

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DEC. 23, 1853.

TOM-FOOLERY.

Old Samuel Johnson, with more malice than truth, defined a fishing rod, as something with a line and hook at one end, and a fool at the other. How, or in what terms, the learned Doctor would have described a circle of "Spirit Rappers," we know not; probably as a "table in the centre, and a lot of noodles on the periphery. Yet we speak with diffidence; for the surly old gentleman had, if report speaks true, a lively faith in, and a sincere respect for, the "Cock Lane Ghost;" now the "Cock Lane Ghost" was evidently a maternal ancestress of the Misses Fox.

"Spiritual Rappings"—or—"Cock-Lane-Ghostism"—one of the latest phases of modern Protestantism—have, we regret to say, made their appearance in a very striking manner in this good city of Montreal: and, if the public journals may be relied on, have found partisans, and believers, amongst men, pretending to a smattering of education, and—Oh disgrace!—calling themselves Catholics. Wonderful things are told of tables—how they give a paw—stand up on one leg, and answer the most difficult questions, in the most intelligent and amiable manner. Our very household furniture is taking up its parable against us; and we find tongues in our stools, and extract most eloquent sermons from a rush bottomed chair. Where this is to end, we know not; not until the tables are fairly laid, either for dinner, or in the Red Sea: we should prefer the former.

We do not pretend to account for the extraordinary phenomena of which we have lately read.—Whether they be the product of an impudent charlatanry, or of supernatural devilry, we pause not, at present, to enquire; for in either case, they are beneath the respectful attention of the gentleman, or the Christian, whose only interest therein should be, either to expose the one, or denounce the other, as tricks—and very mischievous and dangerous tricks too—played off by cunning knaves upon silly fools; or as infernal artifices by which the devil seeks to decoy unwary souls to hell. "Spiritual Rappings" we say, with all their attendant phenomena, are either human-knavish, or superhuman-devilish; it is therefore the duty of every gentleman, of every Christian Catholic, to denounce them, and to discountenance their abettors.

When Mr. Ketter, at the Theatre Royal, displays his tricks of "Second Sight" and "Table Rappings," we may safely look on, laugh, and applaud the ingenuity and dexterity of the operator; for we all know that we are looking at that which, after all, professes to be but a trick, though a very clever, and perhaps a very simple trick. We can assist at such displays with respect for the skill of the exhibitor, and without contempt for the intelligence of the audience. But the case is very different when the same phenomena are brought forward in support of a most dangerous, and demoralising system; of a system, which has ruined the health and intellects, the souls and bodies, of thousands in the United States: and which is based upon the hypothesis that there exists a medium of communication betwixt the living and the dead. The thing becomes now too serious for laughter; it is dangerous to society, and most damnable in its consequences; and as such loudly calls for the intervention, either of a policeman with a magistrate's warrant against common cheats and hawks—or of the Catholic priest, with his prayers and exorcisms against unclean spirits. Of these two remedies, we should decidedly recommend the application of the legal one, first: and then—should the "Rappings" continue in the jail yard—or "Spiritual Manifestations" take place on the treadmill—then, and not before, should we feel inclined to call upon the assistance of the Church and her ministers. We would undertake, by means of hard labor, low diet, a convict's dress, and, in extreme cases, a timely application of the "oat," to cure the worst "medium" on the continent of America, and to put a complete stop to all "Spiritual Manifestations" for the future.

It would be necessary however to distinguish betwixt the dupers, and the duped, betwixt the knaves and fools: remembering that the latter—in all these absurd displays—invariably compose the great majority; indeed many of those who begin as the first, end by becoming the last, that is, the fools, and duped. Besides men are so easily gulled, that we can readily believe that many, very many, of the dealers in "Rappings" are in perfect good faith with the public, in what they relate. These poor creatures should be the objects of our pity, and prayerful sympathy, whether we look upon their hallucinations as proceeding from a disordered stomach, or a disordered brain, from an intellectual depravity, or demoniacal possession; we should therefore be careful not to encourage them in their folly, or worse; and to show that, over true Catholics, "Spiritual Rappings" and all the "diablerie" of the XIX century can exercise no power, and with them, obtain no credit. If of man, we laugh at them; if of the devil, we despise them, and him, and snap our fingers at him,

and all his tricks: he is a poor creature after all, and the greatest fool in creation.

One observation we would make in conclusion, to the victims of this singular delusion. Don't you think that your Spirits must be a precious set of fools, not to have discovered by this time some better, and more expeditious process of communicating their thoughts, that the stupid, tedious, and childish plan of rapping on a table? Why, man-a-live, you, though no Newton, are an angel of intelligence compared with one of those stupid louts of Spirits, for you can talk and write, and are not altogether such a fool as to spend your time playing tricks with your neighbor's furniture; even the spirit of a defunct jack-ass, of ordinary attainments, would be ashamed of such silly trifling; it at least would denote its asinine presence by a spiritual bray, and that is more than your Spirits can do. Courage man; cut your connexion with those Spirits, for their acquaintance does you no credit. Go to your duties—show yourself to the priest—make a good confession—and humbly approach the Blessed Sacrament: we warrant you that you shall never be troubled with "Rapping Spirits" again. And remember this—that bad, dishonest, and apostate Catholics have always made the best "mediums," as over such men the devil seems to have especial power; they are his own peculiar darlings, the flowers of his flock.

SUNDAYS v. HOLYDAYS.

Until the end of the XVI. century, the Christian world had ever looked upon Sundays as Holydays, or Festivals, upon which, desisting from all servile work, men might enjoy relaxation for their souls and bodies, in the service of their God, and in all innocent amusements. All Sundays were Holydays, and all Holydays were, by the Church, enjoined to be observed as Sundays; and, in like manner, to be sanctified by a complete suspension of all servile work, and by a devout attendance upon the sacred offices of religion, which, upon those days, were celebrated with more than usual magnificence. For some time after the great apostasy of the XVI. century, and until the foul spirit of Puritanism, with its pestilential breath, dispelled the last vestiges of Catholic tradition, similar views, as to the nature of Sundays and Holydays, obtained:—

"Sundays and holydays," says Hallam in his Constitutional History, "stood much on the same footing, as days on which no work except for a good cause was to be performed, the service of the Church was to be attended, and any lawful amusement might be indulged in"—c. vii.

It was not till about 1595, says the same historian, that the Puritans began to place the Sunday, or hebdomadal festival of our Lord's Resurrection, on the footing of the Jewish Sabbath:—

"Interdicting, not only the slightest action of worldly business, but even every sort of pastime and recreation; a system which, once promulgated, soon gained ground, as suiting their atrabilious humor, and affording a new theme of censure on the vices of the great"—Ibid.

The Church of England long, but ineffectually, contended against this Judaizing tendency; and, to its credit be it said, had no sympathy with what Hallam calls, the "atrabilious humor" of the Puritans, and manifested no desire to curtail the rational and innocent amusements of the people. Even to the present day, it makes no distinction, in its Rubrics, or Liturgies, betwixt Festival and Festival—betwixt "The Feast, of the Nativity of our Lord—of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin," and "All Sundays in the year." Sundays and Holydays are still in the letter, if not in the spirit, of the Protestant church of England, synonyms, denoting stated periods for relaxation from servile toil, and the public worship of Almighty God.

Well would it have been for the morals, and happiness of the people of England, if these views—remnants of better, and Catholic days—had been retained; if the Sunday had still been allowed to maintain its hold upon the affections, and therefore upon the reverence, of the people, as the Christian man's Holyday, and the poor man's Festival; if their May-games, their foot-ball matches, on Sunday afternoons, had not been cast aside; and the village green, with its merry groups of blythe lads, and buxom lasses, had not been abandoned for the low pot-shop, the fetid atmosphere of the brothel, and the Saturnalia of a Protestant Sabbath. Alas! for the Holydays of merry, and Catholic England—for the foul spirit of Puritanism has breathed upon them. Alas! for the morality of her people, who, in the Sunday, can no longer recognise the Christian's Holyday. With the Protestant, Sunday and Holyday are placed in irreconcilable antagonism—the one is the antithesis of the other.

We have been led to make these remarks by an article in last Saturday's Transcript—a journal from which we should have looked for better things. Christmas Day falls this year on a Sunday; and the Catholic will, at the same time, celebrate the Feast of our Lord's Nativity, and the Christian weekly Festival, knowing that the Church demands from him the same sentiments of love and devotion towards the Giver of every good and perfect gift upon the one, as upon the other; and that enjoyments, which are lawful on a Christmas Day, are lawful on all Sundays in the year. Not so with the Protestant; with him, Sunday is a day of gloom, specially set apart for the indulgence of his "atrabilious humor" in public, and his lusts in private; whilst Christmas Day is a day of undisguised, open debauchery, and unrestrained, unbridled license, both in public and in private.

"You are well aware"—says a Protestant writer, approvingly quoted by our cotemporary—"that real Christmas Day enjoyments, setting aside attendance at Divine worship, cannot be participated in on that day, without desecration of the Sabbath;" and the

Transcript endorses the above with the following remark of his own:—

"A holyday is deficient, or the Sabbath is profaned."

In other words, the modern Protestant Holyday stands in such a position of antagonism towards the Christian Sunday, that it is impossible to observe the one without openly desecrating the other.

What then, are these "real Christmas Day enjoyments," permissible on that day on which the Church celebrates the Nativity of the Redeemer, and returns thanks for that the Son of God became Man for our salvation, but which would however be intolerable and criminal of a Sunday? It is lawful to do good on a Sunday—Is it, we would ask of our cotemporary, lawful to do that which is not good on Christmas Day? Or will God wink at debauchery, and sensuality upon one day, and punish it if practised on another?

Be not deceived; God will not be mocked; any "real Christmas Day enjoyment" which is lawful on the 25th of December, is equally lawful on every other day of the year, be it Sunday, or Monday; and that which may not be done on Sunday, is as much sin if done on Christmas Day: On both we should, with thankful hearts, refrain from our servile works, and meet together to thank God for the mercies He has bestowed upon us; on both may we indulge ourselves in every innocent recreation and amusement, which interferes not with the stated services of the sanctuary, and which diverts not our affections from Him whom we should love, for Himself, and above all things; but on neither is excess innocent—or rioting, gluttony, wantonness, or debauchery, lawful. Christmas and Sundays are both Holydays, and should therefore both be kept holy; they are Festivals on which we should be merry, but with merriment such as becometh a Christian; abstaining from the sensuality of the libertine on the one hand, and from the "atrabilious humor" of the Puritan on the other; both being equally opposed to the true spirit of Christianity.

We trust our readers will take our remarks in good part; and believe our sincerity, when we wish them a "Merry Christmas," and none the less a "Merry" one, because it falls upon a Sunday. Nay, as we shall have on Sunday next, two Festivals, instead of one, we trust that it may be doubly "Merry;" but truly "Merry," only, if its merriment be restrained within the bounds of Christian moderation. Let us shew by our conduct that, unlike Protestants, we can keep the Festival of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus, without profaning the day of which also He proclaimed Himself the Lord—"Dominus enim est filius hominis etiam Sabbati."—St. Matt. xii. 8.

To our "atrabilious" friend of the Transcript we offer a very different advice. If he feels that "Christmas day enjoyments" are a profanation of the Sabbath, let him abstain from them; let him eschew roast turkey, and look not on the face of a bottle of Champagne; and, above all, let him not touch "mince-pies," lest he be grievously tormented in his bowels, and in his conscience. There is no warrant in Scripture for "mince-pies;" leave them to poor blinded bigotted Papists.

Some remarks of a correspondent of the Quebec Gazette, of the 10th, who, over the signature of Marcus, undertakes the defence of Mr. Jenkins' integrity, against our strictures, seem to call for a reply from the TRUE WITNESS.

Marcus taxes us with being unjust towards Mr. Jenkins, because we have attributed his mistranslations, and false quotations from Catholic authors, either to ignorance or bad faith; and because we have asserted that no language can be too severe towards the "deliberate falsifier and maligner of his brethren." We reiterate this assertion.

Marcus may call the wilful rendering of "addoloratissimo" as—"most adorable"—instead of—"most afflicted"—a trifling error if he will; but we call it by the shorter name of a—"lie"—deliberately and wilfully resorted to, for the purpose of making it appear that Catholics adore, with supreme worship, the body of the Blessed Virgin. If Marcus says that this mistranslation was an unintentional error on Mr. Jenkins' part, we tell him candidly that we do not believe him.

The same remarks do not apply to another error, of a very similar tendency, which occurs in Mr. Jenkins' pretended quotations from the "Roman Catholic Missal for the use of the Laity." We doubt if Mr. Jenkins has ever opened a Missal in his life, or any other Liturgical work of the Catholic Church, and therefore we give him the benefit of that doubt. Mr. Jenkins picked the quotation up, most likely, in some one of the No-popey tracts from which his lectures are compiled; and so whipt it in, as calculated to serve his purpose of making it appear that Catholics ignore, or deny, the sole mediatorship of Christ. Still—as the Missal is a work easily obtained—prudence, if not charity, or a love of truth, should have induced Mr. Jenkins to satisfy himself, by personal observation, whether the passage, which he quoted as an instance of the corruptions of Romanism, does, or does not occur. Had he done so, he would never have had the impudence to state at p. 208 of his lectures, that the following prayer is to be found in the service for St. Thomas of Canterbury, in the "Roman Catholic Missal for the use of the Laity:—

"Do thou, by the blood of St. Thomas, which he spent for us, grant that we may ascend whither he has ascended."

We assert that no such prayer occurs in the Missal, or any of the Liturgies of the Roman Catholic Church. We have carefully searched these Liturgies, and nowhere is such a form of invocation to be found; or any prayer which does not conclude with "per Christum Dominum nostrum"—thus clearly

recognising that it is through Him, and His merits alone, that either our prayers, or the prayers and merits of the Saints, can avail for our salvation.

Marcus seems to assert that the passage, as quoted by Mr. Jenkins, does occur in the Liturgy; for he says "he has it in Latin before him." It appears to us that the most satisfactory manner of bringing the question to an issue, would be for Marcus to state, where, and in what service of the Liturgy—this prayer to St. Thomas of Canterbury is to be found. We have looked for it in vain.

"A PROTESTANT'S APPEAL TO THE DOUAY BIBLE."

Our controversy with Mr. Jenkins on the Eucharist, resolves itself into a simple historical question—were the Elevation, and Adoration, of the consecrated Host, generally practised in the Christian Church ere it may be said that the corruptions of the Church of Rome had commenced? For, if both, or either, of these practices can be shown to have generally obtained during any period of the Christian era, prior to the commencement of that corruption, we may be well assured that, at the same period, it was generally believed that the Host, so elevated, and exposed to the adoration of the faithful, was indeed, in virtue of the consecration, the adorable body of Our Lord Jesus Christ. If the language of the Fathers be ambiguous, there can be no doubt about the meaning of such an act as the Elevation and Adoration of the consecrated species. Of this Mr. Jenkins seems to be conscious:—

"The elevation and adoration of the Host is another thing against which Protestants remonstrate; a practice which stands or falls with the doctrine of Transubstantiation. We remark (1.) Because there is no ground for this doctrine of Transubstantiation, either in the Scriptures, or in the early fathers of the Church as was proved in the former lecture, we are therefore bound to protest against it, as both unscriptural and idolatrous. But independently of this we protest against it (2.) Because it was not the practice of the Apostles as recorded by the Word of God. If our Catholic friends say that they have warrant for it in Scripture the onus probandi is upon them, they must prove that it is so, and not we that it is not. We protest against against it (3.) Because it is opposed to the practice of the ancient church after the apostolic age. The first command which the Church received for the elevation and adoration of the Host was in the year 1213, the year following that in which the Lateran Council was held, when Pope Honorius ordered that the priests, at a certain part of the service of the Mass, should elevate the Host, and cause the people to prostrate themselves in worshipping it. We challenge our Roman Catholic friends to produce higher, or more ancient authority for this practice, in the Church generally, than the early part of the thirteenth century."—pp. 330, 331.

We accept Mr. Jenkins' challenge; and know not which to admire the more—the ignorance of ecclesiastical history, which it betrays on the part of him who made it; or the ignorance and blind credulity of the audience, which could patiently sit listening to such nonsense. Perhaps however, there is, after all, nothing to admire; for so gross is the ignorance of ecclesiastical history on the part, both of Protestant ministers, and Protestant congregations, that one will greedily swallow any absurdities which the other may please to utter.

To come however to facts. We assert that, from the earliest periods of the Church's history, of which we have any authentic written documents, during some part of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Host was, after consecration, publicly elevated by the officiating priest, and thus exposed to the adoration of the faithful; we conclude therefore that, that which was so elevated and adored, was believed to be really and truly the body of Christ; and that Protestantism, which has denied this belief, and rejected the practices which attested it, is not the "Old Religion."

To come to proofs. The Liturgies of the Church, both of the Eastern, and Western, Church—many of which are still retained by sects, cut off from the Church, long before the time of Gregory the Great,—are still extant; and we assert, that in every one of these, the Elevation of the consecrated Host, at some part of the service, is distinctly pointed out. In the Greek Church, and in most of the Oriental Liturgies, this Elevation does not take place, as with us, immediately after consecration, but shortly before the Communion. This fact is so clear, that Protestants themselves have been forced to admit it, and have been thus sorely puzzled to account for the similarity of practices between religious bodies so long, and so entirely separated, from one another, and from the Church of Rome. If the latter were the mother of all abominations, and the source from whence the corruptions of the Christian world have flowed, how has it happened that rival, and most hostile, sects have adopted all her idolatrous practices? Is it not more probable that these practices generally obtained ere the separation took place? Protestants would at once answer this latter question in the affirmative, did they not see that, by so doing, they would be affirming the antiquity of the "Errors of Romanism."

It is not necessary for us to cite these ancient Liturgies, because, as we said above, we have the admissions of Protestant historians as to the antiquity and universality of the practice of the Elevation of the Host; and though we reject their testimony when hostile to the Church, as that of interested and partial witnesses, their evidence is conclusive when it is in her favor. We appeal then to Neander in support of the antiquity and universality of the practice of Elevating the Host, and thus exposing it to the adoration of the Faithful during the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as celebrated in the IV. century. It must be remembered that Neander, strongly prejudiced against Catholicity, is striving to make out a case against the doctrine of Transubstantiation—and, to do this, he finds himself compelled to attribute to the early Church the equally mysterious dogma of Consub-