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SIMPLE STATEMENT OF POPERY AS IT IS—NOT AS IT IS SAID TO BE.

BY A LATE PROTESTANT.

I am impelled to write the following remarks from the observations which I have so often heard made by my Protestant relatives and acquaintances, and the motives by which I am actuated (and that of circulating a true state of the case) has been further augmented by the passing remarks I have frequently heard from the groups who, attracted probably by the "concourse of sweet sounds," are generally stationed at our chapel doors.

I have been myself a Protestant—that is, I was, like hundreds, nay thousands of others, brought up in the established church of England, merely because our fathers were. Full well I know, therefore, the erroneous ideas, the preposterous opinions which every Protestant entertains of his Catholic brethren; and it is to throw a true light on these unjust and ungenerous prejudices that I thus venture to compose this humble tribute of sincerity. Oh! let the readers peruse it in the same frame of mind in which it is written—in the spirit of gentleness and of pure Christian charity.

There is nothing existing in the wide world that is so utterly misunderstood, so glaringly misrepresented, or so manifestly perverted as the rites and doctrines of our holy church. There is no created being who is so little understood, I had almost said so wilfully slandered, as the Papist; opprobrium and misrepresentation are coupled with his very name, and children of the established church are (I know by the experience of my own education) taught from their very infancy to look on a "Roman Catholic" as on some poisonous weed. And why so? Not from what they ARE—but from the mistatement of what they are not. Even the very word "Protestant" is, as a general term, a mistaken one; for how can any one protest against that of which they are brought up in utter ignorance? I was always taught that Catholics worshipped the blessed Virgin; I know now that they do not. If praying to her is idolatry, then has every churchman been more or less an idolater, not to the Blessed Virgin queen of saints, but to fellow mortals on earth, for every one has prayed to some higher power in the church to obtain for him honors, preferment, or a good benefice. And if the word *worship* be idolatry (though that is a word we do not use in any address but to our God), then is every Protestant husband an idolater, for he says to his bride, in the matrimonial ceremony, "with my body I thee worship." Yet are we called idolaters, and scarcely is there a vice, a deformity that is not laid at the door of our pure yes pure and God-protected church. We are charged with worshipping, not merely saints, but the very pictures of saints, and our priesthood, our bright examples, our noble-minded priesthood, are loaded with every contumely, accused of selling permissions to sin, of ministering absolutions for "filthy lucre," of condemning their own precious souls to sooth the souls of others, and many other absurdities too

glaring to repeat. Oh! who that calmly reflects can for one moment yield credence to aught so utterly improbable, and of a community too, professing, word for word, the same apostolic creed?

In gentleness and christian charity let me thus venture then a few remarks. I seek not to draw any from the path they have been taught is the right one; I seek only to remove the weeds which prejudice and falsehood have strewed upon ours. The glorious sun still hovers brightly o'er it; the weeds may flourish for a time, but the flowers, though shadowed, are flowers, fair flowers still. And first of idolatry.

The reverence which every Catholic pays to the altar is attributed either to the worship of the crucifix placed thereon, or to the painting suspended over it; at the best, the said reverence (even attributed to the really existing cause, viz. to the consecrated elements of bread and wine) still bears the charge of idolatry, because nine persons out of ten, not being aware that only as consecrated species are they thus revered, imagine that we worship bread and wine, leaving the Creator for the creature, and in a word are really that which, in such a case we should be, —rank idolaters. But are we so? In the name of the whole body of the holy Catholic church I answer, No! We pay reverence to the altar because on that hallowed spot is celebrated the august sacrifice of the mass, being that pure offering which the Prophet Malachi foretold should be offered among the Gentiles in every place—the real and indisputable body and blood of Christ; for such we believe it, as we reverence it, and every genuflection, every passing homage, every act of adoration, whether outwardly or in the heart, all, all have but this one only object,—our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. HE has said "This is my body." We believe our God, and we "fall down and adore."

The Protestant Catechism teaches that "the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." Why then arraign us for practice as well as precept? Why sow discord on our path because we perform that which we profess? Be it too ever remembered that this was a doctrine never doubted till the sixteenth century (the very syllable *mass* in the words *Christ-mas* Day, *Michael-mas* Day bearing witness to their derivation); and had not our first apostate king been a murderer, an adulterer, and a thief, it had been undoubted still, and once substantiated, this doctrine of doctrines, this corner stone of our happy privileges (a doctrine hallowed and interwoven in the holiest fibres of every Catholic breast), the altar claims, nay, commands, not only the homage of every knee, but of every heart. I know that to this topic an objection is advanced, and which, as a poor weak woman, I am no theologian to combat; but my own plain common sense tells me that a doctrine sublime, soul-inspiring like this, could never have been made hyman; could never have crept into the church. Mistaken but well meaning individuals may have extended and abused some original

observances and traditions, but the doctrine of transubstantiation could not be one of them. In a late controversial discussion at Dublin between a Catholic priest and a Protestant divine, the latter, when challenged to specify when and at what time such innovation found its way into the church, replied "that it grew by imperceptible degrees, just as a man's hair imperceptibly grows grey, without our exactly being conscious at what particular period the change begun."

Yes! the hair may grow grey by degrees, but here the argument of the rev. opponent refutes itself; because, even though admitted that some trifling abuses may have crept into some of the observances of the church, still, never could such a doctrine have been introduced by degrees. Would not every man, woman, and child have thrown back with horror the daring blasphemy in the teeth of the very pope himself? Would not every Christian parent exclaim: "Teach not this to our children, for it was not taught to us." And how indeed could aught so marvellous and improbable ever be reconciled as even possible, unless by the supposition so admirably suggested by the learned Dr. Bailey, viz., "that on some one particular night all the Christians in the world went to sleep sound Protestants, and woke in the morning rank Papists."

We reverence the altar for the sake of that which sanctifies it. We worship one God, and him only do we serve. We reverence too the crucifix it is true, and for the same reason we value a picture delineating either our Blessed Saviour or one of the holy saints; but can any one really suppose us so utterly devoid of common sense, nay, of Christianity itself, as to worship them? What! worship wood and brass? Adore oil, paints, and paper?—Yet so are we supposed to do. One of my Protestant acquaintances at this very moment believes that every priest, on lifting up his eyes in prayer, is paying homage to the picture over the altar; nay, I did but feed a poor tortoise, the little pet plaything of my children, when I heard it alleged that I was praying to it—that I believed it could help my salvation! This is so ridiculous that, were it not well known as having been said (yes, and thought too) in the neighborhood where I reside, one would indeed scarcely suppose it possible that prejudice could extend to aught so preposterous and ungenerous.—Yet so it is. Nothing, however, implorable, seems too glaring for the poor Papist to be charged with. But still, in the name of every Catholic, I protest our innocence. We hold it damnable to give to any creature whatsoever the homage which is due to God; and a proof of it cannot better be given than by an extract from our Catechism—a trite but comprehensive work, placed in the hands of every child as soon as it can lisp its infant prayers.

"Q. May we not pray to relics or images?"

"A. No, by no means, for they have no life or sense to help us."

*A convert—the son of the Bishop of Bangor.

Yet they possess one quality, a quality in unison with every other representation from the pencil of the artist—they remind us of those they portray, and every good Catholic will, when thus reminded, not worship the representation, but try and imitate virtues so exalted, as to render the original thus worthy to be represented.—And here let me appeal to the heart of every fellow being. Oh! lives there one who has not enshrined in tender memory some dear departed one now mouldering in the grave! Some

"Hallow'd form that's ne'er forgot,
That, lingering, haunts the greenest spot
On mem'ry's waste."

A parent, a child, a loved and tender tie. And oh! if a portrait exists of these lost treasured ones—nay, if but a faded flower they once have touched break suddenly on our sight, is it not prized? is it not loved, and kissed, and wept over? You call not that idolatry; why, then, is our value for the crucifix (prized only as the symbol of our mutual redemption) why is that so called?

How frequent is it in the Protestant church to hear the congregation enjoined "to pray" for some absent person "dangerously ill." What is there more idolatrous in our invoking the prayers of a higher congregation—the congregation of saints in heaven instead of that of sinners on earth? Their prayers (whatever Protestants may, and I know do say to the contrary) is all we ask; and let declaimers still declaim, and slanderers still slander, yet will I continue to say, "Holy Mary, pray for me." Aught else laid to our charge is utterly false.

The church teaches that "it is profitable to invoke the prayers of the saints," and therefore we do so. The same church teaches that "it is damnable" to give them any but "that inferior and relative honor which is due to them as the faithful servants and special friends of God," and therefore we do it not; and if, by some mistaken thought well meaning individuals, this doctrine, this blameless doctrine, has been thoughtlessly and ignorantly abused, that is no more the fault of the church than would the abuse of a physician's prescription impugn the physician's skill. Our fundamental doctrines cannot be wrong, for they rest with the church; and these once sanctified by that infallible authority, how trivial as "threads of gossamer" must appear in our eyes any little errors or mistaken abuses in the "nites of matter" which our separated brethren so largely stigmatise as idolatry and apostacy. Oh! who that hath climbed the lofty mountain brow would pause to glance back at our hills on his way? The crucifix, or the picture, or the image on our altars are no more objects of worship than are the Lion and the Unicorn over the communion table in the Protestant churches. We look on the crucifix with holy tenderness (who could do otherwise?)—but that no more comprises idolatry than does the bended knee of the courier to his sovereign or the salute of a military officer to the colors of his regiment.

[To be continued.]