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TRACTS FOR THE MILLION.

PROTESTANTISM WEIGHED IN ITS OWN BALANCE AND FOUND WANTING.

THE BIBLE AND THE BIBLE ONLY.

"The Bible and the Bible only" has been the rallying cry and watchword of all the countless sects of Protestants, who, from the time of Martin Luther, have claimed the right of private judgment, in the interpretation of the written Word of God. It is their rule of faith, "so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This is the express declaration of the Established Church in England, and may be taken as the general profession of faith of all Protestants everywhere.

It is worth observing, however, that this rule of faith, as well in its short and popular form as also when more fully drawn out and explained, is rather negative than positive. Those who use it are more careful to say what they do not hold, than what they do; they insist upon "the Bible only," to the exclusion of every thing else, but they are not equally jealous about receiving the whole Bible—every part of it. They say that nothing is to be required of any man that it should be believed which is not to be found in the Bible, or at least may not be proved thereby; but they do not, with equal distinctness, insist upon the duty of believing every thing which is read in that sacred book, or may be proved by it.

This is no idle assertion; it is a plain matter of fact, which may be justly charged against all Protestants, of whatever denomination, all over the world, that they do not really receive the whole of the Bible, that is, do not really receive every thing which it contains. I am not now speaking of their rejection of those books which they call Apocryphal, but which are received by Catholics as part of the written Word of God; nor am I speaking of such bold and impious rejection of parts of Holy Scripture as has been ventured upon by Luther and some others. That arch-reformer of the Church would fain have reformed the Bible also; he said of the book of Esther that he was such an enemy to it, he would it did not exist—he would toss it into the Elbe; of the book of Jonah, that the history which it contained was so monstrous that it was absolutely incredible; of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it was not written by an Apostle, and therefore it was not to be wondered at that it should contain some mixture of wood, straw, and hay; of the Epistle of St. James, that it was worthless, an epistle of straw; and lastly, of the Apocalypse (or Revelation) of St. John, that much was wanting to persuade him that it was scriptural.

But I repeat, I am not now speaking of open and avowed rejection of whole books of the Bible such as this; I am speaking of the way in which Protestants in general treat several portions even of the Old and New Testament, which they profess to receive—indeed, which all Christians agree in receiving—as divinely inspired: and I say that there are many texts even there which they do not really receive; some which are to them as an unknown tongue, without any meaning at all, and which they therefore make no use of whatever; others which seem to be opposed to their own creed, and which they therefore try to escape from and to explain away; lastly, there are others which they even boldly contradict.

In the following pages a few of the most striking of these texts shall be brought forward, arranged in order, according to the subjects to which they belong, and compared, as briefly as possible, with the Protestant doctrine upon the same subjects. We will begin with what is obviously the most important—the rule of faith; having first explained, however, in a few words, both what is meant by this phrase, and also why this subject is so very important as to deserve the first place.

All Christians are agreed that the Son of God came down from heaven to teach mankind the will of His Father, and that those who wish to be saved must be very careful to know and to do that will. Now, then, can we know, for certain what that will is? In other words, how has our Lord Jesus Christ taken care that we, who live more than eighteen hundred years after He went back to heaven, and those too that shall come after us, even to the end of the world,—how has He taken care that we shall all know for certain, and without a mistake, every thing which He taught, and which we must do and believe, according to His doctrine, to gain everlasting life?

If you ask this question of a Protestant, he will tell you that our Lord took care to have it all written down very clearly and distinctly in a book, which book is called the Bible; so that any one who wishes to know what he must do and believe, in order that he may be saved, has nothing to do but to go and read,

in that book, and he will be sure to learn. If you ask the same question of a Catholic, however, he will tell you that our Lord chose certain persons whom he carefully instructed in all that concerned the kingdom of God, and to whom He gave a commission to teach the rest of mankind; that these persons were to appoint others to assist and to succeed them; and that our Lord promised, as well to those persons whom He had selected, as also to their successors for ever, that He would be with them always to the end of the world; so that any one who wishes to know what he must do and believe, in order that he may be saved, must go to those whom Jesus appointed to teach, and in this way he will be sure to learn. You see at once that there is a great difference between these two answers; the one refers us to a book, the other to a living body of men; the one refers us to the Bible, the other to the Church. You see also that this difference lies at the very foundation of the controversy between Catholics and Protestants, so that there is no use in discussing minor questions of detail until this main point has first been settled; indeed, one might almost say that there is no use in discussing minor questions of detail at all, because they are, in fact, all wrapt up and included in this one main question, Whether God intended the Scriptures to be the only guide and teacher of mankind in matters of religion? For if He did, then of course the Catholic Church is in error, since she denies this, and teaches the contrary; nay more, she is altogether false and an impostor, for she claims to be God's messenger upon earth, authorised to teach mankind all things that they ought to know, and to do, for their soul's health; whereas if this doctrine be true, there is no such messenger anywhere, but only a message written in a book which every body has a right, and is even bound, to read and understand for himself. If, on the other hand, God did not intend the Bible to be man's only guide and teacher, in matters of religion, but appointed His Church for this very purpose, that she should fulfil this office, and promised her His guidance, so that she should never be deceived in proposing any thing to our belief that was not true, and had not been revealed by Him, then, of course, not only is the Catholic Church right upon this point, but also, of necessity, right upon every other point also.

Our present purpose, however, is not to establish the truth of this Catholic doctrine, nor, indeed, of any other Catholic doctrine whatever, but simply to demonstrate the falsehood of the Protestant doctrine by means of an appeal to its own standard, the Bible and the Bible only; we propose to show, that he who really receives the written Word of God, as the only rule of faith, is by that very rule bound to receive something more, which no Protestant is content to receive; that Protestants do not, and cannot, as long as they remain Protestants, make use of the whole of the Bible, but only of certain parts of it; that though they may profess to believe it all, yet in point of fact they act as though they only believed a part of it; that though they may be continually declaring with their lips that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," yet meanwhile they declare still more effectually by their creed and practice, that they consider a good deal to be of no profit at all in the present age, or at least, not for themselves.

First, then, upon this very fundamental question of the rule of faith itself, we say that Protestants practically set at naught and deny much that the Bible tells them. Let us see, for example, how they handle the following texts: first, words spoken by our blessed Lord Himself; secondly, words spoken by His Apostles:—

I. THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD.

What says the Word of God?

1. St. Matthew, xxviii. 19, 20. Jesus came and spake unto His Apostles, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

What says the Protestant?

1. Our Lord made use of frail, fallible men, to preach His holy Gospel, and to teach all nations at the first; and He promised to be with them, that is, to help and strengthen them in a very special manner, for that purpose. But it was not His intention that this should continue for ever, even unto the end of the world; on the contrary, He intended to withdraw this special guidance and assistance at some future period, if not from the Apostles themselves, at least from their successors, as soon as the Bible should be written or printed; and then, from that time forward, His promised presence would be

2. St. John, xx. 21, 22. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.

3. St. John, xvii. 18, 20. As Thou has sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.

4. St. Luke, x. 16. He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.

5. St. Matthew, xviii. 17. If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto you as an heathen man and a publican.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF HIS APOSTLES.

What says the Word of God?

1. 2 Tim. i. 13, 14. Hold fast, the form of sound words which thou has heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us.

2. 1 Cor. xi. 16. If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.

3. 1 John, iv. 1, 6. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. . . We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

4. 2 Thes. ii. 15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle.

5. 1 Cor. xi. 2. Keep the traditions* as I delivered them to you.

no longer with the preachers of the Gospel as it had hitherto been, but with the book in which the Gospel was written.

2. There is therefore nobody now upon earth sent by Jesus Christ, in the same way as Jesus had been sent by the Father.

3. Neither is there any body through whose word persons are now called upon by God to believe in Christ.

4. Nor any body who so represents our Lord here upon earth, as that those who despise his teaching are in fact despising the teaching of our Lord himself.

5. Nor is there any Church, or body of men, whom persons are bound to hear and obey in matters of religion.

OF HIS APOSTLES.

What says the Protestant?

1. At the time when St. Paul gave this charge to Timothy, the only means of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel was, for one man to teach another; this, however, being a most unsafe method, and liable to all kinds of abuse, was merely a temporary arrangement, until the whole truth should have been committed to writing. Henceforward, no man would be trustworthy or faithful in this matter, and fit to teach others; but all would have to learn out of one common book.

2. So, in like manner, it was very well for the Apostles to propose themselves, and the custom of the Churches, as a standard of truth.

3. And to give us a test, or means of distinguishing false teachers from true ones, their obedience or disobedience to the living pastos of the Church; but this also was merely temporary. As soon as the Scriptures should be written and collected in a single volume, these, and these only, were to be the true test and standard by which each man should try for himself whether or no the doctrine proposed to his belief came from God.

4. St. Paul had a perfect right to call on his converts to receive all the traditions which they had learned, whether written or unwritten; and they were bound to obey him. But those unwritten traditions, at least as much of them as it was important for us to know, were afterwards written, and are to be found in the later portions of the New Testament.

* In the Protestant translation, "ordinances;" but as in the original it is the very same word as in the previous text, I have used the same English word also.

LECTURE OF MR. LARKIN IN THE MUSIC-HALL, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

In consequence of the announcement of Gavazzi to lecture in Newcastle, on the request of various parties, Mr. Larkin gave a lecture in the Music-Hall, Newcastle, on Tuesday last, to nearly a thousand persons, in reply to the diatribes of Gavazzi. The audience listened with the greatest attention, only interrupted with vehement bursts of applause, to a lecture which lasted two hours and a half. He commenced by giving an amusing description of the credulity of the people of England, in listening, with untiring docility, to the ravings of impostor after impostor against Popery; and, though the characters of each in succession was detected and exposed, their appetite for denunciations of Catholicism seemed utterly unsatiable. No matter how degraded the quarter whence they came, they were always acceptable (cheers.) He described the character of Dr. Achilli, a Biblical Saint and martyr of the Inquisition, whom they would have to be a martyr, though he was apparently sound, wind and limb, and though he did not come like the great martyr of the Star Chamber—Prynne, cropped of his ears, and slit in his nose, and bearing a mark and brand of infamy on his person (laughter and cheers.) Aye, but though there was no mark of infamy burnt by the hands of the hangman on his person, there was an indelible brand of infamy burnt into his own character by the profligacy and open depravity of his life (cheers.) Mr. Larkin then recounted the circumstances of his life, amid the shuddering and indignation of an excited auditory. Passing from him, he proceeded, as an introduction to his remarks on Gavazzi, to describe the celebrated Fra Paoli, author of "The History of the Council of Trent," of which council he was not the historian but the enemy; he alluded to Bossuet's concise, curt, and pithy description of him as *un Protestant habille en moine*—"A Protestant in the masquerade of a Monk." He exposed all the hideous hypocrisy of this man's life in the outward profession of Catholicism, and in seeming communion with a Church which internally he believed to be corrupt in practice, and idolatrous in doctrine. This odious hypocrite heard the confessions of the simple and confiding, and publicly said Mass, skipping over a great part of the Canon, and remaining silent during those parts of the service of the Church of which he did not approve. What can be more odious (exclaimed Mr. Larkin) than a character of this description, which would seem to demand the bursting forth of a thunderbolt from Heaven to destroy and crush him in the midst of his blasphemy and impiety, did we not know the patience and long-suffering of the Almighty, and that in the mysterious dispensation of His wisdom, He permits the hypocrite and Atheistic Priest to tread His sacred court, and minister at His altar, handling holy things, and desecrating by his impiety, His sacred temple and holy sanctuary? Such was an Italian Priest and pretended Monk of the 16th century. The present century show that the Italian breed of hypocrites and villains still subsists—(loud cheers)—and though it is an insult and slight to the talents and intellectual power of Fra Paoli to associate him for one moment with the baseness of the name of the peripatetic denunciator of Catholicism, Gavazzi, this base man, still resembles him in the hypocrisy and degradation of his character, and in preserving the cowl and garb of a Monk while he reviles the religion of which that garb is the sign and emblem. We, Catholics, however, have a proverbial saying applicable to hypocrites of this description—*Cucullus non facit monachum*. It is not the cowl that makes the Monk any more than the light with which the deceiving power can surround himself, can make the Devil an angel of light. (Cheers and laughter.) That garb, like the satanic radiance, is worn for the purpose of effect and deception, and from beneath the cowl there grins the features of a liar and impostor. (Hear.) Who, then, is this sacerdotal masquer? Who is this frocked hypocrite and crimson-crossed impostor? Who knows him? Who vouches for his integrity? Who is his sponsor? ("The Devil, to be sure," interrupted, amidst the roars of the auditory, an honest Irishman.) The fact is, masses of the public are receiving with ten thousand welcomes, and applauding to the skies, a man of whom they know nothing, but that he is the flatterer of their prejudices, the fomentor of bigotry and intolerance, the later of Catholicism, and the friend, associate, and applauder of Dr. Achilli, the apostate Friar, and convicted adulterer. (Loud cheers.) What is more clear than that he is a mean trader on the bigotry, and mercenary speculator on the intolerance of this country? (Hear, hear.) He represents Priests as the transmuters of men's superstitious terrors into money. Is that alchemy which he pursues less detestable, by which he converts their prejudices into silver, and turns their anti-Papal antipathies into gold,

(To be Continued.)