



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. II.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 1852.

NO. 24.

CONTROVERSIAL SERMON BY THE VERY REV. DR. CAHILL IN LIVERPOOL.

(From the Tablet.)

"The Bible, as interpreted by private judgment, is as false as a rule of Faith."

One of the most powerful and interesting discourses perhaps ever enunciated by this eloquent Divine, was delivered on Sunday last, at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Seel-street, Liverpool, on the above important subject. Long before eleven o'clock, the hour announced for the discourse, the sacred edifice was crowded to excess, and several well-known Clergymen belonging to the Protestant Church, and a large number of their flocks, were present. A considerable number of persons, who came at the time appointed, had to return, as they could not procure places, and many others were content to stand outside the doors, and hear as well as they could under the circumstances. The Rev. gentleman came before the altar habited in his surplice and stole; he was accommodated with a seat. The most profound attention was observable throughout his brilliant discourse, which lasted nearly an hour and a half. It was, indeed, a master-piece of eloquence. He said that he hoped to prove, by the clearest evidence, that the Bible, as interpreted by private judgment, was false as a rule of Faith, and he then proceeded to show that from the creation of the world up to the time of Moses, that there was no written work in existence whereby true believers could have been directed or governed by; and yet, after all, Faith was preserved and handed down pure from generation to generation, from father to son, and so on. There was no law written as regarded Faith; so that at least for a period of twenty-six hundred years after the creation of Adam, man had no written book to guide him as a rule of Faith, and yet God was worshipped by man, and the true Faith preserved all that time without a written book, and God's law was obeyed. The law was imparted by God to the Patriarchs, and by them it was handed down from one generation to another; so that, according to the doctrine that the Bible was a rule of Faith, how could man have been saved in the Old Law until the coming of Christ? When Christ came on earth, and died for the redemption of the world, He descended into Hell—Limbo—to preach the glad tidings of redemption to the souls who were there, not by a book, but with the authority of His word. He had there to tell them that the Faith which they had held from the creation of the world—which had been handed down from father to son—had been accomplished in His death. The Patriarchs were not governed nor guided by any written law, but by the authority which they had received from the beginning, and which they imparted from one to the other, from generation to generation. There was, therefore, no written book from the commencement, but the Faith was communicated by word of mouth, and by living authority, and he (the Very Rev. preacher) would submit that was a very strong point. For twenty-six hundred years the Church of God was governed, not by written works, but by the true living authority communicated to her by God himself. He would now come to the New Law, as established by Christ—for up to the time when He made His appearance on earth, salvation was obtained, not from books, but from the living authority which existed without any book. Coming, therefore, to the New Law, he wanted to know where it was written, or ordered to be written, as an authority to be guided by? It was not written, but it was spoken law. If it had been necessary for Christ to have written a book on the subject, He would have done so, or He would have commanded one to have been written; but the fact was that Christ never, during His life on this earth, wrote a book, nor did he speak about having a book written. He said to His Apostles that He would send the Holy Ghost, who would teach them all things, and bring to their minds whatever He had told them, and whatever He had told them He commanded them to do. He did not say to them "write a book," but He commanded them to go and preach the Gospel all over the world—not by writing, but by teaching by word of mouth. When, then, did the sanction of the first book appear on the subject after the death of Christ? Not for three hundred and seventy-five years after the death of Christ. It was that time before the stamp of the Church was put upon any book—not but that the Scriptures were written and in possession of the Church before it, but they had not been stamped with the seal of authority up to that period. The Old Testament had been written by Moses—the New Testament had been written, and was in the possession of the Church; but, as he before observed, they were not stamped with the authority of the Church for nearly four centuries after the Gospel was preached—not written—by Christ and His Apostles. No book was used during that time; but

the Gospel existed, and salvation was obtained through the Church, speaking by the living authority alone. There were twelve Apostles, and out of those only five wrote books. He would ask if it were necessary, why did not the remainder write? The four Evangelists wrote three works, not as general, to the Church, but at the special request of individuals. Matthew wrote at the solicitation of the people of Palestine; St. Mark at that of the people of Rome; St. Luke to an individual; and St. John wrote to put down a heresy that had arisen amongst some early Christians. The writings were not general, but written locally, and for local purposes, not as the guidance or rule of Faith. Suppose that Queen Victoria had occasion to write to an individual in Liverpool relative to some local act of parliament, did any one think she would sit down and write the code of laws by which England is governed to that individual? So it was with the Scriptures. If they were written for the government and law of the whole Church it would be clearly so stated and set forth; but they were not; they were written for local and special purposes, without reference to the general government of the Church, which was preserved in the Church itself from the beginning. The Rev. preacher then stated in detail to whom and for what purpose the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse were written, and stated that the Church, as the depository of all truth, had by her authority set her seal on the Scriptures, but that it was not until nearly four hundred years after Christ that she thus collected and set apart the sacred volume we now possess. Yet the Christian Faith existed before that. Christ did not say to His Apostles, "Go and write to all nations in my name," but he said, "Go and teach, and preach to all nations;" and St. Paul expressly states that Faith comes by hearing alone. Now, hearing must come from one living man to another living man, who, by speaking, communicates the Faith to him—that Faith having come down from the earliest times to its possessor, through the authority of the Church. A man cannot hear with his mouth or his eyes, but with his ears he can hear what the mouth utters to him. Christ was a living man, and he spoke to living authorities, who, in their turn, spoke also to living authorities in the Catholic Church; and thus the Faith was preserved pure and spotless down to the present time, and would ever continue so to the end of time. It was clear, therefore, that Faith came by hearing, that Faith being spoken by the authority of the Church, and that was the Faith and the belief given by Christ to His Church on this earth. His first point was therefore proved; and his second fact was equally strong. It was avowedly admitted that for nearly four hundred years after Christ there was no book stamped with the authority of the Church. If the rule of Faith of the Catholic Church was confined to books of Scripture, many of those were lost; but notwithstanding that, the Faith was fully and entirely preserved in the Church, for he had received his Faith from his spiritual Fathers in the Church, as pure and spotless as the stole he wore. He was the legitimate descendant of that Faith, and would not part with it but with his life, nor would any other Catholic in the world. Suppose the Scriptures were the rule of Faith why they ought to have the whole Scriptures; but they had not the whole, as it was well known that nearly the half of the books were lost; but yet the Catholic Church preserved the Faith whole and entire. If a man kill another, he violates the Fifth Commandment, and although he did not violate any of the other ten, yet he could not be reconciled to God until he returned to grace and repentance; and, in the same manner, if a man violated one of the dogmas of Faith, he could not preserve a part thereof: so that if the Scriptures were a rule of Faith, man should have the whole, and not a part, of what he founded his Faith upon. Catholic Priests were reviled, and charged with not reading the Scriptures; and they were further charged with preventing the people from reading them. Now, he would tell such parties that every Priest at his ordination was obliged before the Bishop, with his body prostrate on the ground, and his hands stretched out, to take one of the most solemn oaths that man could take, that for the remainder of his life he would devote at least one hour and a quarter every day reading the Scriptures. So that any one who asserted that Priests did not read the Scriptures told a falsehood. They say also that Priests prevent the people from reading the Scriptures—that is another falsehood. Also, let any man go into any shop in England where books were sold, and he would get the Scriptures to purchase if he had money to pay for them. In fact, that was a matter of mercantile speculation; but see how easy it was to choke two such bold lies as were constantly uttered against Catholic Priests and Catholics. But he would ask, how could the whole Scriptures be read? Where were the lost books to be found?

He would now come to that point, and show how many books were lost: and this he would prove from the books that remained of the Scriptures. In the Book of Numbers, xxi., 14, there is the following passage:—"Wherefore it is said in the Book of the wars of the Lord." Now, where was that book? It was not to be found—it was lost. In the Third Book of Kings it is stated that Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs; there was not more than 1,500 to be found—the rest are lost; and in the same book it stated that he wrote 105 canticles—there is not the half of that number to be found in the present Bible; they are lost. Then, there it is stated that there was the Book of Nathan the Prophet—there is no such book now; it is lost. In the Book of Chronicles it is stated that the acts of David are written in the Book of Samuel the Seer, and Nathan the Prophet—no such books are to be found: they are lost. There was an Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians lost. St. Paul wrote five Epistles to the Corinthians, but we have only two of these. There were altogether twenty-three books belonging to the Bible lost—twenty from the Old Testament, and three from the New; so that if the Bible was to be a rule of Faith, how could it be proved that the whole Bible existed? If a man made his will, and left his son his property, and that in the course of time twelve men, on their oaths, came to decide on that will, and found only the half of it in existence, would they, or could they, as honest men, say that it was the man's will? It was manifest, therefore, that there was a time when there was no Bible; yet Faith existed, and it was equally manifest that the Bible, as interpreted by private judgment, was false as a rule of Faith. Catholics respected the Bible, but they did not make it a rule of their Faith; but they respected and believed it because the Church had sanctioned it—that Church which was unchanged and unchangeable. How was that portion of the Bible preserved? Why, from the fall of the Roman empire in 475, for nearly nine centuries, every country in Europe was in a constant state of revolution, confusion, and civil war: and where was religion, piety, literature, Faith, and morals preserved all that time? In the faithful repository and bosom of the Catholic Church. That was known all over the world—history records it. And how was such preserved? By teaching the doctrine which was confided to the Church by Christ and His Apostles—the living authority being in the Church. It follows that those who made the Bible the sole rule of Faith ought to have the whole Bible, which they had not, and if they had not, why they must be in doubt every moment about their Faith. They could not be certain of the truth or of the Faith, and therefore they must be in the dark, and to be in doubt on such a matter was to be always in a state of unhappiness. Moses wrote a portion of the Old Testament, but it was admitted on all hands that for twenty-six hundred years before he wrote that no book of the law existed, yet the Faith was preserved all that time by the Patriarchs, who handed it down one from another. Christ said to His Apostles, when speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees, not to do as they did, but to observe what they said, for they spoke the law with their lips, but their hearts were unsound—do not as they do, but do what they say. They taught the law of Moses, who was dead fourteen hundred years before that time. The command of Christ was in the imperative mood—do not what they do, but what they say—so that here again Faith came by hearing. He would ask those who followed their private judgment, and made the Bible the rule of Faith, if they understood Hebrew, for the Old Testament was written in the Hebrew and then translated into Syro-Chaldaic, and the New Testament was written in Greek—he would ask a man depending on private judgment, then, do you know Hebrew? He would answer no. Then how could such a man say that he founded his Faith on the Bible, when he did not know whether it was truly translated or not? The same thing must be said in reference to the New Testament, and in both cases such a man, after all his boasting, was depending, not on his own judgment, but on the judgment of others, of whom he could know nothing, not even their names. Now, would it not be better for such parties as he alluded to to depend on the Pope and the Bishops whom they did know than to depend on parties whose names he was even ignorant of? He would ask such persons—"Is there any person in your Church who cannot read?" He would be answered yes. Then how do you teach persons to form their Faith by private judgment?—By teaching them the Catechism. Yes, but where do you get that Catechism?—From other authority. Then where is your private judgment? You don't get it from your private judgment, but from authority, as you call it, of which you are totally ignorant. The Protestant Clergy were obliged to swear to the truth of the Thirty-nine Articles, and where did these Articles come from? They came to them on the

authority of an act of parliament, and yet such Clergymen were obliged to swear before God to the truth of such Articles. Acts of parliament were made by the House of Commons and the House of Lords, which comprised about 1,000 persons, including old Bishops, all differing in religion, and many having no religion at all, and yet these were the persons upon whom Protestant Clergymen and Protestants were to rely for their rule of Faith—whose judgment they were obliged to obey in swearing to the Thirty-nine Articles. He would ask—If the Pope and the Bishops of the Catholic Church who had preserved the Faith for so many hundred years, pure and spotless, were not better authority than such men as he alluded to? He then alluded to the acts of parliament made by Cranmer in the reign of Edward VI., and contrasted such acts with the conduct of the Popes and Bishops who governed the Catholic Church, and who preserved the Faith of Christ as it had been given to them by Him and the Apostles. Up to the time of Luther in 1517, the authority of the Popes and Bishops was acknowledged all over the world—Purgatory, prayers for the dead, invocation of Saints, and satisfaction for sins—all were acknowledged; but when Luther threw off the authority of the Church, he flung aside those dogmas, because if he retained them he must obey the authority of the Pope, and from that time to the present his followers had been gradually getting rid of everything they thought proper—all on private judgment, of course. He alluded to the Gorham case and the decision thereon. In the same manner the Protestant Church got rid of the Sacraments; and he would ask what belief had they now? There were the Unitarians—many of whom he knew to be learned men, and by the same process of private judgment they denied the Divinity of Christ; in the same manner the Greeks denied the personality of the Holy Ghost. The Protestants first began to take the stones off the house, then they took away the roof, next the pillars, and lastly, they carried away the walls and left nothing behind—all from private judgment, of which they confessed themselves to be totally ignorant, for they depended not on their own, but on the opinion and judgment of others, of whom they knew nothing whatever. Such was their Faith. He then referred to the acts of parliament made on the subject of Church of England government and Lord John Russell's opinions, which governed such acts, and concluded by stating that persons who were depending on the Bible as a rule of Faith, as interpreted by private judgment, were the most inconsistent in the world, and that they stood alone in the world in the midst of the most frightful doubt and perplexity, which nothing could remove from their minds. They should therefore have recourse to the only true and infallible test of Faith which lay alone in the bosom of the Catholic Church from the earliest time, and would continue so to the end of the world. After resuming his argument he concluded by passing a well-merited compliment on the Christian Brothers who had charge of the schools, whose cause he advocated, and showed all the good they had done. In the evening the Rev. gentleman preached a second sermon in the same church, which was thronged as fully as in the morning. The subject was the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, which he proved in the most convincing manner to all who heard him.

The collection for the very meritorious charity, which he advocated, was liberal.

The Very Rev. Divine has won golden opinions from all parties in this town, by his moderation and the inoffensive manner in which he puts forth the powerful truths on both subjects.

A POPULAR RELIGION.

We learn from the *Weekly Jubilee*, a new paper, just started in this city, that the members of the "Episcopal Methodist Church" have commenced a movement in favor of appointing lay delegations to take a part in all future conferences of that church. The editor of the *Jubilee*, who seems to have taken the Methodist Episcopal Church under his special protection, says, in his article introducing the meeting:—

"The fires of freedom are burning in the Church as well as in State, and they must burn till the last vestige of Priestcraft and Sectarian intolerance dies. The Bible! the Bible alone, and an enlightened private judgment as its interpreter must prevail over dead formalism, and authoritative dictation. The sovereignty of the people must and shall triumph in Church as well as State. The old doctrine, that preachers are the servants of God, in an exclusive sense, must give way to that higher doctrine, that preachers are the servants of the people, that they have no power other than that delegated to them by the people."

We cannot blame the Methodist Episcopalians. They but carry out the principles of Protestantism. Their preachers have no mission from God—they are, as the editor says, "the servants of the people—they have no power other than that delegated by the