

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

### THE REST OF ROME AND THE REST OF PROTESTANTISM.

But in the second place, the Roman theology destroys the possibility of religious rest even in the hearts of the staunchest believers. Why did Calvin speak so expressively of the "doubtful faith of Papists?" They are taught by their Tridentine guides that it is not possible in this life to attain that assurance of personal salvation which is such a leading element in the happiness of the most spiritually-minded Protestants. The doctrine of purgatory fills the last moments of Romanists with an alarm which no sacramental expedient can effectively dissipate. What is the true character of Catholic religious experience? Take even the religion of the converts, which contains implicitly some lingering elements of their old Protestantism—in a word—more of Jesus than of Mary. The spirit of such men, so ascetic, devotional, is not happy or joyous. They have not fully tasted the peace of the Gospel. They seem rather to be painfully seeking than to have joyfully found peace. Their piety is a severe, self-mortifying thing, a striving hard after the sacrifices of a broken heart, while the joy of God's salvation is little known. The keynote of their experience is "*Dies irae, Dies illa;*" and though its cheering "*Quem tu salvas salvas gratis*" may not, we trust, be entirely hid from them, yet like a faint star it has shone on them but dimly and unsteadily. We must, however, look into the religious experience of those born in the system. I have seen and known much of Roman Catholics of all ranks, and I have never known one who was happy in his religion. I cannot say that intellectual anxieties were much, if at all, in the way. But the religious anxieties were there in power. Everything is done in the Romish system to keep the intellect quiet, but the conscience is awake. The springs of feeling are sedulously fed. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music, are all enlisted in this service. But the alarm of conscience cannot be assuaged by such expedients. As Roman theology knows nothing of the power of the blessed truth that, Christ having been once offered, the worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins, it can find no substitute in sacraments either to quell the fears of conscience or to satisfy the hearts of earnest men. And be it observed, those who have watched the genuine fruits of living sacramentalism where it grows in its own native clime, far apart from Protestant checks or criticism, will know that it only too often serves to ossify religious feeling and to prompt to new acts of transgression. There is really no rest in Romanism. It is not to be found in the weary round of religious services. A devout Romanist girl once remarked to a young Protestant whom she loved—"The grave and all beyond it seems dark to me." I have seen much of *votens* in Ireland, that is, of persons very earnestly devoted to all sorts of religious exercises, and they had one unvarying peculiarity—a severity, harshness, if not moroseness of disposition—which I have always attributed to the unrest of their minds. I once passed a night in a very poor inn in the south of Ireland. The mistress was an ardent devotee, but a bitter scold. Censures, gibes, and sneers, were always on her lips at the very time that she was handling her beads and saying her prayers. This was no singular experience. I have never known a dying Romanist look forward hopefully or joyously to the grave. A gentleman who had been very munificent in his gifts to the Church was dying and had received the last rites. The priest said that that was all he could do for him. The man was not happy, and complained bitterly that the Church left him helpless at the very time he most needed her assistance. There is no brightness of religious feeling in Catholic biography. We have indeed exceedingly little biography of that sort, but what there is of it shows that the prospect darkens towards the close of life. Take Maguire's "Life of Father Mathew," the founder of Temperance Societies, or the "Life of the Rev. Father Buckley," of Cork, a most genial and literary priest. There was no joy but deep despondency in their last hours. Protestant biography stands in a different atmosphere—that of hope, joy, and even triumph! I attribute the happier tone of religion among Protestants under God to the habitual study of the Holy Scriptures. Better to use one single sentence from the lips of our

Lord than a thousand priestly helps! The human soul cannot rest in a fiction or a negative. The weight of its infinite cares is too great for any mere opinion or theory, and therefore it seeks to place itself in the hands of an infinite Redeemer who is able to save to the uttermost. Romanists, ignorant of the true infallibility, the infallibility of God, rest in the false infallibility, the infallibility of the Church. We offer rest to the doubter in the bosom of that God who is the Father of Light, and in the truth of that Word of which one jot and one tittle shall not pass away till all be fulfilled. We must teach the Bible with firmness of tone, not only in its theological but on its moral side, exhibiting its doctrines not as so many propositions to be received, but as precious truths needed by man's soul, which alone can give to a struggling heart peace here and hereafter. There may still be doubts. If they arise out of the natural development of thought and knowledge, there is nothing for it but an expressly intellectual solvent. There are times when, like Thomas Arnold, we must be content to lie down in the presence of admitted mysteries. But as to questions which touch the central elements of our life, all we can do is to pray for light and guidance, keeping all the while in the path of duty and obedience so far as it is plainly before us, not doubting that there will be to us a fulfilment of the promise that "unto the upright light ariseth in the darkness."

Let us not think of giving way to the superstitious weakness that is at present manifest in so many parts of Christendom, to what Hare called the morbid hankering after leading-strings, which argues, after all, but a poor-spirited, faint-hearted temper that looks for religious certainty without rational conviction, and barter the moral and spiritual power of the Word of God for the magical influence of sacramental grace. There may be something in the statement of Sir James Stephen that there are natures formed for subservience to every form of superstitious terror, glad to get handsomely quit of free agency, and ready to submit to any priestly yoke that will rid them of the sense of responsibility. We know a better way. Our life is entrusted to our own responsibility; but can we not place ourselves in another's hands, and commit the keeping of ourselves to One who understands all the weaknesses and doubts and windings of our natures? Can we not do like Paul, and say like him—"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day?" There is no rest for us apart from Jesus Christ. Shall we not, like Augustine, say that we desire no rest till we find it in Him? No theology can ever give us peace till we find it in Him who is our peace—the Alpha and Omega of thought and existence.—*Rev. Thos. Croskey, in the Evangelical Magazine.*

### RIGHT WAY AND WRONG.

Two men, members of the Church, met with misfortune in their business. After having enjoyed long prosperity and lived in the decorous use of God's gifts, trouble beset them and they saw all their gains of former years fade away, and found themselves compelled to begin the world anew. One of them received his trial as a discipline sent of God, and in undoubting faith went on his way, serving his Master, who he was sure was still loving him. He even grew more devoted to every religious interest. His place was never vacant in the house of God. He made it a point to be present at every prayer meeting. He took a new interest in the affairs of the church, and so far as he had ability, he showed himself additionally liberal in the support and spread of the gospel. An air of improved piety appeared in his countenance and life. He was growing into a better man. His friend took the other direction. He was soured. He attended church but poorly, forsook all the interest he formerly had in the work of the congregation, grew critical, severe, fault-finding, crotchety and disagreeable. His whole life changed into a contradiction to that he had formerly professed and practised, so that he was as gruff a backslider as he had once been an exemplary believer. Now mark the result: The one grew strong in all good fellowship, and cheerfully devoting himself to the work of repairing his broken fortunes, received the confidence and help of his brethren, and finally secured for himself such a footing that he was safe against all contingencies of want and fear. The other repelled friendly sympathies, sank into indolence and sloth, and both as to business

and character, lived a wreck and warning to all who knew him. The moral is, that if misfortunes come they ought to be received in a Christian spirit. If they are not, they will but thicken and increase till the life is lost under their burden.—*United Presbyterian.*

### IMPORTANT RULES OF CONDUCT.

The following suggestions are taken from "Hill's Manual of Social and Business Forms:"

- Never exaggerate.
- Never betray a confidence.
- Never wantonly frighten others.
- Never leave home with unkind words.
- Never neglect to call upon your friends.
- Never laugh at the misfortunes of others.
- Never give a promise that you do not fulfil.
- Never send a present hoping for one in return.
- Never speak much of your own performances.
- Never fail to be punctual at the time appointed.
- Never make yourself the hero of your own story.
- Never pick the teeth or clean the nails in company.
- Never fail to give a polite answer to a civil question.
- Never question a servant or child about family matters.
- Never refer to a gift you have made, or favour you have rendered.
- Never associate with bad company. Have good company or none.
- Never look over the shoulder of another who is reading or writing.
- Never appear to notice a scar, deformity, or defect of any one present.
- Never answer questions in general company that have been put to others.
- Never, when travelling abroad, be over boastful of your own country.
- Never lend an article you have borrowed unless you have permission to do so.
- Never attempt to draw the attention of the company constantly upon yourself.
- Never exhibit anger, or impatience or excitement when an accident happens.
- Never pass between two persons who are talking together, without an apology.
- Never enter a room noisily; never fail to close the door after you, and never slam it.
- Never forget that, if you are faithful in a few things, you may be ruler over many.

### COME, EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH.

No doubt it is advisable to keep dogs out of little shallow pools, for the water would soon become defiled, and the cattle would refuse it; but we do not need to preserve a great river, and no one cares to put up a notice informing the dogs that they may not wash in the sea, because there is no fear whatever that, come as many dogs as may, they will ever pollute old Father Thames, or defile the boundless sea. Where there is infinite abundance, there may well be unlimited freeness. The vilest dog of a sinner that ever ate the crumbs that fell from the Master's table is invited to plunge into the river of the water of life, which is clear as crystal still, though thousands of un-circumcised and defiled lips have drunk it, and myriads of foul souls have been washed whiter than snow in its streams. "Come and welcome, come and welcome," is the note which sounds from Calvary, from the wounds of the expiring Saviour; yea, it sweetly comes upon mine ear from the lips of the glorified Christ, who sits at the right hand of the Father. "Let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." No one can be an intruder when the call is so unconditional, and whoever tries to keep a sinner back is doing the devil's work. They are trespassers who keep away from Jesus, and not those who come to Him. Some are afraid that they would be presumptuous should they believe on the Lord Jesus, but presumption lies in the opposite direction; it is the worst of presumption to dare to question the love of God, the efficacy of the blood of atonement, and the saving power of the Redeemer. Cease from such proud questions, and trust in Jesus.

Come hither, bring thy boding fears,  
Thy aching heart, thy bursting tears;  
'Tis Mercy's voice salutes thine ear—  
O trembling sinner, come.

—C. H. Spurgeon.

THE Presbyterians in Ireland provide 228,239 sittings and have 106,776 communicants.