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Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES. Vol. I. No. 52.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1856.

WHOLE SERIES Vol. XX. No. 52.

Poetry.

"Go, work to-day in the Vineyard."
 Work! 'tis thy Saviour's voice;
 He calls thee *now*:
 This instant be His service thy glad choice;
 Go, christian, go.

Work, with the moon's first ray;
 To duty haste:
 Seize hours and minutes ere they flee away;
 No moment waste.

Work, while the day is thine;
 'Tis waning fast:
 To-morrow's sun for thee in vain may shine;
 This day thy last!

Work, ere the sun goes down,
 And night comes on:
 The evening shadows gather fast, and soon
 Thy day is gone.

Work, for Eternity,
 Lost souls to save:
 Warn them from hell! to Jesus bid them flee!
 Cease not till death—then sweet thy rest shall be
 Beyond the grave.

History and Topography.

For the Christian Messenger.

Recollections of Rome.

[No. 5.]

ROMAN CATHOLICISM.

In Rome we can most clearly perceive the vast difference between Protestantism and Catholicism. Genuine Protestantism aims to affect the heart through the mind, and to reform the life by the presentation of Christian truth. The religion of the Reformation makes no boast of splendid edifices; she makes no efforts to excite the imagination or the sensibilities; she exhibits but little art in her mode of worship. Protestantism possesses few charms for the carnal heart—but to the spiritual worshipper she unveils a temple more gorgeous than human skill ever erected, or earthly wealth ever adorned; to him she exhibits a "great cloud of witnesses" more glorious even than those saints and angels whom the genius of Raphael has delineated; to him she sings "a new song," softer than the *Miserere*, grander than the *Te Deum*.

Roman Catholicism, on the contrary, seeks to influence, directly, the imagination and the sensibilities. Her aim is not to instruct the mind and, through it, to influence the heart and the life, but, by gorgeous temples, beautiful paintings, imposing rites, and delightful music, to fascinate the devotee, to awaken religious sentiment. This religion opens up no spiritual temple, but, to make amends, she can show solid earthly structures of unequalled magnificence. She offers a most excellent mode of worship to the lovers of the beautiful, a capital theology for those who cannot or will not think, and a very delightful and expeditious road to heaven, for those who are disinclined to the straight gate and the narrow way.

Viewed outwardly, the Catholic religion in Rome is very beautiful. The churches are very numerous, all are interesting, untold wealth and unrivalled skill have been expended in their erection and completion, and some of them in their proportions, materials and ornaments are perfectly magnificent.

The Roman church is not a meeting-house; it is, emphatically, a place of worship. Here God is supposed to be specially present, and if he be influenced in his choice of a dwelling, by outward splendor, certainly no place is more suitable than this. Here, too, the sacrifice of the, so-called, body and blood of Christ, is offered up. This is a place for emotion, not for thought; a place for the exhibition of objects fitted to stir the sensibilities, but not for mere instruction.

On entering one of these temples, we are astonished at the lavish expenditure of wealth and genius. The interior fairly dazzles the spectator, by its ornaments. The eye glances with pleasure over the polished marbles, the glittering mosaics, the brilliant frescoes, the beautiful paintings, and the noble statues. The many

altars in the church have each of them some splendid painting of saint or angel. How we pause to admire some exquisite representation of the Virgin Mary, and as we contemplate a model of female gentleness, beauty and purity, we cease to wonder why she receives so much admiration and worship. In the paintings she takes the place of the Saviour. He is always the suffering man, or the stern avenger; but the Virgin, with love in her countenance, is the gentle mediator who intercedes with her stern, and more relentless son. We turn from some beautiful picture of the Virgin to the representation of the crucifixion of Christ. Thick, black drops trickle down the pallid countenance, or fall from the spikes which are driven through his hands and feet. The whole body seems to quiver with agony, and the brow exhibits anguish that cannot be spoken. We shudder at the representation of so much woe.

When the spectator has completed his survey of the ornaments of the splendid edifice,—the gold, and silver, and marbles, or works of art more precious still, he composes himself to attend to the service of the place. Before the high altar, which gleams with gold and gems, the priest stands, arrayed in gorgeous apparel. He waves a golden censer, and sends upwards a thick cloud of incense, filling the house with its fragrance. The worshippers are on their knees, silent and solemn, paying their devotions to their gods.

Then, perhaps, a change takes place in the services. The deep tones of the organ break through the silence, a hymn of praise bursts forth from the crowd of worshippers. Now the music is as soft and as sweet as the notes of the flute, and now in tones of thunder it fills with awe the breasts of all.

"Then the eye with a fine frenzy rolling doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven."

But while so much art, and genius, and wealth have been lavished to make religion beautiful, but little exertion has been put forth to make men's hearts purer of their lives more holy. The priests and monks who swarm in Rome do not improve their fellow-citizens, either by precept or example. The priests act well in the imposing ceremonies of the church, and the monks say mass very well, considering that three-fourths of them do not know the meaning of a word of their lesson. They hear confession, and make excellent spies, but beyond this their duties do not extend.

Few of these numerous priests are instructors, few of these numerous churches contain a pulpit. On Sunday afternoons a monk preaches to a small congregation in the area of the Coliseum. In the church of St. Andrew dell Valle there is occasionally a sermon given in English. In England the priests are preachers also. In France and Germany there is an acknowledgement by the priests that men have minds, but the very existence of such a thing as intellect seems to be ignored in Rome.

The Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church does not like the doctrine of justification by faith. But while she denies the importance of that trust in the merits of Christ, which the Bible enjoins, she claims for her own teachings a most implicit faith. She does not require men "to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," but she does enjoin them, at the peril of their souls, to believe in the infallibility of Roman Popes, in the piety of Roman priests and cardinals, in the truthfulness of the romantic legends which have been handed down. This requires a vast exercise of faith from any man, but in none so much as from the native of Rome.

The church frowns upon the Bible, and severely punishes the man who would, with faith, receive the gracious words which fell from the lips of Jesus, or the soul-stirring logic and rhetoric of Paul. She disapproves of the Bible because it is so hard to be understood. Yet, while she opposes a faith in the very words of God, she herself announces mysteries and doctrines more difficult to receive than the most profound revelations of the Scriptures.

The miracles of which she boasts stagger

our credulity, since they are not only opposed to the ordinary course of nature, but to the manner in which the all-wise God works. The miracles of the Roman church are impossibilities, because they are senseless, and aimless. The faith in a divine revelation, and in a divine Redeemer, which Protestants hold, is surely vastly more rational than the faith demanded by a church which can produce no proof of her antiquity, a faith in purgatory, transubstantiation, or the immaculate conception, doctrines of which the Bible speaks only to condemn, faith in crosses and pictures, faith in old slabs and disgusting relics of dead men.

The Roman Catholic church does demand a most extraordinary amount of faith in all who would be justified by her. In the cathedral of St. Peter's, is the chair on which St. Peter himself sat; there is the very towel with which St. Petronica wiped the sweat from the brow of Jesus, as he was toiling to Calvary with his cross, and still the towel bears the impress of his features. Near the cathedral of St. John Lateran are the Santa Scala which Jesus trod when descending from the Judgment seat of Pilate. In the chapel to which these steps lead, there is a portrait of Christ by the Evangelist Luke. In the dungeons beneath the church of St. Giuseppe de Faleguami the fountain still flows which gushed from the earth for the baptism of the jailors of St. Peter. In the church of Ara Coeli, we are shewn a little wooden image of the infant Jesus,—the work of an angel.

In the church of Domine quo Vadis, outside the city wall, there is a marble slab, which bears the impress of the Saviour's feet. These are a few of the many objects which require of the Roman Catholic, a faith truly child-like.

We must not, however, allow our wonder at the singular dislike which popery exhibits to a reasonable faith, and our passionate exhortations to a faith which is blind and senseless, to urge us into any feelings of bigotry. Upon the whole we must confess that, viewed from the outside, popery is very beautiful. Her churches are magnificent, her services solemn and imposing, her music delightful. Her monks and priests are fed and clothed in a manner which does credit to her house-keeping and wardrobe.

In conclusion we are brought to the candid conviction that, with the exception of Christianity, Roman Catholicism is the most interesting and useful religion in the world. Compared with her, Puseyism seems like the ass of the fable, trotting about with the lion's skin, and with the utmost complacency imagining that its brayings are really like the deep-mouthed roar of the forest king. No, my dear Puseyite friend, you must practice intonation, and bob up and down, and turn hither and thither, for some time longer before you can hope to rival the Catholic priest. You may preach about the church, and holy week, and the altar, and doing duty, and the baptismal waters for some time longer before you will be any thing else but a jack ass. You never can learn to roar, or lash your tail, or frighten dissenters so long as you are the nominal member of a protestant church. The full blown Roman Catholic may excite a little nervous shuddering, but the Puseyite can only create a grin, such as one makes when he sees a monkey trying to imitate a man.

Roman Catholicism is, as we have said, a very magnificent religion—a great improvement on the religion of ancient Rome. We might fancy a Roman of the olden pagan times, arising from the dead. If a man of taste and intelligence, he would be struck with the improvements which had taken place during the last two thousand years. Some institutions he would recognize. The Carnival would seem very like the old Saturnalia; here and there he would see in the modern churches, statues of Apollo or Mercury, before whom he had once bowed, the names only changed. The Pantheon would seem to have undergone no change, the very niches in its walls being still filled with gods and goddesses. He would enter St. Peter's with delight, and candidly acknowledge that ancient Rome

boasted of no temple like this; he would go to the vases of holy water and perform lustrations just as of old; he would look upon the idols which surround the walls of this temple, and think every thing was just as it ought to be. The glittering mosaics, and the brilliant paintings he would think were additional attractions to the holy place. The statue of Peter near the centre of the building he would recognize, as an old statue of Jupiter. He would fancy that Peter was the modern name of Jupiter, and that the apostolic keys were an improvement on the ancient thunderbolts. Mary, of course, would be the modern name for Juno.

As he contemplated the paintings of the Virgin he would admire her more than formerly, and wonder how she became so gentle and sorrowful. The sacrifice of the mass he would also admire, and deem it a great improvement on the old system of slaying the dumb animal at the altar. He would also be pleased to see the Pontifex Maximus, living so regally, and exerting so much power. After his examinations of Roman Catholicism in Rome, he would say, well, how little the world has changed. During the last two thousand years, the old temple and palaces have, of course, mouldered to the ground, this city has lost much of its ancient magnificence, but still the good old religion remains, unchanged, improved considerably, but in its essence and spirit the same. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun.

For the Christian Messenger.

Australian Mission.

MR. EDITOR,

As the Australian Mission is now being discussed in the C. M. and C. V., I claim the privilege of presenting my thoughts upon this important question. True, when "Vin Aigre" appeared I felt something like regret steal over my mind, and had I not discerned unmistakable evidences of the author's genius so as to put it down as my opinion, the production of Bro. D. M., I would have said that *Vinegar* would have been an appropriate signature to such a communication.

As I was not at the Convention I have no personal knowledge of what passed there; but it appears to me not to be the better way of recording our dissent from an action of any meeting, small or large majority, by holding up their enterprise to a kind of modest ridicule (which seemed to be the object of the *Vinegar* production,) in order to make it unpopular.

It seems to me a strange matter, that this mission should be opposed as it is in some quarters. But let us look at the matter calmly, and not allow ourselves to get into a contentious mood.

Let us in the first place look at the objection growing out of the scarcity of ministers in the Provinces, I admit that we need some 50 or 60 more ministers in the home field; but is that an argument against going abroad? Was this argument used by Bro. D. or others when Arthur Crawley was about going in the foreign field? or when Bro. Burpe left the Provinces? Yet ministers were as scarce then as now. Could not the same argument have been urged against Cary going to the east? against Marshman, Judson, and others? Those men could have found plenty to do at home. No doubt they could have been useful as home missionaries or as pastors, but still they went. They felt "Woe is me if I preach not Christ to the heathen." They were "pressed in spirit," felt constrained to go to the "regions beyond." Then why should this scarcity of ministers at home now be so vehemently urged against an Australian Mission? Surely brethren the above is fair argument, and places the present enterprise as clear of home ties as the foreign mission.

Then our brethren seem to say in the second place, that the Australian Mission will divert the forth-coming funds from the Foreign Mission, which is a serious consideration. In reply we say we have no Foreign Mission, and our funds collected for that purpose have been, and are still likely to be, handed over to other Boards