

p. 301. If the first, they condemned themselves, and must, to be consistent, return to the Church; if the second, then they must adopt an absurdity too gross even for them to swallow. What, then, could they do? Mystify themselves and others with high-sounding words, meaning nothing. They must say, *Scriptura interpretat seipsam*, and the Holy Ghost is the supreme judge of controversies. But as the Holy Ghost decides, according to them, only as *speaking in the Scriptures*, and as the Bible has never been heard to utter a single syllable, they gain nothing, but are ultimately reduced to the rule, Each one understands the Scripture as he chooses,—the great fundamental principle of Protestantism, and nearly the only one in which all Protestants are able to agree. So, after all, in trying to avoid one sand-bar, they stuck fast on the other, or as one of our former legislators would express it, "In keeping clear of *Skilker* they run foul of *Charybæus*."

We do not intend, on this occasion, to give the various and satisfactory proofs of the necessity or of the fact of a living tribunal in the Christian Church for determining religious controversies. But we may say, the tribunal alleged by Presbyterians is obviously no tribunal at all; and the fact that they are ashamed to avow it, and seek in every possible way to disguise it, is a sufficient refutation of the principle of private interpretation, or, if not, it has already been several times and amply refuted in the pages of this journal, as well as elsewhere. It will suffice for our present purpose to adduce a couple of edifying commentaries on the Presbyterian rule, supplied by the very volume before us.

In the *Form of Government*, p. 364, we read:—"To the General Assembly belongs the power of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline, of reproving, warning, or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, presbytery, or synod, of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations"; and on page 378, that the Presbyterian minister who preaches at the ordination of a candidate is to propose to him the following questions:—"Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice? Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures? Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?" To all these questions the candidate answers in the affirmative.

Well done, O ye learned divines! These lessons of submission given to the candidate are admirable; these enactments to enforce obedience to the decisions of the General Assembly are truly edifying! But, dear friends, how could you so soon and so completely forget and abandon your cherished and favorite doctrine! How could you write one thing in the beginning of your book, and give it such a flat denial in the end? How could you establish one principle in the *Confession*, and a contrary principle in the *Form of Government*? Indeed most amiable doctors, you hardly treat us fairly. Which are we to believe, *Confession* or the *Form of Government*? In one place you tell us the Scripture and the Scripture alone can interpret itself; and now in another, instead of Scriptures, you give us the decisions of the General Assembly. You told us that the supreme judge in controversies can be none other than the Holy Spirit; and now when controversies arise among you, instead of having recourse to "the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures," you modestly invest the General Assembly with "the power of deciding all controversies." In the *Confession* you solemnly assert that "the decrees of councils, the opinions of ancient writers, the doctrines of men, and private spirits," are to be brought only before the bar of the supreme judge, "the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures"; and now you summon us before the bar of the General Assembly, that is to say, before a couple of hundred of Presbyterian ministers, and a like number of Presbyterian elders! You were telling us, a moment ago, that the Holy Spirit speaks only through the Scriptures; and now you tell us, that he speaks through the Presbyterian elders of the United States! Really, gentlemen, this obliviousness on your part is too bad, altogether too bad. Alas for the poor candidate! How deplorable is his fate! After having received the assurance of having no other interpreter of

Scripture than Scripture itself, and no other judge but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures, he now finds that all was a delusion, and that he must tamely promise subjection to his brethren, and follow their decision, or be ignominiously dismissed and branded for life.

Alas! how many lies does that first lie render necessary! Thus it is that error must necessarily stamp all its proceedings with contradictions and lies. *Mentis est iniquitas sibi*. Protestants, and Presbyterians in particular, were at first most obstreperous against all authority; for this was necessary in order to be able to wrest a portion of the faithful from their legitimate pastors. But having done this, and finding that no shadow of government or society was possible on the principles they at first set up, they turn round, and with admirable coolness deny, and reject those very principles without which they had never existed, and institute in their novel and self-constituted tribunals the most intolerable tyranny, in the place of the paternal authority they threw off, and which had received the traditions of all Christian nations, and the promise of the Divine protection and guidance. But it was not to be supposed that such tribunals, such supreme judges, would command any respect, or much submission. Dissent breeds dissent. The first dissenters authorise by precept and example the new dissenters. What right had you to dissent from the authority to which you were born subject, which we have not to dissent from you! Hence, the decisions of these tribunals and judges are followed only so long as force, or self-interest, money, or social position are present to back them; when not supported by such or like considerations, they are mere cobwebs. Hence, Protestantism is everywhere cut up into divisions, sects, parties, and factions, too numerous to count, and which serve only to worry and devour each other, and to place in bold contrast the majestic and compact unity of the Catholic Church.—(*Guardian phascopy*)

ROME.—O'CONNELL'S HEART.

Letters from Rome, dated the 27th ult, have reached us.—The Rev. Dr. Miley and Mr. Daniel O'Connell had arrived there, bearing with them the heart of the late Mr. O'Connell inclosed in a silver urn. "No words can describe," say those letters, "the grief and disappointment that was experienced at the announcement of O'Connell's death. A triumphal entry was prepared for him. The compartments of the arch under which he was to pass were ready, and every other arrangement made to receive him, rather as a prince than as a pilgrim. The stroke which crushed all our hearts has deranged all this, and the glowing enthusiasm which busied itself about his triumphal entry is sorrowfully but earnestly engaged in preparing for the grand requiem which is to be celebrated for his eternal repose on the fifteenth June in one of the chief Basilicas of Rome, *Padro Ventura* the brightest ornament of the pulpit in Italy, is preparing the funeral oration. An audience is to be granted to the Rev. Dr. Miley, and Mr. Daniel O'Connell immediately on the return of Pius IX. from Subiaco, for which place his Holiness started this morning at 3 o'clock. Half Rome has followed him. The Pope's own suit and guard were small, but their deficiency was more than compensated for by the 60 or 80 young Roman nobles and gentlemen, who turned out splendidly mounted and appointed as a volunteer body Guard for their sovereign who reigns supreme in every heart. His Holiness is not expected to return before Tuesday next. In the interim, the heart of O'Connell is deposited in the ancient church at St. Agatha, which is served by the Irish College; where, on Monday next, a solemn requiem is to be celebrated for the departed, whose death has plunged the venerable prelate, the Rev. Dr. Cullen who presides over the College, and his community into the bitterest grief."

The Pope has appointed five new Cardinals, two French, (the Archbishop of Cambrai and Besancon), and three Italian.—M. Antonelli, Treasurer; M. Bufondi, Prolegato at Ravenna; and M. Fonari, the Pontifical Funcio in Paris.

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