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JEREMY TAYLOR, D. D.,

BISHOP OF DOWN, CONNOR, AND DROMORE.

There are several reasons why I think it desirable that our friends and brethren on the Continent should have some information laid before them respecting Bishop Jeremy Taylor. For (1) He is the most eloquent of Anglican divines. (2) He was the first advocate of the principle of Toleration. (3) He makes the nearest approach of any Anglican writer to a Casuistical Theologian. (4) He has written a specific treatise to explain what is our doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. (5) He has composed not only a reply to the attacks of Papal assailants, as Andrewes, Laud, and Bramhall did, but a direct and formal "Dissuasive from Popery", on account of the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.

Descended from Rowland Taylor, who died a martyr in the Marian persecution, he was born at Cambridge in 1613, and having been Chaplain to Charles Ist and suffered much in the great Rebellion, he was appointed Bishop of Down and Connor in Ireland after the restoration of the Monarchy, and died in 1667.

(1) I shall not select any specimens of his eloquence; your space would not allow that. But when for other reasons I shall presently quote some passages from him, I will ask your readers to note the flowing style which earned for Taylor the name of the Anglican Chrysostom.

(2) Toleration is a thing, as you and yours are well aware, unknown wherever the Roman Church has power to control the government of the country. The lamentations of Pope Leo XIIIth over his inability to crush the Old Catholics in Rome by force show how much the principle of toleration is understood in

Italy by Romanists now. In the West the idea was born at the Reformation, but it required time to germinate. We fix on the year 1688 as the date on which Toleration established itself in England, when by the blessing of God we had got rid of James IInd and the Jesuits. But Taylor wrote his treatise in its defence in 1647. He called it “A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying, with its just limits and temper; showing the unreasonableness of prescribing to other men’s faith and the iniquity of persecuting differing opinions;” and he dedicated it to Lord Hatton. The treatise begins by laying down, and proving, that the Apostles’ Creed contains the whole of the Christian Faith necessary for salvation.

“Which creed, unless it had contained all the entire object of faith and the foundation of religion, it cannot be imagined to what purpose it should serve; and that it was so esteemed by the whole Church of God in all ages appears in this, that since faith is a necessary predisposition to baptism in all persons capable of the use of reason, all catechumens in the Latin Church coming to baptism were interrogated concerning their faith and gave satisfaction in the recitation of this creed. And in the East they professed exactly the same faith something differing in words, but of the same matter, reason, design and consequence; and so they did at Jerusalem, so at Aquileia. But if this was sufficient to bring men to heaven then, why not now? If the Apostles admitted all to their communion that believed this creed, why shall we exclude any that preserve the same entire? Why is not our faith of these articles of as much efficacy for bringing us to heaven as it was in the Churches Apostolical? . . . *Quid unquam aliud Ecclesia conciliorum decretis enixa est nisi ut quod antea simpliciter credebatur, hoc idem postea diligentius crederetur*, said Vincentius Lirinensis. Whatsoever was of necessary belief before is so still and hath a new degree added by reason of a new light or a clear explication; but no propositions can be adopted into the foundation. So that if we have found out what foundation Christ and His Apostles did lay, that is, what body of articles, simply necessary, they taught and required of us to believe, we need not, we cannot, go any further for foundation, we cannot enlarge that system or collection.” § 7—13.

Having laid down the principle that the doctrines summed

up in the Apostles' Creed and afterwards, if need were, explicated, are all that should be required of any man to be believed as part of the faith, Taylor deprecates the application of the harsh words, heresy and schism, to every difference of opinion or procedure, and having estimated the relative value of Scripture, Tradition, Councils, Popes, Fathers, the Church diffusive, and Reason as judges of controversy, he enquires whether persecution is justifiable for producing uniformity, and whether a prince (that is, the civil power) may tolerate different religious views in the country which he rules. He instances in the two cases which he thought most doubtful — Anabaptists and Papists — and sets out the *pros* and the *contras* which should lead a State to tolerate them or to refuse them toleration, with great fairness and learning. Some of his contemporaries, finding that he took for his test not so much the truth or falsehood of the doctrines as their likelihood to harm the State or its citizens, pronounced him an indifferentist, only because he was in advance of his age. And Romanist writers to this day cannot believe that an adversary could set down their claim to toleration so fairly and yet be opposed to them. They conclude that he must have been a crypto-Papist in spite of his counterbalancing arguments and the testimony of all his life and writings ¹).

(3) Bishop Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, like Bishop Sanderson's *De Obligatione Conscientiæ*, differs widely both in purpose and in method from the Casuistical works satirised and pilloried by Pascal. The purpose of the Roman Casuistical books appears chiefly to be to enable a confessor to state whether an act is a sin or not, and the method adopted is to write down the names of all doctors who have held it to be a sin

¹) There is a Roman Catholic Newspaper in England, made proud with the approbation of Leo XIII. and Cardinal Vaughan, which calls itself the *Universe* because it is a humble imitation of M. Veuillot's *Univers*, the characteristics of which, well known to you, it reproduces in exaggerated form with the exception of its talent which is absolutely wanting. This paper has lately been assuring its world (a very small world) that as Taylor advocated toleration of Popery, he must have been in heart a Papist. A man named Christopher Davenport or Hunt, who took the name of A Sancta Clara, made a like charge after Taylor's death, which was as true as the similar declaration made by an English Roman Catholic about Döllinger the week after he died, which Professor Friedrich had to refute.

and all doctors who have held it not to be a sin, and to leave the confessor or penitent to take his choice according to his pleasure, a sufficient number of grave doctors being found on each side to make both sides "probable and safe to follow", whenever any real difficulty exists. But Taylor's purpose is to point out, when two duties conflict, which of the two is the paramount duty, so as to help a man to decide for himself what is the course that he ought to pursue. His method therefore is not to quote lists of authorities, but to deal with each case on the highest principles of law and morals. The only authorities that he recognizes are Scripture, Universal Tradition, Right reason, "when the question admits these probations". In other cases he takes as "next best" the "Laws of wise Commonwealth", the "Sayings of wise men", the "Results of fame", the "Proverbs of the ancients", the "Precedents of holy persons", the "Great examples of saints", with the warning that in moral theology it is only some things that are demonstrable, many probable, others only to be regarded as better than their opposites, and that such proof only is to be looked for as the matter under consideration admits. He unaffectedly shrinks from the burden of the work that he has undertaken, but "some one must begin" on a better system than that of the Roman Casuists, who have "storehouses in which many excellent things are exposed to view", but among them "many boxes of poison under specious titles", so that all is "unstable as the face of water", and "confessors are enabled to answer according to every man's humour, and no man shall depart sad from the penitential chairs, and themselves shall take or give leave to anything", as is shown by the "books of Port Royal and their own weak answers and vindications."

To show the difference between the casuistry of the English Church and that of the Jesuits, denounced by Taylor's contemporary Pascal, and now become that of the whole Roman Catholic Church through its adoption by Liguori, I will take one point of morals only — truthfulness. Liguori, as you and all disciples of Döllinger know well, following in the steps of earlier moral theologians, allows a use of Equivocation and of Mental Restriction in such a way that a man may make any false statement that he pleases, and confirm it with an oath, so that the words he uses may in some sense, other than that

in which they are accepted by the hearer, express a material truth. An ambiguous word may be used for this purpose. Consequently, if a man had a reason for doing so, he might swear that at the reading of a Will the *heir* was present, when he was not, meaning to himself that the *air* was present, and yet he would not have told a lie; or if a man had been in Paris, he might state on oath, "I say, I was not", meaning to himself no more than that he was saying the three words or sounds "I was not", without any connexion with the context; or he might say "I was not", understanding to himself "to-day", or "so as to have to tell you". This was the state of the casuistical science on this point at the time Taylor wrote. The immortal Provincial Letters had not yet appeared, nor had the feeble effort after better things made by Innocent XIth and at once frustrated by the casuists, condemned *pure* Mental Restriction. Taylor threw away with scorn the puerile confusion between material truth and moral truthfulness on which the whole of the Jesuitical and Roman system rests and began again from a new starting point. The essence of untruthfulness, he taught, is the attempt, successful or not, to deceive our neighbour. Why may we not deceive our neighbour? Because by the divine constitution of the human mind and of society, every man has "a right to truth" from his brother man. What then, it is objected, is to be said of false statements made to sick people or to declared enemies? There are, answers Taylor, a few classes who have not a right to truth, such as madmen, sick men, children (sometimes), and declared enemies. To these classes, which are but few and may be definitely named, the duty of speaking the truth does not apply, because they — and they only — have not a right to truth, and we are justified in deceiving them for their good in the case of madmen, sick men and children, and for our good in the case of enemies when war has been declared, which gives public notice that the right to truth, which the adversary has hitherto had, no longer exists. What then is his view as to the use of Equivocation and Mental Restriction? That they are justifiable when a direct falsehood is justifiable but in no other cases, except when they are used for jesting purposes and not to deceive. This is all that can be laid down in a treatise, but he allows also that cruel cases may arise

where the virtues of charity and veracity are so apparently opposed to each other that one or other must give way, and he recognises the fact that the claims of charity must sometimes supersede the claims of veracity. But when these terrible cases occur, he leaves to the individual conscience to decide, in order that a concession, allowed in one case, may not be wrested into a rule justifying other cases.

Here then is Taylor's principle of Truthfulness. You may say what is not true to madmen, sick men, children, for their good, and to open enemies, because public notice has been given them to that effect. In all other cases you must speak the truth in such a way as not to deceive your neighbour, who has a right to truth at your hands, except in the few cruel cases where charity must supersede veracity. And you may not use Equivocation as a weapon either of defence or offence, except where you may, as above granted, speak a downright falsehood.

(4) Archbishop Cranmer and Bishop Ridley — the two most learned prelates that have ever sat on the throne of Canterbury or in the see of London — wrote treatises on the doctrine of the Holy Communion which were of the utmost value at a time when all men's minds had been saturated with mediaeval doctrine, and to distinguish between what was Roman and what was Catholic was at once most difficult and most essential. After their time every Anglican theologian dealt more or less with the subject — Hooker, Andrewes, Laud, Cosin, Bull, Beveridge and the rest. But it was Taylor who composed a formal treatise to show in what sense the Church of England does, and in what sense she does not, hold the doctrine of the Real Presence. The expression is found in Hooker's ecclesiastical Polity, who says that "the Real Presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not to be sought for in the sacrament (that is, in the elements) but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament". Such continued to be the traditional teaching of the Church, but Taylor conceived that it required further explication, and hence his treatise. The full title is "The Real Presence and Spiritual of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament proved against the doctrine of Transubstantiation". He begins by explaining the true meaning of

the words Real, Substantial, Corporal, Spiritual. With respect to the word Spiritual he writes: —

“We say that Christ’s Body is in the sacrament really but spiritually. They say that it is there really but spiritually. For so Bellarmine is bold to say that the word may be allowed in this question. Where now is the difference? Here. By “spiritually” they mean “present after the manner of a spirit”; by “spiritually” we mean “present to our spirits only”; that is, so as Christ is not present to any other sense but that of faith or spiritual susception. But their way makes His Body to be present no way but that which is impossible and implies a contradiction; a body not after the manner of a body; a body like a spirit; a body without a body; and a sacrifice of body and blood without blood; *corpus incorporeum, cruor incruentus*. They say that Christ’s body is truly present there as it was upon the cross, but not after the manner of all or any body, but after that manner of being as an angel is in a place; that is their “spiritually”. But we by the “real spiritual presence” of Christ do understand Christ to be present as the Spirit of God is present in the hearts of the faithful by blessing and grace. And this is all that we mean besides the tropical and figurative presence.” § 8.

Next he discusses the force of S. John VI and of the words of Institution, showing thus what is the teaching of Scripture. Then he denies Transubstantiation on the testimony of our senses, of our reason, and of the Primitive Church, and urges the grave danger of the practice of Adoration of the sacrament. His conclusion from this and others of his treatises may be stated thus, though not in his own words: Christ is present by His Spirit wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name, for He has promised it; He is assuredly therefore present by His Spirit *at the ordinance* of the Lord’s Supper which He appointed. And if this presence by His Spirit were called objective (though of course he knew no such word, which has of late been culled in the field of German philosophy) Taylor would not have refused the term. But any presence of Christ’s Body and Blood, and therefore according to modern doctrine of Christ Himself in His Divinity and Humanity, within the bread and the wine he puts aside as untenable on the evidence of Scripture, Catholic teaching, our reason

and our senses. It may be asked: Do we not then receive the Body of Christ? He fully acknowledges that we do: "Be not abused by the rhetorical words and high expressions alleged out of the Fathers calling the sacrament the body or the flesh of Christ; for we all believe it is so, and rejoice in it. But the question is after what manner it is so, whether after the manner of the flesh or after the manner of spiritual grace and sacramental consequence. We with the holy Scripture and the primitive Fathers affirm the latter; the Church of Rome, against the words of Scripture and the explication of Christ and the doctrine of the primitive Church, affirms the former." *Dissuasive* I. 1. 5.

In another treatise, called "the Worthy Communicant" he explains this point further:

"His natural Body He gave us but once, then when upon the cross He was broken for our sins; this Body could die but once, and it could be but in one place at once, and heaven was the place appointed for it. This Body, being carried from us into heaven, cannot be touched or tasted by us on earth; but yet Christ left to us symbols and sacraments of this natural Body; not to be or to convey that natural Body to us, but to do more and better for us — to convey all the blessings and graces procured for us by the breaking of that Body and the effusion of that Blood; which blessings being spiritual, are therefore called His Body spiritually, because procured by that Body which died for us; and are therefore called our food, because by them we live a new life in the Spirit, and Christ is our bread and our life, because by Him after this manner we are nourished up to life eternal." 1. 3.

In few words, Taylor teaches that Christ is present by His Spirit (objectively, if you will) at the ordinance, but that He does not become present by being made to enter a number of pieces of bread and a cup of wine by a form of words employed by a priest. What we eat with the mouth is bread and we refuse to worship what we eat; what we receive in our souls, if faithful, is the application to ourselves of the benefits wrought for man by the breaking of the Body of Christ upon the cross and the shedding of His Blood there.

(5) As Taylor wrote a special treatise to show that we hold, and in what sense we hold, the real Presence of Christ

in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, so he wrote a special treatise to distinguish our doctrines in general from those of Rome, and to warn true Catholics against Popery. He calls it "A Dissuasive from Popery" and he addressed it to the people of Ireland in which his see was situated. He begins by stating the Catholic position of the Anglican Church: —

"The religion of our Church is therefore certainly primitive and apostolic, because it teaches us to believe the whole Scripture of the Old and New Testament, and nothing else, as matter of faith; and therefore unless there can be new Scriptures, we can have no new matters of belief, no new articles of faith. Whatsoever we cannot prove from thence, we disclaim it, as not deriving from the fountains of our Saviour. We also do believe the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene with the addition of Constantinople, and that which is commonly called the symbol of S. Athanasius. And the four first General Councils are so entirely admitted by us, that they, together with the plain words of Scripture are made the rule and measure of judging heresies among us; and in pursuance of these it is commanded by our Church that the clergy shall never teach any thing, as matter of faith religiously to be observed, but that which is agreeable to the Old and New Testament and collected out of the same doctrine by the ancient Fathers and Catholic Bishops of the Church." I. 1.

The Bishop then points out that Rome has innovated on the Catholic Faith, claiming the right of making new articles of belief, and expurgating the works of the Fathers, so as to destroy, where possible, their testimony to unpalatable truths. Some of their innovations are the doctrines of Indulgences, Purgatory, Transubstantiation, Adoration of Images, Universal Bishopric of the Pope, "and they have greatly turned aside from the doctrine of Scripture and the practice of the Catholic Apostolic and Primitive Church in divers other points" among which are Invocation of Saints, Insufficiency of Scripture, Absolution before canonical penance done, Selling Masses, Circumgestation of the eucharist to be adored, Intention, Sacrifice of the Mass, Private Masses; "this religion, as it is distinguished from the religion of the Church of England and Ireland, being neither the old nor the Catholic religion, but new and superinduced

by arts known to all who with sincerity and diligence have looked into their pretences”.

Secondly he complains that the Church of Rome “as it is at this day disordered” teaches doctrines and practices which in their immediate consequences give warranty to a wicked life. These are their doctrines on Repentance, Penance, Satisfaction, Attrition, Indulgence, mortal and venial sin, Probable opinions, *Ex opere operato*, Invocations, Sacramentals, Images. His conclusion on this and the previous point is: —

“If these things can consist with the duty of Christians, not only to eat what they worship, but to adore those things with divine worship which are not God; to reconcile a wicked life with certain hopes and expectations of heaven at last, and to place these hopes upon other things than God, and to damn all the world that are not Christians at this rate: then we have lost the true measures of Christianity, and the doctrine and discipline of Christ is not a natural and rational religion, not a religion that makes men holy, but a confederacy under the conduct of a sect, and it must rest in forms and ceremonies and devices of man’s invention.” I. 11.

Thirdly he charges the Church of Rome with teaching doctrines subversive of Society, such as those of Equivocation and Mental restriction, Privileges of clergy, Deposition of Kings and absolution of subjects from their fealty.

Taylor’s controversial teaching may be summed up thus. (1) We hold the Primitive Catholic Faith; (2) which was recovered for us at the Reformation; (3) the corruptions of the Church of Rome being rejected; (4) every truly Catholic doctrine being preserved.

He does not confine himself to controversy. He is the most prolific of our writers and has produced a large number of purely devotional books, the chief of which are “The great exemplar of sanctity and holy life according to the Christian institution, described in the History of the Life and Death of the Ever-blessed Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world”; “Holy Living and Dying”; “A discourse of Confirmation”; “Unum necessarium, or the doctrine and practice of Repentance, describing the necessities and measures of a strict, a holy, and a Christian life”; “The Worthy Communicant, or a

discourse of the nature, effects and blessings consequent to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper"; "The Golden Grove, or a Manual of Daily Prayers and Litanies fitted to the days of the week, containing a summary of what is to be believed, practised and desired"; "Collection of Offices and Forms of Prayer"—besides Sermons, Hymns, and Prayers.

Taylor was a very devout and diligent Bishop as well as a very learned controversialist.

Blickling, February 1st 1901.

F. MEYRICK.
