





THE
RULE OF FAITH.

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THE RULE OF FAITH.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF CHICHESTER, JUNE 13, 1838,

AT THE

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF THE RIGHT REVEREND

WILLIAM,

LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER.

BY

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TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

WILLIAM, LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER,

AND TO THE CLERGY,

THIS SERMON

IS INSCRIBED, BY

THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT AND BROTHER,

H. E. M.

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A FEW paragraphs, which were omitted in preaching, because they would have occupied too long a time, are now printed, and included in brackets.

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S E R M O N.

GALATIANS i. 8, 9.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

THE specific kind of false teaching, condemned in this awful sentence, was the doctrine of the Judaizing heretics, who preached the necessity of circumcision as well as of faith in Christ. This intermediate system of compromise was partly devised by men who, being Jews by birth, still clung to the Mosaic law; and partly by men of a corrupt and subtle mind, who shrank from the persecution of the Jewish zealots.

It would seem also, that even the Gnostic heretics, although themselves of Gentile birth, and uninitiated into Judaism, enforced nevertheless the necessity of circumcision. The reason of which St. Paul intimates, “If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet

suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the cross ceased," (ver. 11). They thought to make faith in Christ a passport to reigning, and circumcision a talisman against suffering with Him.

Let all such, writes St. Paul, be cut off from the body of Christ. Yea, "though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel, beside that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

It appears that the Judaizing teachers quoted the authority of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, who, as they alleged, did not prohibit circumcision. "Observe the wisdom of the Apostle: lest any man should say, that he vaingloriously harped upon his own doctrines, he anathematizes also himself. And whereas the heretics betook themselves to authorities, as James and John, he therefore brings in angels also. Tell me not, he says, of James and John, for though the corrupter of the Gospel be one of the foremost angels of heaven, let him be accursed¹."

Surely this apostolic sentence was not uttered against one isolated error, or against the wilful heretic, or for the first times of the Church alone, but, like the Gospel which it guards with its awful condemnation, is everlasting. We may no more swerve from the pure faith of Christ's Gospel, and be held guiltless, than the fickle Galatian, or the inflated Gnostic. And though *wilful* heresy be the blacker

¹ S. Chrysostom in loc.

sin, yet the doctrinal errors of the cold earthly mind, of the indolent and unconcerned heart, much more of the self-wise incredulous intellect, have their graduated measures, and those not small, of positive moral guilt. And, besides the sinful temper of mind producing the error, the pernicious effects which the error in turn produces on the flock of Christ, involve the ministers of the Church, in all ages, in the peril of condemnation.

[And the danger of erring from the purity of the Gospel can be no less now than then. For we have not the inspired servants of our Lord to bear a living and personal witness to the mind of the Holy Ghost. The churches of Christendom, at this day, can hope for no epistle from an Apostle of Christ, to recall them from errors, or to warn them of apostasy. And besides, in those early days, when the Gentile philosophies lay in dark and defined outlines on the earth, and the morning light of Christ's Gospel had suddenly broken forth from the decaying shrine of God's elder Church; and, after pouring for a while a flood of brightness through the courts and porches of the temple, had gathered itself up, as the glory in the prophet's vision, and gone abroad into the earth, leaving its former tabernacle a rent and blackening ruin; surely, when the schools of human reasoning and the dispensations of God, the one lingering beyond its time, the other just new-born, were so distinctly marked, without mixture, or confusion, or

approach, and even where there should have been affinity, a most unnatural strife, we might have thought that among systems so distinct there would be little danger of contagious familiarity. But now, though the strife for mastery has long since passed into the triumph of the Gospel, and Judaism has been branded with the stigma of crucifying the Lord of glory, and heathen philosophy has sworn the oath of fealty, and entered as a subject and a tributary within the precincts of the Church, a thousand heresies and false traditions have been broached within the fold of Christ, of which the earliest indeed were at once thrown out by a vigorous effort of her then healthful and united system¹, but the later have been

¹ St. Augustin records by name eighty-eight heretical sects, which at his day were condemned and notorious; adding, that he was conscious of omitting many more, and had not access to books in which others were enumerated. *Liber de Hæresibus*, §. 1. The Arians are the forty-ninth in St. Augustin's list. Mr. Palmer states that "more than sixty heresies were suppressed before the synod of Nice." *Treatise on the Church*, ii. 134. Thorndike says, "The Church was, from the beginning, by virtue of the perpetual intelligence and correspondence settled and used between the parts of it, a standing synod, even when there was no assembly of persons authorized to consent in behalf of their respective Churches." *Epilogue*, b. i. ch. 21. This fact is of the first importance, because it refutes a very dangerous misinterpretation of St. Paul's words, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work," 2 Thess. ii. 7; which are used by every sect, in turn, to asperse that part of the primitive doctrine which most severely condemns their peculiar errors. The object of such a

absorbed into some parts at least of her broken and languid frame, exasperating deeper still the original disease, as morbid humours grow inwardly inveterate, where there is not vigour to expel them. And besides all this, the overgrown and dangerous authority, arising even from the learning and holiness of individual fathers and teachers, of earlier and later days, has been rendered, in divers times and Churches, irresistible by schisms which both spring from and foster false opinions, and again divide men into still smaller sections, easily controlled, and deluded further by a succession of inferior leaders. When all these things are weighed together, and withal it is remembered, that, at this day, the churches of Christ on earth stand arrayed in a

course it is hard to conjecture, except it be "to leave nothing unsuspected that can be presumed upon the consent of the Church." The greatest, indeed the only ultimate, gainer by such an argument, must be the Socinian or the Deist. "The mystery of iniquity," whether understood of Nero (S. Chrys. in loc.) and heathen persecution, or of heresies (S. Cyril. Hieros. Cat. xv. 9. Theodoret in loc.), was working *without* and *around* the Church, and *within* it only so long as *undiscovered*. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us," 1 St. John ii. 19; or if they did not spontaneously go out, they were thrust out and branded with the name of the heresiarch. See Thorndike, Epilogue, b. i. ch. 23. Hammond, dissert. de Antichristo, c. ix.

miserable hostility, the East against the West, and the West against itself, and that every particular church has both its gainsayers without, and its conflicting teachers within, and that ourselves, my reverend brethren, are not inspired servants of our Lord, but weak men, easy to be swayed by intellectual prejudices, or to be overcome by moral faults, we may well shrink as we hear, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

As teachers of Christ's flock, we are invested with an office for which we can hardly think him fit that feels not his own unfitness. What singleness of heart; what freedom from hidden bias; what faithfulness to light already given; what diligent, thirsting study of Holy Scripture; what teachable regard to the aids which God in His providence has ordained; what fervent prayer for the leading of His heavenly grace; and, through all, what a pure and stern love of truth need we have to fulfil the work of an evangelist.]

Perhaps there is none whose anxious sense of responsibility has been sharpened by the charge of souls, and has not sometimes felt the harassing of a doubtful mind on great and weighty points of doctrine and interpretation. When we are pressed by the incredulity and cavilling of disputatious men, we cannot at once shake off an undefined feeling, that the light of truth, in passing to us through so great

a distance, and a medium of such various density, in the several ages of the Church, may be variously refracted, and therefore the outline also presented to us vary from the figure of the Gospel, when it rose full-orbed upon the earth; and that particular doctrines may so have lost, as evening shadows, their original proportions, lengthening as they fall about us, on whom the ends of the world are come. And at such a time, perhaps, the mind has felt about, happily it might find some *rule* by which to measure the proportions of the faith, and to ascertain, from the shadows we see, what is the true form of the realities they indicate.

I do not mean now to inquire what are the specific *doctrines* of the Gospel, but what is the *rule* by which we may ascertain them. Is there any principle, to guide us in our search after the truths of revelation, analogous to the principles of science, or the rules of moral reasoning? Such a rule there must be, unless the knowledge of the Gospel be revealed over and over again, from age to age, to churches and to individuals, immediately, as in the beginning: that is, unless the faith once delivered to the saints is, by the same supernatural communication, still being perpetually delivered to the saints. And if so, then is it a perpetual inspiration of men and churches: for in what does inspiration consist, but in the immediate teaching of the human mind? But if there be now no such inspiration; if the Holy

Spirit teaches us, not without means, but through means, what are the means ordained for that end, and on what principle are they to be used? And the answer will give us the rule we seek.

I. The institution of the Church, and the delivery of the Holy Sacraments and Scriptures, are a sufficient proof of the *kind* of dispensation, and of the media through which it has pleased God to perpetuate and to dispense the knowledge of His truth; and, as to the *principle of using* them, we begin at once by appealing to *the Holy Scriptures as the one sole foundation and proof of the faith*. We believe in the sufficiency of Holy Scripture for salvation, not upon any argument *à priori* drawn from our conceptions of what God would do for the safe keeping of the Faith¹, (though that might raise a presumption of the fact;) nor upon any attempted judgment of our minds respecting the doctrines there made known to us; (which judgment, as all our knowledge of those doctrines is derived from the very book we would so judge of, revolves in a circle, and must be wholly inconclusive;) but upon the same constant, unanimous witness on which we receive the sacred books; from which, also, we learn what is genuine, what authentic, and what pure in the writings of the Apostles of Christ. And that witness

¹ Bishop Butler has completely exposed the fallacy of all such reasonings. Analogy, part ii. chap. 3.

declares to us that the Holy Scripture is “the one perfect instrument of God¹,” perfect, that is, both in harmony and compass; “the most true rule of doctrine²;” “the even and true balance;” “the mirror without a flaw³;” “the healing medicine of the soul.” “For in those things,” we are told, “which are openly set in Scripture, is to be found every thing that contains the faith and practice of life⁴.”

“If we will thus search the Scriptures, not barely but with accuracy, we shall be able to attain our salvation: if we will continually dwell upon them, we shall know both the right rule of doctrine, and

¹ Speaking of the harmony of the Scriptures, of the Law, the Prophets, and Apostles, Origen goes on to say, ἔν γάρ τὸ τέλειον οἶδε καὶ ἡρμωσμένον ὄργανον τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι πᾶσαν τὴν γραφήν, μίαν ἀποτελοῦν ἐκ διαφόρων φθόγγων σωτήριον τοῖς μανθάνειν ἐθέλουσι φωνήν.—Orig. in Matthæum fragm. è 2do tomo, ed. Ben.

² Et malum quidem est invenire aliquem secundum mores vitæ errantem, multo autem pejus arbitrator esse, in dogmatibus aberrare, et non secundum *verissimam regulam Scripturarum* sentire. Id. in Matth., Tract. xxvii.

³ Solent enim isti etiam hoc dicere, pensantes ea non in *staterâ æquâ* divinarum Scripturarum, sed in *staterâ dolosâ* consuetudinum suarum. Sed ideo tanquam sincerissimum speculum proposita hominibus oracula cœlestium paginarum, ut, &c. S. Aug. contra Ep. Parmeniani, lib. iii. c. ii. 9; also De Baptismo contra Donatistas, lib. ii. c. vi. 9.

⁴ In iis enim quæ aperte in Scripturis posita sunt, inveniuntur illa omnia quæ continent fidem, moresque vivendi, spem scilicet atque caritatem. S. Aug. de doctrinâ Christianâ, lib. ii. c. ix.

the most exact practice of life ¹.” “² Hold fast, moreover in your minds this seal (*i. e.* the faith), which is now recited to you cursorily, and in a summary; but, if the Lord permit, shall be declared to you according to my power, with proof from the Scriptures. For we may not deliver ever so small a thing concerning the divine and holy mysteries of the Faith without Holy Scripture, nor be carried away by mere plausible and artificial reasonings. Do not simply believe me, who tell you these things, except you receive proof of what I declare unto you, from the Divine Scrip-

¹ Ἄν οὕτω τοίνυν θέλωμεν τὰς γραφὰς ἐρευνᾶν μετὰ ἀκριβείας καὶ μὴ ἀπλῶς, δυνησόμεθα τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐπιτυχεῖν· ἂν διὰ παντὸς αὐταῖς ἐνδιατριβώμεν, καὶ δογμάτων ὀρθότητα, καὶ βίον εἰσόμεθα ἠκριβωμένον. S. Chrys. Hom. in S. Joan. liii. (al. lii.) 3. Ed. Ben.

² Ταύτην ἔχε τὴν σφραγίδα ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ σου πάντοτε, ἥτις νῦν μὲν κατὰ ἀνακεφαλαίωσιν ἀκροθιγῶς σοὶ εἴρηται, εἰ δὲ παράσχοι ὁ Κύριος, μετὰ τῆς ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν ἀποδείξεως κατὰ δύναμιν ῥηθήσεται. Δεῖ γὰρ περὶ τῶν θείων καὶ ἀγίων τῆς πίστεως μυστηρίων, μηδὲ τὸ τυχόν ἄνευ τῶν θείων παραδίδοσθαι γραφῶν· καὶ μὴ ἀπλῶς πιθανότησι καὶ λόγων κατασκευαῖς παραφέρεσθαι. μηδὲ ἐμοὶ τῶ ταῦτά σοι λέγοντι ἀπλῶς πιστεύσης, εἰάν τὴν ἀπόδειξιν τῶν καταγγελλομένων ἀπὸ τῶν θείων μὴ λάβῃς γραφῶν. ἡ σωτηρία γὰρ αὕτη τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν, οὐκ ἐξ εὐρεσιλογίας, ἀλλὰ ἐξ ἀποδείξεως τῶν θείων ἐστὶ γραφῶν. S. Cyril. Hieros. Cat. iv. 17.

The Editor, Touttée, rightly confines this to the Creed or Symbol, but incorrectly describes the Creed, as if it were a statement of the doctrine of the Trinity alone (Dissert. de Doctr. S. Cyr. c. xiii. p. 245). Cyril has been speaking of the whole *οἰκονομία*, including the future judgment. Cat. iv. vii.—xv.

tutes. For this salvation, which is by our belief, is not derived from inventions of men, but from proof of the Divine Scriptures.”

“The canon of the Scriptures is perfect, and is for all things abundantly sufficient to itself¹.”

“Those other things which they invent, and frame at will, as if from some tradition of the Apostles, without the authority and testimony of the Scriptures, the sword of God smites².”

Such was their cardinal rule, which may be found in a multitude of express declarations; and in still many more, as the axiom pre-supposed³, or the pre-

¹ Hic forsitan requirat aliquis; *cum sit perfectus Scripturarum canon, sibi que ad omnia satis superque sufficiat*, quid opus est, ut ei Ecclesiasticæ intelligentiæ jungatur auctoritas? Quia videlicet Scripturam Sacram pro ipsâ suâ altitudine, non uno eodemque sensu universi accipiunt, sed ejusdem eloquia aliter atque aliter, alius atque alius interpretatur; ut penè quot homines sunt, tot illinc sententiæ erui posse videantur. Vincent. Lirin. Commonit. ii.

² S. Hieron. in Aggeum, c. i. 11. (quoted by Bishop Taylor in the Dissuasive, &c.) “Sed et alia quæ, absque auctoritate et testimoniis Scripturarum, quasi traditione apostolicâ sponte reperiunt atque confingunt (hæretici scil.), percutit gladius Dei.”

³ Per fidem enim ambulamus, non per speciem; titubabit autem fides, si divinarum Scripturarum vacillat auctoritas. S. Aug. de Doctr. Christianâ, lib. i. c. xxxvii. See also S. Basil. de Fide, tom. ii. pp. 223-4. Ed. Ben. ὥστε καὶ γὰρ, ἅπερ ἔμαθον ἐκ τῆς θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς, ταῦτα ὑμῖν παραθέσθαι κατὰ τὸ ἀρέσκον Θεῷ, πρὸς τὸ κοινῇ συμφέρον, ὀφειλέτης εἰμί εἰπὼν ἃ ἐδιδάχθην παρὰ τῆς θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς· φειδόμενος μὲν καὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων

mise suppressed, because known and allowed of all. And the reason of this principle they give likewise. "God did not converse with Noah, and Abraham, and his sons, or with Job and Moses, by writing, but finding them clean of heart, [He spake to them] by Himself. But after that the whole Hebrew people fell into the very depth of wickedness, thenceforth they had need of writings and tables, and of the remembrance which these supply. And this, we may observe, fell out not with the saints of the old covenant alone, but with those of the new also. For God did not give to the Apostles any thing in writing, but, in the stead of writing, He promised to give the gifts of the Spirit. 'For,' He saith, 'He shall bring all things to your remembrance.' And that ye may learn that this was far more excellent, hear what He saith by the Prophet: 'I will make a new covenant with you, putting my laws in their minds, and in their hearts will I write them,' and 'they shall all

καὶ ῥημάτων ἐκείνων, ἃ λέξει μὲν αὐταῖς οὐκ ἐμφέρεται τῇ θείᾳ γραφῇ, διάνοιάν γε μὴν τὴν ἐκείνην ἐγκειμένην τῇ γραφῇ διασώζει φανερὰ ἔκπτωσις πίστεως καὶ ὑπερηφανίας κατηγορία, ἣ ἀθετεῖν τι τῶν γεγραμμένων, ἢ ἐπεισάγειν τῶν μὴ γεγραμμένων καὶ τοῦ ἀποστόλου ἐν ὑποδείγματι ἀνθρωπίνῳ σφοδρότερον ἀπαγορεύοντος τὸ προσθεῖναι ἢ ὑφελεῖν τι ἐν ταῖς θεοπνεύστοις γραφαῖς." *i. e.* Gal. iii. 15.

Although St. Basil is speaking of the Creed, yet the tone is very different from that which contends for the sufficiency of unwritten tradition.

be taught of God.' And Paul, setting forth their pre-eminence, said, that they had received a law, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart. But after that, in the course of time, men made shipwreck, some about doctrines, and some about [the rule of] life and manners, there was need again of the remembrance which writings afford. . . .

“In the old law, indeed, when Moses had gone up [into the mount], GOD came down. But now, seeing that our nature hath been exalted unto the heavens, or rather to the royal throne, the Spirit descends. And these tables are better far than those, and the deeds of righteousness more glorious. For the Apostles came not down, as Moses from the mount, bearing tables of stone in their hands; but, carrying about the Spirit in their minds, and pouring forth a treasure and fountain of doctrines, and gifts of grace, and of all good things, so went they everywhere, themselves being living volumes, and laws through grace. Thus they drew to them the three thousand, and the five thousand, and the nations of the world, God speaking by their tongues to all that drew nigh; by whom also Matthew, being filled with the Spirit, wrote his Scriptures¹.”

Here we see the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament shown to be parallel in their end and design, and of a like office and perfection; to which nothing may be added, and from which nothing can

¹ S: Chrys. Procem. in S. Matt.

be taken away; and also the preaching and writing of the Apostles are asserted to be of equal fulness, and sufficiency to life and doctrine. Again, "For we have not learned the dispensation of our salvation from any others, than those by whom the Gospel came to us; which at that time, indeed, they preached, but afterwards by the will of God delivered to us in writings, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith¹."

Thus, they believed and taught that the apostolic Scriptures, afterwards written, so fully contained the doctrine of salvation as to be for ever the fixed witness and representative of the *apostolic preaching*. And thus they would say, "Thou hast the oracles of God; no man teaches thee as they teach: listen, I pray you, all ye of the laity, and purchase the books which are the medicines of the soul. If ye will have no others, yet at the least purchase the New Testament—the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospels; those perpetual teachers²."

And so their greatest and wisest were wont to say, "What more shall I teach thee than that which

¹ Non enim per alios dispositionem salutis nostræ cognovimus, quam per eos per quos Evangelium pervenit ad nos: quod quidem tunc præconiaverunt, postea vero per Dei voluntatem in Scripturis nobis tradiderunt fundamentum et columnam fidei nostræ futurum.—S. Iren. lib. iii. c. 1. Irenæus probably wrote *διαραγήν*, (as in Gal. iii. 19, and Acts vii. 53. Suicer, Thesaur. in voc.) which the Latin interpreter has rendered "dispositionem."

² S. Chrys. in Ep. ad Coloss. Hom. ix. 1.

we read in the Apostles' writings? for holy Scripture fixes the rule of our teaching. 'Let us not dare to be wise above what we ought to be.' Far be it, therefore, from me to teach thee anything else, save only to expound to thee the teacher's words, and to discuss these things which the Lord has delivered ¹."

"After this, as is his (St. Paul's) manner, he affirms what he had said, from the Holy Scriptures, and at the same time sets an example to the teachers of the Church, that they ought not to advance, in their addresses to the people, doctrines taken up at their own private opinion, but fortified by divine testimonies. For if he that was himself such, and so great an apostle, does not think the authority of his own words enough, except he teach that the things he speaks are written in the law and the prophets, how much more ought we, who are of all the least, to observe this, that in our teaching we bring forth not our own, but the sense of the Holy Spirit ²."

¹ Quid ego amplius te doceam, quam id quod apud Apostolum legimus? Sancta enim Scriptura nostræ doctrinæ regulam figit, "Ne audeamus sapere plus quam oportet sapere," sed "sapiamus," ut ipse ait, "ad temperantiam, sicut unicuique Deus partitus est mensuram fidei." Non sit ergo mihi aliud te docere nisi verba tibi doctoris exponere, et de iis quod Dominus dederit disputare. S. Aug. de Bono Viduit. c. i.

² Post hæc vero, ut ei moris est, de Scripturis Sanctis vult affirmare quod dixerat: simul et doctoribus Ecclesiæ præbet ex-

And as a last witness, “Wherefore [if any shall declare unto you any thing] concerning Christ and His Church, or concerning any other thing which pertains to your faith and life—I will not say if we, who are no way to be compared to him that said ‘though we,’ but altogether what he went on to add, ‘If an angel from heaven shall declare unto you any thing, besides what ye have received in the *Scriptures of the Law and the Gospel*, let him be accursed¹.’”

And, therefore, the Church of England, almost in

emplum, ut ea quæ loquuntur ad populum, non propriis præsumpta sententiis, sed divinis munita testimoniis proferant. Si enim ipse tantus ac talis apostolus auctoritatem dictorum suorum sufficere posse non credit, nisi doceat in lege et Prophetis scripta esse quæ dicit, quanto magis nos minimi hoc observare debemus, ut non nostras cum docemus, sed Sancti Spiritus sententias proferamus? Orig. in Ep. ad Rom. lib. iii. 3. Ed. Ben.

¹ Proinde sive de Christo, sive de ejus Ecclesia, sive de quacunque alia re quæ pertinet ad fidem vitamque vestram, non dicam nos, nequaquam comparandi ei, qui dixit, “Licet si nos,” sed omnino quod secutus adjecit, ‘Si angelus de cælo vobis annuntiaverit præter quam quod in Scripturis legalibus et evangelicis accepistis, anathema sit.’ S. Aug. contra litt. Petiliani, lib. iii. c. 6. See Bishop Taylor’s Dissuasive, book i. part ii. ch. 2. He mentions an objection of Cardinal Bellarmine, that “præter quam” signifies “against,” and answers it. The following passage, quoted from S. Jerome by Thorndike, Epil. i. 31, expresses a meaning over which no verbal objection can cast a doubt, “Ecclesia autem Christi, quæ habitat bene, et in toto orbe ecclesias possidens, spiritus unitate conjuncta est, et habet urbes legis, prophetarum, evangelii, et apostolorum, non est egressa de finibus suis, id est, de Scripturis Sanctis.” S. Hier. in Mic. i. 11.

the very words of the early Church, declares that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation¹." In which Article she does not assert, as some of her adversaries, blinded by their own zeal, either deceive themselves into believing, or else falsely accuse her of asserting, either that Scripture is so clear as to need no interpreter, or that every man is able to interpret for himself. About *clearness* and *interpretation* she says nothing at all, but only declares, in accordance with the Church of early times, that "Holy Scripture *containeth* all things necessary to salvation;" that it is the sole proof of faith: rejecting, therefore, both all things repugnant to it, and all things which cannot be proved from it, either by statement or inference, from the substance of necessary faith².

¹ Article VI.

² "Traditional, authoritative teaching *was* clearly appointed; the substitution of Scripture *never* was. How, then, can this have been abrogated or even limited (query, *by* ?) the other?" Dublin Review, No. V. July, 1837, Art. iii. Nothing was *abrogated*. We contend that the living, authoritative teacher predicated of the canon of the New Testament, that it contains the whole faith as delivered by the apostles; that in points of faith necessary to salvation the apostolic preaching and writing is co-extensive. This is the only issue to be tried.

Nor does she thereby subject her own decisions to individual judgment¹, but enunciate the principle

¹ After quoting the 6th Article, Dr. Wiseman goes on to say, "But it is evident here that the rule is placed in other hands; that the rule is more (sic) to prevent some one not named from exacting belief beyond a certain point: it is a limitation of the power to require submission to the teaching of some authority. That this authority is the Church, there can be no doubt, if we compare the 20th Article." In the next page, "when, therefore, it is affirmed that the Church has authority in matters of faith, yet a rule is given whereby the justice of its decisions is to be determined, and no exemption from error is allowed to it, it is no less implied that, besides the Church, there is some superior authority to prevent its acting contrary to the code that has been put into its hands. Now what authority is this, and where does it reside? Is it each one that has to judge for himself, whether the Church be contradicting the express doctrines of Scripture, and, consequently, is each person thus constituted judge over the decisions of his Church? If so, this is the most anomalous form of society that ever was imagined; for if each individual singly in himself has greater authority than the whole collectively (for the Church is a congregation formed of its members), the authority vested in that whole is void and nugatory." Lectures on the principal doctrines, &c., by N. Wiseman, D.D. Lect. ii. pp. 29, 30. This is the well-known argument used by Bossuet, in his conference with M. Claude, to which it deeply concerns Protestant communities to find a sufficient reply. The Church of England is neither able to help them, nor is she. "careful to answer" objections in this matter. The fact is, she makes no such submission of her decisions, either here or elsewhere, to her individual members.

We acknowledge no authority "superior" to the Church; but supreme authority does not mean authority which admits of

of her teaching, and protest, by unhappy necessity,

no limit or restriction. Even the Almighty Father of all creatures, if it may be reverently spoken, prescribes to Himself the eternal and unchangeable rule of right and truth, and has imposed the same on all beings made in His likeness. Besides this eternal law, He has ordained in His Church laws of preceptive right and positive institution, of order, and teaching, and sacramental mysteries, and the like. The proof and boundary of these obligations are to be found in the Catholic traditions; and the test of those traditions, “*universitas, antiquitas, consensio.*” On this ground the Church of England asserts that “*Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.*” She declares herself to be obliged by Catholic tradition in this respect. So much for the limitation.

Next as to the judge of the rule so enunciated. The Church of England, so far from submitting either the rule, or her decisions according to the rule, to the judgment of her individual members, will not submit them to the judgment even of particular churches, or to any tribunal less than that to which all particular churches are subject, that is, a general council, of which either the members shall truly *represent* the Church Catholic, or the decrees be universally *received*. “*We that never disbelieved any word of God, written or unwritten (by any means made known to us to be such), particularly, never questioned any voice or testimony of the whole Church concerning such word, but are ready to believe that to be apostolical which shall be to us universally testified to come from the Apostles, and persuade ourselves that God will never permit any such universal testimony concerning the faith to conspire in conveying error to us (and, upon the strength of that persuasion, as we have never yet opposed any universal council, nor other voice of the whole Church, such as by the Catholic rules can be contested to be such, so, for the future, we profess never to do), are by our grounds thus far secured from*

against the error of sister Churches which have departed from the Catholic rule ¹.

2. This appeal to the proof of Holy Scripture might appear to be at once a sufficient test to ascertain what the Apostles preached. And so indeed it would be, if either the Scriptures were so clear that private Christians could not err in understanding, or churches so infallible as never to go astray in expounding the interpretation. But as neither of these conditions is true; as churches both may err, and have erred, and private Christians, by the repugnancy of their interpretations, daily convict them-

all heretical pravity, that unless we destroy in the retail what we have built in the gross, and until we shall be proved, by the particular view of our doctrines, to have thus failed in some particular, we cannot with any justice, or without great uncharitableness, be accused of it." Hammond's *Parænesis*, &c., chap. v. sect. 12. Works, vol. i. p. 403.

We therefore no more submit the doctrinal decisions of the Church to the judgment of individual minds than the canon of Scripture itself. We do acknowledge an authority higher than either the Church of England or of Rome in particular. What hinders the appeal to that tribunal, Dr. Wiseman knows as well as we. But if such a council, truly general, freely assembled, should meet to-morrow, the rule of its decisions would be, "*non sua posteris tradere, sed a majoribus accepta servare.*" The witness of primitive tradition must be the measure of its determinations after all; so that, whether the gathering of a council be possible or not, "the law is open, let them implead one another."

¹ Vincent. Lirin. *Commonit.* cap. vi.

selves of error ; and as the Gospel of Christ is not syllables and letters, whether of the original or translated text, but the meaning of them ; and as, of all the meanings Holy Scripture *may* bear, we must believe one only to be the sense *intended*, it is plainly necessary that we should have some further rule for our common guidance.

It is evident, from the words of St. Paul to the Galatians, from the testimony of fact, and from the reason of the thing, that the whole Gospel Revelation was delivered to the world before any part of the New Testament was written. The writing of Scripture pre-supposes the foundation of Churches, and the foundation of Churches the delivery of the faith on which they were built¹. Every particular Church, therefore, being a witness to the whole Gospel delivered by the Apostles, and to the particular Scriptures which were severally addressed to them ;

¹ This is true not only of the Epistles, but of the Gospels also.

“ It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to *write* unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.”—St. Luke i. 3, 4.

The dates assigned to the Gospels are

St. Matthew's, in Hebrew, A.D. 37 or 38.	
————— Greek	61.
St. Mark	60 — 63.
St. Luke	63 — 64.
St. John	97 — 98.

(Horne's Introd. vol. iv. p. 259.)

and the whole Church being in like manner a witness to the whole Gospel, which in all places was alike, and to the Apostolical Scriptures, which were mutually interchanged till all were collected into one, and the canon of the inspired books complete¹; it is evident that each particular Church read and understood its own particular Scripture in the sense of the faith before delivered to it, and the whole Church read and understood the whole Scripture in the sense of the Apostolic teaching, which all in common had received. In each particular Church, therefore, as well as in the Church at large, there was both the Scripture and the sense; and of this sense a certain portion was, from the beginning, gathered into a summary, and tendered to every candidate for Baptism, as the condition of his entering into the Church of Christ, and the rule of his faith afterwards; and this summary was the same in all Churches, and confessed by all Christians; and the substance of it, how variously soever expressed in words, was as directly delivered by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, and by the Apostles delivered to the Church, as that of Scripture itself. We have the same proof that St. Paul delivered to the

¹ Although the canon was, for the most part, ascertained in the course of the second century, yet certain books were not universally received until the fourth. The four Gospels were collected before the other books, probably in the time of Trajan, A.D. 98—117. Dodwell, *Diss. in Iren.* i. 40.

Galatian Church the substance embodied in the Catholic Creeds as they now stand, as that this Epistle, which recalls them to his former teaching, is authentic ¹. And therefore, although the whole sub-

¹ Hoc autem testimonii genere tradiderunt Veteres Novi Testamenti *canonem*, et formam regiminis ecclesiastici ab Apostolis relictam atque institutam. Quod liber aliquis in canonem admitteretur, id non *argumenti* causa factum, sed *auctoris*, quod ab *auctore* cœlitus afflato scriptum crederetur. Quis vero libri fuisset *auctor*, ea *facti* erat quæstio, nullis *ratiociniis* admixta, quæ non et ipsa essent ad *factum* referenda. *Auctorem* enim è *manu* probabant eo seculo notissima, aut ex eo quod scriptum illud auctorem agnoscentem *auriti* testes audivissent, &c. . . . Hæc omnia ad *factum* pertinent in quo recentiorum sagacissimorum *conjecturæ* non sunt Veterum vel simplicissimo testimonio omnino conferendæ. § xxxvi. Sic itaque nulla est omnino ratio cur de ea traditione dubitemus quæ nobis Novi Testamenti canonem transmisit. Dico præterea, ut alia solida ratio nulla est cur *canoni* assentiamus, præter *traditionem*; sic traditionem illam qua N. T. scriptum credimus, non esse utique firmiorem quam sit illa nostri Irenæi. Mitto hic rationes alias ab aliis assignatas quæ manifestum sapiunt *enthusiasmum*. . . . § xxxvii. Venio itaque ut ostendam non esse *firmiorem* illam de *canone* sacro traditionem quam sit illa, cujus causam agimus; nostri Irenæi.—Dodwell, Dissertationes in Irenæum, § xxxv. xxxvi. xxxvii.

The sixth Article rests the canon at once on catholic tradition. "In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church:" i. e. in the Catholic Church; for some particular Churches did for a time doubt of certain Epistles and the Revelation, until the full testimony was communicated to them. Such was the universal jealousy

stance of the creed may be ultimately resolved into the Scripture, it was not at first derived from it, being in itself older than the Apostolic writings, and coeval with the first preaching of the faith. And this summary of truth was held everywhere as “the one sole rule of faith, never to be changed or remodelled¹,” “the rule of truth²,” “the definition or boundary line³,” and “the exposition of the faith;”

of the Church over the canon. Thus St. Augustin says, “Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Catholicæ Ecclesiæ commoveret auctoritas :” . . . and a little after, “utramque Scripturam similiter mihi catholica commendat auctoritas.” *Contra Epist. Manichæi et Fundamenti*, cap. v.

¹ “Regula quidem fidei una omnino est, sola, immobilis, et irreformabilis, credendi scilicet in unicum Deum omnipotentem,” &c. *Tertull. de Virg. Vel.* p. 173. ed. Rigalt. Again, “Hanc regulam ab initio Evangelii decucurrisset,” &c. *Adv. Praxeam*, ib. p. 501.

² “Regula exigit veritatis, ut primo omnium credamus in Deum Patrem, &c. Eadem regula veritatis docet nos credere post Patrem etiam in Filium Dei Christum Jesum, &c. Sed enim ordo rationis, et fidei auctoritas digestis vocibus et literis Domini, admonet nos posthac credere etiam in Spiritum Sanctum,” &c. *Novatian. de Trinitate*, ad calc. ap. *Tertul. c. i. 9.* 29.

³ “Another usual name of the Creed was *κανών*, the ‘rule,’ so called because it was the known standard or rule of faith, by which orthodoxy and heresy were examined and judged; as when the Council of Antioch (*Ep. Conc. Antioch. ap. Euseb. lib. vii. c. 30, ἀποστάς τοῦ κανόνος*), says of Paulus Samosatensis, that he was ‘an apostate from the rule,’ &c. Agreeably to this, it is commonly styled among the Greeks *ῥρος*, and *ἐκδοσις πίστεως*, the ‘determination’ or ‘exposition of the faith’ (*Socrat. lib. ii. c. 39, 40*,

and, as by supremacy, “the faith,” as we are wont to say, “the Creed.” “The Church,” writes St. Irenæus, “although scattered throughout all the world, even unto the ends of the earth, received from the Apostles, and their disciples, the faith in one God the Father Almighty, that made the heaven, and the earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them.” He then recites the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the incarnation, the passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His coming again to raise all men, to judge men and angels, and to give sentence of damnation, or of life everlasting. How much soever the language may vary from other forms, such is the substance. He then adds, “The Church, having received this preaching, and this faith, as we have said before, although it be scattered abroad throughout the whole world, carefully preserves it, dwelling as in one habitation, and believes alike in these [doctrines] as though she had one soul, and the same heart; and in strict accord, as though she had one mouth, proclaims, and teaches, and delivers on these things. And although there be many diverse languages in the world, yet the virtue of the tradi-

and lib. v. c. 4), and sometimes simply *πίστις*, the ‘faith’ (Theod. Hist. lib. i. c. 7), which answers to the Latin name, *regula fidei*, ‘the rule of faith,’ the common appellation of it in S. Irenæus, Tertullian, Novatian, and S. Jerome.” It was also called *μάθημα*, the ‘lesson,’ and *γράμμα*, and *γραφή*.—Bingham’s Antiquities, b. x. chap. 3. sect. 2, 3, 4.

tion is one and the same. And neither do the Churches planted in Germany believe otherwise, or otherwise deliver [the faith]; nor those in Iberia, nor among the Celtæ, nor in the East, nor in Egypt, nor in Lybia, nor they that are planted in the main land. But as the sun, which is God's creature, in all the world is one and the same, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and lighteneth all men that are willing to come to the knowledge of the truth. And neither will any ruler of the Church, though he be mighty in the utterance of truth, teach otherwise than thus (for no man is above the master); nor will he that is weak in the same diminish from the tradition. For, the faith being one and the same, he that is able to say most of it hath nothing over, and he that is able to say least hath no lack¹." The same summary of doctrine he gives in another place, calling it "the tradition and ordinance of truth²." In Tertullian we read three summaries³; in Origen,

¹ S. Iren. adv. Hær. lib. i. c. x. 1, 2.

² Ibid. lib. iii. c. iv.

³ All the creeds here referred to are given in full by Walchius in his Bibliotheca Symbolica, containing a collection of creeds and expositions of the faith composed and used in the first five centuries. He arranges them under four classes.

1. Creeds found in the writings of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, in number twenty.

2. Creeds of Churches, Eastern and Western, &c., in all thirty-five.

3. Creeds of Councils, thirty-three.

two; in Cyprian, two distinct quotations from a baptismal creed; in Gregory Thaumaturgus, one; besides many more in other writings of Christian antiquity; all substantially agreeing together. To these must be added the creeds of the Eastern and Western Churches, and again of particular Churches in those two greater members of the Church Catholic, such as, the creeds of the Churches of Cesarea, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Aquileia, Rome, Ravenna, Taurinum, besides many more which seem to have been used in the Churches of Africa, Gaul, and Spain. The substantial agreement of all these, whether summaries or creeds, becomes more striking by the variety of language in which they are expressed. The very diversity of the *wording* is a further evidence to the Apostolical origin of the *matter*; for that which is found in all Churches to be one and the same, is not error but Apostolical tradition¹; while

4. Creeds of private doctors, &c., nineteen.

The number of these forms, including versions, as the Latin versions of the Nicene, is one hundred and seven. From these may perhaps be deducted some, as hardly of a form sufficiently exact to deserve the name of a creed, and some which bear both the internal marks and the stigma of heresy. The remainder is an irresistible proof of the assertions made in the text. The comparison of creeds is a process identical with the collation of MSS. to fix the text of Holy Scripture; and the result, not less certain.

¹ “Ecquid verisimile est, ut tot ac tantæ (sc. Ecclesiæ) in unam fidem erraverint? Nullus inter multos eventus unus exitus;

the variety of their language, as the seeming discrepancies of the four Gospels, makes them to be so many independent witnesses.

And over this “rule of faith” the Church possessed only the power of *explanation*¹. From the substance she might neither add nor take away. All that she has ever done has been to *harmonize the language* in

variassse debuerat ordinem (*fors.* Nullis inter multos eventus unus est exitus; variassse debuerat ordine) doctrinæ ecclesiarum. Ceterum quod apud multos unum invenitur, non est erratum sed traditum.”—Tertull. de Præscr. Hær. xxviii. Opuscula, &c. Routh.

¹ Grabe, in his annotations to the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters of Bishop Bull’s “Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ de Necessitate credendi,” &c., proves that all the articles of the Apostles’ Creed, as we receive it, were contained in the baptismal confession in use from the beginning, except the descent into hell, and the communion of saints; and these are no more than explications of the articles “buried,” and “the Church,” in like manner as the “one substance” of the “only begotten Son” of the Father.

“Denique quid unquam aliud conciliorum decretis enisa est, nisi ut quod antea simpliciter credebatur, hoc idem postea diligentius crederetur, quod antea lentius prædicabatur, hoc idem postea instantius prædicaretur, quod antea securius colebatur, hoc idem postea sollicitius excoleretur? Hoc inquam semper, neque quicquam præterea, hereticorum novitatibus excitata, conciliorum suorum decretis Catholica perfecit Ecclesia, nisi ut quod serius à majoribus solâ traditione susceperat, hoc deinde posteris etiam per scripturæ chirographum consignaret, magnam rerum summam paucis literis comprehendendo, et plerumque, propter intelligentiæ lucem, non novum fidei sensum novæ appellationis proprietate signando.”—Vincent. Lirin. Commonit. xxiii. 1.

which it is expressed, and, where heresy has compelled her, reluctantly to *unfold the sense of points contained in substance from the beginning*. Such was the act of the Council of Nice, by which the consenting testimonies of the whole Church were harmonized into one form of words, and the everlasting Sonship declared to involve, by Apostolical teaching, the mystery of one substance with the Father. Henceforth this was the baptismal creed of the Eastern Church¹, and so superseded, as it were, the other symbols, by taking up into itself the substance of all earlier forms. In the Western Church, the Roman, or Apostles' Creed, as it is commonly called², seems to have prevailed in the baptismal office, and was judged to be so fully equivalent to the keener definitions of the Nicene, that although this was universally received throughout the West, the other was not displaced³. And thus the two creeds, as we receive them, are to us the representatives of the Apostolical tradition, the two witnesses of the East and the West to the one Catholic faith.

Scripture, then, being the proof of the creed, and the creed the interpreter of Scripture, the harmony of these is the first rule of interpretation.

¹ Wall on Baptism, part ii. ch. ix.

² Vossius, Diss. de Tribus Symbolis. Diss. 1. c. xxiv. Bull. Judicium, cap. v. § 2.

³ It is used to this day : see Office for Baptism.

3. But although a large portion of holy Scripture will be thus taken up into the proof of the creed, and so receive a clear and fixed interpretation, there will yet remain a large body of doctrines, which are not included in the summary of the creed, but are, nevertheless, of prime importance in the Christian faith, such as, original or birth sin, the condition of the will of man, justification, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and the like. Now on all these doctrines the Apostles, speaking by the same Spirit in all places, spoke alike; and all their writings, indited by the same Spirit, have one fixed meaning. Yet it cannot be said that all these are so clear in Scripture as to need no expositor. If so, whence have arisen the unnumbered repugnancies of interpretation in these later days?

We often persuade ourselves that, when Holy Scripture is once proved to be such, all questions are quickly ended, by a final appeal to the word of God; whereas, in truth, the final appeal is the beginning of controversy. For all parties lay equal claim to its favourable verdict; and men hear its voice as variously as they will. The very point at issue is the meaning of the voice. Their differences prove at least this, that Scripture is not the clear expositor of its own meaning. And if not clear, then to what can we appeal, but to that same witness which attests to us the very books to which we make appeal? And if equal evidence demand equal assent, it will

not be easy to show, how any man should accept the testimony which consigns to him the Apostolical Epistles, even in the minutest points of reading and punctuation, and reject the same testimony when it delivers the broad features of interpretation too. Indeed, the very canon of Scripture was not fixed when the doctrine of original sin was universally received; and the mystery of the holy Eucharist was everywhere believed, while some of the Epistles were not everywhere as yet received as apostolical.

But if, on the other hand, holy Scripture is so clear as to bespeak its own interpretation to any mind rightly seeking for it, this argument must at least tell both ways; or rather, so much the more require that we should teachably abide by the original interpretation. For, how clear soever Scripture may seem to be, it can be no clearer to us than it was to them in the beginning. It does not acquire clearness by indefinite transmission through ages and generations, but is rather darkened by a series of conflicting expositions, and made doubtful by the established authority of particular theories of man's invention. And if clear in the beginning, then they, who had the guidance of the Holy Ghost, surely no less than we,—who had conversed with the Apostles of Christ, or their next followers, might even abate these advantages, and plead with us only on the clearness of the Scriptures, which they received, and attested, and delivered down to us. But when a

man has brought himself to believe, that they to whom the Scriptures were written, who, before the writing of the Scriptures, had received of inspired men the whole counsel of God, and, in the light of that previous knowledge, both read and understood the mind of the Spirit, as expressed in their after writings; who also believed, and confessed, and loved not their lives unto the death, and, dying, delivered to us, with the seal of their own blood, all that we know of Christ's Gospel;—when a man has brought himself to believe, that they knew not the true sense of writings which we, at this day, profess to be so clear as that even we may be confident of our interpretations—then indeed is not a mere exposition alone at stake, but Christianity itself is secretly undermined. *The whole body of Christian evidence is at once and alike assaulted.* But if we dare not imagine this, and yet our faith and theirs refuse to square together, which shall be rejected in the proof?

In these chief points of doctrine, the Church of England has given a guide to her members in her Articles, which are not new theological determinations, deriving their weight from her sole wisdom or authority, but *depositions of evidence*, exhibiting interpretations that have obtained from the beginning¹.

¹ No one can examine the Thirty-nine Articles without perceiving this fact. The first five are little more than the catholic

In her Articles the Church does not *expound*, but *witness*; and, faithful to the primitive rule, she does not require assent to them as *terms of communion*, but as *conditions of the license to teach her people*. And these chief points of doctrine (*prima credibilia*), which range next in importance to the fundamentals of the creed, she holds herself and delivers to us as the witness of those “who are presumable, by their antiquity, to know the truth, and, by their uniform consent, neither to mistake themselves, nor to deceive us¹.” This is a second rule of interpretation.

4. And after that the Creed, and the consent of the Christian Church, as expressed to us in the Articles, shall have guided us in the interpretation of holy Scripture, there will remain of the sacred text little or no part bearing on the fundamentals, or chief articles of belief, on which any serious repugnancy of judgment can arise, because the body of

creeds. The sixth rests the canon on tradition, and the sufficiency of holy Scripture for salvation. The eighth acknowledges the creeds. The ninth condemns the Pelagians by name. The eleventh, with the homily on Justification or Salvation referred to, was evidently the result of a deep and extended search into primitive doctrine; witness the collection of passages from Scripture and the Fathers, made by Cranmer's own hand, and remarkably coinciding with the homily above cited, which is undoubtedly his. See Cranmer's Works, vol. ii. p. 121. ed. Jenkyns. The twenty-ninth quotes St. Augustin. These are the superficial evidences; a closer examination would give many more.

¹ Hammond's Parænesis, ch. v. sect 4, Works, vol. i. p. 388.

Scripture directly involved in proving, or indirectly determined by the proof of each several point, is so great, that the collective proof determines the intention and tenor of nearly all that remains. And for such places as are not so involved, the Church has given a principle, on which her members, if they will follow her own practice, will proceed. In throwing herself upon the early and undivided Church, and gathering its witnesses for her own guidance, she counsels them to follow her own example. Nay more, in her canons of 1571, she expressly enjoins her clergy, "that they never teach aught in a sermon, to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament; and which the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops have collected from that very doctrine ¹."

Witness, in all its several degrees of consent or prevalence, is her rule. Wheresoever any degree is to be found, it brings a corresponding measure of obligation. If things attested unanimously, universally, and from the beginning, are not to be doubted,

¹ Wilkins's *Concilia*, iv. 267. It is important to observe, that this canon was framed nine years after the publication of the Thirty-nine Articles, and therefore by the same hands, under Archbishop Parker; and that it received the sanction of Bishop Jewel, whose subscription is attached to the body of canons in which it is contained; and as he died the same year, it was probably his last public act.

things which were early, and, though not everywhere traceable, yet prevalent and uncontradicted, have no small claim on our reception. And such as were early and prevalent, but contradicted by the teaching of particular Churches, or particular persons, and still more those where there is no witness, she has left free to the judgment of Churches and of persons, they being possessed of such a knowledge of interpretations that are certain, as may guide them in the analogy of faith to others that are uncertain ; and of such other aids, natural and acquired, as are needful for the task. On the lowest ground, wheresoever an interpretation exists, it is at least a presumptive evidence, which must be first removed by due and sufficient reason, before any other can be so much as admitted to consideration. Where there is no such evidence, we have no help but to lean on our unaided private judgment.

Such, then, is the mode of using the means which God has ordained to convey to us the Gospel of His Son ; or, as we technically speak, *the rule of faith*, and *the rules of interpretation*.

That God has spoken to mankind ; that He spake after this manner by His Prophets and Apostles, and by His incarnate Son ; that, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, His servants so preached, ordained, and wrote ; that they taught these things as fundamental, and these as of prime importance ; that such was the mind and intention of their several writings ;

that in them collectively is contained the whole faith necessary to salvation; that besides this nothing may be as such required;—all these the Church regards as several facts, or rather as the manifold features of one and the same great fact in the dealings of God with man, and this fact she rests upon the same witness which God has ordained to reveal to the world His being and perfections.

And by this rule she protests against the claims, whether of Churches or of individuals, to *such* an immediate guidance of that same Spirit by whom the Scriptures were dictated, *as shall supersede this witness* in interpreting their sense: referring that immediate guidance to the Prophets and Apostles of the Lord, and confiding herself to the means which God has ordained, and by His providence administers, for the preservation and transmission of the faith. And in this she testifies against every exaltation, either of the Church or of self, above Holy Writ, whether in imposing upon the written word new readings of the original, or interpretations of the translated text other than those which were received from the beginning; and also against both all arbitrary distinctions into essential and non-essential points, at the will and judgment of private men, and all new additions to the rule of faith by any council of the Church.

But, in thus resting upon the external witness of the Gospel, she does not fail to apply for her own assurance the full force of internal proof. She only

forbids God's order to be reversed, knowing that He has ordained an outward evidence sufficient to leave the infidel without excuse, and reserved the inward corroboration as the privilege of faithful men: "If any man willeth to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." She does not so rest upon outward proof the habitual belief of her own divine original, as to be for ever making a formal recurrence to the well-proved history of her beginning, but upon the inward ever-growing consciousness of supernatural life and power; neither does she linger coldly upon the outward evidence of her inspired books, but in them discerns the voice of the Beloved, and the breathings of the Holy Ghost. The witness of a fact hath long passed into the fruition of a reality. The first is but the avenue, the last the holy place; the unseen dwelling of Christ's mystical presence, into which they that humbly enter at the outward gates are drawn, and there are ever changed, and hid, and sanctified¹.

Of this unerring witness, ever growing, and deepening still, and absorbing the whole inner being of the saints into a confidence which is not so much a conclusion of the mind as a consciousness of the soul, I have designedly said nothing until now. And for this reason; because it pre-supposes, as the necessary condition of its power, the faithful teachable reception of the outward proof. Not so, indeed, that

¹ S. Aug. de Utilitate Cred. c. ix.

Christian men must, each for himself, pass through the toilsome avenues of proof and evidence. It is our birthright to *inherit* the faith; and the teachable and faithful pass, by implicit trust, into the immediate confirmation and fruition of this inward confidence. But the incredulous and wilful, the self-confident and headstrong, forfeit their unspeakable privilege. They must first toil, by a self-imposed necessity, through all the outward approaches, before they can believe the truth by loving it; for it must be first known, and loved afterwards: but they that invert this order, and plead internal proofs against external witness, begin by loving they know not what, or being enamoured of their own opinions; and so going astray from truth, end, for the most part, in fanaticism, and not seldom in apostasy.

Although it is always both the *right*, as men speak, and the privilege of Christians to labour out their belief by analysis and induction, by evidence and history, it can never be their necessary duty until the Church has failed of hers. For it is her office to anticipate all reasonings by holding forth the well-approved results¹. And for this very cause it pleased

¹ The heretics, in Tertullian's day, used to quote the words "Seek, and ye shall find," as a warrant for their proceedings. He answers: "Quod si nationibus destinati doctores Apostoli, ipsi quoque doctorem consequuturi erant Paracletum: multo magis vacabat erga nos, 'Quærite et invenietis,' quibus ultro erat obventura doctrina per Apostolos, et ipsis Apostolis per Spiritum Sanctum." Tertull. de Præscr. Hær. viii.

God, in the beginning, to store up in her the whole treasure of the Gospel: her sacred books were as a stedfast memory ever correcting her conceptions of heavenly things; her living ministry, a thousand tongues; her rule of faith, an universal instinct; her councils, acts of deliberation; her decrees, utterances of judgment. She was, and is a living, responsible being; witnessing, defining old truths, condemning false novelties. Her charge is to sustain, from age to age, the whole body of revealed wisdom; to imbue each successive generation of her children with the conclusions of the faith, openly tendering, also, the proofs of holy Scripture; and thus going before us from our childhood, being ever herself of one ripe age, teaching us what things are necessary, probable, or doubtful—both what we must, and what we may believe; ever leading on those that will follow from conclusions to proofs, to inner ranges, and to higher paths of wisdom.

What then is the reason, why men have come to treat the faith as they do an abstract science, or a dead language, or a research into antiquity, full of doubt, and experiment, and conjecture; as a thing that is to be earned by the sweat of the brow, instead of freely and thankfully inherited? Because, if at any time the Church should cease to guide, they cannot choose but go alone. They have then no choice but to set their hand to the hard inverted labour of first seeking for evidence, and afterwards

deducing, as conclusions, what they ought to have received by intuition as axioms of revelation, and primary truths in the new creation of God.

It was such a default of her high office that made it necessary, in the sixteenth century, to revert to primitive evidence. For the *Holy Scriptures* had not been more neglected than the *witness of antiquity*¹. This is confessed even by those of a communion most pledged to make the best case against the Reformation. And therefore it was, that, for half or nearly a whole century, the chiefest of our Bishops and learned teachers were engaged in labouring out again the deposit of Apostolical teaching. They were compelled to put the whole doctrine and discipline of the Church to the test of antiquity, and to find the thread of primitive

¹ Bossuet says, the doctors of the middle ages “ preferred, for the most part to proceed on philosophical reasonings of the worst description, rather than to consult the Fathers.” Fleury, that, “ it was the misfortune of the doctors of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to know but little of the works of the Fathers, especially the more ancient, and to be deficient in the aids necessary for well understanding them.” “ In 1530 the Faculty of Arts of the University of Paris addressed to the Parliament a complaint on the manner in which theology was taught. The study of Sacred Scripture,” they said, “ is neglected, the holy Gospels are no longer cited, the authority of St. Chrysostom, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, and the other Fathers, is not employed; theology is nothing more than a sophistical science.” Palmer’s Treatise on the Church, vol. ii. pp. 144. 146.

truth, into which had been surreptitiously woven the grosser staple of human inventions, and, having found it, to take it up again, and bring it down to us in its simple purity. Hence it is, that the writings of our great teachers, from the Reformation down to the beginning of the eighteenth century, are of a solidity and value, as well as of a character peculiar to themselves; a character in direct and rebuking contrast to the great bulk of popular theology for the last hundred years. And men are now again reduced to the necessity of making a further choice between that which was the faith of the English Church, when she protested against the definitions of Trent, and the spurious Protestantism, which has now for a century palmed itself upon our headlong zeal, or torpid indolence. Men are again compelled to fall back, and to labour for themselves: and to indicate the teaching of the Church as well by the rule of her genuine protest, as by the witness of antiquity. And this we may do at one and the same act, by citing, from among many witnesses, one who, as he was the foremost in rank, and second to none in experience of the whole proceeding, may be taken as a spokesman of all. "And touching my doctrine of the Sacrament," said Archbishop Cranmer, at his pretended degradation, "and other my doctrine, of what kind soever it be, I protest that it was never my mind to write, speak, or understand any thing contrary to the most holy Word of God, or else

against the Holy Catholic Church of Christ; but purely and simply to imitate and teach those things only which I had learned of the sacred Scripture, and of the holy Catholic Church of Christ from the beginning, and also according to the exposition of the most holy and learned Fathers and Martyrs of the Church. And if anything hath peradventure chanced otherwise than I thought, I may err, but heretic I cannot be, forasmuch as I am ready, in all things, to follow the judgment of the most sacred Word of God, and of the holy Catholic Church, desiring none other thing than meekly and gently to be taught, if anywhere, which God forbid, I have swerved from the truth.

“ And I protest, and openly confess, that in all my doctrine and preaching, both of the Sacrament and of other my doctrine, whatsoever it be, not only I mean and judge those things as the Catholic Church, and the most holy Fathers of old, with one accord, have meant and judged, but also I would gladly use the same words that they used, and not use any other words, but to set my hand to all and singular their speeches, phrases, ways, and forms of speech, which they do use in their treatises upon the Sacrament, and to keep still their interpretation. But in this thing only I am accused for an heretic, because I allow not the doctrine lately brought in of the Sacrament, and because I consent not to words not accustomed in Scripture, and unknown to the ancient

Fathers, but newly invented, and brought in by men, and belonging to the destruction of souls, and overthrowing of the pure and old religion ¹.”

Such, then, being the principle of the Church, both in her primitive and reformed practice, we are bound, by a twofold obligation, to hold it without wavering. In us it would be a twofold apostacy, both from our apostolical character and from the protest of our Reformation, if we should consciously depart from this rule and witness.

Assuredly these are times to try our constancy; for the temper of these days, in some of its chief characteristic points, is arrayed in the most irreconcilable warfare against the rule of faith.

For, first, men are possessed by an *insatiate lust of ever-progressing discovery*. The rapid growth of science has silently insinuated into all branches of knowledge a disposition, healthful or spurious, to expand. It is assumed that all knowledge is, or ought to be, ever on the move. The rude mechanical and physical sciences of earlier days have grown up and consolidated themselves into full and harmonious systems, gathering fresh vigour with their growth, accumulating fact on fact, piling induction on induction, building theory on theory, until we are amazed at the gigantic height to which, in the last two centuries, they have sprung. And, with the advance of science,

¹ Cranmer's Works, vol. iv. pp. 126-7.

the intellectual habits of men have also got a new character and a new momentum; they have acquired a keen hunger for discovery, and a loathing of fixed and measured knowledge. Progression and new results are indeed the very life of science; but the rule of faith is retrospective altogether, and the first axiom of apostolic truth is, whatsoever is new is not of Christ¹. God has set up the landmarks of Revelation, and no man may remove them².

Again, men have acquired *an impatience of any fixed standard of religious truth, external to the mind.*

¹ Id esse Dominicum et verum, quod sit prius traditum : id autem extraneum et falsum, quod sit posterius immissum.—Tertull. de Præscr. Hær. xxxi.

² With this is perfectly consistent the “*profectus religionis*” of Vincentius. “Sed ita tamen ut vere profectus sit ille fidei, non permutatio. Siquidem ad profectum pertinet ut in semetipsum unaquæque res amplificetur; ad permutationem vero ut aliquid ex alio in aliud transvertatur. . . . Imitetur animarum religio rationem corporum, quæ, licet annorum processu numeros suos evolvant et explicent, eadem tamen quæ erant permanent. Christi vero Ecclesia, sedula et cauta depositorum apud se dogmatum custos, nihil in his unquam permutat, nihil minuit, nihil addit, non amputat necessaria, non apponit superflua, non emittit sua, non usurpat aliena, sed omni industria hoc unum studet, ut vetera fideliter sapienterque tractando, si qua sunt illa antiquitus informata et inchoata, accuret et poliat, si qua jam expressa et enucleata, consolidet, firmet, si qua jam confirmata et definita, custodiat.”—Vincent. Lirin. Commonit. xxiii. Very different is the modern doctrine, which is given without comment. “Within the reach, as they (Protestant divines) are, of mental

The changeful fortunes of Christ's Church in England have wrought, together with other malign causes, to bring about this unwholesome temper. The moral health of our people has been sorely tried by variableness and violent alternations in the political and religious influences. The whirlwind of schism and heresy which burst, two centuries ago, upon our land, hurling down our sanctuaries and altars, deposited among their foundation-stones noxious seeds, wafted from abroad, to mingle with the harvest of

freedom, and surrounded by the results of free inquiry in other branches of knowledge, they ought long since to have been struck by the mass of difficulties which the increase of knowledge accumulates, day by day, against Christianity, when it is identified with any of the Scholastic theories, which are embodied in the existing CONFESSIONS OF FAITH."—Observations on Heresy and Orthodoxy, by Joseph Blanco White, p. 10. To this passage the following quotation from Dr. John Jebb is appended as a note :—
 "We may talk, then, of the sufficiency of the Scriptures as we please ; but while the laws establishing subscription to human formularies remain, the voice of the Articles shall alone be heard : the ignorance and superstition of mankind shall for awhile preserve the shadow of religion in our land, but its substance shall nowhere be found. *Improvements in science and the arts shall, at length, disclose the astonishing absurdity of our national faith. The Scriptures shall be disbelieved, because their genuine simplicity and excellence are concealed by designing men from human view: the articles shall be disbelieved, because they are held forth to it.*" "I give," says Mr. White, "the concluding part of the quotation in italics, to call the attention of the reader to the uncontrived coincidence of the passage in the text."—Ibid.

home-bred errors. And although, through the too congenial rankness of our soil, they both sprung up quickly, and as quickly withered, yet they left behind an abundant store, secretly to infest, and overrun the courts of the Lord's house, when they were again builded as before. Then, in relapse from overheated enthusiasm, there came upon our people a cold incredulity, which has not even now been chafed again into the tempered pulse of health. Since that day we have wasted under the plague of a low doctrine, and a laxer discipline¹, amid the boastful infidelity of profligate men, and the secret cavillings of the scorner. Meanwhile, under the heavy, stifling atmosphere of politics and worldly wisdom, which, in

¹ The following statement would be incredible, were it not for the high name of the author who gives it. "Something has also been done towards training up a supply of clergy for those remote parts of the country where the cures are miserably poor, and the peasantry are the only inhabitants. Such cures were held in these northern counties by unordained persons, till about the middle of George the Second's reign, when the bishops came to a resolution, that no one should officiate who was not in orders. But, because there would have been some injustice and some hardship in ejecting the existing incumbents, they were admitted to deacon's orders without undergoing any examination. The person who was then reader, as it was called, at yonder Chapel, in the Vale of Newlands, and who received this kind of ordination, exercised the various trades of tailor, clogger, and butter-print maker."—Colloquies on the Progress, &c. of Society. By R. Southey, vol. i. p. 368.

the last century, enveloped the Church, the spring-heads of truth grew tainted, and they that should have witnessed for Christ were paralysed, or bought over to the world, or tamed into neutrality; the spiritual kingdom of Christ, in all its framework and lineaments, began to sink out of sight among the institutions and schemes of earthly government; the sacred rites and services of worship were thrust into a corner; doctrine gave place to opinion, and discipline to custom¹, till custom and opinion set up their joint throne as “the abomination of desolation,” where they ought not, in the very temple of God, showing themselves that they are gods. Out of these elements of confusion has issued a spirit of spurious and self-styled *Catholic* religion,—not that which defined the creed of Nicæa, or promulgated the Articles of the English Church, but such as chooses for itself peace before truth, and the supple measure of individual opinion before the unbending rule of the Christian faith. And now, forms of religious profession, once at open strife, have mitigated, as by secret compact, their former rigour, and seem wistfully to approach and upbraid each other for the few lingering features of intelligible distinctness. For now all truth is resolved into the *views* of individual minds. *It has no external being*². So men proudly and profanely

¹ Dominus noster Christus veritatem se, non consuetudinem cognominavit.—Tertull. De Virg. Vel.

² “ ‘What do divines understand by *Christian truth*?’ The an-

say ; and as each man ceases to bow to an external reality, and erects himself into the index of truth, to cast the shadow on the dial at his will, the humbling, abasing loyalty of faith gives way to self-esteem, self-confidence, intellectual hardihood, and the cold, easy, good-humoured frankness, which gives largesse of the things of God, to buy the good opinion, or good services, of men. So that it has come to pass that truth looks like uncertainty, because the uncertain opinions of men have made good their claim to be respected by the multitude as truth ; and things are thought disputable, because disputed ; and it is deemed answer enough to say of any doctrine, “ I think otherwise,” or, “ this has been much contro-

swer at first appears obvious. ‘ Christian truth,’ it will be said, ‘ is what Christ and His Apostles knew and taught concerning salvation under the Gospel.’ Thus far we find no difficulty ; but (let me ask again) where does this exist as an object *external* to our minds ? The answer appears no less obvious than the former : ‘ In the Bible.’ Still I must ask, is the MATERIAL Bible the Christian truth about which Christians dispute ? No, it will be readily said, not the MATERIAL Bible, but the SENSE of the Bible. Now (I beg to know) is the sense of the Bible an object *external* to our minds ? Does any *sense* of the Bible accessible to man exist any where, but in the mind of each man who receives it from the words he reads ? The Divine mind certainly knows in what sense those words were used ; but as we cannot compare our mental impressions with that model and original of all truth, it is clear that, by the sense of the Bible, we must mean our own sense of its meaning.”—J. Blanco White’s Observations on Heresy, &c., p. 4.

verted," as if the one would not as keenly arm the Deist against the Gospel, and the other the Atheist against Deism itself.

But amid the windy storm and tempest of man's fleeting and turbulent opinions one thing is steadfast, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:" the one faith unchangeable; the shadow of Himself. And in His awful presence we are set as witnesses. We may be cast out as obstinate and doating, as uncharitable and contentious, as hinderers of the vaunted common cause, as thwarting religious unity and popular co-operation, and even, like the prophet of old, as troublers of Israel. Let us calmly answer, We have no power over ourselves. We testify what we have received. We may not be won by men's allurements—of their wrath we dare not be afraid. The presence of our Master besets us behind and before; the ministry He hath laid on us is guarded by a curse. Therefore, if we do not shrink from the rough task of stemming the strong current of men's changeful will, shackling freedom by discipline, and bringing down the struggling reason to an unbending rule, it is because we fear the greater condemnation. We must tell them affectionately, but as men, that the Church is a migratory witness, wandering up and down the earth, blessing the place of her rest, but shaking off the dust of her feet in testimony against the land that rejects her: that her foundations are in the holy faith; that the

condition of her abiding is our constancy, and theirs in ours. For their sakes we dare not yield, lest He that walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks remove our candlestick out of his place, and ourselves be accursed in the day of the Lord's coming.

THE END.

THE RULE OF FAITH.

APPENDIX

TO A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF CHICHESTER, JUNE 13, 1838,

AT THE PRIMARY VISITATION OF THE

RIGHT REV. WILLIAM, LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER,

CONTAINING AN

EXAMINATION

OF

CERTAIN POPULAR OBJECTIONS,

AND

FURTHER PROOFS OF THE STATEMENTS ADVANCED IN THE
SERMON.

BY

HENRY EDWARD MANNING, M.A.

RECTOR OF LAVINGTON, SUSSEX,

AND LATE FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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1839.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES

THE FIRST

BY

JOHN

WILKINS

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

1725

Printed

by

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2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures that must be followed when recording transactions. This includes the requirement that all entries be supported by valid receipts and invoices, and that they be entered into the accounting system in a timely and accurate manner.

3. The third part of the document discusses the role of the accounting department in providing regular reports to management. These reports should provide a clear and concise overview of the organization's financial performance, highlighting any areas of concern and suggesting appropriate corrective actions.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of financial information. It stresses that all employees have a responsibility to protect this information from unauthorized access and disclosure, and that any breaches of this policy will be dealt with severely.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of regular audits. It explains that audits are a critical component of the internal control system, as they provide an independent and objective assessment of the organization's financial records and internal controls. This helps to identify any weaknesses or areas for improvement, and ensures that the organization is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining up-to-date financial information. It stresses that financial data should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that it remains accurate and relevant. This is particularly important in a rapidly changing business environment, where financial conditions can change quickly.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all assets and liabilities. It explains that this is essential for determining the organization's net worth and for ensuring that all assets are properly protected and maintained. It also emphasizes the need to regularly review and update the organization's asset and liability records.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all income and expenses. It explains that this is essential for determining the organization's profitability and for ensuring that all income is properly reported to the tax authorities. It also emphasizes the need to maintain accurate records of all expenses, as this is essential for determining the organization's cost of operations and for identifying areas where costs can be reduced.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all investments and capital expenditures. It explains that this is essential for determining the organization's long-term financial health and for ensuring that all investments are properly evaluated and approved. It also emphasizes the need to maintain accurate records of all capital expenditures, as this is essential for determining the organization's depreciation and amortization expenses.

10. The tenth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all financial transactions. It explains that this is essential for ensuring the integrity of the organization's financial records and for providing a clear and accurate picture of the organization's financial performance. It also emphasizes the need to maintain accurate records of all financial transactions, as this is essential for ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

CHAPTER I.

“THE Rule of Faith” is the test by which we ascertain the *character* of revelation, the proof of the *fact* being pre-supposed. Sometimes it is used to express the way of testing the whole body of revelation, both the *doctrines* of faith and the *precepts* of obedience, as the words *doctrina* and διδασκαλία often signify: but, chiefly, to distinguish the particular articles of what we technically call the Faith.

The *fact* of a revelation, and its *character* must, in the end, necessarily rest upon one and the same evidence. And we can hardly prove that a revelation has been given, without largely anticipating its particular characteristics; *e. g.* in proving the divine origin of Christianity, we must specify its main features; and so, both are resolved at last into a process of reasoning upon *external evidence*. We shall be found using the same *kind of proof* to convince gainsayers of a revelation without the Church, and to settle doubts on its particular doctrines within.

In the foregoing Sermon, the proof of revelation, as a *fact*, was of course taken for granted; and the words

“Rule of Faith” used in the restricted sense, as a *test of doctrine*.

It was not my intention “to inquire what are the specific *doctrines* of the Gospel, but what is the *Rule* by which we may ascertain them¹.” “Is there any principle to guide us in our search after the truth of revelation analogous to the principles of science, or the rules of moral reasoning? Such a rule there must be, unless the knowledge of the Gospel be revealed over and over again, from age to age, to churches, and to individuals, immediately, as in the beginning: that is, unless the faith once delivered to the saints is, by the same supernatural communication, still being perpetually delivered to the saints. And if so, then is it a perpetual inspiration of men and churches: for in what does inspiration consist, but in the immediate teaching of the human mind? But if there be now no such inspiration, if the Holy Spirit teaches us, not without means but through means, what are the means ordained for that end, and on what principle are they to be used? and the answer will give us the rule we seek².”

The nature of these means was next stated, “The institution of the Church, and the delivery of the Holy Sacraments and Scriptures, are a sufficient proof of the *kind* of dispensation, and of the medium through which it has pleased God to perpetuate, and to dispense the knowledge of his truth³.”

Such being the external evidence by which we are to ascertain the particular character of the Evangelical doctrines, the right use of it must be the test by which to distinguish truth from falsehood in matters of belief.

¹ P. 13.

² P. 13, 14.

³ P. 14. See Leslie's Short and Easy Method, Works, vol. i. p. 27, 28.

The right principle of using these divinely ordained means was stated as follows:—

1. All points of faith necessary to salvation must be proved by Holy Scripture.

2. All interpretations of Holy Scripture in matters of religious belief, must be made in accordance with the faith of those, on whose evidence we receive the written word of God itself.

3. The faith of the primitive Church, on whose testimony we receive the Canon of Holy Scripture, is presented to us in the Creeds and universal consent of Christians. This consent is the basis of the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England.

4. All primitive interpretations prevalent, though not universal, claim their several measures of deference from us, and we may not lightly contradict them.

5. Where we have no external evidence of primitive interpretation, we have no other rule than our own judgment, aided by the laws of criticism and unauthoritative exposition.

The reason of this principle is, that *universal agreement with the Church of the apostolic ages is the surest test of agreement with the doctrine of the Apostles of Christ.*

And this Rule is commonly and shortly expressed in the words—Scripture and Antiquity, or Scripture and the Creed attested by Universal Tradition.

I shall here state at full length all the objections I am aware of, against the Rule above given.

It is said,

1. That it is a departure from the principle of the Reformation.

2. That it is identical with the principle of the Church of Rome.

3. That it invests the Church, or the early Christian writers, with the Romish attribute of infallibility.

4. That there is no consent of the early Christian writers even in points of vital importance: that the Catholic Creeds did not agree.

5. That the Fathers are to be cited as witnesses of facts only, and not of doctrines.

6. That they are to be used destructively only, to overthrow errors; and not constructively, to establish truth.

7. That it substitutes the traditions of men for the word of God.

8. That it shifts our faith from a divine to a human foundation.

9. That it makes all doctrine uncertain.

10. That to use the creeds as interpreters of Scripture, while we use Scripture to prove the creed, is arguing in a circle, inasmuch as Scripture must be first understood before it can be the proof of anything, and, when understood, needs no interpretation afterwards.

11. That if Scripture needs an interpretation, so do their writings: and therefore, the appeal to them only moves the question one step further into perplexity.

12. That the writings of the Fathers abound in trifling and error, and in contradiction of each other and of themselves.

13. That we are better able to interpret Scripture than they were.

14. That revealed knowledge, like natural, is progressive, and therefore, the early times were the infancy of our manhood.

15. That it is contrary to the promise that we shall be led into all truth.

16. That it makes a right knowledge of Scripture impossible to the unlearned.

17. That it is derogatory to Holy Scripture, to deny its clearness to all readers.

18. That it is derogatory to the merciful providence of God, to suppose that he would give a book not clear to all.

19. That if the interpretations of universal tradition are right, a great part of modern theology is wrong.

20. That the rule of faith above given cannot be proved to be the rule of primitive times.

These objections are not drawn from any one source, but from many : some are met with in the minds of others, and some naturally suggest themselves, at first, to our own.

That they are all inconclusive I shall endeavour to show, not by a process of *refutation*, but by giving proofs for the *establishment* of the two following points.

1. That the Rule of Faith, as stated above, is the recognised principle of the reformed Church of England.

2. That it was also the universal rule of the Primitive Church.

If these be true, the whole body of objections will fall at once. They shall, however, be again severally referred to as they occur in the order of the subject.

CHAPTER II.

THE first witness I shall bring to show *that the rule of faith, as stated above, is the recognised principle of the reformed Church of England*, is Archbishop Cranmer, from whose protestation, as it has been quoted, in full, in the forty-seventh page of the Sermon, I shall repeat only the following words.

“And I protest and openly confess, that in all my doctrine, and preaching, both of the Sacrament, and of other my doctrine, whatsoever it be, not only I mean, and judge those things as the Catholic Church, and the most holy fathers of old with one accord have meant and judged, but also I would gladly use the same words that they used, and not use any other words; but to set my hand to all and singular their speeches, phrases, ways, and forms of speech, which they do use in their treatises upon the sacrament, and to keep still their interpretation.”—*Cranmer's Works*, vol. iv. pp. 126, 127.

And in his answer to Dr. Smyth's Preface he recognises the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis. “And I cannot but marvel that Smyth allegeth for him Vincentius Lirinensis, who, contrary to Dr. Smyth, teacheth plainly that the Canon of the Bible is perfect, and sufficient of itself for the truth of the Catholic faith; and, that the whole Church cannot make

one article of the faith : although it may be taken as a *necessary witness*, for the receiving and establishing of the same, with these three conditions, that the thing which we would establish thereby hath been believed *in all places, ever, and by all men.*”—*Cranmer's Works*, vol. iii. p. 23.

The next is Bishop Ridley, at his last examination. “ And in that the Church of God is in doubt, I use herein the wise counsel of Vincentius Lirinensis, whom I am sure you will allow, who, giving precepts how the Catholic Church may be, in all schisms and heresies known, writeth in this manner : when, saith he, one part is corrupted with heresies, then prefer the whole word before that one part ; but if the greatest part be infected, then prefer *antiquity*.

“ In like sort now, when I perceive the greatest part of Christianity to be infected with the poison of the see of Rome, I repair to the usage of the primitive Church ; which I find clean contrary to the Pope's decrees, as in that the priest receiveth alone, that it is made unlawful to the laity to receive in both kinds, and such like, wherefore it requireth, that I prefer the *antiquity* of the primitive Church, before the novelty of the Church of Rome.”—*Ridley's Life*, pp. 613, 614.

The same course he follows in his Treatise on the Lord's Supper, first propounding the proofs of Scripture, and then six early writers of the Greek and Latin Churches, three of each respectively, as “ *witnesses and expounders of their doctrine* ¹.”

Bishop Overall, in a letter to Grotius, writes, “ Our divines hold that the right of definitive judgment in matters of faith, is to be given to synods of bishops, and other learned ministers of the Church, and convened for this pur-

¹ *Enchiridion Theologicum*, vol. i. p. 90. *Fathers of the English Church*, vol. iv. p. 203.

pose, according to the usage of the ancient Church ; who shall determine from the Holy Scriptures, *explained by the consent of the ancient Church*, and not by the rival spirit of Neoterics¹.”

Morton, Bishop of Durham, who died 1659, wrote after this manner in his last will.

“ I do, therefore, here solemnly profess in the presence of Almighty God, that by His grace preventing and assisting me, I have always lived, and purpose to die, in the true Catholic faith wherein I was baptized ; firmly believing all the Canonical Scripture of the Old and New Testament, and fully assenting to every article of all those three creeds (commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creed, and the Athanasian Creed,) which in the ancient Church were accounted *the adequate rules of faith*, and have accordingly been received as such by the Church of England².”

Field, chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, and dean of Gloucester, in 1610, in his work on the Church, says, “ Thus then we see, how many things in several degrees and sorts, are said to be rules of our faith. The infinite excellency of God, as that whereby the truth of the heavenly doctrine is proved. The articles of faith, and other verities expressly known in the Church, as the first principles, are the Canon, by which we judge of conclusions from thence inferred. The Scripture, as *containing* in it all that doctrine of faith which Christ the Son of God delivered. The uniform practice, and consenting judgment of them that went before us, as a certain and undoubted explication of the things contained in the Scripture.

“ ‘ The Scripture,’ saith Vincentius Lirinensis, is ‘ full,

¹ See Bishop Jebb’s Pastoral Instructions, p. 306.

² Funeral Sermon by Barwick, p. 45.

and sufficient to all purpose ; but, because of the manifold turnings of heretics, it is necessary that the line of prophetic and apostolical interpretation should be drawn down, and directed unto us, according to the rule of Ecclesiastical and Catholic sense. So, then, we do not so make the Scripture the rule of our faith, but that other things in their kind are rules likewise, in such sort, that it is not safe, without respect had unto them, to judge of things by the Scripture alone. For, without the first rule, we cannot know the Scripture to be of God : without the second and the third, we have no form of Christian doctrine, by the direction whereof to judge of particular doubts and questions ; without the other rules, we cannot know the authors and numbers of the Books of Scripture, or the meaning of the things therein written : for who shall be able to understand them, but he that is settled in these things, which the Apostles presupposed, in their delivery of the Scriptures ?

“ We do not, therefore, so make the Scripture the rule of our faith, as to neglect the other ; nor so admit the other, as to detract anything from the plenitude of the Scriptures, in which all things are *contained* that must be believed.”—
Book iv. c. 14.

“ Much contention there hath been about traditions, some urging the necessity of them, and others rejecting them. For the clearing whereof we must observe, that though we reject the uncertain and vain tradition of the papists, yet we reject not all : for first we receive the number and names of the authors of books divine and canonical, as delivered by tradition.

“ The second kind of tradition which we admit, is that summary comprehension of the chief heads of Christian doctrine, contained in the Creed of the Apostles, which was

delivered to the Church as *a rule of her faith*. For though every part thereof be *contained* in the Scripture, yet the orderly connexion, and distinct explication of these principal articles gathered into an epitome, wherein are implied, and whence are inferred all conclusions theological, is rightly named a tradition. The third is that form of Christian doctrine, and explication of the several parts thereof, which the first Christians, receiving of the same Apostles that delivered to them the Scriptures, commended to posterities. This may rightly be named a tradition, not as if we were to believe anything, without the warrant and authority of the Scripture, but for that we need a plain and distinct explication of many things which are somewhat obscurely contained in the Scripture; which, being explicated, the Scriptures, which otherwise we should not so easily have understood, yield us satisfaction that they are so indeed as the Church delivereth them unto us.”—Book iv. c. 20, p. 375.

“ Thus having set down the kinds and sorts of traditions, it remaineth to examine by what means we may come to discern, and by what rules we may judge, which are true and indubitable traditions. The first rule is delivered by Augustine: ‘ Whatsoever the whole Church holdeth, not being decreed by the authority of councils, but having been always holden, may rightly be thought to have proceeded from apostolical authority.’—Lib. iv. contra Donatistas, c. 23. The second rule is, Whatsoever all, or the most famous and renowned in all ages, or at the least in divers ages, have constantly delivered, as received from them that went before them, no man contradicting or doubting of it, may be thought to be an apostolical tradition.”—B. iv. c. 21.

Bishop Hall, in his *Concio ad Clerum*, 1623, spoke as follows :

“ He that hath willingly subscribed to the word of God, attested in the everlasting Scriptures; to all the primitive Creeds; to the four general councils; to the common judgment of the Fathers for six hundred years after Christ, (*which we of our Reformation religiously profess to do,*) this man may possibly err in trifles, but cannot be an heretic¹.”

Jackson, Dean of Peterborough (who died 1640), says :

“ The three special notes of the Catholic faith, or Church, are universality, antiquity, and consent. . . .

“ For the form of faith established in our Church, we have the consent of the Primitive Church, of the four first general councils, of all succeeding ages unto this present day; the consent likewise of the present Romish Church, and of ourselves².

Archbishop Ussher, in his Answer to the Jesuits' Challenge, writes :

“ This I must needs tell you before we begin, that you much mistake the matter, if you think that traditions of all sorts are struck at by our religion. We willingly acknowledge that the word of God, which by some of the Apostles was set down in writing, was, both by themselves and others of their fellow-labourers, delivered by word of mouth; and that the Church in succeeding ages was bound, not only to preserve those sacred writings committed to her trust, but also to deliver unto her children, *vivâ voce*, the form of wholesome words contained therein. Traditions, therefore, of this nature, come not within the compass of our controversy, the question being betwixt us *de ipsâ doctrinâ traditâ, non de tradendi modo*, touching the *substance* of the doctrine

¹ Bishop Jebb's Pastoral Instructions, p. 308.

² Works, vol. iii. pp. 888, 889.

delivered, not of the *manner* of delivering it.”—*Answer*, &c. pp. 23, 24.

And again, in his Treatise on the Universality of the Church of Christ: “These common principles of the Christian faith, which we call *κοινόπιστα*, or things *generally believed* of all, as they have ‘universality,’ and ‘antiquity,’ and ‘consent,’ concurring with them; which, by Vincentius’s rule, are the special characters of that which is truly and properly Catholic: so for their duration, we are sure that they have still held out, and been kept as the seminary of the Catholic Church, in the darkest and difficultest times that ever have been.” p. 44.

Archbishop Bramhall, in his Replication to the Bishop of Chalcedon’s Survey, writes :

“ I submit myself, and my poor endeavours, first to the judgment of the Catholic Œcumenical Essential Church ; which if some of late days have endeavoured to hiss out of the schools as a fancy, I cannot help it. From the beginning it was not so.

“ I do implicitly, and in the preparation of my mind, submit myself to the true Catholic Church, the spouse of Christ, the mother of the saints, the pillar of truth. And seeing my adherence is firmer to the infallible rule of faith, that is the *Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Catholic Church*, than to mine own private judgment or opinions, although I should unwittingly fall into an error, yet this cordial submission is an implicit retractation thereof, and, I am confident, will be so accepted by the Father of mercies, both from me and all others who seriously and sincerely do seek after peace and truth.”—See *Preface to Replication*. Works, p. 141.

Again, in his Preface to a treatise called *Schism Guarded*, &c. :

“ Thou art for tradition, so am I. But my tradition is

not the tradition of one particular Church contradicted by the tradition of another Church ; but the universal and perpetual tradition of the Christian world united. Such a tradition is a full proof, which is received *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus* ; always, every where, and by all Christians. Neither do I look upon the opposition of an handful of heretics (they are no more, being compared to the innumerable multitudes of Christians), in one or two ages, as inconsistent with universality, any more than the highest mountains are inconsistent with the roundness of the earth.”—Works, p. 290.

Cosin, Bishop of Durham, in “ A paper concerning the differences in the chief points of religion, betwixt the Church of Rome and the Church of England,” after recounting the *differences*, such as the additions made to the Creed by Pope Pius, and other traditions unfounded in Catholic consent, adds a list of *agreements*, in which the following stand first :

“ If the Roman Catholics would make the essence of their Church (as we do ours) to consist in these following points, we are at accord with them in the reception and belief of—

“ 1. All the two and twenty canonical books of the Old, and the twenty-seven of the New, as the only foundation and perfect rule of our faith.

“ 2. All the apostolical and ancient Creeds, especially those which are commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Creed of St. Athanasius, all which are clearly deduced out of the Scripture.

“ 3. All the decrees of faith and doctrine set forth as well in the first four general councils, as in all other councils which those first four approved and confirmed ; and in the fifth and sixth general councils besides (than which we find

no more to be general), and in all the following councils that be thereunto agreeable; and in all the anathemas, or condemnations given out by those councils against heretics, for the defence of the Catholic faith.

“4. The unanimous and general consent of the ancient Catholic Fathers, and the universal Church of Christ, in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and the collection of all necessary matters of faith from them during the first six hundred years, and downwards to our own days.”—*Appendix to Hiches's Letters*, vol. i.

Hammond, who was Prebendary and Archdeacon of Chichester, in his work called “a Parænesis, or seasonable Exhortatory to all true Sons of the Church of England,” says,

· “SECT. 3. *The two Ways of conveying the Faith to us.*

“And to this also my concession shall be as liberal as any Romanist can wish, that there are *two ways of conveying* such revelation to us; one in *writing*, the other by *oral tradition*: the former, in the *Gospels*, and other *writings* of the Apostles, &c. which make up the Sacred Writ, or *canon* of the New Testament; the latter, in the Apostles' *preachings* to the Churches of their plantations, which are no where set down for us in the *Sacred Writ*, but conserved as *deposita* by them to whom they were intrusted.

“And although in sundry respects the *former* of these be much the more *faithful, steady* way of conveyance, yet there being no less veracity in the *tongue*, than the *hands*, in the *preachings* than the *writings* of the Apostles; nay, ‘Prior sermo quam liber, prior sensus quam stylus,’ saith Tertullian; the Apostles *preached* before they *writ*, *planted Churches* before they addressed *Epistles* to them. On these grounds I make no scruple to grant, that *apostolical tradi-*

tions, such as are truly so, as well as *apostolical writings*, are equally the matter of that *Christian belief*, which is equally secured by the fidelity of the conveyance; that as one is *apostolical writing*, so the other is *apostolical tradition*.

“SECT. 4. *The Testimony from which we receive the Faith.*

“Next then the inquiry must proceed by examining what is this *equal way of conveyance*, common to both these, upon the strength of which we become *obliged* to receive such or such a *tradition* for *apostolical*.

“And this again is acknowledged not to be any *divine testimony*; for *God* hath no where affirmed in *divine writ*, that the Epistle inscribed of *Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, consisting of so many *periods* as now it is in our *Bible*, was even written by that *Apostle*, nor are there any inward *characters*, or *signatures*, or *beams of light*, in the writing itself that can be *admitted* or pretended for *testimonies* of this, any more than the like may exact to be *admitted* as *witnesses* that the *creed* called the *Apostles'*, was indeed in the full *sense* of it delivered to the *Churches*.

“It remains then, that herein, on both sides, we rest content with *human testimonies* of *undoubted authority*, and such as there is not any *rational* motive to distrust, and of which *alone* the matter is capable. . . .

“And from hence it follows, that as we of this age have no other way of judging of the *canon of Scripture*, or of any *book*, or *chapter*, or *period* contained in it, but by the *affirmation* and *authority* of those *testifiers* in the *first ages* of the *Church*, either by their *writings*, or by the unquestioned *relations* of others, brought down and made known to us; so are we as unable to judge of *apostolical traditions unwritten*, whether this or that *doctrine* be such or no, unless it be thus by the undoubted *affirmations* of the *ancients*,

(who are presumable by their *antiquity* to know the truth, and by their *uniform* consent, neither to *mistake* themselves nor to *deceive* us,) communicated and conveyed to us.

“SECT. 5. *The Qualifications of such Testimonies.*

“Now then comes the upshot of the inquiry, what *qualifications* there are of a *testimony* or *testifier*, without which it or he may not be thus deemed creditable, or ἀξιόπιστος, *worthy to be believed*, by a sober Christian; and where these qualifications are to be found; which, when we have once resolved, it will also be possible for us to pass some judgment of *traditions* duly styled *apostolical*, which, as such, must be allowed to be the *object* of our *faith*.

“And herein I shall hope also that the *resolution* will be *unquestionable*, if it be bounded by those *three* terms to which Vincentius Lirinense, in his *Defence* of the Catholic Faith against *heresies* and *innovations*, hath directed us, *Universitas, Antiquitas, Consensio, Universality, Antiquity, Consent*, viz. that the *testimony* we depend on, be the result of all the ancients consenting, or without any considerable dissent. Or, in yet fewer words, a *Catholic Testimony, truly such*, i. e. universal in all respects; 1. of *Place*, 2. of *Time*, 3. of *Persons*.

“SECT. 6. *Of the Consent of antient Doctors.*

“This therefore being thus established, and the conjunction of all the *three sorts of universality* being in all reason required to the authentic testifying of tradition, it is soon defined where these qualifications are to be looked for, and where they may be found.

“The *universal consent* of the Doctors of the *first ages*, bearing *testimony* that such or such a doctrine was from the *Apostles’* preachings delivered to all Churches by them

planted, or their *general confirming testimony* herein, without any considerable dissension producible, is, I acknowledge, ἀξιόπιστος, *authentic*, or *worthy of belief*, and so hath been made use by the orthodox of all times, as sufficient for the rejecting of any new doctrine¹.”

Bishop Bull, in his answer to the question forwarded to him by Bossuet, through Mr. Nelson, inquiring in what sense in his learned works he used the term “Catholic Church²,” replied as follows:—

“Monsieur de Meaux seems to think the Roman and Catholic Church, to be convertible terms, which is strange in so learned a man, especially at this time of the day. Cannot the Catholic Church be mentioned, but presently the Roman Church must be understood? The book which the Bishop refers to, bears the title: ‘Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ, trium primorum Seculorum,’ &c. Of the Catholic Church of the three first centuries, I do indeed speak with great deference. To her judgment (next to the Holy Scriptures) I appeal against the oppugners of our Lord’s Divinity at this day, whether Arians or Socinians. The rule of faith, the symbols or creeds, the possession whereof was in these ages the condition of communion with the Catholic Church, (mentioned by Irenæus, Tertullian, and others,) I heartily and firmly believe. This *Primitive Catholic* Church, as to her government and discipline, her doctrines of faith, and her worship of God, I think ought to be the standard, by which we are to judge of the orthodoxy and purity of all other succeeding Churches, according to that excellent rule of Tertullian, de Præscript. adv.

¹ Hammond’s Works, vol. i. Fol.

² Nelson’s Life of Bull, p. 388.

Hæres. c. xx. xxi. ‘Every descent must necessarily deduce itself from its first original. If these things are true, it is plain that every doctrine which these apostolical, these original, and mother churches held as analogous to the rule of faith, is to be owned as true, and as containing without doubt what the churches received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, Christ from God; but that all other doctrine is to be looked upon as false, and no ways savouring of those truths which have been delivered by the Churches, and the Apostles, and Christ, and God.’ And to the same purpose, he discourseth, cap. 31. of the same book.

“According to this rule, the Church of England will be found the best and purest Church at this day, in the Christian world.”

“How far the present Church of Rome hath departed from this primitive pattern, will appear hereafter.”

And a little after he adds :—

“By the Catholic Church, I mean the Church universal, being a collection of all the Churches throughout the world, who retain *the faith once* (ἀπαξ) *delivered to the saints*; that is, who hold or profess in the substance of it, that faith and religion which was delivered by the Apostles of Christ to the first original Churches, according to Tertullian’s rule before mentioned; which faith and religion is contained in the Holy Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, and the main fundamentals of it comprised in the canon or rule of faith, universally received throughout the primitive Churches, and the possession thereof acknowledged to be a sufficient *tessera* or *badge* of a Catholic Christian¹.”

As Bishop Stillingfleet is sometimes thought to vary from

¹ Hickeys’s Letters, vol. i.

this rule, the following, out of a multitude of other passages in his work on the Grounds of the Protestant Religion, may be here quoted.

He is arguing against the Church of Rome, that nothing may be required as an article of *necessary faith*, but such points as have been so received by the Catholic Church of all ages.

“Thence it is, that *antiquity, universality, and consent*, are so much insisted on by Vincentius Lirinensis, in order to the proving any thing to be a necessary article of faith.”

And a little afterwards,—

“The *Church of England* doth very piously declare her consent with the ancient *Catholic Church*, in not admitting any thing to be delivered as the sense of *Scripture*, which is contrary to the consent of the Catholic Church in the four first ages. Not as though the sense of the Catholic Church were pretended to be any infallible rule of interpreting Scripture in all things which concern the rule of faith; but that it is a sufficient prescription against any thing which can be alleged out of Scripture, that if it appear contrary to the sense of the Catholic Church from the beginning, it ought not to be looked on as the true meaning of Scripture.” He adds immediately, “As long, therefore, as the Church might appear to be truly catholic by those correspondencies, which were maintained between the several parts of it, that what was refused by one, was so by all; so long this unanimous and uncontradicted sense of the Catholic Church ought to have a great sway upon the minds of such who yet profess themselves members of the Catholic Church.” pp. 52—55.

Bishop Beveridge, in his Preface to the Vindication of the Canons of the Primitive Church, writes—

“There are many things which, although they are not

read in express and definite terms in the Holy Scriptures, are yet, by the common consent of all Christians, drawn out of these Scriptures." He instances many articles of doctrine and discipline, as Episcopacy, the Lord's day, &c. and continues, "These, and others of this sort, are no where in the Sacred Scriptures enjoined directly and by name. Yet have they, notwithstanding, during 1400 years from the Apostles, been every where received into public use of the Church; nor can there be found any Church during that period not agreeing to these things. So that there have been, as it were, certain *common notions* from the beginning implanted in the minds of all Christians, not so much from any particular passages of Holy Scripture, as from all; from the general scope and tenor of the whole Gospel; from the very nature and purpose of the Religion therein established; and finally, from the constant tradition of the Apostles, who, together with the faith propagated ecclesiastical rites of this sort, and, if I may so speak, *general interpretations of the Gospel*. For, on any other supposition, it would be incredible, or even impossible, that they should have been received with so unanimous a consent, *everywhere, always, and by all*."—Section 2.

Bishop Patrick writes:

"It is a calumny to affirm that the Church of England rejects all tradition, and I hope none of her true children are so ignorant as, when they hear that word, to imagine they must rise up and oppose it. No! the Scripture itself is a tradition; and we admit all other traditions which are subordinate and agreeable unto that; together with all those things which can be proved to be Apostolical by the general testimony of the Church in all ages: nay, if anything not contained in Scripture, which the Roman Church now pretends to be a part of God's word, were delivered to

us, by as universal uncontrolled tradition as the Scripture is, we should receive it as we do the Scripture.”

And a little before he had said, “ We reverently receive also the unanimous tradition, a doctrine of the Church in all ages, which determines the meaning of the Holy Scripture, and makes it more clear and unquestionable, in any point of faith, wherein we can find it hath declared its sense. For we look upon this tradition as nothing else but Scripture unfolded; not a new thing, which is not in the Scripture, but the Scripture explained, and made more evident.”—pp. 11. 31.

Archbishop Potter, in a defence of a charge delivered by him to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford, of which he was Bishop at that time, speaks as follows :

“ I must not forget under this head, that I am again charged not only with favouring Popery, but with being a Papist in disguise, with acknowledging the Protestant principles for decency’s sake, but steadfastly adhering to the Popish. And all this, as it seems, for having referred you to the practice and writers of the Primitive times, and of the next ages after the Apostles; whereby I am represented to understand the reign of Constantine, which happened, as he (the objector) saith, almost 300 years after. Now I am not in the least apprehensive of my being suspected as a favourer of Popery by any man *who knows the true meaning of Popery; but sure it is such a compliment to the Popish Religion, as no Protestant would have made who understands his own principles*, to date its rise from the time of Constantine; the claim of Infallibility, and of the Papal Supremacy as now exercised, the doctrine of Transubstantiation, Invocation of Saints, Image Worship, Prayers in an unknown tongue, forbidding laymen to read the Scriptures, to say nothing of other peculiar tenets of the Church

of Rome, having never been heard of during the reign of this great Emperor, or for a long time after; as a very little insight into the Popish controversies, or Ecclesiastical historians would have informed their writer. It would have been much more to his purpose, and equally consistent with truth and justice, to have told his readers, that by the next ages after the Apostles, I meant the times immediately preceding the Reformation; but then one opportunity would have been lost of declaiming against the times in which the Nicene Creed was composed, and Arianism condemned. As to the primitive writers I am not ashamed or afraid to repeat, that the best method of interpreting Scripture, seems to me to be the having recourse to the writers, who lived nearest the time wherein the Scriptures were first published, that is, to the next ages after the Apostles, and that a diligent inquiry into the faith and practice of the Church in the same ages, would be the most effectual way, next after the study of the Scriptures themselves, to prevent innovations in doctrine; and, lastly, that this hath been practised with great success by some of our best advocates for the Protestant cause, as Bishop Jewel for example, Archbishop Laud, Archbishop Ussher, Bishop Cosin, Bishop Stillingfleet, Dr. Barrow, Bishop Bull, with many others at home and abroad." pp. 59—61.

These are all the passages with which I shall venture to weary the reader. They are taken from the age of the English Church beginning at the Reformation, and ending with the seventeenth century, except only the last, whose long life extended from 1672 to 1747. In making these extracts I have been compelled to pass over an equal number of witnesses as plain spoken as those cited, and, what is more to be regretted, to pass over an extensive context of matter most decisive, and direct in its bearing upon the point to

be proved. There remains, however, one other great writer, not to be omitted. His testimony has been reserved, contrary to chronological order, to the last, that our apprehension of his purposes in argument may be cleared, by keeping in mind the broad distinction, observed throughout the foregoing passages, between the Rule of Faith proposed by the Church of Rome, and the Rule of Faith as vindicated by the Church of England at the Reformation.

This last witness will be best introduced by carrying on the quotation from Archbishop Potter.

“ To which (i. e. the Archbishop’s foregoing arguments), it will be replied ‘ That our best writers, at least, in their controversies with the Papists, are so far from appealing to the judgment of the Church, in the next centuries after the Apostles, in any such sense as the Bishop¹ is arguing for against his adversaries, that the very best of them, Mr. Chillingworth, has declared, upon the most mature consideration, how uncertain generally, how self-contradictory sometimes, how insufficient always, he esteemed this judgment to be. He had seen Fathers against Fathers, Councils against Councils, the consent of one age against the consent of another; the same Fathers contradicting themselves, and the like, and he found no rest but in the Protestant Rule of Faith. He was willing to yield every thing to truth, *Quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus, because he well judged that nothing could be conceived to be embraced as truth at the very beginning, and so continue at all places, and in all times, but what was delivered at the beginning.* But he saw, with respect to some controverted points, how early the difference of sentiment was.’—pp. 265, 266 in the objector’s work.

¹ Archbishop Potter was at that time Bishop of Oxford.

“ In answer to this,” says Archbishop Potter, “ I shall not take upon me to determine what rank Mr. Chillingworth ought to bear among the Protestant writers ; it being sufficient for my purpose that many others, and those of chief note for learning and judgment in their controversies with the Papists and others, have appealed (and in this manner I have recommended) to the primitive writers, as every one may soon learn who will take the pains to look into their books. In the next place, it appears from this very passage of Mr. Chillingworth, as here represented, that his design was to prevent appealing to *Fathers and Councils as a rule of faith* ; agreeably whereunto I have all along declared, that in my opinion the *Scripture* is the only rule of faith ; and have no further recommended the study of the primitive writers, than as the best method of discovering the true sense of Scripture. In the third place, here is nothing expressly said by Mr. Chillingworth of the most primitive writers or councils, or of any one who lived in the next ages after the Apostles ; but he may very well be understood, notwithstanding any thing here produced, of those latter ages, wherein both Fathers and Councils degenerated from the faith and doctrine of those who went before them ; which is the more likely, because mention here follows of the article which divided the Greeks from the Roman communion,—this having not been openly disputed before the seventh century. Fourthly, he is introduced as speaking in express terms of *controverted* points, but saying nothing of any principal point of faith, nothing of any article which was originally in the Nicene Creed. On the contrary, it may be observed, in the last place, that he plainly speaks of doctrines received by the Church *in all places, and at all times, even from the very beginning*, which, for that reason, he presumed not to reject. Now it cannot possibly

be known what these are, without having recourse to the writers of the primitive ages. So that upon the whole, the method I have recommended is so far from being contradicted, that it is rather enforced by what this writer hath cited from Mr. Chillingworth." pp. 61—63.

Such is Archbishop Potter's judgment on this subject: but, inasmuch as the well-known dictum of Chillingworth, "The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants," is one of those short effective sayings which work revolutions in religion, as the "rights of man," in civil states, being easily remembered, although more easily remembered than understood in the sense intended by the first propounder, it will be well to examine his meaning in the context of his own works.

Few men had better reason to know the real points of controversy between the Churches of England and Rome, than Mr. Chillingworth; for he had once been drawn by the arguments of Fisher, the Jesuit, to embrace the communion of the Romish Church, and to go over to their college at Douay. He was brought back again to England, and it may be said to the English Church, by the letters of Archbishop Laud, then Bishop of London. "Mr. Chillingworth's learning and abilities," said the Archbishop, in his speech before the Lords, "are sufficiently known to your Lordships. He was gone and settled at Douay. My letters brought him back; and he lived and died a defender of the Church of England."—*De Maizeaux's Life of Chillingworth*, pp. 5—12. Of his return I shall have occasion to speak again hereafter.

Now he that would clearly understand Chillingworth's book, the "Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation," must first thoroughly apprehend the state of the then existing controversy.

Every one who has examined the points of difference between the Churches of Rome and England, is aware that, besides the *particular instances* of doctrine, such as transubstantiation, the invocation of saints, &c. there are three great *principles* in dispute.

1. Whether there exists any living infallible judge of controversy.

2. Whether Scripture is the only sufficient proof of the faith.

3. Whether the Creed contains all necessary points of mere belief.

The Roman Church maintains that there is a living infallible judge, who may, from time to time, declare, upon the sole proof of unwritten tradition, points of necessary doctrine, and add them to the Creed. Such is, in fact, the Creed of Pope Pius IV. published at the close of the Council of Trent: when to the Nicene or Constantinopolitan Creed were added, without proof of Holy Scripture, on the infallibility of the Church, twelve new articles of belief.

The Church of England denies the existence of an infallible living judge; asserts that nothing may be required of any man as a point necessary to salvation, but what may be read in Holy Scripture, or proved thereby. And also that the Catholic Creed of the four first General Councils contains all points of necessary belief.

Knott, Chillingworth's adversary, maintained the three Romish points; Chillingworth the three Anglican. And the one great principle of his reasoning is *universal tradition*, to the exclusion of the living infallible judge, and of the *particular* and *novel* traditions of the Romish Church.

The title of his second chapter is "*Scripture the only Rule whereby to judge of Controversies.*" His reasoning is as

follows:—"Neither is that true which you pretend, that we possess the Scripture from you, or take it upon the integrity of your custody, but upon universal tradition, of which you are but a little part."—Vol. i. p. 159. Ed. Oxford.

"And thus, though a writing could not be proved to us to be a perfect rule of faith, by its own saying so, for nothing is proved true by being said or written in a book, but only *by tradition, which is a thing credible of itself*; yet it may be so in itself, and *contain* all the material objects, all the particular articles of our faith, without any dependence upon tradition¹," for *further articles of faith*.

"Scripture might very well be all true, though it *contain* not all necessary divine truth. But unless it do so, it cannot be a perfect rule of faith; for that which wants any thing is not perfect. For I hope you do not imagine that we conceive any antipathy between God's word written and unwritten, but that both might very well stand together. All that we say is this, that we have reason to believe that God, *de facto*, hath ordered the matter so that all the Gospel of Christ, the whole covenant between God and man, is now written². Whereas, if He had pleased, He might have so disposed it that part might have been written, and part unwritten, but then He would have taken order, to whom we should have had recourse for that part of it which was not written, which seeing He hath not done (as the progress shall demonstrate), it is evident He hath left no part of it unwritten. We know no man, therefore, that says it were any injury to the written word to be joined with the unwritten, *if there were any wherewith it might be joined; but that we deny*."—p. 166.

"And here again I say, that all but cavillers will understand the meaning of the (VIth) article to be, that all the

¹ Vol. i. p. 164.

² See Sermon, pp. 19, 20.

divine verities which Christ revealed to his Apostles, and the Apostles taught the Churches, are *contained* in Scripture; that is, all the *material objects of our faith*, whereof the Scripture (*i. e.* its inspiration, and canon, &c. as Knott objected) is none, but only the means of conveying them unto us. . . . So that if men did believe the doctrine contained in Scripture, it should no way hinder their salvation not to know whether there were any Scripture or no. Those barbarous nations Irenæus speaks of were in this case, and yet no doubt but they might be saved.”—p. 183.

“If there be any *traditive interpretation* of Scripture, produce it, and prove it to be so, and we embrace it. But the *tradition of all ages* is one thing; and the *authority of the present Church, much more of the Roman Church*, which is but a part, and a corrupted part, of the Catholic Church, is another. And therefore though we are ready to receive both *Scripture, and the sense of Scripture, upon the authority of original tradition*, yet we receive neither the one nor the other upon the authority of your Church.”—p. 218.

“ . . . The ancient Apostolic Churches are not now as they were in Irenæus’s time; then they were all at unity about matters of faith, which unity was a good assurance, that what they so agreed in came from some one common fountain, and that no other than of apostolic preaching. And this is the very ground of Tertullian’s so often mistaken prescription against heretics: ‘Variasse debuerat error ecclesiarum; quod autem apud multos unum est, non est erratum sed traditum:’ *If the Churches had erred they could not but have varied; but that which is among so many came not by error but tradition*¹. But now the case is altered,

¹ See Sermon, p. 33, and note 1. “Had episcopal government been an aberration from (or a corruption of) the government left in the Churches by the Apostles, it had been very strange that it should have been received in any

and the mischief is that these ancient Churches are divided among themselves :” p. 262. *i. e.* the consent of the *living Church* for which Mr. Knott contended, is inconclusive.

“ I answer : this assertion, ‘ that Scripture alone is *judge* of all controversies in faith,’ if it be taken properly, is neither a fundamental nor unfundamental point of faith, nor no point of faith at all, but a plain falsehood. It is not a *judge* of controversies, but a *rule* to judge them by ; and that not an absolutely perfect rule, but as perfect as a written rule can be, *which must always need something else* which is either evidently true, or evidently credible, to give attestation to it, and that in this case is *universal tradition*. So that universal tradition is the rule to judge all controversies

one church so suddenly, or that it should have prevailed in all for many ages after. Variasse debuerat error ecclesiarum ; quod autem apud omnes unum est, non est erratum sed traditum.” “ *Had the Churches erred they would have varied ; what therefore is one and the same amongst all, came not sure by error but by tradition.*” When I shall see therefore all the fables of the Metamorphoses acted, and prove true stories ; when I shall see all the democracies and aristocracies in the world lie down and sleep, and awake into monarchies, then will I begin to believe that Presbyterian government having continued in the Church during the Apostles’ times, should presently after (against the Apostles’ doctrine and the will of Christ) be whirled about like a scene in a masque, and transformed into episcopacy. In the mean time, while these things remain thus incredible, and in human reason impossible, I hope I shall have leave to conclude thus :

“ Episcopal government is acknowledged to have been universally received in the Church, presently after the Apostles’ times.

“ Between the Apostles’ times, and then presently after, there was not time enough for, nor possibility of, so great an alteration.

“ And therefore there was no such alteration as is pretended. And therefore episcopacy being confessed to be so ancient and catholic, must be granted also to be apostolic. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*”—*The Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy demonstrated.*—*Chillingworth’s Works*, vol. ii. p. 288. 290.

This passage is given in full, as a fair specimen of Chillingworth’s great principle, and his mode of using it. This most useful tract is reprinted in an extremely cheap form by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

by. But then, because nothing besides Scripture comes to us with as full a stream of tradition as Scripture,—Scripture [Chillingworth means the written *doctrine*, so as to exclude *additional articles of faith*, which the Romanists rest on *unwritten* tradition] alone, and no *unwritten doctrine*, nor no *infallibility* of any Church having attestation from tradition truly universal: for this reason we conceive, as the Apostles' persons while they were living were the only judges of controversies, so their writings, now they are dead, are the only rule for us to judge them by, there being nothing *unwritten* [again Chillingworth is speaking of *doctrine*, *i. e.* the articles of the faith, not of *interpretation*] which can go in upon half so fair cards for the title of apostolic tradition, as these things which by the confession of both sides are not so. I mean the doctrine of the Millenaries, and of the necessity of the Eucharist for infants¹.”—Works, i. pp. 269, 270.

“Again methinks so subtil a man as you are should easily apprehend a wide difference between authority to do a thing and infallibility in doing it; and again between a conditional infallibility and an absolute. *The former the Doctor* (Dr. Potter) *together with the Church of England, attributeth to the Church, nay, to particular Churches, and I subscribe to his opinion*; that is, an authority of determining controversies of faith according to plain and EVIDENT SCRIPTURE, AND UNIVERSAL TRADITION, and INFALLIBILITY, while they proceed according to this rule.”—Ib. pp. 276, 277.

The following passages from Chillingworth's argument to prove that “the Creed contains all necessary points of belief,” will show his judgment as to the origin, and authority of the universal Creed.

¹ For the primitive evidence against this alleged Apostolical Tradition, see Waterland's Works, vol. ix. p. 470.

“ He that pretends to believe in God obligeth himself to believe it necessary to obey that which reason assures him to be the will of God. Now reason will assure him that believes the Creed, that it is the will of God he should believe the Scripture; even the very same reason which moves him to believe the Creed; *universal and never-failing tradition* having given this testimony both to *Creed* and *Scripture*, that they *both* by the works of God were sealed and testified to be the words of God.”—Works, vol. ii. p. 36.

“ To the third, I answer, that the certainty I have of the Creed, that it was from the Apostles, and contains the principles of faith, *I ground it not upon Scripture*, and yet not upon the *infallibility of any present*, much less of your Church; but upon the authority of the ancient Church, and written tradition, which (as Dr. Potter hath proved), gave this constant testimony unto it.”—Ib. p. 37.

And, for a last proof of the difference between the Romish and Catholic tradition; and also of Chillingworth’s rule for the test and establishment of his own faith, the following quotations will suffice :—

“ And moreover, to clear myself once for all from all imputations of this nature, which charge me injuriously with denial of supernatural verities, I profess sincerely that I believe all those books of Scripture which the Church of England accounts canonical to be the infallible word of God. I believe all things evidently contained in them; all things evidently, or even probably deducible from them: I acknowledge all that to be heresy, which by the act of parliament, primo of Queen Elizabeth, is declared to be so¹; and though in such points which may be held diversely of divers men, *salvâ fidei compage*, I would not take any man’s

¹ The rule given in the Act is the Canonical Scriptures and the four first General Councils. Gibson’s Codex, 352.

liberty from him, and humbly beseech all men that they would not take mine from me; yet thus much I can say, (which I hope will satisfy any man of reason,) that whatsoever hath been held necessary to salvation, either *by the Catholic Church of all ages*; or, *by the consent of Fathers, measured by Vincentius Lirinensis's rule*, or is held necessary, either by the Catholic Church of this age, or by the consent of Protestants, or even by the Church of England, that, against the Socinians, and all others whatsoever, I do verily believe and embrace¹."

Again, writing to persuade his friend Mr. Lewgar to return from the Church of Rome, he says:

"Give me leave to wonder

.

"That Vincentius Lirinensis seeking for a guide of his faith and a preservation from heresy, should be ignorant of this so ready a one, the infallibility of the Church of Rome.

"All these things, and many more are very strange to me, if the infallibility of the Roman Church be indeed, and were always by Christians acknowledged the foundation of our faith; and therefore I beseech you pardon me, if I choose *mine* upon one that is much firmer and safer, and lies open to none of these objections, which is, SCRIPTURE, AND UNIVERSAL TRADITION."—Works, vol. ii. p. 498.

We are now in a position to understand Chillingworth's rule by his own Commentary.

It is as clear as any demonstration, that when he said, "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants," he intended exactly to express the substance of the sixth article of the Church of England, not that the Bible

¹ Works, vol. i. p. 28, 29.

is to be the proof of its own inspiration, or the sole interpreter of its own meaning, much less that every man is to interpret for himself; but, that “Holy Scripture *containeth* all things necessary to salvation:”—to use his own words, that it “*contains* all the material objects of our faith,” so as to exclude all unwritten *doctrines* from the articles of necessary faith.—Vol. i. p. 164.

At the same time he distinctly, again and again, throws the entire proof of the inspiration, genuineness, canon, and purity of Holy Scripture upon *universal tradition*; and embraces all interpretations attested by the same evidence, of which he specifies the *Creed* as the foremost example¹.

Treating, therefore, the foregoing collection of testimonies as the particular instances in a process of induction, we are warranted in asserting, that the Rule of Faith, as recognised and contended for by the reformed Church of England, is Scripture and antiquity, or Universal Tradition attesting both Scripture and the sense.

It is often said, that a counter-induction might be formed

¹ Chillingworth everywhere admits the *universal* tradition of the whole Church, and rejects only the *particular* traditions of any one Church, as of the Church of Rome. Vol. i. p. 355.

He admits the testimony of the *primitive*, and rejects only that of the *present living* Church. Vol. i. p. 354.

He admits the written traditions of *doctrine*, and rejects only the unwritten tradition of *doctrine* pleaded for by the Church of Rome. Vol. ii. p. 385.

In other words he opposes everywhere *universal* and *primitive* tradition attesting the *Scripture* and the *Creed*, against the *particular* and *modern* Romish traditions resting on the *infallibility* of the Pope.

I am not aware of any passage in his works which will not coincide with these rules.

Modern readers, mistaking his whole drift and principle, apply what he says against the *living, present, individual* Church of Rome, to the *primitive, universal, Apostolic* Church. And this master fallacy, howsoever concealed, runs through all their quotations from his writings.

from other writers of the English Church, and even from the same: but there is no good in *saying* so; the thing must be first *done*, before we can believe it. And in doing it, these things must be borne in mind:—

1. That no writers of the last century, how pious and revered soever their memories may be, can be admitted to weigh against the testimonies of the chief Reformers, and the writers immediately succeeding them, in determining the principle of the Reformation.

2. That no collection of passages expressing,

(1.) The clearness of Holy Scripture,

(2.) or, the promises of divine illumination,

(3.) or, the uncertainty of traditions generally, *i. e.*

carefully excepting *Catholic* or *universal* tradition,

can be admitted. For no writers urge these points more strongly than those above quoted; always pre-supposing *universal* tradition as the interpreter of Scripture, and as the teacher of truths, through the means of which, the faithful man is to be enlightened and sanctified; and always contrasting it with the *novel*, and *particular* traditions which they call the “adinventions” of erring men, and “super-seminations” of the enemy.

The only conclusion that can be pleaded in arrest of judgment is, one founded on an induction of passages, in which the Bishops and teachers of the English Church have recorded a categorical REJECTION of universal tradition, as the proof of the canon of Scripture, and its interpretation.

But it may be said, the Church is not committed by the teaching of her Bishops and Pastors. Granting this to be so, let us ask, Has she ever disclaimed them? and if not, where shall we look for her judgment on this point?

Is not the fact, that she has actually preserved, 1st, the

discipline, 2nd, the faith, and, 3rd, the form of worship, attested by universal tradition, a sufficient proof of her rule? The care with which she kept inviolate the succession of her Bishops in the consecration of Archbishop Parker, and the vigilant labour with which she has ever defended that succession against her adversaries, is proof enough for the first point. The reception of the whole canon of Scripture with the Catholic creeds, and the canon of direction given to her preachers by the convocation of 1571¹, are enough for the second. The Book of Common Prayer, compiled from the Liturgies of the Church, will show the third. And that such has been her conscious procedure, we may learn from the reply made by the Commissioners appointed to review the Book of Common Prayer, 1662, to the Presbyterians². So also Mr. Mede attests: "Our Church, you know, goes upon differing principles from the rest of the reformed: and so steers her course by another rule than they do. We look after the form, rites, and discipline of antiquity; and endeavour to bring our own as near as we can to that pattern."—Works, p. 865, Ed. 1672.

And an older witness, who was himself a foremost actor in

¹ See Sermon, p. 40, and note.

² "The Church Commissioners conclude their general answer with taking notice, that there were ancient *Liturgies* in the Church, as appears plainly from St. Chrysostom's, St. Basil's, and others: and the Greeks, say they, mention St. James's, much older than the rest. And though we cannot trace entire Liturgies through all the centuries of Christianity; yet that there were such in the earliest ages, may certainly be concluded from the fragments remaining. Such as, *Sursum Corda, &c., Gloria Patri, Benedicite, Hymnus Cherubinus, &c., Vere Dignum et Justum, &c., Dominus vobiscum et cum spiritu tuo*, with several others. And notwithstanding the Liturgies now extant may be interpolated; yet where the forms and expressions are agreeable to Catholic Doctrine, they may well be presumed uncorrupted remainders, and primitive usage; especially since General *Councils* are silent as to the original of these Liturgies."—*Collier's Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 884.

the work of Reformation, writes : “ We are come as near as we possibly could to the Church of the Apostles, and of the old Catholic Bishops, and Fathers; . . . and have directed, according to their customs and ordinances, not only our doctrine, but also the Sacraments, and the form of Common Prayer.”—*Bp. Jewell's Apology. Enchirid. Theol.* vol. i. p. 185.

Until, then, it can be shown that the Reformed Church of England has in fact departed from universal tradition, or that her chief Bishops and teachers have designedly rejected it, we must conclude that Scripture and antiquity is recognised as her rule of faith.

And from this will follow as corollaries—

1. That to hold this rule is no departure from the principle of the Reformation, against the first objection.

2. That it is not identical with the principle of the Church of Rome, against the second.

3. That it does not invest the Church or early Christian writers with the Romish attribute of infallibility, against the third.

4. That there is a consent of early Christian writers in all points of vital importance, and a minute agreement of all the Catholic Creeds, against the fourth.

5. That the Fathers are to be cited as witnesses, not only of *facts*, but also of *doctrines*, against the fifth.

6. That they are to be used, not only destructively to overthrow errors, but also constructively to establish truths, against the sixth¹.

Other objections might fairly be met by corollaries from this conclusion; but as they will be examined in detail in the next part of the subject they are reserved until then.

¹ On the principle of this objection, it may be gravely maintained, that the testimony of the Fathers may be admitted to prove what books are *not* canonical, but not to prove what are so!

CHAPTER III.

THE second point to be established is, that *Scripture and the Creed attested by universal tradition was the rule of faith in the primitive Church.*

In proving this, the following facts must be shown by evidence :

1. That the oral preaching of the Apostles was the *sole* rule of faith before the Scriptures were written.

2. That it is recognised as such in *Holy Scripture* itself.

3. That it was the *chief* rule of faith to the *universal* Church until the books of Scripture were collected, and dispersed in the canon throughout all Churches.

4. That it is recognised by the early Christian writers as a rule of faith *distinct in itself* from the Apostolic Scriptures, although in *absolute agreement* with them.

5. That the *oral preaching* of the Apostles, and *not the Scripture*, was the original source of the *Creed*.

1. The first point, "*that the oral preaching of the Apostles was the sole rule of faith before the Scriptures were written,*" requires no proof, being self-evident. But it is of importance to state the facts of the case in full, that we may ascertain their due weight in deciding the question before us.

In the ministry of the Apostles, as recorded in Holy Scripture, there are three marked and distinct stages. The first,

when they offered the Gospel to Jews only, according to our Lord's commandment ¹. The second, after the conversion of Cornelius, when they offered it also to the devout or proselyted Gentiles. The third, when at the special separation of Paul and Barnabas by the Holy Ghost, they offered it to the whole Gentile world.

Now the date of the conversion of Cornelius is fixed by the late Dr. Burton in the year A. D. 32 ²; and by Mr. Greswell, with greater probability, in the year A. D. 41 ³. The earliest book of Scripture was the Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew, written of course for the Jewish Christians, A. D. 37-38 ⁴, or, by Mr. Greswell, A. D. 42 ⁵.

The date of the first mission of St. Paul and St. Barnabas to the Gentiles is fixed by Dr. Burton, A. D. 45 ⁶; by Mr. Greswell, A. D. 44 ⁷.

The date of the earliest Gospel in Greek is fixed by Dr. Burton, A. D. 54 ⁸; by Mr. Greswell, 55 ⁹. By Mr. Horne it is given as A. D. 61 ¹⁰. But, taking the former as the least favourable chronology for our present point, it is plain that ten or eleven years elapsed *during which St. Paul performed his three apostolic journeys in Asia Minor and in Greece*, while the Gentile Churches possessed no written Gospel, nor any apostolic Scriptures at all, excepting only those particular Churches which had received special epistles to confirm or to recall them to the faith already delivered by oral preaching. The Epistles written during these ten years,

¹ St. Matt. x. 5. Greswell's Dissertations on the Gospels, vol. i. p. 136.

² Lectures on the Eccl. History, &c. Chronological Table, vol. ii. p. 493.

³ Dissertations, &c. vol. i. p. 136.

⁴ Horne's Introduction, &c. vol. iv. p. 259.

⁵ Dissertations, vol. i. p. 152.

⁶ Lectures, &c. Chronological Table, vol. ii. p. 494.

⁷ Dissertations, &c. vol. ii. p. 61, 62.

⁸ Lectures, &c. *ibid.* ⁹

⁹ Dissertations, &c. vol. i. p. 154.

¹⁰ Introduction, &c. vol. iv. p. 259.

according to Dr. Burton, were the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, that to the Church in Galatia, and that to Titus¹; according to Mr. Greswell, the two Epistles to the Thessalonians only, to which he assigns the date A. D. 50². So that, any way, the only written documents, during the first twenty years of the apostolic ministry, were, one Gospel in *Hebrew*, and six Epistles, *i. e.* to *three* particular Churches, and to *one* fellow-labourer, according to the most extended concession; and, according to another chronology certainly possessing at least equal claim to regard, one Hebrew Gospel and two Epistles to *one* particular Church, *i. e.* that of Thessalonica.

But where, during these twenty years, were all the other Apostles of our Lord? The very reason of the thing, and the most constant testimony of historical evidence, must convince us that they were scattered abroad throughout the earth, labouring in the same Gospel, and planting Churches in every nation under heaven³. And if so, what Scriptures did they deliver as a rule of faith? have they perished? If so, what becomes of our confidence that we possess *all* the Gospels; and of the testimony of ages that the Holy Gospels were in number only four⁴? But it is self-evident, that, with the slight exceptions above made, the whole body of the Church, from Spain to India, possessed for twenty years (*i. e.* nearly a generation) no other rule of faith than the oral preaching of the Apostles. The other books of the New Testament canon, except those of St. John, the dates of which fall between the years A. D. 60 and 101, were all written between A. D. 55 and 67⁵, about which time St.

¹ Lectures, &c. Chronological Table at the end of vol. ii. p. 494.

² Dissertations, &c. vol. iv. pt. 2. p. 748.

³ Greswell's Dissertations, vol. i. p. 147. notes.

⁴ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 62.

⁵ *Ibid.* vol. iv. pt. 2. p. 748.

Peter and St. Paul received at Rome the crown of martyrs for Christ. Their companions, St. Mark and St. Luke, were with them, and the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, the Greek Gospel of St. Matthew, the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, the second to Timothy, that to Philemon, and perhaps the second of St. Peter, were written from Rome, after the preaching of the great Apostles of the circumcision and of the Gentiles was ended¹.

From all this we may see for how long a time their oral preaching was the *sole* rule of faith to the Church, and in what way their writings were intended to supply the place of their own personal presence, either for a time, as the Epistles, or for ever, as the Gospels, without in any way affecting their original acts and ordinances, but presupposing, and confirming all; and superadding another rule, not as a *new* institution, but as a test by which things should be kept just as they had been ordained from the beginning.

But this we shall see more in detail under the following head.

2. The next point to be shown is, that *the oral preaching of the Apostles is recognised as the rule of faith in Holy Scripture itself.*

The first proof of this may be drawn from the book of the Acts of the Apostles, which was written between the years A. D. 56 and 60². It is the only narrative we possess, from any inspired writer, of the ministry of the Apostles; and, from first to last, contains no mention of any Scriptures delivered to the Churches, while there is a special mention

¹ Greswell's Dissertations, &c. vol. iv. pt. 2. p. 748.

² Ibid.

of the delivery of the decrees of the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem, on the subject of the exemption of the Gentile converts from the Mosaic observances. "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the Churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily¹." This was about A. D. 48². Is it to be believed, that St. Paul, in his last charge to the Ephesian Church, where he testified that he had kept back nothing from them, but had declared unto them "all the counsel of God," and foretold the arising among them of men who should speak "perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," that at such a time he should have said nothing of a written rule of faith, if such had existed? He throws them back on his own *oral teaching*, when he dwelt among them. "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears³." . . . And "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*," which sacred words are no where written by the four Evangelists; and our knowledge of them we owe to this record of St. Paul's oral preaching, which was composed by St. Luke four years after the event⁴. It is remarkable that the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Matthew were probably extant at that very time.

The absolute silence of an inspired writer, professing to record the first delivery of the faith, and foundation of the

¹ Acts xvi. 4, 5.

² Greswell's Dissertations on the Gospels, vol. iv. p. 138.

³ Acts xx. 31.

⁴ Greswell's Diss. vol. iv. p. 520.

Church, on the subject of a *written* rule, at the very time he is narrating the acts of our Lord's Apostles, is a proof hardly to be resisted. But what is gathered negatively from St. Luke's silence, may be concluded affirmatively from the other Apostolic writings.

The following passages, taken from the Epistles of St. Paul, are arranged in their chronological order. Those that are in direct proof, are given at length; and others which fully but indirectly recognise the same rule, are only referred to.

1 THESSALONIANS (*written before all the Gospels, except the Hebrew of St. Matthew*), chap. i. 5, 6.—“For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction,” &c.

Chap. ii. 13.—“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God,” &c.

Chap. iv. 1, 2.—“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.”

2 THESSALONIANS, chap. ii. 5.—“Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?”

Ver. 15.—“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [*i. e.* all that has been any way *delivered unto you*] which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

Chap. iii. 6.—“ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, [*ἀτάκτως*, out of order, whether of faith or practice,] and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

I CORINTHIANS, chap. ii. 1—4.

Ver. 10.—“ For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.”

Chap. xi. 2.—“ Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances (*παράδοσεις*), as I delivered them to you.”

Ver. 16.—“ But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”

Ver. 23.—“ For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread,” &c.

Chap. xv. 1—4.—“ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve,” &c.

[The Scriptures signify “ the types, prophecies, and promises, of the Scriptures,” *i. e.* of the Old Testament¹.]

TITUS, chap. i. 5.—“ For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting,

¹ Scott's Commentary, and Hammond on the passages.

and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." And ver. 9.

GALATIANS, chap. i. 6—10.—“ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

Ver. 11, 12.—“ But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Chap. ii. 2, 6, 7.

[These verses, and the last, show that St. Paul's preaching was the oral delivery of a revelation made immediately to himself, and not through the teaching, much less the writing of other Apostles.]

Chap. iv. 11, 13, 14.—“ I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. . . . Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” Also ver. 19.

Chap. vi. 16.—“ And as many as walk according to this rule, [*i. e.* the doctrine of the cross, see ver. 14.] Peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

All these Epistles were written before or in the same year with the Gospels of St. Mark, and the Greek of St. Matthew. But this fact is of little importance, when we

remember that the date of St. Paul's *oral preaching*, to which his *Epistles refer back*, was *earlier than the whole canon of the New Testament Scripture*.

The same remark will apply to the class of Epistles we now proceed to examine, which were, perhaps, written after the publication of two of the Gospels, although even this is questioned by Dr. Burton's Chronology ¹.

EPHESIANS, chap. i. 13. taken with ACTS xix. and xx. 17—38.

COLOSSIANS, chap. i. 5, 6.—“ The hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world,” &c. See also verse 23.

Chap. ii. 5—8.

HEBREWS, chap. ii. 1—4.

Chap. xiii. 7, 8.—“ Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

1 TIMOTHY, chap. i. 3.—“ As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” And ver. 4. and 18.

Chap. iii. 14, 15.

Chap. iv. 6. 16.

Chap. vi. 3. 13, 14.

Ver. 20.—“ O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.”

2 TIMOTHY, chap. i. 12.

Ver. 13, 14.—“ Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ

¹ Lectures, &c. Chron. Table, vol. ii. p. 495.

Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”

Chap. ii. 1, 2.—“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Chap. iii. 14.—“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.”

Such are the evidences from St. Paul’s Epistles. On reading them over, it will seem, perhaps, that many are wide of the point; but I would take advantage of that fact by deducing conclusions which, being less extensive than the premises, will fall therefore strictly within their scope.

They are as follows :

1. That St. Paul in no place refers to any written documents of the New Testament, used by himself or by any other Apostle.

2. That he universally delivered orally the doctrine of the Gospel as a *sacred trust*¹ to those whom he set over the Churches, as to the Ephesian elders, Timothy, Titus, &c. for which reason the passages relating to their appointment, and that in Hebrews xiii. 7, 8. were included.

In corroboration of this may be added, that St. LUKE, the companion of St. Paul, opens his Gospel² in the year A. D. 60, by referring to the narratives of uninspired writers³, and assigning them as the reason of his making his own compilation.

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in

¹ See Suicer’s Thesaurus, art. *παρακαταθήκη*.

² Greswell’s Dissert. vol. iv. part ii. p. 748. By Mr. Horne it is fixed at A. D. 63-64. Introd. vol. iv. p. 259.

³ Scott in this place; Eusebii Hist. lib. iii. xxiv.

order a declaration of these things, which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word: it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.”—*St. Luke* i. 1—4.

The following passages, from the remaining Apostolical Epistles, may be added :

1 PETER, chap. i. 12. 25.

2 PETER, chap. i. 16. 18.

Chap. iii. 1, 2.—“This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which, I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”

St. Mark was the companion of St. Peter, and his Gospel was compiled from St. Peter's preaching, and, it is said, under his eye¹.

1 JOHN, chap. ii. 20, 21.—“But ye have an unction from the Holy One [compare Ephes. i. 13], and ye know all things. I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it.”

Ver. 24.—“Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.”

Ver. 27.—“But the anointing which ye have received of him [see above, and 2 Cor. i. 21, 22], abideth in you,

¹ Greswell, *Diss.* vol. i. 121.

and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

JUDE, 3. 17.

Men's minds will be variously affected by these passages. Some will receive them with a hearty readiness, as full proof of the point at issue: others will regard them doubtfully; and some will endeavour to explain most of them away. Let it be so. The whole body of quotations has been given, that men may deal with them according to their various leanings. After all, enough will be left to establish the only point of importance, i. e. that the oral preaching of the Apostles, which was the sole rule of faith before the Scriptures were written, is recognised as a rule of faith in Scripture itself. No more than this is required.

3. To this, however, must be added that the *oral preaching of the Apostles was the chief rule of faith to the universal Church, even after the books of Scripture had been written, that is, until they were collected, and dispersed in a body or canon, throughout all the Churches of the world.*

I am not aware that it is ever thought that every several book of the sacred canon contains all things necessary to salvation, as every fragment of a mirror presents a perfect image. “In the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church¹.”

It is plain, then, that in declaring the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, the Church of England speaks of the *whole* Scripture, i. e. the perfect Canon of the Old and New Testament.

The opponents of universal tradition have a twofold

¹ Article VI.

difficulty here to contend against. They have to fix the date of the collection of the Apostolical Scriptures, and of the dispersion of the collected volume among Christian Churches.

They who fix the earliest time put it no higher than the course of the second century. But that would be, more or less, an hundred years after the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, and fifty after the death of St. John, with whose Gospel (A. D. 101) the number of the sacred writings was completed.

It is probable, from a passage in Eusebius, that St. John after the writing of his own Gospel, saw and authenticated the four as they now stand¹. We find the three earliest quoted by St. Clement of Rome, and all by St. Irenæus, who assigns to them the number of four².

The Epistles of St. Paul seem to have been next added to the Canon: his name, his almost universal apostolic journeys, and his autograph at the close of every letter, giving to them a greater notoriety³. The Epistle to the Hebrews was, however, doubted in some Churches, as in the Church of Rome, even in the fourth century. St. Paul's Epistles are quoted by St. Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, and Tertullian, in the second century.

The Epistles of St. James, St. Peter, the two first of St. John, and the Apocalypse, are quoted by St. Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenæus.

The first Church that possessed a complete list (the Epistle to the Hebrews excepted) was probably the Church of Rome: and that arising from many causes. Ten of the inspired books were there written, namely, three Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and six Epistles. Rome was

¹ Eusebii Hist. lib. iii. 24.

² St. Iren. lib. iii. 11. 8.

³ Dodwell, Diss. on Iren. i. 41. 2 Thess. iii. 17.

the centre of the world, and the focus of all lines of communication. Still we find, even in Eusebius's time (A. D. 315), that the books of the New Testament were divided into two classes; namely, those that were universally, and those that were not universally received. To the former he refers the four Gospels, St. Paul's Epistles, the first of St. John, the first of St. Peter; to the latter, the Epistle of St. James, that of St. Jude, the second and third of St. John, the second of St. Peter, that to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse¹. But of these latter it must be observed, that they were never universally *doubted*, but always in some Churches steadfastly received. All that Eusebius intends is, that they were not *universally received* by all Churches, as those of the former class; which fact, so far from shaking our confidence in the canon as we receive it, ought all the more to confirm our trust; inasmuch as it shows the severe jealousy with which each particular Church investigated the claims of every several book, when presented to it as the writing of an inspired man. It is a striking proof of the rigid tests applied by the Church in the fixing of the sacred canon; and, therefore, of its present certainty.

Of ten lists of the inspired books of the New Testament found in the writings of the early Church, six agree exactly with our own; namely, that of Athanasius (A. D. 315), Epiphanius (378), Jerome (392), Ruffinus (390), Augustine (394), and of the forty-four Bishops assembled in the third council of Carthage (397); of the other four catalogues, those of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem (A. D. 340), of the Bishops of the Council of Laodicea (364), and of Gregory Nazianzen (375), are the same as our canon, excepting only the omission

¹ Eusebii Hist. lib. iii. 24.

of the Apocalypse. Philaster, bishop of Brescia (A. D. 380), omits also the Epistle to the Hebrews, but acknowledges both in other parts of his works ¹.

All these lists are from writers of the fourth century. But their unanimous consent, except only in the point of the Apocalypse, and Philaster's omission of the Hebrews, is proof enough that this canon had been long fixed, and had extended itself from Jerusalem to the north of Italy, and into Africa. We may well suppose it to have been fixed somewhere about the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century. Now it is highly important to take notice of the *gradual* fixing of the canon; for it must be self-evident, that, in the mean time, the oral preaching of the Apostles must have been the *chief* rule of faith in the *universal* Church. As every additional sacred book was interchanged among the several Churches, it gave, as it were, new confirmation to that faith which they had received from the beginning, into which each man had been baptized, and which every Christian had by heart, as the rule of his belief.

4. The next point is to show that the *oral preaching of the Apostles is recognised by the early Christian writers as a rule of faith, distinct in itself from the Apostolic Scriptures, although in absolute agreement with them.*

The first passages we will take are from St. Irenæus, the earliest and greatest witness to Holy Scripture in the second century, who testifies to us, that what the Apostles first preached "they afterwards, by the will of God, delivered to us in writing, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith ²."

"When they [*i. e.* heretics] are convicted from the Scrip-

¹ Horne's Introduction, &c. vol. i. p. 74, 5. ² See Sermon, p. 20, and note.

tures, they turn about, and accuse the Scriptures themselves, as if they were incorrect or unauthentic; alleging that they are equivocally expressed, and that the truth cannot be found from them, by those that are ignorant of [their] tradition; for that tradition [of theirs] was not delivered in writing, but by word of mouth; for which reason, also, Paul said, ‘We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world.’ And each one of them declares that to be their wisdom, which he has invented of himself, that is, a mere fiction; so that, according to them, truth may well be sometimes in Valentinus, sometimes in Marcian, sometimes in Cerinthus; then afterwards it was in Basilides, or in him who opposed him, who could utter nothing that was sound; for each one of them, perverse every way, depraving the rule of truth (*regulam veritatis depravans*) is not ashamed to preach himself. But when again we challenge them to come to that *tradition which is from the Apostles*, which is kept in the Churches by the succession of elders, they set themselves against tradition, saying that they being not only wiser than the elders, but also than the Apostles, have found the pure truth And so therefore it turns out, that they agree neither with *Scripture* nor with *tradition* ¹.”

“Since, therefore, there are such abundant proofs, it is not right to seek among any others the truth, which it is easy to receive from the Church, forasmuch as the Apostles most fully laid up in it, as in a rich depository, all things belonging to the truth, that all who would might take from it the water of life: for this is the entrance of life; but all others are thieves and robbers. Wherefore we ought to avoid them; but whatsoever is in the Church that

¹ St. Iren. lib. iii. ii. 1, 2.

to affect with the greatest diligence, and to embrace as the tradition of truth. Wherefore, if there did arise a controversy about ever so small a point, ought we not to have recourse to the most ancient Churches, which the Apostles in person frequented, and receive from them a decision, certain and manifest, of the point at issue? For what if the Apostles *had left us no Scriptures at all, ought we not to follow the line of tradition, which they delivered to them to whom they committed the Churches?* With which rule many barbarous nations agree who believe in Christ, having salvation written, without paper and ink, by the Spirit, in their hearts; and who watchfully preserve the ancient tradition, believing in one God the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things which are in them, through Christ Jesus the Son of God; who, by reason of His exceeding love towards the work of his hands (mankind), endured to be born of a virgin, himself by himself uniting man to God, and suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and being received up in glory, shall come in glory to be the Saviour of them that are saved, and Judge of those that are judged, and shall send away into eternal fire the corrupters of truth, and the despisers of his Father, and of his coming. This faith, they who have believed without letters, as concerns our language are barbarians, but as to their wisdom, and way of life, and conversation, are most wise for the faith's sake, and are pleasing to God, walking in all righteousness, and chastity, and wisdom. To whom should any one, speaking with them in their own tongue, declare the inventions of heretics, straightway they would close their ears, and flee as far as possible, not enduring even to listen to blasphemous discourses. So, by means of the same ancient tradition of the Apostles, they do not admit even in the conception of their minds any of the portentous blas-

phemies (of the heretics), and never, as yet, had there been among them any sect, nor had their [*i. e.* the heretical] doctrine been broached ¹.”

“The *tradition*, therefore, which came from the Apostles, so obtaining in the Church, and abiding even to our time, let us come back again to that demonstration which is drawn from the *Scriptures* of those Apostles who wrote the Gospel ².

“The true knowledge (*γνώσις* of which the Gnostics vaunted) is the doctrine of the Apostles, and the ancient system of the Church which is in all the world; and the form (character, *χαρακτήρ*) of the body of Christ according to the successions of bishops, to whom they delivered the Church which is in every place, and the full use of Scripture, which has descended to us by a safe custody, free from adulteration, admitting neither addition nor diminution; and the reading without falsification, and the *rightful exposition* according to the Scriptures ³.”

Exactly parallel to these passages is the quotation from St. Irenæus in the foregoing Sermon ⁴. And from all these places it is evident that the Apostolical *preaching* and the Apostolical *writings* were wholly distinct in the mind of Irenæus. They were as perfectly distinct in themselves as the two parts of an indenture, although their *harmony* was perfect also. The oral preaching of the Apostles and their writings were both ascertainable by one and the same test, *i. e.* universal tradition; and gainsayers might be convicted by either, and the one fixed sense of the Gospel was secured by the exact agreement of the unwritten and the written tradition: the one serving as a running commentary upon the Book, the other as a fixed test and proof of the universal teaching of the Church.

¹ St. Iren. lib. III. iv. 1, 2.

² Ibid. v. 1.

³ St. Iren. lib. IV. xxxiii. 8.

⁴ See Sermon, p. 31.

Tertullian writes in exactly the same manner.

“Christ Jesus our Lord chose to himself twelve special companions, the destined teachers for all nations. One therefore having fallen, he commanded the remaining eleven, as he was departing, after his resurrection, to the Father, to go and teach the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Straightway, therefore, the Apostles, . . . having chosen by lot Matthias for a twelfth in the room of Judas, by authority of the prophecy which is in David’s Psalm, and having received the promised might of the Holy Ghost for miracles and gifts of utterance, having first borne witness of the faith which is in Jesus Christ, and founded Churches throughout Judea, then went forth into the world, and promulgated the same doctrine of the faith to the Gentiles, and founded Churches in every city: from which, thenceforward, other Churches borrowed, and continually borrow, the line of the faith and the seeds of doctrine, and become Churches themselves. And by this they are reputed to be themselves apostolical, as being the offspring of Apostolical Churches. Every family must be referred to its original. Therefore these, so many, and so great Churches, are still that same Church which was first from the Apostles, from which all are derived. Thus all are primitive, and all are apostolical, so long as all are one. The proofs of unity are the fellowship of peace, the name of brotherhood, the mutual pledge of hospitality, which rights no other rule controls, than the united tradition of the same mystery. Hither, therefore, we must refer the prescription¹.”

By “*prescription*” Tertullian means that form of tradi-

¹ Tertull. de Præscript. Hær. xx. xxi.

tionary doctrine which had so obtained in the Church from the beginning, that it had pre-occupied the ground to the exclusion of all novelties.

“But, to return from this digression, priority is to be ascribed to truth, and posteriority to falsehood, under the sanction of that parable which gave the first place to the good grain of wheat sown by the Lord, and brings in afterwards the adulteration by the enemy the devil,” &c. “So that, from the very order, it is plain that whatsoever is delivered *first* is of the Lord, and true; but that which is brought in *afterwards* is false and foreign¹.”

He then challenges the heretics to show the succession of their doctrines. “For their doctrine itself, compared with that of the Apostles, will declare, by its diversity and contrariety, that it has neither an Apostle nor an Apostolic man for its author; because, as the Apostles did not teach diverse things one from another, so neither would the Apostolic Christians put forth things contrary to the Apostles, except they also revolted from the Apostles, and preached contrary to them².” This, he says, is the challenge which heretics will have to answer; and, as for their appeals to Scripture, until they can show that they hold the Apostolic *doctrines*, they have no right to the Apostolic *writings*. “To whom it may be justly said, ‘Who are ye? When and whence did ye come? What are ye doing in my property, seeing ye are none of mine? By what right do you cut my woods, Marcion? By what privilege do you turn my fountains, Valentinus? By what authority do you remove my landmarks, Apelles? The possession is mine. Why do you sow and pasture at your will here? The possession is mine; I had it long ago; I had first possession; I have secure titles from the

¹ Tertull. de Præscript. Hær. xxxi.

² Ibid. xxxii.

very men whose it was to bestow; I am the heir of the Apostles; as they provided in their will, as they entrusted it, so I hold it. You, assuredly, they did always disinherit, and disown as strangers and enemies.’ But how are heretics strangers and enemies to the Apostles, but by reason of the diversity of doctrine, which each man, at his own will, either propounds or takes up in opposition to the Apostles? To their diversity of doctrine we must impute their adulteration both of Scripture and of interpretation,” &c. ¹

Tertullian argues, throughout, that the faithful reception of Apostolical tradition was a necessary condition to appealing for proof to Apostolical Scripture; most distinctly marking the co-existence of both the unwritten and written tradition, and asserting their exact agreement. “What, forsooth, is there in ours (Scripture) contrary to us? What have we inserted of our own, that we should need to remedy any contradiction to it, which is to be discovered in the Scriptures, by taking away, or adding, or transposing? What we are (*i. e.* in doctrine), that have the Scriptures been from their very beginning ².”

Origen, speaking of the appeal made by heretics to Holy Scripture, says, “As often as they bring forward canonical Scriptures, in which every Christian consents and believes, they seem to say, ‘Behold, the word of truth is in your houses.’ But we ought not to believe them, nor to depart from the primitive ecclesiastical tradition, nor believe otherwise than as the Churches of God have handed down to us by succession.

“Which things,” says Eusebius of Cesarea, “being shortly propounded to the Galatians, out of their own epistle,

¹ Tertull. de Præscript. Hær. xxxvii.

² Ibid. xxxviii.

³ Orig. in Matth. xxix. tom. iii. p. 864. Ed. Ben.

namely, the saving faith which gives us the mystical regeneration in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and besides the Divine (traditions) which are written, the Catholic Church of God, which is from one end of the earth to the other, seals to us the testimonies of Scripture, by *tradition which is not written* ¹.”

St. Athanasius, writing to Adelphius, says, “Our faith is right, coming to us from the teaching of the Apostles, and the tradition of the Fathers, and being confirmed both out of the Old and the New Testaments ².”

Again, “Nevertheless in addition to these things (*i. e.* the foregoing proofs from *Scripture*), let us examine the tradition itself, which was from the beginning, and the doctrine and the faith of the Catholic Church, which the Lord delivered, and the Apostles preached, and the Fathers preserved. For in this faith is the Church founded, and he that falls from it neither can be, nor may be any longer called a Christian. . . . Thus the unity of God is preached in the Church . . . And that they may know that this is the faith of the Church, let them learn how the Lord, sending his disciples, enjoined them to lay this foundation for the Church, saying, ‘Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ And the Apostles went, and so taught; and this is the preaching which is in every Church under heaven ³.” And at the close of the same letter, he writes, “I have delivered [this doctrine] according to the Apostolical faith delivered to us by the Fathers, adding nothing from any other source; but what things I have learned, (those) I have expressed, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures ⁴.”

¹ Eusebius contra Marcellum Ancy. lib. i. c. 1.

² St. Athan. Ep. ad Adelph. 6. tom. ii. p. 914.

³ St. Athan. Ep. 1. ad Serapionem, 28. tom. ii. p. 676. ⁴ Ibid. 33.

And St. Chrysostom on 2 Thess. ii. 15, says, “Hence it is plain, that they did not deliver all things by letter, but many things unwritten. Both those and these are alike worthy to be believed: so that we esteem the tradition of the Church to be worthy of belief¹.”

And St. Gregory Nazianzen writes:—

“And God grant that we may confess unto our last breath, in all boldness of speech, the good deposit of the holy Fathers who were nearest to Christ, and to the original faith, even the confession in which we have been nurtured, which we uttered before any thing else, and in which may we together die at the last².”

So completely in their minds was the right interpretation of Scripture combined with Scripture itself, that both, as together expressing the whole doctrine of the Apostles, are habitually called by one common term, Apostolical tradition. These are the passages so largely quoted by Romanist writers, everywhere imposing on the word “tradition” the gloss of *unwritten*. For instance, St. Hippolytus writes, “Let us believe therefore, brethren, according to *the tradition of the Apostles*, that God the Word descended from heaven into the holy Virgin Mary³.” And so also St. Cyprian, “Whence is this tradition? Does it descend to us by the authority of the Lord, and of the Gospel? Does it come from the ordinances, and epistles of the Apostles? If therefore it is enjoined either in the Gospel, or in the Epistles of the Apostles, or contained in the Acts, &c. . . . let this divine and holy tradition be observed.” And in the same epistle: “If in anything the truth shall seem to fail and to waver, let us return to the original of the Lord, and to the tradition of the Gospel, and of the Apos-

¹ St. Chrys. in loc.

² Greg. Naz. Orat. vi. tom. i. 141.

³ St. Hippol. contra Noetum. Op. 243.

bles, and thence let our practice have its rise, whence our rule, and order, and beginning came. For it has been delivered to us, that there is one God, and one Christ, and one hope, and one faith, and one Church, and one only baptism ordained in the Church alone; from which unity he that departs must be found among heretics, whom while he defends against the Church, he impugns the Sacrament of the divine tradition ¹." St. Cyprian plainly means the whole gospel of Christ attested by the whole Apostolical tradition, both written and unwritten.

"Wherefore," writes St. Basil, "it behoves him that has before his eyes the judgment of Christ, and who knows how dangerous it is to take anything from, or to add to those things which are delivered by the Spirit; not to be ambitious of new expositions of his own (*παρ' ἑαυτὸν καινοτομεῖν*) but quietly to rest in the things which have been before declared by the Saints. But to venture upon anything which neither common custom, nor the use of the Scriptures (*ἡ κοινὴ συνήθεια οὔτε ἡ τῶν γραφῶν χρῆσις*) admit, is the height of madness ²."

I shall add only one more writer, who may fittingly close the list, as he is the great Catholic witness of the rule of which we speak.

"Here somebody may ask, 'Do the heretics also use testimonies from the Divine Scripture?' They do use them, and vehemently indeed. For you may see them flitting through every book of the holy law, through Moses, through the books of Kings, through the Psalms, through the Apostles, through the Gospels, through the Prophets. Whether among their own families, or among strangers, in private, or in public, in their discourses, or in their books, in

¹ St. Cyp. Ep. 74. ad Pompeium.

² St. Basil. adv. Eunom. lib. ii. c. 8.

their feastings, or in the streets, there is hardly any thing that they propound of their own inventions, without trying to throw over it a shadow of words from Scripture. Read the works of Paul of Samosata, of Priscillian, of Eunomius, of Jovinian, and of the other posts; you may see an infinite heap of quotations, not a page suffered to pass, but what is coloured and disguised by sentences from the New or the Old Testament. But, by just so much the more ought we to beware of them, and to fear them, by how much the deeper they lie hid under the shadows of the divine law And if any man should ask one of these heretics, who is endeavouring to persuade him to his opinion, Whence do you prove, whence do you teach me that I ought to let go the universal and antient faith of the Church Catholic? he immediately answers, 'It is written.' And straightway he produces a thousand testimonies, a thousand quotations, a thousand authorities from the Law, from the Psalms, from the Apostles, from the Prophets, by which, interpreted in a new and false way, the unhappy soul may be hurled from the Catholic stronghold into the depths of heresy What then shall Catholics, and sons of the Church their mother do? In what way shall they discern truth from falsehood in the Holy Scriptures? This they shall take care with greatest heed to do, even that which in the beginning of this commonitory we have written as the counsel which holy and wise men have delivered to us; namely, that they shall interpret the Divine Canon according to the traditions of the Church universal, and the rules of Catholic doctrine: in which also it is necessary for them to follow the universality, antiquity, and consent of the Catholic and Apostolic Church ¹."

¹ Vincent. Lirin. Commonit. sect. xxv. xxvi. xxvii.

In the days of Tertullian the heretics attacked the canon of Scripture; in the days of Vincentius, the interpretation. The answer of both was the same. The Book, and the interpretation rest alike upon universal tradition.

We have now seen with what extreme and jealous faithfulness the early Church preserved the harmony of the Apostolical preaching, and of the Apostolical writings attested by universal tradition; requiring for every dogma, orally delivered as matter of faith, a proof from Holy Writ¹, and for every text of Scripture an interpretation in accordance with primitive and universal consent. For they well knew that the original source of universal consent was nothing less than the preaching of Christ's Apostles. That nothing short of an *universal* cause, in all places acting alike with *one unerring uniform* operation, could bring about an *universal* effect, which, like the laws of the material world, and the instincts of animate creatures, point by their universal harmony to the sole universal Agent. In the midst of a moral chaos, where, for four thousand years, all jarring elements of ill contended—heathenism, a vain philosophy, lust and wilfulness, falsehood and wrong—they saw a new creation of truth and light arising; men and nations were by some higher force compelled into agreement; a new instinct was stamped upon them, a new nature given. All Christendom had one heart, and one voice, and walked by the same rule, and spake the same thing. The consent of Christians was a visible and perpetual MIRACLE. And God was the Author of it. The consent of the Christian world they knew to be the voice of God, prolonged from the Apostles to themselves.

It would be easy to multiply passages parallel to those

¹ See proofs quoted in the Sermon, pp. 15—22.

already quoted, but it is hoped that these will suffice. I would only remark, that they have been designedly taken from writers extending to the latter end of the fourth century, in order that it might be seen how exactly the same rule was observed, both after the fixing of the Canon of the New Testament, and before.

For the present we may conclude that “the oral preaching of the Apostles is recognised by the early Christian writers as a rule of faith, distinct in itself from the Apostolic Scriptures, although in absolute agreement with them.”

5. Although we shall, indeed, seem “*agere actum*” in the following point, yet it may be still of use to state distinctly, that the *oral preaching of the Apostles, and not the Apostolical Scripture was the original source from which the Baptismal Creed was drawn.*

This must be self-evident in the case of the Apostles. That they required of every man whom they baptized a profession of faith in Christ’s Gospel, the Holy Scripture itself attests. That they and their fellow-labourers had been baptizing, and founding Churches of baptized men throughout the earth for twenty years, before any of the four Gospels existed, we have already seen. The only question that can arise is as to the substance and extent of the profession of faith made by each man at his baptism.

The Socinian school have long and in vain endeavoured to show that the only baptismal formula was “in the name of Jesus Christ¹;” pretending that the departure of the Apostles from the injunction of our Lord in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, proves that they did not conceive the form then given to be necessary, or expressive of faith in the Holy Trinity. They treat the incidental historical narrative in

¹ Wilson’s Scripture Illustrations of Unitarianism, p. 78.

the Book of Acts ¹, and the allusions of St. Paul, as a full exposition of the Apostolic practice.

Episcopius and others, proceeding on a similar principle, argued that the only form of baptismal profession was that expressed by our Lord to the Apostles. Basnage and others maintained that the Creed was compiled by successive additions, chiefly in the second century, in opposition to the successive heresies as they arose.

Bishop Bull has for ever decided the question against Episcopius; and Grabe, in his Annotations upon Bp. Bull's Works, has proved that the whole substance of the Apostles' Creed as it now stands, except only the articles of the "Descent into Hell," and of the "Communion of Saints," was contained in the baptismal profession of the apostolic age. The two excepted articles are, in fact, only *explanations* of the articles "buried," and the "Church ²."

Grabe established his proof by the evidence of the Holy Scriptures, especially the Book of Acts, in which the oral preaching of the Apostles to the unbaptized was afterwards narrated; and also by the testimony of antient writers, who give the substance of the faith which was professed by all at their baptism.

In the following passages, taken from the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke has recorded every article of the Creed as declared in the original *oral preaching* of the Apostles,

¹ Acts ii. 38.

² Grabe's Annotat. on c. 4, 5, 6, of Bp. Bull's *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ de Necessitate Credendi*, &c. and Bingham's *Antiquities*, book x. c. iii. 7.

Lord King, in his *History of the Apostles' Creed*, maintains that part of the Creed "was transmitted down from the Apostles, and the other parts thereof were afterwards added," &c.—*History*, &c. pp. 38—42.

But the *additions* he speaks of are little more than *explanations*; and these, though they may be *proved* from Scripture, he refers not to *Scripture* as the *source*, but to the Apostolical doctrine preserved in the several Churches, p. 42.

except two, which also are so directly implied, as only to need comparison with the passages of Holy Scripture inserted parenthetically in the following references¹: Acts xvii. 24; viii. 37. ii. 27. [comp. Luke i. 35.] ii. 22, 29, 30. [Gal. iv. 4.] xxvi. 22, 23; ii. 23. 31, 32. 34; xvii. 31; ii. 33; xx. 28; xx. 32; ii. 38; xvii. 32; xiii. 46. It is surely too self-evident to need proof, that they who were baptized, were baptized on the condition of faith in the Apostolic preaching; and that they professed, in some form, to embrace the whole doctrine delivered to them.

The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 1, 2, 3), and to the Romans (vi. 17), distinctly refer to some fixed form of doctrine in the keeping of all Christians². And the following verse in St. Paul's first Epistle to Timothy bears very significant marks of a summary of evangelical truth: "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

The constant tradition of the Church attests the fact, that *some form or summary* of doctrine was professed at baptism by every candidate from the very beginning of the Gospel.

The only question, then, is, do the baptismal creeds of the later Church represent the baptismal summary used by the Apostles? Are they lineally descended, and, therefore, the genuine offspring of their original oral preaching? Such has ever been the universal tradition of the Church. With the lineal descent of holy baptism has come down to us, also, the baptismal profession or creed; in substance the same as at the beginning; in language, from time to time retouched so as to condemn the false glosses of heresy, as they successively

¹ On this point see Grabe's Annot. ut supra, Sect. 9.

² See Suicer's Thesaurus, art. τύπος.

endeavoured to impose themselves upon the rule of faith. And it is to be observed, that, as the *substance* of the Creed is acknowledged by all to be in point of time *older* than the Apostolic Scriptures, and therefore not at the first derived from them, but only confirmed by a subsequent and fixed attestation, so the original *wording* of the Creed, whatsoever it might be, must also be drawn from the oral preaching. And, further, the subsequent explanations, as at the Council of Nice, were made not by the insertion of Scriptural language, the very meaning of which was the point at issue, but by the introduction of words accepted by the faithful as expressive of the universal belief of Christians, and in harmony with the Catholic interpretation of Holy Writ. What they did was to throw a safeguard around the Apostolical Scriptures to preserve them from a novel interpretation; but to fortify Scripture by Scripture, when the *sense* of the same Scripture is the point at issue, is only to beg the question over and over again, and to leave the whole doctrine as open to misinterpretation at last as it was at the beginning. It is plain that Scripture was never the source either of the *substance*, or of the *wording*, although it was the perpetual test and confirmation of both¹; while the Creed in turn expressed the witness of the universal Church from the very beginning, as to the character of the Apostolic preaching, and so became a rule for interpreting the Apostolic writings. This harmony of the Creed and of the Scripture was thus fixed for ever in the Church as the first rule of interpretation.

We will now take some examples of the Catholic Creeds, and trace them upwards towards the Apostolic times.

¹ S. Augustin, de Symbolo, i. and S. Cyril, Catech. v. speak of the Creed as a summary of the chief heads of Scripture, but they plainly mean no more than that, it may be either deduced from Scripture or resolved back into it, *i. e.* its perfect agreement in substance, and completeness as a summary of the faith.

It will not be necessary to recite in full the Nicene and the Apostles' Creed as we receive them. They are respectively the Creeds of the Eastern and of the Western Churches, and are the representative of two lines of the baptismal confession, which evidently converge as we pursue them upward.

The first example, then, shall be the Creed of the Church of Cæsarea. It is preserved by Eusebius (A. D. 315), who was first a presbyter, and then bishop of that see. He says it is the Creed that he had received from the bishops who went before him, and also at his own first catechetical instruction and baptism.

“ We believe in one God the Father Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible :

“ And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, light of light, life of life, the only begotten Son, the first-born of every creature, begotten of his Father before all worlds, by whom also all things were made, who for our salvation was incarnate, and dwelt among men, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead :

“ And we believe in one Holy Ghost; believing each One of these to be, and to exist; the Father truly the Father, and the Son truly the Son, and the Holy Ghost truly the Holy Ghost; as our Lord, when he sent his disciples to preach, said, ‘ Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ Touching whom we affirm that we thus hold and thus think, and have held of old, and will contend for this faith even unto death; and we anathematize every godless heresy ¹.”

¹ St. Athan. de Decretis Nicænæ Synodi, tom. i. p. 238.

The next we may cite is the Creed of the Church of Jerusalem, given by St. Cyril, bishop of that see (A. D. 350), in his catechetical instructions.

“ We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible ;

“ And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father, very God before all worlds, by whom all things were made, who came in the flesh, and was made man, [of the virgin by the Holy Ghost,] was crucified and buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into the heavens, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and shall come with glory to judge the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end :

“ And in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which spake by the Prophets; and in one baptism of repentance, for remission of sins; and in One Holy Catholic Church; and in the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting¹.”

The next is a Creed given by Ruffinus in his Exposition of the Apostolical Creed, and called by him the Creed of the Eastern Churches². But it is neither the Creed of Nice nor that of Constantinople, and is earlier than those above cited³, being probably the basis of them; and as Ruffinus shows, is in the strictest accordance with the Creeds of Rome and Aquileia, and so of the Western Churches at large.

The necessity which demanded a further explication of the Eastern Creed is sufficiently proved, by the fact that the heresies, such as that of Paul of Samosata, impugning the Godhead of our Lord had first arisen in the East, and during the third century. This the Creed of Cæsarea shows

¹ S. Cyrilli Cat. 6, &c. passim.

² Ruffin. Expos. Symb. Apost. ad calc. S. Cypr. Op.

³ Vossius, de Tribus Symbolis, I. xxx.

by the words, "And we anathematize every godless heresy."

The Oriental Creed as given by Ruffinus is as follows :—

"I believe in one God the Father Almighty :

"And in our one Lord Jesus Christ, his only Son; who by the Holy Ghost was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried; on the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father: from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

"And in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Church; the remission of sins; the resurrection of the flesh¹."

The Creed of the Church of Aquileia :—

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, invisible and impassible :

"And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who by the Holy Ghost was born of the Virgin Mary; was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father: from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

"And in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Church; the remission of sins; the resurrection of this flesh."

The Creed of the Church of Rome :—

"I believe in God the Father Almighty :

"And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who by the Holy Ghost was born of the Virgin Mary; was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried; on the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father: from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

¹ Ruffin. ut supra.

“ And in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Church; the remission of sins; the resurrection of the flesh ¹.”

The exact coincidence in substance, and almost in words, of these three Creeds, no one can fail to observe. And the importance of their agreement is very great, inasmuch as it proves the harmony of the Eastern and Western Churches in their baptismal form, before the pressure of heresy compelled the former to enlarge their definitions; while the ready reception of the Creeds so enlarged, as for instance the Nicene and Constantinopolitan, by the Western Church, proves also the agreement of the latter in the fuller exposition of the Eastern Symbols. Both before and after that enlargement, they were judged to be in substance exactly the same with those of the West.

With the Creeds of Rome and Aquileia, the Creeds of Ravenna, and Taurinum (Turin), and of the Churches in Spain, Africa, and Gaul, agree almost to the very letter ².

Ruffinus speaks, like all the ancient writers, of the Baptismal Creeds, as universal and immemorial traditions. No date, no author, no council, is spoken of as originating, or changing them. They were, and ever had been, in the mouths of all men. They are traceable upwards towards the Apostolic ages, as far as evidence can reach; and they form in some shape, an integral and distinct part of the deposit of truth, committed in the beginning to the Church. So that to this the rule of St. Augustine may be applied: “ What the universal Church holds, not having been instituted by any council, but always retained, is most rightly

¹ Ruffin. *ut supra*.

² Bingham gives a collection of the Catholic Creeds translated into English, with an account of each, in his *Antiquities, &c.* b. x. c. iv. And Walchius gives the same, and many more, in the original, in his *Bibliotheca Symbolica*, which is a small, but very valuable book.

believed to be delivered by the authority of the Apostles¹ ;” or, as Chillingworth expresses it, “ The certainty I have of the Creed, that it was from the Apostles, and contains the principles of faith, I ground it not upon *Scripture* and yet not upon the *infallibility* of any *present*, much less of your Church, but upon the authority of the *ancient Church* and written tradition, which gave this constant testimony unto it².”

I would now add certain summaries of evangelical doctrine which are recorded by Origen, Irenæus. and Tertullian, as the universal rule of faith. We need not suppose any of them to be exact forms of confession, or ever to have been used at baptism ; but they have both broad and minute features of resemblance, such as to compel us to conclude that they are of a kindred nature, and of a common origin with the more exact summaries committed to memory by the faithful from the beginning. And they are expressly referred to the oral preaching of the Apostles.

Origen recites a more diffuse summary of evangelical doctrines as an example of the Apostolical preaching³. And there is also found in his works a shorter form, closely resembling the more defined creeds of the Church.

“ I believe in one God, the Creator and Disposer of all things ; and in God the Word, which is from him, of one substance, from everlasting, and, in these last times, took upon him manhood of Mary, and was crucified, and rose again from the dead.

“ I believe also in the Holy Ghost, the eternal⁴.”

Tertullian recites the Apostolical tradition as follows : “ The rule of faith, indeed, is one, never to be changed, or re-modelled ; namely, that we believe in one God Almighty,

¹ De Bap. contra Donatistas, lib. iv. 31.

² Supra, p. 30.

³ Origen. Op. i. p. 47, 48.

⁴ Ibid. i. 304.

Maker of the world; and in his Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised the third day from the dead, received into heaven, now sitting at the right hand of the Father, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead by the resurrection of the very flesh¹.”

Again, writing against Praxeas, he says, “ But we, indeed, both always, and now more than ever, as being more perfectly instructed by the Paraclete, which is the guide into all truth, believe in one God; in this dispensation, however, which we call the economy, that there is of this one God his Son, which is, his Word, who proceeded from him, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made; that he was sent of his Father into the Virgin, and of her was born, both man and God, the son of man and the Son of God, and called Jesus Christ; that he suffered, was dead and buried, according to the Scriptures, and was raised again by the Father and taken up into the heavens; that he sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come to judge the quick and the dead; who sent thence from the Father, according to his promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Sanctifier of the faith of them that believe in the Father and Son and Holy Ghost. That this rule has come down from the original of the Gospel, the novelty of the heresy of Praxeas, &c. will prove, &c.².”

And once more, in his Prescription against heretics he says, “ That is the rule of faith . . . by which we believe that there is one God, and the same, the Maker of the world, who brought all things out of nothing by his Word, which was sent forth before all things; that this Word is called his Son, and was seen in various ways under the name of God by the Patriarchs, was ever heard through the Prophets, and

¹ Tertul. de Virg. Vel. Op. p. 173.

² Adv. Praxeam, c. ii.

afterwards, by the Spirit of God the Father, by power descended into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and was born of her, (even) Jesus Christ; who afterwards preached the new law, and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, wrought miracles, was crucified, on the third day rose again, was taken up into the heavens, sat on the right hand of the Father; that he sent the person of the Holy Ghost in his own stead, to lead believers; that he shall come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of eternal life, and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the profane to perpetual fire, having raised both by a restoration of the body, this rule, ordained by Christ, as shall be proved, admits of no questions among us¹," &c.

Irenæus, having first spoken of the "unalterable rule of truth which each man received at his baptism²," goes on to declare it in the next chapter, as follows:—"For the Church, which is dispersed in all the world, even to the ends of the earth, received from the Apostles, and from their disciples, that faith which is in one God, the Father Almighty, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, who spake before by the Prophets, of the disposition [dispensations] of God, and the coming of the beloved, Jesus Christ our Lord, and His being born of the Virgin, and His passion, and resurrection from the dead, and ascension in the flesh into the heavens, and His coming again from the heavens in the glory of the Father, to gather together all things in one, and to raise all flesh of mankind, so that to Christ Jesus, our Lord and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the good pleasure of

¹ Tertull. Præscr. adv. Hæc. c. xiii.

² St. Iren. lib. i. ix. 4. τὸν κανόνα τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκλινην ὃν διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἴληφε.

the Father invisible, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue should confess to him; and that he may exercise just judgment upon all, and send away into eternal fire the spiritual wickednesses and angels that transgressed and became apostate; and, impious, unjust, and lawless, and blasphemous men. But to the just and holy, and to those that have kept his commandments, and have continued in his love, some from the first, and some by after-repentance, he will freely give life, and incorruption, and will clothe them with eternal glory¹.”

Now, in this summary are no less than four direct quotations from Holy Scripture, introduced not by way of proof, but allusion; the whole substance in which they are inserted being derived from a source earlier than Holy Writ, and resting upon universal tradition.

And this will be evident, if we compare it with the rule of faith given by Irenæus in another place, and already once quoted.

“With which rule many barbarous nations agree, who believe in Christ, having salvation written without paper and ink, by the Spirit, in their hearts, and who watchfully preserve the ancient tradition, ‘believing in one God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things which are in them, through Christ Jesus the Son of God; who, by reason of his exceeding love toward the work of his hands [mankind], endured to be born of the Virgin Mary, himself by himself uniting man to God, and suffered under Pontius Pilate; and, rising again and being received up in glory shall come in glory to be the Saviour of them that are saved, and judge of those who are judged, and shall send

¹ St. Iren. x. 1.

into eternal fire the corrupters of truth, and the despisers of his Father, and of his coming.' This faith they who have believed without letter," &c.¹

From what has been said we may believe, That the Apostles used some form of confession in administering baptism before the Scriptures were written; that the narrative of their oral preaching to unbaptized men presents us with the substance of the Creed afterwards taught, before baptism, to the catechumens; that all Churches, every where, and at all times, have used a baptismal creed; and that their creeds, although various in particular points of language, which need not therefore be referred to the Apostles, agree in substance², and, for the most part, even in the arrangement of the several articles; that this substance and arrangement coincide closely with the rule of faith, which is attested to be derived from the oral preaching of the Apostles; and as some baptismal form must, by the necessity of the case, have existed before the Scriptures were written, it cannot be doubted that the Nicene and the Apostles' Creeds are the offspring and representatives of the oral preaching of the Apostles.

On the strength of the foregoing proofs, we may conclude as follows: That the oral preaching of the Apostles was the *sole* rule of faith before the Scriptures were written, and is so recognised in Holy Scripture itself: that it was the *chief* rule of faith to the *universal* Church, even *after* the books of Scripture were written; that is, until they were collected and dispersed in a canon throughout all the Churches of the world: that it is recognised by the Christian writers of the

¹ Lib. iii. iv. 2, et supra, p. 51.

² "So far all the ancient Catholic Creeds may be said to be Apostolical, as being in *substance* the same with *the Creeds used in baptism by the Apostles.*"—*Bingham, Antiq.* b. x. c. iii. p. 5.

first four centuries, as a rule of faith in itself *distinct* from the Apostolic Scriptures, although *in perfect harmony* with them: that it is *attested* to us by the universal consenting tradition of the primitive Church: and that the offspring and representative of the *oral preaching* of the Apostles is the *Creed* as we now receive it, which is in substance *older* than the Scriptures, and universally used at baptism in all Churches *before* the Scriptures were written. Therefore the rule of faith in the primitive Church was Scripture and the Creed attested by universal tradition. From this we must conclude further, that this rule of faith was the ordinance of the Apostles, and therefore of GOD.

If this be so, we might suffer all the remaining objections to pass unnoticed. Whatsoever God has ordained, man vainly opposes. If it be contrary to what he imagines God has done, would do, or ought to do, he only convicts himself. But we may, for fuller satisfaction, proceed as before, to draw certain propositions from the above conclusion, and contrast them with the objections before stated.

Inasmuch, then, as we have seen that Scripture and the Creed, attested by universal tradition, is the rule of faith *divinely* ordained, we must conclude further—

1. That it is the *Divine* tradition which God has ordained to secure His pure word from the corruption of particular *human* traditions, against the seventh objection.

2. That it rests the faith, *i. e.* the sense and interpretation of Holy Scripture, on the same proof and foundation with *Scripture itself*, against the eighth.

3. That it therefore makes the fundamental and chief doctrines of the Gospel as certain as the genuineness of the books of Scripture, against the ninth.

4. That the substance of the Creed, being *older* than the Scripture, received a perfect confirmation from the Scrip-

tures when they were afterwards written, and therefore may be *proved* by them. That the Scriptures, when written and received by the Church, were universally understood in the sense of the Gospel, *before* preached by the Apostles, and therefore must be *interpreted* by us according to the sense of that oral preaching which is preserved to us in the Creed. The fallacy lies with the objector, who assumes that the Creed was *later* than the Scripture, and drawn from it, which is untrue; therefore there is no circle in the argument.

Moreover, granting, but not admitting, that the Creed was composed *after* the writing of the Scriptures, yet, if attested to be the sense of Scripture by a *sufficient witness*, such as universal tradition, or drawn from it by a *competent authority*, such as a general council, and no man can deny that it has both these to confirm it, the Creed would be to us the *interpreter* of Scripture; and being by the hypothesis deduced from Scripture, Scripture would be likewise the *proof* of the Creed. So that, even on this ground, though untrue in itself, the objection is altogether inconclusive.

Nor, again, is there any force in the objection, that "Scripture must be intelligible before it can be used in proof; and if intelligible, needs no interpreter." Two writings, both *equally* intelligible, may by their *harmony* fix one unalterable sense, to the exclusion of all other interpretations, because they may differ in language and expression, and mutually supply limitations, checks, and exclusive definitions¹: and one of the two being *written under the guidance of the Holy Ghost*, may be the fixed perpetual proof that the sense elicited by that *harmony* is the truth of God.

¹ For instance, the Nicene Creed declares Christ to be the Son of God "begotten, *not made*, being of one substance with the Father," by which a true sense is fixed for all the texts in Scripture, which speak of him as the "Son of God."

But, in fact, the meaning and intention of the *Creed* is *never disputed*: the whole controversy turns on the meaning of *Scripture*, e. g. The Socinians admit that the Nicene *Creed* asserts the doctrine of the Trinity, but deny that *Scripture* does.

The tenth objection is therefore a fallacy in every way.

5. That the Creeds, and the testimonies of the early Christian writers are interpreted by their *consent*; and their consent attested by universal tradition, is the rule by which to fix the meaning of *Scripture* where it is doubtful or disputed: against the eleventh.

6. That granting (but not admitting) all that is said of the contradictions and discrepancies of the Fathers, the argument from their consent is even thereby perpetually strengthened. *For error ought to vary; but what among so many is one and the same is not error, but universal tradition.* It is like the sameness of natural *instincts* among the infinite diversities of individual *character*: against the twelfth.

7. That we are in every way less able to interpret *Scripture* with confidence than they were; for we are only *critics*, they were *witnesses*; we deliver our *judgments*, they their *depositions of evidence* received from the Apostles: against the thirteenth.

8. That we can know no more of the Gospel of Christ that the Apostles taught the Church in the beginning: for revealed knowledge cannot be enlarged without a new revelation: we can *advance* in *Scriptural* knowledge only by *retrograding*, i. e. by falling back upon the full interpretation of *Scripture* which they had who received the sacred books

I need not add that the Arians and heretics of their kindred expounded this title as Son by *creation* or *adoption*, or by *mere title*. Against whom St. Hilary writes, “Non est Dei filius, Deus falsus, Deus adoptivus, nec Deus nuncupativus, sed Deus verus.” Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Article 2, p. 140.

from the inspired writers. Biblical criticism is nothing but a re-opening of the path to the Apostles, and that path lies through antiquity : against the fourteenth.

9. That God has provided a perpetual means of preserving, and diffusing a right knowledge of the sense of Scripture to all Christians, and that by this means God fulfils his promise of leading us into all truth : against the fifteenth.

10. That God has provided a way of conveying a right knowledge of Scripture to all men ; a way which Chillingworth calls, “ *conditionally infallible* ¹.” It may not be the way men would choose, but it is the way God has ordained. And there is just as much seeming objection against the fact that God should so order the writing of Scripture that it should need to be *translated*, as that, being translated, it should need to be *interpreted*. No unlearned man need fail of knowing the sense of Scripture but by his own fault : against the sixteenth.

11. That it is not derogatory to Holy Scripture to say, it is not clear to all readers after being translated, any more than to say that to most men it is unintelligible before it : against the seventeenth.

12. That it cannot be derogatory to the merciful providence of God to give a book not clear to all, if it can be shown that he has done so, and at the same time made sufficient provision for the right perpetual interpretation, which has been already proved : the objection is therefore *irrelevant* until the facts before established are overthrown : against the eighteenth.

13. That the popular rejection of universal tradition would naturally lead us to expect a marked opposition between

¹ *Supra*, p. 30.

modern interpretations and the primitive faith: so that the objection which admits that opposition confirms our argument. Primitive tradition and primitive theology, stand and fall together: against the nineteenth.

14. The twentieth has been met by the whole body of the foregoing evidence, proving that Scripture and the Creed attested by universal tradition was the rule of faith in the primitive Church.

CHAPTER IV.

WE have hitherto confined our attention exclusively to the *Catholic* Rule of Faith. We have seen that it is distinctly recognised by the English and the early Church; but we have given only the affirmative evidence on which it rests. We may now go on to confirm what has been said, by considering two fallacious rules, which have been, in later ages, adopted by the Church; both, therefore, *modern*, and condemned as novel, by universal tradition: I mean the rule of the Roman Church; and the rule that is held by all Protestant bodies, except the British and American Churches. The former may, for distinctness, be called the Roman, and, the latter, from its extreme novelty, the New.

We will, first, *define* these fallacious rules, and *contrast* them with the true; and then go on to *compare* them together, and show what similar and fundamental errors result from both alike.

And, first, as to the Roman rule, which we will take from a work in great repute among the Roman Catholics in this country.

“As the Church can assuredly tell us what particular book is the word of God; so can she, with the like assurance, tell us the true sense and meaning of it in contro-

verted points of faith : *the same Spirit which dictated the writing of the Scriptures, directing the Church to understand them, and to teach all mysteries and duties as are necessary to salvation* ¹.”

“The pastors of the Church, either diffused, or convened in council, have received no commission from Christ to frame new articles of faith ; but to define, explain, and propound to the faithful *what anciently was, and is received and retained*, as of faith in the Church, when debates and controversies arise about them. These definitions, in matters relating to faith only, and proposed as such, oblige all the faithful to a submission of judgment ².”

“By Apostolical traditions are understood such points of Catholic *belief and practice, as not committed to writing in the Holy Scripture*, have come down to us in an unbroken series of oral delivery, from the Apostolic ages ³,” &c.

Now in these propositions we have the following points asserted :

1. That there is a living judge of interpretations, guided by an inspiration the same in kind with that which dictated the Holy Scriptures.

2. That the rule by which the judge shall proceed is “*what was anciently received,*” &c.

3. That some points of *belief*, [which, if it means any thing more than the sixth article of the Church of England, must mean *of necessary faith*,] were *not committed to writing in Holy Scripture*, but rest on *oral tradition alone*.

Acting on this rule, the Church of Rome, at the Council of Trent, added to the Nicene or Constantinopolitan creed, many doctrines and tenets which cannot be proved from Holy Scripture ; *e. g.* transubstantiation, purgatory, invocation of

¹ Berington and Kirk, Faith of [Roman] Catholics, p. 100.

² Ibid. pp. 128, 129.

³ Ibid. p. 115.

saints, veneration of images, indulgences, &c. A profession of this faith she requires as necessary for communion.

Against these points, the Church of England maintains :

1. That the inspiration of the Apostles in the writing of Holy Scripture, and the guidance of the Church in interpreting its sense, are different; the former being *immediate*, the latter *mediate*, *i. e.* through *ordained means*.

2. That the rule by which the Church is to proceed is not *antiquity* alone, but also *universality and consent*.

3. That all points of *necessary belief* are written in Scripture, and must be proved by it.

4. That the Creed contains all necessary points of mere belief. Therefore she rejects the points added to the Creed by Pope Pius the fourth, at the council of Trent¹.

Or, to bring out the contrast, if possible, more distinctly,

The Church of Rome asserts that *oral tradition* is a *sufficient* proof of points of necessary belief :

The Church of England, that *Scripture* is the only sufficient proof of necessary faith.

The Church of Rome says, that the doctrinal articles, added to Pope Pius's Creed, may be proved from Scripture, but need not :

The Church of England, that they ought to be proved from Holy Writ, but cannot.

The Church of Rome maintains that they are binding because they are Apostolical traditions :

The Church of England denies that they are Apostolical traditions, inasmuch as they will not stand the Catholic test ;

¹ "The Roman doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrants of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God." Article XXII.

not being *primitive*, neither have they ever been *universal*, nor held with *consent* of all Churches.

But of this we shall see more hereafter.

The Church of England, therefore, protests against the Church of Rome for departing from the *universal* tradition of the Apostles, and for bringing in *particular* traditions, having their origin in an equal neglect of Scripture and antiquity.

2. The other fallacious rule is as follows:

“That Holy Scripture needs no interpreter, but is plain to all.”

But, this is felt to be so evidently untenable, that it is generally stated in this form:

“That the Holy Spirit, which dictated the Scripture, now guides all who seek the truth into a right understanding of it.”

Now, here is exactly the same fallacy as in the Roman rule above given. The Church of England carefully distinguishes between the immediate guidance of inspiration, and that guidance which leads men through the means God has ordained for the conveyance of truth.

She holds, therefore,

1. That neither Churches nor individuals have any warrant to expect that spiritual guidance, while they reject the means through which God is pleased to give it.

2. That those means are Scripture and universal tradition, which attests both *Scripture* and the *sense* of Scripture.

3. That Holy Scripture is sufficient, as “*containing* all things necessary to salvation:” but not sufficient to prove its own *inspiration, authenticity, genuineness*, nor the *purity* of the *text*, nor its *interpretation*.

These then are the chief points of difference brought out

by contrasting the two fallacious rules of faith with the true. But we must go on to a still more instructive topic, namely, the close agreement of these two principles, notwithstanding their seeming irreconcilable opposition.

In the following six points they closely agree:—

1. Both exalt the *living judge*, or interpreter, above the written rule.

2. Both claim a *special* guidance.

3. Both argue *à priori*.

4. Both oppose antiquity and universal tradition.

And, as natural consequences of all these,

5. Both introduce new doctrines.

6. Both, in effect, undermine the foundation of the faith.

We will now give particular examples and proofs of these points.

1. First, both the Roman and the new rule exalt the *living judge*, or interpreter, above the *written rule*. That this is so, many decrees of councils and popes will sufficiently prove. We need not quote the profane sayings of bygone controversy, expressing in too homely a way the malleableness of Scripture in the hands of the *living Church*. The maxim “*Scripturæ sequuntur Ecclesiam*,” is enough. They have been made to follow the *living Church* with too ductile a pliancy. For it is plain, that the meaning of a mute document, if it be tied to follow the utterance of a *living* voice which shall claim the supreme right of interpretation, must vary with its living expositor. And in this lies the real danger of the Roman doctrine of infallibility; against which Chillingworth writes as follows:—

“You say indeed, confidently enough, that ‘the denial of the *Church’s infallibility* is the mother-heresy, from which all others must follow at ease;’ which is so far from being a necessary truth, as you make it, that it is indeed a manifest

falsehood. Neither is it possible for the wit of man, by any good, or so much as probable consequence, from the denial of the *Church's infallibility* to deduce any one of the ancient heresies, or any one error of the Socinians, which are the heresies here entreated of. For who would not laugh at him, that should argue thus: Neither the Church of Rome, nor any other Church is *infallible*: ergo, the doctrine of Arius, Pelagius, Eutyches, Nestorius, Photinus, Manichæus, was true doctrine? On the other side it may be truly said, and justified by very good and effectual reason, that he that affirms with you the pope's infallibility, puts himself into his hands and power, to be led by him at his ease and pleasure into all heresy, &c. For that name [real enemy of Christ], and no better, (if we may speak truth, without offence,) I presume he deserves, who, under pretence of interpreting the law of Christ, (which authority, without any word of express warrant, he has taken upon himself, doth, in many parts, evacuate and dissolve it; so dethroning Christ from his dominion over men's consciences, and instead of Christ setting up himself; inasmuch as he that requires that his interpretations of any law should be obeyed as true and genuine, seem they to men's understandings never so dissonant and discordant from it (as the Bishop of Rome does) requires, indeed, that his interpretations should be the laws: and he that is firmly prepared in mind to believe and receive all such interpretations, without judging of them, and though to his private judgment they may seem unreasonable, is indeed congruously disposed to hold adultery a venial sin, and fornication no sin, whensoever the pope and his adherents shall so declare. And, whatsoever he may plead, yet either wittingly or ignorantly he makes the law, and the lawmaker both states and obeys only the

interpreter. As, if I should pretend, that I should submit to the laws of the king of England, but should indeed resolve to obey them in that sense which the king of France should put upon them, whatsoever it were; I presume every understanding man would say, that I did indeed obey the king of France, and not the king of England. If I should pretend to believe the Bible, but that I would understand it according to the sense which the chief Mufti should put upon it; who would not say that I were a Christian in presence only, but indeed a Mahometan ¹.”

Although this investing of the pope with infallibility is the *Italian* doctrine, the *Gallican* and *British* Romanists placing it in the Church assembled in council, I have quoted the whole passage for a two-fold reason. First, because it is equally applicable to the interpretation of the *living Church* in council; and, secondly, because, in the rashness of controversy, this passage, levelled against the *infallibility of the living judge*, whether *pope* or *Church*, is turned against the very ground on which Chillingworth stood when he wrote it, *i. e. primitive and universal tradition*.

In the third section following the above quotation, Chillingworth says:

“You say, thirdly, with sufficient confidence ‘that if the true Church may err in defining what Scriptures be canonical, or in delivering the sense thereof, then we must follow either the private spirit, or else natural wit and judgment; and by them examine what Scriptures contain true or false doctrine, and in that respect ought to be received or rejected. All which is apparently untrue; neither can any proof of it be pretended. For though the *present* Church may possibly err in her judgment touching this matter,

¹ Chillingworth, vol. i. pp. 11, 12, 13.

yet we have other directions in it, besides the private spirit and the examination of the contents, (which latter way may conclude the negative very strongly, to wit, that such or such a book cannot come from God, because it contains irreconcilable contradictions; *but the affirmative it cannot conclude, because the contents of a book may be all true, and yet the book not written by Divine inspiration*): other direction therefore, I say, we have besides either of these three, and that is *the testimony of the primitive Christians*¹."

Again, section 16, "Had I a mind to recriminate now, and to charge Papists as you do Protestants, &c. . . . I would show you that, divers ways, the doctors of *your* Church do the principal and proper work of the Socinians for them, undermining the doctrine of the Trinity, by denying it to be supported by those pillars of the faith *which alone are fit and able to support it*. I mean SCRIPTURE, and the CONSENT of the ANCIENT DOCTORS²."

But for further proof I must once more refer the reader to the extracts from Chillingworth already given³; and return to the point in hand.

It remains to be shown that the modern or *new* rule equally exalts the *individual* above the written Scripture; and that simply because it makes him the *interpreter* of Scripture. All Chillingworth's arguments apply with increased force to this form of the case. It matters not whether the individual interpreter be learned or unlearned, a critic, or a mere reader of the English text, whether he puts upon Scripture, without scruple, his own interpretation, or casts about for others to help him, and refers to modern commentators living or dead; after all, it is but his own interpretation still, original or adopted, and only one of a

¹ Chillingworth, vol. i. p. 16. ² Ibid. p. 18. ³ See pp. 26—31.

thousand various and contradictory expositions. In this case, "Scripturæ sequuntur hominem." What he bids it to say, that is its voice to him. And to each man his own interpretation is equally clear, undoubted, unquestionable. And the written rule is bent into as many shapes as there are interpreters; and that because the *living* interpreter is impatient of a rule to control him. The Church of Rome alters with it; the modern school rejects it. On this point I cannot refrain from quoting the following passage:—

“Whenever, under the vain upstart plea of *insulated* and *independent* and *uninformed* private judgment, the Church of England shall depart from the complexity of her own recognised mode of theologising, *Ichabod* will be written in characters of fire upon her recreant forehead. She will have quitted the path of Cranmer and our wise reformers, and she will be on the high road to every evil imagination. Like a ship without a rudder, she will be carried about by each wind of doctrine, whatever may be the fashionable humour of the day; and the obvious reason is, because, in such a supposed case, she has forsaken the stedfastness of testimony, the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*; and has trusted to her own vain and unauthorized hallucinations. Perhaps it might be useful to inquire, whether the plague has not already gone forth among us; whether, in the pride of our high speculations, we are not, even now, in our irreverent dealing with God’s word, too frequently building upon the independent sufficiency of our own unaided hermeneutic powers; whether, in the stubborn self-conceit of our own insulated knowledge, we are not, too many of us, among those whose language is, *We are they, and wisdom will die with us*: but I forbear; and, with real feelings of Christian anxiety, when I behold the facility with which strange doctrines are disseminated and

received among us, leave the consideration of these matters to those whom they may concern. Suffice it to say, that this spirit of arrogant self-sufficiency and inflated self-dependence, in the work of Scriptural interpretation, is the very spirit of high-vaulting Socinianism. The pretence is, *an honouring of the Bible*: the reality is, *an overweening estimate of ourselves*. Thus acted not our wise and humble reformers. The attestation of Parker of Canterbury to the principle and practice of his illustrious predecessor Cranmer, is well worth the attention of those, who seem to think that a departure from the avowed system of our English Reformation is the best and most consistent mode of upholding that same Reformation. ‘Which matter being perceived,’ says Parker of our chief reformer, ‘he unrolled the most ancient Fathers, both Greek and Latin; he investigated all the councils, and every part of antiquity up to the very times of the Apostles.’—*Antiq. Britann.* p. 331¹.”

2. The next point of agreement between the two fallacious rules is, that they both claim a *special guidance* of the same Spirit which dictated the Scripture, in determining its interpretation.

Now, I would first observe on the remarkable fact, that the very same class of texts is quoted by both, namely, the *promises of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles for their plenary inspiration*². These promises are appropriated on the one side to the Church collective, on the other to each particular man. There can be, I think, no doubt that this promise of our Lord was the same for which he bade his Apostles stay

¹ Faber on Justification, p. 53. note.

² St. John xiv. 16—26. xvi. 13. Faith of [Roman] Catholics, p. 55. Milner's End of Controversy, p. 120. I purposely abstain from quoting any writer of our own Church; but the fact is admitted.

at Jerusalem after his ascension ; which St. Peter recognized as fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and St. Paul refers to, in the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians ¹, as a fulfilment of a prophecy in the sixty-eighth Psalm, namely, the coming of the Holy Ghost to dwell in the Church, to inspire his Apostles and Prophets with supernatural endowments, and to sanctify the body of Christ. Both the Roman and the New rule, therefore, assume this *immediate* guidance as *perpetual* ; superseding thereby the whole body of divine ordinances, by which as *media* of conveyance, the truth is designed to be brought down to us. This assumption has, as we believe, led the Church of Rome to set herself, in practical effect, whatever she may profess, above *Holy Scripture* ; and also has originated among Protestants every imaginable form of schism from the *Church*, which two divine ordinances, are the media through which truth is conveyed to us. Indeed, the natural, I may say, necessary issue of such a theory must be the exaltation of the individual so guided above both Church and Scripture ; of which dangerous result we have had in our history formal and avowed examples ².

It is of the greatest importance to observe further, that the promises of spiritual guidance, in the search after divine truth, relate rather to the *moral* than to the *intellectual* nature. God has ordained an outward means of presenting to the intellects of men the whole revelation of the Gospel. It may be received in all literal correctness by the infidel, whom we cannot believe to be taught of the Spirit in the sense here spoken of. The office and work of the Holy Spirit is plainly to *sanctify* us, through truth *already under-*

¹ Ephes. iv. 8—12.

² See Hammond's Postscript concerning New Light, or Divine Illumination, prefixed to his Commentary on the New Testament.

stood, by means of the outward teaching which God has appointed for that end. If any one will look to the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, he will see the most explicit and particular prayer for divine illumination in behalf of the Church at Ephesus¹, where he had himself dwelt, teaching by the space of three years², and, as he himself testified, had declared unto them "all the counsel of God³." It is manifest that St. Paul prayed that the doctrines he had taught might be impressed on their moral nature to the sanctification of their hearts. And this is a key to all parallel expressions. "No Christian, who has compared his own heart with the language of Scripture, will deny his need of the gracious illumination of the blessed Spirit. But, from an attentive and cautious perusal of that same Scripture, many Christians will perhaps incline to think, that *that promised and necessary illumination is moral, not intellectual.*"

"Its object is, I apprehend, to remove the moral darkness of our fallen nature, to communicate a thorough knowledge of our own utter weakness and corruption, to dispel the delusive dreams of our own innate sufficiency and goodness, to cast down all high imaginations, and to show us, practically and feelingly, what we have become through sin, that so we may thankfully and eagerly aspire after a better state through grace.

"But unless I greatly mistake, its object is *not* to convey to our intellect the alone true meaning of a difficult passage in Scripture: its object is *not* to enable us to determine peremptorily, and without appeal, what scheme of doctrine must be received, and what scheme of doctrine must be rejected⁴."

¹ Ephes. i. 15—20.

² Acts xx. 31.

³ Ibid. 27.

⁴ Faber on Primitive Election, p. 54—56.

I have thought it necessary to add these few words, to anticipate the objection that, by denying our warrant to expect such a guidance of the Holy Spirit *as shall supersede the witness of antiquity*, our illumination by the Holy Spirit is denied.

It is, however, very far from my wish to represent a large body of most truly pious persons who believe in this special guidance, as going the full length of the principle they have admitted. Happily they are inconsistent. They admit that it is pledged to us in *the use of means*; to those, that cannot read, through oral instruction, to those that can, through the ministry of the Church and Holy Scripture. It becomes, therefore, only a question of degree; as they would at once perceive, if they would only consider that they have already admitted the principle of the Rule of Faith, namely, that God has ordained certain *external means*, *i. e.* the Scripture and the sense of Scripture, attested to us by one and the same evidence, which they cannot decline to receive without involving themselves in a circle. For, having once admitted universal tradition as sufficient proof of Holy Scripture itself, to reject the self same proof when it attests its sense, is to unsettle what was settled before, and to call Scripture into question again, by questioning interpretations which rest on the same evidence. In the due and faithful use of these means, we have a sure promise of God, that we shall be led into all truth, even into the *same mysteries* which the Holy Spirit taught to the Apostles, though not in the *same way*; for they received them by immediate infusion, we by an ordained external channel of conveyance. It is a sad and miserable thing to see men going about, doubtless in honest zeal, to persuade Christians that the guidance of God's Spirit, and the witness of universal tradition will lead them to various and

even contradictory results. It is most miserable, because most untrue and dangerous; they being both of God, and testifying alike, the one as an outward the other as an inward witness, to the truth as it is in Jesus.

All men of sober minds confess that we have no warrant to prove our inward convictions to be the workings of God's Spirit, except they agree with Scripture; and how shall the sense of Scripture, which is itself to be the test of our inward convictions, be ascertained? By the *living* Church as the Roman, or by *each particular man* as the New rule would answer? Surely by universal tradition, which consigns to us both the book and its interpretation. It is a second circle to say, our inward convictions are of the Spirit's teaching, because they agree with Scripture, and this is the sense of Scripture because it agrees with those inward convictions. The standard must be fixed first somewhere externally or internally, either by conscious infallible inspiration, or by universal unfailing tradition. The former was the special endowment of Christ's Apostles, the latter is the Rule of Faith to Christ's Church for ever.

3. We now come to a third agreement. *Both argue, à priori*, from our anticipations of what God would be likely to do, that therefore He has done so.

Knott, Chillingworth's adversary, argues for the infallibility of the Church as follows: "Now this is our gradation of reasons; Almighty God, having ordained mankind to a supernatural end of eternal felicity, hath, in his holy providence, settled competent and convenient means whereby that end may be attained. The universal grand origin of all such means is the incarnation and death of our blessed Saviour, whereby he merited internal grace for us, and founded an external visible Church, provided and stored

with all those helps which might be necessary for salvation. From hence it followeth, that in this Church, among other advantages, there must be some effectual means to beget and conserve faith, to maintain unity, to discover and condemn heresies, to appease and reduce schisms, and to determine all controversies in religion. For, without such means, the Church should not be furnished with helps sufficient to salvation, nor God afford sufficient means to attain that end to which himself ordained mankind. This means to decide controversies in faith and religion (whether it should be the Holy Scripture, or whatsoever else) must be endued with an universal infallibility, in whatsoever it propoundeth for a divine truth; that is, as revealed, spoken, or testified by Almighty God, whether the matter of its nature be great or small. For if it were subject to error in any one thing, we could not in any other yield it infallible assent; because we might, with good reason, doubt whether it chanced not to err in that particular¹.”

From this he infers that a perpetual infallibility has been *de facto* pledged to the Church in all her doctrinal definitions.

So, on the other hand, it is argued, that it is not to be believed that God would give a book that should not be so clear in itself, that all men may read and understand it; therefore Holy Scripture is clear to all.

This is exactly the same form of argument, drawn from an antecedent presumption in our minds as to what God would do in giving a revelation. The only difference is in the particular application of the argument to the infallibility of the Church; to the clearness of the Scripture. The fallacy is the same.

¹ Chillingworth, vol. i. p. 97.

Now, in Bishop Butler's time, this form of argument, *à priori*, was used by infidels against the *substance* of Christianity. They objected against particular *doctrines*, as contrary to reason, and to what we should naturally expect a revelation to contain.

In the following passage Bishop Butler refutes the whole class of arguments drawn from our *expectations* of what God would do in making a revelation to mankind, both as to the matter and the manner of it¹.

“These observations, relating to the whole of Christianity, are applicable to inspiration in particular. As we are in no sort judges beforehand, by what laws or rules, in what degree, or by what means, it were to have been expected, that God would naturally instruct us; so, upon supposition of his affording us light and instruction by revelation, additional to what he has afforded us by reason and experience, we are in no sort judges by what methods, and in what proportion, it were to be expected, that this supernatural light and instruction would be afforded us. We know not beforehand, what degree or kind of *natural* information it were to be expected God would afford men, each by his own reason and experience; nor how far He would enable, and effectually dispose them to communicate it, whatever it should be, to each other; nor whether the evidence of it would be certain, highly probable, or doubtful; nor whether it would be given with equal clearness and conviction to all. Nor could we guess, upon any good ground, I mean, whether natural knowledge, or even the faculty itself by which we are capable of attaining it, reason, would be given us at once, or gradually. In like manner, we are wholly ignorant what degree of *new* knowledge it were to

¹ See Sermon, p. 14, and note.

be expected God would give mankind by revelation, upon supposition of his affording one; or how far, or in what way, he would interpose miraculously, to qualify them to whom he should originally make the revelation, for communicating the knowledge given by it; and to secure their doing it to the age in which they should live; and to secure its being transmitted to posterity. We are equally ignorant whether the evidence of it would be certain, or highly probable, or doubtful; or whether all who should have any degree of instruction from it, and any degree of evidence of its truth, would have the same; or whether the scheme would be revealed at once, or unfolded gradually. *Nay, we are not in any sort able to judge whether it were to have been expected that the revelation should have been committed to writing, or left to be handed down, and consequently corrupted by verbal tradition, and at length sunk under it, if mankind so pleased, and during such time as they are permitted, in the degrees they evidently are, to act as they will.* But it may be said, ‘that a revelation in some of the above mentioned circumstances,—one, for instance, which was not committed to writing, and thus secured against danger of corruption, would not have answered its purpose.’ I ask, what purpose? It would not have answered all the purposes which it has now answered, and in the same degree; but it would have answered others, or the same in different degrees. And which of these were the purposes of God, and best fell in with his general government, we could not at all have determined beforehand. Now since it has been shown, that we have no principles of reason upon which to judge beforehand, how it were to be expected revelation should have been left, or what was most suitable to the divine plan of government, in any of the forementioned respects; it must be quite frivolous to object afterwards as to any of

them, against its being left in one way rather than another; for this would be to object against things upon account of their being different from expectations which have been shown to be without reason. And thus we see that the only question concerning the truth of Christianity is, whether it be a real revelation; not, whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for; and, concerning the authority of Scripture, whether it be what it claims to be; *not whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulged, as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a divine revelation should.* And therefore, neither obscurity nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts, nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of the Scripture, unless the Prophets, Apostles, or our Lord, had promised that the book containing the divine revelation should be secure from those things¹.”

Universal tradition attests to us *what God has done.* There are many things, both in the matter and the manner of doing it, far otherwise perhaps than we should blindly prescribe for Him whose ways are not our ways. And this should make us lay aside our vain speculations, and learn simply from the testimony of the fact, with what office it is that God really has invested His Church, and for what end and purpose He ordained that the Scriptures should be written. We shall then escape the presumption of putting upon them an office and character which God never designed them to bear; and the danger of throwing into disorder His perfect appointments for the perpetuation and proof of the faith.

¹ Bp. Butler's Analogy, pt. ii. chap. iii. pp. 252—255. 8vo. 1771.

The evidence of history and fact attests to us that the Church is a visible body, that her office is to be “the witness and keeper of Holy Writ¹,” that Scripture together with its sense² is ascertained, and presented to us on the same proof

¹ Article xx.

² A consciousness, that if the same external evidence, by which the *authenticity* of the sacred books is proved, can be found to attest also the *sense* of them, common candour and reason would require us to admit both, seems to lie at the bottom of almost all the endeavours that are made to get rid of this kind of proof: and men are driven to such fallacies as the following. They say, “*external evidence is one kind of proof; but we have many others, such as miracles, prophecy, the evidence of friends and gainsayers, and the adaptation of Scripture to the wants of the heart of man.*” But how can we know that miracles were performed; that prophecies were spoken *before* the events foretold; that the events did in due time come to pass; that friends maintained, and foes attacked the faith? Every single particular is a *fact, i. e. a matter of history*: and on what does history rest but *external evidence*? So that miracles, and prophecy, and the rest, all require *external evidence* before they can have any weight at all. It is on the testimony of eye and ear-witnesses, that the whole fabric is grounded. And so of the adaptation of Scripture to the human heart. It must be known to be *Scripture* first. A book may be all true, and most applicable to the human heart, and yet not written by the Apostles of Christ. But this is the very point to be proved. Our great writers, such as Bishop Butler, well knew this first rule of reasoning, and always presuppose the external proof, before they admit at all the *corroboration*, and *after-confirmation*, of prophecy, and adaptation to human nature, &c. The whole of Bishop Butler’s Analogy is an argument from the external evidence of the natural world to clear away objections drawn from our internal apprehensions and anticipations against Revelation taken as a *fact*, resting on outward evidence. This once granted, all kinds and any amount of internal evidence may immediately be admitted.

The best way to put this to the test is to take the 2nd and 3rd Epistles of St. John, and to find the proof that they were written by the Evangelist; or to establish the purity of 1 Tim. iii. 16, as we receive it in our Bibles. The former would exemplify the mode of ascertaining the authenticity of all books, and the latter of testing the purity of all readings of the Holy Scripture. Until we have tried our hand at such a process, we allow ourselves to say strange things about external and internal evidence.

In this place we may add a single word on the common idea that Scripture

of universal tradition ; and that the written rule is the boundary of her teaching in points of necessary faith.

4. We may now pass on to a fourth point of agreement, *i. e.* that *both oppose antiquity and universal tradition.*

The Roman Church, how much soever it may appeal in words to antiquity, does in practice actually oppose it. The infallibility of the *living* Church absorbs all proof into itself. Antiquity, as well as Scripture, is made to follow the interpretation of the present Church. Of antiquity it accepts

declares its own office, as a teacher universally plain. The texts commonly produced are such as follow :

1. St. Luke's commendation of the Bereans. (Acts xvii. 11.) But they put a *new* doctrine, claiming to be of God, to the test of the *old* Scriptures. St. Paul announced the fulfilment of prophecies in the Messiah ; the Bereans compared his announcement with the *old* Testament.

2. St. Paul's words to Timothy. (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) Timothy was converted by St. Paul himself, (1 Tim. i. 2.) which must have been after the year A. D. 44, the date of St. Paul's first mission to Asia : but not one of the Books of the New Testament Canon was then written, the earliest Gospel being A. D. 55 ; for no one will think the Hebrew of St. Matthew an exception, nor believe that St. Paul meant that Timothy had the Christian Scriptures in his childhood, before he was converted to Christianity.

3. The words of the Prophet Isaiah foretelling the safety of "the way of holiness," *i. e.* the whole system of the Christian Church, misapplied to the written Scripture. (xxxv. 8.)

4. The words of the Prophet Habakkuk, (chap. ii. 2.) misunderstood. The Prophet was bidden to write so that all who read may run, *i. e.* be readily obedient, not that all who run may be able to read.

"Now if we consider that this privilege, of containing all that is necessary to the salvation of all, belongs not to any part, but to the whole body of the Scriptures, it would first have been said, what Scripture, speaking of the whole body of the Scripture, hath established this property, or privilege of it. *For my part, upon the best consideration that I can take, I am at a stand to find any text of Scripture, any letter, or syllable of the whole Bible, that says anything at all, good or bad, of the whole Bible.*" Thorndike's Epilogue, b. 1. c. v. p. 31. The assertion of our sixth article, therefore, stands not on *arguments à priori*, nor on the *self-attested* sufficiency of Scripture, but upon the consenting witness of the Church. See Sermon, p. 14—22.

so much as is in accordance with its existing system ; of the rest, some it explains away, some it rejects, some it utterly condemns. The Church of Rome is pledged to the definitions of its councils: the doctrine of infallibility gives them an inflexible stiffness, and all must bend into conformity. Antiquity then is no *rule* to the Church of Rome ; it is not even a *proof*, but a pretext. “They profess to appeal to primitive Christianity; we honestly take their ground, as holding it ourselves: but when the controversy grows animated, and descends into details, they suddenly leave it, and desire to finish the dispute in some other field. In like manner, in their teaching and acting, they begin as if in the name of all the Fathers at once, but will be found in the sequel to prove, teach, and conduct matters simply in their own name. Our differences from them, considered not in theory but in fact, are in no sense matters of detail and questions of degree. In truth, there is a tenet in their theology which assumes quite a new position in relation to the rest, when we pass from the abstract and quiescent theory to the practical workings of the system. The infallibility of the Church is then found to be its first principle, whereas, before, it was a necessary but a secondary doctrine. Whatever principle they profess in theory, resembling or coincident with our own, yet when they come to particulars, when they have to prove this or that article of their Creed, they supersede the appeal to Scripture and antiquity, by the pretence of the infallibility of the Church, thus solving the whole question, by a *summary* and *final interpretation both of antiquity and of Scripture* ¹.”

Of this we will take only two examples from the book just quoted. In the preface prefixed to the works of St.

¹ Newman's Lectures on Romanism, pp. 59, 60.

Ambrose, by the Benedictine editors, who, of all the Roman communion, have done highest reverence to antiquity, we read :

“It is not, indeed, wonderful that Ambrose should have written in this way concerning the state of souls ; but what seems almost incredible, is the uncertainty and inconsistency of the holy Fathers on the subject, *from the very times of the Apostles, to the pontificate of Gregory XI. and the Council of Florence: that is, for almost the whole of fourteen centuries.* For they do not only differ from one another, *as ordinarily happens in such questions before the Church has defined,* but they are even inconsistent with themselves, sometimes allowing, sometimes denying to the same souls, the enjoyment of the clear vision of the Divine nature¹.”

The Church of England does not venture to define where Antiquity is doubtful ; nor to make that a point of faith, which with the early Church was an open question.

And once more :

“I for my part, to speak candidly,” said the Bishop of Bitonto who assisted at the Council of Trent, “would rather credit one pope, in matters touching the faith, than a thousand Augustines, Jeromes, or Gregories².”

It does not require many words to show that, in like manner, the New rule of faith necessarily opposes itself to antiquity and universal tradition.

Every particular sect, almost each individual man, is pledged to some theory of religious opinion, which, as it had not its origin in universal tradition, so it never, except by chance, agrees with it. In one point their procedure differs from the Roman ; for they, of whom we now speak,

¹ Admonit. in Lib. de bono Mortis. Newman's Lectures, pp. 78, 79.

² Newman's Lectures, p. 96.

make no profession of appealing to antiquity ; they plainly say it has no weight with them ; they call universal tradition *human* testimony ; they assert that there is no consent of the primitive Christians even on vital points. They can, therefore, hardly be said to reject evidence of which they sweepingly deny the very existence. They are as impatient of a rule to limit private interpretations, as the Church of Rome is of a check imposed upon her authority to define. The reason of both is the same : it is the *living* judge against the cloud of witnesses, which, though dead, yet speak to us.

And now, from two systems, which alike exalt the living judge above the written rule ; which claim a special guidance to establish their interpretations : which argue from what men expect God would do, that therefore he has, in fact, so done ; which oppose the universal tradition of the primitive Church ;—from systems holding so many common errors, what can we look for but a common result ? The consequences of both, although different in outward aspect and direction, are alike.

5. For, in the first place both introduce *new* doctrines unknown to the Apóstles of Christ.

To the Roman rule we owe the doctrine of Transubstantiation ;

To the new, the vague or mere figurative theory of the Holy Sacraments.

To the former, the doctrine of Purgatory ;

To the latter, the modern forms of Predestination.

To the former, the Papal supremacy ;

To the latter, the Presbyterian system.

To the former, a scheme of justification imperfect in one half ;

To the latter, the same doctrine mutilated in the other.

The former rule introduces new doctrines by *adding* to the old; the latter by *taking away*.

The one is a principle of superaddition; the other of diminution.

The Roman rule has brought into the Church the invocation of saints, the adoration of relics, the doctrines of transubstantiation and concomitancy, and many more;

The New rule has brought in few, but has taken away many, as the doctrine of the real Presence distinguished from transubstantiation, Baptismal regeneration, the Apostolical succession, the visible unity of the Church, &c.

6. And, once more, the two fallacious rules agree in producing a further result; namely, they both *undermine the foundation* upon which Christianity itself is built.

God forbid that I should say this, as imputing the conscious intention to any man holding either of the principles above referred to. We are speaking of these rules as matters of reasoning and evidence, without reference to those that entertain them.

The first example of this effect may be shown in the uncertainty which is thrown by both over the vital doctrines of the faith; and the proof of it shall be drawn from a quarter at first sight very unlikely to afford one.

We have already seen how Chillingworth argued that certain doctors of the Church of Rome do the principal and proper work of the Socinians for them, undermining the doctrine of the Trinity, by denying it to be supported by those pillars of the faith which alone are fit and able to support it, *i. e. Scripture, and the consent of the ancient doctors*. He mentions Cardinal Perron, Mr. Fisher, or Mr. Floyd, and Petavius, as speaking with more than doubtfulness, whether or no the Arian doctrine was not common, if not preva-

lent, among the anti-Nicene Fathers¹. The history of this strange matter we may hear from Bishop Bull, who writes as follows:

“But I am beyond measure astonished at that great and profoundly learned man, Dionysius Petavius; who, for all the reverence which he professes for the Nicene Council, and his constant acknowledgment that the faith confirmed in it against the Arians, is truly Apostolic and catholic, yet makes them an admission, which, if it holds, goes the full length of establishing their heresy, and of disparaging, and so overthrowing, the credit and authority of the Nicene council; namely, that the rulers and Fathers of the Church before its date, were nearly all of the very same sentiments as Arius. What was Petavius’ view in so writing, it is difficult to say. Some suspect that he was secretly an Arian, and wished insidiously so to recommend the heresy to others. This was the opinion of Sandius,” the heretical writer, “whom I just now mentioned. . . . However, Petavius’s own writings make it, I think, abundantly clear that this pretender’s supposition is altogether false. If some underhand purpose must be assigned for his writing as he did, and it be not sufficient to ascribe it to his customary audacity and recklessness in criticising and animadverting on the holy Fathers, I should give my opinion that this author, as being a Jesuit, had in view the interests of Popery rather than of Arianism. For, granting the Catholic doctors of the first three centuries held nearly all of them that very error of doctrine which the Nicene Council afterwards condemned in Arius as heresy, (which is Petavius’s statement) two things will readily follow: first, *that little deference is to be paid to the Fathers of the first three centuries, to whom reformed Ca-*

¹ Chillingworth, vol. i. pp. 18, 19.

tholics specially appeal, as if in their time the chief articles of the Christian faith were not yet sufficiently understood and developed : next, that œcumenical councils have the power of framing or (as Petavius speaks) of establishing and publishing new articles of faith, which may fitly serve to prepare the ground for those additions which the Fathers of Trent annexed to the Rule of Faith and obtruded on Christendom ; though even this will not be a sufficient defence of the Roman faith, since the meeting at Trent was anything but a general council. However, the masters of that school, it seems, feel no compunction at erecting their own pseudo-Catholic faith on the ruins of that which is truly Catholic. The Divine oracles themselves are to be convicted of undue obscurity ; the most holy doctors, bishops, and martyrs of the primitive Church are to be charged with heresy ; so that in one way or other the credit and authority of the degenerate Roman Church may be patched up and made good. At the same time, these sophists, to be sure, are the very men to execrate us as brethren of cursed Ham, and scoffers and despisers of the venerable Fathers of the Church, and to boast that they themselves religiously follow the faith of the ancient doctors, and hold their writings in the highest reverence. That such a nefarious purpose led to Petavius's statement, I do not dare say for certain, but leave the matter to the heart-searching God. Meanwhile, what the Jesuit has written, as it is most welcome to modern Arians, (all of whom on that account revere and embrace him as their champion) so, as I would affirm confidently, it is manifestly contrary to truth, and most injurious and slanderous as well towards the Nicene Fathers as the ante-Nicene ¹."

¹ Newman's Lectures, p. 75—77.

It is now time to fulfil a pledge made in the first part of this Appendix, namely, that I should once more speak of the return of Chillingworth from the Church of Rome; and this will explain, in full, why his testimony has been here adduced so much at length. To rest anything upon his evidence, would be, indeed, a most needless and gratuitous departure from the whole principle of the Church of England. Universal tradition is her only rule, from which if any of her greatest depart, her true sons dare not follow them. But it is right to show how little he will serve those who are wont to reiterate his supposed dictum, and to claim him for their own. We must, however, add a further notice of Chillingworth, which ought to mingle a very real sorrow with our admiration, and to serve as a *warning* to all those who would follow in his steps: and most of all to those that, by a hasty glance at the surface of his writings, would make him contradictory to his first principles, and tenfold more dangerous to themselves.

We have already found him charging Cardinal Perron, Mr. Fisher, and Petavius with “doing the principal and proper work of the Socinians for them, undermining the doctrine of the Trinity by denying it to be supported by those pillars of the faith, which alone are fit and able to support it—Scripture and *the consent of the ancient Doctors*¹.”

Now, it would indeed be incredible, were it not that conversions from one Church to another unsettle the moral steadfastness of the mind, that Chillingworth should himself make use of the very same assertions of both Perron and Petavius, in a private letter to a friend, and upon their evidence conclude as follows:—“In a word, whosoever shall freely and impartially consider of this thing, and how,

¹ Chillingworth, vol. i. p. 18.

on the other side, the ancient Fathers' weapons, against the Arians, are in a manner only places of Scripture ; and those now for the most part discarded as impertinent and unconcluding ; and how, in the argument drawn from the authority of the ancient Fathers, they are almost always defendants, and scarce ever opponents ; he shall not choose but confess, or at least be very inclinable to believe, that the doctrine, of Arius is either a truth, or at least no damnable heresy ¹."

We cannot, however, leave Chillingworth without quoting the following passages from the letter of one of his contemporaries and admirers. Bishop Barlow states, in a letter to Sir Peter Pett, that Chillingworth wrote his book against the Jesuit at Tew, Lord Falkland's place, where he had the use of a valuable library, and the benefit of Lord Falkland's conversation, to which he modestly and truly confessed himself to be indebted.

"His library," continues Bishop Barlow, "which was well furnished with choice books (I have several times been in it, and seen them), such as Mr. Chillingworth, neither had, nor ever heard of many of them, until my Lord shewed him the *books* and the *passages in them*, which were significant and pertinent to the purpose. So that it is certain that most of those *ancient* authorities which Mr. Chillingworth makes use of, he owes, first to my Lord of Falkland's learning, that he could give him so much directions ; and next to his civility and kindness, that he would direct him."

In another letter to one of his friends, who had writ to him for his judgment, *wherein Mr. Chillingworth's peculiar excellency above other writers consisted*, the Bishop returns the following answer :

"You desire to know," says he, "wherein Mr. Chilling-

¹ Des Maizeaux's *Life of Chillingworth*, p. 55.

worth's excellency above other *writers* did consist? So that you seem to take for granted, that he has an excellency (if not above all, yet) above many, or most writers; and I think so too. But then the case must be cautiously stated; for his excellency we speak of, cannot consist in any extraordinary knowledge he had of *antiquity*, (sacred or civil), of *Councils* and *Fathers*, or learned men's animadversions upon them; nor in any great skill he had in several *tongues* and *languages*, &c. But his excellency wherein he excelled many (if not most) writers, did arise from, and consist in his logic; both *natural* and (by exceeding great industry) acquired¹. . . .

The truth, then, is that Chillingworth's *premises* were supplied by Petavius; his *logic* was his own. The latter may be invincible, while the former are granted. But logic takes no cognizance of the truth or falsehood of propositions; having to do with *form* of argument alone. The defenders of Chillingworth are wont to say that he was charged by his adversaries with formal Socinianism²; and by refuting this untenable accusation they give the colour of clearing him from the melancholy and undeniable unsettledness of mind proved above from his own words. There is no need to believe him either Socinian or Arian; but nothing can acquit him of adopting errors propounded by Petavius, and other Romish writers, which, by his own confession, would lead to both those heresies³.

¹ Des Maizeaux's *Life of Chillingworth*, p. 46, note.

² Lord Clarendon, whose opinion of Chillingworth's learning was more favourable than that of Bishop Barlow, tells us nevertheless that he was "*sceptical enough*, even in the highest points."—*Clarendon's Life*, vol. i. p. 43.

³ Of this same unsteadiness we have had a notorious example in our own days. The mind seems to reel for years after it has recoiled from the Roman system. It was some years before Chillingworth would sign the Articles of the

It was reserved for a Bishop of the English Church to build again what Petavius, and his fellow labourers, had shaken. Bishop Bull, in his Defence of the Nicene Creed, and in his "Judgment of the Catholic Church of the three first centuries, on the necessity of believing in the true Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ," has for ever decided the question, so as to involve any man that re-opens the doubt in this dilemma of either refuting these works, or acknowledging his own error. The object of Petavius in throwing doubt on Primitive Antiquity, we have seen; but what can be the object of a school of modern writers, the irreconcilable enemies of Popery, and the professed friends of the true Faith, in repeating, perhaps unknowingly, the thrice refuted errors of Petavius, it is hard to say. The impossibility of their gaining anything to the advantage of truth, by studied and reiterated misrepresentation of Antiquity, by denying universal tradition, by asserting the discrepancy of the universal Creeds, by calumniating holy men of old, who by life and by death bore witness for the faith, telling us that they did not agree even in vital points; that they were full of darkness, error, ignorance, and superstition, that they savour of Arianism; that they establish Popery—the impossibility of gaining anything to the advantage of Christianity by such a course, must convince every mind not heated by prejudice, or warped by party, that, as all this cannot serve any good purpose, so most assuredly the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ, both seen and unseen, are making tools of indiscreet and well intentioned people, to do the same work in the Church of England which

Church of England. (Des Maizeaux's Life, pp. 86. 265. Note.) For the moral effects of Romanism in shaking the habit of faith, see Southey's Colloquies, vol. ii. pp. 16. 31.

Petavius was employed to do in the Church of Rome, by undermining the foundation of the faith.

The late Dr. Burton's *Ante-Nicene Testimonies to the Divinity of our Lord, and to the Doctrine of the Trinity*, published in English, and containing the quotations at full length, and Mr. Newman's *History of the Arians*, really leave men who make such mischievous assertions, without excuse. Those who say that the testimony of the early writers is controvertible on these points, because Priestly, and the like, have disputed it, ought to say further, that Christianity itself is controvertible, because Julian, Celsus, and Porphyry wrote against it. This is indeed to "do the principal and proper work of the Socinians for them."

These things are said with unfeigned reluctance. But when we daily see around us a multitude of men perpetually labouring with unwearied energies, eagerly circulating dangerous misstatements, and thrice refuted errors handed down by a line of modern tradition from Romish and ultra-Protestant controversialists, from Perron and Petavius, on the one hand, and Daillé and Blondel on the other; no man who desires to hold fast the Truth himself, and, by God's help, to keep others from being misled, can dare to be silent. He must feel for those that, in the simplicity of a pure and single heart, are being led away from the steadfast grounds of Christ's Religion.

For, word it as we may, the *attack on universal tradition undermines the foundation of Christianity*. It is not an *interpretation*, but *the Gospel* that is at stake. "If any given doctrine was universally believed by those Christians who had been instructed by the Apostles, and the disciples of the Apostles; if this doctrine was received by all succeeding generations as sacred and divine, and strictly conformable to those Scriptures which were read and

expounded in every Church: this belief, one and uniform, received in all Churches, delivered through all ages, triumphing over the novel and contradictory doctrines which attempted to pollute it, guarded with jealous care, even to the sacrifice of life in its defence, and, after a lapse of eighteen hundred years, believed as firmly by the overwhelming mass of Christians among all nations, as when it was first promulgated: such a doctrine must be a truth of revelation. It rests on evidence not inferior to that which attests the truth of Christianity. Is it possible that the infinite majority of Christians in all ages can have mistaken, or adulterated their own religion, a religion which they held to be divine, and on which they believed their salvation to depend? And this, while the Scriptures were in their hand, and the care of God was (as Christians believe) extended over His Church—the people whom He chose for himself. If so, then they may have been equally deceived as to the authenticity of Scripture, as to the truth of the mission of our Saviour; and the whole fabric of revelation totters to its base. Hence I maintain that Christians cannot possibly admit that any doctrine, established by universal tradition, can be otherwise than *divinely, infallibly, true*.

“The existence of such a tradition from the beginning is a matter of fact, which is to be established on the same sort of evidence as proves any other historical fact. The question is, what were the tenets of the religious communion called Christian from the beginning? This is evidently to be proved only by authentic documents, monuments, and facts; and we accordingly adduce the creeds, or professions of faith acknowledged by the universal Church, in proof of her faith, on certain points, up to the period when she made them, the creeds and liturgies of particular churches, as evi-

dence of their belief as far back as those creeds and liturgies can be traced. We produce the attestations of particular Fathers, and councils of bishops, to the contemporary and former belief of the Church, either by direct assertions to that effect, or by the silent testimony of the same, afforded by the fact of their own express belief, and the approbation of that belief by the Church generally. We adduce ancient customs and rites to the same ends; and even the objections of infidels, and of sectaries, concur in establishing what was the real faith of the Catholic Church in all ages. If proofs like these be rejected on the ground of the uncertainty of all *human testimony*, then there can be no certainty of any of the facts of history; and we are reduced to believe only facts which have come under the cognizance of our own senses. If the testimony of the early Christian writers on this question of fact be rejected, the external evidences of Christianity are subverted. The authenticity of primitive tradition and its records, of Scripture and its doctrines, and of Christianity as a revelation, stand or fall together. It is not the defence of any particular doctrine which is involved in the question of the credibility of tradition: *the whole fabric of Christianity is vitally connected with it*¹.”

And, further, that an overthrow of the Church and Gospel of Christ has followed wheresoever universal tradition has been rejected, it will be easy to show.

The opponents of universal tradition admit the *fact*, that the foreign Protestant bodies in Geneva, France, Germany, and Holland, and the sects of the old Presbyterians and certain others in this country, and in America, have lapsed into Rationalism and the Socinian heresy. Indeed, as to this country, we are told that of 207 congregations, possessing

¹ Palmer's Treatise on the Church, vol. ii. pp. 47—49.

endowments, as that of Lady Hewley, and originally holding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, 176 now deny the Divinity of our Lord; and in a single western county of England, *thirteen* Socinian congregations now exist, *eleven* of which were, within the last *twenty years*, Christian societies¹. This decline is ascribed by the writer just quoted, among other causes, to the want of standards, or confessions of faith, which he justly describes as the means of preserving and making permanent a Scriptural faith in the Church. "The constant tendency of all human institutions and societies is ever found to be downward. Deteriorations, evil admixtures, and distortions are continually going on. Among Dissenters these have their full effect. Among Churchmen, a continued though silent power is operating in a contrary direction; and the fixed and Scriptural standards of the Establishment remain like a sea wall, opposing itself to the encroachments of the ocean, to preserve the antiquity of her ancient faith²."

By "standards of faith and doctrine," this writer means to express the Articles of the Church, and, of course, Creeds, which are the subject of a separate article³.

Now the Articles of the Church, on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, are grounded on the Catholic Creeds⁴, and these, as we have shown, upon universal tradition. So that what this writer (and it was sufficient for his then purpose,) speaks of as "safeguards," are, in fact, the witnesses of universal tradition defining the interpretation of Scripture on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

But let us consider more closely the reason of this remarkable fact. Wheresoever the doctrine and discipline of Calvin

¹ Essays on the Church, p. 130.

² Ibid. pp. 129, 130.

³ Article VIII.

⁴ See Articles I. to V.

has prevailed, as in both points men felt themselves committed to a system which was condemned by Antiquity, so they have opposed universal tradition on some of many pleas ; such as, that its testimony is needless, or uncertain, or contrary to Scripture, *i. e.* to their own sense of Scripture. They have, therefore, first shrunk from it, then misrepresented it, and, lastly, condemned it altogether ; for, of the two, one must needs fall, either antiquity or their new interpretations. And thus, rejecting first the *witness* of universal tradition to the sense of Scripture, they went on to abandon the true *sense* itself. The consent of the Primitive Churches, expressed in the Catholic Creeds and in their traditive interpretations, being once forfeited, the full licence of individual judgment pleading the clearness of Holy Writ, or the especial guidance of the Spirit, soon reduced all doctrines to an equal uncertainty ; so that as the elder Socinus was an early partaker of the doctrines of Zuingli, the Zuinglian and Calvinistic bodies have carried out, in their turn, the rule of their masters into the Socinian heresy.

But not only so ; the infinite diversity, contradiction, and uncertainty of doctrinal interpretation, has brought about a supercilious scepticism as to the subject-matter itself. Indifference, which is next akin to contempt of truth, already prevails ; and the end is not doubtful. For, as the Roman rule, by *superseding* universal tradition, has brought in particular and unwarranted tenets upon the Church, so the new rule, by *rejecting* universal tradition, has taken away many doctrines of the Gospel, has rendered all more or less uncertain, is, in fact, undermining the very canon of Scripture, and will, in due time, when that which letteth is taken out of the way, bring in the Antichrist of infidelity.

Having thus traced out the agreement of these fallacious rules, both in their kindred errors and in their common

results, we will go on to examine the true rule of faith, in its application to one or two particular doctrines, and then bring this subject to a close.

The Church of England, proceeding by Scripture and universal tradition, rejects the peculiar tenets of the Roman and the modern schools, for one and the same reason.

To use the argument *refutatively*, universal tradition is a preliminary objection, establishing a positive or negative prescription against new tenets; proving, by either that any given doctrine was held otherwise, or was not held at all, and, therefore, cannot be Apostolical.

Or again, if any thing should be propounded as matter of *necessary faith*, she puts it to the test of Scripture, and, if not proveable thereby, rejects it.

For these reasons she refuses the tenet of transubstantiation, and the Calvinistic doctrine of the sacraments, the Papal supremacy, the Presbyterian scheme, and the like.

Or, to use the same proof *affirmatively*, it is upon Scripture and universal tradition that she holds the mystery of the ever-blessed Trinity, the real Presence in the Eucharist, Baptismal regeneration, the perseverance of the saints, the defectibility of grace in the regenerate, and all other doctrines of the Gospel.

This, then, is the real state of the question. The Church of England, the Church of Rome, and the modern school, appeal to the written Scripture. It is a common term in the argument of all three.

But they differ in their interpretation. What shall decide? The Church of Rome appeals to her own infallible definitions; the modern school, to personal conviction; the Church of England, to Antiquity. The two former shrink from the ordeal; but we abide it. They are unaccustomed to be subject to any rule, and have about them too much that

is at variance, too much that goes beyond or comes short of primitive doctrine; besides, the habit of submitting to an external superior is unusual and irksome.

The Church of England submits herself to Antiquity; she professes, as her chief privilege, to be subject to it, to represent it, to speak in its very tones, to observe its very practices. This is her moral habit, and her rule.

It is equally false, therefore, for the Romanist, and for the ultra-Protestant, to plead that the Church of England opposes the truth of God or of Scripture, when she opposes their interpretations: for, to call *interpretations* of Scripture, "*Scripture*," until they are proved to be the *right sense*, is begging the question. The real struggle is between Church infallibility, individual judgment, and universal tradition. There is no other rule except immediate conscious inspiration.

CHAPTER V.

WE will now take one or two examples of the use of universal consent in fixing the right interpretation of Holy Scripture.

The following words are invariably quoted in the Socinian controversy. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen¹."

The first objection of the Socinians is, that the word "*God*" is not found in many manuscripts.

This is refuted by the agreement of "every known manuscript of this Epistle, and every ancient version extant²." It is universally read as we receive it.

Next they would convert the last sentence into a doxology to the Father³.

Thirdly, they would read ὧν ὁ Θεὸς for ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς, and translate it, "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, of whom (*i. e.* the fathers) is God over all⁴."

Lastly, they break away from criticism, and assert that the Fathers did not cite it to prove the divinity of Christ⁵.

¹ Rom. ix. 5. ² Abp. Magee on Atonement, &c., vol. iii. p. 109, note.

³ Ibid. p. 110.

⁴ Ibid. p. 115.

⁵ Burton's Ante-Nicene Testimonials to the Divinity of Christ, p. 87.

The fact is as follows :

St. Irenæus, proving the divinity of Christ against the Gnostics, says, "And, again, writing to the Romans concerning Israel, he [Paul] says, 'whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever ¹.'"

Tertullian writes, "Yet speaking singly of Christ I can call him God, as Paul did; 'of whom is Christ, who,' he says, 'is God over all blessed for ever ².'"

Cyprian, in his work called "Testimonies against the Jews," under the head, "that Christ is God," says, "Also Paul to the Romans, 'I could wish &c., . . . whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever ³.'"

Novatian twice quotes the verse for the same purpose.

Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, twice calls Christ "God over all," which words occur in no other place in the New Testament.

It is also quoted by the council of Antioch against the heresy of Paul of Samosata, with other texts to prove that Christ is essentially and substantially God.

And lastly Hippolytus, who, having first quoted the text, writes, "He that is God over all is blessed; and becoming man, is God for ever." This is in a work written against heretics who, in support of the Patripassian heresy, *i. e.*, that it was the Father who came and suffered, quoted this very text to show that the Christ was the supreme God.

And lastly, as some of these witnesses wrote in Greek and some in Latin, their respective quotations fix the genuine reading beyond the possibility of cavil. If the Greek could

¹ Lib. III. c. xvi.

² Adv. Prax. c. 13, and again, c. 15.

³ Test. Adv. Judæos.

be changed from $\acute{o} \tilde{\omega} \nu$ into $\tilde{\omega} \nu \acute{o}$, the Latin “qui est Deus super omnes,” is beyond torture¹. These testimonies are earlier than the Nicene council; at and after which there is no doubt, even in the mind of Socinians, as to the interpretation of the Church.

For another instance we will take the words, “whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified².” The word *glorified* is interpreted by Calvinists and Armenians alike of the *future* glory of the elect. By antiquity it was universally understood of their *present* glory, as expressing not what God would do, but what he had already done for them in fulfilment of his predestination, *i. e.*, the *adoption* of Christians to be sons of God, the great grace of the Gospel, and the spiritual conformity to the image of Christ which it conferred on the regenerate.

“By ‘glorify’ we may understand,” says Origen, “in this present world, that which the Apostle says, ‘we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord³.’”

St. Chrysostom: “He glorified by gifts of grace and the adoption.”

Œcumenius: “He glorified by the gifts of grace of the adoption.”

Theodoret and Theophylact, who add their testimonies to the interpretation of St. Chrysostom: “He glorified them, calling them sons, and giving them the grace of the Holy Ghost.”

The writer who goes under the name of Ambrose: “He

¹ Burton's Ante-Nicene Test., pp. 86—93.

² Rom. viii. 30.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

magnified them that they should be made like to the Son of God.”

Jerome : “ that they should be glorified by the endowment of graces ¹.”

To these may be added—

St. John Damascene : “ He glorified them by gifts of grace, and the adoption.” St. Cyril of Jerusalem ², and Theodoret ³, apply it to holy baptism, by which we are made sons of God ⁴.

A third and last instance may be taken from the conversation of our Lord with Nicodemus in the third chapter of St. John’s Gospel.

The countless and contradictory expositions of this passage by modern interpreters are too well known to need more than a mere recital. Some expound it of regeneration, but not of baptism; some of baptism, but severed from regeneration: some deny that material water is at all intended: some say that water is spoken of, but in marked contrast to Spirit, in order to show us its inefficacy. To these, and all other modern expositions we may safely apply Tertullian’s rule. It is the very nature of error to vary: one only of all these can be true; and in fact not one is the right interpretation. Universal tradition, with one consent, testifies that in these words our Lord spoke both of regeneration and of baptism, and connected them together as the two parts of one and the same mystery. “To hide the general consent of antiquity,” says Hooker, “agreeing in the literal interpretation,

¹ Faber on Election, p. 328.

² Catech. xxi.

³ In loc.

⁴ The word *δοξάζειν* in the New Testament universally means “to praise” (Luke iii. 10. iv. 15.), or “to magnify” (Rom. xi. 13.), or “to make glorious,” as when the Father openly acknowledges the Son (John xii. 28. Acts iii. 13). It is also used of the present state of Christians, 1 Pet. i. 8.—See *Schmid’s Concordantia*.

they cunningly affirm, that ‘certain’ have taken these words as meant of material water, when they know that, of all the ancients, there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise either expound, or allege the place, than as implying external baptism ¹.”

Origen writes : “ And since the sin of our birth is put away by the sacrament of baptism, therefore little ones are baptized : ‘ for except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven ².’ ”

At the Council of Carthage one of the Bishops said, “ And in the Gospel, our Lord Jesus Christ with his own divine voice spake, saying, ‘ Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ This is the Spirit, which from the beginning was borne upon the water. For neither does the Spirit work without the water, nor the water without the Spirit ³. ”

St. Cyril says, “ For since the nature of man is twofold, being made up of soul and body, the cleansing is also twofold, the incorporeal for the incorporeal part, the bodily for the body. The water cleanses the body, and the Spirit seals the soul : so that being sprinkled by the Spirit in our heart, and our bodies washed with pure water, we may draw nigh to God. Wherefore, when you are about to descend into the water, give no heed to the weakness of the [mere] water ; but, by the power of the Holy Ghost, receive salvation ; for without both, thou canst not be perfected. It is not I that say this, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath put this matter in his own power, for He saith, ‘ Except a man, &c. ⁴ ”

¹ Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* b. v. lix. s. 3. Ed. Keble.

² In *Lucam*, *Hom.* xiv. Also, *ad Rom. lib.* v. p. 8. and *Tertull. de Baptismo*, xiii.

³ *Nemesianus in Concil. Carthag.* S. *Cyprian. Opera*, p. 330.

⁴ *St. Cyril. Catech. de Baptismo*, iii. s. 4.

St. Augustin¹ and St. Chrysostom² apply the passage universally to baptism. But to multiply quotations is as needless as it would be easy.

As these instances will serve for our present purpose, I shall conclude with the following extract from the works of Dr. Waterland :

“ Great pains have been taken by many to depreciate the value of *antiquity*, and to throw contempt upon the primitive *Fathers* : which is a very unjustifiable practice, and is wounding *Christianity* itself through their sides ; though some that have done it, might be far from intending it. But I proceed to particulars :

“ It has been sometimes pleaded, that the *Scriptures* are in themselves a *perfect* rule of faith : what need therefore can there be of *Fathers*, with respect to the *fundamental* articles³ ?

“ To which we answer, that we produce not *Fathers* to superadd *new* doctrines to Scripture, but only to secure the *old* ; not to *complete* the rule, but more strongly to assert and maintain both its *true* sense, and *whole* sense. The more *perfect* the rule is, the more care and circumspection it demands, that we may preserve it entire, both as to *words* and *meaning*. For if either of them happens to be stolen away, or wrested from us, Scripture so maimed or castrated is no longer that *perfect* rule which Christ has ordained. It is much to be suspected, that many pretend a zeal for Scripture, who mean nothing by it, but to have its *fences* taken down, that they may deal more freely or rudely with it. They would exclude the *ancients*, to make room for *themselves*, and throw a kind of slight upon the *received* interpretations, only

¹ St. Aug. t. v. p. 393. 1186.

² St. Chrys. t. x. p. 373. & in loc.

³ Whitby, Dissertat. de Scriptur. Interpret. in præfat. pp. 8, 9.

to advance their *own*. . . . It might be shown, on the other hand, that those who have least indulged their own fancies, but have adhered strictly to *antiquity*, in the prime things, have done most honour to the *perfection* of *Scripture*, and have kept the rule of faith entire: this, therefore, is the way, rather than the other.

“ I may add, that when we say that *Scripture* is *perfect*, we mean, generally, as to the *matter* of it, which is *full* and *complete*, to be a rule of life and manners, without taking in any *additional* rule to join with it. But if we speak of *Scripture* being *perfect* in regard to *words* or *style*, we can mean only, that it is as perfect as *words* can be, and words (to us now) of a *dead* language. Whatever *imperfection* necessarily goes along with *all languages*, must of course go along with *Scripture language*; which, though dictated from heaven, or conducted by the Spirit of God, is yet adapted to the manner of men, and must take its construction from the common rules of interpretation agreed upon among men. Now if the *Fathers*, as living nearer the fountain, had some opportunities which we want, and might know some things much better than we at this distance can pretend to do, why should we neglect or despise any light or help which they can give for our direction, in settling the sense of *Scripture*? If the *Fathers* were *fallible*, so also are we; and if they, with all their advantages, might misconstrue *Scripture*, so may we much more. Therefore there is no prudence in throwing off their assistance as *useless* and *superfluous*. Even fallible men may be useful instructors to others as fallible; and in a *multitude of counsellors*, especially such counsellors, *there is safety*. But it is further pleaded, that *Scripture* is *plain* in all *necessaries*, and therefore needs no illustration from the *ancients*. We allow that *Scripture* is plain in *necessaries*; yea, it is what we urge

and contend for : and there is nothing that offends us more, than that many persons will endeavour notwithstanding, by violent contortions, far-fetched subtilties, and studied evasions, to elude and frustrate these *plain* things. Such conduct, on the adverse side, makes it the more necessary to have recourse to *antiquity*, for the greater *security* against all such attempts : for while Scripture is *plain*, antiquity is plain also ; and *two* plain things are better than *one*. God himself hath taught us, by adding his *oath* to his *promise*, not to think any *confirmation* superfluous, which he is pleased to afford us. His word alone might be *safely* depended upon, being *certain* and *infallible* : but *two immutable* things afford the *stronger consolation* ; and God considers the infirmities of mankind. In like manner, though Scripture be very *plain* to reasonable men, so far as concerns *necessaries*, yet by taking in *antiquity* to it, the evidence, upon the whole, becomes both *plainer* and *stronger*. There is so much weakness commonly in human nature, and so much reluctance shown to the reception of divine truths, that we have need of all the *plain* things we can any where procure ; and had we twenty more as plain as these, we could make use of them all, and indeed should be obliged to do so, lest otherwise we should be found guilty of despising the blessings of heaven. It is certain that there is something very particular in the concerns of *religion*, that *plain* things there have not the same force or weight as they have any where else. It is the only subject in the world wherein a man may dispute the most *certain facts*, and most *indubitable proofs*, and yet be allowed to be in his senses ; for if any one, in the common affairs of life, were to make it a rule to believe nothing but what he *sees*, or were to reject the *faith* of all *history*, he would undoubtedly be despised or pitied by

every body, as not well in his wits. Seeing, then, that the case of religion is so widely different from all others, and that the *plainest* evidences there often lose their effect, we can never be too solicitous in accumulating evidence upon evidence, and testimony upon testimony, to do the most we can towards relieving the weakness, or conquering the reluctance of men slow to believe.

. If it be said, that *common* Christians, at least, can reap no benefit from *antiquity*, nor make any *use* of it, that will not be reason sufficient for throwing it aside, so long as the *learned* may. But even *common Christians* do enjoy the benefit of it, if not at *first* hand, yet at the *second*, *third*, or *fourth*; and that suffices here, as well as in other cases of weighty concernment. How do they know, for instance, that Scripture is the word of God? They know it *immediately* or *proximately* from their proper guides, or other instructors, who in the last resort learn it from the *ancients*. So, then, *ordinary* Christians may thus *remotely* have the *use* of antiquity (not to mention other *nearer* ways) with respect to the *sense* of Scripture, as well as with regard to its *authenticity*. We admit, as I before said, that Scripture is very *plain* in *necessaries*.

But notwithstanding that all these things are so *plain*, yet considering that we are not the *first* men that ever looked into Scripture, but that others, who had as good eyes as we, and as upright hearts, and a competent measure of common sense (besides some peculiar advantages beyond what we can pretend to), have perused the same Scripture before us, I say, considering these things, it would be something of a mortification to us, or would appear somewhat strange, if such persons should not have found the same doctrines then, which we have the pleasure to find now. For whatever is

really *plain* to moderns, and *necessary*, must, one would think, by parity of reason, or for a stronger reason, have been *plain* to the *ancients* also, and *necessary* to them as well as to us¹.”

¹ Waterland on the Use and Value of Ecclesiastical Antiquity. Works, vol. v. pp. 282—287.

CHAPTER VI.

SUFFICIENT proof has, I trust, been given that the Rule of Faith, as expressed in the foregoing Sermon, is the principle distinctly recognised by the *reformed* Church of England, and also by the Church of *primitive* times : and enough has been said to show how the two great departures from it are akin to each other both in their errors, and their evil results. Having also attempted to show the application of the true rule, in confirming the right interpretation of Scripture, I would refer very shortly to the practical and moral benefits to be expected from a faithful endeavour to hold, and to promote in others a recognition of it : and so will conclude.

Now, after all other objections are spent, men commonly end by saying, that it is too alien from modern feelings, and would, if admitted, require a thorough remodelling of popular religious opinions. They argue, therefore, that it is impossible to recover it, and more than imply that it is not to be desired.

It is, however, as possible as it is necessary. The very alienation of the minds of men, and the acknowledged contrast of modern religion, in form and spirit, with the primitive faith and temper, while they are indeed hinderances to its reception, are in reality the chief and most urgent reasons to demand it.

The first effect of a hearty and honest submission of our minds to universal tradition, whensoever it is discernible in interpreting Scripture, would be to produce *agreement*.

Men have grown so familiar with the infinite diversity of religious opinion, that they have become incredulous as to the possibility of being united. They deny that there ever was such a thing as unity in opinion; and are, therefore, content to differ, and either to compromise differences at the cost of truth, or to contend for them at the cost of peace. And this has fostered, on the one side, exclusiveness leading to every form of division, and, on the other, liberalism leading to indifference. It is remarkable, as a summary test of these mental habits, that the very word *Catholic* has lost its ancient, and got a modern meaning. Once, it signified the unity of all Christians distinguished from every perversion of Apostolical teaching; it was emphatically an *exclusive* term. Now it signifies the few lingering facts, the *caput mortuum*, remaining among all sects after the abstraction of all particular and distinctive doctrines. Again, it was once used to express the spirit of universal charity which *followed* upon universal agreement in the faith; it is now taken to mean the general habit of indiscriminate good feeling, antecedent to and regardless of all particular truth. The very idea of oneness in religious opinion is by some laughed at as a dream, and by others even censured as intolerance. To such a pitch is it come: and to such an unworthy acquiescent contentedness in our present unhappy divisions are we fallen. Still we must believe, until the contrary shall at least be made probable by evidence, that if men would only submit to universal tradition in other points of religious opinion, as they do in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, they would differ just as little in understanding all passages of Scripture bearing upon points now tenaciously

disputed, as they do about such as establish that first and fundamental mystery. The agreement we might attain is greater than men seem to believe. Agreement was the original and heavenly endowment of Christ's Church, and was designed to be her inheritance for ever: but we, alas, have forfeited it; and, what is worse, are incredulous of our hereditary right, and unwilling to regain it.

The next effect of acting upon this rule would be *to throw the Church of England back upon the ground she held in the seventeenth century.*

Our adversaries know full well how far we have departed from the principles of that age; and they take due advantage of it. Modern Romanists carefully abstain from quoting such writers as Ussher, Hammond, and Bull; they dwell on Baxter¹, and other semi-conformists whose devotional writings have obtained for them a name in England, or on a few misrepresented fragments of Chillingworth², on the branded errors of Hoadly³, or on Archbishops Tillotson and Secker⁴, Bishops Porteus⁵, Watson⁶, and other writers⁷ of the *last century.*

I am far from breathing a word disrespectfully of the names above given, among which are those of men, whose saintliness of life has left their memory deeply impressed in the affections of the English Church. I would only point out this fact, in confirmation of the alleged change of tone among our later writers, in their controversies with the Church of Rome; and to show how warily our adversaries take advantage of it, and of our affectionate attachment to their memories. A still further proof of this may be given, in the fact, that whensoever Romanist writers do at all refer to controver-

¹ See Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, p. 35. ² Milner's End of Controversy, p. 82.

³ Ibid. p. 141. ⁴ Ibid. p. 34. ⁵ Ibid. p. 169, &c. ⁶ Ibid. p. 113.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 133, 139.

sialists of the seventeenth century, it is almost always in the way of shewing what *concessions* they were compelled to make : and that often when they are most strongly *vindicating* the avowed *principles of the English Church*.

The formal errors of Bishop Hoadly, who, as a very high authority has of late years publicly declared, died a Socinian in doctrine, are too well known to need recital ; but we are perhaps hardly aware, how extensively they spread in his day, and, through the writings of his disciple, Dr. Balguy, and others, afterwards ; much less are we sufficiently jealous to detect their chilling and lowering influence even upon those who would turn from them when formally propounded with alarm. There can be no doubt that the influence of Bishop Hoadly gave a decided character to the theology of his day, and left behind him an impression which is not even now altogether effaced. The Romanists are eager to make full use of this ; and have not scrupled to say that Hoadlyism ¹, as they phrase it, is the dominant system of the English Church ! It is well known also that the Presbyterian Establishment in Scotland, which is ever affected for good or ill by the variations of the Church of England, was in the last century reduced likewise to a tone of doctrine, in marked contrast to the formularies of its founders, and verging manifestly to a declension from the Gospel. There is indeed not much in the theological history of our Church, in the last hundred years, on which we can look back with satisfaction. The century opened with the pestilence of free-thinking ; and no sooner was the fact of Christianity established by such writers as Bishops Berkeley and Butler, than the specific doctrines were called in question. Hence the petitions from clergy and laity for abolition

¹ So it has been stated by Mr. Butler. See also Milner's Letter to a Prebendary, and End of Controversy.

of subscription to articles; the "Improved Version" of the New Testament; the open vaunting of Socinianism. And although, by God's blessing, the Church was able to witness both to the fact and to the doctrines of Christianity, her watchfulness was drawn off from the subtilities of Romanism to the audacity of free-thinking and false doctrine among professing Protestants. Against these enemies all her energies were pointed, and whether or no she forgot the mode of warfare by which she had prevailed against Romanism, at and for more than one hundred years after the Reformation, a comparison of her older and later writers will decide. It is an ominous fact, that, at this day, her most eager defenders cannot distinguish between the principle of the Reformation and the principle of Romanism, but identify them with a blind zeal, and so denounce both at once.

A further benefit from the Recognition of this Rule of Faith is, that it will bring us to a right apprehension of the leading principle of the Reformation. After all that has been quoted before from the writings of Archbishop Cranmer and others, it would be only a weariness to give particular evidence over again. If there be any weight in the testimonies which have been adduced, Scripture and the sense of Scripture attested by universal tradition must be acknowledged as the rule of our Church at the Reformation; and her modern defenders, who studiously reject that rule, cannot be admitted as true representatives of that great work. It is well that we should look the question plainly in the face, and make our choice between universal tradition, and the novel system of the last century; or, in other words, between the protesting Catholic rule of the Reformation, and the mere Protestantism of these days, which the English Reformation condemns with an equal

peremptoriness, and on the very same proof with which she resists the kindred innovations of the Church of Rome. Whether we are aware of it or no, we are at this time making our choice, and ranging ourselves on the one side or on the other accordingly. And if, through irresolution or easiness of mind, we think to put the choice aside, events will decide it for us.

And a last beneficial effect of fairly adopting this rule is, that it will bring us back to a full agreement with primitive Christianity, with which the Church of England at the Reformation identified herself. Universal tradition, as it is the ordinance of God for the perpetuation of His truth, so does it directly lead every man that commits himself to its guidance to the knowledge of the faith. For this we must ever bear in mind; that the only tradition which the English Church believes in is the universal; and that the universal tradition of all ages is no less than the voice of God.

These are some of the practical benefits to the Church at large, we may confidently expect from the re-adoption of this great and unchangeable rule; there are still, however, certain *moral* effects to be hoped for on the mind and temper of us all.

It will be a wholesome cure to the radical moral disease of our times, namely, the unconscious or overweening confidence with which we measure all truth by our own judgment and opinions. Men may talk of the prostration of reason before the shrine of authority, but let them take care that they do not covertly introduce a principle as irreligious as it is unphilosophical. For surely nothing can be more unphilosophical than the popular way of measuring religious truth; and nothing in more direct contrast to the great principle of natural science, of which these latter days are so boastful.

It is charged upon the natural philosophers before Lord

Bacon's time, that they framed hypotheses without investigation of facts; that they imposed their theories on nature, and used observations only to support their already constructed systems; external nature was their *follower*, not their *guide*. And so in modern religion, Antiquity and external proof are either rejected, as by the modern school, or bent, as by the Roman, to establish their previous theory. The great and true definition of natural philosophy, as we have it on the high authority of Lord Bacon, is the "questioning of nature," and the only sure rule is the deducing of conclusions from facts first gathered from the external world. The great universal laws of the material world, and the universal instincts of animate nature, are parallel to the universal tradition of revealed truth. Universal tradition is the evidence of an induction formed on the basis of all Christendom; and surely *they* most fall out with philosophy who reject it. Again, if this outward authority be of God, the most docile submission is the highest grace. It is assumption of supremacy on earth, and of freedom from all controlling authority in religion, that makes the Church of Rome and the modern school unteachable and wilful. The moral habits are the same; and hence comes all the kindred temptations to an evil disposition of mind. Self-confidence, a self-ordained infallibility, pertinacious tenacity of argument, readiness to accuse, rashness in denouncing, exclusiveness, a warped judgment, all these are the besetting dangers of our times; and so they ever must be until we all honestly submit to something out of ourselves, against whose decision we may make no further appeal. And surely no man can refuse to submit, in other things, to the same external evidence on which he receives Holy Scripture itself. From this we might confidently hope for a mutual forbearance and a real self-mistrust; for kindness and gentleness to-

wards those, who hold with us the same rule, but hesitate about particular examples; for manly openness in acknowledging our errors when we swerve, and boldness in putting forward the principles of which we are persuaded; and, with all this, a deep, reverential, and almost reluctant habit of mind, whensoever we take upon ourselves the grave duty of contending for truths revealed by Almighty God.

It would be well for us, in these days of natural science, if the genius of the great man to whom all profess to turn as the father of a new mode of philosophy, were more deeply wrought into our minds.

“Hoping well,” writes Lord Bacon, “to deliver myself from mistaking, by the order and perspicuous expressing of that I do propound; I am otherwise zealous and affectionate to recede as little from antiquity, either in terms or opinions, as may stand with truth, and the proficiencie of knowledge.

“And herein I cannot a little marvel at the philosopher Aristotle, that did proceed in such a spirit of difference and contradiction towards all antiquity; undertaking not only to frame new words of science at pleasure, but to confound and extinguish all ancient wisdom, insomuch that he never nameth or mentioneth an ancient author or opinion, but to confute and reprove, wherein for glory, and drawing followers and disciples, he took the right course.

“For certainly there cometh to pass, and hath place in human truth, that which was noted and pronounced in the highest: ‘Veni in nomine Patris, nec recipitis me: si quis venerit in nomine suo, eum recipietis.’ *I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.* But in this divine aphorism, considering to whom it was applied, namely to Antichrist, the highest deceiver, we may discern well, that the coming in a man’s own name, without regard of antiquity or paternity, is no good sign of truth, although it be

joined with the fortune and success of an ‘*eum recipietis*’—*him ye will receive*¹.”

By this means, too, the bonds of brotherly kindness, especially among the Clergy, would be strengthened and confirmed.

It is true we may differ without breach of affection; and no man who knows himself can doubt, that agreement, even in opinion, greatly cherishes and secures attachment. The best proof of it is, that a close agreement generally precedes or follows friendship.

And, lastly, the habit of looking out of ourselves and of submitting to an external witness of God’s appointment, has a direct tendency to deepen and confirm the devotional energies of the mind. It is not true, that they who reject universal tradition *can* wholly look out of themselves. Holy Scripture is indeed an external witness to which they believe themselves to bow; but it is Scripture *understood in their own sense*; and therefore, after all, *it returns unto themselves again*. Universal tradition makes the *sense* external too. Apostles, prophets, martyrs, doctors, and saints of old, gathered into one glorious fellowship, lose each their several forms and features of distinctness; they pass from our sight in the brightness which a miraculous consent of all Churches, and of all ages, sheds upon us: all that we behold is as it were the skirts of His glory, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. We listen not to them, but to Him, before whom let all the earth keep silence.

¹ Bacon’s *Advancement of Learning*, pp. 157, 158.

THE END.



