

Moments in Our History

(Excerpts from the Dissenting Church of Christ at St. John's 1775 – 1975)

John Jones and Bishop O'Donel (Part 3)

John Jones was outraged by such a charge and wrote a letter of protest to Mr. Price pointing out that it was inconsistent “with true religion to receive and propagate evil reports to the prejudice of our neighbour” and that Mr. Price “as gentleman and that of the Gown” should acquit him of this false accusation. In the Journal, Jones writes, “the polite Reverend gentleman was pleased to send the following answer... Mr. Price thinks Mr. Jones’ letter to be very insolent and unbecoming, however imputes it to his ignorance.”

Because of the unsatisfactory nature of this reply, Jones made the following solemn declaration to the court:

“The humble Petition of John Jones prayeth... that to the best of his knowledge he never used the word, Roman Catholic or Papist. Pope or Popery, in any of his public preaching at St. John’s or elsewhere... that he wishes not to give offence to any, but to live at peace with all men... so far from being disagreeable to him that his fellow citizens of the Catholic party should enjoy with himself the full liberty of conscience... their relief in a toleration of their religious principles is but of equity and justice... ”

He goes on to say that “he has frequently in private conversation admonished those of the Dissenting Community against any provoking expressions of that kind” and despite repeated efforts of the Reverend Mr. Price to “withstand and oppose the errors of Rome... he did not think it proper to express himself thus.”