



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. VII.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1857.

No. 43.

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TO LORD PALMERSTON ON THE BIBLE SOCIETIES.

To the Right Honorable Viscount Palmerston.
Dublin, May 7th, 1857.

My Lord—In the present communication I do not presume to add to your comprehensive knowledge anything new, in reference to the character of Biblical Protestantism in Ireland; I mean to repeat before the nation, at this particular juncture, the social hatred which the cruel imposture of these societies keeps alive in this country; and I wish, by addressing this letter to you, to publish, through the prestige of your name, before mankind, the permanent injustice and the malignant wrongs of the Church Establishment. I wish to assure your Lordship that my remarks shall have no reference to Protestant doctrine; since, in point of fact, they have not at the present time, or indeed never had, any defined form of faith: my observations shall be directed to the stratagems, the deception, and the incredible system of lying by which they maintain, from year to year, this huge Biblical swindle.

Protestantism has now spent three hundred years in a fruitless attempt, by various means, to plant its principles in this country, and to change the faith of the Irish. Every evil scheme that human ingenuity could invent, every bribe that could seduce the heart, and every torture that refined malice could employ, have been all put into merciless practice for three centuries against the faithful Irish Catholic; and yet, after the expenditure, besides, of tens and hundreds and thousands of millions of pounds sterling, this institution has failed in its mission; its own members are hourly deserting its ranks; and the old Catholic congregation in this national struggle has seldom been disgraced by a single base apostate from her communion. And this is still but a natural consequence: the code of Irish confiscation, and of banishment; the rope, the axe, the gibbet, were always kept by our persecutors too vividly before the burning revenge of the orphan children of Ireland; and hence how could it be expected that the living widow could receive a Gospel from the murderer of her husband? or how could the surviving son accept the mockery of religion from hands dripping with the blood of his father? And the same parties have lived on and on, in two parallel lines of opposition, from these terrible times to the present moment; and the same persecution has been inflicted from year to year by one party; and the same undying hatred maintained by the other. The enemy has never allowed a truce of a moment, or never will; and hence, till Ireland shall have lost the memory of her wrongs, and have forgotten the feeling of long oppression, relentlessly and never-ceasing, she never can, or never will, take a new creedless Gospel from the English executioner, disguised in a clerical mask, and clothed in a Protestant surplice. The annual ferocity of these Bible meetings, therefore, will always evoke a retaliation which cannot fail to renew a religious animosity, by which *Biblicism* will most assuredly lose more than it gains in these malignant exhibitions.

The American Declaration of Independence in 1782, the first French Revolution in 1789, aided no doubt by a growing liberality in some high quarters, compelled the Protestant Church in the end of the last century to change the character of her assault on the religion of the Irish: and hence, so far back as the year 1804, she devised the plan of a Bible Society, in order to write down, to preach down, and to belie down Catholicity. As the Emancipations of the Catholics approached, this Society rose into increased fury, and from the year 1824 to 1829, the history of civilized mankind does not contain any record of insensate bigotry at all comparable with the misrepresentation and slander of Protestant writers against the Catholic faith.—Almost the universal Protestant literature of England, Ireland, and Scotland of these days, was saturated in this base traffic; and it is true to say, that the whole mind of the British public was then additionally inoculated with a virus of an anti-Catholic hatred such as has no parallel in the worst days of former English history. And perhaps the most unendurable part of this system is, to hear men call themselves Christians, and designate this Church as the work of God, while it has palpably broken one thousand times over, the Ten Commandments, in the face of society, and has cemented its foundations in the martyred blood of tens of thousands of our ancestors.—The worst crimes that have ever stained the annals of human iniquity are written in the crimsoned page of Irish Protestantism; and now in the end of ages, to see the descendants of these fiends in human shape, come forth in the face of the public, claiming the character of spotless sanctity, believing the creed of their plundered victims, slandering the whole generation of all living Catholics; and reversing the red handwriting of their own past history, is one of those astounding instances of Protestant hardness and imposture, which has perhaps never been equalled

in the whole world. One should think, that as long as the remains of the old ivy churches of Ireland are standing, which their cannon shot had dismantled: as long as the cathedrals which they seized are in existence: as long as the Abbey lands and the Church lands which they wrested from the poor, are in their possession: as long as they are clothed in the purple and fine linen purchased with the property of the widow and the orphan, one would think they would have the common shame of eating in secret the produce of their sacrilege, and feel the common decency of growing fat in quietness on the result of their perjuries: and above all, one should at least suppose they would be silent as they pass the old grey church-yards where the mouldering dead, our fathers, their plundered victims, lie in their crimsoned graves. But when one sees the Bishop hold up his red apron for public respect, and when one beholds apostasy and crime demand homage for the rope and the block, it amounts to the very same reckless insane lie in principle, as when Satan assumed the character of God the Father on the mountain, and demanded the worship of Christ.

If your lordship could find time to read the report of the lies of one of these annual Bible exhibitions, and to calculate the tens and the hundreds of thousands which they yearly collect for the furtherance of their calumnious avocations, you would say, on an honest examination of this incredible scheme, that for skillful stratagem, powerful machinery, and persevering hypocrisy, it has never been equalled in any other sphere of public imposture as a monster swindle.

In coming, my lord, to particulars, let us see what good have they ever executed in any one part of the world: or rather let us behold the incalculable injury which they have everywhere inflicted on the common principles of Christianity. In the East Indies, in the West Indies, at the Cape, in Australia, in the North, in the South, they have never converted one tribe, one hamlet, I might say truly, not one individual. The history of India furnishes irrefragable proof that Protestantism can never reach the heart of the Pagan; and the failure of these Societies in every part of the world where they appeared, is an additional argument that the Reformation Gospel can only strike root in a country where social hatred, religious malice, and political vengeance, are the natural products of the soil.

In every Catholic country, my lord, where they have been admitted, resistance to the laws, rebellion, plunder, and massacre have invariably marked their career: and the lessons of religion which they were said to teach, have all ended in profanation, in sacrilege, and in open infidelity, in every spot on the civilized earth where they have been permitted to set their foot. France, Spain, Portugal, Naples, all Italy, Austria, have, by a universal decision, branded the English biblicals as the most "diseased scum of an atrocious impiety;" and at this moment there is established a silent *cordón sanitaire* round all Catholic Europe, to keep off, like the cattle murrain, all connection with the agents of the English Bible societies. Perhaps your lordship may recollect that I have some knowledge of the accuracy of the facts, which I here state.

Let any foreigner visit England, the country of Protestantism, and examine London, the metropolis of Protestantism, and listen to his report; he notes the churches deserted: crime knee-deep in the cities: and the laboring classes sunk in the inextricable mire of a brutal iniquity. He cannot fail to say that the every-day poisonings, child-murders, adult murders of England, surpass in number the crimes of all the rest of Europe, while the unnatural circumstances of cutting, boiling, and roasting their victims is the index of a ferocity not known amongst the savage tribes of the trackless forest. These societies have circulated in England more Bibles than would cover the very surface of the country, and yet, who can shut his eyes to the unceasing flood of crime and irreligion in the land? In fact, the clergy have lost all hold on the people: and the fine, noble, generous English character has sunk into mere animal appetite, and brutal instinct, from the absence of all spiritual instructions on the part of their overfed worldly teachers. The voice of the pious ordained accredited priest—because it would be the voice of God—would sanctify the nation: but the hoax of cartloads of Bibles, and the traffic of ship loads of tracts can no more (a million times more) place a people on the paths of grace, morality, and faith, than a dismantled ship can take a given secure course without sails, rudder, needle, captain or crew.—What can laws do without courts, officers, and judges? What can muskets and guns do without men and generals? An imperfect Revelation without the infallible head, the ordained priest, the official communication with God, is like the ashes of a dead man compared with the living, speaking, acting being. It is everywhere, my lord, the same system of hateful hypocrisy and lies: and, as a matter of course, can never produce the fruits of truth, zeal and charity. As I promised to avoid all allusion to doctrines, I shall

make no remark on the idea of a foreigner in England seeing no authority in the Church, no fixed creed, no united congregation, no supreme voice to teach, while the ministers have no official position under God, and while the inspiration of the very Scriptures themselves is canvassed, doubted, and denied.

But whatever may be the character of the English Biblicals on the European Continent, it is only in Ireland their system is developed in all its abhorred ramifications. It has made its way into the army. The Commander of our Irish forces has even contributed £5 to the support of one of the most insulting Biblical dens to be found in the filthy purlieus of the Souper infamy of our city: and who has not heard of the suppressed rage of our Catholic soldiers in the Crimea, while the Souper emissaries offered them their lying tracts while ranged almost in order of battle. Conduct like this, unless checked, will produce a spirit of insubordination which it may be difficult to reduce—impossible entirely to assuage. This Biblical fanaticism has appeared on the Bench; amongst the Queen's Counsel: in the country court of the magistrate: in the grand jury box. The landlord is infected with it; it is in the gaol: in the poor-house: it is even in the camp of the Irish constabulary: it is an insulting net-work spread all over the entire surface of Irish society. The petty delinquent fears it in the partial administration of magisterial justice; the culprit dreads it in the charge of the judge of the upper courts and in the verdict of the jury. The private soldier, the constable, are in terror of it from their superior officers. It has placed in angry conflict class against class: it is the eternal bar to national union, national peace, national prosperity. It is the exterminator of the Irish: it is the burning, inextinguishable brand of social revenge. It is in Ireland the very worst species of Orangeism; and being carried on in the same religion, it thus incongruously sanctifies the rope, consecrates the axe, and sets up the standard of human vengeance in the room of the Christian cross. It is impossible to calculate the interminable branches of this national mischief—the society has five hundred branches, another has four hundred agents; all have thousands of pounds at their disposal; and the entire institution is a school where discord is taught, where malice is engendered, and where irreligion and infidelity are learned in the advanced graduated progress of the pupils.

In their yearly reports of the transactions of these societies, their secretaries keep up the same kind of deceptiveness as the secretaries and the adults of the late fallen banks; and whoever wishes to examine their statements and watch their progress, will detect an imposition on the public credulity which surpasses all credibility. We have often, my lord, challenged these societies to name one nobleman, gentleman, farmer, or tradesman, who have joined their ranks. They ransack the lanes of disease, they pounce on the famished wretch in the garret; they steal on the abandoned widow in the cellar; and when they find their victims in the very jaws of death from grinding destitution, they draw forth their Biblical gold, and exacting a pledge of apostasy from their trembling prey, the first act of the new convert is the scarlet perjury of his conscience before God and man.

The subordination of the army, my lord, the fidelity of the police, the peace of society, demand that a check be put to the shamful hypocrisy, and neither the victory over the Russians, nor the chastisement of the Persians, nor the retaliation against the Chinese, can distinguish the administration of a powerful Minister so much as the restraining within just bounds a society which in principle and practice damages the cause of Christianity, weakens the power, and retards the progress of our national resources. Your lordship can read in the unceasing emigration from Ireland, in the large rumored resignations in the police, in the exode of the comfortable farmers, that a universal feeling of dissatisfaction pervades the whole Irish population; and hence when you have minutely examined the cause of this increasing flight from the country you will learn that *Biblicism* has converted all Ireland into one Orange Lodge; and that the deep impression on the heart of the Catholic population is, namely, that the Government, the aristocracy, the church, are leagued in one powerful confederacy to persecute, exterminate, and banish the friendless peasantry of Ireland.

I have the honor to be, my lord, your lordship's obedient servant,

D. W. C.

The following is an extract from one of a series of remarkable articles, published by the *Civiltà Cattolica* on the "Spirit Rapping" mania. It is headed "Modern Necromance":—

THE RELIGION OF THE SPEAKING TABLE IN GENEVA.—We have already remarked, in a preceding article that table-turning and table-speaking have in Europe, for the most part, served chiefly for the amusement and curiosity of

persons who, as soon as they had satisfied their fancy by witnessing their motions and turnings, and by hearing them answer, divine, and discourse about the various indifferent moral, and sometimes even religious questions which were put to them, did not carry their investigations further, though they wondered that tables should ever have arrived at such a point, and lost themselves in a thousand conjectures about the hidden causes of such strange effects. There was, however, one soil more fertile when the tables succeeded in setting up a school and choir of religious teaching, and when they found some minds light and silly enough to allow themselves immediately to be drawn into the giddy dance. This place was Geneva, the gentle Queen of the Lemman lake, the Rome of Calvin, or more truly the Babel of all the heresies, the natural home and country not only of hundred more ancient sects of Protestantism, but also of the more modern follies of religious fanaticism, such as the Monierites, the Darbists, the Irvingites, the Mormonites, transplanted from the shores of the great Salt Lake, and last of all the "Bortites" or worshippers of table-speaking. "Bortism" sprang up in Geneva towards the end of 1853 (see "Annales Catholiques de Geneve, Mai 1855, Avril 1856"). It derives its name and its origin from M. Bort, Minister of the National Protestant Church of Geneva, who left the humble sphere of Pastor in the Hierarchy of the Genevan Church and Oceana one fine day, the Archimandrite, Hierophant Pontiff, and at the same time prophet of the new mysteries of the tables. His chief ministers are M. Mestral, his brother-in-law, and M. Bret, his son-in-law, who was followed by a pious flock of worthy men, women, and damsels, the nucleus of the new-born Church. They hold their meetings at the house of Messrs. Mestral and Bort, where, in the midst of a large saloon, there is a table, to which the eyes and ears of all the faithful are devoutly turned. The table is held or governed by three persons who have "influence," the principal of whom is always M. Bort. At the commencement the table used to answer by striking with its foot at every letter of the alphabet which was named, and was suitable to its word, but this slow and rude language of infancy soon gave place to another more ingenious and expeditious. On the middle of the table there is placed a pivot, which supports a light table with the letters of the alphabet written round its circumference. From the foot of the table a rigid and fixed rod stands out, bent so as to present its point to the circumference of the little table above, which, turning under the impulse of its mysterious mover, stops itself now with one, and now with another, letter before the rod. These letters then form words, and these words phrases, and the phrases form the "divine and mysterious revelations" by which the religion of the Bortites, is nourished. For greater brevity, when the oracle has begun a word after one or two letters, M. Bort fills it up out of his own head, without waiting for the interminable turnings of the little table, as he is a most skilful interpreter and diviner of the thoughts of his machiæ. If the answer is a simple Yes or No, the table expresses it without more ado than inclining itself or knocking. Several shorthand writers are in attendance to register every syllable; there is also a secretary, who compiles the acts of each sitting, and a lector, who reads them. The oracles of the tables are listened to by those present with that reverence which is due to the invisible personages who, according to M. Bort prophecy by means of them. For here the spirits who come from beyond the tomb to animate the speaking-table are not obscure and plebeian, or even the shades of illustrious men of profane antiquity; but they are no less personages than the angel David, the angel Uriel, the angel Gabriel, the angel L—, the angel M—, the angel Luther, and the archangel Michael, but even generally (the reader will pardon our being obliged to mix up with so much profane nonsense so august a name) it is Jesus Christ Himself, whose Divine Person is impiously profaned, as He is made to be the principal actor in these representations, whatever they be. When he enters, he announces himself with the salutation, "Peace, my lambs! In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Then all get up on their feet, and listen in attitude of great reverence, whilst they remain sitting during the speaking of the angels. If any one should be curious enough to know what are the answers of this new oracle, he may read them in two volumes, already published by M. Bort, entitled "Revelations Divines et Mystérieuses, ou Communications Entre le Ciel et la Terre, par le Moyen d'une Table." Lausanne, 1854. In these volumes, says the author there is not one syllable which is not dictated by heaven. The preface itself is by the Saviour; thus comes another preface of the angel Gabriel and a declaration on the part of the same angel against some who attributed to Satan, transformed into an angel of light, the revelations which follow in the book: "Then there is a Lord's Prayer dictated by the Saviour, but different from

that in the Gospel. Next, the words of the Saviour and of the Angels day by day, and the stories of the Millenium, or of the "Wild Valley," "of the Cabin of the Poor Negro," of the "Two Lambs," and of the "Happy Family." Then follows a string of prayers, thanksgivings, invocations, supplications, psalms, odes, hymns, and songs, &c. And all this enveloped in a certain grotesque dress of a semi-biblical, semi-romantic style, which is sometimes emphatic and at others puerile; but there is always so large a dose of fanaticism and folly, that it would be blasphemous to compare it for a moment to the sublime simplicity which shines in the Word of God in the Sacred Scriptures. With regard to the substance of it, it is unnecessary to mention that, in addition to the endless absurdities and contradictions of all kinds, it is exquisitely anti-Catholic; and Jesus Christ and the Angels are made to speak like wild Calvinists, and worse still. Geneva, according to them, is the Blessed City, which from her infancy has reposed in the arms of God; she is the little one among the cities, but great in the eyes of the Lord, because she has kept the faith, which is to serve as the torch to enlighten the nations of the earth; she is the city elect of God, for whom he prepared his servant Calvin to receive in these times celestial honors, that is to say, the speaking-table, the organ of the new revelations. "O Geneva, my beloved (thus speaks the false Christ in the preface), thy bells shall not mingle their voices with the abominations of Rome. No; they shall intone psalms to the true God; they shall still sing the liberty of the heavens; they shall still recount to the children of men the benefits of the Eternal. Your long sighing, O blessed bells, shall still be wafted along the waters of a free lake, and shall be heard by the children of Geneva upon its shores. . . . O Geneva, I have delivered thee from the plottings of thy enemies. Fear not, O Geneva, for God, who is good and powerful, watches over thy sons; unfurl thy banner, and doubt not to proclaim unto the nations that thou art the chosen of the Lord. . . ."

Such is the tenor of these new "Divine and mysterious revelations," which resemble closely the impious extravagances and mystical ravings of the Irvingites in England, and of the Mormonites in America. They have nothing, it is true, of what is orally new, except the organ by which they manifest themselves, and of which they themselves celebrate the miracle, as the infallible criterion of their divine veracity. As regards the rest, among so much that is mere jargon, these revelations seem all to agree in asserting that the coming of Christ is imminent, that the prodigy of the speaking-tables is the precursory sign, and that Geneva is the new Jerusalem, destined to be the theatre and the seat of the final triumphs of the Judge. Meanwhile, the new sect goes on prosperously, and making proselytes at Geneva, at Lausanne, and in those parts, in spite of the derisions and contradictions which it has had to sustain on all sides from the very first. And these proselytes are not merely young women with their heads filled with fancies, or stupid and common people; but, if we are to believe the *Universal Gazette* of Aushburg, April 14, 1856, the majority of the believers belong to the educated classes, and many occupy very respectable positions in the social hierarchy. From the private apartments of M. Bort's residence, where the first meetings were held, Bortism has come forth into open day, has placed its head quarters in a villa not far from Geneva, marked out by the table, and has erected a temple there with a little bell tower, whose bell the first day it began to ring, as it did very early in the morning, threw the whole neighborhood and the watchmen into consternation, who thought it was an alarm of fire, and hurried to the spot with their engines and pumps to extinguish it. Besides this, the hierophants of the new rite, whom we have been talking about, after having published, two years before, the revelations of the tables, sent forth another work last year, entitled, "Rome, Geneva, and the Church of Christ: a work dedicated to the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, sole Mediator between God and man," in which are contained the new interpretations of the Bible, and the new Gospel revealed also by the table. It is not easy to find out what is to be the part which this new sect which has sprung up in the bosom of European Protestantism out of the speaking tables will have to play; but when we reflect, on the one hand, how many monsters of religious folly it has already engendered, and is still capable of engendering, thanks to the unbridled independence of private judgment, the hydra of Protestantism; and when we consider, on the other hand, the frightful progress which the new belief of the "Spiritualists" has made in so short a time in America, and the symptoms of the tendency in a religious direction which the mania of the talking-tables is showing in various parts even in Europe, and the favor, or rather the enthusiasm, with which several archimandrites of animal magnetism have welcomed the appearance of these portentous tables, as the aura of a Pantheistic religion which they are endeavoring