

the confusion of contending sects, in the din of this strife, of intellect with intellect, was I to decide? and if I, with all my advantages of situation, and of study, found it so difficult to obtain a solution to these difficulties that haunted me, how much more difficult; how impossible must it not be to the poor negro—to the wild son of the forest—to the child of toil, whose time was fully occupied in working for his daily bread? What were these to do in order to find religion? or could they be saved without religion? As a father, fresh difficulties started up before me; I had sons, but what could I teach them? Could I, who had no certainty of truth, presume to force my crude speculations, as God's truth, upon my children? could I thus run the risk of leading them into error? for as I had no certainty of possessing the truth myself, I had no guarantee that what I might teach them, might not be a lie, instead of truth. No. I could not incur the fearful responsibility; I could not run the risk of being, perhaps, accessory to the damnation of my own children; and thus it came to pass, that I, professing to be a minister of the Gospel, did not dare to teach my own children, whom I loved, any religion at all, lest whilst giving them my own opinions as truth, I might, perchance, be poisoning their tender minds with a lie. I, a Protestant minister, dared not educate my own children in religion! Oh! I said, if I had but the truth; if I had but an infallible assurance—then would I not neglect my duty to my offspring! But where, but how, was I, as a Protestant, to obtain this certainty, this infallible assurance?

In concluding his lecture, Dr. Brownson mentioned that an anonymous letter had been thrust into his hands, upon entering the room, accusing him of having changed his religion seven times. He had but one feeling, for the anonymous coward who dared thus to malign him; but as the subject had been often alluded to, he would explain, what, and how many, were the changes with which he was taxed. Until he was 21 years of age he had been a Presbyterian; he then became a Universalist, and was a minister of that denomination for some few years: he changed from a Universalist to a Unitarian, not that there was any difference betwixt them, but because the latter was the more gentlemanly sect: these were all the changes he had undergone, and about which so much had been said. Whilst a Protestant, he had often changed his arguments, but not his doctrines; driven from position to position, he sought to save himself by calling new arguments to his aid; and still was destined to see argument after argument fail him, till at length he almost despaired of being able to prove anything. This change he admitted, but this change of arguments was the consequence of his fidelity to his doctrines. The learned gentleman announced his second lecture for Tuesday evening.

On Tuesday evening, Dr. Brownson resumed the question—"Why am I not a Protestant?" The attendance was fully as numerous as on the first evening of lecture.

The learned gentleman commenced his discourse, by remarking that some people were very hard to please, and had complained that, in his first lecture, though professing to explain why he was not a Protestant, he had assigned no reason why he was a Catholic. He had professed to give some only out of many, of the reasons why he was not a Protestant, but not all the reasons: the objection therefore was unfounded, for had he given all the reasons why he was not a Protestant, he would, in that case, have given the reason why he was a Catholic, for every man must be either the one or the other.

"On Thursday," the lecturer continued, "I laid before you some of the reasons why I was not a Protestant. Firstly—Because I could never find, amongst any of the Protestant sects, the assurance that, if I followed Protestantism, and fulfilled all its requirements, I should be saved. Secondly—Because I never could find out what Protestantism was in its positive aspect, or of what doctrine it could be predicated that it was a Protestant doctrine, peculiar to Protestantism—distinct from Catholic doctrine on the one hand, and from Deistical or Infidel doctrine on the other. I assumed that if Protestantism professed to be the true religion, it must be able to give me the assurance I sought, and that my soul required; but as Protestantism could not give me that assurance, it seemed to me evident that Protestantism was not the true religion. My second reason was—that never could I ascertain what Protestantism positive was. From all the various sects I received an answer, but from none a definite answer; the evangelical sects all differed amongst themselves, and amongst the liberal sects the case was bad. I remember when I was a Unitarian minister, that it was commonly said, that there were but two amongst the Unitarian ministers of Boston who agreed with one another, and that they differed essentially. How, then, could I discover with infallible certainty to which sect to attach myself, or what doctrines I was obliged, under peril of damnation, to accept? Not only Protestantism could not give me any satisfactory answer, but Protestantism had not, cannot have, any authoritative organ, through which to reply, for it has no teaching faculty. Though to Protestants this may seem a trifling objection, to the man who is in earnest in his researches after the truth, who is deeply convinced of his responsibility as an immortal being, it is, to say the least, very perplexing. What I wanted was something clear, and definite; something besides bare words. Of these latter I got plenty; oh! plenty of words, and fine sounding phrases. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,' cried the Evangelical. But what is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ? I rejoined: If I am to believe on Him, I am to believe something on His authority; what then is this something that I am to believe? What Christ taught, you say. But what did Christ teach? Now to this question I never could get a definite answer. Presbyterians, Methodists, Unitarians, Universalists, Swedenborgians, Mormonites,

all good Protestants, in that they protest against the Catholic Church, all answered this question differently; all agreed as to the negative, all differed as to the positive, aspect of Protestantism. But it was Protestantism in its positive aspect that I sought.

Some said—Justification by Faith alone, is the great Protestant doctrine. This doctrine, indeed, was taught by Luther, and Calvin, and may perhaps be held by some Protestants to-day; but even this doctrine contains a positive and a negative element: in that it is positive, it is a Catholic doctrine; it is a Protestant doctrine only in virtue of the negative element that it contains. What it affirms—Justification by Faith—it affirms in common with Catholicity, for Justification by Faith is a Catholic doctrine: what it denies, is the necessity of good works, and it is only in virtue of this denial, in virtue of this little word, alone—which Protestantism has attached to the old Catholic doctrine of Justification by Faith—that it can be called a Protestant doctrine. Again, not only is the doctrine of Justification by Faith, alone, a Protestant doctrine only in virtue of the negation that it contains, but it is not, even in this negative form, a doctrine common to all Protestant sects: therefore, it is not the Protestant doctrine. The Unitarians deny it; they argue that God is the God of justice, and of truth, and that, therefore, He cannot call a man just, unless the man be just. If God were to repute the unjust man, just, God would repute a lie; but God is truth. The Unitarians and liberal Protestants, therefore, repudiate the doctrine, and in so doing, seemed to me, when I was a Protestant, and seem to me, now that I am a Catholic, to be better reasoners, and sounder logicians than their self-dubbed orthodox brethren.

Next, I am told, that the Protestant doctrine is—Salvation by the merits of Christ, in opposition to—Salvation by works. In this doctrine there is nothing peculiarly Protestant, for the Catholic Church teaches, and always taught, the doctrine of—Salvation by the merits of Christ, and that it is through His meritorious Cross and Passion, alone, that the possibility of salvation has been obtained for mankind. What there is of positive in this doctrine, is Catholic; all that is Protestant in it, is, the implied denial, of the necessity of leading a holy life, and of the merit of good works done in a state of grace. The Catholic doctrine is, that it is by the merits of Christ, alone, that we are enabled to do good works, that the power to do them is the free gift of God, but that to obtain salvation, we must merit salvation, must apply Christ's merits to our souls, and bring forth good fruits: hence, Heaven and eternal life are propounded to us as a reward; the power to merit that reward, by good works, is the free gift of God. And here I cannot but allude to the singular confusion that exists in the Protestant mind, with regard to works. Protestants confound the works of the Jewish law, works of local, and temporary obligation, with the works of the moral law, works of universal and perpetual obligation; then they confound the works of the moral law, which man, in his natural state, is able to perform, with the works in the supernatural order, which man is enabled to perform by God's grace alone. Thus, then, neither in the doctrine of—Justification by Faith alone, nor in that of—Salvation by the merits of Christ, could I find any peculiar positive Protestant doctrine: in that they asserted anything, they asserted it in common with the Catholic doctrines, they differed from the Catholic doctrines only in that they denied something—the necessity of good works. This negation was at least convenient, because, on the Protestant principle, if a man could once bring himself to believe that his sins had been forgiven, it was an unavoidable logical sequence, that all his sins, not only past and present, but to come, were, and would be forgiven. This Lutheran doctrine was the logical consequence of the doctrines of 'imputed righteousness,' and the worthlessness of good works. It is related in Luther's *Table Talk*, how the great reformer replied to a well meaning young man, who wrote to him, complaining of the violence of the temptations to which he was subjected, by the following pithy exhortation: 'Drink! Drink, get Drunk and defy the Devil; tell the Evil One that you cling to Christ, in spite of him.' I do not mean, continued the lecturer, to tax my Protestant brethren of the present day, with holding similar sentiments.

But passing over the difficulty of discovering what the Protestant doctrine was, another difficulty, no less great, awaited me; for, even supposing that it were possible to find out what the Protestant doctrine was yesterday, it is impossible to say what it is to-day, or what it will be to-morrow. Protestantism boasts of being progressive; but progress implies change: Protestantism is always undergoing reform, and hardly has one reformation been effected, but the reformed reformation must be itself reformed; hence you never know when you have Protestant doctrine. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say, that there is not a single Protestant sect—nay, that there is not a Protestant individual, who believes the doctrines of the early reformers, or whose doctrines are, in all respects, identical with the doctrines of Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Martin Bucer, or Queen Elizabeth's Parliamentary Prime, Dr. Parker. Calvinism still exists in New England, but the Calvinism that is taught there to-day is not the Calvinism that was taught in my younger days. If from New England, the home of the Puritans, we turn to Germany, the birth-place of Protestantism, to Wittenberg, where Luther posted his theses, and denounced the Pope in High Dutch, and bad Latin, we find that Protestantism has undergone still greater changes; of the sects called after the name of Luther, there is not one that would dare to-day to proclaim the doctrines of Luther. In Geneva, from the pulpit of Farel and of Calvin, doctrines are now preached, not only, less Christian than those for the profession of which Calvin burnt Servetus, but doctrines too meagre even for J. J. Rousseau, too unsatisfactory even for a Voltaire. And, so throughout Europe; old forms of words are still retained; orthodoxy is still a name; but the doctrines, once considered orthodox, have been long abandoned for a transcendental rationalism, or mystic Pantheism.

But I protest against the modern use of this word *orthodox*; I do not admit that Protestantism is limited to the so-called orthodox sects. One sect has no more right to call itself Protestant, *par excellence*, than any other sect; the Unitarian has just as much right, and just as much good reason to call his opinions, *orthodox* Protestant doctrines, as has the howling Methodist, or the more sedate Congregationalist. No man can decide what is orthodox; therefore no man has the right to call his opinions orthodox doctrines. Every man, in his own opinion, is orthodox, and esteems his opponent heterodox; but as all Protestants deny authority, and as without infallible authority, it is impossible infallibly to decide what is orthodox, and what heterodox, it is, to say the least, gross impertinence on the part of any Protestant sect, to arrogate to itself the title of orthodox. *Orthodoxy* amongst Protestants was well defined by a Quaker, as that *doxy* which was uppermost. If Unitarianism were in the ascendancy, Unitarian *doxy* would be *orthodoxy*; if the Swedenborgians or the Mormons, had the upper hand, Swedenborgian or Mormon *doxy* would be *orthodoxy*; in fact, with Protestants, *orthodoxy* means *my doxy*, heterodoxy *another man's doxy*. Protestants, when they have the power, sometimes call in the aid of the State to settle the question of orthodoxy; but I cannot accept the decision of the State, whether pronounced by a Sovereign, by a Privy Council, or by a majority of the people, as a test of orthodoxy, for God has given to the State no power to decide in matters of faith—no authority in the spiritual order whatever. In things spiritual, the State, as well as the individual, is bound to receive and not to give laws; for the State as well as the individual is subject to God—to Him who is the Lord of Lords, and the Ruler of Princes.

Sometimes our Protestant Reformers appeal to universal suffrage, as the test of orthodoxy; thus recognizing the justice of the Quaker's remark, that *orthodoxy* meant the uppermost *doxy*. Here, for instance, I hold in my hand a report of a speech lately delivered in London, by that great reformer J. Mazzini. He proposes to regenerate Italy by the abolition of the Papacy, and the establishment of a new and reformed religion upon its ruins. But to discover the true religion, how does Mazzini propose to proceed? The Pope is no more—the authority of the Church is no more—Religion cannot be brought down from God, it must therefore be dragged up from the people. Mazzini's plan is, simply, to ascertain the truth by universal suffrage. Here are his words as reported in a London Journal:—

"The Pope being gone, it would become the necessity for us, and for the whole of Italy, to do what I shall call, feel the pulse of humanity as to our religious question. As we should do in political, so should we do in religious matters—ascertain the general opinion by a general assembly. We should summon, so far as the resolution goes, the clergy; not only the clergy, but all others, laymen, who have studied the religious question; and we should know from them the state of feeling and opinion, as to religiosity. We should have the actual transformations effected in the Catholic belief by time. We would have a council by the side of the constitutional assembly. We should have universal suffrage, and we should know, not what is the individual religious belief, but, what is the collective belief of the majority."

Thus Protestantism proposes to settle questions in the religious, or supernatural order, precisely as it settles questions in the civil or natural order—"ascertain the general opinion by a general assembly"—and then pronounce the *general opinion* so ascertained to be orthodox, forgetting that religion is from God, as from the *Lex Suprema*, and must be known by revelation, and revelation alone.

But some Protestants may refer me to the Bible, as a proof that their *doxy* is, after all, the *orthodoxy*. "But," I ask, "have not the other Protestant sects, whom you brand as heterodox, have not they got the Bible also? Are they not, in point of intelligence, of sincerity, and diligent research after truth, your equals, to say the least? Why, then, should you assume, that the Bible is to be understood as you understand it, or that the opinions which you thence profess to deduce, alone are orthodox? Who gave you a right to call your brother, the Unitarian minister, as good, as intelligent a man as yourself, perhaps a far better, a far more intelligent man than yourself, heterodox, because his opinion of the meaning of the Bible differs from your opinion?" These are questions hard for the orthodox Protestant to answer, often as they have been asked; but they cannot be answered, for in Protestantism there is no authority to decide what is, and what is not, orthodox; yet, in spite of this, we daily see impudent, thick-headed, and generally very ignorant upstarts, denouncing better men than themselves, as heretics and infidels.

Sometimes, with marvellous inconsistency, your orthodox Protestant will appeal, in support of his views, to the universal belief of the Christian world—to tradition in fact. But if to learn what orthodoxy is, I must go back to the traditions of the olden time, I must go back to that Church that ruled the world ere Protestantism was begotten—to the old Roman, Catholic Church. If Protestants appeal to antiquity, in support of their *doxy*, the Catholic appeals to a far higher antiquity, in support of his *doxy*, and history condemns, in unmistakable language, not the liberal, or heterodox Protestant sects alone, but all separatists from the one Church, and the one fold. When the orthodox Protestant refers me to the universal belief of the Church, he refers me to tradition, and attempts to support Protestantism upon Catholic principles, which are as fatal to his Protestantism as to the more advanced and more consistent Protestantism of the Unitarian. But it is as absurd as it is impudent, to talk of *orthodox* Protestantism. *Orthodoxy* is a *doxy* that has long been dead; in vain do its ministers try to galvanise the corpse into a ghastly action, resembling life—it is dead—it can no more influence the world; it has no hold over men's souls, no authority over their hearts or consciences; its power is gone, and the real strength of the Protestant world is with the liberals. The old forms have lost their charm—no longer is the Protestant bond of union—Justification by Faith alone—or Salvation by the merits of Christ—the true bond of union is the assertion of the right of private judgment, a right which Protestants assert, but which they will not allow others to exercise. Free inquiry is all very well with them, provided only, that free inquiry be not allowed to bring forth its legitimate fruits—free thinking. "It is amusing," continued Dr. Brownson, alluding to the illiberal strictures of some of the evangelical journals, upon the celebrated gentleman who is now lecturing in Montreal, "to see in one column of these papers, the right of free inquiry asserted, and in another, to see the result of free inquiry—i. e.—free thinking, condemned."

The lecturer then alluded to the difficulty that the Catholic controversialist had, in dealing with the Protestant. Like smoke, Protestantism always managed to elude its pursuer's grasp; ever moving, ever

changing—no longer to-day, what it was yesterday; the argument that was good against a Protestant doctrine yesterday, is worthless to-morrow. If the Catholic sets himself to repute Luther or Calvin, his Protestant antagonist tells him that he don't hold with Luther, or with Calvin; that his Protestantism is impregnable to arguments which he will admit are fatal against the Protestantism of Luther and Calvin. The same with the Anglicans. One don't hold with Pusey—another don't hold with Dr. Sumner—a third abandons Dr. Phillpotts, and in fact, no Protestant ever seems to hold with any one but himself, and even then, he cannot hold with himself long. Thus, the Catholic controversialist knows not where to direct his batteries: his antagonist is a very Proteus, and thus, by ever changing, manages to escape his death-blow.

The lecturer summed up. All that Protestantism can call its own is negative—that its faith is merely the denial of some portions of Catholic faith. Protestantism commenced by protesting against the self-denial, the fasting, the asceticism of the Catholic Church, because fasting is painful to the body, and Protestantism likes to take care of the body, and to cherish and comfort the belly: then Protestantism protested against the Confessional, as involving a very painful and very humiliating process, and Protestantism don't like anything that is painful or humiliating. Then Protestantism protested against some other Catholic doctrines and practices. As the controversy went on, Protestantism protested against some more Catholic doctrines, and lopped off a little here, and a little there; thus, day by day approaching nearer and nearer to Ultra-Protestantism, or universal denial, until it resulted in the Hegelian philosophy, which denies all things, and maintains the identity of Being and Non-Being. Protestantism, or the force of nonsense, could no further go: it would have protested against, and denied itself, if it could, but no one can deny his existence, for, in the very act of that denial, he affirms what he denies.

But there came to me moments when I must have something positive, when the soul asserted her reality, and I felt that I was a rational, and responsible being, and had a duty which I was bound to perform. No matter what we may think or say in the thoughtless gaiety of youth, and the hey-day of life, there come such moments to us all, when we are forced to retire within ourselves, and reflect on what we are, what we have done, and what is our moral condition.

I knew there is a God, that he had created me, and that, therefore, I belonged to him—all that I am, and all that I was. I was bound to obey him, to live according to his law, his will and pleasure. But I had not obeyed him; I knew from my own conscience that I was a sinner. The consciousness of sin is universal; all creation groans under the curse of sin. Universal tradition asserts it. All experience the poetry of all nations, in its low, melodious wail, testifies to the sad truth, that man has fallen and lies under the condemnation of sin. Here I am, a sinner; I cannot deny it; conscience affirms it, and my heart is tortured with remorse. But I wish not to be a sinner; I resolve not to sin—I resolve to break off from sin, and regain my integrity; but I fail. I re-resolve, but break my resolution as soon as formed; I am forced to acknowledge that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. I am forced, in the breaking up of my whole moral being, in the convulsive agony of my soul, to cry out—What shall I do to be saved?

In my distress, I go to my Protestant brethren, and call upon them to tell me—Tell me, O tell me! what shall I do to quench these flames of hell, already kindled in my heart, to wipe out my guilt, and to find peace and salvation? Do not mock me with mere words, but answer me plainly, distinctly, and directly. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," said they, "and thou shalt be saved." With all my heart, but to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to believe something on His authority, that is, the truths He has revealed, or taught. What are these? "Come to Christ," they replied again, "and you shall be saved." But to come to Christ is to come into moral harmony with Him, to be one with Him, to be made alive in Him. But my principal difficulty is, that I am not thus in harmony with Him, that I am not alive in Him. I am dead in trespasses and sins, and you do but say to me—"Live, and then you will be made alive!" My difficulty is, that I am dead, and cannot live; that I cannot restore myself to life. Tell me how I am to be made alive; tell me where, and what is the power to speak to those dry bones, to clothe them with flesh, and cause them to live?

Alas! Protestantism had no intelligible answer to give; she mocked me with words, high sounding words indeed, but words without meaning. She might bid me fold my hands, and wait till the Holy Ghost should be pleased, by His irresistible influence, to regenerate my heart; but she had no sacraments, she had no fixed, regular, and determinate media, by which the sinner could attain to the fountain of life, no channels through which grace could reach him in his lost condition, and elevate him to the kingdom of heaven.

Here, after all, was the chief reason why I could not continue a Protestant. Protestantism could not meet my necessities as a sinner; it could not bring me pardon for sin committed, or infuse into my heart the power to live the life required of me by my Maker.

These are some of the reasons why I am not a Protestant; several other reasons I had intended to assign, but I pass them over, and in my next lecture will proceed directly to the question—Why am I a Catholic?

DR. BROWNSON'S THIRD LECTURE

WILL TAKE PLACE

THIS EVENING, (FRIDAY.)

AT THE ODD FELLOWS HALL.

The Doctor is stopping at the residence of Mr. Sadlier, 16, St. Antoine Street.

SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE.—The following vessels have arrived at Quebec:—The *Toronto*, *Albion*, *Ottawa*, the *America* and the *St. Lawrence*.

Acknowledgments in our next.

Married.

In this city, on the 20th instant, at the Parish Church, by the Rev. J. J. Connolly, Mr. Patrick Coyle, son of Edward Coyle, Esq., to Miss Joanna Jones, daughter of the late Thomas Jones, Esq., all of this city.