4-8-1861

Letter to C. P. McIlvaine

William Jay
Rt. Rev. & Dear Sir,

When I wrote to you last September, my heart was sad at the progress of Oxford divinity in our church but I felt that it did not become me to introduce the subject to you. Your kind reply & your voluntary allusion to the new theology relieves me from the restraint I then felt. Since the receipt of your letter, I have purchased your book & read it with an entire concurrence in its sentiments. You will be somewhat surprised to learn that you are chargeable with exciting in me a feeling akin to personal vanity. The work flatters the discernments and knowledge of character which I am too fair to believe, led me in the N. York convention about 12 years since to oppose the election of a Diocesan who has since officially proposed the erasure of the word "protestant" from the style of our church; & to cast a solitary vote for Him, who is now the prominent champion of the Doctrines of the Reformation.

Your volume is indeed a heavy piece of ordinance which must prove inexisthible where it can be brought to bear; but possibly in the present state of the campaign, lighter artillery might do more extensive execution. It struck me that the 8th Chapter, either entire, or with slight alterations would make a very effective tract.

I think I perceive germinating in the new school, most if not all the corruptions of the Church of Rome with the exception of the supremacy of the Pope. Our new-light Bishops judging from recent indications are not unwilling to be Popes in their respective Dioceses, but I have no evidence that they are preparing to surrender their into the hands of the Bishop of Rome.

The papists just now are (perhaps fortunately) assailing the validity of our orders; & few of our Clergy are willing to enter a church into which they can be received only as Laymen. It is therefore not unnatural that the nearer the Oxfordists approach the Dominions of his Holiness, the more jealous they should become of their own independence. Hence, probably the late discovery that Papists are dissenters _______ that Rome separated from England, & not England from Rome - that we are the Church & besides us there is none other - that we are Catholics & must no longer be Protestants or Episcopalians - that there is no ________ Bishop in Maryland because there can only be one Bishop in a Diocese etc. etc.

But alas! these novelties & curious devices will prove in the end, but a miserable barrier against the encroachments of the man of Sin after the bulwarks of Protestantism have been broken down, the Doctrines of the Reformation buried beneath them, & the insufficiency of Scripture, the authority of tradition, & the infallibility of the church established upon their ruins.

It is not to be supposed that those who are attempting such radical changes in our church, & whose future influence & character are staked upon their success will very meekly endure reproof & opposition. Such as resist innovation & where to the Doctrines & worship of the church as set forth in her standards, must expect to be charged with indifference or even enmity to her. But this is no strange thing. The heavenly minded ________ remarks in reference to similar charges against himself. "It is painful to be supposed hostile to that Church
we most tenderly & volicitously love, but such has been the lot of better men than ourselves - of those whose love has burned with a brighter & purer flame."


I am inclined to believe that you have more secret well wishers than open allies in your contest with Oxfordism. The number of the latter will gradually increase, as they become more sensible of their strength. May our Heavenly Father, my Dear Sir, direct & bless your labors for his glory & the salvation of souls.

That those who saw unto us spiritual things, should reap of our carnal things, is admitted I believe by all parties in the church to be a very orthodox sentiment. I am only acting in its spirit, in begging your acceptance of the annexed, together with the best wishes of your fellow churchman & most respected Servant.

William Jay

Rt. Rev. Bp. McIlvaine