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Reply to Dr. O'Brien's Letter.

To the Editor of the Examiner.

DEAR SIR.—The line of latitude does very much coincide with the theory. Why leave out England? Had the Doctor a reason? But to the fact. Is it not true that the Teutonic races are mainly Protestant? The "absurd English periodical" happens to be a work from the pen of a famous Frenchman, and he shews most ably how the great Teuton race will think and judge for itself, and will not be held under ecclesiastical bondage as the Latin. Every theory is accompanied by some exception, but this is mainly true.

Christ did not teach all Christians under pain of condemnation to follow their religious leaders. He taught just the opposite, for He bade all men to repent and believe the gospel. The whole New Testament forbids any such thing as the handing over of conscience to a priest. Our Lord and His Apostles appealed to the enlightened judgment of men, and to their intuitive perception of truth when presented. They never demanded of any man the surrender of intellect; but on the contrary, the consecration of all the powers to active service. The doctrines of infallibility and passive obedience are impracticable as well as inadmissible. If creeds ever hold sway over the human mind, as matter of conscience, it must be because of the divine and eternal truths which they embody, and not because the church teach them. How can a fact have any moral significance if it lacks the quality of freedom, and is a matter of compulsion? A church may teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and worship can be done by machinery.

Dr. O'Brien says, "our Saviour denounced as heathens and publicans all who would not hear the church." If Dr. O'Brien knows anything of Greek, he will know that "church" is synonymous with congregation or society, and means just what the Dr. would not have it to mean. A writer says, "there was the loss of that activity of the reason and conscience of the Society which the original form of polity implied." When? "When Bishops lorded it over God's heritage." It is only such convictions as are based on the Word of God which have a right to the sacred name of conscience in matters of religion. It is impossible for a heathen to have a Christian conscience. The heathen, who had no such word, neither made the claim, nor understood it when advanced by others. With them religion was only a question of law and usage. The heathen priests were content with the *opus operatum*, and so are thousands of Romans.

"Absence of conscience, brought about by the machinery of Popery." What conscience is cannot be satisfactorily defined. St. Thomas, notwithstanding; but we can show sufficient for the purpose. The very meaning of the word—a knowledge with oneself—gives the clue. We know what conscience is in practical life—it is the moral guardian of the intellect. A man must have knowledge before conscience can be exercised. By conscience I mean that private moral judgment which is exercised on knowledge. That moral judgment has been destroyed by the system of popery; the voice of the priest becomes conscience. Conscience is handed over to the keeping of the church or priest. In matters of faith Rome judges and decides for her followers. So far as the masses are concerned, in Roman countries there is, in matters of faith, an entire absence of conscience. Dr. O'Brien confounds conscience with obedience to the Pope. Thousands of Romans give obedience without any knowledge whatever, and there can be no true conscience in the matter; they obey because they are in ignorance on matters of religion, as revealed by God through Jesus Christ. They do as the priest tells them, and that ends it; they do not even know the meaning of personal moral responsibility. Of course this does not apply to all Romans; but it does apply to the masses in Roman countries. I have seen it with my own eyes, and have heard it with my own ears. It is this ignorance which is so valuable to the priesthood. Let them educate their children in State schools, as Protestants do; let the priests call on their people to examine for themselves, and what then? The power of the priest over the conscience would end. Dr. O'Brien dare not himself, in matters of faith, exercise his private judgment against Rome. He might squirm and wriggle, as many of the Bishops of Rome did when swallowing the infallibility dogma, but in the end he would have to give in. In 1876, Dr. O'Brien published a book, (I think lightly of it), and in the Preface are these words: "Hence, if there be in these pages, aught that is opposed to the teachings of that Church, we repudiate, condemn, and hold it for not written, and wish our readers to do the same." Why not let the book go forth if it held the Doctor's conscientious convictions? Surely Rome has him with a hard grip! Again, in political matters you find Romans changing sides in a body. Can it be true that at a given moment nearly every Roman becomes conscientiously a Conservative, who has hitherto been a Liberal? There, as in all vital questions, the Church is conscience. The Dr. gives us St. Thomas: "the natural law is an impression of the divine light in us, a participation of the eternal law in the rational creature." This jargon is made plain by what follows: "the voice of God speaking to man," and then the Dr. says: "We obey the teachings of our religion, because through the light of Faith we apprehend them as being the mandates of God." This is well put by the Dr. but unfortunately, the last word of the sentence should be

"church" or "priest," and then it would be true. I have known many Romans, some in obedience, some in disobedience, some who had left Rome, and I found the truth was this: Rome had hidden from them everything except the authority of the Church, and I never came across one Roman Catholic, and descendants of Spaniards too, who had ever seen a Bible. Obedience to the church, or to the priest, which to them means the same thing, was the evidence of religion. The women gave that obedience, but the men generally not.

I need not reply to the Dr's remarks concerning Bismarck, as I made no mention of him in my speech. I will just say I do not believe in a *pope* Bismarck any more than I do in a *pope* anybody else.

How innocently the Dr. quotes the 4th Lateran Council! What right had that imperious pontiff, Innocent III., to publish seventy decrees without asking anyone? New powers to pope and clergy, new doctrines, transubstantiation, confession to a priest a divine ordinance. The Dr. cannot find the 4th Lateran Council in the Word of God. The doings of that Council were antagonistic to the Gospel of Christ. Let the Dr. give to his people an open Bible and the declarations of the 4th Lateran Council, and they will soon see the one is a direct contradiction of the other. The Dr. advises I "should become acquainted with Catholic teaching." Catholic and Roman are not synonymous. Does the Dr. think they are? I am ready to reply on that question if he wishes. The Dr.'s arguments are all *ad captandam vulgus*.

Now for France, but we must dispose of the 1st paragraph. "Witness his derivation of the Masonic Order from the builders of Solomon's Temple." Was Dr. O'Brien present at that lecture? If he were not he can scarcely speak, if he were he has written that which he knew not to be true. That lecture lies before me, and no such statement is in it. The Dr. dare not become a Mason without a dispensation, and knows nothing whatever about it. Again, "his historical escapade regarding St. Peter's sojourn or rather non-sojourn at Rome." The Dr. ought to know he has misstated that. I denied St. Peter's bishopric. Dr. McDonald could not shake my proofs, nor can Dr. O'Brien. Unless he follow Rome and make history, he cannot make St. Peter twenty-five years Bishop of Rome, and if the Dr. be a trained controversialist he knows that too. The Dr.'s statement about France is calculated to mislead. I say, (1) the Government is not a misrepresentation of the national spirit; (2) I did not by any word in my speech "appear to approve of persecution." I do not approve of persecution of any kind, not excepting that against the Colporteurs, encouraged by the Priests of Rome. Let the Dr. reply to my statements, which he never does once in his long, rambling letter. (1) Did not the Religious Orders obtain diplomas for teaching without examination? (2) Had they not certain exemptions, not granted to others, in business and legacy duties? (3) Was not the clerical party defeated by an immense majority, and decrees of expulsion upheld? Come, now! let the Dr. own up like a man with a conscience. The Dr. states that the Religious Orders pursued "no object hurtful to the State." Let us see. I will take the Order to which I specially referred—the Jesuit. They were expelled from the Kingdom of France, 1764; expelled from the Kingdom of Portugal, 1759; censured for lax morality in France, 1760; Pope Clement XI. condemned them; the theological faculty of the Sorbonne censured them as "false, rash, scandalous, contrary to the Word of God, and subversive of the Christian faith and religion;" the Parliament of Paris, 1762, commanded them to quit. Louis XV. confirmed the decree, 1764; Spain expelled them, 1767; Clement XIV. launched against them the famous bull, *Domini ac Redemptoris*, 1773; not restored until 1814; expelled from Russia, 1820. I need not go further. If they were expelled from every country in Europe, when they pursued "no object hurtful to the State," will the Dr. please enlighten us as to the cause of expulsion? I could relate a few stories. The Dr. is afraid I "cannot understand a life of chastity, poverty, obedience, and complete self denial." Does the Dr. mean me to infer that all Roman priests do? or does he confine this to the Orders? So far as "chastity" is concerned, let the Dr. go down to South America, and he could have his eyes opened. Spaniards have told me curious stories. I know that "poverty" is not the distinguishing mark of one Order, for the rarest dishes graced the table and champagne flowed in abundance, and in whatever country I have seen Roman priests, they have always been conspicuous, by their appearance for good living. In the matter of "obedience," I know nothing.

In Belgium men have become Atheists, for they think that only is true freedom. But that there may be no mistake about the Roman priests in Belgium, I add the following for the Dr's consideration. The priests in Belgium are just now engaged in a vigorous war against the new Elementary Education Law. I quote: "The witnesses called by the Committee of Inquiry depone to the most shameful proceedings on the part of the priests, most of whom have recommended disobedience to parents from the pulpit, and sown trouble and disunion in many households. To prevent the molestation of the pupils and school-mistresses in the very church in one important parish, the burgomaster was obliged to send four gendarmes; while the *procureur du roi*, wearing his scarf of office, also attended to enforce the non-molestation of the teacher and her pupils. Everywhere we hear of infamous retaliation made by priests upon mothers who continue to send their children to the lay schools. For instance, a poor widow having lost one of her two children, asked the priest to say a mass (une messe d'ange) for the repose of his soul, and was answered, 'I shall not say a mass for the child; besides, you are pun-

ished by Heaven; your other child will die also, all this because you have sent your children to the lay school.' At this point a cry of indignation arose from all voices present, and the priest begged the president of the inquiry to protect him. 'Although I deprecate any manifestation,' answered the president, 'I can, nevertheless, not refrain from telling you that the indignation of the public is justifiable. Do you not perceive the odiousness of your conduct towards this poor widow, who, having lost a child, needs consolation? Instead of this, you menace her with a second misfortune, instead of consoling her with christian words! It is true that you cannot understand the grief of a mother who is bereaved of her child. It is true that you cannot realize the sufferings of a father who loves his beloved child; but allow me to tell you that your conduct to Madame Tunise is unworthy of a civilized man!' These words, pronounced with feeling and conviction by the president, produced a profound impression on the auditory. The priest retired amid the hootings of the immense crowd assembled in the court yard of the school, and escaped down a back street. Generally, the priests declare that they do not remember the facts deposed to by the witnesses. Frequently they give a flat denial to them, even when there is confirmation by other witnesses. This system of denial caused one member of the committee of inquiry to observe to a priest that if he was telling the truth, all the members of his congregation were liars and perjurers."

Does priestly energy in Italy betoken an appreciation of the national spirit, and does it seek the spiritual good of the people? Or is it against the national aspiration? Any one may answer the question.

The Dr. grows quite warm when he mentions Spain. All I said was contained in eight lines of print, and I did not "revel in a wrath of abuse and misrepresentation," and the Dr. knows that he is simply at his *ad captandam vulgus* again. "Spain is not yet ready for the Bible, and does not want it, etc." "The women have their show every Sunday morning, and the men have their bull fight on the same day." The "profanity," and all, was "precisely original" so the "smartness" need not be "diminished." I remember using the word "show," and perhaps on second thought (it was an extempore speech) I would change the word, but it represents just what I mean. The Church of England in her XXXI. Article says the "sacrifice of masses" . . . "were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" and every Church of England Clergyman professes to believe that. I did not use those words, but in the hurry of speech hit on the word "show." I meant this: that it was to most a spectacle or exhibition. I have spoken to a good many Romans who could give no reason for the service. Of one Roman country I know it is practically a show to many—the masses do not understand anything about it. The word expresses my mind, though I would not have used it, had I foreseen it would be offensive. It cannot be more offensive to Romans than the term "apostacy" used by the Dr. with respect to the faith of Protestants, but the Dr. was only making his *ad cap. vulgus* again. So the Dr. thinks our Bible is mutilated, truly it is, again and again, by Roman priests when they expend their rage in rending copies of it into pieces. So far as the Bible is concerned, Spain as a nation is in darkness. I could tell (names and places) of stones hurled at Colporteurs, bullets flattened against bedroom walls, shots through doors and windows, and the priest foremost in this dastardly work. Was that conscience? Was that "the voice of God speaking to man"? Has the slaughter of Saints all down the ages been "the voice of God speaking to man"? What will men call conscience? Now comes a statement which requires painful consideration: "We are quite confident that in every household in Spain, when its members can read, there is a Bible in the popular language. It is the same in Italy and France." Now, I say distinctly that statement is untrue. As a gentleman, I must not believe the Dr. knew that to be untrue when he penned it, but as it stands, it is false. I know the Bible is not in every household in Rome, nor in Ireland, nor in Cuba, nor in Charlottetown—read or not read. There are many Romans who have never seen a Bible, and Spain is no exception. Does the fact that Spain has had great men answer my statement? Every country has had great men. Is not Cotewayo a great man? I say Spain does not want the Bible, and this is absolute truth. England can more than compare with Spain. Where are the philosophers of Spain of to-day? The scientific life of Spain to-day is in "swaddling bands." If this correspondence continues I shall be happy to meet the Dr. on that point. My remarks in eight lines were every word true, and are true now, notwithstanding the Dr's letter. In days gone by I have sat and listened while Spaniards have talked of Spain's ancient glory, and I have heard the same men bewail her present condition, and again and again I have heard them hiss their curses as they said, "the priests have crumbed Spain." The wars which the Dr. laid to conscientious convictions tell another story to us; but we cannot enlarge upon that now. The Dr. points to cause and effect. Cause—a king bareheaded carrying a taper, Bishops in the Senate. Effect—public credit is rising. I shall just refer to the bull-fighting by saying the Dr. did not make a fair parallel. It was another *ad captandam vulgus*. Where do England's fairest and highest born go to the gin den, and with flowers and fashion, music and song, call for the wife beater and his wife to make sport for a Sunday holiday? for that would be the parallel. I lived in six Counties during my residence in England, and I know that wife-beating is not done on Sunday afternoon, as a pastime. English towns are very quiet on Sunday, and gin dens are closed the greater part of the day; besides, the police would stop any pastime of the

kind—public opinion is against it. In London, that may be possible, but I do not think that wife-beating is specially appointed for Sundays, even in London. Was the Dr. ignorant of English life, or was it another bold dash of the *vulgus*? One feels some surprise the Dr. did not condemn the desecration of the Lord's Day in Spain. Is that desecration another instance of conscience, of "the voice of God speaking to man?"

If the Dr. should carry this on, will he please not ramble so much? After following him all over the world, and then to find nothing in reply to my speech is anything but amusing. I am quite willing to set my speech, spoken extempore, and his letter, written deliberately, side by side. I spoke quietly and without malice, as I always do. As a member of the Bible Society's Committee, I shall speak of our work, and of the hindrances to it, whenever I am asked, and shall not "back and fill" to please anybody. I am a Protestant, and a free man, and shall be prepared to defend myself against Dr. O'Brien, or any one else.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,
ALFRED OSBORNE.

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