

We have now before us, from scripture testimony, the first elements of the constitution of the Church. We behold it founded by Christ its great invisible head. We see it receive from Christ a visible head or ruler, with a Body of Bishops to act in conjunction with him. The head, and the Bishops are well acquainted with the powers & prerogatives of their respective offices, and are well aware of the end for which they have received them. All this has been made known to them during the time that they were listening to the instructions of their Divine Master. We discover on further examination, that these Apostles selected subordinate and inferior ministers, to co-operate with them in the fulfilment of their mission. St. Paul writes to Titus "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee."

In another part of scripture we find them establishing an order still inferior to that of the Priesthood, viz: the order of Deacons.*

Yet they acted thus, not of their own authority, but, undoubtedly, after the express direction of their Divine Master. For it is said that Christ "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all meet in the unity of faith." &c:

And to the clergy of Ephesus, it was said by St. Paul that "the holy Ghost had placed them" in the office which they filled and appointed them "Bishops to rule the Church of God." The Bishops, Priests, &c. which they selected, ordained, and appointed, to be co-operators with them "in the building up of the Church, the body of Christ," and in bringing "all to meet in unity of faith," were represented, as "given by Christ," and as "placed in their office by the Holy Ghost." And here we behold the constituents, of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, instituted by Christ, for the government of his Church. There is a head pastor; there are Bishops, priests and subordinate ministers. They are different officers of the spiritual government and different grades, but all from one body under one head, and all are designed to combine their energies to establish one faith and one church, through the whole world, and through all ages.

We will now turn to contemplate the promises which Jesus Christ made to this Sacred Hierarchy, to insure its success in the accomplishment of the important object for which it was instituted. Peter, the first of the Apostles, on occasion of his direct profession of faith, that his master "was Christ, the son of the living God," was called "blessed," because this foundation truth of Christian faith, had been revealed to him by "the Father who is in heaven." The fact that it was thus revealed, was declared to Peter, by Christ himself, in the presence of the rest of the Apostles, and combined with much other testimony, to show the superior part assigned to Peter. After this testimony to Peter, Christ proceeds to speak concerning the establishment of his Church: "And I say to thee thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

*Math. xvi. v. 18.

The enemies of the Church, have endeavored to explain away the force of these terms, they have tortured language, and done violence to the most palpable suggestion of common sense, in order to invalidate this most clear and direct testimony of scripture. Although the name Peter was given by Christ to this Apostle, precisely with a view to indicate the important place he should hold in the Church, and although the Saviour, in speaking of the establishment of this Church, addressed Peter by name, and even mentioned the name of his father, saying in express terms, that he designed, upon "him to build his Church," as upon a rock, which was signified by his very name; in the face of these facts an attempt is made, by torturing plain language, to prove that the Church was not built upon Peter, the rock, but upon Christ himself the rock.

Will any one, who impartially considers what the words of scripture in this place naturally signify, ever for a moment imagine that Christ, giving to this Apostle a name to signify a rock, and after bearing such a solemn testimony, that God had made to him a particular revelation concerning his own divine character, as the eternal Son of the living God, would say "thou art Peter, that is, a rock; and upon this rock, that is, upon myself, I will build my church?" If Christ did not intend to build his Church upon the rock, Peter, why would he here make reference to this Apostle by name, and in a manner so pointed? Surely, we have a right to assume, as self-evident, that if the scriptures, as is pretended by Protestants, are designed to teach us the will of God, and the means which he has prepared for our salvation, the language is not itself a snare to entrap us, and the truth is not designedly buried beneath false and unnatural constructions, but rises up to view, according to the plain import of the words. The violence, therefore, which is done to this text, by those who protest against the Pope's supremacy, only proves, that the plainest passages of scripture are not sufficiently plain to confound the ingenious subtlety of private interpretation, and have no voice, except from the Church of Christ, to complain of the manner in which they are abused. However pregnant the scriptures are with a living spirit and meaning, yet as writings they are inert and passive in the hands of men, and allow themselves to be properly used, or grossly abused, as may happen, neither smiling approbation nor uttering groans of complaint. Had they a voice of their own, how often would they rebuke the rash speculator and presumptuous theorist who forces them to give unwilling testimony to his crude, inconsistent, and even blasphemous conceits and opinions!

The passage of scripture here under consideration, literally and naturally refers to Peter in his relation to the Church, and in it we behold four important truths:

1. The choice made of Peter, as the first visible head of the Church of Christ.
2. The stability of the Church of Christ, because it is a house built upon a rock, upon which the rains will fall, and around which the storms and waves will rage in vain. "It will stand, because built upon a rock."
3. We behold a clear prediction, here made by Christ, of the fact that "the gates of Hell," that is, the powers of Hell, will try to prevail against this Church. The prince of the lower world, will come up from the bottomless pit, and with all his forces, with the seductions of error; with schism, heresy, and persecution; struggle to subvert this Church.
4. We have also a clear, express, unambiguous promise, that the fury of the powers of Hell shall never be able to subvert this divinely founded Church;

"The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it," &c.

The progressive history of ages, which have elapsed since the prediction and promise were made by the Saviour, as stated in this passage by the Evangelist, shows how perfectly they have been verified.—The Church has stood permanently upon its solid foundation, in defiance of the storms and tempests of passing centuries. Persecutions raged, the children of the Church, flying before the kindled wrath and unsheathed swords of pagan princes and governors, were driven into the catacombs, into deserts, into hiding places of every sort. They were seized, tortured and put to death, by tens, hundreds, and even thousands, in every part of the world, and still the Church stood, prospered, and was extended. Centuries rolled on, and with occasional intermissions, the storms of persecution continued to rage. Hell groaned to see its idols broken; its oracles silenced; the monuments of its power destroyed, and more fiercely waged its war against the Church, but still in vain. The citadel of faith was impregnable, the armies of Christ, the soldiers of the Cross, were multiplied on every side.

To be Continued.

CATHOLIC CHILDREN EDUCATED IN PROTESTANT SCHOOLS.

A correspondent, whose adopted signature we append, adverts in a note, dated July 5, to a letter in the *Tablet*, from the late pious and venerable prelate of the Western District, Doctor Baines, on the organization of the kingdom for the general purpose of religion. "It is time," he says, "that something was done for religion in these parts, for the slaying of that apostacy which has been so frightfully prevalent in times past. I am sorry to say that there are many living instances of this evil in these country localities. What else can we expect when the children of the poor have been; and are being educated according to the regime of Protestant schools. They are taught the Protestant Bible, Protestant Prayers, and in every respect are being educated in heretical principles. Who is to be responsible for these defections? Is it not a bishop's duty to look after such matters, to see that his clergy prevent such evils. Can a priest admit to the sacraments a parent who permits his children to be trained in such erroneous principles, which in maturer years lead to apostasy? Moreover, can a Catholic person contribute to the support of a school where Catholic children are educated in the manner aforesaid? Yet such is the case, and they might easily prevent it. I have put these queries in order to show that there is need of a common fund, for the common good, and, moreover, that there is a great need for the advice of our venerable pastors on the subjects alluded to.

I fear that many of us, who dream not of responsibility at all, will have a pretty good share to answer for at the bar of Divine justice on these heads.—To educate Catholic children in Catholic principles is a much higher science than the distribution of polemical tracts. For my part I confess that it would be infinitely better for these poor children to have no education, except a religious one, than thus run the risk of their eternal salvation.

I do sincerely trust that our bishops will warmly take up the matter, and that when invited by their lordships, both clergy and

laity will evince their solicitude by suggesting, and when adopted, by carrying out the plan for the general welfare.

I remain, your obedient servant,
A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

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Hamilton Nov. 1, 1843.

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