

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1852.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

Mr. Walpole has brought forward in the House of Commons, the ministerial plan for augmenting the National Defences. By this measure, it is proposed to raise a voluntary force of 80,000 men, to be drilled and trained according to the regulations of 43rd Geo. III. Of this force 50,000 are to be recruited the first year, and 30,000 during the second; the whole period of service is to be for five years. A bounty of from £3 to £4 is offered to volunteers, to be paid at once in full, or in monthly instalments of 2s. or 2s. 6d., the option being left to the volunteer: the expense is calculated at about £1,200,000. The ministerial proposition was well received. It was not clearly stated whether the provisions of the Bill were to be extended to Ireland; perhaps, with a large part of the native population armed, and trained to the use of arms, the Government might find it inconvenient to enforce the provisions of the Whig Penal Laws: an opportunity to test their courage will soon be offered to them.

On Friday, the 2nd instant, the three suffragan Prelates, Kildare, Ferns, and Ossory, together with the Dean and Chapter, met to elect a successor to the late lamented Dr. Murray, Archbishop of Dublin, the votes stood:—

Most Rev. Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of all Ireland, (<i>Dignissimus</i>)	23
Rev. Dean Meyler, (<i>Dignior</i>)	9
Rev. Mr. Dunne, P.P., (<i>Dignus</i>)	8

Writing before the result of the ballot was known, the editor of the *Tablet* remarked—"that if the name of Dr. Cullen be found on the list, whether as *Dignus*, *Dignior*, or *Dignissimus*, he will be selected by the Holy See, as the future Archbishop of Dublin: the writer intimates that it is in contemplation to confer upon this illustrious Prelate of the Catholic Church, the office and dignity of perpetual delegate of the Apostolic See in Ireland. The friends of education in Ireland, and by the friends of education, we mean the enemies of the Government, or National School system, have good cause for congratulation, in the prospects of the appointment of such a man as his Grace the Archbishop of Armagh, to the Archiepiscopal See of Dublin. The British government, on the other hand, will see in this appointment, the determination of the Church to carry into force, the decrees of the Synod of Thurles; though it may bully, and bluster, and talk big, about putting the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill in force, and prosecution against the Bishops, for the illegal assumption of territorial titles, it may rest assured that its scheme for perverting the faith of the youth of Ireland, by means of mixed, and godless education, is destined to meet with signal discomfiture.

The *Baltic* brings intelligence up to the 7th inst., the most important items of which are those in reference to the state of affairs at the Cape of Good Hope. Sir Harry Smith has been disappointed in the result of his demand for a Burgher levy on the frontiers. The Caffres have not accepted the terms proposed to them, and the British troops are busily engaged in destroying the enemy's crops, and laying waste the country. Her Majesty's steamer *Birkenhead*, with reinforcements for the Cape, has been totally wrecked; 446 persons are missing. The following are the particulars of this sad catastrophe:—

The *Birkenhead* was lost about two miles and a half or three miles off Point Danger, at two, a.m., on the 26th February. The sea was smooth at the time, and the vessel was steaming 8½ knots per hour. She struck the rock, and it penetrated through her bottom just aft of the foremast. The rush of the water was so great, that there is no doubt most of the individuals in the lower troop deck were drowned in their hammocks. The rest of the men and officers appeared on deck, when Major Souton called all the latter about him, and impressed upon them the necessity of order and silence among the men.

Sixty men were put to the chain pumps, sixty men to the tackles of the paddle box bents, and the remainder brought on to the poop, in order to ease the fore-part of the ship, which was rolling heavily. The horses were pitched out, and the cutter was got ready for the women and children; they were put in it (in charge of Master's Assistant Richards), and stood off about 150 yards.

Just afterwards, the steamer's entire bow broke off at the foremast, the bowsprit going up into the air towards the foremast, and the funnel went over the side, carrying away the starboard paddle-box and boat. The other paddle-box boat upset in lowering. The large boat in the centre of the ship could not be got at. It was about twelve or fifteen minutes after she struck that the bow broke off. The men then all went to the poop, and in about 5 minutes more the vessel broke in two, cross-wise, just about the engine-room, and the stern part immediately filled and went down. A few men jumped off just before, but the greater number remained to the last, and so did every officer belonging to the troops. All the men put on to the tackles (Captain Wright fears) were crushed when the funnel fell, and the men and officers below at the pumps could not (he thinks) have reached the deck before the vessel broke up and went down. The survivors clung to the rigging of the mainmast, and others got hold of floating pieces of wood. There must have been about 200 on the drift wood. Captain Wright was on a large piece with five others, and they picked up nine or ten more. The swell carried the wood in the direction of Point Danger. Captain Wright succeeded in landing, and with some of the men proceeded into the country in search of shelter; many of the men were naked, and almost all without shoes.

The captain obtained provisions after some difficulty. Lieutenant Girardot, of the 43rd Regiment, and Cornet Bond, of the 12th Lancers, accompanied the party, which amounted to sixty-eight men (including sailors). He then returned to the coast, and examined the rocks for more than twenty miles, in hopes of finding some men who might have drifted in. A whale boat picked up two men, and found two, all much exhausted. It was eighty hours after the wreck before Captain Wright left the coast, and he can safely assert that when he left there was not a living soul on the coast, of those who had been on board. Five horses got ashore. The loss is nine officers, and 249 men, besides that of the crew. The total number embarked was—15 officers, 476 men. One officer and 18 men were landed at Simon's Bay. All the women and children were put safely on board a schooner, about seven miles from the steamer. This vessel also took off 40 or 50 men who were clinging to the rigging. Eighteen of the men saved are bruised, eight burned by the sun; and the rest are "all right." Every thing belonging to the men was lost.

DR. BROWNSON'S LECTURES.

On the evening of Thursday the 18th instant, Dr. Brownson delivered his first lecture in the Odd Fellows' Hall. In spite of the inclemency of the weather, the room was crowded, and the only regret was, that, unfortunately, the Hall was too small to accommodate the numbers eager for admittance to hear this celebrated champion of the Catholic religion.

The lecturer commenced by stating, that he had been invited by the Catholic Institute to answer these two questions—"Why am I not a Protestant?" and "Why am I a Catholic?" It was the first of these questions that he intended to consider that evening. He did not pretend to hold up his conduct for imitation, or to give his *experiences* as reasons, to others for following his conduct, as was the habit of those who considered religion as a mere matter of feeling, in which there were no dogmas propounded to man's acceptance, and to which his obedience was claimed. He would, however, endeavor to lay before them the reasons which had chiefly contributed to his conversion—reasons which, from the importance of the subject, ought to weigh upon every mind.

"Why am I not a Protestant?"—I was born a Protestant, (continued the learned Doctor,) I was brought up amongst Protestants, was educated a Protestant, and, for many years, I was a Protestant minister. I then believed that in Protestantism I might find salvation for my soul. Now I stand before you a Catholic, and though I do not hold up my conduct as an example to others, as God forbid that I, an erring and fallible mortal, should have the presumption to do, I will explain some of the causes that mainly co-operated in effecting this great change in me.

And firstly, never amongst any of the Protestant sects could I find the assurance, that, if I followed Protestantism, and fulfilled all its requirements, I should be saved. Plenty there were who told me, that by being a good Protestant I should be saved, but never found I any one who so much as pretended that he had any authority to tell me so; far less could he prove it to my satisfaction. I felt that the object of religion was to teach man his relation to his Maker—the end why he was created—how to fulfill that end, and how to secure that exceeding great reward which the Creator has prepared for those who faithfully serve Him. Now, reason could not give me a satisfactory solution to any of these questions, for reason can take cognizance only of things in the natural order; hence I felt the need of a revelation, and of a teacher from God, to teach me—what was the end of my existence—how to fulfill that end—and to assure me that, if I fulfilled it, I should obtain eternal life; and it was here, as unable to fulfill any of these requirements, that I first felt the deficiency of Protestantism as a religion.

I asked the Presbyterian—Can you answer me with infallible certitude, can you give me that assurance that my soul requires, and without which I cannot have peace? But alas! I found that no Protestant sect at present existing, could claim an antiquity greater than 300 years. For 1500 years, if Protestantism be true, the world had sat in great darkness: the light had become so dim, that by it man could no longer read the Divine Word. What assurance had I then, that the Presbyterian had been able to bridge over the chasm of 1500 years, that separated the ancient from the modern world—that he had been able to restore the pure, primitive Christianity—that he had been able rightly to read the sacred records—that he, in his turn, had not mistaken the Gospel? He was not infallible; then it was possible that he might be deceived, and that I might, by following his directions, be taking the broad road that leads to hell, instead of walking along the path whose end is in heaven. But I asked for certitude, for assurance; Presbyterianism could not give me what I sought.

I asked the Methodist, and the Methodist answered loudly, earnestly, and with great apparent unction. He told me that to be saved, I had only to be a good Methodist—I was to attend love feasts, and to go off in fits—I was to undergo strange ecstasies, and to detail my experiences with much humility, and great confidence; if I did all this I might consider myself sure of heaven. Still I felt that my chance of gaining heaven as a Methodist, depended upon whether Methodism were true Christianity. Is that fact certain? I asked of my Methodist teacher. He answered me by referring to his feelings; but how could I know his feelings? He told me that the Spirit bore witness to his spirit—but I had been warned not to believe every spirit. I did not care about his feelings, for though my informant might be good authority as to what his feelings were, he could give me no assurance as to the cause of his feelings; and as the Methodist was fallible, from him I could get no infallible assurance, that in following Methodism I should not be following the downward road. Methodism then could not give me the assurance that I required.

And so with all the other Protestant denominations. If I turned me to the Episcopalian, I fared no better than with the Presbyterian, or the Methodist. "Ours is the Church," said the Episcopalian—what Church? I asked. "The Church of Christ" he replied; and then I called upon him for proof. Has not your Church changed? I inquired. "Oh yes," was the answer; "for 800 years Rome usurped dominion over us, but 300 years ago we threw off the yoke of Rome, and purged the Church of her corruptions." Then, said I, you have, by your own showing, erred once; what security have I that you have not erred again? You tell me that you believe you are right. I give you credit for sincerity, but how can I tell that your belief is right? What authority had your Reformers to reform? Who gave them the right to purge the Church? and what guarantee have I that, in purging out the errors, they have not lost some of the truth—that in pulling up the cockles, they have not also rooted up some of the wheat?

The lecturer then proceeded to give a brief historical sketch of the English Reformation, and of the characters of the principal actors. Henry VIII. the first reformer, was not a good man—Cranmer was certainly much worse; if the latter was a reformer, and his doctrine the true doctrine, which was the doctrine professed by Cranmer, that was to be accepted as the doctrine of the Reformation? for Cranmer professed so many contradictory doctrines. Was he to be believed before he perjured himself, in order to be made Archbishop of Canterbury, or after? Was his retraction of Protestantism, or his retraction of his retraction of Protestantism to be considered as containing the true summary of the reformed faith? During the reign of Mary, the Church changed again, and yet again in the reign of Elizabeth; the latter expelled the Catholic Bishops, and created a new Hierarchy, by Act of Parliament; but whence did Elizabeth or Parliament derive their commission to make or unmake Bishops? God alone has the power to proclaim what is true—where, then, is the authority of an Act of Parliament Church? a Church, the creature and tool of the State? What assurance, what satisfactory answer to his questions could be got from such a Church? And yet he felt that he must have assurance and certitude somewhere, for his soul required it. Protestantism could not give him what he sought.

Here, then, continued Dr. Brownson, was my first difficulty. I sought, but sought in vain, to discover the true religion; I felt that if it were necessary to have religion, it was no less necessary to have true religion, for falsehood could never be acceptable with God, nor could man, by following falsehood, fulfill his end, for man's end is God, and God is truth. Now, as in Protestantism, I could find no assurance of having the truth, and as truth is the great object of the human intellect, my mind was troubled, for I could never feel assured that if I followed Protestantism, and fulfilled its requirements, I should be saved; but my difficulties did not end here.

Not only I could never find in Protestantism the assurance that my soul required, but I never could discover—What Protestantism was. Words I heard in abundance, words full of fire and fury—"Glorious Reformation—Reformers—Emancipation of the human intellect from the bondage of priestcraft and the trammels of superstition—March of mind," and all the other stock phrases of the Protestant platform; but I asked, were these words true? had they any definite meaning, or were they words and nothing more? Protestantism, in its negative aspect, I could understand: as such, Protestantism signified a denial of Catholicity; but of itself a bare negation can never satisfy the human intellect, for negation is, by itself, unintelligible. A negative is only conceivable by its relation to the positive, and thus the affirmation must always precede the denial, as a belief in the existence of God must always have preceded Atheism; religion, therefore, cannot consist in negation, nor can any quantity of disbelief amount to an act of faith. Protestantism as a bare negation, therefore, did not satisfy me; I sought for it in its positive aspect, if it had any; that is to say, I sought to discover, what doctrine that was, of which it might be said—Lo! this is the Protestant doctrine, a doctrine peculiar to, and essentially distinctive of, Protestantism: a doctrine which it did not hold in common, either with Catholics on the one hand, or with Deists, Infidels, and Atheists on the other. By some I was told that the Trinity—the Incarnation—were Protestant doctrines; but if I went beyond Protestantism, I found that these doctrines were Catholic; doctrines of the old Roman Catholic Church, which Protestantism had not rejected, or protested against; therefore, in no sense could they be called Protestant doctrines; nor did the accident of having retained them, give Protestantism any right to call them its own. True, Protestantism denies many other doctrines of the Catholic Church, but denial is not faith. By others, I was told that the right of free inquiry was the Protestant doctrine; but then, this right of free inquiry is equally asserted by the Deist, the Infidel, and the Atheist: it may distinguish the Protestant from the Catholic, but it does not distinguish the former from the Infidel; the right of free inquiry, therefore, cannot be the characteristic doctrine of Protestantism in its positive aspect. Besides the assertion of this right is not an article of faith: it asserts merely the right of the mind, that has not the truth, to search for it, but cannot assert the right to reject the truth; it is the sign of an intellectual want—of a want, which can exist only prior to the discovery of truth, that is, whilst the mind is subject to error—of a want, which must cease, so soon as its end—the discovery of truth—is accomplished.

Thus, neither in the doctrines which Protestantism professes to hold in common with Catholicity, nor yet in the assertion of the right of free inquiry—a right which Protestantism asserts in common with Deism, Infidelity and Atheism—could I discover the grand characteristic doctrine of Protestantism, in its positive aspect. If I betook me to the sects, I got no satisfactory answer; none could tell me, I do not say, what was truth; but what were the doctrines which they professed to hold as true? I asked the Presbyterian what Presbyterianism was. "Lo, it is here," said one—"you are wrong, it is here," said another—"this is it," said the old School—"it is this," bawled out the new—whilst the Cumberland whistled gently in my ear, "that if I wanted real Presbyterian doctrine, he was the man that could supply me with the article." Now, amongst all these conflicting classes of Presbyterians, all giving one another the lie, one only could be true, and I could find no authority to tell me which that one was. I remember, my old Pastor, a Presbyterian minister, putting into my hand the Westminster Confession of Faith, as containing a summary of doctrine, not that ought to be, but that was, believed. He bid me read the Word of God, and to believe what I *thought* I found there-

in; he added, that in the Confession that he placed in my hands, I should find the doctrines of Election and Reprobation, horrible doctrines enough, but which he had long tried to get abolished: his motion, as I was subsequently informed, had been rejected at a conference of Presbyterian ministers, by one vote, and thus, but for one adverse vote, the doctrines of Election and Reprobation would no longer form part of the Presbyterian Word of God. I fared no better with the Methodists, than I did with the Presbyterians; none could tell me what Methodism was. Thus, even if Methodism were true Christianity, I was unable to discover what Methodism, or true Christianity was.

But, surely, it will be said, I could find my difficulties resolved in Anglicanism, with its beautiful old liturgies, its book of Common Prayer, and its thirty-nine articles. Well, I asked the Anglican—what Anglicanism was? what were its peculiar doctrines? "Oh, the thirty-nine articles," said one; but upon examination, I found that the thirty-nine articles contradicted one another, as was but natural, seeing that they professed to be, articles of peace, a compromise betwixt two contending parties. Hence, even Anglicans do not understand the meaning of, or understanding, do not believe, their own articles; one man, indeed, may believe one article; another man may believe another article; but no one man believes all the thirty-nine articles: credulity and inconsistency can not, even amongst Anglicans, go so far. Then, another told me that the Anglican doctrines were embodied in the book of Common Prayer; but if I asked what does it teach? I was told—what the Church teaches; and if I asked what does the Church teach? I was told—what the book of Common Prayer teaches. But the Church of England has no teaching faculty: its clergy are not allowed to meet in Convocation, and the judicial committee of the Privy Council has kindly undertaken to settle its doctrines for it in a manner, which, if it fails to give satisfaction to Anglicans, causes, at least, much amusement to the lookers on.

The lecturer then gave a humorous account of the Gorham case, which excited much laughter amongst his audience, at the idea of a judicial committee of the Privy Council sitting in judgment upon the vital question of Baptismal Regeneration, and deciding that it was equally in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of England, to teach that all children were regenerate in Baptism, and that they were not. "Thus," continued the lecturer, "I could find no way of ascertaining what were the doctrines of the Anglican Church."

From the evangelical or orthodox sects, I turned to the professors of liberal Christianity—men who, in their excessive liberality, have given Christianity itself away, and kept none for themselves. The Unitarian told me that Protestantism consisted in every man thinking for himself; but this was as much the doctrine of the Atheist as of the Protestant. "Take your Bible, and search for yourself," said the Unitarian. But what, I asked,—What does the Bible teach? I find words, but how am I to ascertain, with infallible certainty, the meaning of those words, or the doctrines therein contained? "Judge for yourself," said the Unitarian—But if I find, or think I find, in the Bible certain positive dogmas—the Divinity of Christ—or the Trinity, for instance—what am I to do then? "Believe them," said the Unitarian. But then I am not a Unitarian. "It is not necessary that you should be," he replied—"You may go to heaven just as well, as a Trinitarian." But if Unitarianism be true, then Trinitarianism must be false—and so, according to the Unitarian, man may be saved by falsehood, as well as by the truth.—Where, then, is the need of Unitarianism? The lecturer then told the following anecdote:—

In 1834, I was a member of a conference of Unitarian ministers, and was appointed chairman of a committee to prepare a report upon the best manner of spreading Christian truth over the land. In the report, I remarked, that before considering what was the best mode of diffusing the truth, there was a previous question to be discussed—What was Christian truth? That truth could not be Unitarianism, because Unitarians admitted that Trinitarians might be saved; therefore, the peculiar doctrine of Unitarianism was not the truth of Christianity, essential to salvation. The words of our Lord were, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—St. Mark, xvi. 15, 16—*Prot. version*. Now, no man can say that he has the Christian truth, unless he can stand up and declare that he has a doctrine, which, unless a man believe, he shall be damned. Of which doctrine of the Unitarian's could this be predicated? what doctrine did Unitarianism teach as essential to salvation? Not a belief in the inspiration of Scripture, nor even in the miracles; for men might deny these, according to Unitarianism, and yet be saved; what then was the doctrine of Unitarianism, of which it could be said, that "if a man believed it not he should be damned?" Objections, but no answers, were made, and finally the report was accepted.

Next I called upon the Universalists for a reply: they told me that their doctrine was—that all men should ultimately be saved. I made them my bow, and said, that in that case there was no necessity for my becoming a Universalist. Other liberal Christians made Christianity to consist in not being of any particular religion; but with all, the tendency was, to indifference to all religion, and the sum of their teaching was—Be good, and do good, and then—you will be good, and do good—a truth which I will not venture to deny.

Here, then, I had, as a Protestant, two great difficulties. First—What assurance had I, that if I followed Protestantism, and fulfilled all its requirements, I should be saved? Secondly—How was I to discover what Protestantism was? How, amidst