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## THE CATHOLIC.

Hamilton, G. D.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4.

From the Dublin Review.

- ART. II.—1. The Standard of Catholicity, or an attempt to point out in a plain manner certain safe and leading principles amidst the conflicting opinions by which the Church is at present agitated. By the Rev. G. E. Biber, L. L. D.
2. Dr. Biber's Standard of Catholicity Vindicated, being a reply to the notice of that work contained in No. 57 of the British Critic.
3. An Appeal in behalf of Church Government, addressed to the Prelates and Clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland: being remarks on the Debate in the House of Lords respecting that subject, on the 26th of May, 1840. By a Member of the Church.
4. A Letter to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ripon, upon the State of Parties in the Church of England.—By Walter Farquhar Hook, D.D., Vicar of Leeds.
5. Catechetical Instructions of the Doctrines and Worship of the Catholic Church. By John Lingard D.D.

In looking over a late number of an eminent quarterly publication, we found it stated in an article upon the present condition of Ireland, that certain persons in this country had been "converted from Popery to the Catholic Church."

As we ourselves, like all other Irish Papists, had always been under the impression that the Church of which the pope is the visible head upon earth, was the Catholic Church, we were not a little puzzled in our endeavours to conceive what the nature of the "conversion" could be. As, however, the writer was engaged at the time in the discussion of an Irish question, we imagined that according to the popular notions about Irish composition, he may perhaps have considered himself at liberty to designate as a conversion what to us appeared to be a movement *ab eodem ad eundem*. We very soon, however, observed that by the "Catholic Church" he intended to denote a certain *globus individuorum*, who, in their aggregate capacity, are in some public documents called "The United Protestant Established Church of England and Ireland;" and the nature of whose faith is correctly indicated by a negative designation, which intimates that there are some doctrines against which they "protest," without suggesting that there are any which they believe. That this fortuitous course of individuals were what the writer in question intended to designate as the "Catholic Church," was put entirely out of controversy by another passage, in which he stated that "a second class of evils in Ireland were those which arise from the conflict between the old Catho-

lic Reformed Church and the schismatic intruders of Popery."

Having some very strong doubts in our own minds about the propriety of applying the term "Catholic" to a Protestant establishment, in any sense which we ourselves had ever attributed to the term Catholic—believing, in fact, according to what we supposed to be the universal acceptance of that particular adjective, that there was no more propriety in calling the Church of England in Ireland the Catholic Church, than in calling a jack-napes a megatherion, or in calling a barrel of oysters a barrel of whales—we next began to suppose that the writer of the article may have had in his own mind, and in connexion with the word Catholic, some notions different from those entertained by ourselves, and as he stated in another part of the article that this "Catholic Reformed Church" of his had been lolling in a state of absolute idleness and inutility "from the Reformation to the year 1824," we imagine it to be possible that by a "Catholic church" he may have intended to denote a church which "throughout the whole" of its unprofitable existence had neglected the performance of every one of the duties which it was paid for performing—and that a "Catholic church," in the sense of this writer, was therefore a church which had continued for three centuries to obtain money under false pretences. In this respect, however, we were also mistaken; for in another part of the article we discovered a formal definition of the sense in which the term Catholic was used by the writer himself,— "Do men know," says he, "the meaning of the word Catholic? It means universal," (p. 133.) Having our doubts about the application of the term now completely removed, and having our minds enlightened by the learned author as to the real meaning of the word itself, we began to consider the matter in a totally different point of view, and to think that the writer in question had been dealing in those particular figures of speech called mendacium and amphibologia, concerning the nature of which amiable sorts of rhetorical artifice he had given some exemplifications of a practical character in the course of the article in question.

Upon extending our perusal to some other publications, we find that this reviewer is not at all singular in his manner of applying the word in question, and that a sort of loose combination has been formed amongst a numerous body of individual Protestant writers, to drop the Protestantism of their designation and assert the "Catholicity" of what Cobbett used to call "the Church of England as by law and bayonets established." How far the writers in question are justified in this "turn out" against the authority of grammar, analogy, common right, and common sense, we shall now proceed to enquire.

In the course of the observations which we shall have to make upon this subject, we shall rigorously abstain from entering upon the confines of polemical theology. For this prudent abstemiousness one very sufficient reason is, that we who indite this present article are not in any way

professionally connected with that science, and that the extent of our acquaintance with it is no greater than that share of theological knowledge which usually enters into what is called a liberal education. Another equally sufficient reason for abstaining from polemics upon the present occasion, is, that the subject which we are about to handle is in its own essence of an entirely different nature from every thing theological, and that it has, in fact, less connection with the science of theology than it has with geography, arithmetic, or statistics. The question is, in fact, of the simplest possible description, and as abundant materials exist for a satisfactory decision of it, "we hope," as they say in the little prefaces, "to render the merits of it intelligible to the meanest capacity."

In the course of this enquiry we shall take the liberty of making frequent use of the pamphlet of which the title stands third in order at the head of this article. The pamphlet bears evident marks of having been brought out under the actual inspection, or at least with the entire approbation, of an eminent archbishop of the Establishment; and presents within a moderate compass the most copious and authentic account that can be anywhere found of the present condition of the Church of England in respect to its doctrine and discipline;—to the actual principles and dispositions of its most important members, and the probable permanence of the establishment itself.

To begin at the beginning. If the reader will take the trouble (if he should think it necessary) to refer to the Lexicon of our old friend Schrevelius, he will see it stated in the proper place, upon the authority of that famous Gymnasiarch, that the Greek word *Katholikos* is equivalent to the Latin *Universalis*. By the term Catholic, then, it seems, that we are to understand the notion of universality in reference to numerical or geographical extension. But as it does not appear that any church professes to have as yet completely arrived at this universality, we suppose that a church which can have any pretence to a Catholic designation, must have made the nearest approximation to this universality—that her doctrines are professed over the most extensive territory and believed by the greatest amount of actual votaries. Now, it appears from the statistics of Adrian Balbi, as quoted in *Blackwood's Magazine* for May, 1838, that upon the whole surface of the globe there are 737 millions of persons, and that of these there are 290 millions who profess the Christian religion. Of the 290 millions of Christians, no less than 130 millions are cherished in the warm bosom of the Roman Catholic church: 62 millions are included under the Greek denomination, and are distinguished from the Roman Catholics by few points except of discipline alone; whilst there are only 59 millions of persons all over the world who profess the negative doctrines of Protestantism, in all the chromatical and contradictory varieties of infallible dissent. In endeavoring to ascertain how many of these 59 millions belong to the church of England, we have experienced no small difficulty

and embarrassment. The first matter to be enquired into, was the existence and situation of the authority which was to characterise the members of the church of England, by deciding that such and such persons professed to entertain the doctrines of that church, and that such others did not. Upon this point we were immediately met by a statement in the "Appeal," that "the church of England (unlike every other religious communion) possessed within itself no power of determining claims to membership." [p. 64.] But, indeed, not only were we unable to ascertain who are the members of this church, but we were, and are, unable even to discover, with any approximation to a certainty, what her distinctive doctrines are, or whether she has any distinctive doctrines, or, indeed, any positive doctrines at all. Eleven or twelve hundred gentlemen who have been ordained in that establishment, and who still profess to range themselves under its banners, and who are, perhaps, the most learned, zealous, pious, and influential members of the whole body, have notoriously "incurred a widely-diffused suspicion; have fallen under a very general imputation of un-church-of-England opinions." [Appeal, p. 71.] Yet these identical persons, although heretical themselves, were able to "cause an assembly of divines to meet very lately in Oxford, and to pronounce a verdict of condemnation for heresy against no less a person than the Regius Professor of Theology in that university." (Ibid. pp 68-71.) This assembly, however, as we are told upon high authority, had no power at all to interfere in the case, and, accordingly, the archiepiscopal author of the *Appeal* declares, "that their whole proceedings were utterly schismatical; that the trial itself was *coram non judice*, and the decision of no authority whatever in form or in fact." (p. 114.) "The professor condemned as heretical remained, and continues to remain to this hour, in the university, in the possession of his theological office, and as fully as ever authorised to give theological instruction to any student who may think proper to seek it." (p. 69.) The author of the *Appeal* informs us that the disciples of the school of which we are speaking have increased, and are increasing. The augmentation of their numbers hath not, however, been sufficient to protect them against the same sort of treatment which they had themselves bestowed upon the object of their hostility. One of the most important in their series of theological publications was condemned in the present year by the hebdomadal Board of the University, consisting of the vice-chancellor, heads of houses, and proctors. But a writer in the *Times* (17th March) informed the world that the Board had no authority, even from the statutes of the University, to represent, upon such a subject, even the University itself, much less the whole church establishment of England. Whilst Dr. Hook, whose name is reported to be the very first upon the list of Sir Robert Peel for a bishoprick, declares, (Letter, p. 4.) "that the determination of the hebdomadal board to censure Mr. Newman was a most unhappy determination, and that a convocation of the university, if summoned