



THE TRUTHS

OF CATHOLICISM

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. I.

MONTRÉAL, FRIDAY, JULY 25, 1851.

NO. 50.

THE VERY REV. DR. NEWMAN'S LECTURE AT BIRMINGHAM.

"THE STATE OF CATHOLICISM IN ENGLAND."

(From the *Tablet*.)

On Monday, the 30th ult., the Very Rev. Dr. Newman delivered the first of a series of lectures on "The state of Catholicism in England," in the Corn Exchange, High-street, Birmingham. The public were admitted by tickets; although the lectures were addressed to the members of the Oratory, the room was crowded. Among the Clergy present were the Rev. Dr. Weedall, the Rev. Dr. Moore, (President of Oscott College,) the Rev. George Jeffries, Rev. F. Amherst, Rev. Mr. Wilberforce, Rev. H. A. Manning, (late Archdeacon,) Rev. Mr. St. John, the Rev. J. Bond, the Rev. Mr. Estcourt, the Rev. J. Mills, the Rev. Mr. Flanagan, many of the brethren of the Oratory, and many respectable Protestants of the town.

Dr. Newman, who wore the habit of his order, was received, on entering the Exchange, with prolonged applause. He took his position on a slightly elevated platform, at the back of which, and immediately over his chair, was a painting representing St. Philip Neri, the founder of the Order of the Oratory. The Rev. Doctor read his lecture, and sat while he delivered it. He began by observing that there was a well-known fable, of which it was his purpose to remind them, by way of introducing the subject of the lectures. He was going to inquire how it was that in this intelligent nation, and in this rational nineteenth century they—Catholics—were so despised and hated by their own countrymen; that they were prompt to believe any story, however extravagant, that was told to their disadvantage, as if they were either brutishly deluded or pretentiously hypocritical; and the other, on the contrary, were, in comparison of the Catholics, absolute specimens of sagacity, wisdom, uprightness, manly virtue, and enlightened Christianity. He was not attacking another's belief; nor defending himself; he was not engaging in controversy; he did but propose to investigate how Catholics came to be so trodden under foot, and spurned by a people who were endowed by nature with many great qualities, moral and intellectual; how it was that the Catholics were cried against by the very stones, and bricks and tiles, and chimney pots, of a popular busy place, such as this town. The clearer the sense they had of their own honesty, of the singleness of their motives, and the purity of their aims—of the truth, the beauty, the power of their religion, its exhaustless fund of consolation for the weary, and its especial correspondence to the needs of the weak—so much the greater might well be their perplexity, to find that its advocates for the most part, did not even gain a hearing in the country; that facts and logic, and justice and good sense, and right and virtue, were all supposed to lie in the opposite scale; and that it was bid be thankful and contented if it was allowed to exist. Such a state of things was not only a trial to flesh and blood, but a discomfort to reason and imagination; it was a riddle which fretted the mind from the difficulty of solving it. Now for this fable:—The man once invited the lion to be his guest, and received him with princely hospitality. There were many things to admire in this palace. There were large saloons and long corridors, richly furnished and decorated, and filled with a profusion of fine specimens of sculpture and paintings. The subjects represented were various, but the most prominent had an especial interest for the noble animal who stalked by him. It was that of the lion himself; and as the owner of the mansion led him from one apartment into another he did not fail to direct his attention to the indirect homage which these various groups and tableaux paid to the importance of the lion tribe. There was, however, one remarkable feature in all of them, that diverse as were those representations, in one point they all agreed, that the man was always victorious, and the lion was always overcome. The man had it all his own way, and the lion was a fool, and served to make him sport. The lion was not only triumphed over, mocked, spurned in the works of art, but he was tortured into extravagant forms, as if he were not only the slave and creature, but the very creation of man; he became an artistic decoration and an heraldic emblem. After he had gone over the mansion, his entertainer asked him what he thought of the splendors it contained; and the lion in reply did full justice to the riches of its owner and the skill of its decorator; but, he added, "Lions would have fared better, had lions been the artists." They would see the application of the fable before he made it. There were two sides to everything; there was a Catholic side of the argument, and there was a Protestant. If a person listened only to Protestantism, and did not give fair play to the Catholic reply to it, of course, he thought Protestantism very rational and straightforward, and Catholics very absurd, because he took for granted the Protestant facts, which were com-

monly fictions, and opened his mind to Protestant arguments, which were always fallacies. A case might be made out for any one or anything. The veriest villain at the bar of justice was an injured man, a victim, a hero, in the defence made for him by his counsel. There were writers who dressed up vice till it looked like virtue. Goethe, he believed, had invested adultery with a sentimental grace, and Schiller's drama of "The Robbers," was said to have sent all the young Germans of his day upon the highway. The same had been reported of Gay's "Beggar's Opera," and in their own time, a celebrated poet had thrown an interest over Cain, the first murderer. Anything would become plausible if they read all that could be said in its favor, and exclude all that could be said against it. Thus it came to pass, that every one, as he might say, had his own sphere of ideas, and method of thought, and unless he was a philosopher, he would be apt to consider his own views, principles and tastes, just and right, and to despise others altogether. He despised other men and other modes of opinion and action, simply because he did not understand them, and yet he would commonly be forward in criticising and condemning the circle of ideas and the atmosphere of thought which was the life of another, not as having heard what it had to say for itself, but simply and precisely for the very opposite reason, because they had not. What was true of individuals was true of nations. However plausible, distinct, or complete the national view of this or that matter might be, it did not follow that it was not a mere illusion, if it had not been duly measured with other views of the same. No conclusion was trustworthy which had not been tried by enemy as well as friend; no traditions had claim upon them which shrank from criticism, and dared not look a rival in the face. Now, this was precisely the weak point of Protestantism in this country. It was jealous of being questioned, it resented argument, it flew to protection, it was afraid of the sun, it forbade competition. How could they detect the sham but by comparing it with the true? Artificial flowers had the softness and brilliancy of nature till the living plant was brought in fresh from the garden: they detected the counterfeit coin by ringing it with the genuine. So it was in religion. Protestantism was, at best, but a fine piece of waxwork, which did not look dead only because it was not confronted by the Church, which really breathed and lived. The living Church was the test and confutation of all false Churches: therefore get rid of her at all hazards, tread her down, gag her, dress her like a felon, starve her, bruise her features, if they would keep up the imumbo-jumbo in its place of pride. By no manner of means give her fair play: they dared not. The dazzling brightness of her glance, the sanctity beaming from her countenance, the melody of her voice, the grace of her movements, would be too much for them. Blacken her, make her Cinderella in the ashes, do not hear a word she says. Do not look at her, but daub her in your own way: keep up the good old sign-post representation of her. Let her be a lion rampant, a griffin, a wivern, or a salamander. She shall be red or black, always absurd, always imbecile, always malicious, always tyrannical. The lion shall not draw the lion, but the man shall draw him, and he shall be always worsted in the warfare with Protestantism; ever prostrated, smashed and pounded, ever dying, ever dead: and the only wonder was that she had to be killed so often, and the life so often to be trodden out of her, and her Priests and Doctors to be so often put down, and her Monks and Nuns to be exposed so often, and such vast sums to be subscribed by Protestants, and such great societies to be kept up, and such millions of tracts to be written, and such persecuting acts to be passed through parliament, in order, thoroughly, and once for all, and for the last time, and for ever and ever, to annihilate her once more. But had not free born Britons a right to think as they pleased? They ruled Popery to be what they said it was, not by history, but by act of parliament; not by sight and hearing, but by the national will. It was the will of the legislature; it was the voice of the people which gave facts their complexion, logic its course, and ideas their definition. Now, he repeated, in order to avoid misconception, that he was neither assuming nor intending to prove that the Catholic Church came from above, (though of course, he would not have become one of her children unless he had firmly held her to be the direct work of the Almighty;) he was only investigating how it was she came to be so hated and despised amongst them. And the reason was this: that reasons of state, political and national, prevented her being heard in her defence. She was considered too absurd to be defended, and too dangerous to be treated with equity and fair dealing. She was the victim of a prejudice, which perpetuated itself, and gave birth to what it fed upon. The Rev. Doctor then gave several instances of his meaning, taking the popular notion that Christianity was very

pure in the beginning, very corrupt in the middle ages, and very pure in England now, though still corrupt everywhere else. In illustration of this fallacy, he quoted the Protestant historian Guizot, Dr. Waddington, the present Dean of Durham, so far as regarded the middle ages. With respect to modern times, he alluded to the outcry against the Jesuits. If there was any set of men in the whole world who were reviled against, as a pattern of all that was evil, it was the Jesuit body. It was vain to ask their slanderers what they knew of them. Did they ever see a Jesuit? Could they say whether they were many or few? What did they know of their teaching? "Oh! it is notorious," was the reply; "you might as well deny the sun in heaven; it is notorious that the Jesuits are a crafty, intriguing, unscrupulous, desperate, murderous, and exceedingly able body of men; a secret society, ever plotting against liberty, and government, and progress, and thought, and the prosperity of England. Nay, it is awful; they disguise themselves in a thousand shapes—as men of fashion, farmers, soldiers, laborers, butchers and pedlars; they prowl about with handsome stocks and stylish waistcoats, and gold chains upon them, or in fustian jackets, as it may be; and they do not hesitate to shed the blood of any one whatever, prince or peasant, who stands in their way." Who could fathom the inanity of such statements, which were made, and therefore, he supposed, believed, not merely by the ignorant, but by educated men, who ought to know better, and will have to answer for their false witness. In refutation of these opinions, he quoted from the late Rev. Joseph Blanco White, and going back to primitive times, he quoted the opinion of the Protestant German historian, Dr. Neander. *Audi alteram partem*, hear both sides, was generally an Englishman's maxim; but there was one subject on which he had intractable prejudice. Rome was his Nazareth: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" settled the question. And here he might conclude his subject; but he was tempted to go on to try whether something of a monster indictment, similarly frightful and similarly fantastical as that which was got up against Catholicism, might not be framed against some other institution or power of parallel greatness and excellence, as the communion of Rome. For this purpose he would take the British constitution; and he took it for the very reason that it was one of the greatest of human works, as admirable in its own line—to take the productions of genius in very various departments, as the Pyramids, as the walls of China, as the paintings of Raffaelle, as the Apollo Belvidere, as the plays of Shakespeare, as the Newtonian Theory, and as the exploits of Napoleon. He would show them how even the British constitution would fare when submitted to the intellect of Exeter Hall, and handled by the instruments of those whose highest efforts at dissection is to chop and mangle. The Rev. Doctor then supposed a speaker, who never saw England, a member of parliament, policeman, a Queen, or a London mob, who had merely dipped into Blackstone and several English historians, and picked up facts at third and fourth hand, addressing the inhabitants of Moscow on occasion of an attempt by one or two Russian noblemen to spread British ideas in that capital. This imaginary speech, of which we can only give a slight sketch, was a travesty of some recently delivered. The supposed speaker accused the system of John Bullism of being atheistical and fiendish. It claimed the attribute of divinity. Antichrist was most literally and exactly fulfilled in the British constitution. Antichrist was not only to usurp, but to profess to usurp, the arms of Heaven—he was to arrogate its titles. This was the special mark of the beast. He turned to Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England; and the first words which met his eyes were, "The King can do no wrong." To the Sovereign was assigned "absolute perfection." Nay, more, the writer continued, that the King not only could not do wrong, but was incapable of thinking wrong: "He can never do an improper thing; in him is no folly or weakness." More, the English Sovereign distinctly claimed, according to the same infamous work, to be "the fount of justice," the author declaring "that she is never bound in justice to anything." She only did acts of reparation and restitution as a matter of grace. Now, let it be observed, continued the imaginary speaker, the Apostle called the predicted Antichrist "the lawless," because he was to be the proud despiser of all law; and wonderful to say, this was the very assumption of the British parliament. "The power of parliament," said Sir Edward Coke, "is so transcendent and absolute that it cannot be confined within any bounds. It has sovereign and uncontrollable authority." Blackstone even said, "Some have not scruples to call its power the omnipotence of parliament." "Now," continued this suppositionary speaker, "have you not heard enough of this hideous system of John Bullism? Was I wrong in using the words fiendish and atheistical? and need I proceed further with impure details, which

cannot really add to the monstrous bearing of the passage I have already read. If the Queen "cannot do wrong," if she "cannot even think wrong," if she is "absolute perfection," if she has "no folly, no weakness," if she is "the fount of justice," "the fount of grace," if she is simply "above law," if she is "omnipotent," what wonder that the lawyers of John Bullism should also call her "sacred," and "majestic"? Here again, continued this imaginary speaker, "I am using the words of the book I hold in my hand. 'The people (my blood runs cold while I repeat them) are led to consider this Sovereign in the light of a superior being.' 'Every one is under him,' says Bracton, 'and he is under no one.' Accordingly the law books call him 'Vicarius Dei in terra,' 'the Vicar of God on Earth'—a most astounding fulfilment of the prophecy, for Antichrist is a Greek word, which means 'Vicar of Christ'! What wonder, under these circumstances, that Queen Elizabeth, assuming the attributes of the Creator, once said to one of her Bishops, 'Proud Prelate, I made you, and I can unmake you.' The subjects of James the First called him 'the breath of their nostrils,' and my Lord Clarendon, the present Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in his celebrated History of the Rebellion, declared that the same haughty monarch actually on one occasion called himself 'a god'; and in his great legal digest, commonly called the Constitutions of Clarendon, he gives us the whole account of the same King banishing the Archbishop St. Thomas of Canterbury, for refusing to do him homage. Lord Bacon, too, went nearly as far when he called him 'Deaster quidam,' 'some sort of little god.' Alexander Pope, too, calls Queen Anne 'a goddess,' and Addison cries out, 'Thee, goddess; thee, Britannia's isles adore.' Nay, even at this very time, when public attention has been drawn to the subject, Queen Victoria causes herself to be represented on her coins as the goddess of the seas, with a Pagan trident in her hand. Gentlemen (continued the supposed speaker) can it surprise you to be told, after such an exposition of the blasphemies of England, though, astonishing to say, Queen Victoria is distinctly pointed out in the Book of Revelation as having the number of the beast? You may recollect the number is 666. Now, she came to the throne in the year '37, at which date she was eighteen years old. Multiply, then, 37 by 18, and you have the very number 666, which is the mystical emblem of the lawless king." After drawing the supposed meeting to a close, the Rev. Dr. protested that he had not caricatured this parallel at all; and that no absurdities contained in the sketch of the supposed meeting could equal the absurdities which were firmly believed of Catholics by sensible, kind-hearted, well-intentioned Protestants. Such was the consequence of having looked at things all on one side, and shutting their eyes to the other.

The lecture, which occupied fully an hour and a half in the delivery, and of which we have given merely a sketch, was frequently interrupted by bursts of applause.

DISCOURSE DELIVERED BY THE REVEREND FATHER TELLIER, S. J., AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, IN TORONTO.

(From the *Toronto Mirror*.)

"Ecce dedi te in lucem gentium, ut sis salus mea usque ad extremum terrae."

GENTLEMEN.—It is the prophet Isaiah who announces to the inhabitants of the earth the Messiah, so ardently desired: darting his eagle glance across the dark vista of ages and of nations, he exclaims:—"Hearken, ye isles, and all ye distant people, listen: the Lord has spoken it to me: you aid me but little to lift up the tribes of Jacob, and to convert the remnant of Israel; the Gentiles are likewise my domain: and behold I destine you to be the light of nations, and to carry to the ends of the earth the favors of salvation." Noble words, which the Church applies on this day to the Divine precursor, and which starting from the hills of Judea, have prolonged their echoes, even on our distant shores. In rallying round the banner of St. John the Baptist, we salute the cross; and the world should understand that the Society of St. John the Baptist is, and can only be, a Catholic association. Descendants of a most Christian kingdom—of the beautiful country of France—we are indebted to birth or the kindness of laws for a new country; and as French Canadians we carry with us the double character of the ancient faith, which has distinguished our mother country, and of the chivalrous bravery which has immortalised the colony. They constitute, gentlemen, unless I deceive