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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 24, 1851.

When a Protestant, in the bitterness of his heart, would condemn some article of the Catholic's faith or practice, the favorite word which he uses for this purpose, is to denounce it as "unscriptural," meaning thereby, not so much that such doctrine or practice is in direct opposition to, as, that it is not by him to be found in, the writings which have been handed down to us. The whole force of the objection, it will be seen, depends upon the unwarranted assumption, that every thing connected with religious belief and discipline, has been committed to writing, prior to the end of the first century, and that the whole of such writings are contained in what is termed the Bible, or, *par excellence*, the Book. We believe that we have not mis-stated the fundamental article of Protestant belief, indeed the only one upon which, all Protestants, who have not as yet succeeded in protesting themselves into deism or perfect infidelity, will cordially agree. If, then, there be one thing which those who differ from us, are imperatively called upon to prove, it is this, that the Bible, as they possess it, is, and that it alone is, the Word or Revelation of God. At first sight, there is certainly nothing to induce us to believe that God ever commanded the whole of His Revelation to be committed to writing. The Bible itself contains no such doctrine. On the contrary, we know that amongst the children of Israel, the most important dogmas—the resurrection of the body, for instance, and that of a great day of judgment, with many others—were handed down from the days of Enoch to the coming of Christ, by means of oral tradition only. There is, therefore, no *a priori* evidence that all that was revealed by Christ to the Apostles, was by them committed to writing. Protestants assert that it was: with them is the burden of proof.

We have before us the report of the annual examination of the pupils of the establishment at Pointe aux Trembles, conducted by the agents of the F. C. M. Society. In that report, we find the usual answer given by Protestants to the important question—Is the Bible the Word of God? It is, as far as we have ever been able to discover, the only answer which they can give—one which is put into the mouths of little children, repeated by old men, and continually bellowed forth by hundreds of ministers from a hundred pulpits. Let us examine it.

Q. "How do you know the Bible to be the Word of God?" A. "By the fulfilment of many of the prophecies contained in it. By its civilising the nations, and by its effects in enlightening and sanctifying the soul." The reporter has appended to this, an editorial comment—"Not a word here about the dictum of the Church of Rome being the only evidence of its Divine origin.—Ed. *Wit.*" If by this the editor means, that Catholics rest their faith, that the Bible contains part of the Word of God, upon the dictum of the *Church of Rome* alone, we do not say that he has mistaken, but that he has mis-stated their tenets. It is upon the authoritative testimony of the Catholic Church, in the person of the descendants of the Apostles, or the *Ecclesia docens*, that Catholics believe, now, in the XIX. century, as did St. Augustine in the IV., that the Bible is the Word of God: like him, also, without that authority, they would have no solid reasons for so believing. It is certainly incumbent upon those who object to, as

insufficient, the reason for the faith which Catholics have in them, that they should be able to bring forward some better and stronger reasons, upon which as upon a sure foundation, may be based the faith of those whom they are trying to convert to their own way of thinking. Now, what are these reasons—these proofs, sufficient without the testimony of an infallible body of teachers to satisfy us—that the Bible is the Word of God?

Firstly. The fulfilment of certain prophecies contained in the Bible.

Secondly. The effect it has had in civilising the nations.

Thirdly. Its effects in enlightening and sanctifying the soul—that is, the personal experience of the individual believer.

We admit that the evidence of inspiration, from the literal fulfilment of prophecy, is good in so far as it goes, but not farther. For instance, we admit that the fulfilment of certain prophecies contained in the writings attributed to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others, proves that such prophecies were written under divine inspiration, and are, therefore, to be considered as the Word of God. But it does not, therefore, follow, as a logical consequence, that all the other writings of the same authors,—far less does it follow that the writings of others, who wrote centuries later,—are, therefore, inspired, that is, that they also are to be considered as the Word of God. The inspiration of Isaiah cannot prove that of St. Luke—nor that of Daniel, the inspiration of the writings of St. Mark, or of, to Protestants, the unknown writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is not because they are bound up in the same volume with other writings manifestly inspired, that these writings are to be held as the Word of God. This may prove the dexterity of the book-binder, but is no testimony to the immediate presence of the Holy Spirit.

The second proof upon which Protestants rely, is the effects of the Bible in civilising the nations. If by this is meant, in civilising the nations of Europe after the destruction of the Roman Empire, we answer that they were converted by the preaching of the Missionaries, and by the administration of the Sacraments of the Catholic Church, and not by the reading of the Bible: if the civilising of nations in modern times, by means of the distribution of the Protestant bible by Protestant Missionaries, be meant, we can only say that the proof is a singularly unhappy one. We need but refer to the beastly state of the Sandwich Islands, in illustration of the effect of Protestant Missions.

The third and last proof adduced, is that of the effects of the Bible, in enlightening and sanctifying the soul, or the personal experience of the individual believer. At the best, this proof can be of use to those only who are, or who have been, the subjects of these personal experiences or interior illuminations; but can be of no use as a demonstration to him who is a stranger to those strange qualms of conscience or of stomach, by which the truth of Revelation is brought home to the minds of the devout frequenters of the conventicle. We have no faith in these subjective evidences. It is so impossible to distinguish, unerringly, what is of inspiration, from what is merely the result of indigestion. We once knew a case in point: that of a rather middle-aged young lady, unfortunately much addicted to tight-lacing, and to the gloomy theology of Calvin. When first we knew her, she had long labored under dyspepsia and a sense of sin. It was awful to listen to her. She chose invariably the most gloomy topics for conversation, and during the sleigh-drive or snow-shoe parties, her talk was still of brimstone and hell-fire. She was a prey to the most dreadful fancies—thought that her soul was lost as well as her appetite, and that the tortures of indigestion were unto her a sign that she must inevitably be damned. Doctors and ministers differed as to the treatment to be pursued. Whilst one spoke of the heart, the other maintained that the liver alone was in fault. Hence, one recommended tonics—the other, tracts. We know not which carried the day, but we believe that both systems were adopted. At all events, when last we saw her, she was an altered person—boasted of her firm assurance, and certainly gave outward and visible signs of a firm state of flesh, and an undeniable digestion. She said, it was her eyes that had been opened. We said no, not so much her eyes—at all events, we could never agree as to the cause of her previous suffering, or of the present salutary change. We only mention the fact, as a proof how little reliance can be placed upon what are termed "*personal experiences*;" and yet upon these personal experiences, do those who reject the authority of the Church, in a great measure rely, in order to prove the very first proposition of Protestantism.

The pupils of the educational establishment at Pointe aux Trembles, will one day go forth into the world. There they will meet, very likely, with more consistent Protestants than themselves—that is, men who deny more, or, perhaps, everything, and who may, therefore, very likely deny the inspiration of the Bible. In that day, we rather imagine that the proofs, from the fulfilment of certain isolated prophecies—its effects upon the nations, and the personal experiences to boot, will serve but little to demonstrate that the Bible is the Word of God. On that day, will be tested the validity of the education they have received from the hands of Protestant Missionaries. Perhaps, also, it may happen that on that day, convinced of the absurdity of supposing that between Catholicity and Infidelity—between the acceptance of all that the Church teaches, or the denial of every thing which God has revealed, there can be any resting place—they may, through His Grace, be brought back into the communion of that Church from which, in an evil hour, they had been seduced.

The news by the *Asia* is of trifling political importance. The anti-Papal excitement in England has greatly subsided, and, like the drunkard when his foul orgies are past, the people of England seem to be a little ashamed of their late conduct. What is to be done? is now the question men begin to put to themselves. Is all the bully and bravado of the last few weeks, to end in smoke? After all this inordinate quantity of talk, is there not to be even one poor half-penny-worth of action? We know not; but it seems that the Catholics of England are as indifferent to any thing that the legislature may say or do, as they have shewn themselves to the brutal bellowsings of a senseless mob. We copy the following from the *Rambler*, a Catholic monthly periodical published in London:—

"Yet we may be mobbed, and our churches burnt. Possibly so; but not more on account of the new hierarchy than for any chance reason wholly distinct. Enlightened, comparatively, as is the popular mind, occasions not unfrequently occur when Catholic priests escape personal violence by a hair's breadth; but these occasions, we are convinced, will be made scarcely at all more common by the new measure of which we are speaking. The people care too little for Protestantism to attack Catholics for any Protestant reason. A few dissolute idlers can, at any time, get up a riot against any person or institution; and the falsehoods which are still scattered profusely among the wealthy as well as the poor might at any moment kindle a fierce blaze against us. But as to any disturbances on a large scale, that cannot be: and for the best of reasons—we are too numerous and too powerful to endure them. Lord Gorge Gordon's riots would be impossible in the present day. The hundred and eighty or two hundred thousand Catholics who live in London only could quell any popular tumult with their own right arms alone. It will be remembered that at the time when the Chartist riots were anticipated in the metropolis nearly three years ago, the most powerful assistance which was rendered to the Government by the really poor and laboring class was given by a numerous body of men termed "coal-whippers," who were duly marshalled and commanded, and who, in case the peace had been broken, would have proved a most formidable obstacle in the way of the seditious. But it was known to few that these very men were, for the most part, Catholics and Irishmen. Yet so it was, and so would it be again. London could, at a brief notice, send forth tens and twenties of thousands of Irish Catholics who in the cause of order would be the most faithful of the auxiliaries of the Government, and than whom the Queen has not more loyal subjects in the empire; but who in case of any extensive Anti-Catholic demonstration would crush their foes and trample them under foot. The English nation may rest assured that we are to be despised no longer. Woe be to those misguided men who attempt violence against us! We obey the laws of the land in all temporal things gladly, and thanking God for the privileges enjoyed by Englishmen. Should any fearful convulsions, which may God avert, shake this country to her centre, the Catholic body, both English-born and Irish-born, will be the very last to cease fighting in the cause of loyalty and order; in the midst of a never-ceasing pelting of abuse and misrepresentation of our religion and our lives, the instances of Catholic abuse of Protestants are comparatively few; but should a frenzied passion ever again seize the multitude, and stir them up to plot against the sacred persons of our clergy, or the consecrated dwelling-places of our God, there exists a protective power among us, which can be summoned to its work in a moment, and which is sufficient to defy the malice of any enemies who can league themselves against us."

It is with sincere pleasure, that we copy, from the *Montreal Herald*, the following passage, forming part of an address delivered by the Right Rev. Dr. Fulford, Anglican Bishop of Montreal, upon occasion of a meeting of the Church Society—Diocese of Montreal:—

"His Lordship, the Bishop of the Diocese, in putting the resolution, regretted any differences of opinion which had been manifested, but gave it as his decided opinion, that before any efforts were made for the conversion of others, it was above all things necessary that the Church should provide for the spiritual wants of its own people, and complete its own organization, at present very deficient. It was also to be remembered that a great responsibility was incurred, in shaking the hereditary faith of another, for it was easy to shake a man's belief, but unless something were given him to supply the place of that which was taken away, he was left in a state of infidelity."

This is the language of a gentleman and an honest man. Would to God that some of his hearers would lay it to heart, and meditate seriously upon the deep truth which it contains. It is easy to shake a man's faith,—if that man be a poor, ignorant *habitant*,—especially if he has been remiss in attending to his religious duties, and in the habit of neglecting the frequent use of the Sacraments. But, and we say it advisedly, it is impossible for the Missionary to supply the place of that which he takes away. "No man drinking old wine, hath presently a taste for new; for he saith, the old is better:"—if he renounce the old wine, it will not be, that he may taste of the new, but with the intent of renouncing wine altogether. And so with Catholicity. The man who abandons it, abandons it, not to assume the crude absurdities of Protestantism, but, with his Catholicity, abandons all religious belief whatever. All history attests the truth of this. No man, we repeat, ever renounced Catholicity, who did not therewith renounce, in his heart, if not with his lips, all Christianity; and the reason is obvious. The Catholic differs from the Protestant, not in what he believes,—for it is not a question of a little more or a little less faith,—but in his reason for believing. Once let a Catholic be convinced that the Church, or body of teachers appointed by Christ Himself to teach all nations, could or did, in spite of the promise, fall into error, and he will be convinced, not that

Protestantism is true, but that the whole system called the Christian Revelation, is but a clumsy imposture, unworthy the attention of a reasoning being.

Few, except the most bigoted Protestants, but will admit that even Romanism (as, in their ignorance, they term Catholicity) is better than infidelity, even in a mere temporal point of view. Let, then, the Missionary pause and reflect well on the advice given by the learned divine whose words we again quote: they cannot be too often repeated:—"It is easy to shake a man's belief; but, unless something were given to supply the place of that which is taken away, he was left in a state of infidelity."

## MEETING OF THE FRENCH CANADIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Our readers may be aware that the evenings of every day during the present week have been more or less distinguished for an outpouring of rabid violence against Catholicity, and especially the Catholic Church in Canada. That much nonsense would be spoken, that many stale, and, one would fain hope, nearly worn-out falsehoods, would be repeated, was nothing more than we naturally expected; but we must confess, that we were not prepared for the following effusion, from the lips of a person who professes to be a minister of the Gospel of Christ. We would not speak harshly—the speaker, upon whose discourse we are about to comment, is a minister, and although Catholics can recognise in him no sacred character, yet we will speak as gently and respectfully of him as if he were indeed, as he is in name, a Reverend Gentleman. After repeating the calumny that the Catholic Church is unfavorable to the dissemination of the Word of God amongst her children, the Rev. W. Taylor, for such we were informed was the speaker's name, proceeded to denounce monastic institutions, and especially the nunneries of Canada, in the following terms:—

"Monastic institutions are contrary to the British Constitution. It is contrary to the spirit of that constitution, that any person should be imprisoned, no matter though that person should have given a voluntary assent to such confinement. It is an easy thing to decoy the young and unsuspecting female into these monastic establishments; to present a life of celibacy, and devotion to religious exercises, in pleasing colors, and when at last led to take the irrevocable vows, she finds herself made a prisoner—and a prisoner for life. In an evil hour she has been seduced, and decoyed within those horrid walls, cut off from intercourse with the world; where no eye may see—no ear may hear the horrid cruelties there perpetrated. We know not the vain regrets which may pass through the minds of the victims. Never more may they listen to the fond voice of father or mother. Never more gaze upon the bright sky above, or listen to the carol of the birds. That nunnery—that horrid nunnery—for ever encloses them from the surrounding world. How many doubting Catholics may there be, thus cruelly immured. I protest against this, as contrary to the British Constitution, and I call upon those who hear me, to come to the rescue," adding, with a momentary twinge of prudence, "that he did not mean by violence, for such were the carnal weapons of their opponents." Indeed, good Mr. Taylor! and with what weapons, then, was it that men of your stamp destroyed the Ursuline Convent at Charlestown, a few years ago, excited by such another series of falsehoods and calumnies as you have yourself vomited forth against individuals, whose shoe-latchets you and yours are not worthy to unlose? Violence, the means which Catholics make use of, indeed? Or, perhaps, you will tell us, that they were Catholics, and not good evangelical Protestants, who destroyed the Nunnery to which we allude. When Mr. Taylor spoke of Nuns being immured in Convents against their will, he knew, or did not know, something about the establishments against which he was presuming to vent his dirty venom. If he did know nothing, he was unwise to speak of them at all; and if he did know, he was something, which we will not soil this sheet by writing, to speak of them in the manner he did. Every one who knows anything about the Monastic Institutions of Canada, knows that no physical obstacles are presented to the departure of any of the inmates,—nay, that in the course of their daily avocations, they are constantly obliged to wander forth into all the haunts of misery and wretchedness, with which this city abounds, ministering to the wants of the needy, or hanging, like angels of mercy, over the beds of the sick and dying. The Sisters of the Hotel Dieu, and of the Bon Pasteur, are the only exceptions, in as much as the objects of their acts of charity, are the poor and desolate within the "horrid convent walls." We will conclude by remarking, that after just such another appeal to the passions of an ignorant multitude, was the outrage against the Charlestown Convent perpetrated; and though, perhaps, were similar sad scenes to occur here, Mr. Taylor might be able to escape the vengeance of the law, yet, upon him would rest the moral responsibility. Yet, we fear not. Even Mr. Taylor will not succeed in effecting what is clearly his object. We have, in the first place, too much reliance on the good sense, and feelings of our Protestant brethren. And secondly, there are too many Irish hearts, and strong Irish arms, to say nothing of the Catholic French Canadians in Montreal, not to render it certain, that fear of chastisement will efficiently prevent any acts of outrage or violence, which evangelical ministers may prompt, or evangelical missionaries may be desirous to carry into execution.