

SELECTED.

MUSENBETH'S DEFENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Continued.

Having thus "destroyed the sophistry" of Mr. White with regard to the Catholic Church, we shall find him "at his dirty work again" in that Letter in his "Evidence" which treats of the Head of that Church on earth, *the Pope*; as well as in the third Dialogue of his "Preservative."

The substance of his Letter, as far as it regards the Pope is this: Mr. White professes to examine the title by which our Church, with the Pope at its head, claims infallible authority. He states, as the ground of it, the memorable text; "Thou art Peter," &c. St. Matt. xvi. 18. He argues, that if those words contain what Catholics teach about the Pope, it is only in an indirect and obscure manner; "that Saint Peter never alludes to his privilege in his Epistles; that our system "may indeed be contained in that passage, but if so, it is contained like a diamond in a mountain;" that it follows that the claim of the Pope and his Church "having no other than an obscure and doubtful foundation, the belief of it cannot be obligatory on all Christians;" that if they have the power which they claim, it is "one of the least obvious truths in the Gospel;" that the force of his argument rests upon the *doubtfulness* of the meaning of the text in question; that either Christ did not mean what Catholics claim; or if he did, he concealed his meaning, and therefore, obedience to the Roman Church cannot be necessary. This is really the substance of Mr. White's grand argument, which he has muddily carried along through seven octavo pages!

Our task then in reply is sufficiently easy; it only rests with us to shew that the claims of our Church and Pope, do not rest on a doubtful foundation. Allowing, for argument sake, that our only proof of the authority of our Church and Pope, is the passage "Thou art Peter," &c. which is by no means the case, we contend that even so, our claim does not rest upon a doubtful but a very sure foundation. How can that passage be of doubtful meaning which for so many hundred years, by so many millions of people, by all the Holy Fathers and Doctors, by all the Councils, and by the most learned and pious men in the world in every age down to the Reformation, was uniformly understood as Catholics now understand it; and since the Reformation has been understood the same by the greater part of the Christian world? A fine idea for a passage to be called doubtful because a handful of men choose to dispute its meaning, in opposition to the rest of Christendom, and 1500 years after the passage was written, its meaning having been agreed to all that time throughout the Christian world!—Was not St. Augustine qualified to pronounce on such a passage? was not St. Jerome biblical scholar enough to determine its meaning? Was that like a diamond hid in a mountain; which was found and used by the primitive Fathers, and has been preserved in all its brilliancy ever since? What does Mr. White mean by a passage with a *doubtful meaning*? Does he mean a text which no one has been ever found to dispute? He will find few such indeed in the Scriptures. If so many discordant meanings have been assigned to those four words, "This is my body," than which language can furnish none plainer, how are we to hope for a passage like that in question to be undisputed?—But, independent of the glaring fact that such an overwhelming majority of Christians in every age have understood this passage in *one sense*, and thereby removed all doubtfulness from its meaning, an impartial examination of the Text will shew clearly what our Saviour intended by it.

Our Saviour had previously changed the Apostle's name from Simon to that of Cephas or Peter, which means a rock. (See St. John, i, 42). He shows in St. Matt. xvi, 18, what he intended by so doing. Simon Peter had just made a glorious confession that Christ was the Son of the living God; and to reward him for this confession our Saviour conferred on him a splendid privilege in these words: "I say to thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." What can this mean but that our Lord chose Peter to be the rock or foundation upon which his Church should be built—that he was to support the whole edifice upon earth? Then our Saviour added: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth it shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven." This second metaphor of the keys plainly expressed the plenitude of power in the House of God; for he who has the keys of the house or city, has committed to him the government, possession, and administration thereof. Where is the obscurity or doubtfulness of the passage? It plainly confers the primacy of honour and jurisdiction on St. Peter; and these he is proved to have exercised, though his humility may easily have prevented him from proclaiming his authority in Epistles, which would, after all, have been a very needless proclamation where his supremacy was never questioned. In proof that he was ever the acknowledged head of the Church, it should be observed that he is *always named first* in the enumeration of the Apostles in the Gospels; he spoke first for the election of an Apostle in place of Judas, declaring that "one of these must be made a witness with us of his Resurrection" (Acts, i); he proclaimed the Gospel first, and first opened the Apostolic ministry on the day of Pentecost (Acts, ii); he first pleaded the cause of the Apostles before the Council (Acts, iv); he first began the conversation of the Gentiles, in the person of Cornelius (Acts, x); he first spoke in the Synod of Jerusalem opening it with authority, although St. James was the Bishop of that city in which it was held (Acts, xv). Thus do the Scriptures themselves testify the meaning of that passage which Mr. White endeavours to obscure.

It has been shewn then that the meaning of the said text is not doubtful or obscure; and this at once demolishes all Mr. White's pompous argumentation. Mr. W. is wrong in stating that the claims of our Church and Pope rest solely upon the above text. With his usual want of theological accuracy, very disgraceful in a man of his multiplied titles, he has confusedly mixed up the separate subjects of the *Authority of the Church, the Head of the Church, and the infallibility of the Church*. All those important points we prove from various weighty arguments; which as the nature and limits of this little work neither require nor admit of our stating at any length, we refer the reader to the masterly exposition of them in that incomparable work, "The End of Religious Controversy," by Bishop Milner, or in the "Discussion Amicale" of the Abbe Trevern, now exalted to the episcopacy in France. We confine ourselves to the sophistry of Mr. Blanco White; and shall now shew how he continues it in his "Preservative," dialogue third.

What will the reader think of Mr. White's regard for *truth and charity*, when he finds him accusing Catholics of holding such monstrous doctrines, as that the Pope has received the power "of adding to the Scriptures several articles of faith." Perhaps this is as gross and absurd a calumny as was ever put forth against the Catholic Church; and it is brought against her by one of her own ministers! It is a broad insinuation that the Pope claims the power of *making* articles of Faith when

it suits his pleasure or profit; and that we are bound to receive such articles equally with those in the Scriptures. It was known to Mr. White that no Catholics ever held such a doctrine: and what could it avail him to be guilty of such misrepresentation? Catholics do not hold that the *Pope* can invent or propose articles at his pleasure; nor is any constitution of the Pope binding upon us unless received and approved by the open or tacit consent of the Church throughout the world. "The Church," says the illustrious Bossuet, "openly professes that she says nothing from herself; that she invents no new doctrine; she only declares the Divine Revelation by the interior direction of the Holy Ghost, who is given to her as her teacher."

To be continued.

Quem terra, pontus, othera—Translated

He, whom his wond'rous works proclaim  
All-wise, all-mighty, sole supreme;  
Whose Majesty no limits bind,  
Is in the Virgin's womb confin'd.

Him, who those shining orbs on high  
Has pour'd along the boundless sky;  
A mortal maid conceives and bears,  
Her God, man's humble form who wears.

Within herself could she afford  
A dwelling meet for nature's Lord;  
Who on his finger's point can poise  
Creation's whole, outstretch'd that lies.

Thrice happy thou, ordain'd to see  
Th'expected Saviour born of thee  
And find thyself, as Gabriel said,  
Although his mother, still a maid.

To Jesus from a virgin sprung,  
Be glory giv'n, and praises sung!  
Alike to God the father be,  
And Holy Ghost eternally.

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