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Church of Ireland appoints a Roman Catholic priest as a Canon in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast



St Anne's Cathedral - long a home to ecumenical betrayal

The announcement of the appointment of a Roman Catholic priest as a "canon" at St Anne's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Belfast, is presented in an article in the "Belfast Telegraph", (29/7/16) as a wonderful story of 'sweetness and light'.

What is not referred to is the utter repudiation of the Protestant position of the Church of Ireland.

The Church of Ireland is part of that Anglican Communion which was born at the time of the English Reformation of the 16th century.

Its theological basis, "The 39 Articles of Religion", was "agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces and the whole clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year 1562."

These articles accept the full and final authority of Holy Scripture as the basis for all that is to be believed by Christians.

The great Protestant Bishop of Liverpool, J.C. Ryle, wrote a very informative tract on the 39 Articles and it appears in the book, "Knots Untied", first published in 1877.

He had three sections in his article.

- I. What are the Thirty-Nine Articles?
- II. What is the rank, authority and position of the Articles?
- III. What are the great leading characteristics of the Articles?

He wrote the following under the fourth point in his third division:

What are the great leading characteristics of the Articles?

"(4). Let us mark, in the fourth place, as we read the Articles, the thoroughly Protestant spirit which runs throughout them, and the boldness of their language about Romish error.

What says the Nineteenth Article?

'The Church of Rome hath erred, not only in living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.'

What says the Twenty-second Article?

'The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also of invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.'

What says the Twenty-fourth Article?

It forbids the Romish custom of having public prayers and ministering the Sacraments in Latin.



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What says the Twenty-fifth Article?

It declares that the five Romish sacraments of confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be accounted sacraments of the Gospel.

What says the Twenty-eighth Article?

It declares that 'transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.' It also declares that 'the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.'

What says the Thirtieth Article?

'The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay-people.'

What saith the Thirty-first Article?

'The sacrifices of masses, in which it was commonly said the priest did offer Christ for the quick and dead, to have remission of pain and guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.'

What says the Thirty-second Article?

'Bishops, priests, and deacons are not commanded by God's laws to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage.'

What says the Thirty-seventh Article?

'The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England.'

Now what shall we say to all this? Nine times over the Thirty-nine Articles condemn, in plain and unmistakable language, the leading doctrines of the Church of Rome, and declare in favour of what must be called Protestant views. And yet men dare to tell us that we Evangelical clergymen have no right to denounce Popery; that it is very wrong and very uncharitable to be so hot in favour of Protestantism; that Romanism is a pretty good sort of thing; and that by making such a piece of work about Popery, and Protestantism, and Ritualism, and semi-Popery, we are only troubling the country and doing more harm than good. Well! I am content to point to the Thirty-nine Articles. There is my apology! There is my defence! I will take up no other ground at present. I will not say, as I might do, that Popery is an unscriptural system, which every free nation ought to dread, and every Bible-reading Christian of any nation ought to oppose. I simply point to the Thirty-nine Articles.

I ask any one to explain how any English clergyman can be acting consistently, if he does not oppose, denounce, expose, and resist Popery in every shape, either within the Church or without. Other Christians may do as they please, and countenance Popery if they like. But so long as the Articles stand unrepealed and unaltered, it is the bounden duty of every clergyman of the Church of England to oppose Popery."

Here are words which expose the wicked travesty of true religion that the Church of Ireland engages in when it appoints an agent of that which the ancient creed of Anglicanism terms a system of "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."



'Fr' Edward O'Donnell, who is the parish priest of St Brigid's in south Belfast is the new appointee.



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Dilemma

What will those professing evangelicals, those who swear that their allegiance is to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, do in response to this act of blasphemous defiance of God and His Truth? A priest of the dark teachings of Rome is now a fellow member of the 'ministry' with them. The priest himself says of his role: "But in practical terms it means I can preach occasionally in St Anne's and I will be able to attend chapter meetings and to take my place as one of the canons at important events in the life of the cathedral."

The only thing that honest, God-fearing men can do is to obey God and separate from this ungodly amalgam.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

Compromise has come easy to evangelicals who have long stifled their conscience but surely there comes a time when their conscience can no longer be denied!

Now that they are yoked to a priest of Rome, has not that time come?

Ivan Foster.

30th July 2016.