

THE CROSS.



NEW

SERIES.

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No. 16.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is Crucified to me, and I to the world.—St. Paul, Gal. vi. 14.

HALIFAX, APRIL 17, 1847.

CALENDAR.

- APRIL 18—Sunday—II Sunday after Easter.
19—Monday—St. Leo IX., P. C.
20—Tuesday—St. Vincent Ferrer, C.
21—Wednesday—St. Anselm, B. C. and Doct.
22—Thursday—SS. Soter and Caus, Popes and Mart.
23—Friday—St. George, M.
24—Saturday—St. Fidelis of Sigmaringa, M.

THE PROTESTANT RULE OF FAITH.

“THE BIBLE ALONE IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS.”

We have addressed some questions to our opponents on this important subject, because, after all, the Rule of Faith is the Cardinal point upon which all minor controversies depend. If the Rule of Faith proposed by any Church be sound, it may be safely followed; but if this rule be obscure, doubtful, contradictory, and productive of all manner of conflicting creeds it cannot be that “royal way” spoken of by the Prophet, which is so plain and straight that “even fools cannot err therein.” Reason tells us that religion must be true, simple and indivisible; that if God has revealed his will to man, there cannot be two revelations contradicting each other; that the truth of God is always one and the same; that he could not have established two creeds, two religions, or two Churches, essentially different from each other; that he could not justly require the assent of his creatures to the truths or mysteries of faith, unless he had left them some means, some rule for ascertaining what that faith really is; that this rule must be one adapted to all times and places, and people; one equally applicable to the rich and poor the learned and the unlearned, the people who lived for fifteen centuries before the invention of printing, as well as those who have lived for three hundred years after it, to the poor man who cannot read, as well as to the abstruse philosopher. Now we say that the Protestant Rule has none of these properties. It is obscure; it is difficult; it has been, and is unattainable to millions: it does not lead to oneness of belief, to simplicity of faith; it has produced and must necessarily produce conflicting

creeds and opinions; it leads to diversity, and not to unity in religion. It excludes the poor man, and the ignorant man, and the man of weak capacity, it proscribes nearly sixty generations of the people of Christendom, from the time of the Apostles to the sixteenth century; it shuts out the countless millions who could not read, or could not comprehend the Bible, or who could not procure a copy of the Bible, no, not even one of the Gospels, because the excessive rarity and high price of the Scriptures for fifteen centuries, placed them far beyond the reach of the great bulk of mankind. It places on the shoulders of millions a task of enormous difficulty, and to which not one in a million is equal—to search, to examine, to collate, to compare, to deduce, to find satisfactory reasons for the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures, for their integrity, for their accurate translation into the language in which he reads them, and above all, for his correct interpretation of them.

The Protestant Rule cannot be the Rule, for instead of humbling fallen man, it elates and puffs him up with notions of his own importance; it exalts his pride of understanding; it allows him “to think what he pleases, and to say what he thinks;” it teaches him to look upon himself as equal to the most wise and learned men on earth all put together, nay, as their superior, and authorises him to follow his own judgment in preference to theirs; it destroys all authority and levels all disjunctions, and instead of a living, speaking voice with power to decide and interpret, makes the dead letter of the most incomprehensible volume ever written, the rule of belief, and thus produces not only hundreds of different religions, but as many creeds as there are individuals who follow this rule.

We say that on this ground alone, the Protestant Rule cannot be the rule left by Christ. For, as faith is essential to salvation and as Faith can be but one, and undivided, the Rule of Faith must necessarily tend to that unity of Faith and Truth, or otherwise it would defeat its purpose, and become a rule of confusion contradiction and error. We maintain that the Protestant Rule has not only actually led to this confusion and disagreement in doctrine, has not only been most likely to produce disunion, but that it necessarily does so, and that in the nature of things i