

A JESUIT ON THE BIBLE.

THE ELOQUENT JESUIT PROVINCIAL LECTURER

Before the Catholic Summer School on the Holy Scriptures—The Catholic Church Preserved Them.

Copied Them and Translated Them.

Father Pardow began by stating that it was impossible, in four lectures, to treat fully of any of the deep questions connected with the study of the Bible, so that in the lectures it would be considered principally as the Rule of Faith. Before considering it so, however, there were a few preliminary questions that must be answered. For ages the enemies of the Church have charged her with being the enemy of the Bible, and she only, stands up to declare that the Bible, and the whole Bible, is the inspired word of God, and consequently must be believed. The Sovereign Pontiff in his Encyclical says: "Let them loyally hold that God, the Creator and Ruler of all things, is also the author of the scripture, and that, therefore, nothing can be proved either by physical science or archaeology which can really contradict the scriptures. Truth cannot contradict truth, and if there is any apparent contradiction we may be sure that some mistake has been made, either in the interpolation of the sacred words, or in the polemical discussion itself, and if no such mistake can be detected, we must then suspend judgment for the time being."

There are, at the present time, many earnest people who have loved it all their lives, who, perhaps, have read it on their knees, into whose souls, moved by this higher criticism which now rejects one part and now another, doubts are creeping, who ask themselves: "Will it stand the test? When will this work of desecration end? Is the Bible to be to me merely a book of consolation, or is it to be a book which imposes points of doctrine that I must believe under penalty of eternal condemnation? Who will tell me what to believe?" St. Paul says: "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son."

PREJUDICE IS REASON'S ENEMY.

Our God, to use a familiar comparison, has been to us as a telescope bringing down truths to us from his Eternal Father. It would seem an easy thing for God to speak to his people, but it is a hard thing. It is an easy thing for Him to speak to individual souls, but to souls collectively it is the hardest thing in the world. It is hard to convince them that it is He who speaks, and that they must obey, for human reason is infallible in its own sphere. When, after a clear examination, reason tells us that we must do a thing, it must be done, or we sin against God. The question is asked, however: If reason is infallible, why do we differ? Because we will not let reason speak. Reason presents unpleasant truths to us and we silence it. Obstacles come in the way and prejudice steps in—prejudice or pre-judgment—a judgment beforehand. This is what has been doing all the harm in matters of religion throughout the ages—prejudice. This is what Catholics have suffered from at the hands of their enemies—pre-judgment: that is a pre-judgment before we know what we are talking about. Our Lord, coming to speak to men gifted with reason, willingly submitted to the requirements of that same reason which he had given them.

OUR LORD'S CREDENTIALS.

When St. John the Baptist, hearing of the works of Christ, sent two of his disciples to ask Him, "Art thou He that art to come?" our Lord, knowing so well the human mind, did not say, "I am the Christ," as any impostor could have said, but, "Tell John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the dead rise again." John called our Lord to the tribunal of reason, asking Christ for his credentials, and our Lord answered by suspending some of the laws of nature and performing miracles. His answer could not be duplicated. Having shown His credentials as authorizing Him to speak in the name of His Father, He then had the right to teach. But what should those do who had not seen?

They should take the testimony of truthful witnesses. There are two avenues to the mind, and only two; the authority of evidence and the evidence of authority. Truth put clearly before the mind produces certainty. Few things are evident. Almost all knowledge is acquired by authority.

HOW WE MAY SIN AGAINST REASON.

Our Lord tells us things that we cannot prove and that He will not prove to us. For example, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which we cannot grasp. If, however, His credentials have been examined and have been admitted, then must all the doctrines He teaches be admitted. Such has ever been the teaching of the Catholic Church. When, as we read in the VI. chapter of St. John, our Lord proposed a doctrine which to some of the disciples was "a hard saying," what did He do, He the loving master who had come on earth to save sinners? He let His disciples go. They sinned against reason; they were the first protestants, because, although they had admitted His right to teach, they objected on the score of what He taught. He let them go. Better let 10,000 go than forego that principle so full of consolation to all succeeding ages.

LUTHER'S CHARGE CONCERNING THE BIBLE.

Then Luther came. He wished to reform the church, and men listened to him. Men of keen intellect, who were able to weigh and sift evidence, listened to this one man who wished to reform God's masterpiece, the institution which our Lord came on earth to found, and which was to teach truth to the end of time. What should they have done? They should have said: "Show us your credentials; show us by what right you say the spouse of Christ is not true, that Christ has failed to keep his appointment and has taught error. If the church must be reformed, it must be reformed by its author, or one whom he authorizes."

Luther said the church had enchained the word of God. What do others say in this age of enlightenment and investigation? The church had enchained the word of God. Is it so? Yes; and why? So that the people might read it. Think what the Bible was in those days. It was not the book of to-day, which can be turned out of the press by the hundreds, but the book over which holy monks and nuns in their quiet cells had toiled months and years in order that it might be placed in the cathedrals for the people to read. Does any one claim that nowadays the directories are chained to the counters of our apothecaries' shops so that people may not have access to them?

The men of to day boast of their fairness of investigation, and are critical in their weighing of evidence, yet they admit accusations by which more than 200,000,000 of people are condemned, and they have never taken pains to investigate evidence, and the Catholic Church is condemned without a hearing.

RELATION OF REASON TO REVELATION.

What is reason's attitude to the Bible? Reason acts sometimes as though it would say, if the Bible proves its right to teach, I will admit it. I will be glad to admit it if it teaches me more truth. I will welcome it as I would welcome a friend. Reason goes farther still. It says probably there are truths beyond the range of my own vision, but these truths must be authenticated. One man cannot know all things well. Only God's infinite mind can know all things. If, therefore, one wishes to get information on some particular subject, he goes to one who has learned all he can on that subject, a specialist, one who speaks with authority. Even he may make mistakes. If a man comes to me as an ordinary teacher, I will listen to his ideas, and if he can prove them I will accept them, but when a man comes to me and says, you must believe these truths which I do not intend to prove, truths upon which rests your eternal salvation, reason rebels and says, "Show me your authority." God, knowing all things, knows that if he sends a teacher he must send him with authority. This is proven by the example of Moses. We read in Exodus that God said to Moses, "I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt and I have heard of their cry. And knowing their sorrow, I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians. Come, I will send thee to Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people of Israel out of Egypt." Moses said to God: Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel and say to them: The

God of your fathers has sent me to you. They will not believe me nor hear my voice, but they will say: The Lord hath not appeared to thee. Then the Lord said to him: What is that thou holdest in thy hand? He answered: A rod. And the Lord said: Cast it down upon the ground. He cast it down, and it was turned into a serpent, so that Moses fled from it. That they may believe, saith He, that the Lord, God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared to thee. Then Moses went forth and the people believed him because of the miracles performed. They were critical people in those days. They wanted the authentication and Moses had the power of the Almighty back of him. It was no longer Moses who spoke, it was the Lord. When our Lord came on earth, He came down to the requirements of human reason. There was difficulty. When He spoke in the synagogues at Nazareth the people were delighted with Him and wondered if it were possible that this was the carpenter's son, their townsman, whom they knew so intimately, but when He stood up to declare that He was the Messiah referred to by the prophets, they refused to believe Him and asked by what authority He made the claim. Hence His miracles.

LUTHER'S WRONG IDEA OF REFORMATION.

Luther should have made the distinction between the reformation of morals and the reformation of doctrine. Can there be a reformation of morals in the Church? Yes. A reformation of faith? No. Our Lord came to save sinners, and there will be sinners in the Church, sin to be forgiven till the end of time. The teachers of truth may fall away, but truth remains. Judas taught the kingdom of God, but Judas betrayed his Master. He showed many the way to heaven, but he strayed from it himself. Those whom he taught were not lost, because it was Christ who had taught them through him. Judas was only the instrument. So the Lord has placed a deposit of truth in His Church. If the Church had taught error but once, it forever lost its power to teach. There can be no error in the teaching of the spouse of Christ. The accusation against the Church has been that we Catholics do not do our own thinking. What thinking does any one do in regard to the Trinity? How much thinking does one do about baptism? Only the mind of God can see the mystery of the Trinity.

HOW THE BIBLE GREW.

Now, as the Bible is a teacher, we must ask for its authority. The authenticity of the Bible must be investigated. What is the Bible? It is a book made up of many books, a book that grew. Few have thought how it grew. Adam had no Bible, but he had the truth direct from God. For many years there was no Bible, and so it is absurd to say the Bible is the rule of faith. Who wrote the Bible? God by His own hand wrote the commandments, and that is all. Did one man write all the books? No. How do we know that the men who wrote it were right? Because God inspired them, and therefore God is the author. What is meant by inspiration? When the Church speaks of inspiration it means the voice of God. Then did the Lord inspire the authors of this book? He did not dictate every word to them, for we know that the same incidents are related in different words by the different authors. He moved their wills, and so they wrote for you and me, and the unity of the book is preserved, for He is the author.

How did the New Testament grow? How did the epistles grow? The epistles were letters—letters from Paul to the Romans, to the Corinthians, to Timothy. Were these letters inspired? Who says they were inspired? Who says I must do what they say? The Church. Listen to what the Protestant Sherer says: "Unless, with the Catholics, we attribute a supernatural, infallible authority to the Church, we are compelled to acknowledge that she may have been deceived in the formation of the Canon of the Bible; may have introduced into it books which did not merit that honor, and excluded others which would have deserved it more." (La Critique et la Script.)

And what does the great St. Augustine say? "I would not accept the Gospel unless the authority of the Catholic Church impelled me."

NO BIBLE OUTSIDE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Luther rejected from the canon of the Scriptures Job, Ecclesiastes, the Epistle

to the Hebrews, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, that of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse. Calvin removed also from it the books of Esther, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiastics and the two books of Maccabees. Spinoza and other critics cast a doubt on the authenticity of the Pentateuch, the Judges, Kings, the two books of Paralipomenon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve lesser prophets; Hobbes, that of Ruth. Grotius asserts that the Canticle of Canticles, the Book of Wisdom, and the two last Epistles of St. John are not inspired. The Anabaptists denied the divinity of the Psalms and the books of Esdras, and so on. So that a Protestant publisher who wished to publish a Bible containing only books whose authority would be recognized by all his co-religionists would have nothing to print.

Who settled the canon of the Holy Scripture? Who determined what was Bible and what was not? No other power but the Church. Christ had said: "All power is given to me. Go ye therefore, and teach." And falling back upon his promise, "All My power I give to you." The Fathers in various councils, without fear of hesitation, declared what was Bible and what was not.

Did the Church wish to keep the Bible from the people? Who preserved it, copied it, translated it? These Catholic translators exist now. Luther said he had unearthed the Bible, and yet there were sixteen editions of the Bible in German before Luther printed his. How in the face of this could Luther say he had not seen the Bible? Why had he not been called to account for his statement? People were blinded.

Irish News Items.

At a Redmondite Convention in Kilkenny, on July 21, Dr. French Mullen was selected to contest the city at the next general election.

At the ordinations which took place on the 8th of July, at the Maison de Missionnaires, Oblate, Rue Basse-Dix, Lege, John Flynn, son of the late Laurence Flynn, of Cook Hill, Gormanstown, was ordained priest by Monseigneur Doutreloux, Bishop of Liege.

The Congested Districts Board have decided to make a grant for the improvement of the road leading from Glenfarne railway station to Killyclogher, North Leitrim, on the condition that the improvement be carried out by the Leitrim Grand Jury on plans approved by the Board.

These Mayo people have died recently: In Castlebar, on the 27th ult., at the residence of her father, Hugh Morrison, Eliza J., wife of J. Hanna, of Belfast, aged twenty-seven years. In Castlebar, on July 24, Sophia, relict of the late Patrick Walsh. The deceased belonged to an old Castlebar family (the Knights.) At Hollymount, on July 27, Sarah, wife of John Hughes, and mother of Father Hughes.

The Southern Division of the Police Courts, Dublin, on July 26, presented a scene of unusual interest. The Dublin and Suburban Workingmen's Dwelling Company issued ejectment notices against twenty-eight of their tenants residing at Liffey street, Inchicore. The tenants are:—Thomas Byrne, James Fitzgerald, J. Doherty, Peter Stafford, James McGibney, Catherine Carway, Thomas Moore, William Whelan, Edward Young, Patrick Nolan, Maria Keane, John Murtagh, Thomas Hopkins, William Connor, Patrick Fitzsimmons, Agnes Waller, Eliza Doyle, Joseph Tierney, Margaret Merrigan, Andrew Lyons, Mary Meredith, William Griffin, John Burke, Thomas Gibney, George Hawkins, Thomas Byrne, Michael Murray and James Gaynor. The judge dismissed all the cases, with 2s. 6d. costs in each case.

"What a very disagreeable thing it must be to be disappointed in love," said she. "Yes," replied he, with emphasis, "it is infinitely worse to be disappointed in marriage."

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