

THE CATHOLIC.

QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB OMNIBUS CREDITUM EST.—WHAT ALWAYS, AND EVERY WHERE, AND BY ALL IS BELIEVED.

Very Rev. W. P. MacDonald, V. G., Editor.

OFFICE—CORNER OF KING & HUGHSON STREETS.

J. Robertson, Printer and Publisher.

VOLUME V.

HAMILTON, [GORE DISTRICT] JANUARY 31, 1844.

NUMBER 19.

From the Catholic Advocate.

FOUNDATION OF PROTESTANT FAITH.

We have seen that Protestants cannot consistently ground their faith upon the authority of the particular church to which they may profess to belong, because, in their separation from the Catholic church, they expressly maintained that the authoritative teaching of the church could not be the ground or basis of faith, and in effect, they contemned the authority of the church, as erroneous, corrupt, and contrary to the word of God, and therefore on their own individual responsibility departed from her communion. Their leaders taught that the scriptures, read by the right of private interpretation, constitute the only rule and foundation of faith. At first they endeavored to prove, that the scriptures are plain, simple, clear, and easily to be understood by the most humble capacity—that every article of christian faith is there plainly, clearly, and unequivocally taught. But it was soon evident, that such is not the fact; but on the contrary, that the scriptures are “hard to be understood,” and may, by many, “be wrested to their own destruction.” This fact caused a new modification of Protestant Theology, and it was next asserted, that men are not obliged to believe anything, which is not clearly taught in the scriptures; and thus, a great portion, of what is declared to be the word of God, is virtually set aside, and rendered nugatory, by Protestants.

With such a principle moreover, it was easy for Protestants to narrow down the symbol of faith to the dimensions which might best please the investigator. When he had an aversion to any of the received dogmas of doctrines, he could exclude it by the ingenuity of interpretation, which is skilful to overspread the most plain and evident texts with obscurity and difficulty.

No language can be so explicit, detailed and comprehensive, as to defy ingenious discussion. And although it may, to the docile pupil, clearly express the doctrines designed, and the signification intended, it is nevertheless liable to be mystified, perverted, or wrested to a sense not intended by the writer. The scriptures are sufficiently plain, when read in submission to the unalterable teaching of the church, to which, of right, they belong, because with her deposited by the sacred penman; but they, more perhaps than any writings besides, can be disfigured, obscured, tortured, and perverted by ingenious and learned interpretation.

The church had the scriptures from the moment of their first existence, but she had the doctrines of Christ before she had the scriptures. It was her duty to preserve and promulgate these doctrines. She was expressly ordered to teach to “all nations, all things whatsoever” Christ had commanded her to teach, but she was never ordered to disseminate the scriptures, as a book for the instruction of the people, to be by these understood in every sense, which private interpretation can “wrest” from them.

When the church was commanded to “teach to all nations all things,” which Christ had himself delivered, it was for the purpose of bringing “all nations to believe all things” with the same faith. Hence the body of doctrines to be taught were called “the truth,” and the belief of “the truth,” constituted “faith,” and this faith was to be one, not manifold. St. Paul expressly declares that there is “one Lord, one faith.” And the divine Saviour, prayed to his father that his disciples—that is to

say, all taught by him whether *directly*, as when he spoke to them, or *indirectly*, as when his church fulfilled the commission which he gave her—should be one, and by their unity of faith, convince an infidel world of the divine nature of his mission; That they may be one in us, that the world may know that thou hast sent me.” He further manifested his wish on this subject by declaring that he regarded himself as the good shepherd, who would lay down his life for his sheep, who would search after the sheep that were astray, and who would gather all into the same fold; “other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, and there shall be but one fold and one shepherd.” If any refuse to enter this fold it is a sign that they do not belong to him. “My sheep will hear my voice;” and hearing his voice they will come into the fold. If they come not, as a consequence, they are not his sheep, for they do not obey the voice of the shepherd.

Evidently, Christ here speaks of his church, under the figure of a fold. He wishes that all who hear his voice, should obediently receive the faith, and enter his church. In the fold, we must expect to find “sheep and lambs.” And Christ designates the members of his church by these terms, for he says to St. Peter “feed my sheep,” “feed my lambs,” thus giving to him, in charge the whole fold, and fulfilling what he declared he would do; “There shall be but one fold and one Shepherd.”

What a beautiful provision does the Saviour thus make for the perpetual existence of his church! And how melancholy and ruinous a step was taken by protestants, when severing the bonds of unity, they wandered forth, singly or in herds, in search of forbidden pastures, where craggy precipices, and hidden sinks at every step caused their ruin.

The church had her doctrines well ascertained, her seven sacraments of universal observance, and centuries had already passed over her while she still faithfully discharged her high and most sacred office. But as soon as the protestant rule was reduced to practice, what was the consequence? Immediately five of the seven sacraments were destroyed. Five of the seven sacred channels, instituted by Jesus Christ for the purpose of ministering grace to the souls of men, were removed, and although it had been the undisputed teaching of the church, that the sacraments conferred grace, it was declared, that the two not destroyed had no power to confer grace, but were the mere seals thereof. Thus were men at once virtually deprived of these sacred institutions, and by human pride robbed of the merciful provision which had been made for their souls in the various circumstances of the merciful provision which had been made for their souls in the various circumstances of their earthly probation.

The Saviour had said “suffer little children to come to me and forbid them not,” and as, without act of their own, they had been made *children of wrath* because of original sin, so, without any act of their own they were mercifully admitted to become children of God by “the lover of regeneration;” and in pursuance of the intention of Jesus Christ, who would have them “come to him,” the church caused them to be brought early to the sacred font to be baptised, but protestants came forward “to forbid these children to come to Christ,” refused them the rite of baptism, and allowed them to die unregenerated, in spite of the declaration of scripture “that

unless any one be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Cruel fruit of the new principle of protestant faith, the private interpretation of the holy scriptures, by which children, dying before the age of reason, are robbed of that provision which a most affectionate Redeemer had made for them!

The Saviour had said, “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you;” and that you may be able to do what I require of you; that is, “to eat my flesh and drink my blood,” I, by my power, make my flesh and blood present in the Sacrament under the form and appearance of bread and wine—and that generations after you, may have the same opportunity to eat my flesh and drink my blood, to you, I give the power “to do in commemoration of me” what I have done for you. As I say that “this is my body, this is my blood,” so shall you declare to those whom you will invite to partake of this holy sacrament, and give it to them as “my flesh and blood.” for “my flesh is meat indeed, my blood is drink indeed.”

The church understood that in this most holy and mysterious institution, Jesus Christ had devised a means of giving his body, blood, soul and divinity, to his disciples and followers that they may be branches of the living vine, and be supported by the very substance of Him upon whom they were engrafted. Therefore, with St. Paul, after blessing the bread and wine, said, “The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?” But by the protestant rule, it was discovered that this was not a reality, but a figure. It was found out that we cannot “eat the flesh of Jesus Christ, or drink his blood,” because his flesh and blood are not present in the sacrament. The means which Jesus had affectionately devised for making himself one with men, “to abide in them, and they in him,” was rejected as absurdity and impossibility. The sacrifice of the New Law, a foresight of which had given joy to the prophet Malachi, in his vision, and which was designed to the end of time, to show forth the death of the Saviour in his great Sacrifice on Calvary, was abolished, and religion was left without an altar, without a sacrifice; and without the necessity for a priesthood. Thus did men, in the pride of their interpretation of the Scriptures, reject one after the other, the consolations, the blessings, the sacred dogmas, which had for centuries been received and cherished.

But the principle of private interpretation is an active, operative and limitless one. It must continue to work until it reaches its last possible consequences.

(Continued next week.)

The enormous sum of £12,000,000 sterling in England and Wales, is annually imposed in the shape of local taxation; upwards of 150,000 officers, who are annually changed, have the application of this amount for which they are responsible. The temptations to which they are exposed, and the opportunities afforded for abuse, lead of course, to a great deal of dishonesty and extravagance.

A sawling-piece, or gun of any other description, cannot legally be imported from England to Ireland without a license from the privy council, the fee on which amounts to £2 12s. 6d