

THE WESLEYAN.

Halifax, Saturday Morning, March 8, 1851.

ATTACK ON PROTESTANTISM:

A Pastoral Letter for the Lent of MDCCLII. Addressed to the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Halifax, By the Right Rev. Doctor Walsh, Bishop of Halifax.

This Address, at first orally delivered in the Roman Catholic Chapel of this City, has been issued from the Press, we suppose, *pro bono publico*. Whatever might have been its effect on those who listened to its *cava voce* utterance, we are persuaded, its perusal, in its present form, will only excite unbounded indignation in the mind of every true Protestant the Province throughout; and confirm, were confirmation necessary, the irrefutable fact, that, in all essential points, in suppression of truth, in fundamental errors of doctrine, in proud and blasphemous assumption of divine prerogatives, in superseding the scriptural ground of a sinner's justification, and final salvation, in unholy exaltation of its priesthood, in its malignancy of spirit, in its uncompromising hostility to those without its pale, or, as slanderously designated, "heretics," and in its intense hatred of evangelical Protestantism, POPERY, at this day is what it ever has been. It has been stated, again and again, by we would hope well-intentioned, but, in our view, mistaken Protestants, that a great and mighty change has, within some years past, come over the former persecuting spirit of popery: but the "Pastoral Letter" of Bishop Walsh will, we opine, put these dreams to flight, and justify the application of the term, "unchangeableness" to the popish system in its rancorous spirit towards Protestants, which its Priests, Bishops, and Popes have assumed for it in respect to doctrines and polity generally. Hear what this gentleman, (!) who, according to his own statement, occupies his present ecclesiastical position "by the grace of God," says of THE GLORIOUS REFORMATION IN ENGLAND. After adventing to the previous domination of popery in that Country, he, in the way of contrast, proceeds—

"But, alas! in an evil hour, and days of darkness, a terrible vicissitude obscured all her ancient renown. How has her gold become dim, and her best colour been changed, and the abomination of desolation set up in her holy place, and the stones of her Sanctuary been scattered at the top of every street! In His inscrutable judgments, the Lord has covered her with obscurity in the day of His wrath, and brought her into darkness, and not into light. He has cast her down headlong, and has not spared all that was beautiful in her. He has, in His fierce anger, cast off her Altar, and cursed her Sanctuary; He has delivered the walls of the towers thereof into the hands of the enemy. His law was no more amongst her, and her prophets found no vision from the Lord. Those blind prophets saw but false and foolish things for her, and they did not lay open her iniquity to excite her to penance. The Lord made her a derision to all his people—their song all the day long. He filled her with bitterness, fed her with ashes, removed her soul far off from peace, so that she forgot the good things of old, and her end and hope seemed to have perished. She strayed away from the womb, and spoke false things. She despised the faithful Mother who had begotten her in Christ, who had nourished her with sound doctrine, and exalted her to glory and honour. Great has been her pride, and her arrogance as that of Moab, and in the multitude of her strength she persecuted the Church of God, and got drunk with the blood of His Martyrs. She made His servants a prey to the fowls of heaven, and gave the flesh of His saints to the beasts of the earth! Great, indeed, as the sea, was her destruction: who could heal her? Jerem. &c. passim. Ps. lxxvii."—pp. 6, 7.

As a specimen of the false representations, in which R. C. writers are in the habit of indulging, when dwelling on the wrongs which popery in the British Dominions is said to have received from Protestantism, we re-produce the echoes of them as heard from Bishop Walsh's lips, and which are reduced to palpable form in this extraordinary and inflammatory document. From the following accumulation of vituperative epithets our readers may judge of the extent, to which the records of English History have been falsified, by this supreme Patron of Truth:—

"We almost shudder at giving even a brief transcript of the horrible devices employed against the Church of God; but why should we not exalt the heroism of His faithful servants in England—the invincible power of His Truth—the irresistible strength of the right hand of the Most High? We therefore only declare what is notorious to the world, when we say, that sanguinary laws, bribery and punishment, threats

and smiles, imprisonment and proscription, outrages and insult, misrepresentation and calumny, sham-plots and mendacious forgeries, exclusion from place and power—oppression in the army, degradation in the navy, injustice in the courts of law, banishment from the halls of science, crushing fines, grievous exactions, cruel confiscations—the rack, the scourge, the gibbet—every form of torture, all species of contumely—whatsoever was hideous in bondage, debasing in slavery, unnatural in civil strife—all that poisoned the springs of friendship, destroyed the charities of life, and rent asunder the dearest ties of nature—all, all have been tried, and tried in vain."—p. 7.

This description is pathetic—but is it true? It will be seen, however, that the Orator on this occasion, has taken care not to darken the frightful picture he has drawn principally from imagination, with the black colours of popish persecution of Protestant "heretics"—he has not alluded, even in a whisper, to the FIRES OF SMITHFIELD, or to the bloody MASSACRE IN IRELAND—not a syllable has he breathed of the thousands, yea tens of thousands, of Protestants in England and Ireland, to say nothing of the Millions in other kingdoms, who have fallen victims to the inherent spirit of popish hate and cruelty. No—the appearance of these shades would have frightened the "faithful"—and—spoiled the effect of his "Lenten" Address! But the "heretics" (!) of this day cannot forget the blood-stained pages of English Martyrdom—or the cruel-mercies of "The Only True Church on Earth," of which Bishop Walsh here proudly makes his boast,—that one mark of "THE BEAST," as claimed by himself, is "immortality," as well as infallibility,—that wherever not legally restrained, he wastes and destroys the Saints of The Most High,—and that, in those countries where legal restraints exist, he opens his mouth and shows his teeth, and rolls his tongue, sufficiently often to show that his insatiate savageness of spirit has not become extinct.

On the subject of persecution, we believe the following remarks will be found to be true

"Popery, when it has possessed sufficient power, has sought to destroy the lives of MILLIONS for not submitting to its authority. It has been pre-eminently a persecuting system.—Some protestant Sects have been guilty of persecution, but in their case it has generally been the effect of some of the leaven of Antichrist still remaining among them, and as increasing knowledge of the nature of Christianity has prevailed among them, their disposition to persecute has vanished, and they have renounced and condemned the deeds of their fathers. Not so Popery. Other churches have persecuted casually; the church of Rome constantly. Others under the influence of transient feeling—she systematically and from principle. Not content with the common zeal of her public functionaries, she has consecrated men to this peculiar service; she has instituted offices and established communities for this express purpose; she has encouraged whole troops of ecclesiastics to devote themselves to the work; and she has allowed men the character of priests, the revenues of princes, and the power of despots, on condition that they make persecutions the sole business of their lives."—(Popery Unveiled, quoted in Pike's Antichrist Unmasked.) "The followers of Roman Catholicism are anxious to have the blood of martyrs, which antichrist has shed, forgotten. Sometimes misrepresentation is employed, at other times the aid of the most bare-faced falsehood is not rejected, when the object is to cast into oblivion the hosts of Protestant martyrs, and to depreciate our great Martyrologist and other Christian historians.—But Protestants should never forget, that whatever benignity or liberality may exist in some members of the Romish Church, the system of that Church is a murderous persecuting system."—(Pike.)

In proof of this assertion, we submit the following facts, which, if necessary, might be multiplied.

POPE URBAN III. says,— "They are so far from being guilty of murder, who kill any that are excommunicated that they are bound to exterminate heretics as they would be esteemed Christians themselves."

CARDINAL BELLARMINE, one of the oracles of the Church of Rome, teaches,— "that heretics are to be destroyed, root and branch, if it can possibly be done, but if it appear that the Catholics are so few, that they cannot conveniently with their own safety, attempt such a thing, then it is best, in such a case, to be quiet, lest upon opposition made by the heretics the Catholics should be worsted."

L. MORISSY, a Romish Priest, in Ireland, in 1821, published a summary of the law with regard to heretics, as it stands in the Church of Rome according to the constitution of POPE INNOCENT IV. enacted October 31, 1242. Beside other laws this contains the following:

That heretics condemned by the church are to be handed over to the secular power for punishment.

That heretics although penitent are to be perpetually imprisoned.

That heretics are to be taken up every where, and consigned to the Inquisitors.

That their abettors are to be punished.

That heresy is to be accounted among public crimes and adjudged greater than the crime of high treason.

That impenitent heretics are to be burned alive.

That those suspected of heresy, are considered as infamous people and banditti.

That those invested with civil power are to be bound down by an oath to prosecute heretics publicly.

These atrocious laws were confirmed, or aggravated by subsequent Popes.

Let our readers ponder also the following facts:—

Dr. TROY, a few years since popish Archbishop of Dublin, published an edition of the Bible in 1816, with a Commentary. In his exposition of chap. xvii., 6, and xxii., 8, of the book of Revelation, he says, "When Rome puts heretics to death, and allows their punishment in other countries, their blood is not called the blood of saints, no more than the blood of thieves, murderers, or other malefactors, for the shedding of which no common-wealth will answer."

In 1816, Dr. Troy's Bible with the RHENISH NOTES, was published at Dublin, not only under the sanction of Dr. Troy himself, but also that of Dr. MURRAY, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. REILLY, primate of Ireland, &c., and was declared by these bishops to contain nothing but what is agreeable to the doctrine and piety of the Catholic Church. We give the following extracts:—

"The TRANSLATORS of the English Protestant Bible should be abhorred to the depths of hell!"—Rev. v, 7.

"The good must tolerate the evil, when it is so strong, that it cannot be redressed without danger or disturbance of the whole church, otherwise, where evil men, be they heretics or other malefactors, may be punished and suppressed without hazard of the good, they may and ought by public authority, either spiritual or temporal, be chastised or executed."—Matt. iii.

"All PROTESTANT CLERGY are THIEVES, MURDERERS, and MINISTERS OF THE DEVIL—leaders of rebellion against the lawful authority of the Catholic Priests—they are engaged in a damnable revolt against the priests of God's church, which is the base of our days and country."—John x, 1. Heb. v, 1.

"Christian people, BISHOPS especially, should have great zeal against heretics and hate them as God hates them, and be thus zealous against all false prophets and heretics of whatever name, after the manner of holy Elias, that in zeal killed 450 false prophets."—Rev. xi., 6, 20.

"As the fact of Elias was not reprehended, neither is the Church, nor Christian Princes blamed by God for putting heretics to death."—Luke ix., 55.

It is said, that even Daniel O'Connell, in a full Catholic Board, Dec. 4 1817, pronounced these notes teaching hatred to, and the murder of Protestants and not to keep faith with them, as abominable, murderous, and damnable. But the Church was too strong for O'Connell. The harlot drunk with blood would never denounce the doctrines which supplied her with that element in ages past, and which, had she sufficient power, would soon procure for her a fresh supply. See Pike's Antichrist Unmasked, and Ouseley's Old Christianity.

Want of space prevents us from pursuing this subject further this week: but from the statement of facts above given, our readers may perceive, without difficulty, that Bishop Walsh's recent and gratuitous attack upon Protestantism will only recoil disastrously on his own influence, on his proud assumption, and on the cause generally which he has so feebly advocated. For our own part, however much we regret the would-be-orationary display of misrepresentation, and the true, fiery, anathematical, popish spirit on the part of the R. C. Halifax Bishop, we are not, on the whole, sorry that he has shown, in a

manner too plainly to be misunderstood, what is really in his heart. He has compromised himself, as an active and avowed enemy to Protestantism, beyond redemption. He has thrown a fire-brand, burning at both ends, into the midst of this peaceable community, and neither he, nor his adherents, have any cause of surprise, if Protestants take it, burning as it is, and apply it to the magazine of popery, and thus carry the war into the camp of the enemy. Bishop Walsh will learn, that he has madly struck a chord which will vibrate far and wide, and long, throughout this Province. He has evoked a spirit, not unknown to, or unfelt by, the Protestants of this land, which will lead them courageously and zealously to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and rather than quiescently yield to the haughty, unmeasured dictation of any popish priest, to welcome a martyr's doom and win a martyr's crown.

Whilst Bishop Walsh is engaging the "faithful" under his jurisdiction to pray for the conversion of England to Popery, we direct the attention of our readers to an article on our second page, in which they will see the just exposure which GAVAZZI, an Italian Priest, has made recently in London of "the jumble of incoherencies thrown on the Seven Hills." "Maniacs," he says, "are found in connexion with that system, such as it now exhibits its repugnant features to the world, who talk of the conversion of England. God help the silly creatures!" But read the whole article.

Although, in the above notice of Dr. Walsh's "Pastoral Letter," we have spoken strongly against Popery as a false and persecuting system of religion, and may speak equally as strong in our future notices of it, we cherish nothing but hearty good-will towards the members of that Church as individuals, and ardently desire their conversion to a pure and Christian faith. We know the difficulty of condemning a system without wounding the feelings of its conscientious adherents. But he is not really an enemy who speaks the truth—he is our best friend who warns us of fatal error and saves us from impending danger. We shall therefore defend Evangelical Protestantism, as the truth of God, from the rude attacks recently made upon it; and shall not spare the pride, and corruption of Popery, as a system branded with divine reprobation, and as occupying a criminal and destructive position of antagonism to the Cross of Christ, and the virtue of his one all-sufficient atonement.

The best corrective of false doctrines, and the most effectual opponent of false systems of religion, are to be found in the conversion of sinners from the "error of their way." In proportion as the work of God advances in the earth, and the number of the actually saved is multiplied, the destructive character of error, and of false systems of religion, becomes the more apparent—before the triumphant march of truth they recede—and the assumed authority over the consciences on the part of fallible man, though clothed in gorgeous apparel, outlying in splendour the robes of the fabled East, is rejected with pious indignation—the human mind is emancipated from priestly tyranny, and owns naught supreme but the authoritative will of God. The spread of evangelical religion is, therefore, the most certain and effective antidote to the extension of Popery.

THE GOOD CAUSE PROGRESSING.

Not less than we ourselves have our readers had cause to rejoice at the glad tidings of the progress of the cause of God in the lower Provinces, which we have recently published. We are privileged again with being made the medium of communicating to the religious public the most delightful intelligence of the continuance and great extension of the good work on the CHARLOTTETOWN CIRCUIT, which was noticed in our last. With pleasure we refer our readers to the exceedingly interesting communication of the Rev. F. SMALLWOOD, which appears on the preceding page. A serious and prayerful perusal of it, cannot but fill the pious man's heart with gladness, and cause him more earnestly to pray for a wider diffusion of divine truth, and for a more general influence of God, the SPIRIT, to accompany the labours of the Ministers and other members of the Christian Church. We are particularly pleased with the truly Catholic spirit which the article in question breathes

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