

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY AFTERNOON,
At the Office, No. 3 McGill Street.

TERMS:

To Town Subscribers. . . . \$3 per annum.
To Country do. . . . \$2½ do.
Payable Half-Yearly in Advance.

THE TRUE WITNESS
AND
CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 7, 1852.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

Parliament re-assembled on the 19th ult.; the debates offer nothing of any interest. It is rumored that the Chancellor of the Exchequer intends to propose the repeal of the Income Tax.

With the prospect of a general election before them, the supporters of the Penal Law of the last session, begin to suspect that that measure has after all, turned out to be a great political blunder, as its opponents predicted from the very commencement of the No-Popery agitation that it would be. As yet, the only effect of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, according to the *Times*, is to put an amount of electioneering influence, far greater than that of O'Connell in his palmiest days, into the hands of a conclave of Bishops, presided over by an Italian Priest. It was the custom a few weeks ago, to sneer at the Catholic Defence Association, as a body unable to exert any influence over the Irish Catholic mind; it seems that this confidence was a little premature; prospects, it is now universally admitted, are not looking bright for the Government or Protestant party in Ireland. The *Times* cannot disguise its fears, or its impotent hatred:—

"The Ecclesiastical Titles has not been enforced; the only effect of its enactment seems to be that it marks out for honor and distinction the persons most forward in its violation. The labor of a whole session, the theme of so many debates, has had no other effect than to confer honor and impunity on its violators, and to serve as a grievance to excite the passions of the Roman Catholic laity. It is really pitiable to think how utterly powerless our government is to prevent the growth in Ireland of a power far more unconstitutional than any nobleman ever exercised over the election of members of Parliament. The country seems content to leave its representatives to be selected for it by the priests, and the priests select the most objectionable men whom they can find to give expression to their wishes. The return of seventy or eighty Irish Roman Catholics bodes little good to the coming Parliament. Neither party can afford to throw away the support of so numerous a body of auxiliaries, and it is quite possible by a judicious direction of their power they may be able to extort wide and impolitic concessions, such as it may not be good for the empire to grant, nor for the safety of a harassed and tottering ministry to refuse."

This is an ugly "look out" for John Bull; after all his high sounding words of last session, after all the solemn forebodings of the downfall of the man of sin, and the triumph of stir-about and the Protestant faith, it is sad to think that perhaps the House of Commons, that is to be, may yet be obliged humbly to undo the work of its predecessor, and to witness, without the power to save, the destruction of State-Churchism and State-Schoolism in the sister isle. In this emergency Protestantism naturally looks to fresh Penal Laws for protection, and cries upon the State for help. New legal safeguards for Protestantism must be devised; other and heavier fetters must be prepared to restrain Catholicity. Such at least seems to us the meaning of the following mystically oracular paragraph, which we clip from the article in the *Times* which we have already quoted:—

"The Court of Rome and its obedient satellites, lay and clerical, seem determined to drive matters to such a point in Ireland that we must either yield to all their most unreasonable demands, and offer up on the altar of vain and fruitless conciliation the cause of enlightenment in the shape of the national system of education, and of truth in the shape of the Established Church of Ireland, or else bethink ourselves of some new safeguard against the violence of men who stimulate every bad passion in the name of religion, and rouse their followers to faction and discord with the perverted doctrines of the gospel of peace."

The news by the Pacific is of little interest. The drought so long prevalent in Ireland is beginning to create no small anxiety amongst the farmers. The rage for emigration still continues unabated amongst the peasantry.

The 10th May is looked forward to with much anxiety by the people of Paris; by many, it is confidently expected that the Empire will be proclaimed upon the occasion of the grand review that is to take place on that day. M. Proudhon, whose term of imprisonment has expired, has been ordered to quit France, and has, in consequence, taken up his residence in Belgium.

DR. BROWNSON'S LECTURES.

On Tuesday evening, the 27th ult., Dr. Brownson gave his concluding lecture of the course—Why am I not a Protestant? and—Why am I a Catholic? The Hall was as densely crowded as on previous occasions, and the applause with which the learned gentleman was greeted upon his entrance, testified as to the satisfaction which his unanswerable logic, seconded by the arts of the accomplished orator, had afforded to his auditory. When the storm of applause had somewhat subsided, Dr. Brownson commenced his fourth lecture, being a continuation of the reasons—Why he was a Catholic:—

I showed, said the lecturer, in my previous discourses—Why I am not a Protestant, and I gave also some of the positive reasons—Why I am a Catholic. I showed that Protestantism, in so much as it is Protestantism, is a mere negation, and that, if consistently and logically carried out, it must lead to

universal negation—to the denial of all things. I know no better test of the falsity of a system than this, that if carried out it leads to universal denial, for truth is essentially in Being, and not in Non-Being; hence, only what is, can be true. Now, a system that is based upon a negation, that proceeds from a negative principle, can never lead to anything more than negation, that is—to falsehood, which is merely the negation of truth, for nullity is the best expression for falsehood that I know of. But Protestantism is only the negation of Catholicity; and as it denies Catholicity without opposing any truth to it, it follows from the falsity of Protestantism that Catholicity is true, for, of two contradictories, if one is proved to be false, the other is proved to be true. I showed, that the question at issue, is between Catholicity, and Protestantism, or negation; and that every man must accept either the one or the other. I endeavored to illustrate this by showing, that I could not abandon Protestantism without assuming Catholicity; for whither could I go? I could not go to Gentilism, which is only another, and older form of Protestantism, because I should still be in Protestantism; I could not find rest with any of the early heretical sects, for all sects are heretical, and Protestantism includes within itself all heresies. Thus, I concluded, that betwixt Catholicity, and absolute Nihilism, there was no third alternative, and that as every man must be a Christian, or else deny all religion, so every man must be a Catholic, or else deny all Christianity. Betwixt Protestants and Catholics there is no common Christianity—there are no great religious truths common to both, for religion can exist only as a system, and in a Church. The question thus resolves it into one—not between one form of Christianity and another, but between Catholicity, and no Christianity whatever. I endeavored to show that Catholicity is only the continuation of the religious order that has always existed in the world, and which has been, from the beginning, established by God, for man. Then, by another line of argument, I endeavored to prove that the Catholic Church is, and must be, God's Church, because of the stupendous miracle of her continued existence, in spite of the opposition that she has constantly met with from men and devils, from the powers of earth, and the powers of hell. Attacked on all sides, she has seen her enemies fall on her right hand, and on her left, and has survived them all. Unscathed, unslung, she has come forth from the fiery furnace, the flames of which have proved fatal only to her foes. Hence, I concluded that her existence, in spite of this continued opposition, was a miracle, her institution miraculous, and that she was, therefore, God's Church, and therefore, all that she professes to be—Infallible—but if infallible, then must all her teaching be true, and then must it be the duty of every man to submit himself to that infallibly true teaching, for, in disbelieving her teaching, we disbelieve not a human, but a divine institution; in protesting against her, in opposing her, we protest against, and oppose her founder; and in blaspheming her, we blaspheme God.

And yet I have been still asked to prove that the Church is infallible. "Prove," it is said to me, "prove that the Catholic Church is infallible, and I will become a Catholic." I know not what proof, men who speak thus, desire. I would ask them—what manner of proof is it that you seek? Do you believe the infallibility of the Scriptures? "Yes," you answer. I ask you—why do you believe so? You answer me—"Because they are inspired." But—how know you that they are inspired? "By the evidence of the miracles," you reply again. But miracles can be no proof of an infallible inspiration to teach. From the fact of the miracles we may indeed conclude the divine commission, and the presence of divine assistance; thence we may conclude that as God is true, so the teacher assisted, and commissioned by Him, must needs be a true teacher. The miracles wrought by, or for such a teacher are his credentials; they are, as it were, the endorsements of the Lord of Lords, and thus from the commission to teach, we conclude the infallibility of the teacher, because God is truth, and if He has given the commission to teach, His word is pledged for the teacher's truth.

To establish then the infallibility of the Church as a teacher, all that it is necessary to do is to establish her divine commission to teach; if I can prove the first, I have the right to conclude the second. But Protestants do not understand this, simple as it seems; they do not understand by the word Church, what Catholics understand by it. Protestants fancy that the Church comes from below, not from above—is formed by men, and not established by God; their idea of a Church is, that doctrine is first of all preached, then believed, and lastly, that the believers of the doctrine preached, come together, and form a Church. Take, for instance, the Anglican's definition of the Church, and perhaps of all the Protestant sects, Anglicanism has retained the most, or, to speak correctly, has lost the least, of the true idea of the Church. The Anglican definition of the Church is—"That it is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered." Thus the Anglican definition makes, the true faith, the pure Word of God, and the due administration of the Sacraments, the tests of the true Church, and consequently supposes that every man must first discover, what is the true faith, the pure Word of God, and the due administration of the Sacraments, and that having discovered all this, without the Church, he next must look about him for some religious society, in which this faith is taught, this pure Word of God is preached; and the Sacraments are thus duly administered, and that he must then come to that body to be taught what is the true faith, what is the pure Word of God, and how the Sacraments ought to be administered. But how is the seeker after the Church to find out—what is the true faith and the pure Word

of God, or—how the Sacraments ought to be administered? Caprices, prejudices, guesses, may lead a man, upon these principles, to choose what he may call a Church, but such a Church can have no claims as a teacher, nor can such a man look upon the Church in the light of a teacher, for if he did, he would begin his researches by seeking after the Church, from which he might learn the true dogmas. But no—a Protestant is never troubled about dogmas; a knowledge of these, he supposes to come, like Dogberry's reading and writing, "by nature;" not even an Anglican, who, as I said before, has the least lost sight of the true functions of a church, entertains any higher or more logical notions of the Church, than those I have stated. The other Protestant sects suppose the Church to be merely a congregation of individuals, brought together by common sympathies, and similarity of opinions, making thus their faith and regeneration, to precede their entry into the Church. With such absurd views of the Church, of her functions and of her origin, it is not surprising that Protestants do not understand what Catholics mean by the Church.

By the Church, the Catholic intends to denote—an institution of God—established by Him, and by Him commissioned for a definite purpose. The Catholic believes that the object of Revelation was to give mankind, not a mere disembodied faith, but a faith embodied in an institution, and in an institution perfectly organized, and fully able to perform all its functions. And here I cannot but notice another very ordinary view of Protestants, with regard to the Church; they hold with regard to her, doctrines similar to those which the Epicureans held with regard to the world. These did not deny the existence of God, or Gods; they contented themselves with ignoring Providence; if they admitted the creation of the world by God, they could not believe that this God cared the least what became of the world after He had created it; they fancied that God had made it, and then, giving it a kick, had launched it out into space, to shift for itself. Much such an idea have Protestants of God's dealings with His Church: they may admit that He instituted a Church, that He gave her faith, and furnished her with Sacraments, and that then, as if weary of His work, He had started her off to shift for herself. "Go ahead, on your own hook." Protestants cannot bring themselves to believe that the same causes that first necessitated the establishment of the Church, are still in operation, and render God's providential care over her, as necessary as her first institution. It is this inability to conceive God's continual, and supernatural Providence over His Church, that renders it so difficult for Protestants to conceive the continued existence of an infallible Church upon earth, or to perceive that a Church instituted by God must needs be infallible. Like the Epicureans, they ignore God's continual Providence, and so, not content with the proof of her divine commission and command to teach all nations, they keep continually demanding other proofs of the Church's infallibility. Now my argument for the infallibility of the Church, as a teacher, rests solely upon her divine commission to teach. Of this fact, even when I was a Protestant, I was fully convinced—that, if God had established a Church, the Church was infallible. Thus then even as a Protestant, I had but two questions to settle. Did Christ establish a Church? and if so—Which is it? These are the only two questions open for discussion betwixt Catholics and Protestants, and the proof that Christ did institute a Church, is the only proof that can be given, the only proof that can exist, of that Church's infallibility. There is no other way of proving infallibility, whether of the Apostles, of the Scriptures, or of the Church; we argue their divine commission from the miracles, and their infallibility from their divine commission. In support of the divine commission of the Church, I have appealed to the most stupendous of miracles—her continued existence for so many centuries, in spite of the constant and active opposition she has met with, and her continual triumphs over all her adversaries; and from the divine commission I conclude her infallibility; it must be remembered too, that there is no halfway house—that the Church is either a gigantic imposition, or else, all that she claims to be; that she cannot be partly good and partly bad—partly true, and partly false, for she stands up before the world, and proclaims herself to be the teacher commissioned to teach all nations: if she has not that commission, she is false, she is an impostor, and to suppose God's protection to be extended to a false Church, is to blaspheme God. Let us now see what light history throws on the claims of the Church to be divinely commissioned.

Referring then to the Scriptures, as genuine, and reliable historical documents, I find it recorded of Christ, that He appointed a body of men as the teachers of mankind. "Go," said He to them, "and teach all nations—and *Lo I am with you even unto the end of the world,*" or "till the consummation of all things." Here, then, if this historical account be true—if Christ did speak in these terms—was a commission given as plainly as words could give it. To whom was it given? To the Apostles—but clearly not to the Apostles as individuals, (for individuals are mortal, and the commission was to endure until the end of the world,) but to the Apostles as to an undying corporate body, and which, only as a corporate body, could exist until the end of the world. They were to teach, and to teach all nations—hence all nations are bound to accept their teaching. Did Christ provide for them? Did He promise them His protection in the fulfillment of their commission? "Lo I am with you all days"—He promises, then, to enable them to execute their commission. What commission ever given could be more universal, more comprehensive than this? And if in virtue of this commission they were to teach all nations, they could only execute that commission in virtue of their infallibility, for, if not infallible, they might themselves fall into error, and so teach a lie. From history, then, I conclude that the Church which retains the true Apostolic succession, and communion, is, and must be, in virtue of Christ's promise, infallible.

But, again, I am asked—How can men, fallible, individually, be infallible collectively? I must confess that I cannot hear this objection propounded without feeling pain for the intellectual weakness of our "separated brethren;" it is a sign that they do not understand what the Catholic means by the Infallibility of the Church. Infallibility cannot, it is true, be predicated of any collection of human individuals: collectively, they can be no more infallible than they can be infallible individually. No; Catholics do not suppose that men become infallible in virtue of their collectiveness; they suppose—nay they know with certainty—that the Holy Ghost is in, and with the Church, and that it is only in virtue of His presence—that infallibility can be predicated of the Church. The infallibility, that Catholics claim for the Church, proceeds, not from any amount of human sagacity or prudence, but from the supernatural assistance of that Holy Spirit, whose office it is to teach all truth; and the objection of Protestants arises from their Pagan views of God, and of His dealings with the Church, views which, as I have shown, they hold in common with the Epicureans.

I must, indeed, be ignorant of the first principles of reasoning, if the line of argument that I have hitherto adopted, be not amply sufficient to establish the existence of an infallible Church, and I have shown, that the Catholic Church is that infallible Church, because, none other can be. The Church then speaks to me in the place of, and with the authority of, God: I have full assurance that every word that she utters is His word, and that all her commands, all her decisions, are His commands, and His decisions. I dare no more refuse to listen to her, disobey her, or reject her decisions, than I would dare to close my ears to, disobey, or reject, the Words of God if I heard them ringing in my ears to-day, as of old, they were heard issuing from the cloud-covered summit of Sinai, by the assembled thousands of Israel. But I have yet another argument.

To be a Christian, I must believe something; the very name of *believers*, as applied to Christians, implies this. Belief is necessary to Salvation, for without Faith, it is impossible to please God. Then, this something that must be believed, as essentially necessary to Salvation, is Truth, all the Truth, and the exact Truth. The Truth, for it is repugnant to the idea of God, as the God of truth, to imagine that man can be saved by a lie—the whole truth, for it cannot be supposed that God, as a God of infinite wisdom, has revealed truth which it is unnecessary for man to believe—the exact truth, because truth not exact, is truth mingled with falsehood, which is error; and error can be no more acceptable to the God of truth and purity, than a lie. Hence, it is necessary for Salvation to believe, and therefore, to know, the whole, and the exact, truth revealed by God to man. How is the knowledge of this truth to be obtained? It cannot spring up spontaneously in the human breast; it cannot be the product of the human intellect; it comes not by intuition; it must be learnt, and if learnt, why then it must be taught, and if taught, why then there must be a teacher. The pride of man renders him averse to acknowledge this; hence, his contempt for a teacher, and for tradition. Blinded by their pride, men see not that all knowledge must have proceeded from God, and through tradition: that were He to cease to instruct us, were the human mind to forget all that it has learnt from Him through tradition, all knowledge would be lost, and could never be re-acquired by any effort of the human intellect. Yet, in forgetfulness of this fact, modern philosophers tell us to "rely on ourselves,"—"to look within," and inculcate a contempt for the authority of a teacher and tradition. Now, I assert, that all knowledge has been handed down to us solely by tradition. It is to tradition that we are indebted for the preservation of language, and of the meaning of language. Without language, knowledge would be impossible; without it, we could form no distinct conception of any truth: we might, indeed, reflect upon those objects of which our senses can take cognisance, without language, but how, without it, could those objects which are purely intellectual, which transcend the sensible, become matters of reflection; the ideas which are the object of the intellect must be fixed, must become incarnated—so to speak—in language before they can become the subjects of reflection, in order that the mind may have time to seize upon, and to analyse them; now, language must have been given to man, directly by God. Fancy men endeavoring to create language! why, until they had language the idea of language would have been inconceivable. Hence, we conclude, that language is of divine origin, made by God for man, and that not only the words, but the ideas of which those words are the symbols, were by Him infused into the hearts of men. God then gave knowledge, and all that it expresses—for knowledge can be preserved only as it is embodied in language; and hence, we see, that in the beginning, man must have been taught by God, and that all knowledge is, in its origin, supernatural. Since the beginning, how has language been transmitted to us? By tradition; then tradition has been the medium through which all knowledge has been transmitted to us, for without language, knowledge would be impossible; and only in proportion as language has been preserved in its purity and integrity, has knowledge been preserved pure and entire. From this, we perceive the necessity of a Sacerdotal or Priestly caste, in which language might be preserved in its purity and integrity, and this Sacerdotal or Priestly caste has always existed in the world—before Christ, in the Patriarchs, and the Synagogue; since Christ—in the Catholic Church. We see how in the ancient Gentile, and in the modern Gentile, or Protestant, world, the unity of speech has been lost; how language has lost its purity and integrity, and has become confused, and how a corruption, or confusion of ideas has been the consequence of the Babel-like corruption and confusion of language. We see, how in spite of the great intellects of the sages of ancient Greece and Rome, the speech of their philosophers is broken, and one false idea pervades all their philosophy—they substituted the idea of Emanation for that of Creation. So with the modern Protestant world; what more confused than its speech? what more corrupt than its incoherent babblings? Thus, has it been, thus, must it ever be; left to itself, the speech of man becomes confused, language becomes corrupt, and knowledge lost; to preserve knowledge in its purity and integrity, language must be preserved in purity and integrity, and this can be done only by means of supernatural assistance; and that supernatural assistance is the infallible teaching of the Church to-day, as in the old time, it was the teaching of the Synagogue, and in the days before the Synagogue, the teaching of the Patriarchs.

Thus, then, as knowledge, even in the natural order, cannot be preserved in its purity and integrity without