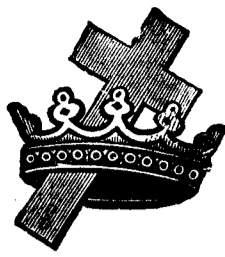


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THE CHURCH AND MATERIAL PROSPERITY.

Though the following letter from Monsignor Vaughan, brother of the Cardinal, is several months old, it has a perennial freshness for all lovers of truth and common sense. The best of its many palpable hits is that the only promise of riches and dominion was made by Satan. The letter completely turns the tables upon the shop-keeping nations and makes the Latin races feel intensely comfortable. God bless John S. Vaughan and his flawless family, ever untainted by heresy, and therefore sane beyond the reach of non-Catholic brains.

[To The Editor of The "Spectator."]

Sir, — What Mr. H. Hensley Henson writes in the Spectator of Oct. 15 concerning what he is pleased to call "Romanism" is just the sort of thing that we might expect the "rich man" of the gospel, from the vantage-ground of his high social position, to have written concerning poor Lazarus. To his way of thinking, his purple and fine linen, and his daily sumptuous repasts were, of course, the clearest indications that heaven's blessing rested on his head, and proofs unmistakable enough of divine favor. Lazarus, on the other hand, from his empurpled gentleman's point of view, can hardly be described as a success. Financially, indeed, he was a dead failure, and the wreckage of his worldly career was, no doubt, ascribed to his peculiar religious profession, which, presumably, made it difficult for him to deal successfully in business with less scrupulous men, and to outstrip competitors in astuteness and cunning. His sorry plight — lying there covered with sores and unseemly rags — must have implied (to use Mr. Henson's expression) "something seriously faulty" in the religion he professed. I should think so, indeed! But, joking apart, it has always puzzled me to discover upon what grounds Protestants make prosperity a test of the truth of their religion. There is no warrant for such a view in the pages of the New Testament. No vestige or shadow of such a principle is discernible in the teaching of Christ. On the contrary, the whole trend of his teaching, IN SO FAR AS IT BEARS ON THE SUBJECT AT ALL, tells the other way. "Hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven," "It were easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven," etc., are but samples of hundreds of similar texts that might be quoted. The one solitary instance in the New Testament occurring to my mind in which any promise of riches and dominion is made is found in Matthew iv. 9; but then it is the devil who makes it: "All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them will I give

thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." A reward promised to devil-worshippers will hardly be invoked by Christians, even though they be members of that kingdom upon whose possessions we are constantly reminded "the sun never sets." I can not follow Mr. Henson in his interpretation of the text, "Ye are the salt of the earth," etc. These words were most certainly addressed primarily to the apostles and disciples, and it is difficult to see how they are applicable to others expect IN SO FAR as others resemble the apostles, and IN THE MEASURE in which they inherit their spirit and religious temperament.

But would men of the character and training of the apostles ever build up an empire such as the British Empire? Men totally indifferent to wealth, and reputation, and dominion, and worldly success? Would they, whose chief boast was that they had "left all things to follow Christ," be the sort of persons suitable for the purpose? I mean men like St. Peter, who, when Simon Magus attempted "to transact a little business" with him, exclaimed: "Thy silver perish with thee" (Acts viii. 20); or St. Paul, who confessed that, "having food and covering, we are therewith content" (Tim. vi. 8); or indeed any of the others? Yet they are PAR EXCELLENCE and before all "the salt of the earth and the light of the world"; for to this God himself bears witness. Mr. Henson seems to wish religion to be judged by its results. This is fair enough so long as the results looked for are spiritual rather than commercial and political, and so long as our survey is not confined to this world. The Church of Christ is not a commercial syndicate. The greatest failure in this life is not inconsistent with the most signal triumph in the next. Christ's Church is, of course, His Kingdom, but then some of us seem to forget that His Kingdom, is "NOT OF THIS WORLD." Nay, more: we are expressly told that "the world is the enemy of God," not His friend. Moreover, it is "seated (which implies a settled state) in wickedness." But let us waive every objection and assume—merely for sake of argument—that national prosperity and power are unmistakable signs of divine approval. Consider into what a quagmire such a theory lands us. To start with; if the theory is sound it must be applicable to all time. I must be allowed to look out upon the world, right down through the ages, and to deal with it as a whole. With what result? Well, that I find the balance of national prosperity sways and shifts in different and often opposite directions. At present, it indeed points to Protestantism; a few hundred years ago, say in the time of Philip II. of Spain, it pointed to Catholicism; but as a whole, its tendency is most cer-

tainly in favor of paganism and rank infidelity. Egypt and Greece and pagan Rome will serve as illustrations of what I mean. Considered in the moment of their greatest development and highest achievement, they have no parallel in any state, at the present day. Neither Great Britain nor Germany can compare with the Roman Empire at the zenith of its prosperity. From the point of view of splendor, magnificence, power, dominion, military glory and conquest, and purely worldly greatness it eclipses every modern empire on the face of the earth. A well known historian speaks of it as "the most mighty Empire the world has ever seen." Did something in paganism favor development and account for this success? And, if so, are we to favor paganism? It is surely evident that any educated pagan, living, let us say, in the reign of Augustus, might have taken as his theme "IDOLATRY and National Success," and have argued about it very much as Mr. Henson now argues about Protestantism and national success, or about "Romanism and Decay." only probably his arguments would have been more subtle and his rhetoric more stirring. Yet what weight can one attach to HIS words while the infallible words of CHRIST are ringing in our ears? England is rich, and wealthy indeed, but Christ says: "Woe to you who are rich." She has extended her dominions, and added to her territory and possessions, but, again, it is written: "Woe to you who join house to house, and lay field to field" (Isaiah v. 8). "Where the Roman Church has had a free hand . . . national greatness has declined," writes Mr. Henson. If "greatness" be taken, not in a spiritual and supernatural, but in a worldly and material sense, this may be true. Speaking broadly, it is no doubt the wealthy and prosperous nations and races that abandoned the Catholic faith in the sixteenth century, but this fact serves merely to enforce and to light up the truth contained in St. Paul's warning words: "They that will be rich, FALL INTO TEMPTATION and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. vi. 9). In our opinion the richer and more prosperous states did actually "fall into a snare" when they fell into heresy. And while we lament their defection from the centre of Christian unity we can not be wholly surprised, for we have been warned by God through the mouth of His apostles, that "the love of money is the root of all evil; which some reaching after have been led astray FROM THE FAITH." "Led astray from the faith," yes, that to our minds describes precisely what has happened to the wealthy, luxurious, money-seeking, money-loving nations,

with their keen commercial instincts, their business habits, their daring speculating spirit, their astounding enterprise, and their worship of the "almighty dollar."

I can not, of course, expect members of the Church of England to accept such a view, though I know not how they can deny to it the support of Holy Scripture. But without adopting this view, perhaps they will not refuse to hear how this prosperity theory, so often insisted upon, strikes a Catholic. — I am, Sir, etc.

JOHN S. VAUGHAN,

Prel. Dom. di S.S.

Westminster, Oct. 19.

"CONVERTING" CATHOLICS.

PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES A GREAT WASTE OF ENERGY AND MONEY.

The eagerness which some of our non-Catholic Christian friends manifest for doing missionary work in the islands recently evacuated by Spain, indicates on their part more zeal than good judgment. These good people ought to know that the attempt to make Protestants out of Catholic people invariably results in utter failure. No Catholic ever abandons his faith through conscientious conviction. A Catholic may become indifferent to his religion, but in that case he is equally indifferent to all others. He may abandon it through motives of material advantage, but in such a case he is obviously insincere as a member of any other denomination. At most, if the proselytizing efforts of Protestant missionaries among Catholics have any effect at all, it is only to make those affected bad Catholics, never good Protestants.

As a rule, however, such missionary efforts are wholly without results, and the supporters of such missions are the victims of a palpable fraud. As an illustration of how the game is worked, the case of Protestant missions in Italy might be cited, because it is clearly stated in a book written about five years ago by Rev. Dr. Stackpole, a Methodist missionary, who had been in Italy for years, engaged in evangelical work. Dr. Stackpole virtually declared that the whole Protestant propaganda in Italy was a sham, a fraud, and a huge imposition.

He declared that were the whole facts known they "would be disgraceful to all concerned." Here is his description of the Protestant mission at Florence: "Work was begun in 1879, and probably over \$20,000 have here been spent. We have no church property. A fine house is rented for \$300 a year. A recent pastor told us that he found 150 names in the church register, but has seen only two of their owners in church. The minutes of 1893 reported 14 members and two probationers. The congregation varies from five to twenty-five. When the presiding

elder was to make his quarterly visit the pastor of another denomination used to send his congregation up to our service, so as to make the presiding elder think that we have a large audience in Venice. We told this to one of our preachers in conference. 'Oh' said he, 'there are two or three other pastors that do that way.' Another pastor (when he knew the presiding elder was coming) went out into the streets and cafes, and hired an audience for a cent apiece."

Here is another extract from Dr. Stackpole's book illustrating the dishonesty of the Protestant propagandists in Italy: "We once asked one of the preachers why he did not cut down the statistical report for the minutes to actual facts, and he replied: 'That would not please the presiding elder.' Every preacher on the Italian mission knows that all the authorities on both sides of the ocean want to see every year in the reports an increase of probationers, conversions, etc., and they are accommodating enough to make the desired increase."

So much for Protestant missionary efforts in Italy; though many more testimonies of the same tenor might be adduced from Protestant sources. What about France, whose evangelicism Gen. Howard seems to think so well adapted for Protestant missionary efforts in Cuba? Here is the statement which Rev. Mr. Galliene, a Protestant preacher in that country, lately made public: "The general position of affairs in unchanged. A good deal of faithful work has been done, with the result simply of keeping up our numbers, and it is necessary (from the financial point of view) that our English friends should thoroughly understand that this is the story of French Protestantism in all its branches for the last quarter of a century. The McAll Mission, the Salvation Army, the very energetic Home Mission, created in 1871, in the south of France, by joint efforts of all (Protestant) denominations, the unofficial organization of synods in the Established Presbyterian church, the considerable increase of earnest evangelical ministers in that church — all these agencies, with infinite variety of methods, have failed to create any important religious movement. All the agitation has been confined to the same narrow circle; the general (Catholic) public has listened, shrugged its shoulders and passed on, utterly indifferent to (Protestant) religious matters."

This is the universal experience in the attempt to "convert" Catholics to the Protestant denominations, and if our separated brethren are wise they will save their money and their activity for labor in the home vineyard, where more than two-thirds of the population are outside of all forms of Christian belief. — Worcester Rectord.