

Secession from the English Establishment.

[From the Correspondent of the Christian Watchman and Reflector.]

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MESSRS. EDITORS.—In my last communication, I mentioned to you the secession from the Establishment of the Rev. John Dodson, A. M., Vicar of Cockerham, near Lancashire. His "Reasons for leaving the English Establishment" have just been published. If I am not greatly mistaken, the book will excite much attention, and perhaps, obtain a wider circulation than even Mr. Noel's Essay. The work is smaller, (price 2s.) which renders it more accessible to the multitude, and a statement of the reasons which have influenced him in taking this step will give it a power to interest and impress both Churchmen and Dissenters. It is written in a style simple and unaffected, and contains many passages of startling pungency and forcible reasoning. A brief outline of the work, and a few general extracts, I am persuaded, will interest your readers.

Mr. Dodson's reasons for leaving the English Establishment are arranged in the following order.

I. "I cannot maintain my subscriptions."
II. "My views and convictions are increasingly at variance with the system of the Establishment; a reason which applies to continuance, not merely in its ministry, but in its communion."

III. "I believe many of the fundamental principles of the Establishment to be unscriptural and mischievous."

IV. "The sins of the Establishment."

V. "The results of the Establishment."

Under the first reason Mr. Dodson refers to the three articles of the 36th canon, which asserts the Queen's ecclesiastical and spiritual supremacy, that *nothing* in the prayer book is *contrary*, and that *everything* in the articles is *agreeable* to the Word of God, and, after having shown that that he, in his conscience, does not assert these things, which every clergyman must subscribe at his ordination, he says:

"Having, then, seen the falsehood of those subscriptions, shall I continue to affirm them? shall I consent to retain my ministry on these terms? shall I maintain myself in my position by the virtual daily ratification of a subscription now seen to have been made in error? shall I purchase my orders and my benefice by a daily acted falsehood? I think, then, that I am justified in assigning the untenability of my subscriptions as my first and foremost reason for secession?"

The manner in which he enumerates the shifts and evasions to which clergymen have recourse in order to harmonize the baptismal service with Scripture and with common sense is striking. He shows that the mass both of clergy and laity, still lean to the doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration*, and openly defend it from the formularies of the church; and stigmatize, as disingenuous shufflers, all who venture to expound them in a different sense. He thus concludes:

"If you look at facts, you will find, that notwithstanding all your explanation of this language, its actual effect has been in every age, and in every generation, not only to train up the great mass of the English clergy to be the holders of that soul-destroying doctrine, but to alienate them from the doctrines of the Reformation generally, and to instigate, and greatly to aid their endeavours to bring back the Church of England to the embrace of Rome."

Under the third reason, Mr. Dodson observes:

"The Establishment is not the Church.—Such a separation, therefore, is not necessarily schism. The Establishment may be left, in order to avoid any evil greater than that of passing from one section of Christ's church to another section of the same church. Nor does the objection move us, that in seceding from the Establishment, we shall be leaving our places to the Tractarians; and shall soon see them working the Establishment to their own advantage, and the deadly wounding of the cause of truth. If it be so we cannot help it. We may not do evil that good may come. We will not do wrong to prevent others from doing it. The place is too straight for us.—The Establishment is not theirs, any more than ours. If we are not at home in it, neither are they. If many of its practices and principles favor them, its doctrinal articles, being in the main Protestant, are against them.—This, the honest Tractarians have confessed; and, as in duty bound, have become Papists.

And so it is; Tractarians and evangelical men must alike quit the Establishment, if true to their convictions; the former because it is too Protestant, the latter, because it is too Popish."

I shall conclude with a single additional extract:

"Such then being, and likely to be, the results of the Establishment, my judgment the more condemns it; I shrink the more from connection with it; and I feel the more constrained even to desire its downfall, and to join in that cry (with respect to the Anglican church, as established,) which will yet be heard to wax louder and louder, 'take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's!'"

As a proof of the interest which questions relating to the Established Church now excite, I may mention that the titles of no less than *sixteen publications* on this subject now lie before me, which have just issued from the press. The evangelical members of the Church of England appear to be aroused to the imminent dangers to which that church is exposed from the Tractarian movement. Dr. Wiseman, the Roman Catholic Bishop of London, has himself said: "It seems impossible to read the works of the Oxford divines, and especially, to follow them chronologically, without discovering a daily approach to our holy church, both in doctrine and affectionate feeling."

A new illustration of the absurdities of Puseyism has just been given by the Rev. Mr. Maskell, an adherent of the Bishop of Exeter, and who was recently his examining chaplain. This clergyman, within the last few weeks, made a statement in his own pulpit which would scarcely be credited in the United States, and which shows that Puseyism is in a fair way to out Herod even Popery. The fact was stated by Sir Culling E. Eardley, at a public meeting, the last week, on the most unquestionable authority, that Mr. Maskell had said in a sermon,

"That the thief on the cross had been baptized, or he could not have been saved; that he would have been baptized by St. Peter, had not the apostle fallen by denying his Master; and that, as the thief was on the cross when our Lord's side was pierced, and the water came out from the Redeemer's side, it was thrown over the penitent thief, and therefore, he was baptized and redeemed from his sins."

By the present condition of the church, as by law established, he is condemned to eternal bondage, and incapable of reformation upon any vital point. Her living members are linked to a dead body; yet many of them dread nothing so much as the stroke which would give freedom to her movements, by separating her from the State. Although they must swear that they approve of everything in the formularies and articles of the church, yet they wish some things were not there or differently expressed. Some would explain the prayer-book by the articles, others would accommodate the articles to the prayer-book.—And thus, the church has been like a house divided against itself, from the time of her alliance with the State.

The anti-State Church Association, whose annual meeting will be held in a few days, is closing vigorously its winter campaign. This society has made great progress during the past year. As an illustration of this remark, I will mention a single fact. About a year since, a deputation from this society visited Bristol, to hold a public meeting but not a single Dissenting pastor of that city was present on the occasion. This indifference arose, not because they were friendly to the union of Church and State, but from an apprehension that injury might be done from anything like political agitation. At a very large meeting of the Association, lately held in that city, all the leading Dissenting ministers were present, and eloquently advocated its cause. A still more recent instance of their zeal has been manifested in a meeting convened in reference to Mr. Shore, one of their resolutions being the necessity of the separation of Church and State.

There were also some remarkable circumstances that occurred at a crowded and highly respectable meeting which has just been held at Bath, in regard to Mr. Shore's imprisonment. The Rev. Hobart Seymour, of the Church of England, in moving the first resolution, acknowledged the sins of his church, but he hoped to see the time when she would stand forth a pure and reformed church; and when he saw the man who would unfurl the banner of church reformation, no man would leap to his side with more readiness than he. He stood before them, therefore, to claim li-

berly for the church, whilst he felt ashamed and sorry that she should ever have owned such a bishop as the Bishop of Exeter. He was no admirer of the canons of the church, still less was he an admirer of the bishop's courts. The canons were oppressive and the courts unjust. How could it be otherwise, when, in the courts, the bishop was the accuser, the bishop was the jury, and the bishop was the judge? The bishop drew up the indictment, returned the verdict, and passed judgment.

The Rev. Thomas Spencer, a clergyman of the Church of England, moved, as an amendment to one of the resolutions, "That, whilst, sympathizing with Mr. Shore as the victim of an unjust law, this meeting desires more particularly to denounce the law itself, and to remove the power to oppress, and to this end the persons now present do hereby pledge themselves to sign a petition to Parliament, praying for the following reforms: To obtain the abolition of all ecclesiastical courts, 230 in number; to obtain the removal of the bishops from the House of Lords; to obtain the immediate and entire reformation of the Church of England, including its separation from the State; to obtain for the people of England the right to elect their own ministers; and to obtain the appropriation of ecclesiastical property to national purposes, due regard being had to existing incumbents and patrons." This amendment was put from the chair, and an immense forest of hands held up in its favour—a demonstration that was followed with deafening applause.

REVIVAL OF OUR INNER LIFE.

Christ, in saying that the kingdom of God is within us, has virtually taught us where to look for the beginning of a revival. There is no harm in the application of the term revival to the raising of the dead to life—to the conversion of sinners, who never have been alive to God—provided we keep well in mind that revival in the stricter sense, and that revival which Christians should most immediately seek, is the raising of a higher flow of life in their own hearts. That a revival consists mainly in an increase of the spiritual affections of the persons who pray for revival, and hence that the field for them to cultivate is so near home, should dwell in mind as a first principle of all that is said, and felt, and done respecting revivals.

This of course will not hinder any suitable efforts to act on other minds—whether by mutual exhortations among Christians, or by endeavors to persuade men to be reconciled to Christ. For it is the revival of our inner life that gives life and force to act thus without.

When our own impression of eternal realities is vivid and intense, through our intimate communion with God, our desire to move other minds becomes irrepressible, and our longings for their salvation will have utterance in effectual intercessions for them. So that the most direct and effectual way for a church to put in motion the train of influences that will secure the conversion of men, is for each individual to spend his first and main care in promoting an increase of his own interior life. The ministry are supposed to be more especially concerned to secure the best methods of reviving religion in the hearts of others, especially of those committed to their charge. But what can a minister do in a way of giving shape and tone to his labors, which will more surely contribute to a general revival, than to spend his main care in securing a revival of his own fervors and affections?—Let him have the ordinary qualifications for the ministry, and judgement and discretion in applications of truth; then let his mind come under an intense realizing of eternity, let his heart become the seat of those fervors, and longings, and intense anxieties, and that strong faith which attend the fresh unction from the Holy One, and he will have the most effectual impulse and direction to all the efforts appropriate to his office. He will have no reason to inquire what revival measures are most approved, and what are the best expedients to awaken the careless, and the best means to secure the co-operation of the church, and what is the best form of revival preaching.—For, when his own heart is enflamed, it melts and recasts the materials of divine truth which it takes in, and sends them forth glowing and burning their way into other hearts.

And in a similar way fresh anointings prepare the hearts of other Christians for revival action. There was formerly a semi-prophane way of talking about "GETTING UP REVIVALS."

The term, we suppose, was intended to cover certain processes of external action, which were supposed to be invariably connected with revivals. It supposed that the thing could be studied and practised as an art; and that the labors of one expert in this art, were above all price. But there is no true way of getting up revivals but the getting up of our own hearts from the sloughs into which they have sunk, and getting up the tide of life in them. Let this be done—let each one build the wall over against his own house, and secure an intense indwelling of the Spirit of life in himself, and then he cannot avoid being an instrument of reviving others. Revived religion, if it be in a solitary heart, is as sure to spread as a flame.

The sum of this matter is, that we may spare ourselves all trouble about the best modes of action for a revival of religion. Let our own individual heart clear away all obstructions to its own communion with God, and enter into the glow of divine love and the habits of Christian faithfulness, and it will be in a way to do our part towards the blessed result. Let each member of the church thus clothe himself with the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, and that church will have the best equipment for action. And if the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by this means secured, it will have the best guides in action. If it abound less in theatrical and startling expedients, it will be more efficient in the action of heart on heart, and in those communications of divine truth, which carry life to the soul dead in sin.

True religion is an inner life. Its nature is to begin within, and to spread itself from the inward seat over the outer man, and thence to spread itself abroad in communications to others. And to those who say, Lo here or lo there, the answer is, The kingdom of God is within you.—N. E. Puritan.

INTEGRITY OF BUSINESS MEN.

Not frequently we notice in the public prints articles like the following: "Another case of Conscience!"—"Strange Disclosures!"—"Great Defaulter!"—and the like, which startle community usually in proportion to the number of dollars concerned; or if known, the rank of the individual implicated. A long sigh is heaved by some moral philosophers; the exclamation, strange!

Such facts, which the history of the business-world from time to time discloses, speak too loudly to remain unheeded of an undercurrent of deception, selfishness, and dishonesty, which the caving in of circumstances causes to flow out to the light of searching justice; and which, like the rushing lava, carries terror and desolation in its tide.

None who have mingled in society and grown familiar with the dealings of men need be told of the few governed by the principles of strict integrity. Evidence like the above is sufficient to reveal the truth. It is impossible to have aught to do with business transactions without encountering those who, by an air of candor and justice, succeed in duping those of their fellows not yet initiated in the mysteries of deceiving. Rarely is the man found who preserves unsullied a pure and holy integrity amidst the game constantly played around him; and to say, there is a very honest man, is to say there is a very strange man. What wonder man is afraid to trust his fellow, unless he has proved himself pure and incorruptible, like gold that is tried. As it is, a Christian is sometimes afraid of a Judas in his brother.

In the temptations and distractions of business life, those only are safe who act from heavenly motives; who seek not their own glory—trust not to their own keeping; but whose constant prayer is, "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me." With all this vigilance and watchfulness there will oftentimes wage in their hearts sore conflicts between present worldly interests and the uncompromising principles of right and justice. Could the history of those be revealed who have fallen in the instances alluded to, in some particulars there would be a striking similarity. Many, when lads or young men, were sent forth from homes in some quiet, moral part of our country, all untutored in the plays of life's great stage, with habits unformed, principles not established—or at the best, weak and wavering. In this plastic state their minds were easily beguiled by adepts in the science of the selfish dishonesty. They were carefully, cautiously led in the new dark way; soon with unaided, hasty strides, they reached the extreme of treachery and disgrace. Now