



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Methodist minister endorses Rome's errors



The normal gait of the ecumenist is to slither along in the undergrowth of religious activities, concealing from public scrutiny just where he is going and what progress he has made. However, every so often, he betrays his position. In a moment of proud self-confidence, he yields to the desire to bask a little in the sunshine of his fellow-ecumenists' admiration and for a brief moment his guile is set aside. Just such a moment took place recently when leading Methodist ecumenist, Dr. Johnston McMaster, ventured into the open and showed clearly where ecumenism is going and how far it has progressed toward its purposed goal. Dr McMaster was the chief speaker at a special ecumenical service on 'Ash Wednesday' at 'Patrick's Purgatory', a Roman Catholic shrine on 'Station Island' in Lough Derg in Co. Donegal.

'Station Island' in Lough Derg is a major Roman Catholic 'holy place' visited by thousands of pilgrims from all over the world each year. According to Roman Catholic Bishop of Clogher, Dr. Joseph Duffy, who welcomed the people from various churches to the ecumenical gathering, Station Island was considered as 'somewhere on the road between hell and heaven.' It dates back to the days of Patrick though it is admitted that the link is 'legendary'. To complete successfully the religious exercises, which include fasting and walking barefoot around the 'Stations of the Cross' on the island, earns the devotee many years' remission from 'purgatory', Rome's mythical place of purging to which all faithful Roman Catholics must go before they may enter heaven.

It would be good to remind ourselves of what our Protestant forefathers thought of purgatory. It would be best to start with the views of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, since his views are the views that Dr. Johnston McMaster purports to uphold. Here is what John Wesley said of purgatory. After quoting from Virgil, the heathen poet, on soul purging after death, John Wesley continues: "See the near resemblance between the ancient and the modern purgatory! Only in the ancient, the heathen purgatory, both fire, water, and air, were employed in expiating sin, and purifying the soul; whereas, in the mystical purgatory, fire alone is supposed sufficient both to purge and expiate. Vain hope! No suffering, but that of Christ, has any power to expiate sin . . ." (Sermon 112 on Luke 16:31.)

Johnston McMaster very obviously would not have had John Wesley's company on his 'pilgrimage' to Patrick's Purgatory!

So-called Protestants of the Presbyterian and Church of Ireland denominations were also in attendance at the gathering. Consider the official teaching of these denominations on the subject of purgatory. "The bodies of men, after death, return to dust and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep) having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are



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cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none," (Westminster Confession of Faith, 32, para 1).

The Church of Ireland teaching on purgatory is equally plain. "The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration as well of Images as of Reliques, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God," (Article 22 of the 39 Articles of Religion). We can say a loud 'Amen' to that!

Ecumenism is beguiling Protestants into treacherously casting away the Biblical faith of their forefathers and blindly fastening again on their wrists the chains of popish superstition that were struck off at the Reformation. Furthermore, such actions as those of Johnston McMaster only confirm poor Roman Catholics in their false religion. When leading Methodist ministers join Roman Catholic pilgrims in such unbiblical worship what hope have we of convincing the Roman Catholic of the error of such a religion? One of the saddest thing about the whole matter is the silence from within Methodism. I have no doubt there are yet men who believe the Bible and who reject such follies as those engaged in by Johnston McMaster . But where were their protests at this gross betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ? If there were protests which I failed to notice, will those who protest press charges against his betrayal of the gospel and his repudiation of his ordination oath? To remain silent and inactive in the face of such rebellion is to become part of the betrayal. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin* , James 4:17. It is to deny Christ and His gospel for the sake of quietness and the continued enjoyment of a manse and stipend. It is to sell Christ as did Judas. The spirit of Esau, the man who sold his birthright for a morsel of meat (Hebrews 12:16), is alive and well and residing within the ranks of Irish Methodism.

The following instructions are given to would-be pilgrims to Lough Derg and are copied from the official website of the shrine. They show the sad and utter folly of popery.

Order of Stations

Begin the Station with a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in St. Patrick's Basilica. Then go to St. Patrick's Cross, near the Basilica; kneel, and say one Our Father, one Hail Mary and one Creed. Kiss the Cross. Go to St. Brigid's Cross, on the outside wall of the Basilica; kneel, and say three Our Fathers, three Hail Marys and one Creed. Stand with your back to the Cross, and, with arms outstretched, say three times "I renounce the World, the Flesh and the Devil." Walk slowly, by your right hand, four times around the Basilica, while praying silently seven decades of the Rosary and one Creed at the end. Go up by the edge of the lake to the penitential cell or "bed" called St. Brigid's Bed. (However if there is a queue take care to join it before going to the Bed.) At the Bed:

1. walk three times around the outside, by your right hand, while saying
2. three Our Fathers, Three Hail Marys and one Creed;
3. kneel at the entrance to the Bed and repeat these prayers;



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4. walk three times around the inside and say these prayers again;
5. kneel at the Cross in the centre and say these prayers for the fourth time.
6. Repeat these exercises at:
 - a. St. Brendan's Bed,
 - b. St. Catherine's Bed,
 - c. St. Columba's Bed.
7. Walk six times around the outside of the large Penitential Bed (which comprises St. Patrick's Bed and that of Ss. Davog and Molaise) while saying six Our Fathers, six Hail Marys and one Creed.
8. Kneel at the entrance to St. Patrick's Bed (nearer the men's hostel) and say three Our Fathers, three Hail Marys and one Creed.
9. Walk three times around the inside while repeating these prayers.
10. Kneel at the Cross in the centre and say them again.
11. Kneel at the entrance to the Bed of Ss. Davog and Molaise (nearer the water's edge) and say three Our Fathers, three Hail Marys and one Creed.
12. Walk three times around the inside while repeating these prayers.
13. Kneel at the Cross in the centre and say them again.
14. Go to the water's edge; stand, and say five Our Fathers, five Hail Marys and one Creed.
15. Kneel and repeat these prayers.
16. Return to St. Patrick's Cross; kneel, and say Our Fathers, one Hail Mary and one Creed.
17. Conclude the Station in the Basilica by saying Our Fathers, one Hail Mary and one Creed for the Pope's intentions.

This is what Johnston McMaster would bring the Methodist people of Ireland back to. And this is what the Methodist people of Ireland seem prepared to embrace again under his leadership!