

not had these advantages, and who, consequently, have not bestowed so much time on their religious system. However much the liberty of private judgment may flatter their pride, yet they ought not and they cannot overlook the opinions of men better able to judge than themselves, men who are teachers in their own church, men whose business it is to study religion, and whose early prejudices leave no room to suspect them of a leaning to Catholicity. The writer from whom we extract our materials, Esslinger, was formerly Protestant chaplain to the Swiss in Paris; he afterwards became the Catholic chaplain to the Swiss in the Pope's service. As an apology for his deserting Protestantism, and embracing Catholicity, he adduced the Protestant testimonies which form the basis of our articles.

Dr Munscher in his 'History of Dogma,' writes, "Near'y all the writers of the first age of the church, quote the so-called apocryphal books, and quote them in a manner that clearly makes it appear that they considered them of equal authority as the other books of the Bible. The Catholic church, then, can with reason boast of agreeing with antiquity regarding the canon of the Old Testament."

Bretschneider in his "Manual of Dogma," makes this honest confession: "Our Church did not chose to place them in the number of divine books, because the Catholic church found in them testimonies favorable to some of its dogma, as the mass and purgatory." This passage clearly shows that the Protestants, in the construction of their church, did not strive to build it on the model of antiquity. They first framed their belief, then turned overboard all ancient writers whom they could not bend or pervert to their sense. Luther pronounces St. James' Epistle a work of straw with as little concern as he called his friends hard names; and for no other reason than because it favored the Catholic doctrine of good works. This religious dictator seldom gave reason for his assertions, his word and his will, were law.

Stoer in his "Manual of Lutheran Evangelical Dogma," considers the apocryphal books as written by a special disposition of Providence, and destined to form a passage or bond between the Old and New Testament.

Plank in his "Words of Peace," justly observes; "It is unjust, and we allow ourselves to be dragged forward by the spirit of party, when we blame the Catholics with preventing the people from reading the Bible: that was the result of a simple measure of precaution, adopted at the time of the reform, when they thought themselves bound to prevent the translations of the sacred text into the vulgar tongue, many of which were incorrect and unfaithful, from being read indifferently by all. But since the falsification of the Word of God is no longer to be feared, the Catholics apply with zeal to the reading of the Bible." If the Catholics did not read the Bible we should not have so many hundred commentaries on it; if the Catholics were prohibited from reading it, so many thousand editions of it in every language would not have issued from

their press. — The perversions and party mistranslations of the Bible by the early pseudo reformers are notorious; some of their descendants of the present age are zealous followers in their track. In some places the text is corrupted to flatter the vanity of the natives among whom it is introduced; in others it is mistranslated through a gross ignorance of the text.

Augusti, after having quoted this observation of Plank, in his "Antiquities of the Catholic Church," adds: "For the rest we know that, since the middle of the 18th century, Catholic theologians have been very much divided as to the necessity and utility of an indiscriminate reading of the Bible by all persons." Locke was of a similar opinion; he considered the Bible a most unfit book to be put into the hands of children.

An anonymous writer in the "Literary Gazette," No. 48, March, 1821, observes, "The Bible is useless to him who does not understand it, and dangerous to him who understands it amiss. The most useful part of its contents may be extracted for the use of Christians in general. Otherwise they would not be able to read it without the aid of a scholar or a commentary to explain what they read. That the Bible is not a secure and sufficient means to put an end to controversy clearly appears from the fact that they who admit the Bible alone, and nothing but the Bible, always find in it that their side is right and their adversaries wrong."

"Hic liber est in quo sua quisque dogmata querit. Invenit et pariter dogmata quæque sua." \*

This is the admission of a Protestant writer, but any sensible man must avow the same. The number of varying commentaries written on the Bible is a sufficient proof of its difficulty. It is written in a language which is no longer in use; it describes the manners of a people who for nearly 2,000 years have ceased to exist as a nation; it refers to places whose situation and names have long since perished; so that it required more than an ordinary knowledge of geography, manners, customs, and language to be able to expound it. Then what version has he to select who does not understand the original text. It is translated into every language of the world, yet scarcely any two of these translations agree. In some languages perhaps more than a hundred versions have been made by different scholars at different times, and yet they are often diametrically opposite in sense. Again learned men are often at variance as to the reading of the original text from which these translations are made; for the ravages of time; carelessness, and malice have sometimes rendered it difficult to ascertain the correct reading. Yet this is the book which Protestants offer every man as the charter of his religion; you might as well offer a parchment well written in black letter to an illiterate peasant, he would understand one as well as the other.

And yet, parents, this is the book which the general education system insists on being put in the hands of your children. From the history of the wicked kings of Judah and Israel they have to learn morality, and

from a book which the learned can hardly understand, they have to make for themselves a religion, and that too so that the child, who is incapable of willing a few pounds, is yet old enough to form his religion from a difficult and obscure book, on which religion his happiness in this world and in the next has to depend for an eternity of weal or of woe. Parents!—pause before you plunge your children into these inextricable difficulties.

TOXOTES.

ENGLAND—IF CATHOLIC.

To the Editor of the Orthodox Journal.

DEAR SIR.—Allow me to address you upon a subject that ought ever to be dear to our hearts, that ought frequently to engross our deepest thoughts and aspirations, and form a part in our daily supplications before the throne of mercy—I mean the conversion of our beloved country. Oh! even the mere sound of such a blessing, the mere idea of such a glorious event is sufficient to awaken in our minds thoughts and feelings that language cannot express; for if we could but see that "which many kings and prophets have desired to see, and have not seen;" if England once more returned to the faith of her fathers,—by which she became of old so great, so glorious and free—by which she deserved to be styled an "Island of Saints," then would joy inexpressible fill our hearts, and gladly should we exclaim with holy Simeon, "Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine secundum verbum tuum in pace."

But when shall this blessed day break upon us as the morning rising? How shall that be finally accomplished after which we have so long sighed, and for which many true Catholic hearts still mourn apart? We know not, neither doth it become us to dive into the deep secrets of God, who has reserved to himself the times and seasons. We may, however, with truth assert, that the day of vengeance has nigh passed away; that the Almighty has, therefore, heard the tears and groans of his children for the restoration of the beauty of his house, for the building up of the places that have been made desolate. † We humbly trust, then, "that the stone which hath been moved will continue to roll on without power of control: that the waters which have been set in motion will remain agitated, even if the breeze that first stirred them shall droop; that the seed which hath been cast will spring up, even though the lower should endeavour to stir it up. Yes! the stone which covered the tomb of England's old and true religion I would fain believe that an angel's hand hath rolled away, that like his Lord and Spouse, she, too, may arise triumphant: and splendid, to reign for ever." ‡ But whether

\* "All indistinctly apprehend a bliss On which the soul may rest, the hearts of all Yearn after it, and to that wished bourn All strive to bend."—Dante *Purg.*

† Prostrata nuper ecclesia rursus exurgit, et Bajore gloria templum Dei quod ab impiis fuerat eversum, misericordia Domini fabricatum. . . . Nunc post tantæ tempestatis violentos turbines, placidus aer et optata lux refulsit. Nunc placarus servorum suorum Deus jacentes et afflictos, celesti auxilio sublevavit." (Lactantius "De Morte Persecut." Preface.) See also St. Cyprian, *Liber de Lapsis*, cap. i.

‡ Dr. Wiseman. "Sermon preached at the solemn dedication of the cathedral church of St. Chad," page 15.

the church be destined to conquer by might and to scatter her enemies like chaff before the wind, as she did her pagan persecutors of old, when God raised up a "horn of salvation" that struck the proud one and wounded the dragon; whether to win by her native loveliness, or to invite by her virgin dignity; whether she will break forth on a sudden upon the world in glory and majesty, as the sun when it was first created; or whether, in fine, she be destined gradually her many wondrous excellencies to unfold—of all these things we know nothing. God alone knoweth, and in His own good time they will be manifested unto us. Our duty is to wait with patience, and to endeavour humbly to correspond with the daily manifestations of his mercy towards us. Of this truth, however, we may be assured, that the day will dawn, when his church shall appear like a bride prepared for her spouse—glorious, and sweet, and heavenly unto those that shall gaze upon her.

Oh if England could but once more become Catholic—be restored to that faith in which her noblest kings and valiant warriors went forth, "conquering that they might conquer," in which her renowned statesmen lived and died; then how different would this unhappy and distracted land be from what it is now! "Yes! beloved land—land twice converted—too far to be for ever lost, thou art still dear to all thy sons, but doubly so to such as lament thy sad destiny. Thy sweet meadows would then cover themselves with the enamel of flowers, to grace the progress of thy Saviour in the sacrament of the altar; thy solemn woods would give shelter to the lonely hermit, and thy bright streams would yield refreshment to the tabernacles of the just; then thy gardens would give roses to scatter before the adorable sacrifice, and thy towns and hamlets would send forth their cheerful youth—children as fair as the race of primal creatures—to commence their flowry sprinkling. Thou art still a noble instrument, though now mute or discordant. Ignorant and unskillful hands have played upon thee till they broke thee into a thousand parts; but, thus broken and disarranged, let but the master arise who can revive the Catholic chord, and thou wilt again send forth the sweetest music."\*

These observations are as just as they are beautiful; for what was England before she fell away from her ancient faith? What she was then she may be again, provided only that religion be once more embraced which alone made her great. Do we read that there were those many jarring sets that now tear in pieces the seamless garment of Christ, and battle for it like a Roman mob, that estimated their glory by the desolation they had made and the numbers they had slain? No, for the church being necessarily one, all her children were one in faith and doctrine; all seemed to have but one heart and soul, even as the first Christians had. Hence dissensions in matters of faith were effectually guarded against; and whenever, through man's natural pride or obstinacy, they arose in the church, the individuals,

\* Digby. "More's Catholics," vol. i, p. 26.