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PROTESTANT MORALITY.

(From the Pittsburgh Catholic.)

The cry of superiority of Protestant nations over Catholic countries, as regards wealth and commercial enterprise and property, has been continually rung in our ears, notwithstanding the charge has been victoriously refuted time and again, by the immortal Balme, and hosts of Catholic writers. But even if the boast were as true as it is false, it would not make any thing for the cause of Protestantism. It would only show that Protestants, like the Jews, have wholly mistaken the mission of Jesus Christ.

As the unhappy Israelites vainly expected in the Messiah a rich, powerful, temporal prince and deliverer, so Protestants, by their rapid boasting of temporal prosperity and riches, act as if they believed that Jesus Christ came to make man wealthy in this world, and not wise unto salvation, as if he descended from on high to make his creatures money makers and not to teach them how to be good, "to grow rich towards God," and to gain heaven.

But we do not intend, at present, to dwell on this Jewish carnal error of Protestantism, but we wish to examine just now, her pretensions as a promoter and guardian of morals in a community. This investigation is forced upon us by the astounding frauds, and high crimes, and misdemeanors that fill the columns of the daily papers, and which have been perpetrated by professed Protestants, and in high communion and estimation with the various sects into which Protestantism is infinitely divided. The public press lays before us the atrocious crimes committed against society by Schuyler, Manchester, Meiggs, Beale, and hundreds of others, who were professed Protestants, and who stood bound in the closest brotherhood towards their sectarian churches.

Schuyler, whose numberless frauds are spread over the pages of the public press throughout the land, was so truly Protestant, so highly Biblical and pious, that he had the greatest scruples, and turned up the whites of his eyes in holy horror at the abomination of cars, even with the public mail, running on the Sabbath. And yet this same Schuyler thinks nothing at all of perpetrating the gigantic fraud and robbery of \$800,000, against the community in which he resides.

Manchester, of Cincinnati, of whose depredations the *Public Ledger* gives a full account, was so pious and religious a Protestant, that he was a constant frequenter and worshipper in the Presbyterian Church, in which he had a pew valued at \$300. And yet this Manchester robbed his community of \$125,000; all of it deposited in his hands for safe keeping by needy servant girls, poor widows, and honest hard laborers, who all, out of their dearly won earnings, were endeavoring to lay up something for a rainy day.

Meiggs, the San Francisco forger, to the amount of about a million and a half, was, says the *Ledger*, known by many of his business acquaintances as honest Henry Meiggs.

The whole West groans beneath the weight of the most stupendous frauds, trading on the heels of frauds committed by Protestant bankrupts, their robbing clerks and villainous accomplices.—[It is the same in Canada.—Ed. T. W.]

Beale, the dentist of Philadelphia, whom a jury lately convicted of a nameless outrage upon an innocent female patient, as awfully detailed in all the papers, was so practical and pious a Protestant, that several Protestant ministers assisted at his trial to influence judge and jury by their expressed sympathy for him. "A large number of clergymen," says the *Philadelphia Sun*, "testified to the good character of the defendant, and that he is a member of a Christian Church."

"Dr. Beale," says the same Editor, "was continually prating about *temperance and religion* to his patients." "This case," continues the *Sun*, "which has excited more than ordinary interest in the community, has been at length settled, by the jury finding a verdict, *guilty*. The public mind was prepared for such a conclusion, notwithstanding that the prisoner was surrounded by numerous friends and many clergymen, whose anxiety for his acquittal was unmistakably manifested."

We will not continue any further the black list of these specimens of what Protestant Christianity can effect, as regards morality, though it could be prolonged *ad infinitum*, but we will stop, simply to inquire into the subject at the head of this article—namely, "the efficiency of Protestantism as a promoter of morality" in a community. What is the cause of this frightful immorality and crime against society? Had these grand robbers been Catholics, forthwith there would be raised a hue and cry against "the Popish" religion—abuse would be heaped upon the Confessional—yes, that holy institution, where *restitution is sternly prescribed*, whose motto is "no remission unless what is unjustly taken is restored."

It would be said that Catholics had an easy way of obtaining pardon—they had only to go to the priest, and, for a small sum, they would get forgiveness.—But let us ask our slanderers, whither did these high Protestant criminals go to ease their consciences?—What easy terms of forgiveness led them on from crime to crime? Had they no ways and means at hand to clean their skirts of these abominable doings?

Without slandering our Protestant friends, as they do us invariably, we can make them touch with their hand the cause of the rottenness of their morality.—We can make it palpable to the dullest eye that they have far easier terms of pardon than even calumny has ever imputed to us. What is the cardinal principle of the Reformation and of Protestantism?—Why, that faith alone will save us; that all we have to do is, to believe—believe. Good works are not only of no use, but they are an hindrance to the true believer. Such was the doctrine of their father Luther, over and over again repeated in his writings. This belief and the *fore-ordination* of Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterians, must lead to and justify every crime. If I have only to believe and I will be saved—if I am fore-ordained to be saved or damned, no matter what I do—what harm will it do me to rush into crime? I may cheat and rob my neighbor and the community as much as I please, I shall still be saved. For I believe still, and I am one of the elect.

Here are easy terms for you, with a vengeance. Talk of Catholics having to pay their priests for having their sins forgiven. This even would be some check to all sinners who regard their purse, but Protestants cast them into the shade, for they have nothing to pay at all. Their forgiveness does not cost them a cent. It is *scot free*. All they have to do is to believe, believe, and to think they are of the elect, and their sins, though red as scarlet, become as white as wool.

To these dreadful anti-social principles of the Reformation may be traced this Protestant laxity of morality, as surely as any effect to its cause. If there are vast numbers of Protestants honest and honorable, as we are proud to acknowledge, this only shows they are better than their religion. Or we may trace, and fairly ascribe this anomaly to the traditional honesty and nobleness of conduct inherited from their Catholic ancestors, whose blood still courses in their veins. Men may have faith alone, and be worse than devils. For St. James tells us "that the devils believe and tremble." Now, the great plunderers of the public may believe in the Protestant sense, but it is very questionable whether they ever tremble, and therefore they are not so good as devils. Like the wicked Judge in the Gospel, "they fear not God, nor regard man." Their Parsons are potent when the question is to make them hate Catholicity and become rebellious to the "light," as holy Job has it; but they are powerless and imbecile towards making their people "honest men." They have influence for evil, not for good.

If those grand robbers of the public, mentioned above, were Catholics, they would be forced to disgorge their prey, they would have to make restitution to the last farthing. The Confessional has written on its walls—"No remission until what has been unjustly taken away has been restored—*Non remittitur peccatum nisi restitatur ablatum*." Yet this institution which thus watches and exists for the best interests of society, for the peace of families, and for the welfare of the community at large, is compared by the Know-Nothing Dr. Bond, of the *Christian Advocate*, to those secret societies that are now plotting in darkness against the rights of their fellow men, and against the Constitution of their country.

Here, then, we throw the gauntlet down to Protestantism. We challenge Dr. Bond and all the sectarian tribe of pseudo-religious editors, bond and free, to show us in the Catholic Church of the United States, any parallel cases of atrocious immorality, as can be pointed out in their Protestant Zion. Let them show us professed and practical Catholics in full communion with the Church, and honored by the clergy and laity, and who are nevertheless guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors against society. We defy them, again and again, to bring us examples similar at all to the illustrations we have given of Protestantism, as a promoter of morality. They will find none in our two hundred millions throughout the world, save outcasts, outlaws, the excommunicated, the unpractical and dead members, who are guilty of such crimes. Here is the test and touchstone of truth and falsehood—the superiority of Catholicity over Protestantism, as the guide and guardian of morals.

We conclude our rather long article, and beg to subjoin the very apposite remarks of the Editor of the *Philadelphia Sun*, some of which may be applied to the other criminals, as well as to the convict to which he refers:—

"Great crimes, like the present one, must be punished with unflinching severity, otherwise the very foundation of civil society will soon be sapped. The day when the simple presence of a few clergymen in Court, attending with sympathetic demeanor, upon a hypocritical culprit, was sufficient to raise a doubt in the minds of jurors, as to the guilt of an alleged offender, has passed away, we trust, never to return. So common has it become for the most lascivious and dishonest men to connect themselves with Churches, with the ulterior object of guarding themselves with a good character, in the event of detection, that all confidence is lost in the excessively sanctimonious.—Such a guise, at one time, was a proof against conviction of any offence. But as a majority of the great robberies of public and private institutions have been committed by just such men, the experienced in human affairs hold such sanctimony at a great discount, and deal with its owner as they would with a rogue."

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND HER SERVICES.

(From the Edinburgh Witness.)

That the Church of England is manifesting the symptoms which precede and indicate changes—reforms they may be, but, at all events, changes—is plainly evident to every one who has marked her course for the last ten or fifteen years.

The bishop has revised his Synod; the priest—for the term *priest* is legally acknowledged, and the rubric runs that the *priest alone* shall pronounce the absolution—has revived his claim to the administration of an efficacious sacrament; The Anglican minister of the Gospel has bent his eye on the purgation of the Liturgy. All, or almost all, coincide in wishing for a revival of the General Assembly of the church—the Convocation—which was said to be suspended, but in reality suppressed, at the accession of the House of Hanover. All things betoken a change—coming events are casting their shadows before—the Church of England, always a church of compromises and concessions, is now suspended midway between two antagonistic elements; she must now make her election and choice, she must take a step either in the direction of a less doubtful Protestantism, or she must declare to the world that she consciously and intelligently sanctions those passages in her authoritative standards which countenance the presumptuous claims of the Romish priesthood, and render error within her own bosom only a legitimate and fair reading of the words in which she has expressed her doctrines.

At present the great prospective change in the administrations of the affairs of the Church of England is the revival of the Convocation. A church that cannot, and dare not meet, or rather that annually goes through the form of meeting, and of being dismissed by the royal authority, is a subservient church, openly admitting that it derives its status from the crown or supreme political power of the state. Such a Church stamps upon itself that it is a political institution, and proclaims—though every year with greater unwillingness—that it accepts the political rule of the civil power; the civil power having for its own purposes assumed the nominal supremacy of the Church. With the revival of the Convocation, which must come sooner or later, there must also arise the major question of the Church's independence; and then, in all probability, must be tried over again the anomalous decision which constitutes the monarch the supreme head of the ecclesiastical association. In the meantime, there seems to be not only a necessity, but a very generally expressed desire, for some alteration in the services of the Church. The Liturgy is no longer, received as perfect—it requires amendment—it requires curtailment—it requires adaptation to the present circumstances of Anglican belief. It must undergo a revision, and on the character of that revision very much may be said to depend.

Next to the Bible, the book of common prayer stands highest in the estimation of Englishmen. It is regarded as the supreme product of human intelligence and piety, aided by the words of Revelation. It is deeply rooted in the national affections; so deeply, that any attempt at alteration must be made by the gentlest hand, and conducted on the calmest spirit of sincerity. Even the dissenter who rejects its use, pays the tribute of profound respect to the judgment that he admits to have presided over its arrangement and compilation. He regards it as essentially a great book, surpassing all other human compositions; and even when he records his objections, he wonders at the skill which enabled any body of men to produce so complete a summary of the things necessary for the guidance of a Church.

The English Liturgy may, it is true, be shortened—which is the present proposal; but that is only a matter of convenience and propriety, it involves no

great principle whether the service be a little longer or a little shorter. Far otherwise is it with the *revision*. The revision may almost be said to involve the future destiny of England. That England will abandon the Liturgy there is not the slightest appearance; for, in fact, England is far more a liturgical than an Episcopalian country. The bishop is waning fast in the estimation of the people, who see no reason prelatial power should be preserved, when all other exclusive and privileged powers have been obliged to give way before the deep intuition of civil liberty, which is ineradicable from the English mind. Even the Legislature, slow as it is to touch the edifice of the Church with the finger of reform, has commenced with the bishops by subjecting the Episcopal revenues to control; and probably a few years may see the threat of the Earl of Derby carried out, and the bishops dismissed from the House of Lords. The Liturgy, however, with all its faults, is not shaken in the popular mind. England is liturgical by inclination—Episcopal only by accident. Even the Methodists, and some other dissenters still continue to use the Liturgy. If, then, any alteration in the book of common prayer were authorized, it would afford an opportunity for recasting those portions which are taken as the pretext, and which are unquestionably literal justifications of the Tractarian errors. The book of common prayer contains, in our estimation, two radical errors, from which the Romanizing tendency of a portion of the clergy have sprung, if not *in esse*, at least *in posse*; that is, the Romanizing tendency may have actually originated in some other source, but it is borne out and justified by the very words of the Anglican standards.

The first error is, in applying the word *priest* to a minister of the Gospel; the second, in retaining the baptismal ritual, which assures us that a sacramental service, outwardly performed, has a positive efficacy on the unconscious recipient, and that a child is regenerate, or born again, under the influence of the baptismal ordinance. The first misleads the mind by the inculcation of a positive error. It matters little what the etymology of the word *priest* may be. When transplanted into the English language, it means a sacred person, who performs rites and offers sacrifices; and its constant, or almost constant association, is with a spiritual caste, that mediates between God and man.

Hence the Anglican *priest* has in the book of common prayer the very first element of the course that leads him ultimately either to Rome, or to the conventional agreement that words shall not be held to mean what they really do mean. And hence there are in the Church of England two parties,—those who adhere literally to their own standards, and consequently assert their arrogant claims to what, if carried out, would end in a spiritual despotism; and those who have agreed to accept the standards as mere articles of peace, either disbelieving the statements, or putting on them a certain peculiar construction, which was expressly invented for the very purpose of evading the plain and evident meaning. The uninitiated multitude reading the words will believe one thing, but the initiated priesthood has another meaning invented to save the conscience. It is the same with baptismal regeneration, which, if words have a signification that can be discovered at all, is as plainly taught by the book of common prayer as any doctrine whatever; and the Tractarian party is literally correct in affirming that it is *de facto* the doctrine of the Church, those who reject it having done so by agreeing to misunderstand the plain declarations in which it is conveyed.

Let us take the very words of the service for the public baptism of infants: "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy Holy Church." Or again, the service for the private baptism of infants: "seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is by baptism regenerated, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits." On these two errors may be hinged the whole Tractarian and Romanizing tendency of the present day. If the pastor is a *priest*, and the child is regenerated by baptism, the Protestantism of the Church of England falls to the ground; and it has in past time been entitled to the name of Protestant only because it rejected in fact, and in public instruction, the very doctrines which it inculcated; in its services and printed in its standards.

If, then, the services of the Anglican Church are to be revised, (which seems eminently probable,) she must take one of two courses,—either she must allow the objectionable passages to remain,—thereby giving a new authentication to the fact that these doctrines actually are held by her,—or she must expunge the passages, and come over to the side of definite Protestantism, which does not require an understand-