

testament Bible, since it is notorious that, not individuals merely, but large bodies, disputed the canonicity, not of chapters only, but of whole books contained in it, namely, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of St. John, the Epistles of St. James and of St. Jude, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse. The last chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark; the history of the bloody sweat, and the consoling angel in the Gospel of St. Luke, have been also subjects of doubt. On what ground, then, were these books included in the Protestant canon? On the traditional authority of the Church?—a sound rule, doubtless, but not a Protestant one.

Again, before the canon was finally determined, several books, not now included in it, were by many in the Church received as inspired. If they really were inspired, it is obvious that neither the Catholic nor the Protestant canon is the Bible, but only a part of it. How does the Protestant know that they were not inspired? Holy Scripture gives him no information on this matter; philosophy is not the guide he goes by; and miraculous or angelical guidance he has none. He practically accepts as conclusive the authority of the Church, which decided on rejecting the books in question. It is in vain to say that he is determined by historic research and literary criticism. If this be all he has to guide him, he is confessedly in the very region of doubt: and a probable opinion is the utmost which he would be likely to reach. Now if we have but opinion as to the canon of Scripture, it is plain that we have but opinion as to a theology built exclusively on Scripture. Such a statement would, therefore, undermine the very foundation of faith.

That the researches of mere individuals who believe that they have the Spirit, afford no sure guidance in this matter, is proved by the contradictory judgments of Protestants. Thus, the Established Church of England, ever since the reign of Queen Elizabeth, has rejected the Deutero-canonical books; yet the Homilies, as set forth in that of Edward VI., quote them as Holy Scripture, and ascribe them to the Holy Ghost. Luther at one time rejected the Epistle of St. James, and other parts of the New Testament:—the Calvinists, that of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse. These are matters on which, not only error, but uncertainty deprives Protestantism of its very foundations. If the Reformers had no sure guide on such essential points, what commission could they have had to revolutionize theology?

The question of the Deutero-canonical books was investigated with the utmost care at the Council of Trent. Both early and late councils were referred to in favor of the existing Catholic Canon, together with the writings of Sts. Cyprian, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Basil, and other Fathers. The Protestants had claimed certain of the Fathers as on their side. The Catholics answered, that when they wrote, the matter had not been fully investigated or decided on by the Church. The Protestants had asserted that the books in question had formed no part of the Hebrew Canon. The Catholics maintained that they had been received with the utmost reverence by the Hellenistic Jews, and that the earliest Christian writers and martyrs, as Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, and Irenæus, refer to them in the same manner as to other parts of Scripture. They quoted St. Augustine: "We must not omit those books which we know to have been written before the coming of Christ, and which are received by the Church of the Saviour Himself, although they be not received by the Jews." Now, assuredly the Church, notwithstanding her conviction of her own infallibility, used all those human means for arriving at the truth which God accords to us as a secondary instrumentality. Neither did she stand alone in her judgment. The East has confirmed the decision of the West; and in 1672 a Greek synod, held at Jerusalem under the Patriarch Dosithous, acknowledged as canonical the same books to which the Council of Trent had already attached that character. How, then, it is possible for the Protestant to feel certain that the Church is wrong, and that the truth is to be found among those only who could neither agree with the Catholics, with the Greeks, with each other, or consistently with themselves?

On this subject Protestants have in truth no certainty except that which results from self-will. Out of many circumstances which attest this statement, it will be sufficient here to refer to but a few. How does it happen, then, that this important question being plainly one of learned and critical investigation, the Protestant who has never examined into the subject, enjoys an imaginary confidence with reference to it, at least equal to that of the more learned Protestant? Does he go by authority? But authority is the very principle he repudiates. The great preponderance of existing ecclesiastical authority, moreover, is notoriously against him. Historic criticism is a region which he acknowledges that he has never entered, and into which he is not qualified to enter. Yet, his position requires that he should be certain; and, accordingly, certain he is. What is the value of his certainty on other matters, may be inferred from his certainty on this. It is an illusion, consecrated by casual associations. He will say, perhaps, that he does not feel the inspiration of what he calls the Apocrypha, as he does that of Isaiah and the Psalms. But such a test would disparage many other books of the Old Testament as well as the Deutero-canonical, and would involve us rapidly in that German Neology which has dealt as roughly with the Bible as with the Church. Once more:—how can the Protestant be certain that the doctrines to which he objects, as insufficiently supported by Scripture, are not confirmed by the last books referred to in the Old Testament?

On the Protestant rule of faith we ought to find in Holy Scripture a guarantee likewise for the authority of the text. Our existing versions are founded

on a comparison of conflicting manuscripts, which do not claim to be original. Of these, some have been rejected and some accepted; but, unless assured by an infallible authority, that in this process we have fallen into no error affecting faith, it seems hard to know how we can arrive with certainty at any such conclusion. This question is one of the most immediate importance. The Unitarians justify their heresy on the ground that several of the most important texts appealed to by Trinitarians are spurious. They urge, that they are as competent judges on this matter as the Trinitarian Protestants; since they, too, accept the Protestant rule of faith, and solicit the Divine aid in investigating the Bible. The more orthodox Protestants assert that they have sophisticated the Bible in order to countenance their own pre-conceptions. Now, a Catholic might well bring such a charge against Protestants, saying that they had rejected the Deutero-canonical books, in order to get rid of such texts as that which affirms that it is "a good and wholesome thought to pray for the dead." But in the mouth of a Protestant the statement is utterly unmeaning. If the Bible be our sole rule of faith, our primary care must be to make that rule a sound one, by weeding from the Bible all corruptions or additions. If, either through error or through fraud, the Church of the middle ages was capable of appending whole books to the canon, though not inspired, much more must it have been capable of introducing spurious texts into it. No one, whether Catholic or Protestant, affirms that the text of Holy Scripture is perfect. Biblical criticism, on the principles of the "Bible Protestant," must be the highest, if not the only, important part of theology; and to reject certain results of biblical criticism without learned investigation, because they contradict our theological opinions, is, to act, not on the Protestant rule of faith, but in direct opposition to it. The orthodox Protestant is right in his conclusions, when dealing with Unitarians, but only by a happy inconsistency, and because he has inherited from the Catholic Church at once the doctrine of the Trinity, the authentic text on that doctrine, and the Catholic interpretation of that text. On the long run, however, principles carry men along with them whether willingly or not; and, accordingly, Unitarianism is the gulf to which Protestantism ever tends when its ardor has died out, and its scepticism only remains.

Again, the Protestant Rule of Faith would require a scriptural guarantee, ensuring fidelity in the translations of the Bible. How is it possible for a Protestant to feel assured, on scriptural grounds, that he has not been mis-informed as to the meaning of some passages respecting which scholars are at variance? He cannot entertain a confidence based on a general reliance on the goodness of God; for the very question at issue is whether the rashness of man has not discarded the provisions made by the Divine Goodness to preserve us from important error. Least of all can he assert the infallibility of his own individual teachers, or of such criticism as he has himself adopted at their suggestion. How can he know whether a particular Greek expression is rightly translated "repent" or "do penance?" And yet, if the latter should be the correct rendering, he has been living all his life in an overt disobedience to the Divine commands, as if he had never partaken of the Lord's Supper, or frequented congregational worship. How many among the unlearned are qualified to determine whether the command of St. Paul be to observe the "ordinances" taught by him, or the "traditions" in the Catholic sense of the term? How many have ever enquired whether another text ought to be rendered, "search the Scriptures," or "ye search the Scriptures?" How many have the means of determining whether the text which affirms that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation means that each passage is to be interpreted by the Church, not by the private individual, or simply that it is to be compared with other passages?

(To be continued.)

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

PROTESTANT LIBERALITY.—Count Fane de Salis, High Sheriff of the county Armagh, has given the Primate the magnificent contribution of £100 towards the completion of the cathedral. Every Catholic must witness with pleasure and gratification this evidence of liberality and generosity on the part of a Protestant gentleman.

STATE OF TIPPERARY.—At the opening of the Nenagh Quarter Session, Mr. Sergeant Howley made the following reference to the change which has taken place in the conduct of the people of the county Tipperary:—"I rejoice to say that there is not now in her Majesty's dominions a better ordered population, or a more submissive people to the laws, than the inhabitants of the county Tipperary. A blessed change has taken place; crime has diminished—as the calendar before me attests—there being only forty-four cases for trial, whereas at the January sessions for this division of the county in years gone by, the cases sent up for the consideration of the grand jury might frequently be numbered by hundreds. Those on the present calendar are also of light description. Here, then, is a cause of congratulation."

THE SOUPERS IN GORT.—A few days ago three sinister-looking chaps, of the swaddling tribe, made their entrance into Gort, bringing with them a pot, kettle, chairs, tables, and other moveable articles of furniture. The trade must be going to the bad in Outerard and Castlekirk, when the evangelists are forced to migrate and settle down in a quarter where there is not a single pervert, and where their tricks are abhorred alike by Catholic and Protestant, who are living together on the best of terms. If these traffickeers on religion attempt to disturb the social unanimity which has hitherto prevailed amongst us they will not experience the same impunity here as in the desolate wilds of Connemara.—*Correspondent of Galway Packet.*

The weather in Dublin continues exceedingly severe and inclement, with snow, sleet, and rain, and occasionally a very cold temperature.

P. J. SMYTH.—We are rejoiced to welcome back to Ireland our friend, P. J. Smyth, one of the political exiles of '48. His public services in the Irish Confederation made him many attached friends, to whom his return will be pleasant news. And his last labors in Australia, in assisting the escape of Mr. Mitchell, furnish ample evidence that he has lost none of his courage or enthusiasm in exile. After a short visit to his family, Mr. Smyth will return to the United States.—*Nation.*

THE POLITICAL EXILES.—It is confidently boasted that one of the most prominent actors in the rebellion of '48, and who had fled to the land of stripes and stars before that memorable movement finally exploded in the widow's cabbage garden, was recently a visitor in Liverpool and London. Prior to his flight from Ireland, a reward of, I believe, £300, was offered for his apprehension by the Irish Government. A matrimonial speculation, it is said, led to this bold defiance of the home authorities.—*Times.*

STATE OF THE ACHILL MISSION.—To every observer visiting the Achill colony, the base and low craft that has been there practised must appear manifest. On entering that decayed establishment, he sees a muster made of the few half-starved, half-naked creatures who joined them when their temporal prospects were much more tempting than they are at present. By the ragged appearance of this ghastly group, an effort is made to excite his commiseration. He is next solicited for the relief of the *Destitute*, the *Orphans*, the *Agricultural Schools*, the *Church Indemnity Fund*, the *Aged and Infirm*, the *Industrial School*, &c.; and on his inquiring where these are established he is assured they are in contemplation, and that an effort is being made for bringing them into operation. On the following day he is sure to be conducted to one of the few schools on the Mission property; and every effort is made among the tenants of the property, by bribery and landlord intimidation, to induce them to send their children, at least for that day, to gratify the eye of the English visitor. On leaving this school-house, the teacher is privately instructed to have the self-same children conveyed by the nearest way, unnoticed, to the next school, to be a second time exhibited before the stranger. This wicked and diabolical traffic in human souls is, thanks to an all-merciful God, almost at an end. This I can prove from that vehicle of slander, the *Achill Herald*. By their own exaggerated report in 1849, the numbers attending their schools were 2,000 children. On the same authority this number was, in 1851, reduced to 800; and, from a letter which appeared in the last *Achill Herald*, purporting to have been written by Mr. Barker, Rector of Achill, it appears the number is now reduced to 300 children.—*Cor. of Tablet.*

It is stated in a letter, in *Thursday's Evening Post*, that of the 138 grand jurors who have served in the county of Cork for the last three years, only four were Catholics. Sir Timothy O'Brien, in an able document laid before the Town Council of Dublin, on Friday last, proved that in twenty-four counties in Ireland, the members of the Boards of Superintendence of Prisons amounted to 266: and of those 257 were Protestants, and nine Catholics—that the subordinates in those establishments numbered 449, of whom 380 were Protestants, and 62 Catholics!!!

A great triumph of genius, perseverance, and profound knowledge, on the part of an Irish student at Rome, appears in the *Cork papers*. We regret we must here only compress the account of it from the *Cork Examiner*, at the same time avowing that it must be one of the most wonderful books ever viewed by a "looker-on;" for, unless a man, as the preface truly says, possessed the powers of a mezzofanti, a polyglotist, *par excellence*, he could be, comparatively, but a spectator. This is the notice of the book to which we refer:—One of the most extraordinary and beautifully-executed specimens of calligraphy, that, perhaps, has ever proceeded from the pen, we have just had an opportunity of inspecting. It consists of the Lord's Prayer in one hundred and seventy-two languages and characters, to which have been added 56 alphabets, the whole in manuscript, which presents the appearance of some of the illuminated works of the laboring monks of the middle ages, in consequence of the use of different colored inks in each page. It has been compiled by Mr. Augustus Henry Keane, of the Propaganda in Rome, with the assistance of his fellow-students, though the largest, and by no means the share least creditable, as regards his attainments as a linguist, has been performed by himself. This young gentleman is the son of our respected fellow-citizen, James Keane, Esq., of *Affghan-house*, and he has, with exemplary filial piety dedicated his unique book to his parents. A work, more interesting to the philologist, or more elegantly finished, it is impossible to conceive.

POLITICAL AGITATION FORBIDDEN TO THE CATHOLIC PASTOR.—If there be any foundation for the rumors that have gained circulation and belief, in quarters likely to be well informed, we are just upon the eve of one of the most important events that has occurred in Irish politics for many years past. It has been so confidently stated, that we have no hesitation in giving publicity to the assertion, that a pre-emptory order either has been or will shortly be issued by the Holy See, prohibiting the priesthood in Ireland from taking any active or prominent part, for the future, in political matters. There are some who even go so far as to assert that the Archbishop of Dublin, in his capacity as Legate, or Apostolic Delegate, has already received instructions to communicate the wishes or commands of the Holy See, upon this subject, to the other Irish prelates who will have them only enforced amongst their subordinate clergy. We have no certain or authentic information on this subject, beyond the fact that the statement is believed by those whose opinions are of considerable weight. We give the rumor for whatever it may be worth. The reality will shortly be ascertained beyond all doubt. We may remark, however, that a statement appeared in the *Tablet* a few weeks back to the effect that representations were then being made to the Pope, respecting some alleged proceedings of the clergy, in connection with the last general election. We have since heard this interference attributed to a very eminent and exalted personage who is in Rome at present, and who is known to be so decidedly hostile to priests having anything to do with politics that he strictly forbade those under his own jurisdiction, and we believe under ecclesiastical penalties, to take any part in political agitation. In the absence of more decided information we refrain from all remark or commentary upon this alleged circumstances. But if the statement be true its importance in a political point of view can scarcely be exaggerated.—*Galway Packet.*

Mr. Baron Pennefather is rapidly recovering from his indisposition.

Mr. H. A. Herbert, M. P., is very generally spoken of as a successor to Mr. Sadleir as Junior Lord of the Treasury.

O'Byrne Redmond, Esq., of Killougher Hall, has been honored with the appointment of chamberlain to His Holiness Pope Pius IX.

CALLING OUT OF THE IRISH MILITIA.—A correspondent, writing from London, says:—"I have reason to believe that 20,000 of the Irish Militia will be enrolled, the same as the English, at the meeting of Parliament."—*Evening Mail.*

Frances Brown, the blind Irish ptefess, is in a state of pauperism in London.

Rise in Provisions.—The following statement appears in the *Cork Constitution*:—"Every article of agricultural produce has advanced and is advancing in price. On Thursday white wheat, home grown, was sold in the corn-market at the high figure of 44s. 3d. This may be considered a famine price, and every other article being proportionately high, the cost must bear heavily on persons whose means are small. For instance, barley is 19s. and oats 17s. per barrel. Hay is £4 per ton; straw is up to 50s. Carrots will bring 30s. per ton. These are the prices in the corn-market. In butter there has been a slight decline, but this is the only article that has not advanced. Fat cattle for market are also dear and scarce, the severity of the season being much against them. As much as £15 12s. was paid on Thursday for what would be considered a small cow, to be killed for the Grand Parade market. Sheep, too, are scarce, and high in price. £2 14s. each was offered and refused by a county Limerick gentleman for 50 sheep, from a lot of 150, and a Cork victualler had to purchase the whole number to get them at a lower figure. Should the weather become favorable, as far as beef and mutton are concerned, a decline in price is certain, the present being the season with graziers for fattening stock for market." From the western parts of Ireland the reports are of a similar tendency, prices of all kinds of provisions being steadily on the increase. In the county of Roscommon, especially the pressure is severely felt, and, as a consequence, the number of applicants for poor relief is daily becoming more formidable. The average price of oatmeal in that county is £16 per ton, and a still higher rate is anticipated.

MARITIME SCHOOL IN BELFAST.—It has been determined by the Commissioners of National Education to establish a maritime school in Belfast, in connection with the system of which they are the administrators.

EVICIONS AT CASTLEBAR.—A correspondent has informed us that numerous evictions have recently taken place at Castlebar, under very distressing circumstances. It is a melancholy thing to find that wanton and cruel extermination has vastly increased throughout every part of the country, but particularly in the West of Ireland, during the last twelve months.—*Galway Packet.*

THE YELLOW FEVER AT QUEENSTOWN.—The port of Cork is somewhat unfortunate of late. Its last piece of ill-luck is the arrival at Queenstown harbor of a Government transport, (the James), from Bermuda, with 50 convicts on board, among whom that awful pestilence, the yellow fever of the West Indies, had broken out. Two of the sufferers died on that morning. Two more have since been attacked, and were conveyed to the hospital at Spike, where one of them died, and by the latest accounts the other was not expected to survive. Accommodation has been provided for the other patients in Spike hospital.

The number of bridges carried away and damaged by the flood of the 2nd November over the entire of this country was 49, of which 28 were in the East Riding, and 21 in the West. Applications for presentments for their reconstruction and repair have already passed the sessions, and will be laid before the grand jury at the ensuing assizes. The expense of the entire will be under £10,000.—*Cork Constitution.*

FRIGHTFUL ACCIDENT.—On Thursday last an operative in the Belfast Iron Works, whilst sucking with his mouth the air out of a pipe through which molten iron was to pass—a usual custom in the process—he swallowed a portion of the melted mass, receiving terrible internal injuries. A hope exists of his ultimate recovery.

A MAD ASS.—On a recent occasion an ass, the property of a farmer near Nicholstown, was bitten by a mad dog. On Tuesday last he showed evident symptoms of hydrophobia, but the owner, not understanding what ailed him, took no notice of it. On Wednesday morning the ass' head was discovered very much swollen, and the animal in a savage state, having got loose, ran raging through the country, biting at everything that came in his way. He attacked a man, who only escaped by throwing his hat to him, which he tore in bits; he then ran along the road, and meeting a woman driving an ass, he seized the ass by the neck and cut him severely, he then pulled the tail-board out of the cart, and but for the timely interference of some men (who beat him off with stones) he would have dragged the woman from the cart. After several other wild antics, such as pulling a large iron plough along the road with his teeth, biting large stones, &c., he was shot by a gentleman living in the neighborhood.—*Tipperary Free Press.*

A dreadful shipwreck occurred in the gale of the 19th; the *Taylor*, a magnificent new iron ship, 2,000 tons, having struck and foundered in Dublin Bay, with the loss of 400 lives. The *Taylor*, Capt. Noble, left Liverpool on Thursday 19th, on her first voyage, with 670 persons on board, for Melbourne, Australia. About noon on Saturday, the ship being under reefed topsail, land was discovered close on the lee bow. Both anchors were let go, but they either dragged or the cables snapped, for the ship continued rapidly approaching land, and at length struck violently upon a rock called "the Nose of Lambay Island." Immediately after striking she turned broadside to the rock, and a number of passengers jumped ashore. She remained in this position only a few minutes when she slipped off and immediately sank, stern foremost, only the tops of her masts remaining above water. Only 240 succeeded in reaching the island, the remaining 330 went down with the ship. The captain, and third mate were saved. The second mate and surgeon with the wife and child of the latter, perished. Of the females on board only three women and two girls were saved. There had been several other casualties along the Irish coast.