together on terms of perfect equity, and are taught the sciences without any reference whatever to any peculiarities of religious faith. Their education is perfectly free, the teachers being supported wholly at the public expense, and the buildings in which the schools are held being erected and furnished in a similar manner. In our large cities, such as New York and Philadelphia the pupil is then carried through all departments of science to the attainment of a complete liberal education. In the city last named, the scholar, if he chooses to study sufficiently, graduates with the college and university degrees. The influence of the system in favour of Protestantism, and against Catholicism, is wholly and exclusively incidental, arising entirely from the fact, that Protestantism is the spirit of knowledge and of liberality, and Catholicism of ignorance and despotism, and that, in these schools, the Catholic child, by social contact and the influence of science, insensibly imbibes the spirit of knowledge and freedom, and, of course as he grows up to manhood, casts off the incubus of Catholicism. The perpetuation of Catholic families as such, through successive generations, while their children and youth are subject to such influences, may safely be pronounced an absolute impossibility; hence, the Catholic priesthood and press have now openly combined their influence for the destruction of the system of free schools in these United States. The system is everywhere denounced as unchristian, infidel, and atheistical. Charter elections, in our lower cities, are made to turn almost, and, in some instances, quite, entirely upon this one question. The determination to carry this one point is everywhere declared to be inflexible, and never to be abandoned till it is accomplished. But here Catholicism has met an immovable rock, and will, inevitably, fall to pieces upon. "It is very clear," says one of our political papers, "that no power in the universe, save a special act of the Almighty, can break up the unity of the American common schools;" and this is but an echo of a united and immovable public sentiment throughout the entire Free States, and in all others where the system has been adopted. Everywhere "the priesthood" have found themselves in a very lean and depressing minority, and the power against them is perpetually increasing. A bill has just been introduced in the Legislature of the State of Maryland, by some Catholic members, for the distribution of the school fund on sectarian principles, and it has "convulsed the State." "Never," says one report, "have we had such excitement." "A monster meeting" was immediately held in

the city of Baltimore, a meeting consisting of more than ten thousand persons, "to denounce the bill and its policy." On the day following, "an indignation meeting," for the same purpose, was held, "which was larger yet." "The feeling," says one of the papers of the city, "is very general and strong, and will sweep over the State, like fire over the prairies, if the bill be not defeated." The spirit of Protestantism was never before so thoroughly aroused in this country, and was never called forth on so favourable an issue. Of the result there can be no doubt. Catholicism cannot break down the free schools, and cannot live unless they are destroyed.

At the last Charter election, in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, the Catholics offered to throw their entire vote for the Democratic party, provided the candidate for the Mayorship should be of their (the Catholic) faith. The offer was accepted, and although the free schools were triumphantly sustained against the power of Rome, the candidate referred to was elected. Not long after his election, the Very Reverend John B. Purcell, Archbishop of Cincinnati, desiring to make, before the people of that city, a public display of the power of the Romish Church in the same, the laying of the corner-stone of a new Church was selected on the occasion, the Sabbath, 24th ult., for the time, and a public Catholic procession through the principal streets of the city as the means of attaining this high end. In the morning of the day appointed, however, a small meeting was collected in the city market—a place where such meetings are often held—to hear a discourse on "The Errors of Romanism." Mayor Snellbaker considered this as an insult offered to "the Mother Church," and appeared on the ground to stop the speaker, and disperse the crowd, under pretence of preventing a riot. The speaker was accordingly pulled from his stand by force, and imprisoned, and then the streets were occupied by the procession of the Archbishop, guarded by the Mayor and his police. The result was what neither anticipated—a public excitement, such as has seldom been witnessed—an excitement of the most intense, and yet healthy and orderly character. Immense public meetings were called, attended and headed by the most influential citizens. At one of these meetings, a committee of one hundred influential citizens were appointed to wait upon the Mayor, and request him to resign his office. A petition was also circulated, requesting the Sheriff of the county to exert the power lodged in his hands to prevent the Mayor interfering with any orderly meeting which the citizens might choose to hold. On the following Sabbath, Mr. Kirkland, the imprisoned speaker, found himself in the market place again, and there in the presence of more than 50,000 people, to hear him speak on "The Errors of Romanism." The Mayor, in the meantime, issued the following bulletin in one of the public papers:—

"Messrs. Editors,—In reference to the man Kirkland, it is my purpose not to interfere with him further, except to protect him as I would any other citizen, unless directed by the Council to pursue some other course."  
"DAVID T. SNELLBAKER."

The opposition to the measures of the Mayor has had the greater influence, because it has been attended with such perfect order, and at the same time, inflexible determination on the part of the citizens. Your readers will probably, be interested in the following account, from the *Cincinnati Gazette*, of the proceedings on the first Sabbath named. The article appeared on the following morning, April 25:—

"TWO SCENES OF YESTERDAY CONTRASTED. "Yesterday, about nine, A. M., we observed an individual, mounted upon a barrel, in the midst of the Fifth-street market place, speak-

ing to a crowd of fifty or a hundred persons, who were standing around him and upon the side-walk in the vicinity. The audience seemed both orderly and respectable. There was no apparent heat in the manner of the speaker, nor any excitement visible among the audience. The name of the orator, we are informed, is Kirkland, and the subject, the errors of the Roman Church. A few minutes after this, the Mayor of the city made his appearance upon the ground, attended by the regular, and a large body of special police, some seventy-five in number, and, under the pretence that a riot was to be apprehended, ordered the speaker to be silent. Mr. Kirkland, believing himself to be entitled to express his sentiments in a peaceful manner, refused. The Mayor persisted, and an argument ensued, the result of which was, the speaker was seized by his honour and compelled to desist.

"What right, under the law, the Mayor of this city has to interfere, in a case of this kind, where the people have peaceably assembled to hear a public discourse, we do not understand. So far from there being any danger of a riot, the audience was of the most peaceable description. The public harmony was not disturbed. Nobody was inconvenienced. The speaker, as we have the best authority for believing, is a respectable, educated, and pious man, and an American citizen, and neither noise nor offence did, or was likely to grow out of his appearance. We cannot but look upon this act of Mr. Mayor Snellbaker as a tyrannical assumption of power which the law does not confer, and which he can only pretend to justify under assumptions that have no foundation in truth.

"We wish to contrast the foregoing scene with one that occurred in the afternoon. The Very Reverend John B. Purcell, Archbishop of Cincinnati, having determined to devote yesterday to the business of laying the corner stone of a Catholic Church, collected from the city and the towns of the vicinity the male members of his communion to the amount of from five to ten thousand. These, decked with badges, with gaudy flags waving in the wind, amid the discordant ringing of bells of the churches and stepping to the music of braying brass, clashing copper, and thundering sheep skin, from nearly all the bands in the city, marched through half the corporation, filling the streets and blocking up the avenues, with the manifest intention of ostentatiously displaying to the people of Cincinnati the immense force which this ghostly potentate is able to control. For hours, Fifth-street, from Mound to Western-row, was blocked up by a solid mass of humanity, rendering passage by others impossible. Never was the stillness of the Sabbath here more boisterously invaded, and never have the people witnessed what, to many of them, was a more high-handed desecration of the day.

"And what did our worthy Mayor do in this case? Did he, in the tenderness of his conscience, take his stand upon a barrel head, read the law in the ears of the hierarch, and in holy fear of a riot, 'and that, too, on the Sabbath-day'—as he says in his missive to Mr. Kirkland—command the assembly to disperse, or the officiating potentate to desist? He did no such thing. His fears had taken a different direction. He sent his huge police to attend the ceremony, it is true, but for what purpose? He was afraid that the archbishop, with his thousands of sturdy followers, would be attacked by the people of the city, and the constabulary was commissioned to watch tenderly the welfare of this great army of Roman legionaries. Conscientious and consistent Mayor Snellbaker!

"The head of the Church chooses the Sabbath for a parade. He takes particular care that his army shall be composed of men who can defend themselves. He surrounds his