

From the Cincinnati Telegraph.
**TESTIMONY OF PROTESTANT WRITERS IN
 FAVOR OF CATHOLICITY.**
 No. I.

UNITY OF FAITH.

More than 2,000 years ago, when the Greeks had defeated the fleets and the armies of Persia, the generals met to determine to whom belonged the glory of having saved Greece. With questionable modesty, much imitated in our days, each voted himself the saviour of his country, but all agreed in awarding the second place to Themistocles, — a plain proof, observes his historian, that to him belonged the contested laurel. His countrymen then, and posterity since, have agreed with this observation of the historian. What was true 480 years before the Christian era is no less true now in the 19th century. The same maxim still holds; and when we find each of the rival sects of religion, and of no religion, that now swarms on the earth, allotting to Catholicity the most *probable* chance of salvation after itself, we may lawfully conclude that it is the Themistocles—the only true religion to which belongs salvation, for it is the only one which all are agreed in commending.

There is another principle equally true, which is laid down by the great Lactantius, "That is, a strong proof of a truth when it is admitted by its adversaries," by those whose self love, whose party spirit, and whose interest must lead to deny it: *satis firmum est testimonium ad probandum veritatem, quod ab ipsis perhibetur inimicus.*—Now there is not a single truth taught and believed by Catholics which cannot cite in its favor numerous Protestant authorities, both of the present and preceding times. We have in our possession an old book which proves the Catholic doctrine from the avowal even of the Reformers; but in our present article we have to deal with latter times, for in truth men now-a-days care little for Doctor Luther or Calvin, for the Right Rev. Thos. Cranmer, or the theological boy Edward. May God grant that the Protestant whose eyes fall on these pages may consider seriously and earnestly the testimony borne to the Catholic faith by those of his own religion who are the most competent to judge ministers, preachers, professors and doctors in theology; and may the Catholic receive comfort and consolation at seeing his religion thus openly proclaimed and commended by his enemies. Yet let it not be supposed that we wish by human authority to confirm his faith, which is based on the veracity of God.

Boemero, in his "Principia Juris Canonici," writes thus: "The Christian church is a society of men united in the same Christian faith for the practice of the religion of Jesus Christ. This church endures as long as it preserves unity of faith. This unity once lost, the church is destroyed." This definition utterly confounds and destroys the assertion of the Oxford writers, who maintain that the Anglican church is one of the western churches, which conjointly with the Catholic forms the church of Jesus Christ. If such be the case, where is the unity? Such assertions put forth in fine type, on

good paper, and in insinuating and confident language, may mislead the unwary; but, when tried by the practical touchstone of common sense, they seem utterly ridiculous.

De Wette, in his work on Religion and Theology, observes: "That ancient body of doctrines which was looked on as obligatory on all was never abolished, and the spirit of Protestantism did not allow another to be introduced obligatory in the same sense. It would be a dangerous reaction which would tie the Protestants down to a doctrine as unchangeable as that of the Catholics. Such an attempt would not be less contrary to the spirit of Protestantism than to that of the age, and would indeed be impracticable without a visible head of the whole Protestant church.* What could be done is to prescribe a rule of faith for a national Church: but it would be rejected by other countries, and the Protestant Church, as a whole, would preserve its liberty. † On the other hand, this breaking in twain the bonds of unity of doctrine would be a no less dangerous experiment, as we have already experienced to our cost. We stand in need of an extraordinary unity and of a fundamental rule, for the horrible confusion which allows every one to preach to the people whatever he likes will assuredly produce unbelief and indifference for religious truth, and the rather as a numerous body of doctors, not knowing themselves what religion is, abuse the liberty of teaching, tread under foot and turn adrift the most fundamental dogmas of religion, as, for example, that of justification. Without doubt, the Bible is the fundamental ‡ rule from which the Protestant doctrine is drawn; but the interpretation of the Bible leaves a wide

*This is a cool admission of the necessity of having a pope, or universal head to preserve unity of faith.

† With such a system it would be hard to determine where the unity of Protestant faith lays, for each church would have its own peculiar formularies, which might differ from each other as much as the religious systems of the ancient Egyptians, some of whom adored the animals which the others hunted and ate as a delicacy, or exterminated as a nuisance. Nor yet would it preserve the so much boasted liberty of conscience; for, when the national church was confined to a rule of faith, it is clear that individual liberty would be sacrificed, so that, in truth, there would be no liberty at all. As well might we say that the Russians are free because their government differs from that of Austria, and has a separate code of laws from that of Turkey.

‡ The Catholic, who is so much abused for neglecting the Bible, actually grounds his religion thereon: it is the foundation of his whole belief. He first goes to the Bible as a historical record; the Bible refers him to the church as having a commission and power to teach, and from the church he learns for the first time that the Bible, which he had hitherto considered merely a historical document, is an inspired volume. "We believe then in the first place," writes Dr. Wiseman, in his Moorfield's lectures, "that there is no groundwork whatever for faith except the written word of God.—The first step in the order of argument or demonstration is the scripture, which contains all the evidence that we require to establish church authority. Christianity might have existed without the New Testament being written—it could not have existed in its present constitution without the church; but although there would not have been ample ground of demonstration for that authority in any case, we now compendiously take it from those sacred records which preserve the words and actions of our Blessed Redeemer."—Preface viii.

enough field for individual opinions. We are now, then, brought to the necessity of restoring the authority of the confessions of faith, which offer a staying point of support to the interpretation of the Bible; yet, while we speak of a restoration of the authority of these confessions, we do not intend to speak of the latter, but of the spirit of it."

There is something droll in this idea of establishing confessions of faith to restrict the license of interpreting the Bible. By the Protestant principle the Bible is held out as the charter of freedom, but by way of codicil there is appended to it a confession of faith, which cancels the liberty granted in the charter. Either the confession will have no power to restrict the headlong system of interpretation, or the Bible ceases to be the charter of Protestant freedom, from which every one is at liberty to select his religion. But yet the unity which De Wette expects from his system is only specious, for, while apparently every man submits to the confession, yet this *spiritual* interpretation of it leaves him to follow the vagaries of his fancy to his heart's content. He furnishes us with a sample of this style of interpretation. We learn from scripture that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Ghost: this, he tells us, means merely that religion comes from God. No wonder then that such men, gifted with the faculty of *spiritual* interpretation, reduce the sacrament of the Eucharist to a commemorative rite which contains mere bread and wine, such as it was when it left the breakfast table.

Dr. Ammon,—"From the birth of Christianity until our times, the communion of the altar has been grounded on the unity of faith, not unity in one part of faith, as incredulity would have it, but perfect unity in all the articles of faith. In all the attempts at re-union which have been ever made, the first step was not a mere external union, but profound discussion, and research regarding the points in question, to arrive at sameness of doctrine by the same intimate conviction."

Augusti,—"Great as are the evils which result from separation, the union of all in the same indifference would be a still greater evil: it would be the death of all religion."

Luther had the same idea. "It is horrible (he said) barely to imagine men gathering round the same altar and communicating together, whilst some of them believe that they are taking mere bread and wine, and others that they are receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ." Yet, what horrified even Luther, the first Protestant parson, does not at all affect our modern parsons; for it is notorious that, even in the parliamentary church, there is no union other than external. A follower of Mr. Newman will go to the communion table with a scholar of Mr. Faucett; the one believes that he receives the body and blood of Christ, the other that he receives only the symbols, so that likely, in every Protestant congregation there exists the horrible thing which made even Luther, who was pretty well accustomed to horrors, shudder and tremble.

An Anonymous Protestant Writer in the Ecclesiastical Gazette of Darmstadt writes: "If it be asked in what thing Protestants, and in particular those who are instructed, agree, pretty nearly the following profession of faith will be made. The principle of Protestantism is the free examination of Christian truths: Protestantism ends to religious liberty, the fullness of which is the great end which it proposes to itself."

The same writer continues to observe that the tendency of Protestantism is scientific, not religious; and that, since St. Paul observes that we know only in part, Protestantism will ever remain imperfect, that it is greatly so at present, because they believe only in part and that it will never be totally complete, because they possess not unity of faith.

Schlegelmacher, in his dogmatic System, observes:—"So great is the disgracement in the Protestant church, that what some regard as the essence of Christianity is for the others a mean outward form; and what by this latter is considered essential is by the first considered of little importance."

Berger, in his "Introduction to Rationalism," says—"The ministers of the Protestant church contradict each other in the most fundamental points of religion, and they cannot agree as to the great question, what ought to be done to save the soul."

Ecclesiastical Gazette of Darmstadt, June 20, 1830.—"Have not the Catholics reason to regard it as a disgrace in us that we cannot agree even as to the essentials of Christianity? Nor even can we allege as an excuse that discrepancies are inevitable, as arising out of the nature of our mind; for the diversity of methods and forms, quite compatible with union in the substance of doctrine, leaves a wide field for the liberty and activity of the mind."

Enneke,—"Unity in doctrine and faith exercises a salutary influence in the Catholic religion. Why should we not do justice to this unity? All the religions of Protestantism are grounded on certain articles of faith, which are not placed beyond the reach of reform." A Protestant author, in controversy with Enneke, had maintained that every bird ought to sing in its own way; as if we were birds, and religion a mere cackling!

Usteri,—"The monarchical form of government, and the temporal power of religious government preserved unity in the Christian world, and prevented it from being divided and subdivided into sects innumerable."

Foellner,—"It is better to adopt Catholicism, or renounce all idea of unity of faith."

In the above extracts the advantages and necessity of union in a church are clearly set forth, and yet it is honestly avowed that they do not exist in Protestantism, and cannot exist out of Catholicity. Calvin, in a letter to Melancthon, says, "It is well that posterity should not hear of our disagreements, for it is truly ridiculous that we who contradict the whole world should contradict each other." But posterity not only knows that the early pseudo-reformers contradicted each other, cursed each other, burnt each other, fought against each other; but posterity beholds the same or greater disagreements existing among the preachers of these days, and so far from lessening, the evil goes on increasing. Almost every city and country newspaper brings tidings of some new fanatic, some new light, some new trafficker in religion; and so it will go on, for they are not of Christ; and need not repeat the prediction of our Lord, that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

TOXOTES.