





LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS





THE OLD CATHOLICS
AND THE
COLOGNE CONGRESS
Of 1872.

BY THE
BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

Lincoln:
JAMES WILLIAMSON, PRINTER, HIGH-STREET.

—
1872.

To the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Lincoln.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

The relation subsisting between us, and the kindnesses received by me at your hands, induce me to address you on the following subject :—

In the Diocesan Synod, held at Lincoln, on September 20th, in last year, a resolution was adopted, expressive of our sympathy with the “Old Catholics” of Germany ; and I was authorized by the Synod to address a letter, in its name, assuring them of the interest we feel in their work, and of the hope we entertain of their success.

A similar feeling was manifested by the large gathering of Clergy and Laity at the “Church Congress” held a few weeks afterwards in the largest town of this Diocese, Nottingham. The letter of the Lincoln Diocesan Synod elicited a grateful acknowledgment from the President of a meeting of the Old Catholics ; and the courteous reference made by Dr. Von Döllinger to the proceedings of the Nottingham Church Congress is probably well known to you.

It is doubtless due to those expressions on your part, that I have now been invited to attend the Congress of Old Catholics, which is appointed to be held at Cologne, on September 20th, 21st, 22nd, of this year.

This invitation, altogether unsought for by me, has caused me some hesitation.

If I were to decline it, it seemed to me that I might perhaps incur the charge of indifference to what appears a great and holy cause, and of acting in a spirit at variance with that which was expressed by our Lincoln Diocesan Synod, and in the Church Congress at Nottingham.

Nor can I disguise from myself that the Church of England, by her peculiar constitution and position, both as Catholic and Protestant, seems to have peculiar responsibilities and duties at this crisis to the Old Catholics and to the whole of Christendom; as well as to possess some special privileges and advantages for imparting to others the spiritual benefits which she herself, by God's goodness, richly enjoys.

On the other hand, it might be apprehended, that by accepting the invitation I should perhaps be thought by some to be identifying myself with the "Old Catholics," and to be committing myself, and (what is a more serious matter) to be committing you, and the Church of England, to the various opinions which have been adopted, or may be adopted, by them.

After giving to this grave matter the best consideration in my power, and after consultation with others to whose judgment a respectful deference is due, and after earnest prayer to Almighty God for guidance, I have deemed it best, on the whole, to accept the invitation; but, at the same time, in accepting it I have thought it my duty to guard carefully against those inferences which I have just specified, and to state distinctly the understanding on which the invitation is accepted by me.

This I have endeavoured to do in the Reply which I have made to the invitation of the Old Catholics, and which I now feel it my duty to communicate to you in the following pages, in order that you may see clearly what the conditions are upon which I should go to the Congress, provided it should be willing to accept me on those terms. I have not the presumption to imagine, that if I were to go to Cologne, I should go, in any respect, as a representative of the Church of England, or even of this Diocese: I wish it distinctly to be understood that I entirely disclaim all such pretensions. I have no public mission; I should not go of my own accord; I have not asked, or wished for, an invitation; but having been invited to go, I do not feel it right to decline. If I go to the Congress, it will be in order to shew sympathy with a body of men whom I greatly admire, and to testify an interest in a cause which I believe to be

the cause of God ; and which seems to have a strong claim on the support and co-operation of all who wish well to the peace, freedom, good order, and happiness of Civil Governments, as well as of the Christian Church.

In the event of my going to the Congress of Old Catholics at Cologne, I feel bound to declare publicly, that I should go in a spirit of uncompromising loyalty to those fundamental principles of Christian doctrine and discipline which are contained in Holy Scripture as received and expounded by the judgment and practice of the Primitive Church, and as re-asserted by the Church of England at the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

Earnestly requesting your prayers on its behalf,

I am, my dear Friends,

Yours sincerely,

C. LINCOLN.

Riseholme, Lincoln, August 9th, 1872.

Prayers suitable for the occasion.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and One God, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, from hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Holy Word and Commandment :

Good Lord deliver us.

That it may please Thee to bring into the way of Truth all such as have erred and are deceived ; to strengthen such as do stand ; and to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up them that fall ; and finally to beat down Satan under our feet :

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Christ have mercy upon us.

Lord have mercy upon us.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, Whom truly to know is everlasting life ; Grant us perfectly to know Thy Son Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; that, following the steps of Thy Holy Apostles, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

GOD, Who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by the sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus Our Saviour, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the same Spirit, One God, world without end. *Amen.*

LORD, we beseech Thee to keep Thy household the Church in continual godliness, that through Thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve Thee in good works, to the glory of Thy Name, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

GRANT, O Lord, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Thy Governace, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness ; through Jesus Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

GRANT, we beseech Thee, that as there is but One Body, and One Spirit, and One hope of our calling, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee ; through Jesus Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY and Everlasting God, by Whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified, receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before Thee for all estates of men in Thy Holy Church ; that every member of the same in his vocation and ministry may truly and godly serve Thee through Jesus Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

O ALMIGHTY GOD, Who hast built Thy Church on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Head Corner Stone, grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable unto Thee, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

GRACIOUS FATHER, we humbly beseech Thee for Thy Holy Catholic Church throughout the World : fill it with all truth, and in all truth with all peace ; where it is corrupt, purify it ; where it is in error, direct it ; where it is superstitious, rectify it ; where anything is amiss, reform it ; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it ; where it is in want, furnish it ; where it is divided and rent asunder, heal the breaches thereof, O Thou Holy One of Israel, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

OUR FATHER, &c,

The Grace, &c.



