

RESPECT FOR THE BIBLE.

Protestants in general are great admirers of Dr. Martin Luther. They praise him without measure, as a great, good, and pious man, and attribute to him many wonderful things, which have occurred long since this reformer was gathered to the grave. But Protestants also profess great respect for the Bible, or the word of God, and consider it a very heinous offence to be wanting in respect for the holy book. And yet it is a notorious fact that Dr. Martin Luther treated some of the sacred writings in a very summary manner, and even rejected some altogether as uncanonical.

"Luther," writes the Baron de Stark, "had himself rejected the Epistle of St. James, which he represented as entirely destitute of the evangelical manner, and consequently, not the production of the Apostle. He also called it an *epistole of straw*."

Roscoe, the author of the Life of Leo X., also confirms this fact.

De Stark in his philosophical treatises, shows that Luther treated several other books with a like disrespect. He treated the book of Job as a *fable*. And of Ecclesiastes he said, "he had neither boots nor spurs," and declared that the epistle to the Hebrews contained *errors contrary to the epistles of St. Paul*, and said it was impossible for him to find in it an apostolical and divine spirit.

Instructed by Luther, his disciples erased these books from the catalogue of canonical scriptures in 1538, and did not again place them there till 1658, so that they were for the space of 60 years treated with great irreverence by these enlightened Protestant Bibles.

It is not our business to reconcile the respect which Protestants show to Luther with that which they show for the books which Luther rejected so scornfully. It is not our business to show that Luther was a great and good man in rejecting the very books of scripture, which Bible reading Protestants now receive as the inspired word of God. It is not our business to show that God sent Luther to do a piece of work, which his followers found it necessary to undo near a century after. But if not our business, we think it is the duty of Protestants, to reconcile these contradictions.

We ask them who was Luther? Tell us he was an extraordinary man, sent up by God, to reform religion and bring about the reign of the pure Gospel.

We ask them how they know that the scriptures are the word of God? They tell us that the scriptures furnish intrinsic evidence of their own divine origin.

We show them that Luther positively rejected books, which they receive, and we argue to us: If Luther were really sent by God, then what he taught was the truth and you should believe as Luther taught; if you refuse to believe as Luther taught, you certainly cannot believe that he was sent by God. If the scriptures furnish intrinsic evidence of their divine origin, then Luther was blind to the evidence furnished by those books which he rejected, and which you receive, or else he rejected them in spite of the

evidence which they furnish of their divine character. He was either then a blind or a bad man.

But further, Luther rejected books which you Protestants admit to be canonical scripture, which of these decisions is correct? If your decision be correct, it is plain that Luther was ignorant of a portion of God's word: if his decision be correct, you receive as God's word, what is man's work.

Besides, Luther and yourselves are at variance on this point, and who shall decide where the truth lies? Your great reformer was a great bungler, if you are right; and if he was right, you are very presumptuous to prefer your opinion to his; but in the meantime, you must remain in sad uncertainty, for the want of some proper adjudication of this very fundamental point. It is thus that Protestantism in reality degrades the scriptures by depriving them of the authoritative testimony of the Catholic church, which first received them, and which alone is able to declare what they are. "I would not," wrote the great Augustin, "receive the scriptures did not the authority of the Catholic church move me to do so." And notwithstanding all the boasting of Protestants about their respect for the scriptures as God's word, it is manifest that they treat them without the least reverence. They strip them of that solemn testimony which they could receive from the Catholic church which has kept them. They degrade the witness by every false imputation and calumnious charge, and leave the scriptures in the midst of men, without the seal of authority, to be esteemed or disregarded according to caprice or fancy.

They open them, and search out new religions, and preach these as revelations of God, although men of sense are shocked by the absurd and ridiculous contradictions which are uttered on every side as God's truth. They all unite in vague declamatory praise about the bible, and in vague declamatory abuse of the Church, the living witness of the bible; but they unite in nothing else, and they virtually render the bible a stumbling block in the way of thousands; weaken respect for christianity; and sow broadcast over the earth, the seeds of irreligion and infidelity.

Among christians, infidelity was scarcely known before the reformation, and now it is marching with rapid and gigantic strides, wherever Protestantism has had sufficient time to unsettle the principles of faith, and, by its irreconcilable antagonistic theories, founded on the Bible, to make men regard the Bible itself as an enigma or inexplicable puzzle.

Protestants talk of respect for the Bible, when in point of fact there are none but Catholics who know how to respect it as it merits. There are none but Catholics who would fear to offend God by an irreverent appeal to the Bible in support of new and unheard of opinions; who would deem it blasphemy, to draw upon fancy for a religion, and then draw upon the Bible for proof that this religion comes from God. There are none but Catholics who have the good sense to admit that the christian church was put in possession of the real meaning of God's word,

at the same time that the word itself was given her—that the discipline and laws of the Church in operation, were from the beginning the most certain evidence of the design and intention of the Divine Legislator: and the living voice of testimony in the Church and the daily practices of the faithful, were the best exponents of the revelations of the Son of God. There are none but Catholics who seem to know that religious truth can only be one and that the word of God consists less, in the imaginary meanings which ingenuity may deduce from the Bible, than in the Catholic faith which everywhere, and at all times, and by all, was known to have come from Christ and his Apostles, together with the Scriptures, being the soul and spirit thereof: for "the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life."

Protestants use the Bible as they please and for what they please, but Catholics respect it as God's word, when taken together with the uniform teaching and testimony of the Church.—*Cath. Advocate*.

INQUIRING FOR THE TRUTH.

The number of persons engaged at present in making sincere and diligent investigation of the divine origin of the Catholic church, is greater than we have known in any previous time. The spirit of God is operating on hearts heretofore frozen by indifference or lulled with prejudice. This feeling is not confined to one, but is found among professing members of all the sects. During the last week we have received fourteen letters from different persons in the State of Ohio, in which all request to be supplied with standard Catholic authors, that they may be prepared, before they make public avowal of the Faith, to defend themselves against the numerous assaults whom they must expect to encounter.—One of these gentlemen, shews in the following extract from his letter, the progress of his mind towards the light of Truth.

"My mind has been much agitated during the past year by reflecting on the confused and diversified picture which christianity exhibits. Even in the village in which I dwell, where we should be all united in friendship, there are many discussions, beginning in apparent charity but almost ending in acrimony. I wish to all, what the angels sang at the birth of the Redeemer, Peace and good will to man. But how can this peace abide amongst us whilst we are so wonderfully divided? The Presbyterian and the Methodist, as I perceive from their papers, are contending with each other and with the Baptists and Episcopalians. I have often asked myself when remembering my responsibility to God, 'Is it our Lord's wish that this kingdom should be broken up into sects, instead of forming one great and mighty body, whose concerted action could so soon accomplish wonders for humanity? I never could give an answer to this question in the affirmative. Whilst thus disturbed by this truly most important consideration, I chanced to meet with a book published by a member of your church, called the 'End of Reli-

gious Controversy.' I was amused at the title and could not help thinking that he must be a bold man who could choose so conclusive a name for his work at a time when there appears no sign whatever of an approaching end to sectarian disputes. I read the work—I studied it and I have come to the conclusion, that if my future examination into the truth of your religion, should find nothing inconsistent with the great principle enforced in that book, if indeed your members always had and have now unity in matters of faith, that your church is divine and she alone has the intrinsic power to provide a remedy for the present disordered body of Christianity."

Among the letters is also one from a member of the Society of Friends, who professes his conviction of the truth of our church, and that his mind was first initiated in Catholicism by reading the "true principles of Catholics." It is truly gratifying to find how truth is thus forcing its way into the dark places of the land, notwithstanding the gigantic efforts which are made to exclude its rays. "The wonderful vituperation which is showered upon us, seems to be of no avail to turn away a mind, determined to be free in the work of examination, from the path of duty and the fulfilment of a noble as well as important desire to find rest for the soul. "Blessed are you whom men shall say: all manner of things falsely, against you for my sake," says Christ; this blessing has fallen on the Church in our own days, for most bitterly, has she been maligned, and the fruit is already exhibited in the thousands of single minded and pure men, who have disencumbered their souls from the shackles of prejudice, and have given disinterested and magnanimous testimony to Divine immutable Truth.

To the grace of the Almighty, we are indebted for this conversion of souls, and we should be careful that we place no obstacle in the way by which its efficacy could be retarded. There lies a heavy responsibility on all Catholics to lead most pure and upright lives, and to be cautious in word as well as in action, for fear not only of offending God, but of counteracting his good designs by scandalizing our neighbor. Religion is judged of more frequently from the conduct of its professors than the books in which it is maintained; the heart may be as great a sinner as the head; and hence it should be the desire of all to make both agree, and exhibit in thought, in word, in affection and charity, the perfection of Revelation and its adaption to our nature, to guide the understanding and purify the feelings. In these days, more especially, when God is dispensing his mercies far and wide and recalling so many from the barren desert to the happy pastures which his fold enclose, every Catholic ought to live as if all depended on his individual fidelity.—*Catholic Telegraph*.

Aston.—The Right Rev. Dr. Walsh administered the holy sacrament of confirmation at Aston-hall Chapel, on the Feast of St. Joachim, to seventy-two persons, forty-three of whom were converts from Aston and Stone.