



# CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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## TRACTS FOR THE MILLION.

### PROTESTANTISM WEIGHED IN ITS OWN BALANCE AND FOUND WANTING.

THE BIBLE AND THE BIBLE ONLY.

(Concluded.)

The Protestant professes that the only sure way of knowing God's will is for every man to read the Holy Scriptures for himself. I take up the Holy Scriptures, therefore, for this purpose, and I find there that our Lord appointed, and the Apostles practised, quite another way of learning God's will and the right road to heaven. I find that our Lord sent not a message, but messengers, not a book for men to read, but Apostles for men to obey; and, in like manner, I find that the Apostles too say not a word about the necessity of not believing any thing that is not written in a certain book, but, on the contrary, that they distinctly say, "Believe all that you have been taught, whether written, or unwritten." I turn, then, to the Protestant, and ask for an explanation of these things, and he says Obey the Bible, and the Bible only; but he is careful not to obey every word of it, for though the Bible says nothing about it, yet it is quite certain that some portions of it were never intended for you, and do not refer to the present generation. In other words, believe the Bible and *the Bible only*; but believe also what I tell you about certain parts of it.

It may be objected, however, that, after all, this is not a fair statement of the case, for that there are other texts of the Bible which seem to speak very plainly on the Protestant side of the question, and that the Catholic is obliged to disregard these quite as much as the Protestant is obliged to disregard those which have been already quoted.

Now, supposing for a moment that this statement was as undeniably true as it is, in fact, utterly and entirely false, observe what follows from it: simply this, which is what every Catholic believes, but every Protestant is, more or less, bound to deny, namely, that the Bible is not a plain and easy book which every man may read and understand for himself, but, on the contrary, is in many parts a very difficult book, and that we require some sure and trustworthy guide who shall have authority to declare to us its true meaning. It is a book which "the unlearned and unstable may easily wrest to their own destruction," (2 Pet. iii. 16;) and therefore, in order that we may understand it aright and use it for our own salvation, it is necessary that we should have an interpreter whom we can trust both for learning and stability. But where shall we find such a one amongst our fellow-men? We may think one man more learned and more stable than another; but who will feel such thorough confidence in the learning and stability of any man as to be willing to stake his eternal happiness or misery upon it?

And we might go on to establish, in this way, the absolute necessity of an interpreter, authorised by God Himself, and secured, by His express promise, against the possibility of falling into error; in a word, to establish the whole Catholic doctrine upon this subject. Such an argument, however, in no way belongs to our present purpose, for we are now merely addressing ourselves to a person who professes to derive his creed from the Bible and the Bible only, and to reject the authority of the Church; and we are trying his position by his own standard, and showing that, in point of fact, he goes beyond it and admits something else instead of it, or, at least, in addition to it, even at the very outset. This, I think, has been clearly shown already, and we might therefore fairly leave the matter here, and go on to another branch of the subject. Nevertheless, that we may not appear to be guilty of the same fault ourselves of which we have convicted the Protestant, namely, a determination to close his eyes against certain parts of the Bible, let us see what are those texts which he pretends to allege in behalf of his own peculiar doctrine.

That doctrine, as I have said before, may be stated thus:—It is the duty of every man to examine for himself the truth of the doctrines which he is taught, and to put them to the test by an appeal to the Bible; and no man can be called upon to believe any thing as an article of the faith, and as necessary to salvation, which is not read therein or may not be proved thereby. Observe, then, what texts are necessary for his purpose: he must find words of Christ or of His Apostles commanding us to make use of no rule but the written Word of God, telling us that the written Word of God is sufficient for all purposes, and that all things are to be found therein; for any thing short of this does not establish the Protestant doctrine. Where, then, can we find such texts?

First, he quotes the words of our Lord, (St. John, v. 39.) "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." But where do these words contain a command from Almighty God bidding all men to read the Bible, and assuring them that the Bible is a sufficient

guide into all truth? Our Lord bids the Jews to examine the Scriptures of the Old Testament, for that they testify of Him as the promised Messiah; and, as soon as they had recognised Him as such, they should at once listen to His words, receive His doctrine, and obey His commandments.

It is plain, therefore, that our Lord did not use the words, "Search the Scriptures," in the sense in which Protestants use them. He did not refer His hearers to the Scriptures in the same way that the Protestant refers you; for if so, why did they need His further teaching? He made the same use of the Scriptures as Catholics do in speaking to Protestants at this day. The Catholic says to Protestants, "Search the Scriptures," for these are they which testify of the Church as well as of her Head; they expressly command you to "hear the Church," (St. Matt. xviii. 17,) and declare that she "is the pillar and ground of the truth," (1 Tim. iii. 15.) You ought, therefore, to listen to her voice, receive her doctrines, and obey her commandments. Our Lord bade the Jews examine the Scriptures for a particular object; is this the same thing as commanding Christians to examine the Scriptures for every object? He sent them to the Scriptures as testifying of Him, the Teacher, to whom, when recognised, they were to submit. Because the Scriptures testify plainly to the appointed teacher, the Church, does it therefore follow that it sets forth all other truths so clearly as that you should need no other teacher but it? Nay, does not the very contrary conclusion follow?

But, secondly, the Protestant quotes the words of St. Paul to Timothy, (2 Tim. iii. 15-17;) "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Now, of course, the only Scriptures that Timothy could have known from a child were the Old Testament. Does the Protestant, then, mean to assert that the mere reading of the Old Testament is sufficient to teach a man all that is necessary for him to know in order that he may be saved? If so, what need was there of the New Testament? If, on the other hand, he does not consider that the Scriptures here spoken of are sufficient for this purpose, it is impossible that this text should prove that they would be made sufficient by the addition of others, for it says nothing whatever of any addition that was ever to be made to them at all.

But, thirdly, we are sometimes told that the Bereans were good Protestants, and are even expressly commended as such by one of the writers of the New Testament, because we read of them, in the Acts of the Apostles (xvii. 11,) that "they were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so." Surely, however, no one can pretend to argue from these words that the Bereans made the same use of the Holy Scriptures as Protestants insist upon now-a-days; the very contrary can be clearly shown by an examination of the history. For what was the real state of the case? St. Paul had "reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom he preached unto them was Christ," (ver. 2.) If, then, they would listen to the preacher at all, they could do no other than search the Scriptures, for it was precisely this to which he had directed their attention.

He had set before the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the sufferings, death, and rising again of the expected Messiah, and then he went on to tell them that in Jesus, whom he was come to preach to them, all these prophecies had been fulfilled. They searched the Scriptures, therefore, to see whether such things had, indeed, been foretold concerning the promised Saviour of mankind, and finding that they had, "many of them believed." But what did they believe? Did they really believe only what St. Paul was able to prove to them out of the Old Testament—for you must remember that this was the only part of the Bible then in existence—and did they refuse to believe any thing else for which he could not produce a written warrant out of those ancient Scriptures? If so, they could not even believe that Jesus was the Christ, since this could not possibly be proved out of the Old Testament, every word of which had been written long before Jesus was born. You see that they received that which was the most important article of all, that which was in fact the very foundation of every thing else, viz., that Jesus was the Christ—they received this, I say, not because they found it in the Bible, for it was not yet written there, but on the testimony of the preacher,

St. Paul. Their study of the Scriptures might teach them that "thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day," (Luke, xxiv. 46,) and so far it may have disposed their minds towards believing one who came to them saying that these things had been fulfilled. But it could not do more than this; it could not teach them that they really had been fulfilled. Both this and every other Christian doctrine which was proposed to them, they received, as I have said, not from the written Word of God, but from the teacher that was sent to them, the Apostle St. Paul. Even so a Catholic Priest at the present day might open and allege the Scripture of the New Testament, in argument with a man who acknowledges their authority, as the Jews of Berea acknowledged the authority of the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and he might show that our Lord established a society which was to endure throughout all ages, even until the end of time, and that he gave to this society power and authority to teach all nations all things whatsoever He had commanded. Then having alleged thus much out of the written Word of God, he might still follow the example of St. Paul, and go on to show that "this Jesus whom he preached was Christ;" that the Church which he preached to them was in very deed the society to which such high and noble privileges were promised in Holy Scripture; and any one who should give heed to his preaching in the same way as the Bereans did, would not fail to meet the same reward: he also would "believe;" believe not only the one doctrine which had been thus proved to him from Holy Scripture, viz., that the Church was the appointed teacher of mankind, but also every other doctrine which the same teacher might propose to his belief, whether written in the Bible or not.

These are the principal texts alleged by Protestants in behalf of their favorite doctrine of "the Bible and the Bible only;" and you see that there is not one of them which really says any thing at all like what the Protestant says; there is not one which teaches that the Bible contains all things necessary to salvation, so that we are not bound to believe any thing but what is written therein, or may be proved thereby.

Neither is it any more to the purpose to quote, as is so often done, all those numerous texts which speak high and glorious things of the *Word of God*; for, in the first place, except they say distinctly (which they do not) that the written Word of God is all-sufficient, and contains every thing which we ought to know and believe for our soul's health, they do nothing towards really establishing the Protestant doctrine. But, secondly, it will be found, upon examination, that in almost every instance the texts really refer not to the written Word of God at all, but to the Word of God taught or preached. This is a very important distinction, plain to every body when once it has been pointed out, yet commonly overlooked by Protestants in consequence of that false notion which they have been always taught, and into the truth of which they never stop to inquire, that the Bible is the *only* Word of God. They do not believe that God speaks to mankind in any other way than by a message written in a book; when, therefore, they hear any thing said about the Word of God, they naturally take it for granted that it is the Bible which is being spoken of, and nothing else; whereas I will venture to say that there are few texts more manifestly opposed to Protestant doctrine upon this subject, than some of these very passages which they so ignorantly refer to the Bible. Thus St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians (1 Ep. ii. 13:) "We thank God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God." What was this word of God? Was it a *written* or a *spoken* word? "You heard it of us, but you received it as the Word of God;" and you did right to receive it as such, for it is such in truth; God has sent His word or message to you through us, His messengers: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21); "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. i. 2); He sent His Son to preach the Gospel; and in the same way as the Father sent the Son, even so did the Son send us (St. John, xx. 22); and in hearing us, you are in fact hearing Him; and in hearing Him, you are hearing Him that sent Him (St. Luke, x. 16); so that our word is literally and truly the word of God. Who will deny that this is the plain and necessary meaning of the Apostle's words? and who will undertake to reconcile them with the principles of Protestantism?

Again, Protestants assuming that the *only* word of God is the Bible, have sometimes explained these words of St. Paul, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17,) as though they too were spoken of the Bible, and were

intended to declare that faith comes by studying that book; in other words, that the Bible contains all that should be the subject of our faith, all that we need believe, in order that we may be saved. But hear how the Apostle explains his own word: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. x. 13-15.) Can any thing be more distinct than this short but most pregnant passage? And how does the Protestant deal with it? The *first* part of it he understands as all others understand it also; Protestants as well as Catholics are all agreed, that in order to be saved, we must call upon God; all are agreed also, that in order to call upon God, we must first believe on Him, and that we cannot believe on Him except we have first heard of Him. But *now* comes the question that creates the separation between Catholics and Protestants: *How are we to hear of Him?* The Protestant answers, by reading the Bible, or listening to any body who will come and read it to us. The Catholic answers—By listening to a living preacher, and that preacher must have been sent by persons having authority for that purpose. The source from whence the Catholic answer is taken we see at once, for it might be stated in the very words of the Apostle, "How shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" But whence does the Protestant derive his answer? Is it from the Bible and the Bible only? Or is it not clear from this, and the many other instances that have been quoted in these pages, that the Protestant, while professing to follow the Bible, is really forcing the Bible to follow him?

## LETTER OF THE REV. DR. CAHILL.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD PALMERSTON.

Dublin, October 6, 1851.

My Lord—At a dinner lately given to your lordship by your constituents at Tiverton, you are reported to have uttered language which has only to be made known in order to be branded with universal and merited censure. Your short speech may be criticised in one sentence, by saying that it was a characteristic compound of heartlessness, mis-statement, bigotry, and insult. I have seldom read anything, even in the late Whig debates in the House of Commons, which has ranged so low in official deceit as your oration at the dinner of Tiverton; and it becomes a necessary duty to bring it before the Catholic world in order to give a further evidence of the perfidy of the Whig cabinet, and in order to throw additional light on your diplomatic conduct during the late revolutions of Europe.

If you had confined your remarks to subjects purely political, I should not deem it my duty to make any commentary on you; but as you have volunteered to enter the precincts of theology, and in the malignant spirit of the cabinet to which you belong, to misrepresent and defame the character of the Church of which I am a member, you must not be surprised if an Irish Priest of the school of Plunket fearlessly stand before the pupil and follower of Wentworth, and convict you of the hereditary calumny which belongs to your religion; and of the unmitigated anti-Catholic hatred which is almost universally inseparable from your office.

Firstly, then, you are reported to have said—"We have—I mean the British nation, and the British parliament, and the successive governments that have ruled this country—have been occupied in removing abuses, and in making improvements, and therefore the people are contented, and are satisfied, with what has been done, and if there remain other things to do, they are confident that in due course of time these other things will meet with due consideration."

Now, Sir, may I be allowed to ask what are the abuses you have removed? Is it the insolence of the Protestant Church, which abuses, vituperates, and calumniate all the subjects—the Catholic subjects—of the Queen, and is aided in this abuse, vituperation, and calumny by the whole British cabinet—by all the law officers, from the Chancellor down to the parish beadle—and by all the government employes, from Lord Minto down all along to the notorious Drummond? Or have you remedied the laws by which you have sealed the Irish harbors, demolished the Irish factories, annihilated the Irish commerce, starved the Irish artisan, and converted the Irish metropolis into a bankrupt market for English goods, and a war station for an English army? Or have you remedied the laws by which you have transferred every office of honor, trust, and emolument from Dublin to London, drained Ireland to fatten England, centralised the wealth of one island of the empire within another, robbing the one to enrich the other, and leaving nothing behind in Ireland to the naked victims of your misrule, but the overgrown bigotry of country, national animosity, and the sword of your conquest? Are these, Sir, the abuses which in your eloquent speech you stated your cabinet had remedied, and which make us so contented and so happy?

And again, Sir, may I inquire what are the improvements you have made? On this point I think I comprehend the meaning of your official address—you