

**PAPAL INDULGENCES: TWO
LECTURES DELIVERED ON
TUESDAY, SEPT. 21, AND
FRIDAY, SEPT. 24, 1852**

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Papal indulgences: two lectures delivered on Tuesday, Sept. 21, and Friday, Sept. 24, 1852 by Robert Maguire

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ROBERT MAGUIRE

**PAPAL INDULGENCES: TWO
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PAPAL INDULGENCES:

Two Lectures,

DELIVERED ON

TUESDAY, SEPT. 21, AND FRIDAY, SEPT. 24, 1852,

BY THE

REV. ROBERT MAGUIRE, B.A.

Clerical Secretary of the "Islington Protestant Institute,"

IN

ST. PETER'S SCHOOL-ROOMS,

RIVER-LANE, ISLINGTON,

IN EXAMINATION OF A WORK ON "INDULGENCES," EDITED BY THE REV.
FREDERICK GARRELY, M.A., ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST IN ISLINGTON,
AND RECOMMENDED BY HIM TO THE LECTURER, IN REPLY TO A
PUBLISHED LETTER ON THE ABOVE SUBJECT.



LONDON:

J. H. JACKSON, 21, PATERNOSTER-ROW,

AND ISLINGTON-GREEN;

SEELEYS, FLEET-STREET.

1852.

110. d. 195.

LECTURE I.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

I appear before you this evening for a certain purpose, viz., to offer a reply to a book on the subject of "Indulgences," which has, within the past few days, been recommended to my attention by the Rev. Mr. Oakeley, a Roman Catholic Priest in this parish. In whatever remarks I may be led to make this evening, you must bear in mind, that I deal not in personalities; my object is not to assail a person, but to expose a fearful error. I deal with Mr. Oakeley this evening, not as a private individual, but rather, in his official character, as a public and acknowledged agent of the Church of Rome.

You have, doubtless, heard ere this of the letter which the Rev. Mr. Haslegrave and myself have addressed to the Rev. Mr. Oakeley, in reference to my recent Lectures in this place; * in reply, I received a letter, dated 6th September, to the substance of which the Chairman (Rev. Joseph Haslegrave) has just alluded. Mr. Oakeley states therein, that he is "not very much inclined to controversial writing," and recommends to me a book which has been translated and edited by him, and to which he has prefixed a short preface. This book is the production of a French Roman Catholic Bishop (Bp. Bouvier); it is "translated from the French, with a preface, by the Rev. Frederick Oakeley, M.A."

Mr. Oakeley concludes his letter by the following, viz., "I will not fail to read your book carefully, and if I feel that any part of it suggests the necessity of explanation, I will endeavour to find time for a private note; but if I cannot, I must protest against the silence of a particular writer, who happens to be challenged to a reply, indicating any want of theological means on the part of the [Roman] Catholic Church to vindicate her own doctrines."

* "Letter to Rev. F. Oakeley." J. H. Jackson, Islington-green.

In the preface, he, however, admits that the book does not anticipate the "ordinary Protestant cavils or allegations." If so, how can it be received as a *reply* to the letter which I lately forwarded to him? Why has it been recommended to my perusal, *in answer* to the published pamphlet on "Indulgences?" I have, accordingly, waited patiently for a full fortnight, expecting some public or private notice of the pamphlet; and seeing that time passed by without any such notice, Mr. Haslegrave and myself arranged these Lectures in reply to that only answer which Mr. Oakeley thought proper to give, viz., this book which he has edited, and to which he has written a preface.

In order that Mr. Oakeley should be fully informed as to our proceedings in this matter, I addressed to him, on last Saturday (18th September), the following note; viz.,

"12, Lonsdale-square, 18th September, 1852.

"REV. SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 6th inst. I have purchased the book which you were good enough to recommend to my perusal, and I have read it throughout.

"You stated in your letter that you would carefully read the Pamphlet on 'Indulgences,' and that if you should consider it necessary, you would reply to it.

"I have since awaited your reply, but already a fortnight has almost elapsed without any further notice from you, either public or private.

"I must, therefore, *so far*, regard your note of the 6th inst., and the book therein recommended, as your *only reply* to the 'Letter' addressed to you on 'Indulgences.'

"I now, therefore, beg to inform you, that I intend (D.V.) to deliver a Lecture in reply to the book thus recommended by you, and I now beg to invite you to attend the meeting which will be held for that purpose on Tuesday evening next, 21st inst., at half-past seven o'clock, in St. Peter's school-room.

"I need hardly add that your letter of the 6th inst., and whatever may be written on this subject, must, to a certain degree, become public property.

"And I remain, yours truly,

"Rev. F. Oakeley."

"ROBERT MAGUIRE, Clerk."

Seeing, then, my beloved friends, that these letters have passed between us, and that we are now clearly entered on this controversy, it seems that Mr. Oakeley, as the exponent of Roman Catholic views, and of the Roman Catholic system in this parish, *must* come forward, else his cause must be acknowledged to be untenable and frail. I appear this evening with pleasure, to take in hand this book thus recommended to me by Mr. Oakeley, and to

examine what ideas he may entertain, and what sentiments he may hold, concerning this doctrine of "Indulgences." We shall consider the subject as given by Mr. Oakeley and by other Roman Catholic writers, and take our facts and illustrations from Roman Catholic Historians.

I must, at the outset, notice the very great ambiguity which, in Roman Catholic theology, manifestly besets this topic, even as to the *meaning* and *import* of the very term "Indulgence." For instance, we find Popes in many past ages, and even up to the present time, stating in their decrees, that they grant Indulgences "for the remission of *sins*." Cardinal Baronius, as I quoted on a former occasion, records Bulls of Popes on this subject, containing these identical words. We find, however, the Council of Trent, in a hasty moment, on the last day of their last Session, when the Council was on the point of dissolution, —then, and not till then,—defining this subject of "Indulgences" to be "the remission of *punishment due to sin*." This definition, however, has not removed the ambiguity of the term; for *since* the Council of Trent, we have Popes, again and again, publishing Bulls, announcing that an Indulgence means "the remission of *sin* itself." This point is somehow treated of in Mr. Oakeley's preface, and an explanation is attempted. He suggests one or two explanations of this difficulty. One would surely have imagined that in the Church of Rome, where everything is said to be so "certain," there would be but *one* meaning to a term like this. Not so, however, in this question; for Mr. Oakeley suggests, as a probable answer, that these Indulgences may "*tend* to the remission of sin." If so, why not thus stated in the Papal Bulls?—why perpetuate this ambiguity? Another explanation, however, is also suggested, and that by no means favourable to the Church of Rome, viz., (p. ix.) the author (Bishop Bouvier) "considers that Bulls which profess to remit *sin*, are commonly *spurious* or *apocryphal*!"

Let us examine this point. In A.D. 1095, Pope Urban II. published a Bull, announcing that an Indulgence,—that is, a "remission of sins," and not, mark you, of the *punishment due to sin*;—that a "remission of *sins*" would be granted to all those who would take up arms and fight in the Crusades! Pope Eugenius III. (as recorded by Cardinal Baronius, A.D. 1145) stated that those who had

incurred debts, if they took up arms in the Crusade, "need not pay the interest for the past." He confirms the decree, and renews the promise of his predecessor above-named, Urban II.

Again; in Dupin's "Ecclesiastical History" (Dupin is a Roman Catholic historian), we find that at the Council of Lateran, A.D. 1215, Innocent III. not only granted to those who would fight in the Crusades "*a plenary indulgence of all their sins,*" but also *promised* them "*a more perfect degree of eternal happiness than to others,*" (Dupin, vol. ii. p. 453.)

We now come to later times; and we find, in 1850, the present Pope, Pius IX., granted an Indulgence. For what, think ye, and to whom was it granted?—To all those who should pray before the "Winking Picture," at Rimini! I quote from "The Lamp," a Roman Catholic newspaper, Sept. 21st, 1850, the following Brief of Pope Pius IX., to the Bishop of Rimini:

"You may imagine, Venerable Brother, what a consolation to our heart was your letter of the 29th of this month, wherein you inform us that you, and the Clergy of the City of Rimini, long, with the utmost ardour, to give to the most Holy Virgin a public and striking mark of your eminent piety and gratitude; that you have resolved to adorn with a crown of gold that picture, which under the title of the Mother of Mercy, and according to the report you gave us of it, having been rendered famous for two months past throughout all this country, by the miraculous movement of its eyes, is to the great advantage of the Faithful honoured and venerated with much piety and devotion * * *

"For these causes, by these presents, we grant and concede to you, Venerable Brother, with our entire good will, the permission to offer in our name and with our authority, a crown of gold to that picture of the most Holy Virgin to-morrow, under the title of Mother of Mercy, taking care to observe throughout what ought to be observed in such a ceremony * * *

"Furthermore, by our apostolical authority, to all and every of the faithful of both sexes, who having confessed and communicated, shall devoutly visit the church where the holy picture is placed, and shall there pray from the heart for our intentions, and those of our Holy Mother the Church; we grant, in the mercy of the Lord, a Plenary Indulgence and the remission of all sins applicable to the souls in Purgatory."

We now consult Mr. Oakeley regarding this Papal Decree; and it becomes at once a grand uncertainty, a matter encompassed by difficulties; for, according to this book, such Bulls are commonly "*spurious and apocryphal!*"

Let us now, however, come nearer home. We instance the primary cause of these Lectures—"the great Indulgence of Portiuncula," at St. John's Roman Catholic Chapel,

Islington. Here we find the Rev. Frederick Oakeley, "prostrate at the feet of his Holiness," humbly soliciting the Indulgence of Portiuncula. His request is granted.* Pius IX. promises an Indulgence to all those who shall pray in that chapel "for the exaltation of the Roman Catholic Church, and the extirpation of heresies" (and, I presume, with heresy, of *Heretics* also); to all such he grants "*a Plenary Indulgence, in the Lord, for all their sins!*" So that even this Bull of the *Portiuncula Indulgence*, notwithstanding all that has been said about it, becomes an utter uncertainty! Pius IX. proclaims to all those who will worship in yonder chapel, "*a Plenary Indulgence for all their sins;*" but Mr. Oakeley, the Priest of the chapel, considers "such Bulls to be commonly *spurious and apocryphal!*"

The author divides his book into four parts, and I shall take the liberty of making a fifth division. I. he treats of "Indulgences in General;" II. of "Indulgences in Particular;" III. of "Confraternities and Sodalties;" IV. of "The Jubilee;" and to these I add that which is distributed throughout the whole book, and which lays the axe to the root of this destructive error, V. "The utter *Uncertainty* and *Inefficiency* of the System," Mr. Oakeley himself being judge.

First, then, as to the system of "Indulgences generally." The author gives a definition of an Indulgence, as we defined it on a former occasion, when we took these four objections to it—(I.) That there is no such thing as "punishment remaining due to sin" after the sin is forgiven, and by way of satisfaction to the justice of God. (II.) That there is no such place as "Purgatory," from which the soul can be released by Indulgences. (III.) That there is no such thing in existence, as the merits of Saints who have done *over and above* what it was their duty to do, and which can be applied to those who have done *less than* is their duty. And (IV.) even if there were such an accumulated treasure in existence, that such is not placed in the custody, or at the disposal of, the Pope of Rome;—these points remain unanswered!

In Article I., "of the punishment due to sin" (p. 3)

* See *Catholic Standard*, July 31st, 1852.