

On Catholic Restrictions

TM 19/10/12

Letter III.

For the purposes of fellowship in society and government, a man is to be judged of, not by his belief, as derived from the logic of the formulas he swears to, and even believing by i.e. conscientiously swears to; but by the code of practical belief, to be discovered in his systematic habits & actions. 'Tis grievous, no doubt, that men should be entangled in verbal inconsistencies; but 'tis too frequently the case - such is our nature; so beyond our clear ken are some subjects; so darkly, do we see, as through a glass - Words are not always to be interpreted formally; but considered as an imperfect outward type of an earnest & fervent desire of shewing submission to the will of God. I can not palliate equivocations, nor making light of oaths. When the words of oaths and declarations are left in use, after the belief in the thing signified ^{is not directly} under them is neither expected nor required, I admit that a heavy responsibility lies somewhere for the blunting of conscience which must be the consequence - for ~~they~~ deviation from clear rectitude, that may be traced to this source: and ~~we~~ depend upon it, these deviations are not imaginary - depend upon it, the habitude of going through the forms of lying will lower the standard of morality. - But in every case the proposition is true, & whether formulas be adhered to with an enlightened concurrence of belief in their direct meaning; or whether with an obscure, yet conscientious belief, contrary to and thwarting what may be called the practical belief, as demonstrated by the tenor of life & conversation; or whether they be adhered to, in spite of ~~the~~ an absolute absence of belief - none being required or thought of 'tis still the same ^{true} that for the purposes of fellowship men are to be judged by their actions. By their fruits ye shall know them. All arguments drawn from what a man ought to do according to his recorded principles, when we see day after day and year after year that he does not do so, however formal, are but specious and illusory, and are unworthy to be insisted upon by a statesman. These paper pellets ought to be confuted to the schools.

Giving

Giving no undue weight then in any case to the arguments in favor of the Papists drawn from the general conformity of their doctrine and discipline to those of our own church, and none at all if the practice of Catholics shews them to be in any treacherous opposition, to the English constitution - to be unfairly hostile - to be dangerous to it. Proceed to consider the ~~main points~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~church~~

The chief points, in which the church of Rome differs from that of England, are the following viz.

- 1st Transubstantiation; which, as is well known, denotes a more explicit & direct conversion of the consecrated bread & wine into the actual body of Jesus Christ than can be implied by the expression "Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is verily and indeed taken by the faithful in the Lord's Supper", or any other expression in the Ritual, ^{Homilies &c of the church of England.}
- 2^d Image worship; which is Idolatrious or not, according as the word Idolatriy be defined.
- 3^d The doctrine of Purgatory; or state of temporal & redeemable punishment for intermedial sinners; between supreme bliss & supreme misery.
- 4th Invocation of Saints & of the Virgin Mary.
- 5th Efficacy of Prayers for the dead.

The three last dogmas are connected with the Roman Catholic interpretation of those clauses in the Apostles' Creed, which teach us to believe in the communion of saints, & in the descent into hell. The Church of England holds them "vain" & "fond" and to be rather repugnant to scripture than otherwise. What Her own interpretation of the clauses is, I am not competent to say. Her most approved expositor of the creed gives a direct answer to the question of what is meant by "Communion of saints" and "He descended into hell", but we have no right to transfer to Her the blame due to Bishop Pearson for this equivocation. Her only fault or inadvertency in this case is its not placing somewhere conspicuously in her ritual the interpretation of all such expressions, whose meaning is not excited, in the present days by the words themselves; & which her members have to declare their "steadfast belief" in.

6th The five Sacraments of Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage, Penitence and Extreme unction. The church of England considers as superstitious the assigning these ordinancy to the rank of Sacraments, but she holds

2nd Part

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