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William Penn

THE
FRIEND OF CATHOLICS.

BY

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*Read before the Friends' Evening Hour Club of Germantown, December
7th, 1885, and before the American Catholic Historical Society
on February 1st, 1886.*

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WILLIAM PENN,

THE FRIEND OF CATHOLICS.

The following Historical Paper was read before the Friends' Evening Hour Club of Germantown, on Dec. 7th, 1885, and before the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia, on Feb. 1st, 1886.

The purpose of our American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia, is amply disclosed by its title.

Not only is our concern all that relates to our Church in this country, but in an especial manner all that relates to the history of the Church in our own city is of first importance, and to that has the work of the Society chiefly been devoted.

Organized as we are to collect and preserve all that will tell the story of the founding and expanding of the Church here, it seems fitting that on our first manifestation of the work of the Society it would best accord with the object declared 'especially' that of the Society—the elucidation and preservation of the history of the Church in Philadelphia—if I would speak a word in vindication of the memory of William Penn, the Founder of our State and defend him from the aspersions cast upon his character as a friend of Religious Toleration.

FOUNDATION OF PENNSYLVANIA.

If the history of our Faith in Philadelphia is ever to be written or its development aided by our Society, surely the first point of historical inquiry and

patient and conscientious research must be the principles on which our State was founded, and how these principles and the professions according therewith were applied to the early Catholic settlers in the colony Penn established.

Who should be lenient in judgment, tolerant in opinion and disposed to fair examination, if not Catholics, who above all others have suffered most reproach because the enemies of the Church have not examined into the truth of the statements alleged against Her.

Who should not idly speak derogatory of the character or memory of any man unless the truth of history demand, and then judging only by the standard of the times in which the actor was a public character?

Yet, in this have Catholic writers offended. They have done injustice to William Penn as the friend of Religious Liberty. He is charged with denying to Catholics that Liberty of Conscience which he proclaimed as the right of all who came within the lines of his "Holy Experiment."

Thus the minds of our people have been misled, and worse, our children are being taught that Penn and his people were bitterly hostile to our forefathers in the faith in our city. This, too, in Catholic histories, because our children cannot use other histories without being kept in ignorance of the deeds of Catholics in the settlement and development

of our country, and in gaining its Independence.

If mine be the first words of vindication of the founder of my native city, and such as show him to have been in act as in name—a Friend, they are so only because serious and patient and conscientious examination has convinced me that injustice has been done; not censurable injustice, because unknowingly, though carelessly done.

Our whole early history is but a romance, and rarely upon facts. The very first alleged fact—that in 1686—just 200 years ago, there was a Catholic priest resident in Philadelphia, is not true and the Catholic writer who first started that historical tale, is censurable because he perverted the fact upon which he built a story that has its life still longer lengthened as it appears in the recently issued *Life of Bishop Neumann*.

THE PREVALENT NOTION OF PENN'S CHARACTER.

We Catholics regard William Penn as a religious enthusiast, who contended for Religious toleration or Liberty when he was oppressed, and when given the opportunity to establish a colony, proclaimed as the corner-stone of its structure the principles which he had advocated when oppressed for conscience sake. While policy demanded that none should be by declaration "excepted" from the benefits of the principles he proclaimed, yet he was one loath to have religious liberty construed to cover Roman Catholics, or "Papists;" as we were generally called in those days.

Though not excluding Catholics, we Catholics believe that we were not desired by Penn, that he spoke disparagingly of us for publicly exercising the rites of our Church, that his course and words influenced his followers, and that they thus made our position an uneasy one in the Province.

In fact, the Catholic opinion regarding Penn is best expressed in the words of Bishop Gilmour, the present respected Bishop of Cleveland, who, in a public

discourse in 1880, said: "Even the gentle Penn had his fling at the Catholics."—[The Debt America owes to the Catholicity. page 8.]

It is against this stain on Penn that I seek to show that there is no justification for any hesitation on the part of Catholics to express admiration of the Founder of Pennsylvania, nor any reason why his followers, "the people called Quakers," to use the old time words, should not be regarded especially as Friends.

But how did the Catholic misjudgment of Penn's character arise? From Watson, the annalist of Philadelphia. He relates that Penn wrote to Logan, in July, 1708, saying: "Here is a complaint against your Government that you suffer public Mass in a scandalous manner. Pray send the matter of fact, for ill use is made of it against us here."

Then, continues Watson: "And in a subsequent letter he returns to it in these terms: "It has become a reproach to me here, with the officers of the Crown, that you have suffered the scandal of the Mass to be publicly celebrated."

This, related by a Protestant, is the basis of the Catholic opinion concerning Penn.

The first extract is well founded. It appears in "The Penn and Logan Correspondence." Though dated 7th month 29th, 1708, Watson and the Catholic writers give the date as July 29th, forgetting that in 1708 September was the seventh month. This letter was sent by the hand of the new Governor—Gookin—by Penn to James Logan, his confidential secretary and friend. It speaks generally of such affairs relating to the young colony as were of concern at the time, and such instructions as Penn might be expected to give by the new Lieutenant-Governor whom he was sending to the Province.

Recall Penn's troubles from 1692. Remember, all the settlers were not Quakers. Remember his financial difficulties, the people's ingratitude, the hostility of "the hot Church party," and the efforts to dispossess him of his proprietary rights or to prevent him from disposing of them

to the Crown. Remember that Mass was not allowed to be publicly celebrated in England; that his enemies invented lies, perverted facts, and misrepresented circumstances in order to obtain the mastery of him. The malcontents here reported everything to London; and Penn simply informed Logan: "Here is a complaint against your Government, that you suffer public Mass in a scandalous manner." Remember that in England the public exercise of the Catholic religion was not permitted. In all her colonies Catholics were "excepted" from the declaration that liberty of conscience should prevail; and even in Catholic founded Maryland Mass was not publicly allowed even in Father Andrew White's time, and was prohibited by statute in 1692.

Pennsylvania alone did not "except" Catholics and her statute pages contains no prohibition of the public exercises of their religion.

But let us consider "the scandal of the Mass" charge. It is this alleged extract that I attack. I deny its authenticity. It has got into our Catholic histories from *Watson*, because about 30 years ago Henry de Courcy, a French Catholic journalist making a tour of America, wrote sketches of Catholicity in the United States for his paper; these were translated and published under the title *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*.

I deny the existence of "the Scandal of the Mass" (alleged) extract. It is not in the "Penn and Logan Correspondence." I have searched innumerable books for it, have examined a number of authorities, questioned those who have repeated the statement, and sought diligently, anxiously and faithfully to discover if Penn ever used the language. I can get no other or any further back than *Watson*. My position might rest here when the evidence upon which Penn has been charged with "having his fling at Catholics" is not verified nor discoverable. Proof must be produced before condemnation is pronounced. No indefinite "subsequent letter" is evidence. Proof,

if it existed in *Watson's* time, is available now, and even more so in these days of historical research.

But let us examine the probability of any such language having been used. Even if it had, I claim that it is not a just judgment to take one sentence from a private official letter and hold it as destructive of a life-time of professions and practices totally at variance with the spirit which we Catholics might impute to one who would call the most consoling, the most efficacious and most cherished practice and belief of our faith—the scandal of the Mass—even though these were but the words in every day use. But let us see how Penn regarded Catholics.

From King Charles II. Penn received a grant of this land. He undertook to settle it upon a principle first practiced in our country by a Catholic, Lord Baltimore—Religious Liberty. "For the matter of liberty and privileges I propose that which is extraordinary," wrote Penn to Turner, Sharp and Robert, April 15th, 1681, as cited in *Janney's Life*.

It was "extraordinary" to grant religious liberty in any of the Colonies to "Papists and Quakers." Everywhere they were the banned and hunted people, and he who prayed that "the Lord guide me by His wisdom and preserve me to honor His name and serve His truth and His people, that an example may be set up to the nations," would be most likely not to do ill to those who were fellows with him in suffering, who with him were at home and in the new land persecuted and oppressed for conscience sake. But mere Toleration would not satisfy Penn. He made Religious Liberty a right. All know of the penal laws of England against Catholics. They were used to oppress Quakers. He protested against this, but urged that the blow that he desired turned from his people should not fall upon others.

Penn was "a Protestant and a strict one too," as he declared. He believed not the doctrines of "the Church of Rome." As a youth at Oxford he had torn the surplice from a fellow student be-

cause "it was a relic and a symbol of that Church."

For his religious principles he had suffered imprisonment and under laws designed to oppress Catholics. The law of 1582, which imposed on "Papists" a fine of \$20 a month for absence from the Established Church, and the law of 1605 giving the option to the Sovereign of accepting this sum or all the personal and two-thirds of the real estate of the accused, were used by the enemies of the "Quakers" to oppress them.

When the Parliament of 1678 was considering the laws against "Popery," it was proposed to insert an oath by which the penalty could be avoided. The Friends objected to the oath. They wished their word, subject to the penalty of perjury, to be taken. On the 22nd of January, 1678, Penn appeared before a committee of Parliament in defense of the position of his people. His remarks give the key to his course towards Catholics and deserve attention therefor?

"That which giveth me more than ordinary right to speak at this time and place is the great abuse that I have received above any other of my profession for a long time. I have not only been supposed a Papist, but a seminary, a Jesuit, an emissary of Rome and in pay of the Pope, a man dedicating my endeavors to the interest and advancement of that party. Nor hath this been the report of the rabble, but the jealousy and insinuations of persons otherwise sober and discreet. Nay, some zealous for the Protestant cause have been so far gone in this mistake as not only to think ill of us and to decline our conversation, but to take courage to themselves to prescribe us as a sort of concealed Papist. All laws have been let loose upon us, as if the design were not to reform but to destroy us, and that not for what we are, but for what we are not. I would not be mistaken.

"I am far from thinking that Papists should be whipped for their consciences, because I exclaim against the injustice of whipping Quakers for Papists. No, for the hand pretended to be lifted up

against them hath, I know not by what discretion, lit heavily upon us, and we complain, yet we do not mean that any should take a fresh aim at them or that they must come in our room. We must give the liberty we ask, and cannot be false to our principles, though it were to relieve ourselves, for we have good will to all men and would have none to suffer for a truly sober and conscientious dissent on any hand."

To the charge that he was a Papist, he replied: [Letter to Wm. Popple, Oct. 20, 1688.]

"If the asserting of an impartial liberty of conscience, if doing to others as we would be done by, and an open avowing and a steady practising of these things at all times and to all parties, will justly lay a man under the reflection of being a Jesuit or Papist of any sort, I must not only submit to the character, but embrace it too."

To Archbishop Tillotson, who reported him "a Papist, perhaps a Jesuit," he wrote: "I am a *Catholic*, though not a *Roman*. I have bowels for mankind, and dare not deny others what I crave for myself. I mean liberty for the exercise of my religion, thinking faith, piety and providence a better security than force, and that if truth cannot prevail with her own weapons, all others will fail her. . . . I am no Roman Catholic but a Christian whose creed is the Scripture." ["Hazard's Register," Vol. ii. pp. 29-30.] Two principles of religion I abhor: Obedience upon authority without conviction: Destroying them that differ from me for God's sake.—Wm. Penn to Abp. Tillotson. [*ibid.*]

But that Penn could not object to the public celebration of Mass, take his testimony from his "Persuasion to Moderation:"

"By liberty of conscience I mean a free and open profession and exercise of one's duty to God, especially in worship." [Janney's Penn, p. 280, 2d Ed. 1882.]

He cites instances of Catholics granting toleration, and asks, "Who should give liberty of conscience like the Prince that wanted it?" And again he repeats

even more plainly, "By liberty of conscience I mean a free and open profession of that duty."

That was the "cause I have with all humility undertaken to place against the prejudices of the times," said he, and shall I, a Catholic, withhold words of justice from him who pleaded that my forefathers in the faith, were entitled beyond all human laws, to enjoy "the free and open profession" of their faith and practices of their religion? No.

He suffered for his creed and he suffered under laws intended to crush "Popery," and he had to be charged with being a Papist to even attempt to justify the wrong against him. His principles and his sufferings for them taught him "not to vex men for their belief and modest practice of their faith with respect to the other world into which providence and sovereignty temporal power reaches not from its very nature and end."

Such were Penn's professions before the King of England granted him this land. How did he act then?

The Frame of Government granted Religious Liberty. The Great Law passed at Chester December 10, 1682, also proclaimed it.

"The Great Law declares: All persons living in this Province . . . shall in no way be molested or prejudiced in their religious persuasion or practice or in matters of faith or worship."

Penn, in *A Further Account of the Province of Pennsylvania and its Improvements*, says "of the Government"—"We aim at duty to the King, the Preservation of Right to all, the Suppression of Vice and Encouragement of Virtue and Arts with Liberty to all People to Worship Almighty God according to their Faith and Persuasion." *Pa. Mag. Apr.* 1885, p. 79.

Benjamin Furley, Penn's agent at Rotterdam in *Explanation concerning the establishment of Pennsylvania*, issued Mar. 6, 1684, says:

And in order that each may enjoy that liberty of conscience, which is a natural right belonging to all men, and which is so conformable to the genius and charac-

ter of peaceable people and friends of repose, it is established firmly, not only that no one be forced to assist in any public exercise of religion, but also full power is given to each to make freely the public exercise of his own without meeting with any trouble or interference of any kind; provided that he profess to believe in one eternal God all powerful who is the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the world, and that he fulfil all the duties of civil society which he is bound to perform towards his fellow citizens."

Note that Penn always speaks of the right to practise one's religion as well as to profess it. One is naturally contained in the other, but in Penn's day it was not the profession, but the practices of his creed and that of the Catholics that were punished. It was the Mass that was specially objectionable. As regards Catholics, Protestant opinion was aptly summarized by Cromwell's order that liberty of conscience should prevail in Ireland, but no Mass. So that if Penn really meant anything just or wise concerning Catholics and liberty of conscience, he meant above all things else concerning them that Mass should be celebrated in his colony. And history proves it so.

There were Catholics in Philadelphia as early as 1686, and one Peter Debuc, who died in 1693, whose will I have examined, bequeathed £50 to Father Smith—supposed to an alias for Father Harrison, or Harvey, as investigation may show. Now, if half a dozen Catholics could be gathered together in the new city during this time, they surely had Mass celebrated by the Jesuit who visited them when journeying from Maryland to New York, or on his return.

After 1692, until the Revolutionary War, nowhere else in the British Provinces was Mass allowed to be publicly celebrated but in Philadelphia—or elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Even in Maryland, founded as it had been by Catholics who welcomed all, Catholics were, as soon as Protestants got the power, oppressed for their religion, and doubly taxed, and the public exercise of their religion prohibited. Mass could only be

said in one of the private rooms of the manors of the well-to-do Catholics.

Penn declared, "the first fundamental of the government of my Province to be, that everyone should have and enjoy the free possession of his faith and the exercises of worship, in such way and manner as every such person shall in conscience believe most acceptable to God, and so long as such person useth not his Christian liberty to licentiousness or the destruction of others he shall be protected in the enjoyment of the aforesaid Christian liberty by the civil magistrate." So the few Catholics who were here in Penn's time were visited by Priests. They made no special display; they kept to themselves and quietly performed their religious duties.

But I judge that at Christmas or New Year's 1707-8, the few who were here made special manifestation of their faith on the occasion of two converts being received into the Church. Now, reception into the Catholic Church implies long and serious consideration and instruction, and in this case means that priests had been here frequently, were publicly known and moved among the citizens; else how did one of such prominence as Lionel Britton come to seek admission to the Catholic Church, whose members must have been very few in 1708, as the highest estimate made of the Catholics at the building of St Joseph's Chapel in 1732 is forty!

It was this public ceremony of the reception of the two converts that led Rev. John Talbot, afterwards the first Episcopal Bishop (by non-juring consecration) to write to the secretary of the London Society for the Propagating of the Gospel on January 10, 1708; "Arise, O Lord Jesus Christ, and help us and deliver us for thine honor! . . . There's an Independency at Elizabethtown, Anabaptism at Burlington, and the Popish Mass in Philadelphia. I thought that the Quakers would be the first to let it in, particularly Mr. Penn, for if he has any religion 'tis that. But thus to tolerate all without control is to have none at all." This is

the earliest direct evidence of the celebration of Mass in Philadelphia.

On February 14, Talbot wrote to Rev. George Keith: "I saw Mr. Bradford in New York. He tells me that Mass is set up and read publically in Philadelphia, and several people are turned to it amongst which Lionel Brittin, the church warden, is one, and his son is another. I thought that Popery would come in amongst Friends, the Quakers, as soon as any way." [From Doc. His. of P. E. Church of U. S. Church Documents. Conn. Vol. I, p. 37. Jas. Pott, publisher, 1863.]

It was this Mass and reception of converts that the Episcopalians so promptly reported to London. Penn was there harrassed with debt and family troubles and battling with "The Hot Church Party" for the retention of his proprietary interest. His enemies and the enemies of his followers were pressing against him that while neither England nor any of the American Colonies gave toleration to Catholics, in Pennsylvania they were not only allowed to live, but were doing an act unlawful in England—publicly celebrating the Mass and receiving converts. Penn simply wrote to Logan to send a true account of the affair. Unfortunately that account, if sent, has not come to us.

Catholics have failed to remember that though Penn was the Founder, and, with the exception of a brief time, the Governor of the Province, he was not always the controller of its affairs. Nor were his own people always able to direct affairs as he and they desired. Not only had he and they personal and financial difficulties to contend against, but religious controversies and Quaker dissensions thwarted many good works.

But as concerns our question, Penn and his followers had the Established Church party to contend with. They strove to have his rights taken from him in order to have the Church of England established,

Religious controversies were rife during Lord Cornbury's time, and others than Catholics, as few as they were, suffered from the attempts to have the Established Church in England made the Church of

the Province; for Rev. Francis Makemie, Founder of Presbyterianism in America, on March 28, 1707, wrote to Rev. Benj. Colman: "The penal laws are invading our American sanctuary without the least regard to the Toleration Act, which should justly alarm us all." [Pa. Mag., No. 2. vol. v. 1881, p. 224.]

Such were Penn's principles, professions and acts.

How did his followers act? Did they do as he proclaimed?

Let us take the "History of the United States," one of Sadlier's Excelsior Series of Catholic School Books.

This history has been prepared because the histories in the Public Schools are "a conspiracy against truth," as regards Catholics and their doings in this country. Yet it contains the following:

"Though William Penn granted religious toleration throughout his own colony, still in maintaining it towards Catholics he was bitterly opposed by his own people."

So while Penn is not saddled with the charge of the big histories, the odium is now placed on his followers.

A few sentences prior the people are described as "emigrants, mainly Quakers."

Yet there is no foundation whatsoever for this declaration that they bitterly opposed "the maintenance by Penn of religious toleration towards Catholics."

Take these facts as proof:

Pennsylvania was the only colony except Maryland from which Papists were not excluded from the first hour of their settlement. After 1692, it was the only colony that did not prohibit the public exercise of the Catholic religion, and for forty years prior to that time our Religion was not free even in Maryland. It was, indeed, a haven from oppression, and a Catholic even from the Catholic-founded colony of Maryland, was considered as having reached an asylum or sanctuary when within Pennsylvania's borders, for in April, 1690, Cap. Goode, writing to Jacob Leisler, of New York, about two, whom he describes as "strangers, Irishmen and Papists," says,

"they made their escape towards Pennsylvania."

There is not a sign to show that the Quakers during Penn's time here, or when he was in England, or after his death, at any time "bitterly opposed" Catholics practising their religion.

On the contrary, quite the reverse. The complaint to England about the Mass of 1708 amounted to nothing injurious to Catholics. They were here, they came and went, as did others. Priests visited them regularly, and the founder of the little chapel of St. Joseph's is traditionally related to have come to this city in the garb of a Quaker. Perhaps so. It was that of Friends in truth, and he could be safe at any rate.

But after Father Greaton concluded to build a little chapel, and, if we take our Catholic school history as correct, among those who "bitterly opposed" his presence where did he build? Why, of all places in our city, the one he would have avoided if that charge were true—right beside the Quaker Almshouse, back of Walnut Street. That alone is proof of the utmost cordiality and friendship existing between the two peoples, and there are people yet living who remember the passage-way between the two. And when in July, 1734, Governor Patrick Gordon informed his Council that a house lately built in Walnut Street had been set apart for the exercise of the Roman Catholic religion, where several persons resorted on Sundays to hear Mass openly celebrated by a Popish priest," and he thought "the public exercise of that religion contrary to the laws of England." on what grounds did the forty or less Catholics maintain their right to freely and publicly exercise their religion? That they had a right to do so by "the Charter of Privileges granted to this Government by the late honorable proprietor."

The laws of England were against them but they appealed to the Charter of Penn. Governor Gordon was not a Quaker. It was to a Quaker document Catholics appealed, and they were not molested. To show still further, and perhaps more

clearly, that this lesson taught our Catholic children that Penn's followers bitterly opposed the religious toleration of Catholics, is founded on error, let me cite the testimony afforded by a letter in the *London Magazine and Monthly Chronologer*, dated July 7, 1737, and which may be examined at the Ridgway Library. Charges are made against the Quakers: a correspondent endorses them and adds, "A small specimen of a notable event which the people of that profession have taken towards the propagation of Popery in Pennsylvania. Let the Quakers deny it if they can. In the town of Philadelphia is a public Popish chapel where that religion has free and open exercise, and all the superstitious rites of that Church are as avowedly performed as those of the Church of England are in the Royal chapel of St. James"; and this chapel is not only open upon fasts and festivals, but is so all day and every day of the year, and exceedingly frequented at all hours either for public or private devotions, though it is fullest at those times when the meeting-house of the men of St. Omers is thinnest, and vice-versa." And one hundred and fifty years afterwards on the same spot is a chapel, not only open on fasts and festivals, but is so all day and every day in the week, and frequented at all hours either for public or private devotions—dear St. Joseph's. "The men of St. Omers," you will remember, is intended as a stigma on the Quakers as being "Papists," from the Catholic College of St. Omers, in France,

The correspondent continues, "that these are truths you may be satisfied of by inquiry of any trader or gentleman who has been there within a few years."

And we know it was the truth, and it remained the solitary instance, until the Revolution, of a Catholic chapel in all the British Provinces, so much so that Rev. McSparran, writing from Narragansett, R. I., in 1752, to a friend in England, mentions the fact that in Philadelphia there was then a Popish chapel, the only one in the British Provinces. At this very time, though the Provincial laws permitted only "Protestants to hold

lands for the erection of churches, schools or hospitals," as Dr. Stillee states in his very valuable "Test Laws in Provincial Pennsylvania," yet the title of the ground on which St. Joseph's Chapel stood, was then in the name of Rev. Robert Molyneux, and so recorded, as the recently discovered brief of title now in the MSS. department of the American Catholic Historical Society, shows.

During all this time the Quakers were in power, and during this time Catholics freely, publicly and unmolested, had all the public exercises of their religion as to-day, and nowhere is there a trace of a cause for instilling in the minds of our children that Penn's followers "bitterly opposed" them.

Everywhere throughout the Province the friendship existing between Quakers and "Papists" was known. Even the street ballads prove this, as witness the following lines from "A Poor Man's Advice to His Neighbor. A Ballad. New York, 1774:

"I've Papists known, right honest men,
Alas! what shame and pity!
Ah! how unlike the *virtus* Penn,
To drive them from our city."

And seventy years before that from Maryland came the report to the London Society for Propagating the Gospel. "Popish priests and Quakers equally obstruct a good progress." [*First Report* 1703.]

Not only had Penn and his people in England to suffer as "Papists," but in this country even, down to the heat of the Revolutionary War, Catholic titles, opprobriously applied, were used to stigmatize the Quakers. The bigot, John Adams, who on October 9th, 1774, accompanied Washington to Vespers, could at once write his wife about "the poor wretches fingering their beads, chanting Latin, not one word of which they understood, their *Pater Nosters* and *Ave Marias*—their holy water, their crossing themselves perpetually—everything to charm and bewitch the simple and ignorant"—could also on September 8th, 1776, write: "We have been obliged to humble the pride of some Jesuits who call themselves Quakers."

Many additional facts on the same line of consideration which I am presenting might be offered if my time or your patience permitted.

Nor do I enter upon the civil disabilities under which Catholics were, though not by name, debarred from public office, had any been aspiring or deemed worthy of official distinction. This has been fully and accurately shown by Dr. Stille in his recent Paper before the Pennsylvania Historical Society. The very production of so learned and historically accurate an Essay proves the opportuneness of our Society, as it was an encouragement to our members. The spectacle is at this time presented of a Protestant showing the civil disabilities Penn allowed (and for a time sanctioned to be imposed upon Catholics), and thus lessening his reputation as a friend to civil Liberty while I, a Catholic strive to prove him to my fellow Catholics as one who did not oppress Catholics in their religious rights.

But if historical research be now again directed to William Penn, let us be just in our judgment. He was a man proclaiming a principle the world was not then disposed to receive, and we must be careful not to judge his acts by the spirit

of to-day. Civil and religious liberty is now the professed and statute declared principle, but we Catholics know, nevertheless, that in both do we suffer because of our faith.

Pennsylvania alone tolerated the Mass, though many thought it a "scandal" and idolatrous. To-day, though our State's Constitution declares every man's conscience to be unmolested, yet public officials, not Quakers, consider the Mass a scandal and deny it to our brethren in faith, though unfortunate they be.

Can we be harsh in judgment even if, in one instance only, it shall be proven he used but the commonplace language of the time, though to our modern ears it sounds so harshly? Yet officers of our municipal institutions right in the city of Penn—the American Sanctuary, as one hundred and eighty years ago it was called—deride the claim of Catholics to equal and exact justice. Not only is the Cromwellian order of "No Mass" given, but a baser crime than Cromwell's is committed, and Catholics are forced to attend a religious worship hostile to their faith—and Catholics rebuke Penn's followers that he once, if at all, simply spoke unkindly, while this deed of infamy against men's consciences awakens but little concern among us. No follower of Penn now perpetrates this crime; "the hot Church" party and renegades to our faith, and not "the men of St. Omers," live again to-day, right in the City of Penn, once the only home of our faith in the English Provinces.



[Copy of Signature of the first known Philadelphia Convert to Catholicity.]

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