

**CORRESPONDENCE AND
REMARKS IN REGARD TO BISHOP
DOANE'S SIGNATURE OF
THE NAME OF HORACE BINNEY**

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Correspondence and Remarks in Regard to Bishop Doane's Signature of the Name of Horace Binney by Horace Binney

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HORACE BINNEY

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CORRESPONDENCE AND REMARKS

IN REGARD TO

BISHOP DOANE'S SIGNATURE

OF THE NAME OF

HORACE BINNEY,

AS A

SUBSCRIBER TO THE NEW CHURCH EDIFICE IN BURLINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA:

C. SHERMAN, PRINTER.

1849.

KF14752



P R E F A C E.

I EXCEEDINGLY regret the necessity of giving to the following letters and remarks so much of the usual form of publication, as to print them. They are not published at present; but they are printed for distribution as extensively as I may think the knowledge of Bishop Doane's acts and writings upon the subject extends or may extend. He has my consent to regard the printing as publication. I had hoped that a course still farther removed from general publicity would have been sufficient for me; but the partial introduction of the subject by an unknown person into the "Public Ledger," of the 3d January, 1849, and the consequent inquiries of persons before entirely ignorant of it, appear to take from me the choice of an alternative.

Bishop Doane, on the 30th April, 1845, (the time is a necessary inference from his own statement,) took the liberty of signing my name as a subscriber for one thousand dollars, to a subscription paper for building a new church in Burlington, he and myself never having been in habits of intercourse which had the least cast of intimacy or confidence. The subscription was in these words: "Horace Binney (by G. W. D.), one thousand dollars."

Before he so used his pen, the following circumstances had occurred:—1. At my office in Philadelphia, on the same day, when and where he had placed the subscription paper in my hands, I had expressly refused to sign the paper, and had returned it into his hands unsigned. 2. I refused to sign it for a reason that I expressly stated to him, namely, that the subscription paper did not contain any details of plan for raising and applying the money, and for the disposition of the building after it was finished. I said to him at the same time, that I approved of the object, and would contribute a thousand dollars to it, if it was to be built according to a plan that I should approve, not meaning architectural plan, but plan as I explained it; and in answer to his inquiry for my plan, I said I would draw up a plan, and send it to him at my first leisure. My language and his, as I recollect it, will hereafter appear. Bishop Doane left my office with the paper, and without my sig-

nature. 3. He returned to my office in less than two minutes after the first interview, did not sit down, nor show me the subscription paper, nor did I change my position at my office table, and upon his entering said, that he supposed I had no objection to its being stated that I was willing to contribute the sum I had named to the church; to which I replied that I was quite willing, with the condition I had stated, that the church was to be built according to a plan that I should approve. And he again left my office, the subscription paper being still unsigned by me. Bishop Doane's recollection of both interviews, as he states it, will hereafter appear. The fact that I did not sign the paper is undeniable.

These were the only interviews that ever took place between Bishop Doane and myself upon the subject of a subscription for the new church; and what I state to have passed, is the substance of all that passed between us in regard to my becoming a subscriber to it, at the times referred to, or before, or since, to the present day; and it was after these interviews, and *at the first opportunity after leaving my office*, as he has himself stated, that he signed my name to the same subscription paper, as an absolute and unconditional subscriber for one thousand dollars.

After he had so used his pen, and up to the autumn of 1846, the following are the circumstances which bear upon that act. 1. He did not inform me of what he had done in my name, either when he did it, or at any time afterwards. 2. On an early day in June, 1845, when my family removed to their summer residence in Burlington, I passed him in the street, and told him as I was passing, that I had not yet prepared the plan, but that I would do it in a few days; and he replied that he would be glad to see it. 3. On the 19th of the same month, I sent him the plan I promised, giving the details I thought proper, as will hereafter appear, and with it a letter, which will also appear, the first lines of which were these:—"I promised to sketch a plan upon which I should be willing to contribute to the erection of a new St. Mary's Church;" and the letter then referred to the plan enclosed, as one that might be taken as a basis for consideration, upon which I should be happy to converse with him when he pleased. 4. He never subsequently spoke or wrote to me one word on the subject of my promise, which I had thus in writing stated to be dependent upon a plan that I should approve. 5. He never subsequently conversed with me about my plan, nor did he ever speak of it to me as a thing that was in his possession. 6. Our distance from each other, in point of intercourse, increased from this time forward, until I ceased to reside in Burlington, in the autumn of 1846; and during all this interval, neither my promise, nor my plan, nor any act of mine, nor any act of his, in regard to my subscription or my plan, was at any time the subject of conversation or reference between us, any more than if we or they had never existed at all.

After the return of my family to Philadelphia, in the same autumn of 1846, I learned for the first time that Bishop Doane had signed my name to the subscription paper, as a subscriber absolutely and unconditionally; and having before heard that I was regarded by persons in Burlington as a contributor to the new church, the author of which report must have been, directly or indirectly, Bishop Doane himself, for I had never given any warrant for it, I deemed it proper to make a written statement of the case, the same which appears hereafter under date of 28th November, 1846, and to send it for perusal to W. M'Ilvaine, Esq., the friend of both parties. I sent it, very prudently, and, all circumstances considered, very fortunately, with a letter dated 30th November, 1846, which did not request him to read the statement to any person out of his own family, though it did not restrict him, and which contained the following clause:—"It would give me pleasure to know that Bishop Doane himself had read it; but he has not made any communication to me of what he has assumed to do in my name, or on the subject of the new church, and I shall not personally make any to him, until further circumstances shall require it." The letter appears hereafter.

Mr. M'Ilvaine, on the next day, the 1st December, 1846, with my perfect approbation, which he knew beforehand, sent the statement, and with it a letter from himself to Bishop Doane, which expressly stated the writer's motive for communicating the statement, to be "that of possibly opening a door for the removal of an unfortunate misunderstanding." Mr. M'Ilvaine's letter to Bishop Doane appears hereafter.

On the 4th December the statement was left at my office by Mr. M'Ilvaine during my absence; and he subsequently informed me that Bishop Doane's note, on returning the statement to him, informed him that he would be in town in a few days, and would see him.

To these I must add the following facts, which I derive partly from Bishop Doane's letter of 28th May, 1847, to the secretary of the building committee, hereafter given at length, and partly from Mr. M'Ilvaine. 1. That Bishop Doane took a copy of the statement, without asking Mr. M'Ilvaine's leave, or informing him that it had been taken. 2. That Bishop Doane did not for six months make a single inquiry of Mr. M'Ilvaine in regard to the statement, or to his motive in sending it, or to my knowledge of his sending it. 3. That he did not at any time speak or write a single word to Mr. M'Ilvaine to correct my misapprehensions, if I had misapprehended, to deny my allegations if they were unfounded, to obtain further information, if Mr. M'Ilvaine's letter was incomplete, or to promote in any way or manner whatever the object of *his friend*, the "opening of a door for the removal of an unfortunate misunderstanding." For three months after Mr. M'Ilvaine's letter, Bishop

Doane, except to make the promise of seeing him in a few days, which was not kept, was perfectly silent and on the reserve, as much so as if he had thought that Mr. M'Ilvaine was a conspirator with me. At the end of three months, when on his legs to leave Mr. M'Ilvaine's parlour, upon a late morning visit, he intercalated the conversation with his thanks to him for the statement, and in a cursory way remarked that he still considered me a subscriber to St. Mary's Church, and meant to insist on the claim—and said no more. And these words are all that he uttered upon the subject to Mr. M'Ilvaine for still three months longer, up to the end of May, 1847, when he prepared to place before the building committee of the church, his letter of 28th May.

On the 12th May, 1847, while I was absent in Virginia, a note came to my office from the secretary of the building committee, apprising me that the subscribers to the new church were requested to pay certain instalments of their subscriptions at certain times.

I informed the secretary on the 17th, that I was not a subscriber, and had not authorized any person to subscribe my name, or to represent me as a subscriber to the church; and I requested him to send me a copy of the subscription paper, and to inform me by whom it purported that my name had been written.

On the 18th, the secretary informed me that in a list of names handed to him by Bishop Doane, as chairman of the building committee, my name appeared as a subscriber for one thousand dollars, and he promised me further information upon Bishop Doane's return to Burlington. And on the 4th June, he sent me a copy of Bishop Doane's letter of 28th May, 1847, to the secretary of the committee, in reply to my statement, and of a resolution of the committee, directing the secretary "to inquire of Mr. Binney whether the committee might expect to receive his subscription for one thousand dollars or not."

This superfluous resolution, superfluous for any purpose of information, after my previous letter to the secretary, though perhaps agreeable to Bishop Doane, as a temporary support, was answered by me in a manner that will appear; and whether it meant to convey a menace or not, stands now as it stood at that time. I have heard of no action upon my reply. I must say, however, that it was a resolution for which I could not censure the other members of the committee, after I read Bishop Doane's letter. If they did not pause to examine the weight of his allegations and arguments, but passed at once to the breach of honour with which he charged me, in making a clandestine statement to Mr. M'Ilvaine, six months before, it is no more than at first I did myself; and we probably both felt a considerable access of indignation, they at me, without any more knowledge than Bishop Doane had imparted to them, and I at him, with a full knowledge of the whole case.

The exact value of his letter in my estimation, will be found in my remarks, which follow the printed letters. All the allegations and arguments which it put forth in support of Bishop Doane's authority to sign my name, would have discredited him, if I had never opened my mouth, or put pen to paper. They *disprove* his authority conclusively. But this was a small matter. I rather welcomed them, and was thankful for them. But as to that part of his letter, in which he affects to spring a mine upon me, in exposing my secret statement to Mr. M'Ilvaine, and to convey by shadows, rather than by words, his sense of my unimaginable baseness in whispering misrepresentations, that I did not mean he should overhear—this I admit disturbed me sensibly. It disturbed me to think that the calumny must remain without exposure, for at least twenty-four hours, before the men of character to whom it had been uttered. This was bad enough. But infinitely worse than this was the pain of perceiving and knowing beyond any doubt, that a man of Bishop Doane's profession and station, could not only refuse to enter, but slam to, a door of explanation and therefore of reconciliation, that his friend had proposed to open, and could studiously exclude the light for six months from his own eyes, that he might charge me with dealings in the dark. And this he did to the members of his vestry, by representations, in that letter of the 28th May, 1847, that were not even colourably true—that my statement had been shown to him in confidence by the considerate kindness of a friend, who thought he ought to be informed of my course—that he had taken a copy of the statement, which he had kept by him in confidence for six months, not thinking it possible that I would not send it personally to him—the concealment, as his language implies, being so fatal to my reputation as a gentleman—and that only on failure of this he had obtained the consent of his friend to release him from the bond of confidence, that he might expose me in his reply. His letter of 28th May, 1847, is pregnant with all this to the apprehension of every man of common understanding. All is there, and he has used all his arts of composition to impregnate his page with the poison, in equal disregard of his friend and of myself.

And this is not all. The blow that he aimed at me was not reparative to himself, but simply vindictive. The secrecy of my statement had nothing to do with the question of his authority to sign my name. I might have whispered it in the ear, or proclaimed it upon the house-top; still the question of his authority remained the same.

And further. Six months had elapsed from the time the statement was shown to him, during any hour of which he might have lamented this unhappy fall on my part, to the confidential friend who had made it known to him, or privately to some of my family connexions, for whom he has professed much regard, or even to