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# APPEAL FROM TRADITION

TO

## SCRIPTURE AND COMMON SENSE;

OR, AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE DIVINE RULE OF  
FAITH AND PRACTICE.

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BY GEORGE PECK, D. D.

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*Μάτην δὲ σέβονται με, διδάσکوιτες διδασκαλίας, ἐντάλματα  
ἀνθρώπων.—ΜΑΤΤ. xv, 9.*

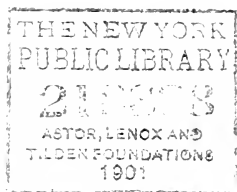
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## P R E F A C E.

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SINCE the decision of the Council of Trent, that "*traditions* should be received as of *equal authority* with the *Scriptures*," the subject of the present work has been one of animated, and often of angry controversy. The great labour of the Romish party has been to show the deficiency of the *Scriptures* as a rule of faith, and the perfect adaptation of the traditions of the church to supply that deficiency. On the other hand, Protestants have laboured to prove the suitableness and sufficiency of the *Scriptures* to teach men the way of salvation, and the utter worthlessness of tradition as an infallible guide in matters of faith.

This question constituted an important portion of the battle-ground of the Reformation. Upon the one side were the "Catholics," and on the other the great champions of truth—Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Beza, Knox, Cranmer, Peter Martyr, and Jewel. Though the defenders of the Reformation often appealed to antiquity, they did not make this

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appeal as to an infallible record, or a recognised supreme judge of controversy. But finding the Romish dogmas unsupported by the purest and best of the fathers, they met their opponents upon their own ground, and successfully fought them with their own weapons. No one carried on the war with the Romanists upon patristical ground more successfully than Bishop Jewel. The defenders of tradition, in our own time, have not a little exulted in this, as though the learned bishop had sanctioned an appeal to tradition as an authoritative rule in controversies. This conclusion is, however, gratuitous—without the least foundation in fact. I have endeavoured to meet traditionists in the same way in this work; but I hope the fact will not be supposed to imply that I have no faith in the principles for which I contend from the opening to the close of the volume, namely, that *the Bible is the divine rule of faith and practice*, and that what is called *tradition* is *totally without authority*, any further than it harmonizes with, and is built upon, the Holy Scriptures.

I do not, however, fully endorse all that the reformers have left upon record, upon the authority and right use of the fathers, and the power of the church, to determine controversies. Sometimes they concede too much, and at others they do

not allow enough. They were often driven by circumstances to see how much they could admit without sacrificing the truth, and sometimes went further in their concessions than was quite consistent with their fundamental principles. At other times, in the heat of controversy, they took positions, and let fall statements, which were taken up by fanatics and pushed out to extremes which they never contemplated, and which they were the first to rebuke. The reformers, in the main, fought the battle well, and we should venerate their memory and their precious remains. They were, however, men—uninspired men—and their decisions are to be measured and tried, the same as all other merely human compositions, by the undeviating standard of truth.

The late revival of the Romish controversy, both by the professed adherents of the pope, and real Romanists under the name and style of “Anglican Catholics,” has brought back the old elements of discord—dug up, from the rubbish of former centuries, the Popish armoury which the mighty champions of the glorious Reformation had broken to pieces, and which the world had reason to suppose would only be resumed by the faithful servants of his holiness in their last effort to recover their former glory.

From this cause we are brought under the necessity of fighting over again the battles of the sixteenth century. Instead of improving all our time and strength in pressing our aggressions against paganism, infidelity, and wickedness in its various forms, we must pause to demolish a corrupt form of Christianity, which throws itself up, like a brazen mountain, between us and our wonted field of labour.

The circulation of the *Oxford Tracts* and kindred publications, in this country, together with the progress which their doctrines have made in certain quarters, has awakened great interest among the churches. And such is the bold front of the *Pusey* party, such their extravagant assumptions, and such their lofty pretensions, that "the sects," as they are scornfully denominated, have naturally been aroused to a new and thorough investigation of the grounds of their faith.

The question of the *supremacy of the Scriptures alone* as the rule of faith and practice is the Thermopylæ of the great controversy between Romanists and Tractarians on the one hand, and the different evangelical Protestant churches on the other. It is consequently of great importance that the whole question should be well understood.

I have endeavoured, in the present work, to pre-

sent all the essential features and phases of the traditionary system, and to show the circumstances of their development and application. In many instances the mere unmasking of an error is its refutation. This is the case with many parts of the system I here oppose, and indeed the same may be said of the system as a whole. I have accordingly drawn it out as set forth in acknowledged authorities, and endeavoured to show its practical bearings upon the great system of faith and practice set forth in the Scriptures.

This, however, in such a controversy, is not sufficient. The arguments presented in support of the heresy must be met and refuted, and those which bear against it presented clearly and forcibly. I have endeavoured to embody in this volume all that is essential to the question, though very much that is appropriate, and has more or less weight, is necessarily excluded. I have intended to make the argument, as a whole, a perfect one, and to look fairly in the face every thing of importance presented by the supporters of the traditionary theory.

It will be seen that I make frequent reference to the learned and able work of Mr. Goode. This powerful champion of true Protestantism has rendered great service to the church by his inge-

nious and learned labours. But his work is too heavy for general circulation, and there are several points in the controversy, particularly as it stands between high-Churchmen and the evangelical denominations in this country, which he has not so fully entered into and laid open as the occasion requires.

It has been my object uniformly to quote my authorities, and, as far as I can now recollect, I have carried out this purpose. I lay under heavy contributions the old English divines, many of whom are quite out of print, and scarcely known. I feel a pleasure in being able to bring these venerable fathers of the English Church before the present generation: and especially in calling the attention of their degenerate sons to the "sound speech which cannot be condemned," of their sainted doctors, bishops, and archbishops. Let their names be in perpetual remembrance in the church below, while they are enrolled in the Lamb's book of life above!

When I quote the fathers, or such Romish writers as are only to be consulted in a dead language, I do not generally insert the originals. This course I take to save room; and as I have prepared this volume for the public in general, and not merely for the scholar and critic, and especially as I always make a full reference in the



margin to the work I quote, I hope this will not be deemed a defect.

As to the style of this work I have little to say. I have laboured to attain the *perspicuity* and *strength* which are necessary in presenting and sustaining a great argument. How I have succeeded in this, I leave for the candid reader to judge. I need scarcely say, that *ornament* has been left entirely out of the question.

The labour which such a work costs the author, no one can appreciate who has not made an experiment in the same way. All this has been endured with cheerfulness, in the hope of rendering some little service to the church and the world. Pressing official duties have necessarily protracted my inquiries and delayed the publication, and the same cause has doubtless, more or less, restricted my investigations; I do not, however, now recur to any point which is left materially defective.

I hope my manner will not appear harsh or severe. I have desired to treat those with whom I feel compelled to differ with due respect and Christian charity. If I have failed in this, I must hope for the forgiveness of the injured, and, above all, for the mercy of Him "who alone can forgive sins," and "who knows our frame, and

remembers that we are dust." This, however, is not designed as an apology for the decided tone and sharpness of rebuke which characterize the work. Errors, such as I here meet, are not to be handled with gloves. The axe of truth and reason must be laid at the root of the deadly Upas—and the blows continue to fall thicker and heavier until it is laid prostrate upon the ground. This is not the time for the watchman to sleep. The enemy is sowing his tares with an industry worthy of a good cause. Let the lovers of truth, then, come to the rescue! Let the evangelical denominations leave their petty differences, and unite in the support and diffusion of the great doctrines of the Reformation, or, to speak more properly, *the great doctrines of the Bible*. The period in which we live is truly eventful. Is it a time to compromise essential truth, or give place to invidious error? Surely not. The great battle which is to decide the fate of the world is at hand—yea, is already begun! Let those, then, who are upon the side of God and truth, "come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

GEORGE PECK.

*New-York, Dec. 1, 1843.*

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AN APPEAL  
FROM  
TRADITION TO SCRIPTURE.

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CHAPTER I.

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM STATED AND EXAMINED.

SECTION I.

Origin and Nature of the Question upon the Rule of Faith and Practice.

DIVERSITY of views in relation to moral truths is incident to the imperfection of the human understanding. But, lest this diversity should extend so far as to embrace inconsistencies and contradictions, and we should not be able to arrive at safe determinations upon radical questions, it would seem necessary that there should be some rule or test by which our judgments might be tried. Especially might this be expected in matters of religion. It would be strange if a God of infinite wisdom and goodness had left man without a guide in relation to the most important of all interests, that of his soul and a future state. While he has established laws for the government of the material universe, and for the regulation of our intellectual processes in relation to them; that our hea-

venly Father should have left religion to the sport of chance—to be decided and acted upon as passion or caprice might direct—is repulsive to reason and common sense.

But if God has given to his poor erring creatures a rule of faith and of duty, where is it to be found? This is a question which has agitated and agonized the soul in all its varieties of elevation and of depression, of despair and of hope. The mere Theist tells us that this rule is to be found in natural religion; that in our desires and repugnances, connected with the consequences of human actions—their relation to individual happiness and the best good of the universe—reason is able to detect the great moral rule which should be regarded as paramount law. That the mind of man does not rest in this conclusion is obvious from the fact that where *legitimate* revelation has not shed its beams, and men have, from tradition or the convictions of natural conscience, any notions of God, they will have their superstitions. They have mysteries—altars, prophets, and priests; and in many instances sacred books; by the help of which they hope to ascertain the will of the great governing Power whose authority they acknowledge, and whose wrath they dread. Whence all this, if a revelation of the divine Mind more direct and intelligible than that which comes through the voice of nature is not one of the natural and legitimate wants of man? As, however, it constitutes no part of my purpose to dispute the ground of divine revelation with the Deist or skeptic, I may now leave this general view of the subject, and direct my attention to the

special matter which I design in the present work to discuss.

It might reasonably have been supposed, that with those who acknowledge both the necessity and the fact of a written divine revelation, no question would have arisen whether such revelation would constitute the only rule of faith and practice. But, unhappily, this question has been agitated by theologians for centuries. In the extension of the Christian church in numbers and political power, many became nominally Christians who were not wholly divested of notions of religion radically heathen, and consequently not in harmony with the religion of Christ. These seeds of error developed themselves in the various forms of heresy which marked the early ages of the church. These heresies were in some instances disowned, and in others cherished, by the learned doctors and leaders whose dictum was taken as the true test of the orthodox faith. Hence arose discussions and contentions, divisions and schisms. Doctrines and usages not recognised in Holy Scripture coming to be insisted upon as essential to Christianity, not only among those who were officially branded as heretics, but also those who represented the orthodox or the Catholic Church, an appeal simply to Scripture did not meet the case. Hence the views of Catholic doctors, the opinions of the Catholic Church, the decisions of the fathers, and traditions apostolical, laid claim to a right to settle controversies; and ultimately these were made to constitute a portion of the rule of faith and practice. As early as the Council of Nice, the authority of the holy fathers was plead both for and

against the supreme divinity of Christ, and the trinity of persons in the Godhead. And in the fifth century, *Catholic consent* was set up as a test of the orthodox faith.

The question ultimately raised was, whether Holy Scripture alone, or Scripture and the voice of the Church conjoined, constituted the divine rule of faith and practice. The sober portions of those who have maintained that "the Bible alone" constitutes the divine rule of faith and practice, have always agreed in recognising all legitimate helps to a correct understanding of the sacred writings. Though they maintain that whatever is morally obligatory as matter of faith or practice is either taught expressly, or is so evidently implied in the word of God, that the simple unsophisticated mind may, without difficulty, gather it from reading the Scriptures, yet they also maintain that many portions of the sacred writings cannot be understood without critical skill, and that the proudest intellect, with all the aids of ancient and modern learning, will often be exhausted without penetrating the profound mysteries of these writings. It is often erroneously asserted that those who take this view of the rule of faith hold that *private judgment* constitutes the true rule. Private judgment upon the meaning of Scripture is certainly the right of every human being, so far as he is capable of exercising such a judgment. But this is simply judging of the application of the true rule, and not setting up one independently. If private interpretation were the rule in the sense here opposed, we should indeed have, as we are often accused of having, as many rules of faith as there are



individuals who read and judge of the sense of the Bible. But no sensible man ever held any such view. The principle maintained by sound Protestants is, that Holy Scripture is the word of God—that God's will lies in the sense or meaning of Scripture—that this sense is to be ascertained by understanding the language—that the more perfectly the language is understood, the more perfect knowledge do we have of the will of God—and that it is our duty to use every means within our power which will in any way contribute to a clear and perfect understanding of this language. Whatever means, then, conduce most effectually to develop the mind of the Spirit, as couched in Holy Scripture, are really of the greatest importance. The fragments which are left to us from antiquity are always embraced in this category, but all do not attach to them the same importance.

Among those who give to the voice of the Church divine authority, there are several diversities of opinion. The view most prevalent among Roman Catholics, and a class of divines of the Church of England which are sometimes denominated *high-Church*, is, that Scripture and tradition jointly constitute the divine rule of faith and practice;—that Scripture is the *record*, and tradition the *commentary*;—that tradition, as well as the New Testament Scriptures, is of apostolical origin, and of course of divine authority in religious controversies;—that the teaching and practice of the primitive church is evidence of the sense which the writers of the New Testament Scriptures intended to express in those writings, or rather of what the apostles preached and practised.

## SECTION II.

The twofold Rule stated.

THE English reformers, together with many eminent divines of the English Church who have lived since the Reformation, agree in paying a high degree of deference to the opinions of the fathers, but still consider their testimony *human*, and consequently *fallible*. I have for myself not the least disposition to question the competency or credibility of the fathers as witnesses of facts which they knew. In relation to these, when their testimony has not been corrupted or mutilated, I believe their declarations as high a species of human testimony as is to be found in the records of antiquity. But there are many abatements to be made to the weight of their testimony when it is adduced in proof of *doctrines* which were supposed to have existed in the apostolic age. This will be shown at large hereafter.

Mr. Wesley, after he had given his followers in this country a plan, or "sketch," of church organization, left them "at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the *primitive church*." From this we see that this great man venerated "the primitive church," and considered a high degree of respect due to it in matters of church order and discipline. And I have no fears that the Methodist Episcopal Church in this country will ever condemn or neglect the primitive pattern, either in doctrine, discipline, or usages. But then, be it observed, *first*, that by the primitive church we mean the church near the apostolic age ;

and, *secondly*, that we follow the primitive church, only so far as it harmonizes with the word of God. We take nothing as of *divine authority* which is not *clearly expressed* or *evidently implied* in God's most blessed word; nothing as being necessary for faith or manners which is not therein expressed or thereby capable of evident proof.

I shall now proceed to present the twofold rule in detail, with the grounds upon which it is made by its assertors to rest.

Mr. (now Archdeacon) Manning professes to give us the true view of the Anglican Church upon the subject.\* And by comparing his system with that of the Oxford school, it will be seen that he only differs from them in the carrying out—or the extent of the consequences to which he pushes his fundamental principles. His foundation is the same as that of the Tractators, and theirs the same as that of the Romanists; but he seems to have less courage in looking fairly in the face the ulterior consequences of the principles in which they all substantially agree. But I will now let the archdeacon speak for himself. He says,—

“We believe in the sufficiency of Holy Scripture for salvation, not upon any argument *a priori* drawn from our conceptions of what God would do for the

\* The work I quote is “a Sermon preached in the Cathedral Church of Chichester, June 13, 1838,” entitled, “The Rule of Faith,” with an appendix of 136 pages, 8vo. This work being a temperate, learned, and sensible production, for one of the class, and held in high estimation by Churchmen, I make it the basis of the traditionary theory as held by them.

safe keeping of the faith; (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;—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 declares to us that the Holy Scripture is ‘the one perfect instrument of God,’ perfect, that is, both in harmony and compass; ‘the most true rule of doctrine;’ ‘the even and true balance;’ ‘the mirror without a flaw;’ ‘the healing medicine of the soul.’ ‘For in those things,’ we are told, ‘which are openly set in Scripture, is to be found everything that contains the faith and practice of life.’” —Pp. 14, 15.

The sum of this statement is, that the Church of England believes in “the sufficiency of Holy Scripture for salvation,” simply “upon the constant, unanimous witness” of the fathers—or upon the testimony of Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, Cyril, Vincent, and Jerome, as these are the authorities he gives in the margin.

Next he gives us the following:—

“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 themselves 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.”—Pp. 26, 27.

What that “rule” is, may be gathered from the following:—

“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*.”—*Appendix*, p. 33.

In what form that “rule” is now presented, which he considers so “plainly necessary,” he states as follows:—

“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.”—P. 35.

We have the theory of the archdeacon more systematically drawn out in the Appendix, thus:—

“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.”—*Appendix*, p. 3.

Here we see that the Scriptures constitute the authorized record; but their *sense* is to be sought in the records of antiquity. This sense our author had limited in the Sermon, which constitutes the foundation of his book, to the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds. But now he gives it a wider range, embracing it “in the creeds and universal consent of [primitive] Christians.” The different forms of this “universal consent,” then, whether exhibited in the creeds or otherwise, “claim their several measures of deference from us.” And these creeds, with whatever else the archdeacon would give the same authority, he claims to have come from the apostles—to have constituted an *unwritten revelation*, brought and reported from the mouths of the apostles by competent witnesses. But he seems to hang principally upon the creeds, and doubtless would scarcely have made provision for the admission of other records had the creeds embraced all the topics which it seems now exceedingly desira-

ble that he should be able to settle by the "unanimous consent" of the primitive church. In his Appendix our author undertakes to prove that "*Scripture and the creed, attested by universal tradition, was the rule of faith in the primitive church.*" But the rule of faith furnished in the creed, and doubtless all other records equally ancient and well attested, the archdeacon makes out more ancient than the writings of Christ and the apostles. In proof of his main position he undertakes to prove "the following facts:"—

"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.*" "It cannot be doubted that the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds are the offspring and representatives of the oral preaching of the apostles."—*Appendix*, pp. 37, 75.

The *first* proposition our author thinks "requires no proof, being self-evident." It is not, however, to me quite "self-evident." By "Scripture" I suppose the archdeacon means the apostolic writings. And though we do not doubt that before these writings

were executed and given to the churches "the oral preaching of the apostles" had the same authority that their writings now have, and constituted a part of "the rule of faith;" yet we deny that it did constitute "the sole rule of faith." For the Old Testament Scriptures were by them appealed to as a divine record, and, so far as they go, as an infallible guide in religion. The learned author seems almost entirely to lose sight of the old covenant, using the general term "Scripture," which is usually understood to embrace both the Old and New Testaments, for the New Testament writings exclusively.

As to the *second*, it is no way important.

The *third* proposition of our author, he thinks, is fully sustained by the fact, that the canon of Scripture was *gradually* settled; and assumes, without proof, that the reports of "the oral preaching of the apostles must have been the *chief* rule of faith" until that event had taken place. And he supposes the canon "to have been fixed somewhere about the end of the second or the beginning of the third century." If this hypothesis is correct, we might expect to find some evidence of it in the fragments from the fathers of the first and second centuries. But so far is this from being the fact, that these fathers uniformly refer to the written productions of the evangelists and apostles, in connection with the Old Testament, as constituting, not merely "the chief," but the only rule of faith and practice.

*Justin Martyr*, who flourished in the second century, says, "Neither did God ask Adam where he was, as one who knew not, nor Cain where Abel was; but for the purpose of convincing each of them what he was,



and that the knowledge of all things might be conveyed to us *by their being committed to writing.*"

Irenæus, of the same century, says, "By no other have we come to the knowledge of the plan of our salvation, but those through whom the gospel came to us, which they then preached, but afterward, by the will of God, delivered to us in the *Scriptures*, to be the *foundation and pillar of our faith.*"\*

Many more passages equally clear might be quoted from the writings of this period, but I must not enlarge at this point. In the absence of all proof of our author's position, 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, until they were collected and dispersed in a body or canon throughout all the churches of the world," the above is certainly sufficient to evince the contrary. There can, indeed, be no question but that the writings of the apostles and evangelists superseded all traditionary reports of their oral preaching, as soon as they were known and read, and those who had listened to their discourses had, with them, gone to the world of spirits.

Eusebius clearly asserts that, according to the tradition, the sacred writings of the New Testament were written to stand in the place of the living voice of the apostles.

"Matthew," he says, "having first proclaimed the gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to them by his writings."†

\* Irenæi Adv. Her., lib. iii, c. 1.

† Book iii, chap. 24.

The following is his account of the origin of the Gospel according to Mark:—"So greatly, however, did the splendour of piety enlighten the minds of Peter's hearers, that it was not sufficient to hear but once, nor to receive the unwritten doctrine of the gospel of God, but they persevered in every variety of entreaties, to solicit Mark, as the companion of Peter, and whose Gospel we have, that he should leave them a monument of the doctrine thus orally communicated, in writing. Nor did they cease their solicitations until they had prevailed with the man, and thus became the means of that history which is called the Gospel according to Mark."\*

As to Luke's Gospel, the same author says, "But Luke also, in the commencement of his narrative, premises the cause which led him to write, showing that many others, having rashly undertaken to compose a narration of matters that he had already completely ascertained, in order to free us from the uncertain suppositions of others, in his own Gospel, he delivered the certain account of those things, that he himself had fully received from his intimacy and stay with Paul, and also his intercourse with the other apostles."†

The following is his account of the origin of St. John's Gospel:—"But after Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say, that John, who, during all this time, was proclaiming the gospel without writing, at length proceeded to write it on the following occasion:—"The three Gospels previously written, having been distributed among all, and also

\* Book ii, chap. 15.

† Book iii, chap. 24.

handed to him, they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth; but that there was only wanting in the narrative the account of the things done by Christ, among the first of his deeds, and at the commencement of the Gospel.”\*

All this seems most clearly to imply that the Gospels were written to remedy the imperfections of oral tradition:—that they were a record of the preaching of the apostles, and not entirely another thing, to be explained and understood by the traditions of their oral teaching. The notion, that the preaching of the apostles constituted one portion of revelation, which was to be handed down by tradition, and that the Scriptures constituted another, which *mean nothing of themselves*, but must be interpreted by oral tradition, is a discovery made several hundred years after the decease of the apostles, and made to serve the purposes of heresy and corruption.

The *fourth* position, like the *second*, is wholly irrelevant to the question at issue.

The whole argument which the archdeacon draws from the dates of the Gospels and Epistles, in proof of his “self-evident” proposition, and by the aid of which he arrives at the result that, with a few “slight exceptions, the whole body of the church, from Spain to India, possessed for twenty years (that is, nearly a generation) no other rule of faith than the oral preaching of the apostles,” is entirely irrelevant. For, so far as the Gentile converts are concerned, none ever denied the fact, nor does it bear at all upon the question at issue.

\* Book iii, chap. 24.

The *fifth* proposition is a mere hypothesis, without the least support.

That the creeds came from the apostles' mouths to us in the precise forms in which we have them, the archdeacon is a little too wary to assert. The authority for this, however, at least so far as the Apostles' Creed is concerned, is as ancient and as valid as that upon which he relies for proof that any formulary of the kind was in use as early as the apostolic age. St. Ambrose says, "The twelve apostles, as skilful artificers, assembled together, and made a key by their common advice, that is, the creed; by which the darkness of the devil is disclosed, that the light of Christ may appear."

Ruffinus says, that "they had received by tradition from their fathers, that after the ascension of our Saviour, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost, before the apostles separated from each other to go into the several parts of the habitable world, to preach the gospel to them, they settled among themselves the rule of their future preaching, to prevent their teaching different doctrines, during their separation, unto those whom they should invite unto the Christian faith: wherefore they assembled all together, and being full of the Holy Ghost, they composed the creed; each one inserting what he thought convenient; and ordained it to be a test of their future sermons, and a rule to be given unto the faithful."

"Besides the opinion, that the apostles were in general the authors of the creed, some have advanced one step further, and affirmed, that every apostle inserted his particular article; by which, according to

the number of the apostles, they have divided the creed into twelve articles, allowing one article for each apostle: a full account whereof is in a sermon falsely attributed to St. Austin; where the author thereof gives us this following relation, concerning each particular article that was put in by each particular apostle. ‘Peter,’ saith he, said, ‘I believe in God the Father Almighty;’ John, ‘Maker of heaven and earth;’ James, ‘and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;’ Andrew, ‘Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;’ Philip, ‘suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;’ Thomas, ‘he descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead;’ Bartholomew, ‘He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;’ Matthew, ‘from thence shall he come to judge the quick and the dead;’ James, the son of Alpheus, ‘I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church;’ Simon Zelotes, ‘the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins;’ Jude, the brother of James, ‘the resurrection of the body;’ Matthias, ‘life everlasting. Amen.’”\*

All this has been considered by many a devout admirer of patristical tradition as certainly true as the Acts of the Apostles. It is not, however, marvellous that a writer of Lord King’s learning and shrewdness should come to a different conclusion. He says,—

“Now as to the truth of this tradition, I think it is altogether to be denied, and that for several reasons: as that it was nigh four hundred years after Christ

\* See the History of the Apostles’ Creed, with critical observations on the several articles, by Sir Peter King, pp. 25–23.

before the framing of the creed by the apostles was ever heard of; and even Ruffinus himself, one of the first reporters thereof, though in the beginning of his commentary he doth roundly assert it, yet in the midst thereof he speaks of it doubtfully, as if its authors were uncertain and unknown.”—P. 28.

The same author tells us that “it is true the exact form of the present creed cannot pretend to be so ancient as the apostolic times by four hundred years.” “As for the authors thereof,” says he, “it cannot be denied but that they were several and many; the creed was neither the work of one man, nor of one day, but, during a long tract of time, passed successively through several hands, ere it arrived to its present perfection; the composure of it was gradual, and not instantaneous.” And though he thinks “some of the articles therein were derived from the very days of the apostles,” he says, “The others were afterward added by the primitive doctors and bishops, in opposition to gross heresies and errors that sprung up in the church.”—P. 33.

Again he states, “‘The descent into hell,’ as Ruffinus informs us, ‘was neither in the Roman nor Oriental creeds;’ ‘the communion of saints’ was not in any creed till above four hundred years after Christ, and then not immediately received in all: the clause of ‘life everlasting’ was omitted in several, while in others it was inserted.”—Pp. 29, 30.

This is all that it is very important to present in relation to “the creeds,” at present: in another place the subject will be resumed, and more fully canvassed.

So far, we have seen the theory of patristical tradi-

tion in its mildest and least exceptionable form. Its most prominent features are, that the oral preaching of the apostles originally constituted the rule of faith—and that out of that oral preaching was wrought a formulary of faith, embracing the articles of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, which were proposed to all who were baptized as a condition of admission to that ordinance. All of which would be harmless enough, if it were based upon legitimate evidence, and did not cast a shade over the peculiar splendours of the written revelation. A system which carries in its train consequences so grave must not be hastily admitted. The arguments adduced in its support must be thoroughly canvassed. To them I shall pay all due attention in another place. For the present, it is desirable to see a more full development of the system itself.

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### SECTION III.

The System of Tradition more fully developed.

WE have seen that Archdeacon Manning considers “the creeds and universal consent of Christians—the creed attested by universal tradition,” as an authoritative commentary upon the Scriptures. He does not, indeed, award the highest kind of evidence to all primitive traditions, but very modestly says that “all primitive interpretations prevalent, though not universal, *claim their several measures of deference from us, and we may not lightly contradict them.*” But for such “primitive interpretations” as were “universal” he takes higher ground, giving them a divine authority—

an authority equal to that of the written word. The following is his language :—

“ 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.*”—*Appendix*, p. 133.

The following is quoted with approbation by Archdeacon Manning from Dr. Hammond, a divine of the seventeenth century, of the Laudean school, and now highly in favour with the Oxford divines :\*—

“ 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 nowhere 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 in the *hands*, in the *preachings* than in the *writings* of the

\* The work from which this extract is made is now before me, and is entitled, “ A Parænesis, or Seasonable Exhortation to all True Sons of the Church of England.” Originally printed in London, 1656. Reprinted, Oxford, 1841.



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 traditions*, 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*."—*Appendix*, pp. 14, 15.

After an extended investigation of the sense of the Church of England, as expressed by several of her learned divines, the archdeacon makes the following induction :—"Treating, therefore, the foregoing collection of testimonies as the particular instances in the 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*."—*Appendix*, p. 33.

According to all this, the system of divine revelation is composed of two parts, one written and the other oral—the Scriptures and tradition—one the *record* and the other the *explanation*, *equally essential* and of *equal authority*. This is precisely the view of the Tractarians and the Romanists.

Mr. Newman says, "We have as little warrant for rejecting ancient consent as for rejecting Scripture itself." And that "catholic tradition—the unwritten word—is a *divine* informant in religious matters." Again, more at large,—

"Let us understand what is meant by saying that

antiquity is of authority in religious questions. Both Romanists and ourselves maintain as follows:—That whatever doctrine the primitive ages unanimously attest, whether by consent of fathers, or by councils, or by the events of history, or by controversies, or in whatever may fairly and reasonably be considered to be the universal belief of those ages, is to be received as *coming from the apostles*.\*

The following explicit statement is from “Tracts for the Times, No. 70 :”—

“With respect to the supreme authority of inspired Scripture, it stands thus:—Catholic tradition teaches revealed truth, Scripture proves it; Scripture is the document of faith, tradition the witness of it; the true creed is the catholic interpretation of Scripture, or scripturally proved tradition; Scripture by itself teaches mediately, and proves decisively; tradition by itself proves negatively, and teaches positively; Scripture and tradition, taken together, are the joint rule of faith.”

That the views of the Romish authors of the highest authority are really the same with those of the high-Church authorities above quoted, will be seen from what follows:—

Bellarmino says, “I assert, that Scripture, although not composed principally with the view of its being a rule of faith, is nevertheless a rule of faith; not the entire rule, but a partial rule. For the entire rule of faith is the word of God, or God’s revelation made to the church, which is distributed into two partial rules, Scripture and tradition. That the Scripture is not the

\* Lectures on Romanism and Popular Protestantism.

judge, is evident; because it admits different meanings, and cannot tell which is the right one."

And the Tridentine Catechism says, "The whole of the doctrine to be delivered to the faithful is contained in the word of God, which is distributed into Scripture and tradition."

The Council of Trent distribute traditions as follows, namely,—“Those which were received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ; or delivered from hand to hand, from the apostles to our times; the Holy Ghost dictating them unto them.”\*

Let it not be pretended, then, that Roman Catholics are heretical and Anglican Catholics orthodox, when they maintain the same general ground. They are brethren, why should they disagree? They must stand or fall together, in spite of their mutual criminations, and exclusive assumptions of orthodoxy. At least, upon points which they hold in common, if they explain themselves intelligibly, it looks captious to see them raise a dust as if to blind the eyes of mankind, and then attempt to draw mighty lines of distinction.

Let it also be remembered that the best of the Romish writers, when they come to specific definitions, go scarcely a hair's breadth beyond the views of the prerogatives of the Church in settling matters of faith which are entertained by the great mass of high-Churchmen, and are expressed by Archdeacon Manning. Indeed, they often wholly disclaim the imputation of holding that the Church has a right to originate new doctrines of faith not contained in divine

\* See Elliott on Romanism, vol. i, p. 95; also Lightfoot's Works, vol. viii, p. 284.

revelation. Witness the following passages from Bellarmine :—

“There are two things to be particularly observed : The first is, that there are some things in the Christian doctrine, *as well of faith as of morals*, that are in themselves (simpliciter) necessary to all for salvation, such as is a knowledge of the articles of the Apostles’ Creed, likewise a knowledge of the ten commandments and certain sacraments. The rest are not so necessary, that without an explicit knowledge, and belief, and profession of them a man cannot be saved, if only he have a ready mind to receive and believe them when they shall have been legitimately propounded to him by the Church.—Observe, secondly, that those things which are in themselves (simpliciter) necessary, the apostles were in the habit of preaching to all ; but of other things they did not deliver all men, but some of them to all, those, namely, which were of use to all, some to the prelates, bishops, and presbyters only. These things being observed, I assert, that *all those things were written by the apostles which are necessary to all*, and which they themselves preached openly to all without distinction ; but that of other things not all were written.” Again he says, “I assert, that of all those articles which relate to the nature of God, there exist proofs (testimonia) in the Scriptures, and that we may be *fully and clearly* instructed concerning those articles of Scripture, if we take them in their right sense.” And again he says, “It is usual with them [that is, the Protestants] to treat the matter as if they defended the Scriptures only, and we defend traditions only, nor cared whether

traditions were agreeable to Scripture or contrary to Scripture. But it is not so ; *for we put a higher value on Scripture (Scripturam pluris facimus)* than they do ; nor admit any tradition against Scripture.”

Mr. Goode, after these passages from the great Romish oracle, adds the following very just observations :—“ From the two former of these passages, then, it is evident that the most learned Romanists hold that all those doctrines, the belief of which is essentially necessary to salvation, including particularly the articles in the Apostles’ Creed, are contained in the Scriptures. There is, indeed, an intimation that there must also be a willing mind to embrace those points which may be propounded for belief by the Church, but then it must be recollected that the Church of Rome does not profess to introduce new doctrines, but only to inculcate those which are derived either from Scripture, or that church tradition which (like the Tractators) it receives as apostolical. That is, the concession here made that the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation is accompanied by the requirement that that is also to be believed which the Church propounds as an apostolical doctrine derived from tradition ; a demand which seems to me to be equally made by the Tractators.”\* And I may add, “ a demand which seems to me to be equally made by” Archdeacon Manning.

So it seems obvious that the cautious statements made by the Romanists, when they speak in view of Protestant objections, are very much like those which high-Churchmen generally make, touching the simple

\* The Divine Rule of Faith and Practice, vol. i, pp. 78, 79.

sufficiency of divine revelation to set forth and prove the doctrines of Christianity. Their fundamental principles are the same, their mode of development sometimes differs; but the discrepancies between the leading teachers of the two schools are scarcely so great as those which are discoverable between leading and learned doctors of each school respectively among themselves.

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#### SECTION IV.

Pretended Distinctions between the Rule as held by the Church of England and by the Church of Rome.

IT is not a little annoying to many high-Churchmen to hear it said that they agree in all essential points with the Romanists. To meet the imputation of Romanism, they sometimes undertake to make distinctions where none but themselves are able to see the least difference. Mr. Goode shows most conclusively that the Oxford divines have, in several instances, in order to prove themselves anti-Papists, most miserably misrepresented and caricatured the Romish theory. On the same ground Archdeacon Manning raises three great questions upon which he makes a radical difference between Anglican and Roman Catholics in the use they make of tradition. I shall just glance at these points, and see what the essential difference is between the archdeacon and his brother Catholics of Rome.

The *first* question is, "Whether there exists any living, infallible judge of controversy." Upon this question the archdeacon takes the negative. But by

a careful examination of all he has said, it will appear that he considers *the Church* to be a judge of controversy, from whose decisions there is no appeal—that her authority is divine, and her determinations final, but that she is still not quite “infallible.” I give the following as specimens of the character and offices of the “living judge:”—

“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 results. And for this very cause it pleased God, in the beginning, to store up in her the whole treasure of the gospel: her sacred books were as a steadfast 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 deliberations; 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 who will follow from conclusions to proofs, to inner ranges, and to higher paths of wisdom.”—Pp. 44, 45.

Upon this truly rhetorical passage I shall, for the present, make no comment. Its style and sentiment would not have disgraced Vincent of Lirin.

In another place, the archdeacon turns aside, in a note, to meet an objection of Dr. Wiseman against the Articles of the Church of England, for giving "the Church authority in controversies of faith," and yet admitting private judgment. And here he says, "We acknowledge no authority superior to the Church; but supreme authority does not mean authority which admits of no limit or restriction—the almighty Father 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, consentio.' 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."—Pp. 24, 25.

Now, it seems that the archdeacon acknowledges "no authority superior to the Church"—even the authority of Christ must of course be subordinate to that of the Church! The Church has "supreme authority," and is only limited by "Catholic traditions." So long, then, as she keeps within this "boundary," "her decrees are utterances of judgment," and though Christians are bound to go to her to learn "both what they must and what they may believe," and "it can never be their necessary duty to labour out their belief, by analysis and induction, until the Church has failed of



hers," yet for all this she *may err*—she is no "living, infallible judge." Now, there is such an evident inconsistency in giving so much authority to the Church, and depriving her members entirely of the right of private judgment, and yet making her fallible in her decisions, that it is quite strange that the learned archdeacon does not, with the British Critic and the Tractators, go entirely over to the Romish doctrine of "a living, infallible judge of controversy." It seems, indeed, absurd to deprive us of the right of private judgment in matters of faith and practice, lest we might chance to err, and yet hand us over to a judge who is also fallible.

But after all, high-Churchmen generally, and Archdeacon Manning with them, do hold to a "living, infallible judge of controversy." They hold that the Church Catholic is "indefectible," and that her decisions in a *general council* are "infallible."

Dr. Hammond says, "The inerrability of general councils—is a theological verity which may piously be believed."—*Parænesis*, p. 65. Again: "We do not believe that any general council, truly such, ever did, or shall err, in matter of faith, nor shall we further dispute the authority, when we shall be duly satisfied of the universality of any such."—*Ib.*, p. 169. Again, more at large: "Nay, on the contrary, 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 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 particulars, we cannot, with any justice, or without great unreasonableness, be accused of it.”—*Ib.*, pp. 154, 155.

The last of these passages Archdeacon Manning quotes, in the note, a part of which I have already given, and accompanies it with the following remarks : —“ 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 Rome in particular. What hinders the appeal to that tribunal Dr. Wiseman knows as well as we. But if *such a council, truly general*, fully 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 manner of its determinations, after all ; so that, whether the gathering of a council

\* Not to hand down their own decrees to posterity, but to preserve those received from their ancestors.

be possible or not, 'the law is open, let them implead one another.'"—P. 26.

Here the supremacy of a general council is fully and explicitly asserted by the archdeacon, and the "inerrability" of such a council, asserted by Dr. Hammond, is not by him denied.

Dr. Pusey says, "The 'indefectibility of the Church' is very different from the infallibility assumed by Rome. We believe that (although councils which have been termed 'general,' or which Rome has claimed to be so, have erred) no real œcumenical council ever did; that is, no council really representing the universal Church."\*

And Mr. Newman says, "Both we and Romanists hold that the Church Catholic is *unerring* in its declarations of faith for saving doctrine; but we differ from each other as to what is the faith, and what is the Church Catholic."† There is, then, according to all these high authorities, no difference between high-Churchmen and Romanists as to the fact of "a living, infallible judge of controversy," though they doubtless do differ as to who constitutes this "judge."

Dr. Pusey gives us a more particular view of the authority of the Catholic Church, and the relations of the English Church to it, as follows:—"Our own Church is the immediate, the Church universal the ultimate visible authority; she is to us the representative of the universal Church, as the Church universal is of her Lord; our own derives her authority from

\* Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 29.

† Quoted by Dr. Pusey, Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 33. For more of this sort, see Good's Divine Rule, vol. i, p. 43.

the universal Church, and cannot claim any contrary to her: we belong to her, because we were baptized in her, and she is the descendant of the primitive church in this land, and her bishops 'the successors of the apostles:' we receive, as articles of faith, what she delivers to us as fixed by the universal Church; what she has by her private judgment deduced from Holy Scripture we teach, because we also think it to be so deducible; if we did not so think, we should obey, must belong to her, but could not teach: her sacraments we receive, because she has received the commission to impart them; her rites, because she has the power to ordain or to change them. To our Church we owe submission; to the decisions of the Church universal we owe faith."—*Ib.*, pp. 34, 35.

The Church of England "is the immediate, the Church universal the ultimate visible authority"—she is to us the representative of the universal Church—to the former "we owe *submission*"; to the decisions of the" latter "we owe *faith*." The Church of England, then, is a sort of *vicar* of the universal Church—possessing the same powers over her individual members that the Church universal has over all the individuals of all particular churches collectively. But what is the specific difference between the "submission" we owe one, and the "faith" we owe the other, is not so clear. The sense seems to be this:—That though in controversies of faith we are, for the present, bound to submit to the decisions of the Church of England, yet we are entitled to an ultimate appeal to the Church universal, whose decisions are final and infallible, and in which we are bound to exercise the

same "faith" that we must exercise in the voice of God in any other form. For "the Church universal" "is the representative of her Lord"—and the Church of England is, in like manner, "the representative of the universal Church." Romanists and high-Churchmen, then, only differ as to the "living, infallible judge of controversy" in relation to the question of immediate access to the judicial power. Romanists claim that the Church of Rome is the universal Church, and has from God plenary powers to decide all controversies—high-Churchmen award that claim to "a general council;" and in the mean time, as the convening of a general council involves some little difficulty, they acknowledge the duty of "submission" to the Church of England, which is, in fact, "to us the representative of the universal Church."

And there is no great hazard in this "submission," for the Church of England has in her possession the grand "rule" of settling all controversies in matters of religion, by which a general council, "should it be assembled to-morrow," would be governed in all "its decisions." "Not to hand down their own decrees to posterity, but to *preserve* those received from their ancestors."

Now, why all this squeamishness upon awarding even to the English Church the character of "a living judge of controversy?" Perhaps it is sheer modesty which prevents our high-Churchmen from claiming for her this prerogative. For that they would, according to their principles, have a right to do so, few will deny.

The *second* question upon which the archdeacon differs from Romanists is, "Whether Scripture is the only sufficient proof of the faith?"

It is not a little singular that high-Churchmen and Romanists should take opposite sides upon this question, when they agree that the *sense* of Scripture is to be found in tradition. Can Scripture, without *sense*, prove anything? Can we gather from it any doctrine, or prove by it any abstract proposition, until its *sense* is made obvious? It would seem not, according to our best high-Church authorities, for they gravely tell us that "Scripture is the only sufficient proof of the faith," while "universal tradition" attests "the sense:" that "tradition teaches revealed truth," while "Scripture proves it." Tradition goes before, and tells us what "revealed truth" is; (and tradition being "a *divine* informant," a query would naturally arise, whether it is not a perfect revelation in itself;) but Scripture comes along in the rear, and tells us that what tradition has told us is even so. Upon this our high-Churchmen vehemently exclaim, "See how clear it is that Scripture is the *only* proof of the faith!" This ground is so exceedingly slippery that it is impossible long to maintain it. The Tractators have fully abandoned it, and gone over to the Romish theory, that there are certain necessary doctrines of Christianity not taught in the Scriptures.

The *third* question is, "Whether the creed contains all necessary points of mere belief?"

Now, wherein do high-Churchmen and Romanists differ upon this question? The former, as well as the latter, embrace articles of faith, or, as the archdeacon phrases it, "necessary points of mere belief," which are not found in "the creed." If the high-Churchman points to the creed of Pope Pius the Fourth as an in-

stance of an assumption, upon the part of the Romish Church, of the right to make articles of faith not found in the creed, the Romanist can, on the other hand, direct the attention of his opponent to the Thirty-nine Articles, or to his list of "Church principles," and demand of him whether these are all to be found in "the creed."

To what, then, does this wonderful difference between Roman and Anglican Catholics amount? Why, simply, that they have a somewhat different nomenclature—that they have a different mode of expressing the same thing. Both hold that the authority of the Church is paramount, and her decisions final. Both hold that Scripture is defective as a rule of faith without the definitions and explanations of tradition. And both hold that the Church has a right to decree articles of faith not expressed in the creed.

The following is from the creed of Pope Pius the Fourth, communicated in a bull from Rome, A. D. 1564, as the result of the deliberations of the Council of Trent:

"The apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions, and other observances and constitutions of the Church, do I firmly admit and embrace. Also the sacred Scripture, according to that sense which our holy mother the Church hath holden and doth hold, (whose office it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of Scripture,) do I admit, neither will I ever receive and expound it but according to the uniform consent of the fathers."\*

\* This creed, both in the original Latin and a translation, may be seen in the Appendix of Appleton's edition of Burnet's Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles.

The concluding point in this article, which requires us to "receive and expound Scripture according to the unanimous consent of the fathers," is legitimately built upon the view maintained by Archdeacon Manning, that "the sense of Scripture" is to be found in "universal tradition;" and that "the universal tradition of all ages is no less than the voice of God." For most assuredly, if universal tradition conveys to us the only true meaning of God's written word—if we here have the true commentary from "the voice of God" himself, then it is perfectly right that we should be required to "receive and expound it" only "according to the unanimous consent of the fathers." We must, indeed, come to this, or condemn "the voice of God!"

The conclusion which clearly follows from this system is, that the creeds, with every other ancient tradition which has the sanction of "unanimous consent," are of the same authority and importance as canonical Scripture. They are necessary parts of divine revelation, and cannot be rejected or doubted but at the peril of damnation. And any doctrine or usage clearly proved from universal tradition is as certainly true, and as universally obligatory, as if it were proved by the holy Gospels or the inspired Epistles.

The archdeacon does make a distinction between "the inspiration of the apostles in the writing of Holy Scripture, and the guidance of the Church in interpreting its sense, the former being *immediate*, and the latter *mediate*, that is, through ordained means."—*Appendix*, p. 83. But I see not how this changes the character of the "inspiration" or "guidance," or what-



ever else it may be called. For if it be “the voice of God” intelligibly annunciated—the divinely-appointed means of “guidance to the knowledge of the faith,” its decisions must be final and infallible. Whether the inspiration be *mediate* or *immediate*, it is such, I take it, as infallibly preserves from error or mistake, and calls for implicit faith.

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### SECTION V.

#### Tradition a Witness—the Church a Witness.

As the theory of tradition is developed it becomes complicated, and it is often difficult, without special attention, to understand it. As we have seen, the assertors of tradition represent it as a *teacher* of the *sense* of Scripture. In further explaining themselves, they tell us that the fathers are mere *witnesses* of *facts*; that is, their testimony goes to the *fact* that such and such doctrines were received by the Church in their respective ages. But in collecting their testimony, they do not confine themselves to the formal statements of the fathers that such are the doctrines of the Church, but they embrace all their didactic and other writings—the decrees of synods and councils—creeds, liturgies, &c., &c. From all these they make up a theology, and assume that the doctrines herein set forth are the doctrines of the Church Catholic, and that the authors of these various records are making formal and solemn *depositions* of doctrines believed and usages practised by the Church Catholic. Thus they make the Nicene fathers *witness*

that the doctrines of the Nicene Creed are the doctrines of the Catholic and Apostolic Church—and the English reformers *witness* that the doctrines of the Prayer-book are the doctrines of the primitive church. Leslie says, “Thus every doctrine is reduced to fact: *for it is purely fact, whether such doctrine was received or not.*” “This,” says the bishop of New-Jersey, “sets in the proper light the whole question as to the true use of the fathers. We look to them, not as interpreters of doctrine, but as witnesses of the fact of doctrine.”\*

And Mr. Newman says, “The doctrine of the apostles is an historical fact, and ascertainable as other facts, and obvious to the intelligence of inquirers as other facts: private judgment has as little exercise here as in any matters of sense and experience.”†

Let us then for a moment look at the fathers in the character of witnesses, and see whether their testimony is available upon the points of doctrine and practice which are in question between Catholics and Protestants. It will not be necessary for us to inquire at large here into the qualifications of a witness. Two points only need be noticed. The first is, whether the fathers are *competent* witnesses. To the competency of a witness it is necessary that *he should be in circumstances to know what he alleges.* Were the fathers, then, in circumstances to know what was the oral teaching of the apostles? Those whose testimony is most employed by Catholics—both Romish and Anglican—lived from one to four, and even six hundred years later than the apostles, whose oral teaching they are supposed to report. The fragments we have

\* Convocation Sermon, p. 25. † Lectures on Romanism.

from the apostolic fathers, that is, those who saw and heard the apostles, so far as their writings are undoubtedly genuine, are not at all available in these controversies, because they say nothing to the point. The later fathers are more to the purpose, provided they are to be considered as competent witnesses. But they were removed by several generations from the apostolic age, and of course could have no personal knowledge of what the apostles preached, except from their writings. It is urged, however, that they did know what had, in their own time, the sanction of universal consent, and what was universally received in the church so near the apostolic age must have come from the apostles themselves. In answer to this it is alleged, that in those ancient times the facilities for intercommunication among the different nations and provinces were comparatively small. And as the art of printing had not yet been discovered, written records were comparatively scarce; and we are thrown into doubt, from an *à priori* view of the subject, whether every branch of the Christian church knew exactly what doctrines were held and what usages obtained among *all other branches* of the church universal. And especially, does it not appear doubtful whether the individuals whose writings have come down to our times had this knowledge?

And if we could be certain that every branch of the whole church knew accurately what every other branch of the church held and practised, after all, this would only amount to a strong probability that the doctrines and usages they report came from the apostles, for we know that the seeds of error were very

early scattered among the professors of Christianity, and, for aught we can tell, some of these things may have been ingrafted upon the Christian system by uninspired men. The testimony of these witnesses, then, either in relation to what the apostles preached, or what the universal church believed and practised, is not an adequate test of truth, the witnesses not being competent to know the truth of what they attest.

In the next place, the testimony of a witness must be *specific and relevant*. But there is often much doubt with regard to the meaning of the fathers: and, when their scope is understood, it is often not at all clear that their language implies what it is cited to prove. Mere isolated passages from the fathers can prove nothing. A comprehensive view must be taken of their scope and design, before a correct induction can be made of their opinions upon any point of doctrine or ecclesiastical usage.

And when witnesses of equal competency and credibility clash with each other, the fact necessarily originates doubt with regard to the matter deposed. And a much stronger doubt arises when the same witness contradicts himself. I can at this point only call attention to these plain and obvious principles; hereafter I shall attempt to show the facts at length, when it will be made clear that the testimony of the fathers is utterly powerless touching the matters in controversy between Catholics and Protestants.

But the fathers are not only made witnesses of apostolical tradition, but "the Church" is made a witness of the sense of the fathers. That is, the Church testifies to individuals what the fathers testify to her.

Archdeacon Manning says, "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*, [the italicising is the author's,] exhibiting interpretations that have obtained from the beginning. 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, 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 others.'"\*

Mr. Faber says, "The attestation of Parker, of Canterbury, to the principles 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 matters being perceived,' says Parker, 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.*'"—*Prim. Doct. Just.*

A divine of the Scotch Episcopal Church, of high standing, takes the same position. He says, "At the

\* Hammond's Parænesis, chap. v, sec. iv. See Rule of Faith, pp. 38, 39.

time of the Reformation, the pious and learned men who undertook and accomplished that great work, considered the revealed word of God, contained in the Old and New Testaments, as *the great charter* of our faith; and they declared that the Holy Scriptures contained all truth necessary to salvation. But in order to ascertain the true and full meaning of the sacred record, these holy men carefully and patiently examined every ancient record and document which bore on the subject. Nor was this all; they imbodyed the fruits of their labours in the several Formularies and Offices which make up the Book of Common Prayer. The Prayer-book was not an invention, nor even a composition, of the reformers; nor was it written at random; nor was it the work of one or two individuals; but it was a compilation, carefully and faithfully gathered from the primitive Liturgies, and the writings of the early Christian fathers, by those eminent and pious men to whom we are indebted for the Reformation. In the Liturgy, the Creeds and Collects, the Offices for Baptism and the Holy Communion, the Catechism, and other Offices, the Ordinal and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, we have a full and complete commentary, showing, in the clearest and most distinct manner, what the primitive Christians believed and taught, as the doctrines of revelation. The reformers further enable us to determine the system of divinity which the early Christians taught as deducible from the written record of God's word; for, from the ancient Liturgies, they so arranged the course of services for the year, that in them is delineated the grand scheme of human redemption in all its essential features, while

the true and catholic meaning of the word of God is so fixed in regard to every part of this mighty plan, that the faithful member of the Church can scarcely put a private or erroneous interpretation on any portion of the divine record. Thus the member of the Church has, in his Prayer-book, all the information concerning the meaning attached to God's holy word by the early Christians that the Anglican reformers, by profound learning and patient research, could discover. They examined the ancient Liturgies, Creeds, Decrees of Councils, and writings of individuals: he, therefore, who makes himself acquainted with the Liturgy,\* Creeds, Formularies, and Articles, contained in the Book of Common Prayer, is very well prepared to read the Bible, as it has always been understood and interpreted by those who continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. The learned are still expected to examine the original records of the primitive church, and to ascertain the fulness of the evidence extant, for every doctrine deduced from sacred Scripture; but those who have neither time nor acquirements for such investigation have only to lean on *the whole host of Anglican reformers*—men who went to the stake in defence of the principles which they inbodied in the Book of Prayer, and as witnesses of the true faith which they had so fully proved. Safely, then, may every member of the Church trust to the evidence of such pious and learned men, and be content to throw in his lot with theirs. They faithfully

\* "N. B. The Scotch Communion Office imbodyes the doctrine of Scripture as interpreted by the primitive church, more fully than the English Office, as it now stands."

proved all things ; and they laid down their lives rather than relinquish what was good. Thus the Church, as the pillar and ground of the truth, supplies a rule by which even the most unlearned of her members may be able to read and interpret the Bible, in all essential points, as it was read and interpreted by the immediate disciples of our Lord and his apostles, and by the faithful in all ages.”\*

From all this it would seem that the Articles of the Church of England (and the same is said of the Liturgy) were by the “chief reformer” derived from “the most ancient fathers.” History does, indeed, attribute the Thirty-nine Articles, and the compilation of the Liturgy, principally to Archbishop Cranmer. And, according to the high-Church authorities above quoted, we are to regard him in all this as “a witness” to what the fathers had reported from the apostles—as giving in “*depositions of evidence*, exhibiting interpretations that have obtained from the beginning.”

In order, then, to a full confidence in these “depositions,” we must have entire confidence in the ability and integrity of the witness. We must believe that the Liturgy is faithfully translated from the ancient Liturgies, and that the Articles contain the true primitive faith, without addition or diminution. We must believe that Cranmer was competent to give us a digest of Christian doctrine, and an exhibition of Christian usages, which should be perfectly true to the original ; and that he has honestly executed this task. All this the *people* must believe, for the Articles thus presented

\* See “The Old Paths ; by Rev. J. B. Pratt, Episcopal Minister of St. James, Cruden.” Oxford, 1840.



“the Church of England has given as a guide to her members.” But have our Churchmen of the present day so much faith in Cranmer as this? What do they say to the following “depositions” of their own witness? “A bishop may make a priest by the Scriptures, and so may princes and governors also, and that by the authority of God committed to them, and the people also by their election.—And the people, before Christian princes were, commonly did elect their bishops and priests.” Again, in answer to the question, “Whether (if it fortun'd a Christian prince learned to conquer certain dominions of infidels, having not but the temporal learned men with him) it be defended by God's law, that he and they should preach and teach the word of God there or no, and also make and constitute priests or no”—Cranmer says, “It is not against God's law, but contrary, they ought indeed so to do, and there be histories that witnesseth, that some Christian princes, and other laymen unconsecrate, have done the same.”\*

What says the most moderate Churchman of the present day to these “depositions of evidence?” Is the witness competent to report the true traditionary explanations of God's word, and has he faithfully executed his work in this instance? Do these depositions, solemnly put forth, in answer to questions proposed by his sovereign, tally with *antiquity*? Are they the result of his having “investigated all the councils, and every part of antiquity, up to the very times of the apostles?” Churchmen generally believe no such thing. And the Tractarians believe no more in the

\* See Burnet's History of the Reformation, Records, book iii.

fidelity of Cranmer's "depositions" than in those of Baxter or Wesley! It is folly to give implicit confidence to a witness when he speaks what pleases us, and wholly to distrust him when he does not. And yet this is the course taken by Anglican as well as Roman Catholics with their own sworn witnesses.

Again, in the forms of ordination prepared by the reformers, in the words of consecration there is no essential difference between those used in the ordination of a "priest" and those employed in the ordination of a "bishop." In the two books of Common Prayer successively set forth by authority of parliament in the reign of Edward VI., in the ordination of a bishop it is simply said, "Take the Holy Ghost, and remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee, by imposition of hands," &c.\* This occasioned the Church no little difficulty from two opposite quarters, and for very different reasons. The Romanists objected that the English bishops were not canonically ordained; and, on the other hand, the Presbyterians plead that, according to the ordinal, a *bishop* was no more than any other *priest*. To obviate these objections, the ordinal was, in the reign of James I., 1662, reduced to its present form.† Now, did the reformers faithfully report the form of making or "ordering" a

\* See the two books of Common Prayer, &c. Oxford, 1838.

† See Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. iii, p. 229; also, Short's History of the Church of England, p. 546; and also, Ecclesiastical Tracts, by Humphrey Prideaux, D.D., Lond., 1716. The first of these rare and valuable Tracts is a discussion of "the validity of the orders of the Church of England," occasioned by a conference upon the subject between two Romish and two English divines.

bishop in the old ordinal or not? If they did, then the change of 1662 is an innovation, and the Prayer-book is not an exact copy of the primitive traditions of the Church. But if they did not, then are they *false* or incompetent "witnesses," at least in one instance, and possibly they may be in others. Now, our high-Churchmen can take which horn of the dilemma they prefer.

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#### SECTION VI.

How is Tradition made accessible to the People?

LEARNING from Romanists and high-Churchmen that the true sense of Scripture is to be derived from tradition, it then becomes a question of no little importance how the great mass of men are to have access to this true commentary. It is referred to by these *Catholic* teachers as a matter which involves no difficulty at all—we have only to go to the holy fathers, and they will tell us at once what the Bible means. The Scriptures are dark and difficult, but tradition disperses all obscurity and removes all doubts. All this is easily said; but if an inquirer asks, How am I to know what the fathers say? the answer varies somewhat according to circumstances.

The Romanists will tell us, we are to learn what sense the holy fathers have put upon the Scriptures from *the Church*, or, in other words, the *people* must go to the *priest* for the information. Bishop Jewel, in his *Apology*, asks, "I pray you, what manner of men be they, and how is it meet to call them which fear the judgment of the Scriptures, that is to say, the

judgment of God himself, and do prefer before them their own dreams and full cold inventions: and, to maintain their own traditions, have defaced and corrupted, now these many hundred years, the ordinances of Christ, and of the apostles?" To this Dr. Harding, the great defender of Romanism, replies, "The Scriptures consist not in ink and paper, but in the sense; which sense the Holy Ghost, by Christ's promise, hath taught the Church.—Tradition," says he, is "the sense and understanding received of the fathers: for that is the key of the word of God.—Now we require you to admit this tradition, that is to say, the Catholic sense and understanding of the Scriptures, which hath been delivered unto us by the holy fathers of all ages, and of all countries where the faith hath been received. And then we will call you again to be tried by the Scriptures. . . .

"As for the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures, where shall we find it, but, as before we said, in the Catholic Church? The Church having Christ remaining with it all daies to the end of the world, having by promise of Christ the Spirit of truth remaining in it for ever, having by God's own ancient promise both the words which the Father hath put in the mouth of Christ, and the Spirit which he put in him, whereby it may understand the meaning of God's words: we may not now seek for the true sense, understanding, and interpretation of the Scriptures anywhere but in the Church."\*

According to this, the fathers, equally with the Scriptures, are in the hands of the Church, to be used

\* Jewel's Works, fol., 1609, pp. 63, 64.

by her as she sees good, and she alone can judge of the "sense" which they put upon the Scriptures. An appeal to the fathers, then, upon a common-sense principle of interpretation, is just as useless as an original appeal to the Scriptures: for "the Church" must tell us what "the fathers" say. The whole question is finally resolved into the Church's *infallibility*. Christ is with the Church "all days—having by promise the Spirit of truth remaining in it for ever," therefore what the Church says must be implicitly relied upon as infallibly true. She gives the *sense* of the *Scriptures* given to her by the fathers, or through *tradition*, as Christ teaches her. The sense of the fathers, then, no more than the sense of Scripture, is a proper subject for the exercise of private judgment.

The same view, that is, that the Church has deposited with her, not only the Scriptures, but tradition likewise, to use at her discretion for the benefit of her children, is taught by the Tractarians. Mr. Newman says, "The *Church* enforces a fact, apostolical tradition, as the doctrinal key to the Scriptures." And another asks, "Is not private judgment as apt to mislead in the interpretation of antiquity, as in that of Scripture?" The British Critic says, "We have in no way maintained that an ordinary religious inquirer would have any chance of discovering for himself the truth, by his personal study of the fathers; and should any be inclined to think otherwise, we shall be very much pleased if the facts brought together by Mr. Goode prove to him his mistake."

"Mr. Goode would consider, indeed, the ground we have taken wholly inadequate to our purpose, from his

notion of its being involved in the principles of those whom he opposes, that the individual Christian is to have the gospel from personal appeal to patristic testimony. From which, for our own parts, we so entirely dissent, that we have no hesitation in speaking of the existing necessity of resorting to church history in the manner we do, as the mere result of our present degraded condition. In the time of St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas, it would be as little a matter of conscious inquiry with Christians whether they should *follow the Church's instructions*, as it is in our days with infants, whether they should believe what their parents teach them. The Church bore on her surface the plain and certain marks of her divine commission, and was listened to as a mother, of course; those who acted on her instructions most faithfully, just as in the parallel case of child and parent, obtained, *without seeking it*, a proof of their truth *by so acting*. This is the condition to which every true Catholic among us burns, so far as it may be granted, to restore the English Church; and in such a state of things, the study of church history, though always, of course, full of interest, nay, of *essential* importance, would still be only *one* theological study out of many; it would by no means have that peculiar exclusive nature which our unhappy circumstances now give it."\* "That the Bible is in the hands of *the Church*, to be dealt with in such a way as *the Church* shall consider best for the expression of her own mind at the time—may surely be considered a Catholic axiom."†

\* Vol. xxxi, pp. 97, 98. See also pp. 83, 84.

† Vol. xxix, p. 453.

“As to the field on which their judgment is to be exercised, some say the text of Scripture without note or comment; others, with the best note and comment attainable; others, again, the works of the Christian writers, accounted orthodox, during the first five centuries; while others consider it proved, whether *à priori*, or from Scripture, or from tradition, that there is some infallible guide, and enforce the duty of persons at some period of their life (whomever and whenever) removing themselves, to the utmost of their ability, from the homes of their childhood, as it were, into the highway of speculation, and looking about with calm and unbiased eyes to recognise this promised guide. . . . Widely different, then, is the subject matter whereon these various classes exercise their judgment, and widely different are the results at which they usually arrive; but in the principle itself they all agree, of private, independent, deliberate choice, aforethought and of set purpose. . . . We consider, then, that the principle, involved in any one of these four alternatives, is highly offensive to God; and that while the idea of deciding without prejudice on moral subjects is in itself (however men may deceive themselves) as wild and visionary, as would be that of detaching ourselves from the conditions of time and space in order to choose our side, at the same time, in whatever *proportion* success may crown our efforts, in that very proportion (saving, indeed, the last alternative of following a guide believed infallible) should we succeed also in overthrowing the very foundations of moral belief, and precluding ourselves from the possibility of a stable and genuine conviction founded on evi-

dence. It would appear sufficiently from much less than we have said, that no two ideas can be more distinct, whichever be the true one, than the duty of *following the authority* of the English Church, and according to it a generous and unsuspecting loyalty in the first instance, as being the Church wherein God's providence has placed us, or, on the other hand, of *going along* with the English Church, because she proves her doctrines, or rather what are commonly considered her doctrines, to the satisfaction of our *private judgment*.\*

All this is as pure Romanism as what I have quoted above from Dr. Harding. It goes to supersede entirely all private judgment, both with regard to the *sense* of Scripture and the *sense* of antiquity. It makes it the business of *the Church* to unfold both. According to this, *the voice of the Church* is the rule of faith—neither Scripture nor tradition are entitled to the honour of such an appellation. It has never been a secret that Romanists, with all their croaking about tradition, fathers, and councils, have as little reverence for them as for the Scriptures themselves, and that the infallible Church is all. But this is bold ground for Churchmen.

Most high-Churchmen, it may be presumed, still encourage those who have the means to prosecute the study of antiquity, as the best means of ascertaining the meaning of Holy Scripture. But for such as are not in a situation to pursue these investigations to ad-

\* Vol. xxxii, pp. 208, 209. The article from which the last quotations are made is a laboured effort to prove that we must receive the "dogmas" of the Church upon the Church's "authority," entirely irrespective of all *reasons*.



vantage they would provide a substitute. They still adhere to the position that the sense of the Scriptures is to be found in tradition, and would make *the Church* responsible for the accurate development of that sense through the medium of antiquity, for the advantage of the unlearned and unstable.

Well indeed it is, if the people must have the *sense* of Scripture through the medium of ancient tradition, that "the Church" has made ample provision to procure and hand such sense over to them. For it would be utterly overwhelming to an ordinary mind to be told that we must read a cart-load of Greek and Latin folios before we can certainly know what we must do to be saved. Well, what is the process by which "the Church" draws the precious treasure from the mine of antiquity, and imparts it to her hungry children, even "without their seeking it?" Do all her priests read and understand all the holy fathers, the decrees of councils, &c.? Not one in a hundred of them has ever read, in the originals, half a dozen of the fathers. The English Church, for the present, until she can, by the aid of her faithful sons and mighty champions at Oxford, save herself from her "present degraded position," points her children to her Book of Common Prayer as a faithful, if not an *infallible* echo of antiquity. Mr. Newman says the Church of England "*transmits the ancient Catholic faith simply and intelligibly—to follow the Church, THEN, in this day, is to follow the Prayer-book.*"

Dr. Hook conducts us to the same result, in connection with an account of the process by which the mass

of patristical traditions was transferred by the reformers to the Prayer-book. He says,—

“Intent, not on pleasing the people, not on gaining popularity, not on consulting the spirit of the age, but on establishing and maintaining the truth as it is in Jesus, they compared the ancient Liturgies of the Church of England, in the first instance, with Scripture, discarding at once what was plainly and palpably contrary thereto; such customs, for instance, as praying in an unknown tongue, and seeking the intercession of dead saints:\* they then compared them with the ancient rituals, renouncing all usages not clearly primitive; and, studying deeply the writings of the fathers, they embodied the doctrines which had been universally received in the primitive church, in that which is the result and glory of their labours, the Book of Common Prayer.—In taking the Prayer-book for your guide to the right understanding of Scripture—the whole Prayer-book, creeds, catechism, articles,† baptismal office, office for the eucharist, office for

\* When Dr. Hook wrote this, the Oxford system had not fully developed itself. Now the Oxfordists openly advocate the intercession of the saints. For one of their acknowledged doctrines is, that “the saints” in “the intermediate state” “pray for us, and that our prayers benefit them.” So Dr. Hook must take back this incautious and erroneous concession.

† The Thirty-nine Articles are now admitted by the Oxfordists to be, at least in their phraseology, *anticatholic*. Mr. Newman has made an ineffectual effort in Tract No. 90 to give them a *Catholic sense*. But it must require a mind of singular obliquity to concede that these Articles have the sanction of “the consentient voice of the universal primitive church,” and yet to maintain that this “consentient voice” sanctions all the Romish dogmas which the Oxford divines now boldly and explicitly adopt.

the ordaining of bishops, priests, and deacons—you take for your guide the consentient voice of the universal primitive church.”\* After quoting this passage, the good bishop of New-Jersey adds, “In other words, the faith once delivered to the saints.”†

We now are able clearly to see the *Catholic* theory as to the process and the media of divine communication with the mass of men—the means by which God reveals his will. First, he gave the Scriptures as the *record of truth*, but leaving them blind and imperfect, to supply their deficiency as a revelation he ordered the apostles to give the *sense* orally, (or rather, this oral sense was given *anterior* to the record itself, as we have seen from Archdeacon Manning,) which sense was reduced to writing by the fathers. Next, the writings of the fathers being voluminous, and only in dead languages, the reformers digested, condensed, and translated them, and gave us the result in the Book of Common Prayer. Now, there being many things in this book that common minds and weak consciences are not able fully to settle or understand, *the priest* gives to such the true *sense*.‡ But here, on

\* See “The Gospel, and the Gospel only, the Basis of Education.” † Convocation Sermon, p. 27.

‡ In the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer we have the following remedy for all misunderstandings:—“Forasmuch as nothing can be so plainly set forth but doubts may arise in the use and practice of the same; to appease all such diversity, (if any arise,) and for the resolution of all doubts concerning the manner how to understand, do, and execute the things contained in this book; the parties that so doubt shall always resort to the bishop of the diocess, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same.

the final step of the process, a trifling difficulty occurs. For priests, bishops, and archbishops, equally canonically authorized and apostolically commissioned, happen to differ upon vital points. There is no *consent* among them, even as to the sense of some articles of the creed, and there is more discrepancy as to the authority and meaning of the Thirty-nine Articles. What shall be done now? Shall we follow Archbishop Laud or Archbishop Tillotson? Bishop Pearson or Mr. Newman?

Archdeacon Manning says, "But, in fact, the meaning and intention of the *creed* is *never disputed*; the whole controversy turns on the meaning of Scripture."\* That this statement is not true, is evident enough to all who are acquainted with the diversity of expositions upon the creed which have been put forth by Churchmen in modern times, to say nothing of the ancient controversies upon this formulary.†

And if the bishop be in doubt, he may send for the resolution thereof to the archbishop."

\* Appendix, p. 78.

† The article in the creed on the holy Catholic Church, Bishop Pearson makes to assert "the existence of the church of Christ." That is, when we say, "I believe in the holy Catholic Church," we mean, *I believe in the fact that there is such a church.* Archbishop Secker takes the same view of this article. He says, "In this holy Catholic Church our creed professes belief. But the meaning is not, that we engage to believe all things, without exception, of which the majority of the Church, at any time, shall be persuaded: and much less, what the rulers of it, or, it may be, a small part of them, who may please to call themselves the Church, shall at any time require: for then we must believe many plain falsehoods, uncertainties without number, and contrary doctrines, as contrary parties prevail." Again: "As believing

We see, then, precisely how near we are brought to the original fountain of truth. God speaks; the fathers explain the sense of his words; the reformers explain the sense of the fathers; and the priests explain the sense of the reformers. Surely we "are not far from the kingdom of heaven!" But we must not go too fast. We are not absolutely obliged "at present" to waive all exercise of our own eyes and ears; we may have the Prayer-book, and even the Bible, in our hands, and exercise some degree of private judgment in relation to their contents; but when the Church shall leave her "present degraded position," and come back to the good old times of "St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas," then all her true children will implicitly "follow the Church's instructions;" and then the Bible and the Prayer-book may be exchanged for auricular confession and the mass! This will bring us one step nearer the original source of information, and will lop off all the vexatious excrescences ap-

in God, means only believing that there is a God; and believing in the resurrection, means only believing that there shall be a resurrection: so believing in the holy Catholic Church, means only believing that by our Saviour's appointment there was founded, and through his mercy shall ever continue, a society of persons, of what nation or nations is indifferent, who have faith in his name, and obey his laws."<sup>1</sup> But Mr. Newman, with the Romanists, understands this article to mean, "*I believe what the holy Catholic Church says.*" Here is a wide and radical difference between the two expositions. Now who shall decide? Archdeacon Manning tells us that "the Church has the power of *explanation.*"<sup>2</sup> But who is "the Church?" And where is the "explanation?"

<sup>1</sup> See Lectures on the Catechism, vol. 1, pp. 221, 222.

<sup>2</sup> Rule of Faith, p. 34.

pended to the Catholic system by the English reformers. And is "this the condition to which every true Catholic *burns* to restore the English Church?" So it would seem, the British Critic being judge.

There can be no doubt but the Puseyites stand upon the *divine authority and infallibility of the Church*. This position is now boldly and unequivocally taken by their leading writers. When the new movement first commenced we heard much about *antiquity*—apostolical traditions—the Catholic rule of Vincentius, &c. But now they tell us plainly that *private judgment* upon *antiquity* is as fairly out of the question as private judgment upon the Scriptures, and that we must take "the *authority* of the Church" for everything, without waiting to understand the grounds of her "dogmas." "The duty of *following the authority* of the Church of England" is a very different thing from "*going along with*" her "*because she proves her doctrines, to the satisfaction of private judgment.*" *Implicit obedience to the voice of the Church* is the bounden duty of all. And as "the Bible is in the hands of the Church, to be dealt with in such a way as the Church shall consider best for the expression of her own mind," when the English Church shall "consider best" to deal with it as the Church of Rome does—that is, withhold it from the people altogether—the Oxford movement will have reached the *ne plus ultra* of perfection for which the Tractarians now so ardently labour. This will be the legitimate practical issue of the system of Church prerogative for which many Churchmen now contend, who shrink from such a result.

The following is the language of a Churchman of our own country and times:—"Why may not the authority of Scripture itself be set aside by the individual as freely as that of the Church Catholic, which gives him the Scriptures? If, on the authority of the Church of Christ, the Christian receives his Bible, (as in point of fact he does,) on what ground of consistency does he stand when he refuses to listen to its authority when teaching it to him? Trusting the word of the Church in greater, why not in minor questions? or was there a church, we ask, to form the canon of Scripture, and is there none to interpret it?—a church for the early Christians, and none for those that come after? Did Christianity begin with an authoritative teacher, when its individual members were few and united, and such bond of unity consequently less needed, and is it now to be held destitute of such, when, through the many men and many minds of Christendom, such bond of Christian unity is essential to its very existence? If the judgment of the individual be the adequate test of Christian truth, then can there be no such thing as a Christian church, or, at any rate, churches as numerous as individual Christians, since individuality, that is, difference of opinion, is as essential to the spiritual mind of man, as individuality of features is to his animal frame."\*

What is this, short of resolving the Church into an *authoritative instructor*, who, of course, has a right to choose her own method of imparting instruction, and to require *implicit* obedience of all? If we must go to

\* Review of Palmer on the Church, New-York Review, vol. x, p. 109.

the Church both for the *Bible* and the *sense* of it, when she shall see proper to give us the *sense* without the *book*, what right will we have to complain? Of what material importance is it to us to have the *book* at all, provided we have the *sense* it expresses in the ear of the Church? The Romanists alone in practice carry out this principle to its legitimate consequences; but we may well expect that they will be followed in this respect by the Anglican Church, so soon as she shall be raised from her "present degraded condition" to the lofty eminence which will enable her to put her foot upon the neck of kings, and trample down the British constitution. And doubtless, "this is the condition to which every true Catholic . . . burns . . . to restore the English Church." But as Protestants, we may all most devoutly hope, that, if the unholy fire which the Tractators have kindled up in the breasts of pseudo-Catholics cannot be extinguished, they may continue to *burn* on until they are reduced to ashes, before their antichristian schemes are consummated. May God avert the judgment, of the extinction of the remnant of liberty and the few rays of light which survive in the English Church!

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#### SECTION VII.

Principles upon which Tradition is to be interpreted.

WE will next proceed to consider the principles upon which we are instructed, by our Anglican advocates for tradition, to conduct our investigations in seeking for the sense of Scripture in the records of antiquity.



We would naturally be led to suppose, from the language of Catholics, both Roman and Anglican, that the holy fathers speak clearly and explicitly upon every important doctrine of religion, and that we only need to learn what they say to know fully the mind of the Holy Spirit. But when we come to particulars, we find that these infallible guides have left many things upon record which *we must not believe*, and so great is the difficulty, after all, of settling the true catholic doctrine by this means, that we stand in need of certain rules of judgment by which we must be governed in our conclusions. We must have *a rule of faith to judge of the application of the rule of faith*. The rule we are to carry with us in the study of tradition is embraced in these three words: "universal-ity, antiquity, and consent." This rule is itself quite ancient, being proposed by Vincentius Lirinensis, or Vincent of Lirin, a monk of the fifth century. It would seem that so early as this author (and indeed, as might be shown, much earlier) there were rival claims to the support of ecclesiastical tradition. The Arians, and other heretics, claimed the authority of the fathers and the tradition of the church. And those writings, then comparatively fresh from the hand of their authors, which are now considered as infallible guides to the right sense of Scripture, were appealed to by both heretics and Catholics. Hence it became necessary to fix upon some great principles, by the application of which the true doctrine could be certainly gathered from ecclesiastical records. We will now give the rule from the "Commonitory" of Vincent in the translation of Reeves, published in London, 1709:

*“ Certain Rules for the safe conduct of a Christian in the choice of his opinions.*

“ And for us who are in the bosom of the Catholic Church, it ought to be our first and principal care to choose such doctrines as we find to have been believed in all places, at all times, and by all the faithful. For there is nothing truly and properly catholic, (as the word sufficiently declares,) but what truly and fully comprehends all these. And we are thus catholic, when we follow universality, antiquity, and unanimous consent; but we follow universality, when we profess that only to be the true faith which is professed by the church all the world over. In like manner, we are followers of antiquity, when we religiously adhere to that sense of Scripture which manifestly obtained among the holy fathers, our predecessors. And, lastly, we follow consent, when we embrace the definitions and opinions of almost all, if not all, the bishops and teachers in the ancient church.”—Chap. 3.

The translator tells us that, “in exact conformity to this rule, the Church of England professeth to defend and maintain no other doctrine than that which is truly catholic and apostolic; and for such warranted not only by the written word of God, but also by the concurrent testimonies of the ancient fathers.” And in “Tracts for the Times, No. 78,” we have a “catena patrum”—*chain of fathers*, that is, of the old English divines, who are alleged to have maintained the principle of Vincent; and are told, in a note, that “this tract has just been republished, with a translation, at Oxford, and should be carefully studied by all who wish

to understand in what sense the English Church upholds tradition.”\*

So we may understand this famous rule of Vincent as having been fully admitted by the old English divines, and unhesitatingly adopted by the Tractarians. All we have to do, then, when we would find what God would have us to believe or do, is to find out from the fathers, 1. What has the sanction of the *universal* church—or what has been received everywhere. This we shall learn as soon as we can become acquainted with the opinions of every branch of the Catholic Church from the days of the apostles down to the time of Vincent, and collate and compare them, and gather out of them a common sentiment. And when this small task is performed, then we must find out, 2. What is most *ancient*. This will require no little attention, for some fathers and some doctrines are older than others. If, then, we find a doctrine or a usage to be *older* than its opposite, so far we are safe; but we must mind well our dates, or we are at once far from the course. 3. More than all this: all our doctrines and usages must have the sanction of *consent*. They must be, as our oracle says, “the definitions and opinions of *almost* all, if not all, the bishops and teachers in the ancient church.” In finding out this we must, of course, consult with great care all that “almost all the bishops and teachers” have said; a work which a monk, in the course of a long life of seclusion from society, might partially, and could but partially, accomplish. But we must go the whole course before we can be sure we are right. What a glorious way this!

\* Tracts for the Times, vol. ii, p. 420.

We may lay the Scriptures aside, and just find out what has been believed *everywhere, at all times, and by all men*, and then we understand the whole mystery of the faith!\*

\* We have seen already that the British Critic leaps over all the difficulties of this course by going over to the Romish doctrine of the unlimited *authority* of the Church to teach. In a review of Dr. Jelf's sermon, this great organ of Puseyism urges this view by presenting the real difficulties in the study of antiquity more strongly than I have done in the text. Dr. Jelf says, "That doctrine cannot but be divine and true, which can be established as agreeable to Scripture by the testimony of so many independent churches in divers countries and from the earliest time. . . . This seems the true standard . . . by which to try *the historical facts* [Dr. Jelf's italics;] . . . and to this, therefore, I propose to refer." To this the Critic replies: "On the whole, indeed, the sermon shows plainly that this is the standard to which the author refers, private judgment exercised not solely on Scripture, but, as interpreting this, on the history 'of the earliest, and therefore the purest ages.' Here, then, let us note one preliminary difficulty; that he has not helped his hearers on this very important question, What are they to do while the historical examination to which he invites them is pending? On what religious system are they *meanwhile* to proceed? The ground on which he inculcates the duty of following our Church is that Rome has innovated and corrupted the faith; well, what are his hearers to do until they are satisfied that the allegation is true? Mr. Caswall tells us of a religious American, who having joined the Methodists, and then apprehending 'that they might be in a state of schism,' 'shut himself up in his study and applied himself closely to the perusal of books on the subject,' 'during which investigation he *attended no place of worship, and determined to attend none* until he had succeeded in discovering the true church."<sup>1</sup> We can hardly suppose that Dr. Jelf would recommend *this* course, as tending to produce the habit of mind which will decide

<sup>1</sup> Caswall on the American Church, pp. 227, 228.

But is this rule definite? Is it intelligible? Or, in other words, does it answer to the character of a *rule*? Do we not need *another rule* still by which to measure and adjust this rule? Yes, we do, and thanks to Mr. Newman, he gives us one; or, at least, a commentary upon it. He says, "The rule of Vincent is not of a mathematical or demonstrative character, but moral, and requires practical judgment and good sense to apply it. For instance, what is meant by being *taught always*? Does it mean in every century, or in every year, or every month? Does *everywhere* mean in every country, or in every diocese? And does the *consent of fathers* require us to produce the direct testimony of every one of them? How many fathers, how many places, how many instances, constitute a fulfilment of the test proposed? It is, then, from the nature of the case, a condition which never can be satisfied as fully as it might have been; it admits of various and unequal application in various instances; and what degree of application is enough, must be decided by the same principles which guide us in the conduct of life, which determine us in politics, or trade, or war; which lead us to accept revelation at all, for which we have but

rightly on religious subjects; yet he has really left no room for any other. Nor can it be said that this perplexity would remain but for a short time; for our own parts, we should be inclined to say that, on a very moderate computation, five times the amount of man's natural life might qualify a person, endowed with extraordinary genius and power of research, to have some faint notion (though this we doubt) on which side truth lies; but *all* must confess that a series of many actively-employed years would be necessary."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vol. xxxii, pp. 213, 214.

probability to show at most, nay, to believe in the existence of an intelligent Creator.”\*

Now, reader, here you have Mr. Newman’s rule, upon Vincent’s rule, upon the rule of faith; and how much the wiser are you for all these *rules upon rules*? You are just left where your divinely-authorized guides found you, with a stock of common sense which, thanks to Mr. Newman, you are permitted to put in requisition. Though we are explicitly denied the right of private judgment upon the Scriptures themselves, and constructively, at least, upon tradition, we may, it seems, after so wide a remove from God’s word as is occasioned by the intervention of two rules which we are not able to use to any good purpose, exercise our own judgment. The final rule is, then, that the “application” of the one next preceding “must be decided by the same principles which guide us in the conduct of life.” This is a very general rule indeed, and, in fact, just nothing to the purpose. If some wise Tractarian will now give us another rule to apply to Mr. Newman’s rule, or commentary, that will be intelligible and will work, he will confer upon the world a lasting obligation. Then, perhaps, with the help of all these wondrously wise rules, we may find out that black is not white, nor white black!

Upon this famous rule Bishop Stillingfleet, as quoted by Mr. Goode, makes the following sensible remarks:

“Wise men who have thoroughly considered of Vincentius his way, though in general they cannot but approve of it so far as to think it highly improbable that there should be antiquity, universality, and consent

\* Prophetic Office of the Church.

against the true and genuine sense of Scripture, yet when they consider this way of Vincentius, with all those cautious restrictions and limitations set down by him, they are apt to think that HE HATH PUT MEN TO A WILD GOOSE CHASE TO FIND OUT ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS RULE; and that St. Augustine spake a great deal more to the purpose when he spake concerning all the writers of the Church, that *although they had never so much learning and sanctity, he did not think it true because they thought so, but because they persuaded him to believe it true, either from the authority of Scripture or some probable reason.*”\*

But it must not be forgotten that the British Critic now explicitly disclaims putting the people in general upon this “wild-goose chase,” fully admitting that the ascertainment of the sense of Scripture, through the study of antiquity, is to nearly all the world utterly impossible. And in this every sensible man must agree with him. But another high-Church authority to which we have referred prescribes as a remedy for the difficulties in the way of a personal investigation of antiquity, *faith in the reformers*. Says he, “But those who have neither time nor acquirements for such investigation have only to lean on *the whole host of Anglican reformers.*”† As for the great mass of men, then, they must believe that the reformers have given us a faithful expose of antiquity in the Prayer-book. Then *faith* comes in—faith in the reformers—faith in the Prayer-book—and supersedes all reasoning, and of course all necessity for the catholic rule of Vincent. Now I am too much of a *rationalist* for

\* Divine Rule, vol. ii, p. 350. † See page 55.

all this. I must look a little into the grounds of the allegation that the Prayer-book is a faithful record of apostolic traditions. In a previous section I have presented considerations which bear upon this point; but it is so vital a portion of the theory of tradition, as held by Churchmen, that I shall be justified in resuming it here, and adding somewhat to the strength of my argument.

And in the first place, I would call the attention of the reader to the history of the Prayer-book, and the mutations which it has undergone. That Cranmer was a diligent student of antiquity cannot be denied. But that he considered traditions “an unwritten revelation,” and that he felt himself sacredly bound to embrace, in the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England, all the doctrines and usages of the primitive church, without any regard to their being taught in the Holy Scriptures, is not true. Nor is it true that the matter of the Prayer-book is all so purely primitive that there is no reason to doubt but that it truly sets forth the “unwritten word of God.” For if so, how has it come to pass that this Prayer-book has undergone so many changes?

The Prayer-book was first published in the reign of Edward the Sixth, in 1549. But in 1552, this same book, true as it was to the type of antiquity, was revised, and underwent many important alterations. In the first book we notice *auricular confession* distinctly admitted. In the homily appointed to precede the communion we have the following:—“And if there be any of you whose conscience is troubled and grieved in anything, lacking comfort or counsel, let



him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned priest, taught in the law of God, and confess and open his sin and grief *secretly*, that he may receive such ghostly counsel, advice, and comfort, that his conscience may be relieved, and that of us (as of the ministers of God and of the Church) he may receive comfort and absolution, to the satisfaction of his mind, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness; requiring such as shall be satisfied with a general confession not to be offended with them that do use, to their further satisfying, *the auricular and secret confession to the priest.*”

We have also prayer for the dead. The following is in the communion service:—“We commend unto thy mercy (O Lord) all other thy servants, which are departed hence from us with the sign of faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace; grant unto them, we beseech thee, thy mercy, and everlasting peace,” &c. And in the burial service a prayer is dictated to be said for the deceased.

In the baptismal service the following form of exorcism is found:—“I command thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out, and depart from these infants, whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath vouchsafed to call to his holy baptism, to be made members of his body, and of his holy congregation. Therefore, thou cursed spirit, remember thy sentence, remember thy judgment, remember the day to be at hand wherein thou shalt burn in fire everlasting, prepared for the devil and thy angels. And presume not hereafter to exercise any tyranny toward these infants, whom

Christ hath bought with his precious blood, and by his holy baptism called to be of his flock."

The Romish custom of signing with the cross was retained in the first Prayer-book, but the words used on the occasion somewhat varied. The words in the Romish Breviary are, "Receive the sign of the cross, both in thy forehead and in thy heart, and take the faith of the heavenly precepts." Those in the Prayer-book:—"C. N., receive the sign of the holy cross, both in thy forehead and in thy breast, in token that thou shalt not be ashamed to confess thy faith in Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue his faithful soldier and servant unto thy life's end. Amen."

In the communion service there is an offeratory prayer in which are these words:—"Sanctify these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ."

But all these, with still other things which I cannot now mention, were, in the revised Prayer-book of 1552, expunged, as essentially Romish in their character and tendency. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth the Prayer-book was again revised, and several things which had been left out in the edition of 1552 were restored. Among these was the sign of the cross, with a form of words connected with the ceremony still different from either the Romish or that adopted by the reformers in the first Prayer-book. Which of all these "came from the apostles" we have yet to learn. This book received its final revision under the reigns of Charles II., when the office for "the baptism of such

as are of riper years" was first inserted.\* Some of the alterations were made by the bishops, some by the reigning sovereigns, and some by nobody knows who. But they all must, of course, have been in accordance with "the consentient voice of the universal primitive church!"

Dr. Brett, a learned nonjuror, charges the Church of England with a vital omission in her eucharistic service, on account of her not making "an oblation of the sacramental body and blood of Christ." This charge is founded upon the fact that the oblatory prayer retained in the first Prayer-book of Edward the Sixth was stricken out in the second, and has never been restored. With this complaint the Tractarians deeply sympathize. The following evidence is exhibited by Mr. Good. He says, "How far our opponents agree in reality with Dr. Brett in this view may be seen in Mr. Froude's Remains, Mr. Newman's Letter to Dr. Fausset, and Mr. Keble's Preface to Hooker. By Mr. Froude it is said that our present communion service is 'a judgment on the Church,' and that there would be gain in 'replacing it by a good translation of the Liturgy of St. Peter,' (a euphemism for the mass-book;) by Mr. Newman, that our reformers, in not adopting 'the canon of the mass,' which is called a 'sacred and most precious monument of the apostles,' 'mutilated the tradition of fifteen hundred years,' and that 'our present condition is a judgment on us for what they did;' and by Mr. Keble, that our reformers, in their revision of the Prayer-

\* See Archdeacon Echard's History of England—Charles II., 1662.

book, have ‘given up altogether the ecclesiastical tradition regarding certain *very material* points in the celebration, if not in the doctrine, of the holy eucharist.’”\*

To all this Dr. Hook and Bishop Doane doubtless most heartily consent. And yet they tell us that “the whole Prayer-book”—not excepting the “office for the eucharist,” which, it seems, has been so miserably mangled—constitutes “the consentient voice of the universal primitive church,” or “the faith once delivered to the saints!”

But the difficulty has been much increased by the action of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country. So far was she from receiving the digest of antiquity presented to her by the mother Church with implicit faith, that she has almost entirely new-modelled the whole, and made still more fatal retrenchments than those of which the Tractarians complain. She has even laid hands upon those “precious monuments of antiquity, the creeds,” wholly throwing overboard “the Athanasian,” and suffering “the minister” to mutilate “the Apostles,” by leaving out “the descent into hell,” and to use either the “Apostles’” or “Nicene” at discretion. But I will here give the reader the whole account of the emendations of the American Prayer-book, as given by Dr. (now Bishop) Short, in a note found in his History of the Church of England. This author says,—

“With the exception of one or two particulars, the changes appear to be judiciously made; and as it is not a book which falls in the way of every English

\* See “The Case as it is,” p. 22.

reader, a brief statement of some of its chief variations from our own may not prove unacceptable. Throughout the whole, there are many small verbal alterations, where obsolete terms, or forms of expression, are exchanged for such as are now in common use; and most of those sentences and words are altered which are liable to foolish cavils, or real objections. It begins with a preface, which modestly justifies the alterations.

“ 1. In the calendar, the lessons are a good deal changed. About one-half the first lessons for Sundays are the same, and there are also proper second lessons from the New Testament, appointed for each Sunday. Those for saints' days are nearly the same as in ours. In the general calendar of lessons, the chapters composing the first lessons are so divided, that all those taken from the Apocrypha, and which are read in our Church from September to November, are omitted. The second lessons in morning service, taken from the Gospels, are so divided, that the Gospels are read over only twice during the year, and the Epistles, as in our Church, three times.

“ 2. In the general arrangement of the three services which are used together in morning prayers in our Church, such portions of each as are virtually repetitions may be omitted at the discretion of the minister. Thus one creed only need be read; the Lord's Prayer and the collect for the day need only be used once; and the *Gloria Patri* repeated only at the end of the psalms for the day, or the *Gloria in excelsis* substituted for it. Thus also a large portion of the Litany (from 'O Christ, hear us,' to 'as we do

put our trust in thee') may be omitted; and thus the morning prayer, litany, and communion service, are converted, as far as possible, into one uniform office.

“ 3. Of the three forms of absolution in our Prayer-book, that used in the visitation of the sick is wholly omitted; and either the form contained in the morning prayer, or that taken from the communion service, may be used at the discretion of the minister.

“ 4. With regard to the psalms, there are ten portions of them selected, and ordered to be used instead of those of the day, at the discretion of the minister; and in cases of fasts and thanksgivings, where none are appointed by authority, the minister is allowed to choose them for himself. The version is the same as that in our Liturgy.

“ 5. The Athanasian Creed is wholly omitted, and the minister may use, at his discretion, the Nicene, or Apostles’.

“ 6. In the evening prayers, the Magnificat and Song of Symeon are omitted, and the 92d psalm introduced.

“ 7. The occasional prayers are newly arranged, and several new ones, as well as corresponding thanksgivings, introduced.

“ 8. In the communion, no previous notice is to be required of the communicants, who are all to receive, kneeling. There is a new additional preface for Trinity Sunday; and a prayer of oblation, partly new, in which the invocation of the three persons of the Trinity is reintroduced from the Liturgy of 1549.

“ 9. In baptism, the parents are allowed to stand as sponsors, and the use of the cross may be omitted at their desire. The rubric about baptized children being

undoubtedly saved is omitted; and in the baptism of persons of riper years, all mention of informing the bishop is left out.

“ 10. The catechism is nearly the same. Ministers are not ordered to catechise after the second lesson. The confirmation is nearly the same.

“ 11. In matrimony, the ceremony may take place in a house, and the prayers are a little altered, and some are omitted.

“ 12. In the visitation of the sick, all notice of private confession and absolution is omitted; the psalm is changed to the 130th, and there are some new occasional prayers at the end.

“ 13. In the burial of the dead, the psalms are shortened, and all expressions changed which seem to apply to the state of the person buried.

“ 14. The churching of women is much shortened, and may be confined to a single prayer. The offering to be applied to the relief of distressed women in childbirth.

“ 15. The form of prayer to be used at sea is nearly the same.

“ 16. The commination is wholly omitted.

“ 17. The form of ordaining priests and deacons, and consecrating bishops, is nearly the same.

“ 18. There are added, a form of prayer for the visitation of prisoners, a prayer of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth, a form of family prayer, a form for consecrating churches, (which is nearly the same as that published by Bishop Andrews,) and an office of institution.

“ 19. The Thirty-nine Articles are hardly changed.

In the eighth, all mention of the Athanasian Creed is left out; the twenty-first, about assembling councils, is left out. In the thirty-fifth, the Homilies are allowed of as containing sound doctrine, but are not to be read till they have been revised."—Pp. 590, 591.

Now, in view of these radical changes in the American Prayer-book, how are we to understand the following language of the learned bishop of New-Jersey: "To one and all, then, unlearned not less than learned, we say, with admirable Doctor Hook, 'in taking the Prayer-book for your guide to the right understanding of Scripture—the whole Prayer-book, creeds, catechism, articles, baptismal office, office for the eucharist, office for the ordaining of bishops, priests, and deacons—you take for your guide the consentient voice of the universal primitive church'—in other words, 'the faith once delivered to the saints.'"<sup>\*</sup>

It is certain, of course, that Dr. Hook refers to the English Prayer-book, containing "the Athanasian Creed," "Commination," &c., &c. And the query is, whether it is this book, with all the parts enumerated, preserved in their integrity, that Bishop Doane endorses as "the faith once delivered to the saints," or the expurgated edition which, it may be presumed, he uses himself. Perhaps this inquiry may be thought impertinent; but certainly, when we are in search for an accredited apostolical commentary upon the Scriptures, it does not become us to be satisfied with mere generalities. If we are permitted at all to look into the character and claims of such a book, we cannot pass unnoticed a matter of so much importance as

\* Convocation Sermon, p. 27.



these American emendations. If I trust to a traditional exposition upon the Bible, I want it perfect in all its parts. And if the English Prayer-book is the authentic traditional record, the American is not—but is a mutilated record not worthy of confidence. If Bishop Doane can hold to the English Prayer-book as “the faith once delivered to the saints,” and yet approve of the American Prayer-book, which is so essentially different, and in which so many vital parts of that *faith* are given up, I see not why he cannot give up the whole. To characterize as “the faith once delivered to the saints” both these books would be an absurdity too gross even for a Romanist, and much more so for the bishop of New-Jersey.

But before I close this section, I beg leave to show, from the most unquestionable sources, that the claim which is set up for the apostolical origin of the Liturgy of the Common Prayer is wholly unfounded. The learned Bingham is admitted to be good authority by all grades of Churchmen. He maintains that the ancient Christians used set forms in public worship; but makes such admissions, and so presents the facts, as to render entirely baseless the claims which are set up to high antiquity for the Liturgy of the Prayer-book. He maintains that “every bishop was at liberty in the first ages to order the form of divine service in his own church,” and fully admits that the primitive liturgies were not preserved and handed down to succeeding ages. The following is his statement:—

“When the extraordinary spirit of prophecy ceased, then the rulers of the Church supplied this want by proper forms of their own composition, according to

Christian prudence and discretion. And this seems to have been the true original of liturgies, or stated forms of divine service. But why, then, have we none of these liturgies remaining entire and perfect to this day? I answer, There may be several reasons assigned for this. One is, that the bishops at first made every one their own liturgy, for the private use, as we may call it, of their own particular churches. And therefore the use of them not extending further than the precincts of their own diocesses, there was little knowledge of them beyond the bounds of those churches, and not much care to preserve them but only for the uses of such churches, for which they were particularly designed. That every bishop had at first this power and privilege to compose and order the form of divine service for his own church, I have shown in another place,\* where I had occasion to discourse of the independency of bishops, and their absolute power in their own church: where, among other things, I observed, that as they had the privilege to word their own creeds, so they had the privilege to frame their own liturgy; which privilege they retained for several ages.”†

Again he meets the query, “Why none of the ancient liturgies are now remaining?” more at length, thus: “If it be inquired, why then none of the ancient liturgies are now remaining, as they were at first composed for the use of particular churches? I answer, Several reasons may be assigned for this. 1. The very liberty, which every bishop had to frame

\* Book ii, chap. vi, sec. 2.

† Origines Ecclesiasticæ, book xiii, chap. v, sec. 1.

the liturgy of his own church, was one reason why none of these are now remaining perfect and entire, as they were at first composed for the use of such a particular church. For the design of them being only for the use of such a particular church, there was no great reason to be very solicitous, either to communicate and diffuse the knowledge of them to other churches, or to preserve them entire to posterity, who were not precisely tied up to the use of them, but might frame others at their own discretion.

2. It is not improbable, but that, as a late learned French writer has observed,\* the ancient liturgies were for some ages only certain forms of worship committed to memory, and known by practice, rather than committed to writing, which is the only certain way of preserving such sort of monuments to late posterity. This seems very probable, because in the persecutions under Diocletian and his associates, though a strict inquiry was made after the books of Scripture, and other things belonging to the church, which were often delivered up by the *traditores* to be burnt, yet we never read of any ritual books, or books of divine service, delivered up among them. Which is an argument, that their forms of worship and administration of the sacraments were not then generally committed to writing, or at least not compiled in books, distinct from the Psalms or other books of Scripture: otherwise, it is very probable, that as the Scriptures, with other utensils and treasures of the church, were often found by the heathens, or betrayed by apostate

\* Renaudotius. *Collectio Liturgiar. Oriental. Dissertat. i, p. 9, tom. i. Par., 1716.*

tizing Christians, and delivered up to be burnt; so we should have heard something of their books of divine worship undergoing the same fate: since they were so curious in inquiring after the cups, and lamps, and torches, and vestments, and other utensils and vessels of the church, as in some of their calendars and breviats we find they were, would hardly have omitted their books of worship, as being more proper objects of their spite and malice, had they found any such in the Christian churches.”\*

Again he asserts that it was “in after ages” that efforts were made to reduce the liturgies to uniformity. He says, “In after ages bishops agreed by consent to conform their liturgy to the model of the metropolitical church of the province to which they belonged. And then it was enacted into a law by several councils, that the same order and uniformity should be observed in all churches. The rudiments of this discipline were first laid in the French churches. For in the Council of Agde a canon was made about the year 506,† ‘that one and the same order should be equally observed in all churches of the province in all parts of divine service.’”‡

Nor were the liturgies which were written in after-ages preserved in the churches. As says our author, “Even those liturgies, which were most certainly compiled in books, in the following ages, are now in a great measure lost also by the injuries of time, as the old Gallican, Spanish, African, and Roman liturgies,

\* Origines Ecclesiasticæ, book xiii, chap. v, sec. 3.

† Con. Agathens., can. xxx.

‡ Origines Ecclesiasticæ, book xiii, chap. v, sec. 2.

of which there is nothing but fragments and dismembered parcels now remaining. Which is a third reason why none of those ancient liturgies are extant at this day. The fourth and last reason, is the interpolations and additions made to the ancient liturgies in future ages.”\*

I will now submit the question to any Churchman, high or low, after leaving out the selections from the Bible, which part of the Common Prayer came from the apostles? Will he say the creeds? These, we have seen, came into being piecemeal, and were not perfected until the fourth or fifth century. Will he say the liturgy and offices? According to the best high-Church authority, no liturgy was reduced to writing during the first ages of Christianity, and “posterity were not precisely tied up to the use of” the first liturgies, “but might frame others at their own discretion;” and after the liturgies were reduced to writing, which was in later ages, scarcely a vestige of the first of these compositions escaped the ravages of time. But will he say the Thirty-nine Articles came from the apostles? This would be too shocking to common sense; † for there is the clearest *prima facie* evidence, to say nothing of the evidence of history, that either as to their language, or sentiment, or both, these Articles originated subsequent to the Reformation. What now is left to which any sensible man will be disposed to accord the honour of apostolic origin? Nothing; absolutely nothing.

According to this learned writer, all claims to apos-

\* See Bingham’s Works, vol. iv, p. 102.

† Will Dr. Hook and Bishop Doane pardon this?

tolic origin in favour of any existing liturgy must, in the nature of things, be utterly groundless. For, 1. Each bishop composed his own creed and liturgy; and of course they could not have been composed by the apostles, nor without a miracle would they have verbally harmonized with each other. 2. Whatever these ancient forms were, they were not committed to writing. And as the learned author admits "*writing*" to be "the only certain way of preserving such sort of monuments to late posterity," we can have no certain evidence of the apostolical origin of any existing liturgy. 3. Such was the diversity of the primitive liturgies, that councils judged it necessary to take measures to remedy the evil by enacting that "the same order should be observed in all churches of the province;" and "bishops agreed by consent to conform their liturgy to the model of the metropolitical church of the province to which they belonged." And this, be it observed, was in the *sixth century*, until which time, it would seem, there had been no uniformity in the formularies even in the same province. And subsequently to these acts of uniformity the same diversity existed in different provinces, as they only contemplated uniformity in the same province. And 4. The earliest written liturgies "are now in a great measure lost by the injuries of time."

Now let the reader glance back over the whole subject, and see the route by which he has been conducted along to his present position. The traditions of the Church are derived from the oral preaching of the apostles, and constitute a part of the rule of faith and practice, and are of divine obligation; the Prayer-

book embodies the whole system of ancient tradition, so fully and exactly that "the whole Prayer-book, creeds, catechism, articles, baptismal office, office for the eucharist, office for the ordaining of bishops, priests, and deacons," claims for its support "the consentient voice of the universal primitive church"—and is "the faith once delivered to the saints." According to all this, we must reckon the Prayer-book of equal authority with the canonical Scriptures, and of course all alterations or emendations of it as sacrilegious! What bishop, what Christian king, what parliament, would ever have thought of adding to and taking from *the word of God*?

But here let it be observed, that though by Tractarians as well as by more moderate Churchmen we are directed to the Prayer-book for the doctrines and usages of the primitive church—though with one consent they tell us this is the true exhibition of the sense of Holy Scripture: that by "taking the Prayer-book" we "take for our guide the consentient voice of the primitive church," yet at the same time our advisers are not at all agreed as to certain radical points which have either been expunged, or have never been admitted into this sacred book of primitive and apostolical traditions. We have seen that the book has undergone a series of mutations. Though we are told that the reformers carefully collected together such doctrines and forms as had the sanction of the highest antiquity, yet we find them in the course of three years making great changes, and excluding as Romish corruptions some of these very things. At different periods for more than a century, various efforts were made in

England to make what was all right before still better. In America, another effort at improvement produced "the American Prayer-book," so that we now have two, materially different from each other. Now the Tractarians, after telling us that "the Church of England transmits the ancient catholic faith simply and intelligibly" in "the Prayer-book," bethink themselves, and declare this same book is essentially defective—that it is no less than "a judgment on the Church," and that in their improvements the reformers "mutilated the traditions of fifteen hundred years!" Amid all these contradictions and absurdities, what can the people, for whose benefit the Prayer-book was compiled, do for security against radical error?

And is there no reason to doubt the claims which are set up to a pure apostolic origin for the formularies of faith and liturgical services of the Common Prayer? A careful examination of their whole history will show that many of them are of comparatively modern origin. The Thirty-nine Articles are the work of the reformers, the Creeds originated partly in the Greek and partly in the Roman Church, and the Liturgy is mostly of Romish origin—being taken from the Roman Catholic Missal. Exorcism and chrism, now wholly rejected, at least in practice, by Churchmen, are as ancient as any part of the Liturgy. And there are portions of this boasted digest of apostolical traditions which were inserted by individuals, without legal authority either *civil* or *ecclesiastical*. I make these statements after due examination and reflection.\*

\* Those who wish to examine for themselves may consult



But I must not be understood as disparaging the Prayer-book. All there is good in it, and that is not a little, I love, and can most heartily adopt. I care not whence it came; whether from councils, popes, bishops, parliaments, kings, or queens; if it is true to the Scriptures, I most cordially take it to my heart. But I protest against the claims which are set up for its *apostolical* origin. As "the faith once delivered to the saints" I discard it.

Burnet's History of the Reformation, Short's History of the Church of England, and Palmer's Antiquities of the English Ritual; Caldwell's "History of the Conferences and other Proceedings connected with the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer, from the year 1558 to 1690," Oxford, 1840; and "Reliquiæ Baxterianæ; or, Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most memorable Passages of his Life and Times." London, 1696.

Since this section was put in type, I have read a new work by the Rev. W. J. Kip, entitled "The Double Witness of the Church." This author reduces "all the primitive liturgies to four:" these are the liturgies of St. James, of St. Peter, of St. Mark, and of St. John. And he thinks it "difficult to assign their origin to a lower period than the apostolic age."<sup>1</sup> I have here no space in which to show up the palpable errors of the author upon this subject. He will, however, find himself, and Mr. Palmer, whom he follows in his errors, amply refuted by the learned Du Pin.<sup>2</sup> This author clearly proves that these *apostolical documents* cannot claim an antiquity earlier than the *fifth century!* I, however, must thank Mr. Kip for drawing my attention to such "collects" in the Common Prayer "as are composed anew."<sup>3</sup> Under this head we have no less than *twenty-five* collects, or prayers, which were "composed anew," in "1549" and "1552." Will Dr. Hook and Bishop Doane please tell us which of the apostles arose from the dead to compose these "collects?"

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 165-167.    <sup>2</sup> See Hist. Eccles., vol i, pp. 8, 9.    <sup>3</sup> Pp. 222, 224.

## CHAPTER II.

## ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF PATRISTIC TRADITION.

## SECTION I.

The Arguments *à priori* and *à posteriori*.

THE arguments in favour of patristic tradition, which I shall consider in this section, may be supposed scarcely worthy of a moment's attention. This may indeed be said of nearly all the proofs which are adduced upon the same side. But as they constitute a part of the controversy upon the subject, and are urged with great earnestness and with apparent sincerity, they can scarcely be omitted. Some of them, as mere literary curiosities—as phenomena in mental processes—are worthy of the attention of philosophers.

A learned Romish writer lays down the *à priori argument* thus: "First. That Christian doctrine was at first unanimously settled by the apostles, in the hearts of the faithful, dispersed in great multitudes over several parts of the world. Secondly. That this doctrine was firmly believed by all those faithful to be the way to heaven, and the contradicting or deserting it to be the way to damnation: so that the greatest hopes and fears imaginable were by engaging the divine authority strongly applied to the minds of the first believers, encouraging them to the adhering to that doctrine, and deterring them from relinquishing it; and indeed infinitely greater than any other whatever, springing from any temporal consideration: and

that this was in all ages the persuasion of the faithful. Thirdly. That hopes of good and fears of harm strongly applied, are the causes of actual will. Fourthly. That the thing was feasible or within their power: that what they were bred to was knowable by them. This put, it follows as certainly, that a great number or body of the first believers, and after faithful in each age, that is, from age to age, would continue to hold themselves, and teach their children as themselves had been taught, that is, would follow and stick to tradition; as it doth, that a cause put actually causing produceth its effect."

A mere synopsis of Archbishop Tillotson's reply to this argument will be sufficient. The archbishop proceeds:—"To show the vanity and weakness of this pretended demonstration, I shall assail it these three ways; by showing, first. That if the grounds of it were true, they would conclude too much, and prove that to be impossible which common experience evinceth, and himself must grant to have been. Secondly. That his main grounds are apparently false. Thirdly. That his demonstration is confuted by clear and undeniable instances to the contrary."

1. "If the grounds of it were true, they would conclude too much, and prove that to be impossible which common experience evinceth, and himself must grant to have been. For if these two principles be true, 'that the greatest hopes and fears are strongly applied to the minds of all Christians; and that those hopes and fears strongly applied are the cause of actual will to adhere constantly to Christ's doctrine;' then from hence it follows, that none that entertain this doctrine

can ever fall from it, because falling from it is inconsistent with an actual will of adhering constantly to it. For supposing (as he doth) certain and constant causes of actual will to adhere to this doctrine, those who entertain it must actually will to adhere to it, because 'a cause put actually causing produceth its effect,' which is constant adherence to it. And if this were true, these two things would be impossible; first. That any Christian should turn apostate or heretic. Secondly. That any Christian should live wickedly: both which not only frequent and undoubted experience doth evince, but himself must grant *de facto* to have been.... It would be impossible that any Christian should turn apostate or heretic. Heresy, according to him, is nothing else but the renouncing of tradition. Now he tells us, 'That the first renouncers of tradition must have been true believers or holders of it ere they renounced it;' and I suppose there is the same reason for apostates. But if all Christians or true believers (as he calls them) have these arguments of hope and fear strongly applied, and hope and fear strongly applied be the causes of actual will to adhere to this doctrine; 'tis necessary all Christians should adhere to it, and impossible there should be either apostates or heretics."\*

2. "Secondly. The main grounds of his demonstration are apparently false: for, first. This demonstration supposeth that the generality of Christian parents in all ages perfectly understood the doctrine of Christ, and did not mistake any part of it; that they remember it perfectly, and that they were faithful and diligent to

\* See The Rule of Faith, part iii, sec. 3.

instruct their children in it; which is as contrary to experience as that the generality of Christians are knowing and honest. It supposeth, likewise, that this doctrine, and every substantial part of it, was received and remembered by the generality of children as it was taught; and was understood perfectly by them without the least material mistake: so he tells us, 'That the substance of faith comes clad in such plain matters of fact, that the most stupid man living cannot possibly be ignorant of it.' But whether this be reasonable to be supposed or no, may easily be determined, not only from every man's own experience of the world, but from a more advantageous instance of the experience of the first age of Christianity. Was there ever a more knowing and diligent teacher of this doctrine than our Saviour? And yet his disciples fell into many mistakes concerning it: so that in order to the certain propagating of it, the wisdom of God thought it requisite to endue even those who had learned this doctrine from himself with an infallible Spirit, by which they might be led into all truth, and secured from error and mistake; which had been unnecessary, had it been impossible for them to mistake this doctrine. The apostles, who taught the world by an infallible Spirit, and with infinitely more advantage than ordinary parents can teach their children, yet in all the churches which they planted they found Christians very apt to mistake and pervert their doctrine, as appears by their frequent complaints in most of their epistles. . . . Secondly. This demonstration supposeth the hopes and fears which Christian religion applies to men's minds to be certain and necessary causes of

actual will in men to adhere to the doctrine of Christ ; and consequently that they must necessarily adhere to it. That he supposeth them to be necessary, I have his own word for it ; for he tells us, that ‘ he hath endeavoured to demonstrate the indefectibleness of tradition as the proper and necessary effect of those causes which preserve and continue tradition on foot,’ and what those causes are he told us before, ‘ that they are hopes and fears strongly applied.’ But I hope that the indefectibleness of tradition cannot be ‘ a necessary effect’ of the strong application of those hopes and fears, unless those hopes and fears be a ‘ necessary cause’ of that effect. And indeed this is sufficiently implied in his saying ‘ that they are the causes of actual will’ in Christians to adhere to tradition. For if these ‘ causes of actual will’ be constant, (as he must suppose,) then they are certain and necessary and infallible causes of adhering to this doctrine. For whatever is in act is necessary while it is so, and if it be constantly in act, the effect is always necessary. But what a wild supposition is this, that moral motives and arguments working upon a free principle, the will of man, do necessarily produce their effect ? Is it necessary that the hopes of heaven and the fears of hell should keep Christians constant to the doctrine of Christ ? And is it not as necessary that these arguments should prevail upon them to the practice of it ? It is in vain to go about to demonstrate that all men must be good who have sufficient arguments propounded to them, when experience tells us the contrary. Nay, it is in reason impossible that moral arguments should be of a necessary and infallible effi-

cacy, because they are always propounded to a free agent, who may choose whether he will yield to them or not. Indeed, it is always reasonable that men should yield to them, and if they be reasonable they will; but so long as they are free, it can never be infallibly certain that they will.”\*

3. “Thirdly. This demonstration is confuted by clear and undeniable instances to the contrary. I will mention but two.

“First. The tradition of the one true God, which was the easiest to be preserved of any doctrine in the world, being short and plain, planted in every man’s nature, and perfectly suited to the reason of mankind. And yet this tradition, not having passed through many hands, (by reason of the long age of man,) was so defaced and corrupted, that the world did lapse into polytheism and idolatry. Now a man that were so hardy as to demonstrate against matter of fact, might, by a stronger demonstration than Mr. S.’s, prove that though it be certain this tradition hath failed, yet it was impossible it should fail; as Zeno demonstrated the impossibility of motion against Diogenes walking before his eyes. For the doctrine of the one true God was settled in the heart of Noah, and firmly believed by him to be the way to happiness, and the contradicting or deserting of this to be the way to misery. And this doctrine was by him so taught to his children, who were encouraged by these motives to adhere to this doctrine, and to propagate it to their children, and were deterred by them from relinquishing it. And this was in all ages the persuasion of the faithful.

\* See Rule of Faith, part iii, sec. 4.

Now the hopes of happiness, and the fears of misery strongly applied, are the causes of actual will. Besides, the thing was feasible, or within their power; that is, what they were bred to was knowable by them, and that much more easily than any other doctrine whatsoever, being short, and plain, and natural. 'This put, it follows certainly that a great number in each age would continue to hold themselves, and teach their children as themselves had been taught, that is, would follow and stick to this tradition of the one true God, as it doth that a cause is put actually causing produceth its effect. Actually, I say; for since the cause is put, and the patient disposed, it follows inevitably that the cause is put still actually causing.' This demonstration, which concludes an apparent falsehood, hath the whole strength of Mr. S.'s, and several advantages beyond it. For the doctrine conveyed by this tradition is the most important, being the first principle of all religion; the danger of corrupting it as great, the facility of preserving it much greater, than of the Christian doctrine, for the causes before mentioned. And yet, after all, it signifies nothing against certain experience, and unquestionable matter of fact; only it sufficiently shows the vanity of Mr. S.'s pretended demonstration, built upon the same or weaker grounds.

"Secondly. The other instance shall be in the Greek Church, who received the Christian doctrine as entire from the apostles, and had as great an obligation to propagate it truly to posterity, and the same 'fears and hopes strongly applied to be the actual causes of will;' in a word, all the same arguments and causes



to preserve and continue tradition on foot, which the Roman Church had: and yet, to the utter confusion of Mr. S.'s demonstration, tradition hath failed among them. For as speculators, they deny the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son; and as testifiers, they disown any such doctrine to have been delivered to them by the precedent age, or to any other age of their Church by the apostles as the doctrine of Christ.\*

“The demonstration *à posteriori*” is thus stated:—  
 “The effect then we will pitch upon, and avow to be the proper one of such a cause, is the present persuasion of traditionary Christians, (or Catholics,) that their faith hath descended from Christ and his apostles uninterruptedly, which we find most firmly rooted in their heart; and the existence of this persuasion we affirm to be impossible, without the existence of tradition’s ever indeficiency to beget it. To prove this, I lay this first principle, That age which holds her faith thus delivered from the apostles, neither can itself have changed anything in it, nor know or doubt that any age since the apostles had changed or innovated therein. The second principle shall be this: No age could innovate anything, and withal deliver that very thing to posterity as received from Christ by continual succession.” “The sum of which,” says the archbishop, “is this: That because a present multitude of Christians (namely, the Roman Church) are persuaded that Christ’s doctrine hath descended to them solely by an uninterrupted oral tradition, therefore this persuasion is an effect which cannot be attributed to any other

\* See Rule of Faith, part iii, sec. 5.

cause but the indeficiency of oral tradition. For if neither the present age, nor any age before, could make any change or innovation, then the persuasion of the present age is a plain demonstration that this doctrine was always the same, and consequently that tradition cannot fail.

“ In answer to this, I shall endeavour to make good these four things :—

“ First. That these principles wholly rely upon the truth of the grounds of his demonstration *à priori*.

“ Secondly. That these principles are not sufficiently proved by him.

“ Thirdly. That doctrines and practices, which must be acknowledged to have been innovated, have made the same pretence to uninterrupted tradition.

“ Fourthly. That it is not the present persuasion of the Church of Rome, (whom he calls the traditionary Christians,) nor ever was, that their faith hath descended to them solely by oral tradition. If I can now make good these four things, I hope his demonstration is at an end.

1. “ That these principles wholly rely upon the truth of the grounds of his demonstration *à priori*. For if the doctrine of Christ was either imperfectly taught in any age, or mistaken by the learners, or any part of it forgotten, (as it seems the whole Greek Church have forgot that fundamental point of the procession of the Holy Ghost, as the Roman Church accounts it,) or if the arguments of hope and fear be not necessary causes of actual will to adhere to tradition, then there may have been changes and innovations in any age, and yet men may pretend to have

followed tradition. But I have shown, that ignorance and negligence, and mistake, and pride, and lust, and ambition, and any other vice or interest, may hinder those causes from being effectual to preserve tradition entire and uncorrupted. And when they do so, it is not to be expected that those persons who innovate and change the doctrine should acknowledge that their new doctrines are contrary to the doctrine of Christ; but that they should at first advance them as pious, and after they have prevailed and gained general entertainment, then impudently affirm that they were the very doctrines which Christ delivered; which they may very securely do, when they have it in their power to burn all that shall deny it.”\*

From this the archbishop proceeds to descant upon the darkness of the middle ages, and to show, from the best authorities, when and how many of the corruptions of Rome were introduced, and were dignified with the imposing title of apostolical traditions.

2. “Secondly. The principles upon which this demonstration relies are not sufficiently proved by him.

“His first principle is this, ‘That age which holds her faith delivered thus from the apostles, neither can itself have changed anything in it, nor know or doubt that any age since the apostles had changed or innovated anything therein. This proposition,’ he tells us, ‘needs no proof to evidence it, but only an explication: for since no man can hold contrary to his knowledge, or doubt of what he holds, nor change or innovate in the case proposed without knowing he did so; ’tis a manifest impossibility a whole age should fall into an

\* Rule of Faith, part iii, sec. 6 and 7.

absurdity so inconsistent with the nature of one single man.' But (by his favour) that which he says is no proof, but only an explication, is a proof if it be anything; and the force of it is this: That which is 'inconsistent with the nature of one single man, is manifestly impossible to a whole age;' but it is inconsistent with the nature of any single man 'to hold contrary to his knowledge,' &c., therefore impossible to a whole age; and consequently, 'that age which holds her faith delivered thus from the apostles, neither can itself have changed anything, nor,' &c. So that in order to the making good of this first principle, Mr. S. hath left nothing unproved but only this proposition, namely, That it is impossible that any one single man that holds his faith to have been delivered uninterruptedly from the apostles, should ever himself have changed anything in it, or know or doubt that any age since the apostles hath changed or innovated anything therein: and to make out the truth of this proposition, there only remains this to be proved, namely, that it is impossible for any single man to be mistaken: for if that be possible, then, contrary to Mr. S., a man may hold that to have been delivered as a doctrine of faith from the apostles which was not so delivered.

“ His second principle is this: ‘That no age could innovate anything, and withal deliver that very thing to posterity as received from Christ by continual succession.’ He proves it thus: ‘Since man is a rational creature, he must have some reason or motive, good or bad, which he proposeth to himself as an end to be achieved by his action: and whatever his remote end is, his immediate end, in telling posterity a late in-

vented thing was held immediately before, is to make them believe it. Wherefore, since a seen impossibility cannot be a motive to one not frantic; and since 'tis evidently impossible they should make posterity believe a thing so universally known to be false, as this must needs be, &c., it is as impossible this principle should falter, as that the foregoing age should conspire to act without a motive, or that the succeeding age should believe what they know to be otherwise, that is, should hold both sides of a contradiction in a clear matter of fact.' The force of which is this, That it is impossible that any man not frantic should attempt to innovate in matter of Christian doctrine, because the immediate end of such an attempt must be to have this new doctrine believed; but it is impossible he should attain this end, and impossible he should not see that it is impossible to attain it. Now a seen impossibility is an end that cannot move any one that is not frantic; therefore no man that is not frantic can attempt to innovate in matter of Christian doctrine. Thus he hath demonstrated it impossible that there should be any heretics, if a heretic be one that attempts to innovate in matter of Christian doctrine: for if there be any such attempters they must be frantic, and if they be frantic they can be no heretics; for heresy implies a crime, but God will not impute the actions of madmen to them as faults. Again: suppose he that attempts to innovate be mistaken, (and I hope Mr. S. will grant that a heretic is fallible,) and think that which he delivers as Christ's doctrine to be really so, though indeed it be not; why should such a person think it impossible to make men believe that to be

received from Christ which he really thinks was received, and thinks he can make it appear that it was so? And if this be granted, then it is not impossible that man, though he be a rational creature, may attempt to innovate. And if so, then his second principle is not proved. If Mr. S. had any regard to the noble science of controversy, (whereof he pretends to be so great a master,) he would not bring such trifling sophisms instead of demonstrative proofs: and nothing less than a demonstrative proof will serve to establish any principle upon which a demonstration is to be built.”\*

3. “Doctrines and practices which must be acknowledged to have been innovated, have made the same pretence to uninterrupted tradition. And of this I shall give several instances; one among the Jews, the rest among Christians.

“First. I shall instance among the traditionary Jews, whose persuasion in our Saviour’s time was, and still is, that their oral doctrine, which they call their *cabala*, hath descended to them from Moses uninterruptedly. Now, here is the existence of such a persuasion, as Mr. S. affirms to be ‘impossible without tradition’s ever indeficiency to beget it.’ And this persuasion of theirs is most exactly parallel with the pretensions of the Romish Church, according to Mr. S. For here’s a multitude of traditionary Jews, manifoldly greater in proportion to the dissenters in that Church, than the Romish Church is in comparison to those Christians that dissent from her.”

“Secondly. As for instances among Christians,

\* Rule of Faith, part iii, sec. 8.

whereof many remain yet upon record; as namely, the various and opposite traditions about the time of Easter, and concerning the baptism of heretics, and the apostolical tradition (as St. Austin calls it) concerning the admission of infants to the communion; all which have been frequently urged in this controversy, and none of them yet sufficiently answered; I shall, to avoid tediousness, passing by these, insist only upon that of the Chiliasts; which, in Justin Martyr's time, was the persuasion of all orthodox Christians, that is, (in Mr. S.'s dialect,) of all the 'holders to tradition.'"

4. "It is not the present persuasion of the Church of Rome, nor ever was, that their faith hath descended to them by oral tradition as the sole rule of it. And this being proved, the supposition upon which his demonstration is built falls to the ground.

"And for the proof of this, I appeal to that decree of the Council of Trent,\* in which they declare, that because the 'Christian faith and discipline are contained in written books and unwritten traditions, &c., therefore they do receive and honour the books of Scripture, and also tradition, [pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia,] with equal pious affection and reverence;' which I understand not how those do who set aside the Scripture, and make tradition the sole rule of their faith. And consonantly to this decree, the general doctrine of the Romish Church is, that Scripture and tradition make up the rule of faith. 'So the Roman Catechism (set forth by order of the Council of Trent) says, That the sum of the doctrine delivered to the

\* Decret. primum quartæ sess.

faithful is contained in the word of God, which is distributed into Scripture and tradition.' Bellarmine\* speaks to the same purpose, 'That the Scripture is a rule of faith, not an entire, but partial one. The entire rule is the word of God, which is divided into two partial rules, Scripture and tradition.' According to this, the adequate rule of faith is the word of God; which is contained partly in Scripture, and partly in the tradition of the Church. And that Scripture is looked upon by them as the principal rule and primary foundation of their faith, and tradition as only supplying the defects of Scripture, as to some doctrines and rites not contained in Scripture, must be evident to any one that has been conversant in the chief of their controversial divines."†

By the archbishop's fourth argument we are not to understand him as denying that the ground taken by his opponent, that *tradition constitutes the SOLE rule of faith*, had never been taken before by any other Romish writer, for this would not have been true; but that the better sort and the most learned of that class of writers do not take this ground. The fact is, that Romanists, in maintaining their dogmas, take such ground as the occasion suggests—they are high or low toned, according to circumstances. And they frame their theory and construct their arguments according to the character of the materials with which they have to deal. I will just add, for the reader's edification, another specimen of Romish logic. Thus proceeds the archbishop's opponent:—

\* De Verbo Dei, &c., lib. iv, c. 12.

† Rule of Faith, part iii, sec. 10.



“It would require a large volume to unfold particularly how each virtue contributes to show the inerrable indeficiency of tradition, and how the principles of almost each science are concerned in demonstrating its certainty: arithmetic lends her numbering and multiplying faculty, to scan the vast number of testifiers; geometry her proportions, to show a kind of infinite strength of certitude in Christian tradition, above those attestations which breed certainty in human affairs; logic her skill to frame, and make us see the connections it has with the principles of our understanding; nature her laws of motion and action; morality her first principle, that nothing is done gratis by a cognoscitive nature, and that the body of traditional doctrine is most conformable to practical reason: historical prudence clears the impossibility of an undiscernable revolt from points so descended and held so sacred: politics show this to be the best way imaginable to convey down such a law as it concerns every man to be skilful in; metaphysics engages the essences of things, and the very notion of being, which fixes every truth, so establishing the scientificall knowledges which spring from each particular nature by their first causes or reasons exempt from changes or motion. Divinity demonstrateth it most worthy of God, and most conducive to bring mankind to bliss. Lastly, controversy evidences the total uncertainty of anything concerning faith, if this can be uncertain, and makes use of all the rest to establish the certainty of this first principle.”

To all this the archbishop drily adds: “A very fit conclusion for such demonstrations as went before.

It is well Mr. S. *writes to none but intelligent readers* ; for were it not a thousand pities, that so manly, and solid, and convincing a discourse as this, should be cast away upon fools ?”\*

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## SECTION II.

### The alleged Necessity for Tradition.

THE assertors of tradition most generally pretend to deal in *facts*, and to have little to do with philosophy. But finding it difficult to persuade men of the truth of a theory which does not seem to be called for by any evident necessity of the case, they venture upon an attempt to show why it is that the Bible alone is not to be taken as the rule of faith and practice.

1. And *first*, they allege that the Bible, without tradition, *has no authority*, as it is by tradition that we learn what books belong to the canon of Scripture, and that the whole is inspired.

Bellarmino sets down several uses of tradition, as follows :—“ Fourthly. It is necessary to know that there exist certain truly divine books, a truth which certainly cannot be obtained in any way from the Scriptures. For although Scripture may say that the books of the prophets and apostles are divine, yet I cannot believe this for certain, unless I should previously have been brought to believe that the Scripture which says this is divine. For in the Alcoran of Mohammed we everywhere read that the Alcoran was sent by God from heaven, and yet we do not believe it.

\* Rule of Faith, part iii, sec. 11.

Therefore, this so necessary article, namely, that there is some divine Scripture, cannot be sufficiently proved from Scripture alone. Therefore, since faith is founded upon the word of God, unless we have an unwritten word of God, we can have no faith. . . . Fifthly. It is not sufficient to know that there is a divine Scripture, but it behooves us to know *which it is*; a thing which cannot in any way be had from the Scriptures. . . . If it be so, then Scripture is not sufficient alone. . . . For if it be left destitute of this unwritten tradition and the testimony of the Church, it will be of little service. *Moreover, if this tradition has been able to come down to us, why cannot others also have come down in the same way?\**

High-churchmen take precisely the same ground. Mr. Newman asks, "How do we know that Scripture comes from God?" and answers, "It cannot be denied that we of this age receive it *upon general tradition*; we receive through tradition both *the Bible itself*, and the doctrine that it is divinely inspired. The sacred volume itself, as well as *the doctrine of its inspiration*, comes to us by traditional conveyance. We receive the New Testament in its existing shape by tradition."

Archdeacon Manning says: "We believe in the sufficiency of Holy Scripture for salvation—*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."†

Again this author says, "Word it as you may, the

\* De Verb. Dei, lib. iv, c. 4.

† Rule of Faith, p. 14.

*attack on universal tradition undermines the foundation of Christianity. It is not an interpretation, but the gospel, that is at stake.*"\*

Mr. Palmer also urges, with his whole power, that upon the question of tradition depends the truth of the whole Christian system. Thus he reasons upon the subject: "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 hands, 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."†

Two points are assumed in these quotations. One is, that tradition is the only evidence we have of the verity and divine inspiration of the sacred writings; and the other, that the traditions upon which these truths are attested are of the same character and credibility as those which are adduced in proof of the doctrines delivered in the oral discourses of the apostles. Now we deny both of these assumptions.

We do not question the validity of traditionary evidence in matters of fact, when the witnesses to such facts were capable of knowing them, and have given in an intelligible and consistent deposition. We admit that the fact of the Scriptures having been written by the persons

\* Appendix, p. 111.

† See Treatise on the Church, vol. ii, p. 50.

whose names they bear, and at the time which they claim for their origin, comes within the rule, and consequently, that the unanimous consent of Christian writers for several hundred years subsequent to the apostolic age is a necessary part of the historical evidence of the truth of the New Testament Scriptures. The fact is one which tradition could never attest unless it were true. This tradition depends not upon uncertain processes of reasoning, is attended by no natural improbabilities, and is opposed by no counter tradition. But tradition is so far from constituting the sum of the evidence by which we credit the Scriptures, that it is only one among several historical evidences, and the historical evidence is but one part of the whole. The universal consent of Christian writers from the very age of the apostles is good evidence of the authenticity of the apostolic writings. But this evidence is materially strengthened by the concessions of enemies. Both heathen and apostate Christians, whose interest it was to discredit these books, acknowledged them authentic, and attempted by various means to answer the arguments which were drawn from them. Profane history also gives a concurrent testimony in favour of the claims of these books, so far as it says anything about them. Under these circumstances the testimony of the fathers, though they had been much worse divines than they really are, though it should not be acknowledged divine and infallible in other matters, would be valid and conclusive in relation to the authenticity of the books of the New Testament. But if upon this matter patristic testimony were found vague and self-contradictory, and utterly opposed to all

probability, and arrayed against all the chronicles of the times, the case would be very different. There is, indeed, no need of annexing this species of evidence to the Scriptures as of equal authority and importance merely because it is useful to the cause of Christianity in relation to matters of fact of public and universal notoriety. Because it is good for *something*, we should not make it *everything*.

The evidence upon which we receive the Scriptures as an inspired record is historical and moral—external and internal. The historical evidence we may divide into traditionary and collateral. The internal evidence arises from the character of the writings themselves. As to the evidence of the *inspiration* of the sacred writings, this is wholly internal. No traditionary evidence would of itself be sufficient to establish this point; for in this respect, perhaps, the Holy Scriptures can scarcely boast of a more unanimous *consent* than the Zendavesta and the Koran.

The line of legitimate argument upon the inspiration of the Scriptures is this:—The Scriptures afford the most incontestable evidence that their writers were men of sound intellect and of honest hearts. And they *profess* to bear to us God's word—to write under the guidance of inspiration. In confirmation of the truth of their professions they utter prophecies which could never have been the result of human foresight, and they work miracles which evince the interference of divine power. Add to this, what they say is consistent with itself, and every way beneficial to the human race. The doctrines taught, and the duties enjoined, as far as we can judge, are worthy of God, and every way

calculated to promote the great ends for which the revelation professes to be made. This is a brief, but doubtless a very imperfect, sketch of the evidence of the authenticity and inspiration of the sacred writings. And how much more satisfactory this combined testimony is than the mere traditions of the Church, I need not attempt to show.

But with what reason do the abettors of patristical tradition identify the evidence of what they are pleased to consider as the oral preaching of the apostles, with the evidence of the authenticity and inspiration of Holy Scripture? And with what justice and candour do they charge those who impugn their traditions with *undermining the foundations of Christianity*? If they will show that the cases are precisely parallel, then we will confess that we are bound in all consistency either to receive tradition as a part of the rule of faith, or to reject the Scriptures as such. But before they can do this, they must prove, *first*, that we have no evidence but that of tradition for the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures; and, *secondly*, that unwritten discourses are as easily handed down, pure and unaltered, from generation to generation, as written records; both of which are false, and, of course, can never be proved. The pretence of Mr. Palmer, that Christians would not be disposed to adulterate "a religion which they hold to be divine," is against all experience, and such a multitude of facts rise up before us at once to confute it, that no time need be spent upon it. And the assertion that oral tradition is a safe and certain mode of conveying doctrines, precepts, and religious rites down through successive

ages, is so contrary to the dictates of common sense, that we have more reason to pity the delusion of those who make it, than to entertain a reasonable hope of reclaiming them by argument.

Still, the abettors of tradition will probably continue to urge against us this objection:—If we have no certainty of the purity of oral traditions, what security have we against the corruption of the written record? The answer is easy: What is delivered orally is easily varied, but it is entirely different with a permanent record. If a record is public, and copies are multiplied, change cannot easily escape detection. But extended argument upon this point is entirely unnecessary. Whoever wishes to see the whole question fully and satisfactorily discussed, will find it done in Mr. Good's *Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*.

2. The *second* reason urged in favour of the *necessity of tradition* is founded upon the pretended *obscurity* of Scripture.

Bellarmino says, “We assert that there is not contained in the Scripture, *in express terms, (expresse,)* the whole necessary doctrine either concerning faith or concerning manners; and therefore that beyond the written word of God is required also the unwritten word of God, that is, the divine apostolical traditions.” Again: “Scripture is very often ambiguous and obscure, so that, unless it be interpreted by some one that cannot err, it cannot be understood; *therefore it is not sufficient ALONE.* . . . It is to be observed that there are two things in Scripture,—the written words, and the meaning contained in them. . . . Of these two, the first is possessed by all . . . the second is not possessed by all,



nor can we in many places be certain of the second, but by the addition of tradition.”\*

In exact accordance with the views of the great oracle of Romanism upon this point are those of high-Churchmen. Mr. Newman says, “The need of tradition arises from *the obscurity* of Scripture, and is terminated with the interpretation of it. Scripture does not interpret itself, or answer objections or misrepresentations. We must betake ourselves to the early church, and see how they understood it. Scripture was never designed to teach doctrine to the many.”

Archdeacon Manning is equally explicit. He says, “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 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 themselves 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 only one to be the sense *indeed*, it is plainly necessary that we should have some further rule for our common guidance.”†

How closely the archdeacon follows the Romish doctor and the magnus Apollo of Tractarianism need

\* De Verb. Dei, lib. iv, c. 3, 4.

† Rule of Faith, pp. 26, 27.

scarcely be intimidated. That high-Churchmen take their cue from Romanists upon the point in question is beyond doubt. Let the reader compare the language of the archdeacon with the following quaint and ludicrous passage from Archbishop Tillotson's opponent. Says he, the Scriptures are "ink variously figured in a book, unsensed characters, waxen-natured words, not yet sensed, nor having any certain interpreter, but fit to be plaid upon diversly by quirks of wit—that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing."\* But in meeting the whole argument two inquiries are naturally suggested. The *first* is, whether there is, in fact, any such "*obscurity*" in the Scriptures as is pretended: and the *second*, whether tradition is the appropriate remedy for the evil.

It must be admitted that there are difficult and abstruse passages in the Scriptures which "the many" cannot understand; and we might venture a query whether even the Oxford divines themselves, with all the helps derived from fathers and councils, are able fully to explain them. But that the Bible, as a whole, or *in matters essential*, is obscure, we deny; and indeed the insinuation impugns the wisdom and goodness of its divine Author. A revelation so obscure that its sense must be handed down through successive ages "from hand to hand," by the uncertain instrumentality of oral tradition, would be a phenomenon. It would be a reversing of the natural order of things. Written records are usually resorted to as a remedy for the uncertainty and obscurities of oral traditions; but in this case, it would seem, the order is reversed. We

\* Rule of Faith, part i, sec. 2.

have a written revelation so obscure that it cannot be understood—a revelation, indeed, that has of itself *no sense at all*—the true meaning being infallibly preserved in the oral traditions of the Church! In all similar cases we should naturally be led to inquire why the defect was not removed by another written revelation, or by notes of explanation which would make the record plain. But here, it seems, we must leave the course of experience, and abandon all common-sense notions, and trust wholly to authority, or yield to what our learned instructors tell us is plain matter of fact. The sense of the Bible is not to be found in the written record, but is contained in the traditions of the fathers.

Now, if this be so, the Bible alone is not a revelation. A revelation is an *intelligible communication of the mind of the Spirit*. But the Bible is merely “the written word,” “the scabbard,” while “the sense is the sword itself of the Spirit.” The Bible is mere “syllables and letters.” According to this representation, who does not see that the *revelation* is not in the *words or language* of the Bible, but in the *explanation*? This is the true theory of traditionists, both Roman and Anglican. And what is this but elevating tradition at the expense of the Scriptures? What is it, in fact, but making *tradition* the *sole* rule of faith? This very consequence high-Churchmen charge upon Romanists, and Romanists as explicitly repudiate it as high-Churchmen themselves. But to an unprejudiced mind it will appear that they are both, and indeed equally, involved in the condemnation. How clear is the process by which we are forced to this result!

The *revelation* is, of course, *sense*. But the *sense* is in *tradition*. Ergo, *tradition is the revelation*. The *sense* of Scripture must certainly be the rule of faith and practice, and if we locate the true sense in tradition, is not tradition, in fact, the *sole* rule? The argument of Chillingworth against the authority of the Church, contended for by Romanists, is upon this point equally pertinent and conclusive. He says, "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, whatever 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 pretence only, but indeed a Mohammedan?" And may we not ask whether "every understanding man" will not conclude most certainly that those who receive the Scriptures "in that sense only" which the fathers put upon them do indeed "obey" the *fathers*? Is it not most obvious, according to the theory here opposed, that *tradition is the sole rule of faith*? But insisting no further upon this point at present, I will now return to the particular question at issue, which is the pretended *obscurity* of Scripture.

And first, I urge, *à priori*, that it is necessary to a revelation that, in all matters essential, it must be so plain, that, with reasonable diligence in its examination, it may be understood by all whom it concerns. I see not how it can be called a revelation if this be

not the case. Surely, to those who are not able to understand its import, it cannot answer the purpose of a revelation, nor can such be in the least responsible for conformity to its contents. There would be no adaptation in such a record to the ends proposed to be answered by it, and the supposition that God has made such a revelation to mankind is a gross imputation both upon his wisdom and goodness.

But what is the fact? Our opponents tell us *the Scriptures are obscure*. It would seem quite sufficient for us to meet this declaration with its contrary, namely, that *the Scriptures are plain*, but that we are met with the overwhelming fact that there are numerous and conflicting opinions with regard to the sense of Scripture, which would not be the case if the Scriptures were plain and "designed for the many." As says the bishop of New-Jersey: "Of the innumerable forms of Christian doctrine, which from age to age have been proclaimed as true by the unnumbered sects which have assumed the name of Christ, however differing from, however opposite to, each other, not one that does not build his claim upon the sacred record."\* And Archdeacon Manning cannot admit that Scripture is "a sufficient test to ascertain what the apostles preached," because the Scriptures are not "so clear that private Christians could not err in understanding, or churches so infallible as never to go astray in expounding," them.

But what has all this to do with the real question at issue? No one in his senses has ever asserted that "the Scriptures are so clear that private Christians

\* Convocation Sermon, p. 18.

*could* not err in understanding” them, or that there may not be a variety of opinions in relation to many points of minor importance among Christians. But are the Scriptures consequently so *obscure* that they do not constitute a perfect rule of faith and practice? Have they therefore no sense in themselves? This consequence by no means follows from the premises. A written rule may certainly be so plain that common minds may, with suitable attention, so far understand its import and application that none of its practical objects will necessarily be thwarted, without being so clear that they “could not err” under any circumstances. And we have never alleged that divine revelation was so plain that there is no hazard, through negligence or prejudice, of misconceiving its true import. The Author of the Scriptures has so adjusted them that a clear apprehension of their import requires the exercise of our voluntary powers; and has made us accountable to himself for a right understanding and a proper application of their great principles of faith and rules of duty. There is, indeed, a wide difference between the fact and the allegations of our opponents—between the necessity of careful examination of the Holy Scriptures, aided by all the means within our reach, and the necessity of a *traditionary sense handed down from the apostles*.

And is no rule sufficiently plain about which men may chance to differ in opinion? Apply the principle to common law, or the Constitution of the United States. Are there no differences of opinion, even among jurists, in relation to their provisions? And because men *may err* in relation to their sense, must

we have an appendage handed down by oral tradition from their framers, *of equal authority*, explaining their meaning, or rather giving them a *sense*? The supposition is utterly preposterous. It is one which is not admitted in any similar case.

But I come next to inquire whether, upon the supposition that Scripture is as obscure as is pretended, tradition is the appropriate remedy.

I shall not now inquire into the evidence adduced of the divine appointment of this remedy for the alleged obscurity of Scripture, but shall simply examine its practical workings. Now, what are the facts in the case? Where tradition has been received as a part of the rule of faith, has it so dispelled the darkness which hangs over the oracles of God that "private Christians could not err in understanding, or the churches go astray in expounding," them? If we are to believe our opponents, the primitive church were guided by the transmitted reports of the oral preaching of the apostles in their expositions of Holy Scripture. But did they never err? Whence the feuds, and schisms, and heresies which arose in the church during the early ages, when, if ever, the traditions of the church must have been universally acknowledged and well understood?

Even in the days of the apostles, when their preaching was listened to by multitudes, "strife, and divisions," and "heresies," arose. And will our good Catholics please to inform us how it can reasonably be expected that the traditionary reports of the "apostles' preachings," handed down through centuries, should be a more potent remedy for schisms

and heresies than they were when they were ringing in the ears of listening multitudes? If the reports we have of the discourses of Peter, and Paul, and John, in the records of antiquity, now give an infallible sense to Holy Scripture, and effectually prevent all diversities of opinion as to its meaning, why were not these discourses, in their original delivery, the means of preventing all such diversities of religious opinion? Let our traditionists look to this matter a little more closely.

And let it be observed, that the ancient heresies arose under the action of this very infallible remedy for all misunderstanding of the meaning of Holy Scripture. Heretics were Catholics before they became heretics. The sects sprung up *in the church*. Where, in the mean time, was this grand remedy for the obscurity of Scripture? Should it be here alleged, as it has sometimes been, that the heretics repudiated tradition, and betook themselves to private interpretation; the answer is, that the assertion is not justified by the records of impartial history. There is strong evidence that the ancient heretics were the first to allege tradition in support of their dogmas. It is an incontrovertible fact, that in the ancient controversies in relation to the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, the Arians resorted to this species of evidence, while the orthodox only used it as an *argumentum ad hominem*, and grounded their main arguments upon the language of the sacred writings.

But let us come down to later times. Were there no differences of opinion *in the Church* during those



ages when tradition was generally admitted as a part of the rule of faith? Look at the history of the Church from the days of Vincent, in the fifth century, to the Council of Trent, in the fifteenth. What is the practical effect of the great catholic rule, "Quod ubique quod semper, quod ab omnibus, creditum est?"—*What is believed everywhere, always, and by all.* Did it prevent the general spread of the Pelagian and semi-Pelagian heresies? Did it prevent the great schism between the East and West? Did it prevent the controversies in relation to the supremacy of the pope, the worship of images, transubstantiation, heretical baptisms, predestination? &c., &c. Did it prevent endless feuds between the Dominicans and Franciscans, the Jansenists and Jesuits, the Nominalists and Realists? What, after all the influence of this grand catholicon for all errors in religion, but the recognition of the supremacy and infallibility of the pope, has, for centuries, prevented the Romish Church from splitting into a thousand fragments?

But let us come to the English Church, where we are told the famous rule of Vincent is, and ever has been, acknowledged. Is there any theological error which has not developed itself in this same Church? But to waive the argument which I might base upon the diversities of opinion which have prevailed at different periods in the Church of England among the mass, I shall select a few of the leading expositors of the doctrines of the Church, who, it is contended by high-Churchmen themselves, equally held the catholic maxim above referred to, and equally acknowledged the authority of tradition.

In Tracts Nos. 74, 76, and 78,\* we have a "catena patrum" of forty-two names, who are all claimed as strict adherents to the doctrine of tradition on the principle of Vincentius Lirinensis. The Tractator, in the commencement of No. 78, clearly declares this. He says, "The following extracts from English divines are but expositions and comments upon the celebrated Tract of Vincentius Lirinensis on heresies, which has been so generally adopted by them, that it may justly be considered as the formal manifestation of our Church as regards all the controversies of the last three hundred years." It may reasonably be expected, then, that at least the names which our Tractator introduces into his "catena," guided, as they are asserted to have been, by this grand remedy for diversity of opinions, will be found to agree in relation to "all the controversies of the last three hundred years." But what are the facts? Why, the facts are that we have among these very "divines" almost every variety of opinion in relation to these "controversies." It is alleged, and I will not now question it, that these divines go by this "everywhere, always, and by all" rule—the very principle which, we are gravely told, will guide all wise and good men to the same conclusions in relation to the sense of Scripture. But an examination of the writings of these fathers of the English Church will show that, upon vital points in the "controversies" in question, they take precisely opposite grounds. Upon the Catholic Church, Pearson is opposed to Potter; upon the apostolical succession, Taylor to Usher; upon the infallibility of

\* Tracts for the Times, vol. i.

general councils, Jewel to Hammond; upon the divine presence in the eucharist and baptismal regeneration, Jewel, Hooker, Beveridge, and Patrick, are opposed to Laud, Thorndike, Brett, Hicks, and Collier; upon the rule of faith, Jewel, Field, Hooker, and Stillingfleet, are opposed to Bramhall, Hammond, Thorndike, Brett, Hicks, Collier, Leslie, &c.; upon predestination, Laud and Hall are at sword's points.

It would be easy to adduce passages, almost innumerable, from the writers named, to prove what I here assert. This, however, would occupy too much space. It is sufficient to add, what all, who have the least acquaintance with the history of "the controversies of the last three hundred years" well know, that these names stand upon opposite sides in nearly all these controversies. They are opposed, in the great ecclesiastical controversies upon church government, and in the theological controversies in relation to predestination, grace, free-will, &c.

Further, though it is conceded by high-Churchmen, and even vaunted as a matter of triumph by the British Critic, that Bishop Jewel acknowledges the authority of the fathers, and meets the Romanists on the catholic ground of Vincentius, yet these same men charge him with heresy. Froude denounces him as "an irreverent dissenter," and the British Critic heartily commends him for the justice of his sentence. Indeed, at present, as may be seen in this great organ of Puseyism, few of the names paraded in the catena above alluded to are considered to be perfectly sound in what is denominated "Church principles," or "catholic verities." How these learned divines

came to stumble upon fatal errors while following out, with all fidelity, the great catholic rule, which is so confidently represented as an unerring guide, is not for me to say. But the conclusion to which Solomon helps us, namely, that "what has been may be," is at least safe in the matter. If, indeed, our "English divines," in the application of this rule, which has so long been held and acted upon by Catholic doctors, have fallen into errors, we certainly may not be altogether safe in its adoption.

Romanists and high-Churchmen certainly presume much upon the ignorance of the world, when they urge the diversity of opinions among "the sects" as an evidence of the obscurity of Scripture, and the danger of private judgment, in religious matters. And especially when they propose, as the sovereign remedy for this enormous evil, the *catholic rule of interpretation*. They must presume that none but themselves know the history of their own controversies and schisms, and that all will take whatever they please to propose without examination. It is time, however, that they had learned their mistake, and begun to exercise something like a decent respect for the common sense of the world.

3. Finally. It is contended that the Scriptures are defective—that they do not teach us all that is essential to Christianity; and hence the necessity of traditional teaching upon several points.

Bellarmino says, "And truly Scripture, inasmuch as it is a rule, has, in consequence, this property, that whatever it contains is necessarily true and to be believed, and whatever is contrary to it is necessarily

false, and to be rejected; but inasmuch as it is not the entire, but a partial rule, the consequence is, that it is not a rule for all things, and, moreover, that there may be something relating to the faith which is not contained in it.”\*

Mr. Keble says, “It may be proved, to the satisfaction of any reasonable mind, that not a few fragments yet remain—very precious and sacred fragments of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the church. The paramount authority, for example, in church government; the threefold order established from the beginning; the virtue of the blessed eucharist as a commemorative sacrifice; infant baptism; and, above all, the catholic doctrine of the most holy Trinity, as contained in the Nicene Creed. All these, however, surely *confirmed* from Scripture, are yet ascertainable parts of the primitive unwritten system of which we yet enjoy the benefit. If any one ask, How we ascertain them? we answer, By the application of the well-known rule, ‘Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.’”† Again, “Without its aid, (that is, tradition,) humanly speaking, I do not see how we could now retain real inward communion with our Lord through his apostles, or the very outward face of God’s church and kingdom among us.”‡

The blindness of this learned Oxonian must be almost judicial, or he could scarcely help seeing “the catholic doctrine of the most holy Trinity” clearly taught in the Scriptures. But if Mr. Keble is unable to see in the Scriptures this “catholic doc-

\* De Verb. Dei, lib. iv, c. 12.

† Sermons, p. 32.

‡ Ibid, p. 41.

trine," the Nicene fathers saw it there, for it was from the *Scriptures*, and not from "the very precious and sacred fragments of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the church," which he says "yet remain," that they drew their materials for the construction of the famous "Nicene Creed." This is made perfectly clear by the learned Mr. Goode. Is it not strange that the Tractarians, in order to make room for the introduction of "Church principles," will concede to the Unitarians that the holy Trinity is not taught in the *Scriptures*? Any sacrifice must be made, any doctrine of the Bible must be considered doubtful, it would seem, in order to make it possible for them, in connection with Romanists, to find a *divine sanction* for such dogmas as they see proper to ingraft upon the Christian system.

Mr. Goode gives us, from the writings of the Romanists and the Tractators, a list of doctrines, usages, and facts, which are admitted not to be found in the *Scriptures*, but are alleged to be taught in the traditions of the Church. Here the *cloven foot* shows itself fully. No unprejudiced mind can avoid the conviction, upon looking over this list of patristical verities, but that this system of adding tradition to the *Scriptures*, as the rule of faith, is a device to give divine sanction to doctrines and practices not taught in the word of God.\*

\* Bellarmine says, "When the Church believes anything as a doctrine of faith, which is not in the *Scripture*, we must judge it to be an apostolical tradition. Otherwise the Church must have erred in taking that for a matter of faith which was not." Here the true reason for enlarging the rule of faith is honestly and explicitly stated. It is a pity our high-Churchmen were not as honest as the great Romish doctor.

But we must not longer withhold from the reader these necessary truths.

“Of points relating to the *practice* of the Church, then, we have the following:—

“1. Relating to points disused,—the non-literal acceptance of our Lord’s words respecting washing one another’s feet; the non-observance of the seventh day as a day of religious rest.

“2. Relating to ordinances and observances in use among us,—infant baptism; the sanctification of the first day of the week; the perpetual obligation of the eucharist; the identity of our mode of consecration in the eucharist with the apostolical; that consecration by apostolical authority is essential to the participation of the eucharist; the separation of the clergy from the people as a distinct order; the threefold order of the priesthood; the government of the Church by bishops; the apostolical succession.

“3. Of points purely doctrinal,—baptismal regeneration; the virtue of the eucharist as a commemorative sacrifice; that there is an intermediate state, in which the souls of the faithful are purified, and grow in grace; that they pray for us, and that our prayers benefit them.

“4. Of points concerning matters of fact,—the canon of Scripture; that Melchisedek’s feast is a type of the eucharist; that the book of Canticles represents the union between Christ and the Church; that Wisdom in the book of Proverbs represents the second person in the Trinity; the alleged perpetual virginity of the mother of our Lord.”\*

\* See Divine Rule of Faith, vol. ii, pp. 18, 19.

This, then, is the sum of the important appendage to the system of revealed truth furnished by patristical tradition. And to what does it amount? Why, simply to this: upon one of these points, the canon of Scripture, the testimony of ecclesiastical antiquity seems necessary: upon two or three others, such as infant baptism and the Christian sabbath, this source of information is important; but in relation to the great mass it is absolutely worthless. For, 1. Those things which are probably true are taught with sufficient clearness in the Scriptures. And, 2. As to those which are, at least to all good Protestants, entirely indifferent or utterly antiscritptural and heretical, which embrace by far the greatest part, no amount of patristical testimony, however explicit, could possibly be of the least authority. That the great mass of these *catholic truths* are in fact *Romish corruptions* I need not here attempt to prove. Nor is it in the least marvellous, that those who hold these dogmas to constitute the most vital part of the Christian system, should be extremely anxious to extend the divine rule of faith and practice beyond the written record.

It is not my purpose to investigate these principles, though it were easy to show that the mass of them are not only independent of the Scriptures, but diametrically contrary to them, and that they have no sanction in the purest antiquity. This Mr. Goode has done most effectually; to whom I would refer the reader who may wish satisfaction upon these points. A few general remarks upon the question which I am at present discussing, and the views taken of it by Catholics, may however be necessary.



It is rather strange, that both Roman and Anglican Catholics deny (this long list of novel principles and usages notwithstanding) the charge of making or originating articles of faith which are not authorized by Holy Scripture. Though here is a long list of religious truths which are not taught in Scripture, and which can only be sustained by calling in the aid of tradition, yet "the Scriptures," we are told, "contain all things simply necessary to salvation," and, as the *record* of faith, are *perfect*. But not insisting further upon this obvious inconsistency, let another fact be noticed. High-Churchmen condemn Romanists for adding to the creed novel articles. They allege that the creed of Pope Pius IV., so far as it goes beyond the Apostles' Creed, is just so much matter of belief over and above Scripture and the acknowledged faith of the primitive church. And this we are not at all disposed to deny. But do Churchmen add no new articles of faith to the creed of the primitive church in their list of "Church principles?" Let them show that these principles are based upon divine revelation; or let them show us that they are supported either by the Scriptures or by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and I doubt not but they will, in the process, help the Romish doctors to good and valid arguments in proof that all the articles settled by the Council of Trent are sustained by the great catholic rule of faith both acknowledge in common. The Tractarians are at present so pressed by this issue that they are fast going over to the Romish faith—they find it impossible to stop upon the slippery hill-side where they at first took their position. Taking up the doctrines of

“baptismal regeneration,” “the eucharistic sacrifice,” “the intermediate state, in which the souls of the faithful are purified,” “the threefold order of the priesthood,” “the inerrability of the Church,” “the apostolical succession,” &c., they naturally slide down to the worst features of Romanism. These principles necessarily run into the doctrines of *transubstantiation*, *purgatory*, *the infallibility of the Church*, *the merit of penance*, *works of supererogation*, and *the supremacy of the pope*.

And if there were no natural relationship between the high-Church and the Romish doctrines, still the one favours the other by erecting for them a foundation to rest upon. For if high-Churchmen have a right to remedy “the defects of Scripture,” have not Romanists the same right? If one may believe a doctrine upon the catholic principle of *Quod ubique, quod semper, et quod ab omnibus*, without any regard to the Scriptures, may not the other do the same? It will not do here to allege that the Anglican follows out this principle in establishing his “Church principles,” but the Romanist does not do this in settling his list of “catholic verities,” for the Romanist denies the allegation, and, of course, it cannot be assumed as though it were conceded. I have, for myself, no doubt but the Romanist is as faithful to the great catholic principle above alluded to, as the high-Churchman, and that he can as easily prove, by its use and application, the creed of Pope Pius the Fourth as the Tractarian can his list of Church principles.

It is a matter of no small interest to observe that

the Tractarians concede that the above-named doctrines and usages are not clearly taught in the Scriptures. For this they are condemned by more moderate Churchmen, who are not at all willing to concede that "the apostolical succession," and "the threefold order of the priesthood," with several kindred doctrines, are not clearly taught in the Scriptures. This point we may leave them to settle as best they can.

But all Churchmen do not assert the *defectiveness* of Scripture who assert its *obscurity*. This is only a difference in the number of the reasons for holding to the same theory. It is not very material whether they hold that Scripture is defective as to the doctrines and usages of Christianity, when they have first taken up the principle that its *sense* is deposited in the records of the primitive church. For if the *sense* of Scripture is to be found only in the traditions of the Church, to these traditions must we go for its doctrines and institutions, and, as there found, we must embrace them, be they few or many. We are then at liberty to embrace no doctrine not found in the traditions of the Church, and all that is there taught we must believe. Upon the principle that the sense of Scripture is only to be found in tradition, the Scripture is not only defective in doctrinal development, but, alone, it teaches absolutely nothing.

The Romish and high-Church doctrine is, that "tradition teaches, and Scripture proves," that *the sense of Scripture is to be sought in tradition*. If this be the true view, then the reason for the necessity of tradition which we now have under consideration should be stated in much stronger terms, and should be made

much more comprehensive than it is, as stated either by Churchmen or Romanists. For tradition, upon this hypothesis, would not be merely necessary to remedy the defectiveness of Scripture, in teaching a few Christian doctrines and usages, but to supply *the utter want of all teaching*. If the sense of the Scripture is in tradition; if Scripture only “proves,” while it is the unlimited office of tradition to *teach*, what can be more logical than the conclusion, that *without tradition the Scriptures have no sense—they teach nothing at all?* This is the result of the system of tradition, even as held by Archdeacon Manning. And how strange it is that after making it necessary for tradition to supply the *whole creed* of Christianity, he finds grave fault with the Romanists for attempting merely to *add several articles* to the creed, as they pretend, from the same source.

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### SECTION III.

The Scripture Evidence adduced in Favour of Tradition.

BEFORE entering upon the examination of particular texts of Scripture which are supposed to recognise tradition as a part of the rule of faith, some things must be premised. And let it first be borne in mind, that we do not deny that the oral discourses of the apostles were a rule of faith to those who heard them. Nor will it be questioned, that if there were sufficient evidence of the transmission of the *words* or the *sense* of these discourses through the medium of tradition, such words or sense would be a portion of

the rule of faith to us. And, hence, all such passages as merely make reference to the discourses of the apostles, as furnishing matter of faith and a rule of duty to those who heard them, are wholly irrelevant.

Archdeacon Manning labours hard, and quotes a multitude of passages to prove "that the oral preaching of the apostles is recognised as the rule of faith in Holy Scripture itself."\* All this, however, is labour thrown away. It is an effort to prove what none deny, and what has no sort of relation to the real question at issue. It would, of course, be a fruitless toil for me to proceed to an examination of the various passages presented. For though it might be shown that some of them are misconstrued, yet nothing of any importance, touching the real point at issue, would be gained by such a process.

There are, however, several passages which are supposed to imply that certain oral traditions were left by the apostles as a sacred deposite, which must be presumed to have been handed down through successive ages, and preserved in their purity.

The first of these which I shall notice is the following: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me," 2 Tim. i, 13. The Romish construction is given by the Rhemists as follows:— "*A form*—The apostles did set down a platform of faith, doctrine, and phrase of catholic speech and preaching, and that not so much by writing, as here we see, as by word of mouth: to which he referreth Timothy over and above his epistle unto him. And how precisely Christian doctors ought to keep the

\* See Appendix, pp. 40-48.

form of words anciently appropriated to the mysteries and matters of our religion.”\*

The high-Church exposition is the same, and is thus given by Dr. Hammond:—“When thou wert with me I gave thee a short summary of the chief things that were to be believed by all, in opposition to the growing heresies; and do thou take care not to depart from it in any part of it, but keep constant to it in the outward confession, and constant adherence to Christ, and in preaching and in teaching others.”†

The learned doctor, in his Paraphrase, supplies the idea which is wanted, in order to press the apostle into his service. But if he has brought out the true sense, it is not because it is in the language used by the inspired author.

This *ὑποτύπωσιν ὑγιαίνόντων λόγων* delineation of wholesome doctrines was the account which the apostle had given Timothy in his public and private instructions of the gospel system. But that it was a digest of this system, such as we have in the creed, independently of the Scriptures, is not capable of proof; much less is there any evidence that such a form was preserved, independent of the Scriptures, and handed down entire through successive ages.

Upon this passage Dr. Fulke, in opposition to the views of the Rhemists, has this note: “For substance

\* “The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; translated out of the Latin Vulgate, diligently compared with the original Greek, and first published by the English College of Rheims, Anno 1582.”

† See Paraphrase, *in loc.*

of doctrine, the apostles taught nothing by word of mouth, but that which is contained in their writings. 'The apostles,' saith Irenæus, 'preached the gospel, and after, by the will of God, delivered it to us in writing, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith.'\* Therefore the truth of all those terms which the Church useth to express the mysteries of our religion, or to meet with the fraud of heretics, is manifestly contained in the Scriptures, though the terms themselves be not expressed."† Here this learned champion of the Reformation takes the two great Protestant positions: *First*. That the matter of the apostles' discourses was incorporated in the Scriptures; and, *secondly*, that theological terms, which have been invented to meet heretics, such as those in the creeds, set forth the truth contained in Scripture. The *revelation* is in the Scripture, these "*terms*" are *human commentaries*.

Another proof adduced by our opponents is the following: "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," 2 Tim. i, 14. Τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην, may be literally rendered *the good deposite*: but what this deposite was is a question to be settled.

Dr. Hammond has settled the question in his way, as follows: "Hold thee constantly to the doctrine of the gospel, or summary of it agreed on by the apostles to be taught in all churches, and whenever thou art tempted to the contrary, remember that this stands by the direction of the Spirit of God that abides among

\* Lib. iii, cap. 4.

† See Confutation of the Rhemish Testament.

us, and make use of that Spirit to confirm thyself in it.”\*

Mr. Keble’s exposition is, “The same treasure of doctrine which we know to have been imbodyed in the confession or creed”—“a certain form, arrangement, selection, methodizing the whole, and distinguishing fundamentals; and also a certain system of church practice, both in government, discipline, and worship”—“comprising matter independent of, and distinct from, the truths which are directly Scriptural.”†

“To this exposition, however,” says Mr. Holden, “many are totally opposed, as may be seen in Poole’s Synopsis, and other commentators. Neither the context, the parallel passages, the cognate verb *παρατίθημι*, nor versions, establish it beyond a doubt; and if we appeal to primitive tradition, it here deserts us. Mr. Keble, indeed, attempts to prove that it is ratified by the general consent of primitive antiquity, and for that purpose has cited Jerome, Hippolytus, and Vincentius Lirinensis; but though some of the fathers adopted this view, others explain it differently, instances of which may be seen in Suicer.

“But supposing ‘the good deposite’ to denote the Christian doctrine, as being the best supported interpretation, and granting, moreover, that the Church was in possession of the substance of saving truth by the sole teaching of the apostles; yet the text only enjoins Timothy to guard and keep safe this good deposite of Christian doctrines; and is entirely silent whether the deposite was ‘independent of, and distinct from, the truths that are directly Scriptural;’ or how it was to

\* Paraphrase, *in loc.*

† Sermon on Tradition.



be guarded and kept safe. It is, therefore, without any ground in the apostle's language to assume that it refers to any doctrine distinct from Scripture, or *now* preserved by tradition."\*

By this "good deposite" the learned Cardinal Hugo understands "the office, or the proper spirit, or the talent of gifts, or the souls of those placed under him."†

And Grotius, "the evangelical doctrine;"‡ and others, "the ministry;" others, "the gospel;" others, "the deposite of sound doctrine committed to him by Paul;" and others, "the Christian religion."§

There are two passages in which the word "traditions" is used, which will require some attention in this connection. They are as follows: "And keep the ordinances [*παράδοσεις traditions*] as I delivered them to you," 1 Cor. xi, 2. Again, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye

\* Authority of Tradition, pp. 64, 65.

† Bonum depositum custodi—Glos. Officium tibi commissum, vel animam propriam, vel talentum donorum, vel animas subditorum, 1 Tim. vi, 10. O Timothee depositum custodi, quod potes.—*Hugonis Cardinalis Opera, Omnia in universum Vetus et Novum Testamentum, in loc.*

It is remarkable that this Romish dignitary and commentator says nothing about "a form of words comprising matter independent of, and distinct from, the truths which are directly Scriptural." So we see, as I find occasion to observe in another place, our high-Churchmen are often far in advance of the better sort of Romanists.

‡ Sic vocat doctrinam illam evangelicam ut, 1 Tim. vi, 20.—*Hugonis Grotii Annotationum in Novum Testamentum, in loc.*

§ See A. Clarke, Macknight, Pyle, Harwood, Hewlett, and Bloomfield, *in loc.*

have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle," 2 Thess. ii, 15.

Dr. Elliott says, "The word *tradition*, from the Latin *traditio*, means something delivered by *word of mouth* without written memorials; or it means anything delivered *orally* from age to age. But the Greek word *παράδοσις*, for which tradition is used as a translation, is of more extensive signification, and means *precept, instruction, ordinance*, delivered either orally or in writing. The compound root of this word is *παράδιδωμι*, to deliver from one to another, or deliver down, and is from *παρὰ*, *down*, and *δίδωμι*, *to give, extend, deliver from one to another.*"\*

It is obvious that the word *tradition* is used by the apostle for the Christian doctrine in general, which had been delivered both by *word* and *writing*, and, consequently, cannot prove the doctrine of tradition as here opposed—as something wholly independent of the Scriptures.

Archbishop Cranmer, who, as we have seen, is represented as the patron of the doctrine of the sacredness of unwritten traditions, gives us the following commentary upon 2 Thess. ii, 15:—

“‘Stand fast, brethren, and keep the ordinances that ye have learned, either by our preaching or by our epistle.’ Of these words they gather, that Paul taught diverse things to the Thessalonians by word of mouth, without writing, which, nevertheless, he com-

\* See *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, vol. i, p. 97. The reader is referred to this whole chapter for a learned discussion of the Romish views, and a complete refutation of the leading arguments by which they are attempted to be sustained.

manded them to do. *Answer.* I grant that Paul taught many things by word of mouth, which he wrote not in his Epistles to the Thessalonians. But how shall they prove that the same things be neither written by him in any other of his epistles, or in any other place of the whole Bible? For what argument is this? It is not written in this place or to those persons; *ergo*, it is not written in the Scripture at all. For the shortness of one epistle, or of one sermon, cannot sufficiently contain all things necessary for our salvation; and therefore be there many books of the Scripture, that what is so omitted, and not spoken of in one place, or else darkly spoken of, might be written plainly in another place. And for this cause St. Paul writeth to the Colossians, saying, ‘When this letter is read with you, cause it also to be read to the Laodiceans. And read you also the Epistle written from Laodicea.’ 2 Cor. x. And St. Paul writeth of himself, ‘Such as we are in our absence by letters, such are we indeed, being present.’ Moreover, Paul speaketh not here of doctrines of faith and charity, which ever continue without changing, adding, or minishing, but of certain traditions, observations, ceremonies, and outward rites, and bodily exercises, which, as he saith, is little worth to God-ward, but to be used for comeliness, decent order, and uniformity in the church, and to avoid schism: which ceremonies every good man is bound to keep, lest he trouble the common order, and so break the order of charity in offending his weak brethren; so long as they be approved, received, and used by the heads and common consent. But they, and every one of such cere-

monies as be neither sacraments, nor commandments of faith and charity, may be altered and changed, and other set in their places, or else utterly taken away by the authority of princes, and other, their rulers and subjects in the Church. Yea, also, the traditions made by the apostles in full council at Jerusalem, may be, and already are, taken away, as to abstain from things offered unto images, from blood and strangled, are nowhere kept. And this, of Paul, that a man should neither pray nor preach capped, or with his head covered, is also clean abolished.”\*

I have quoted this exposition at length, not because I suppose it to be an entirely correct view of the text, but to show that the father of the English Reformation wholly rejected both the doctrine of “unwritten verities” and the application made of the text under consideration by its defenders. He is, indeed, so far from considering the ecclesiastical traditions of the primitive church a part of the divine rule of faith and practice, that he considers some traditions which were established by the apostles themselves as now “clean abolished.”

In my copy of the Douay Bible† we have the following note upon this passage: “*Traditions*—See here that the unwritten *traditions* of the apostles are no less to be received than their epistles.” If the learned commentators mean that these “unwritten traditions” were “no less to be received than their epistles” *by those who heard them from the mouths of the apostles*, we do not object. But this is not the

\* Confutation of Unwritten Verities, chap. ix.

† Sixth edition, folio. Dublin, 1794.

sense of the note. It is making the apostle support the doctrine of "unwritten traditions" as *reported by the Church*, through succeeding ages; a doctrine which the words do not imply, and which they cannot be made to support without the grossest perversion.

The note in the Rhemish Testament is more full. I will here give the exposition of the learned Romish annotators, as there set forth, with the refutation by Dr. Fulke:—

"*Traditions*—Not only the things written and set down in the Holy Scriptures, but all other truths and points of religion uttered by word of mouth, and delivered or given by the apostles to their scholars by tradition, be so here approved, and elsewhere in the Scripture itself, that the heretics purposely, guilefully, and of ill-conscience, that belike reprehendeth them, refrain in their translations, from the ecclesiastical and most usual word, *tradition*, evermore when it is taken in good part, though it express most exactly the signification of the Greek word: but when it soundeth in their fond fantasy against the traditions of the Church, as indeed in true sense it never doth, there they use it most gladly. Here, therefore, and in the like places, that the reader might not so easily like of traditions unwritten, here commended by the apostle, they translate it, *instructions, constitutions, ordinances*,\* and what they can invent else, to hide the truth from the simple or unwary reader, whose translations have

\* Tyndall, in 1534, had translated the word *παραδοσεις*, "ordinances;" Cranmer, in 1539, the same; the Geneva translators, in 1557, "instructions." See English Hexapla, *in loc.*

none other end but to beguile such by art and connivance.”\*

To this Dr. Fulke answers, “Our translations are true, and according to the true sense of the word, and of the text. And seeing traditions are sometimes taken in evil part, as you confess, we do rightly avoid the ambiguity, when, as the signification of the word doth bear, we translate instructions, constitutions, ordinances. And it is as much advantage as you can justly require, to have instructions, constitutions, ordinances of the apostles, unwritten, but that under the voice, sound, and colour of the word, traditions, you would have all your fables and inventions of false doctrine received without any examination or trial, whether they came from the apostles or no.

“But now let us see whether this text doth allow any traditions, or ordinances of the apostles, that are nowhere expressed and contained in the Scriptures. Paul willeth them to hold the traditions which they had learned, whether it were by word or by his epistle: *ergo*, say you, ‘not only the things written and set down in the Holy Scriptures, but all other points of truth, and points of religion uttered by word of mouth, and delivered by the apostles to their scholars by tradition, be here approved. Indeed, as well that which the apostles did preach, as that which they did write, is here approved.’ But how doth it follow out of this text, that the apostle did preach or deliver anything by word of mouth, which is not written and set down in the Holy Scriptures? Un-

\* New Test., Rhem.

less this be your argument, all was not written in the Epistle to the Thessalonians: *ergo*, it is written and set down nowhere in the Holy Scriptures.”\*

Thus did the old English doctors refute the very arguments and constructions of Scripture, which are revived and propagated by a large portion of the English divines of the present day, and not a few of the divines of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country.

There are many other passages of Scripture which are employed in support of the doctrine of patristical tradition; but they are wholly irrelevant. I have noticed the most prominent passages, and the only ones which afford our opponents the semblance of support. The reader will be perfectly safe in concluding that, if the doctrine is not supported by the passages which I have considered, it is not by any other, for these indeed approach the nearest to proof of anything which is brought from the Bible, either by Romish or Anglican Catholics. Those who wish for a more extended investigation of this part of the argument, are referred to Dr. Fulke’s Confutation of the Rhemish Testament, and to Mr. Goode’s learned work upon the Divine Rule of Faith and Practice.

\* See “Confutation of the Rhemish Testament.” This work was completed in 1589, and is pronounced by Mr. James Herve, “A valuable piece of ancient controversy and criticism, full of sound divinity, mighty arguments, and important observations. Would the young student,” says he, “be taught to discover the very sinews of Popery, and be enabled to give an effectual blow to that complication of error, I know scarcely a treatise better calculated for that purpose.”—*Preface to the American edition.*

## SECTION IV.

Evidence in proof of Tradition from Fathers.

IT must not be inferred from my readiness to inquire into the opinions of the fathers upon the subject of tradition, that I recognise their competency to settle the divine rule of faith and practice. I acknowledge no authority competent to this but God himself, or those whom he has inspired. So that if those who are called *fathers* should explicitly tell us that oral tradition coming down, as says the Council of Trent, "from hand to hand," is to be received to the end of time as a part of this rule, we should not submit to their decision in the case, unless it could be sustained by God's word.

But after some examination, having become perfectly satisfied that our opponents derive no support from the most ancient of the fathers, whose writings have come down to our times, I shall devote a brief space to the consideration of the evidence which is adduced from this source.

And first, let it be noted that no proof of the existence of any such appendage to the rule of faith and practice as is contended for by our opponents is attempted to be produced from the apostolic fathers, nor from Justin Martyr. The earliest evidence they profess to find in the fathers is in Irenæus, who flourished in the latter part of the second century. Here, then, we see that, our adversaries being judges, nearly two centuries had elapsed before there is any direct appeal to tradition in settling controversies in religion:—



rather an unaccountable fact, if tradition had from the beginning been a necessary part of the rule of faith—and the divinely-authorized commentary upon the Scriptures. I shall quote verbatim from Archdeacon Manning all that he has seen proper to bring from the ancient fathers. There will then be no dispute as to the selection or the translation. The archdeacon proceeds:—

“The first passages we will take are from ST. IRENEUS, the earliest and greatest witness to Holy Scripture in the second century, who testifies to us, that what the apostles first preached ‘they afterward, by the will of God, delivered to us in writing, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith.’\* ”

“ ‘When they [that is, heretics] are convicted from the Scriptures, 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 afterward 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, de-

\* See Sermon, p. 20, and note.

praving 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*.\*

“ ‘ 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 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,

\* St. Iren., lib. iii, c. ii, 1, 2

believing in one God the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things which are in them, through Jesus Christ the Son of God ; who, by reason of his exceeding love toward 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 blasphemies (of the heretics,) and never, as yet, had there been among them any sect, nor had their [that is, the heretical] doctrine been broached.\*

“ ‘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.’ †

\* St. Iren., lib. iii, c. iv, 1, 2. † Ibid., c. v, 1.

“ ‘The true knowledge (*γνῶσις* 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.’ ”\*

In this passage the following things are noticeable: 1. That Irenæus alleges the Scriptures to be “the foundation and pillar of our faith.” 2. That they were the grand weapon used against heretics. 3. That the heretics first had recourse to tradition independent of Scripture. Here I would call attention to the words “their” and “of their,” inserted in brackets by the archdeacon. These explanatory words give a wrong sense to the father, for he charges the heretics with appealing to tradition in general, and not to “*their* tradition.” 4. The father then appeals to tradition, just as we do, as an *argumentum ad hominem*, it being the ground his opponents had chosen, and so meets them with their own weapons. 5. But the articles in question between Irenæus and the heretics were few and simple, and those about which the traditions of the church would be likely to have suffered at that period but little or no deterioration. And 6. Admitting that there were authentic oral traditions in the church in the days of this father, this by no means proves that

\* St. Iren., lib. iv, c. xxxiii, 8. Appendix, pp. 51-54.

they are still in the church in a state of perfection. Much less does the fact that the few fundamental doctrines which this father mentions had been handed down to the church of his time, not only in the Scriptures, but through the medium of oral tradition, prove that the complicated system of "catholic verities"—or "church principles"—which is presented for our adoption, could have come down to us uncorrupted from the apostles. It would be a strange argument that because several simple principles, which are also explicitly set forth in the Scriptures, could come down pure through oral tradition two centuries, therefore, a multitude of abstruse doctrines not distinctly taught in the Scriptures has passed uncorrupted "from hand to hand" through oral tradition for a period of near two thousand years. And this is the sum of the argument from Irenæus, if you make the very most of it.

The next witness presented by the archdeacon is TERTULLIAN. I will now present all that our author has seen proper to quote from this father, with his commentaries upon the same.

TERTULLIAN says, "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 prescription.”\*

Upon this passage our author remarks, “By ‘prescription’ Tertullian means that form of traditionary doctrine which had so obtained in the church from the beginning, that it had preoccupied the ground to the exclusion of all novelties.”†

I question whether the father, by “tradition” or “prescription” means a “form of traditionary doctrine” *independent* of the *Scriptures*. The fathers, as I shall have occasion to notice hereafter, used the word “tradition” sometimes with reference to the *Scriptures*,

\* Tertull. de Præscript. Hær. xx, xxi.

† Appendix, pp. 55, 56.

and very frequently for the whole system of Christian doctrine as taught in the Scriptures. And when the word is used in contrast with the Scriptures for something universally received in the church, it cannot be proved that by any of the ancient fathers it was used for "an unwritten revelation," of equal divine authority with the Scriptures themselves. Tertullian made the Scriptures "the documents of the doctrine," that is, the doctrine of religion. "And in a word, throughout all his treatises, with few exceptions, he refers to the Scriptures alone for the proof of the doctrines of religion, and that, not as Mr. Newman does, who would have us suppose that it would be no proof unless tradition had delivered the doctrine, that is, in other words, that it is no proof at all, but as a real proof speaking to the common sense of every man. Moreover, that Scripture contains all the points of faith belonging to the Christian religion, we have these testimonies:—'I adore,' he says, '*the fulness of Scripture*, which manifests to me both the Creator and his works. But in the Gospel I find discourse very abundantly serving both as the minister and witness of the Creator. But that all things were made by some subjacent matter I have nowhere as yet *read*. Let the shop of Hermogenes show that it is *written*. If it is *not written*, let him fear that wo that is destined for those who add to or take from Scripture.'"\*

The archdeacon proceeds with further quotations:—  
"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

\* Goode's Divine Rule, vol. ii, p. 220.

to the good grain of wheat sown by the Lord, and brings in afterward 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 *afterward* is false and foreign."\*

All right enough. The verities of religion which have "priority" are set down in the Scriptures. The corruptions both of primitive and of modern times have been "brought in afterward." And the theory of an unwritten revelation, which was even prior to the written, is a device to procure for them the sanction of this rule.

He proceeds:—"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 them.'† 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,

\* Tertull. de Præscript. Hær. xxxi. † Ibid., xxxii.



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 very men whose it was to bestow; I am the heir of the apostles; as they provided in their will, as they intrusted 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.'"\*

From this it appears that the father pleads the want of *unity* in their doctrinal views among the heretics: a test which our opponents could scarcely stand. For with all the superior advantages of tradition, which, according to them, contains the true sense of Scripture, there is as great a diversity of opinion among them as there could have been among the ancient heretics. So that if tradition was ever the means of preserving among the orthodox unity of doctrinal views, it has long since failed to be so, as no one can have the face to deny.

But the father talks rhetorically when he claims for the orthodox the sole proprietorship of the Scriptures. Had the heretics used the Scriptures, and not adulterated them, they would have infringed upon no man's rights. For the Scriptures are not given exclusively

\* Tertull. de Præscript. Hær. xxxvii. Appendix, pp. 56, 57.

to the priesthood, nor to the church, but to the whole world. The archdeacon proceeds:—

“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 coexistence 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, (that is, in doctrine,) that have the Scriptures been from their very beginning.’”\*

Now, who, upon reading the language that our author quotes from the father, would ever dream that he meant to say that “the faithful reception of apostolical tradition was a necessary condition to appealing for proof to the apostolic Scriptures?” If he can find nothing more pertinent than this in his author, he will scarcely prevent any from appealing directly to the Scriptures irrespective of his “necessary condition,” nor, until then, can we at all concede that his authority gives him the least support.

Archbishop Cranmer meets the Romanists, who claim Tertullian as a patron of “unwritten verities,” in this straightforward manner:—“The same Tertullian also, as it is afore rehearsed, saith, that there is nothing else that ought to be believed after Christ’s gospel once published. Yea, all the old authors, a thousand years after Christ, and likewise almost all

\* Tertull. de Præscript. Hær. xxxviii. Appendix, p. 57.

the new, affirm the same, and would not have us credit their sayings without the proof of God's word. Why should we, then, believe Tertullian against so plain Scriptures, against the old fathers of the church, and also contrary to his own sayings? Yet will I here gently interpret him, so as he may both agree with the Scriptures, with the old authors, and also with himself."\*

The next authority presented by our author is ORIGEN. He proceeds:—"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.'"<sup>†</sup>

This is said in opposition to Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, and others, and clearly enough asserts that the doctrines which these heretics rejected were held in the church, and had been "handed down by succession."

"But," says Mr. Goode, "let us consider to what points this creed, for which the consent of the apostolical churches is challenged by Origen, extends. Hardly to one of the points in controversy in the pre-

\* Confutation of Unwritten Verities, chap. x. For a further and more complete discussion of the views of Tertullian upon the subject of Scripture and tradition, see Goode's *Divine Rule*, pp. 219-225.

† Appendix, p. 57.

sent day. How, then, can the authority of Origen be now pleaded for a reference to 'tradition' in proof of points for which he does not challenge the evidence of tradition in his own day? He professes to give in the creed the *whole* of that for which the consent of the apostolical churches could be claimed. We cannot, then, quote him as sanctioning an appeal to 'tradition' on other points. Moreover, he gives no intimation that these points are not all fully and clearly delivered in Scripture, but, on the contrary, his language in other places shows that he was altogether opposed to any such notion."

The learned author concludes his remarks upon the testimony of Origen by observing, that this great light in the primitive church "makes this tradition responsible for some of his own errors:" constituting "a clear instance how easy it is for men to make great mistakes, and embrace serious errors, and at the same time claim 'church tradition' in their favour."\*

The next witness is EUSEBIUS of Cesarea. He says, "Which things being shortly propounded to the Galatians, out of their own epistle, 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.*"†

In this passage it is simply asserted that the doc-

\* See Divine Rule, vol. ii, pp. 237, 238.

† Eusebius contra Marcellum Ancyr., lib. i, c. 1. Appendix, pp. 57, 58.

trine of "mystical regeneration" by "faith," asserted by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, was preserved in "the catholic church," and, with other doctrines contained in Scripture, "sealed by tradition which is not written." And what support does this give our author's views of tradition? It is encouraging, indeed, to learn that in the days of Eusebius this blessed doctrine was still sustained by unwritten tradition. But how is this very doctrine regarded by those who set tradition upon a level with Scripture itself? The Romanists have for centuries rejected it altogether, putting in its place *baptismal regeneration, penance, works of supererogation, &c.*, and the Tractarians now fall in with them. And both unite in an effort to prove that the "sacraments of grace" are sustained by the traditions of the church. Now, if the catholic view of "mystical regeneration" is sustained by tradition, as Romanists and Churchmen strenuously maintain, the single fact that the opposite doctrine was once sustained by that "informant" is enough to show the instability of this means of information; for nothing is more evident than that the tradition of "the catholic church of God" in the days of Eusebius was essentially different from what it is now maintained to have become, before the documents now relied upon as informants were perfected. Would to God that we could bring back our opponents to the *old tradition!* That, it seems, agreed with the Scriptures, but their traditions are wholly averse to them.

Our author next refers to ATHANASIUS. This ancient author 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." Again: "Nevertheless, in addition to these things, (that is, 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." 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."\*

That Athanasius asserts that the "faith" which he maintained came from "the apostles and the traditions of the fathers" is sufficiently plain. And this reference to tradition, if the word means anything more than the apostolical testimony found in the Scriptures, was doubtless occasioned by the fact that the Arians, against whom he was writing, plead tradition for their

\* Ep. ad Adelph. 6, tom. ii, p. 914. Ad Serapionem, 28, tom. ii, p. 676. Ibid. 33. Appendix, p. 58.

heresy. But where is the evidence that this father considered the testimony of the fathers an authoritative exposition of the Scriptures, or that the "faith" was founded upon the "oral teaching of the apostles," independent of the Scriptures? Indeed, we need go no further than the passage quoted by the archdeacon to be convinced that no such theory was embraced by Athanasius. None of the fathers base their arguments more explicitly upon Scripture than he does. Though he uses the word *tradition* frequently, he uses it for the apostolical writings, and by fathers often means the apostles themselves. That he held the sufficiency of Scripture independent of oral tradition, and that it is by Scripture that we receive the faith, is abundantly evident from his writings. In proof of this I give the following passage:—

"As you desire to hear something on this subject, we will, as far as we are able, give a brief exposition of the Christian faith; which, indeed, you might have *found from the divine oracles*; but, nevertheless, politely hear also from others. *For, indeed, the holy and inspired Scriptures are sufficient of themselves for the delivery of the truth.*"\*

That Athanasius does not mean by "*tradition*" the "oral teachings of the apostles," or "the creeds," but that he applies this term to the Scriptures, will be seen from the following passage:—

"I have written these things, beloved; although, indeed, there was no need to write anything more, for *the evangelical tradition is sufficient of itself*; but because you inquire respecting our faith, and on account

\* In Orat. contra Gent.

of those who love to make sport with the faith by their inventions, and do not consider that he who speaks from his own private fancy speaks a lie. For it is not possible for the wit of man to declare fully the beauty or glory of the body of Christ. But it is possible for us both to confess the things that have been done, *according as they are recorded in Scripture*, and to worship the true God.\* Here there is no room to doubt but Athanasius contends for the *sufficiency of Scripture alone*, and by "*evangelical tradition*" he means the sacred writings of the New Testament.

The archdeacon next gives us ST. CHRYSOSTOM as authority. In his commentary upon 2 Thess. ii, 15, he 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 belief."†

The inference the father draws here, "that *we* esteem the tradition of the church," &c., would be legitimate in relation to tradition as evidently coming from the mouths of the apostles, as that which the Thessalonians had received by their "record," but where is there any such tradition? It is nowhere to be found. It must be conceded that Chrysostom supposes the existence of "tradition" of some kind in "the church" which was "worthy of belief." Archbishop Cranmer, Bishop Morton, and Mr. Goode, in order to reconcile this passage with others to be found in the writings of this father, in which he declares the Scriptures

\* In contra Apoll., lib. i, § ult. i, 939, 940.

† Appendix, p. 59.



“the ground and rule of all the truths of religion,” &c., consider him in the passage in question as referring to “traditions” in relation to “rites and ceremonies, which be not necessary for our salvation, but be ordained for decent order and conformity in the church,” but which are “alterable.” And Mr. Goode admits that not only Chrysostom, but some other fathers, “held that many of the rites and customs of the church, not mentioned in the Scripture, might be considered as having been derived from apostolical ordinance and sanction.”\*

But that they believed this without good and sufficient reasons is obvious enough upon a mere glance at a list of these traditions, some of which have gone out of use even among Romanists.†

Next we have the testimony of GREGORY NAZIANZEN. He says, “And God grant that we may confess unto our last breath, in all boldness of speech, the good deposite 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 anything else, and in which may we together die at the last.”‡

There is no reason for supposing that the father does not refer to “the faith” as presented in the Holy Scriptures. There is nothing here said about “oral tradition.” But says Archdeacon Manning, “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,

\* Divine Rule, vol. ii, p. 332.

† See pages 198, 199.

‡ Orat. vi, tom. i, 141.

are habitually called by the common term, apostolical traditions.”\*

Now this statement, I am persuaded, is utterly without foundation. By “the right interpretation of Scripture,” our author means “oral tradition,”—“the creeds and universal consent of Christians” of primitive times. And it is not true of even his own witnesses, that they “combined with Scripture itself” these traditionary interpretations, and called them “by one common term, apostolical traditions.” No evidence yet produced makes good this position. But our author proceeds to further authorities touching this point. Let us see to what they amount.

He says: “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 Mary.’”†

But what evidence is there here that the father, by “the tradition of the apostles,” did not refer merely to the writings of the apostles? He, however, has another witness to this point.

He proceeds: “And 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

\* Appendix, p. 59.

† Hippol. contra Noetum. Op. 243. Appendix, p. 59.

of the Lord, and to the tradition of the Gospel, and of the apostles, 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.\* St. Cyprian plainly means the whole gospel of Christ attested by the whole apostolical tradition, both written and unwritten.”†

These fragments from St. Cyprian are torn from their connections, and wrested from their evident meaning. Let any one read the unbroken antitraditionary argument of the father, as I give it in another place,‡ and he will then see what confidence is to be placed in the patristic proofs of the Archdeacon. Instead of meaning by *tradition* “both written and unwritten” tradition, the father evidently *contrasts* the two, and rejects that which is “unwritten,” as wholly worthless. This sense is absolutely essential to the validity of his argument against Stephen.

Our author’s next authority is ST. BASIL. His words are, “Wherefore, it behooves 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

\* Ep. 74 ad Pomp. † App., pp. 59, 60. ‡ Sec pp. 351-356.

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.”\*

A good exhortation against novel expositions of Scripture. But what is said about “oral traditions?” Indeed, nothing at all. And that Basil is not a witness for tradition in the sense held by our opponents is evident from the fact that Romish writers have foisted a passage into his work on the Holy Spirit exactly to their liking. This passage is as follows:—“Of the doctrine and instructions preserved in the Church, some we have from the teaching of Scripture, and others we have received delivered down to us secretly from the traditions of the apostles; both of which have the like force toward piety; and no one will contradict these things, no one at least who has any experience of the laws of the Church; for if we should attempt to repudiate the unwritten *customs* as not having any great weight, we should unwittingly injure the gospel in the very principal points, or, rather, reduce the gospel to a mere name.”†

This passage is noticed by Cranmer and Jewel with decided disapprobation. But Erasmus, Bishop Taylor and Bishop Patrick, set it down as spurious. Of this, doubtless, the archdeacon was aware, and therefore did not bring it forward. The use I wish to make of it is, to show that the Romanists thought it necessary to put words into the mouth of this father more to the purpose than any which he had voluntarily

\* Basil. adver. Eunom., lib. ii, c. 8. Appendix, p. 60.

† De Spir. S., c. 27.

uttered. And by doing this they have indeed made him contradict himself. It is marvellous that the Romish editors, after palming the above sentiments upon the great Basil, left in his works such sentiments as these:—"It is a manifest infidelity and arrogance, either to reject what is written, or to add anything that is not written." The wonder is, that while they had compelled this father to utter the truth, they did not expurgate his errors.

Our author's last witness is VINCENT of Lirin. "I shall add," says he, "only one more writer, who may fittingly close the list, as he is the great catholic witness of the rule of which we speak." His "catholic witness" proceeds:—

"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 their feasting, or in the streets, there is hardly anything 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 ancient 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."\*

Here we find an author of the *fifth century* who goes explicitly for "catholic consent" as the rule of faith. But it can scarcely escape the most cursory reader that he seems to be thrown upon this ground by the use the heretics made of Scripture. Now, it is not improbable but those who were called heretics in these days held some truths that the catholics had lost sight

\* Commonit., sec. xxv-xxvii. Appendix, pp. 60, 61.

of, and that the latter would find no little difficulty in meeting their opponents upon Scripture ground. They then, instead of a fair investigation upon the principles of legitimate interpretation, throw themselves into the trackless wilderness of "catholic consent."

But further. As Bishop Stillingfleet observes, "Vincentius speaks of such a universal tradition, which depends wholly upon antiquity, universality, and consent; and never so much as mentions, much less pretends to, anything of infallibility."... "For if Vincentius had even in the least thought of any such thing, so great and zealous an opposer of heresies could not have left out that which had been more to his purpose than all that he had said."\*

Moreover, this same Vincent says, "The canon of Scripture is perfect, and most abundantly of itself sufficient for all things."† This sentiment is exactly antagonistic to the theory we here oppose, and, it must be admitted, is scarcely consistent with the fundamental principles of his treatise. Dr. Reynolds has very wisely said, "I like his [Vincent's] judgment in the general point touching *the sufficiency and perfectness of Scripture*, which I know you like not, though you make greater semblance of liking him than I. If in the particulars I dislike somewhat, let the blame be laid upon the blameworthy; not me, who *stand to that which he hath spoken well*, but *him who falleth from it*. For, laying his foundation as it were on a rock, he buildeth up his house beside it on the sand."‡

\* Nat. Ground of Prat. Rel., part i, c. 9.

† Commonit., sec. ii.

‡ De Doctr. Christ, ch. ii.

There are several other admissions and qualifications found scattered through the Commonitory of Vincent which clog and burden his great rule so effectually as to render him rather a poor witness for our opponents, after all. He says, "All true catholics may know it to be their duty to receive their teachers as the Church receives them, and not to desert the faith of the Church upon the authority of their teachers."\* Now, what would be the practical operation of this principle? Should the regular clergy teach heresy, here is authority for the exercise of private judgment.

Again he says, "'Tis necessary to observe likewise, that this method is not to be made use of at all times, and against all sorts of heresy, but against such only as are in their infancy; when they first begin to show their head, before the authors of them have falsified the ancient creeds, the rules of faith; before they can have found time to spread their poison, and adulterate the writings of the ancients."† So, according to Vincent, the Romish and Tractarian heresies being ancient, and their authors having had "time" "to adulterate the writings of the ancients," and, indeed, having well used this "time," cannot be tried by his rule.

Again, we are told by our ancient catholic author, that "the fathers we consult upon this occasion are to be only such holy and wise doctors as have lived and persevered to the last in the faith and communion of the catholic church, such as either died in the Lord, or had the happiness of being martyred for him."‡ Now, who can tell which of the fathers is to be consulted, on this principle? Unless they remained in the

\* Chap. xxiii.

† Chap. xxxiii.

‡ Ibid.



catholic church, and died in the Lord, or were martyrs, they are of no authority.

The intelligent reader is now fully qualified to make up a safe opinion as to the support which the fathers give the doctrine of tradition. He may rely upon the fact, that if there had been anything to the purpose in the writings of the fathers, the learned archdeacon would have brought it forward. And if what he has adduced is wholly irrelevant, it is quite certain the writers he has laid under contribution give his theory no countenance.

Such, then, are the arguments by which the adherents of patristical tradition attempt to tack it upon the Holy Scriptures, in order to supply their deficiency, as a rule of faith and practice. How much better is the rule for this mending? How much gratitude do we owe our patristical tinkers for all their labour in putting the miserable patch of tradition upon the perfect rule which God has given us? Is there any need of it? Is not the whole a work of supererogation? Is there any good reason for admitting the claim set up in favour of tradition? I have presented the leading and the strongest considerations which are alleged in favour of this claim. I know not of another that is worth a moment's attention. And if these reasons are utterly powerless, on what ground can our catholics require us to embrace their dogmas? On none, it may be fairly presumed, unless it is that of a *divine right to dictate* to us our faith, and when they will finally sustain this we will give them *implicit obedience*; until which, we must, however reluctantly, conclude them in error, and refuse our assent to their theory.

## CHAPTER III.

CONSIDERATIONS IN OPPOSITION TO THE CLAIMS OF  
TRADITION AS A DIVINE INFORMANT.

## SECTION I.

The Improbabilities which oppose the System of Tradition.

THERE is a violent improbability in opposition to the claims which are set up for tradition as the infallible standard of Christian doctrine. The common sense of men, in all ages of the world, has uniformly decided that oral tradition is an uncertain mode of transmitting facts and principles from age to age. The adoption of hieroglyphics, commemorative rites, and written records, for the purpose of the secure and faithful transmission of historical facts, philosophical principles, and religious rites to succeeding ages, is a clear and conclusive proof of this position. If oral tradition is a safe mode of conveying down the stream of time the facts of all past history, and the great religious principles upon which the well-being of mankind must ever depend, why have the ingenuity of men and the wisdom of God been so deeply concerned in devising another? That oral tradition would naturally be the earliest method of carrying down from father to son the events and customs of the past, is natural to suppose. And if there had been no danger of failure, what could have induced men to look for some other method?

The doctrines and institutions of religion were at the first, in the infancy of the world, few and simple, the family of man small, and human life protracted to several hundred years. Under such a state of things, especially considering that then God held direct oral intercourse with the patriarchs, oral tradition would be more certain, and permanent records less necessary.\* We have, accordingly, no evidence of written revelations until the days of Moses, when we find the method of recording the doctrines and institutions of religion, and such facts in God's providential dealings as go to illustrate them, adopted by the authority of God himself. But if oral tradition be, as some contend, the only safe mode of transmission, how came infinite wisdom to leave the better and take up the worse? or, to suit the position of those who take more moderate ground, whence the necessity of having recourse to a new system to make more firm and secure that which was already sufficiently guarded against mutations and errors?

The history of religious traditions itself furnishes a striking illustration of the truth and weight of the consideration I here urge. The later Jews had their oral traditions. But though they held that God, in his wisdom, had seen proper, in their first communication, to deliver them orally, yet as they wished to have them retained and transmitted through succeeding ages uncorrupted, the rabbins made them all matters of *record*. And if we are to credit the *Chris-*

\* Notwithstanding all these advantages, the simple doctrine of the one living and true God became corrupted, and was lost to most of the world during the patriarchal ages.

*tian* rabbins, God, in his wisdom, saw proper to have *the sense of Scripture* transmitted for several centuries through the medium of oral tradition. But the holy fathers, through some distrust of this method of preserving the orthodoxy of the catholic church, finally committed it to *writing*. Now what had occurred, in these cases, to change the character of the oral method of conveyance? If that was the best method at first, why is it not the best now? No such changes as have been noticed in the early history of the world can here be plead. Circumstances remained very much the same; and yet, it would seem, though tradition had been at the first divinely sanctioned, and had thus far operated to a charm—infallibly kept the sense of God's word uncontaminated—at once it becomes wholly insufficient for the purpose, and all its great truths must be *recorded!* Now, how can this be reconciled, upon the hypothesis I here oppose, with reason or common sense, except upon the supposition that those who had received "the depositum" in all its integrity, through the medium of tradition, and, of course, had the highest confidence in the safety of this mode of conveyance, for some mysterious cause became unwilling to trust to it for the future? Though they fully believed that God had faithfully kept his promise to the church that "the gates of hell should not prevail against" her, through this chosen and sanctified agency—oral tradition—yet they feared to leave it in the same hands in which they found it. They must make *well enough* a little *better*, and *write out the traditions!* Now, what is all this but the clearest evidence that there was in the

minds of the holy fathers a distrust of the certainty of oral traditions ?

But we need not go so far for illustrations of the truth and force of the consideration here urged. Why did not the Church of England leave her Thirty-nine Articles and her hundred and forty-one canons to the *safe* and *certain* method of oral transmission "from hand to hand," instead of making them matters of record? If oral tradition is a safe and certain method of conveying the sense of Scripture—the doctrines and discipline of the Church—why do not Churchmen and Romanists adopt it? Why have we *in writing* the decrees of the Council of Trent, and the creed of Pope Pius the Fourth, and the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England?

And who, in such cases, relies with any confidence upon oral testimony transmitted "from hand to hand?" Need I urge the fact which everybody has observed, and well understands, that the same facts are very differently reported by different individuals, equally honest in their intentions; and that oral testimony is depreciated constantly in proportion to the number of hands through which it passes? Let twelve individuals hear a discourse upon some new doctrine, and make a separate report of the matter of the discourse: is it probable that these reports would harmonize? But let these reports be handed down to posterity orally, through several succeeding generations, and collected together, and who would expect them to agree, or would dream it possible to make out a consistent sense? And should there be no material discrepancies between the different reports, yet who, in

his senses, would rely with the same confidence upon the oral tradition for a correct representation of the doctrines of the said discourse that he would have in a written copy, which should have been deposited by the author in some place of safety, and should bear every mark of genuineness? Who knows not how soon oral traditions dwindle into legendary tales and romantic visions? And yet, forsooth, it is to be regarded as a most safe and secure method of conveying down, from generation to generation, the vital truths of religion—the whole system of Christian ethics and ecclesiastical discipline!

But before I leave this point I would call special attention to the matter which is supposed to be transmitted by oral tradition. It is not a simple fact, or a few simple facts which would be likely to be universally received, and about which there would be little or no chance for a diversity of opinion; but a complicated system of doctrines, morals, and rites or ceremonies; the very last things which would be likely not to suffer deterioration in transmission. The *à priori* objection with which we are met here, that men will not corrupt, and will be careful faithfully to transmit, what they consider sacred, is answered by ten thousand facts which everywhere stare us in the face. Let the objector but look for a moment at the history of the heresies which have cursed the church from its very beginning, or at the present state of the churches professing the Christian name, and then see with what face he can maintain his objection. No fact is more obvious than that men will mutilate and corrupt the principles and institutions of religion. And

it is about equally obvious, that if the Christian system had been left entirely to oral tradition for its safe transmission, without a perpetual miracle, little, if any, of it would have remained to enlighten and bless the present generation.

The doctrine of the *Church's infallibility* has been, it would seem, invented to remedy the difficulty. For no man can, in his senses, feel that confidence in oral tradition, for which Catholics contend, without resorting to perpetual miracle. Hence the Romanists and Tractarians are at least consistent with themselves when they refer the security of oral tradition to the infallibility of the Church, and the Church's infallibility to the immediate superintendence and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But upon no other principle can anything above human fallibility be attached to any traditions in the Church not recorded in Holy Scripture.

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## SECTION II.

The Analogy between the Doctrine of Tradition as held by Catholics and that held by the Jews, and condemned by Christ.

THAT the traditions of the Jews were to them a constant and fruitful occasion of stumbling, is so explicitly declared in the word of God, that no Christian will question it. Our Lord declares, that "by their traditions, they transgressed the commandments of God," Matt. xv, 3; "They made the word of God of none effect," ver. 6; and he says, "But in vain do

they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men," ver. 9. And St. Peter declares the Jewish converts "redeemed" from their "vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers," 1 Pet. i, 18.

That Jewish traditions are here explicitly condemned as mischievous, and even destructive, no one will deny. It only then remains to show, by a careful analysis and comparison of the Jewish and Catholic systems of tradition, their identity in principle and practical influence, to make the censures here so solemnly pronounced against the former apply with equal force to the latter.

*First*, then, these two systems are similar in their pretended origin: both Jews and Catholics asserting that the oral traditions which they maintain were communicated by God.

The learned Basnage says, "The Jews are persuaded that God gave two sorts of laws on Mount *Sinai*: one, that *Moses* wrote down; another, which he trusted to his memory, which was transmitted to posterity by the ministry of doctors and prophets."\*

Christian traditionists maintain that the apostolical traditions were communicated orally by the apostles themselves. Baronius says that the apostles, "having thus imparted the creed, and also traditions without Scripture to the church, they parted among themselves what country every one of them should go unto."†

\* See History of the Jews from Jesus Christ to the Present Time. Fol., London, 1708, p. 163.

† Lightfoot's Commentary on Acts.



*Secondly.* The oral law was regarded as the commentary upon the written law—imbodying its sense and particular application.

Prideaux says of the Jewish traditions, “They tell us, that at the same time when God gave unto Moses the law on Mount Sinai, he gave unto him also the *interpretation* of it, commanding him to commit the former to writing, but to deliver the other only by word of mouth, to be preserved in the memories of men, and to be transmitted down by them, from generation to generation, by tradition only; and from hence the former is called the written, and the other the oral, law.”\*

And the Catholic divines of Douay say, “First, then, we are only assured by traditions which are the books of Scripture, &c.; secondly, for the *true understanding* of Scripture we are referred to the Church. Thirdly. For things not expressed particularly in Holy Scripture, the Scripture and fathers do commit us to tradition.”† “Catholic tradition *teaches* revealed truth—the true creed is the catholic interpretation of Scripture.”‡ And again, “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.”§

*Thirdly.* These traditions are represented as having been transmitted through a regular succession of divinely-appointed ministers.

Basnage says of the Jewish succession, “It is not

\* Connections, part i, book v.

† Anot. in Gen. v, 1. Synopsis Papismi, p. 57.

‡ Tracts for the Times, No. 87.

§ Archdeacon Manning's Rule of Faith, Ap., p. 3.

difficult to derive down these traditions and oral law from mouth to mouth, while there were priests and prophets, and sacred writers. They can choose in the sacred history the saints that best please them, and produce them to the people as so many conduits through which the oral law has run. But the confusion is greater from *Esdras* to *Jude the saint*, and therefore the succession varies with the most judicious writers, and is found frequently interrupted.”\*

Dr. Lightfoot, speaking of the Pharisees, says, “Hence did a certain generation among them take occasion and opportunity to vent and broach traditions, and glosses upon the law, pretending them to have descended from Moses himself, and to have been handed over to them *from hand to hand*: and as the prophets, while their race continued, expounded Moses, and instructed the people in the knowledge of the law, by the Spirit of God—so these men (now the prophets were gone) took on them to explain Moses, and the law also—and by a way which they pretended to be of equal authority with the words of the prophets: ‘For that (say they) is God’s own gloss upon his own law; and this he taught Moses, while he was with him in the mount; and this Moses taught Joshua, and Joshua the elders; and Eli received it from the elders, and from Phineas, and Samuel from Eli, and David from Samuel,’” &c.†

\* Hist. Jews, p. 163.

† Harmony of the Gospels. For a full list of the successors who were made the depositories of the oral law, see Lightfoot’s Works, vol. iv, p. 261; v, p. 205; and Prideaux’s Connections, part i, book v.

How perfectly similar is the above language to that of the Council of Trent upon the subject of tradition : “ They have come down to us, either received by the apostles from the lips of Christ himself, or transmitted by the hands of the same apostles, under the direction of the Holy Spirit : that these traditions relate both to faith and morals, *have been preserved in the Catholic Church by continual succession*, are to be received with equal piety and veneration with Scripture, and whosoever shall knowingly and deliberately despise these traditions is accursed.”\*

“ The bishops of Christ’s Church,” says the British Critic, “ have formed, as it were, a series of light hearers, who have delivered down the sacred torch from hand to hand, generation after generation.” The fact of the transmission of the true sense of Scripture through an apostolic succession in the form of *oral tradition* is maintained by all high-Churchmen, as well as Romanists. As this will not be questioned, further authorities need not be adduced.

*Fourthly.* The traditions which had accumulated to an indefinite extent came finally to be written by the doctors.

Prideaux says, “ After the death of Simon the Just, there arose a sort of men, whom they call Tannaim, or the Mishnical doctors, that made it their business to study, and descant upon those traditions which had been received and allowed by Ezra, and the men of the great synagogue, and to draw inferences and consequences from them, all which they ingrafted into the body of these ancient traditions, as if they had been

\* See Elliott on Romanism, vol. i, p. 95.

as authentic as the other ; which example being followed by those who after succeeded them in this profession, they continually added their own imaginations to what they had received from those that went before them ; whereby these traditions becoming as a snow-ball, the further they rolled down from one generation to another, the more they gathered, and the greater the bulk of them grew. And thus it went on to the middle of the second century after Christ, when Antoninus Pius governed the Roman empire ; by which time they found it necessary to put all these traditions into writing ; for they were then grown to so great a number, and enlarged to so huge a heap, as to exceed the possibility of being any longer preserved by the memory of man." Accordingly, "it was resolved, that they should all be collected together, and put into a book ; and Rabbi Judah, the son of Simon, who, from the reputed sanctity of his life, was called Hak-kadosh, that is, the holy, and was then rector of the school which they had at Tiberias, in Galilee, and president of the sanhedrim that there sat, undertook the work, and compiled it in six books, each consisting of several tracts, which all together make up the number of sixty-three ; in which, under their proper heads, he methodically digested all that had hitherto been delivered to them of their law and their religion, by the tradition of their ancestors. And this is the book called the Mishna ; which book was forthwith received by the Jews with great veneration throughout all their dispersions, and hath ever since been held in high esteem among them ; for their opinion of it is, that all the particulars therein contained were dictated by God

himself to Moses from Mount Sinai, as well as the written word itself, and consequently of the same divine authority with it, and ought to be as sacredly observed.”\*

The oral traditions in the Christian church first reduced to writing, we are told by Catholics, were the creeds. The whole of the Apostles' Creed was finally brought together in the fourth century. And the Nicene Creed, if we take the authority of the assertors of tradition, both Romish and Anglican, was, by the Council of Nice, concocted from the creeds which had been orally communicated by the apostles to the churches they planted, and were communicated by the bishops, from the various quarters of the world, who constituted the council. Mr. Keble gives us the current account, which is this: “The method of proceeding at Nicæa appears to have been nearly as follows: Each bishop was required to rehearse the faith which he and his church professed, and into which they were baptized;” and from these rehearsals, “the *orthodox traditional interpretation was incorporated into a written creed*, being first thoroughly vindicated both in the substance and wording of it, and also in the annexed anathema, by reasoning out of holy writ. The result was the Nicene Creed, with its anathema.”†

Mr. Palmer says, “The Apostles' Creed was the ancient baptismal creed of the Roman and Italian

\* Connections, part i, book v.

† See Goode's Rule of Faith, vol. ii, p. 250. By the way, this whole story Mr. Goode pronounces “*a pure fiction*,” and shows most conclusively from Eusebius and Athanasius that the Nicene fathers based their decisions on the *Scriptures*, and not upon the *creeds rehearsed by the bishops*.

churches; the Nicene Creed was founded on the ancient creeds of the eastern churches by the holy synod of three hundred and eighteen bishops at Nice, and was adopted as the rule of faith by the universal church in all subsequent times.\*

There are various other compositions which claim the same origin, namely, to have been handed down orally from the apostles, and finally reduced to writing. The ancient *liturgies* are said to be of this class. Mr. Palmer says, "What has been said of the apostolic antiquity of creeds applies also to liturgies."† The same is said of the decrees of the first four general councils, of the homilies, epistles, and commentaries of the fathers of the first four or five centuries, and of several anonymous fragments, among which are the Apostolical Canons, and the Apostolical Constitutions, the latter palmed upon St. Clement of Rome, but which, Du Pin says, "it is\* probable belong to the third, or rather to the fourth, century:"‡ and the learned Dr. Lardner assigns to "the latter part of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth, century."§

These writings are referred to by our traditionists usually under the general name of "antiquity"—"the voice of the primitive church"—"apostolical traditions," &c. The reader will perceive that I here take these representations of *tradition* from traditionists themselves, without any inquiry into the foundations of their claims for the genuineness of the records. That there are genuine writings which come down to us at least from the second, third, and fourth centuries,

\* Eccles. Hist., pp. 30, 31.

† Ibid., p. 31.

‡ Eccles. Hist., vol. i, p. 30.

§ Works, vol. iv, p. 225.

we will not question, and for the present we may go upon the supposition that those writings which we have, which are attributed to these early times, are genuine. What I am here labouring to show is, that Christian traditions, according to traditionists, were in process of time *recorded*, and, like the Jewish Talmud, considered the divinely-authorized commentary upon God's originally-written law.

*Fifthly.* The record of the oral traditions not being adequate to the office of a full and intelligible commentary upon the written law, was itself a matter of discussion and exposition.

Prideaux says, in relation to the Mishna, that, "as soon as it was published, it became the subject of the studies of all their learned men, and the chiefest of them, both in Judea and Babylonia, employed themselves to make comments on it: and these, with the Mishna, make up both their Talmuds, that is, the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonish Talmud. These comments they call the Gemara, that is, the Complement, because by them the Mishna is fully explained, and the whole traditionary doctrine of their law and their religion completed: for the Mishna is the text, and the Gamara the comment; and both together is what they call the Talmud."\*

Almost an exact parallel to the Gemara we have in the writings of Vincentius Lirinensis, in the fifth century; Peter Lombard, of the twelfth; and Alexander Hales, Gulielmus Alvernus, and Thomas Aquinas, of the thirteenth.

\* Connections, part i, book v. See also Basnage's History of the Jews, book iii, chap. vi, sec. 1-3.

It will be sufficient to give a brief sketch of the efforts of one of these great Christian Gemarists. The school divines had mystified everything, and seemed to have lost the sense of the ancient fathers. "To prevent these inconveniences," says Du Pin, "Peter Lombard, bishop of Paris, undertook to make a collection of the passages of the fathers, . . . on the principal questions that were then in debate among the schoolmen; imagining by that means to put an end to their disputes, and to form such decisions, as the authority of those persons, on whose testimonies they were grounded, might render venerable, and might even cause them to be received with common consent. This collection was called *The Book of the Sentences*, and being preferred before all others, was received with so great approbation, that in a little time it became the only model of scholastic divinity that was publicly used in the schools; insomuch that the author of it was called, by way of excellency, *the master of the Sentences*."\*

Mosheim tells us that "The Book of the Sentences seemed to be at this time in much greater repute than the Holy Scriptures, and the compilations of Peter Lombard were preferred to the doctrines and precepts of Jesus Christ."†

The analogy is too plain here to require a remark; I must therefore hasten to another point.

*Sixthly.* The traditionists have elevated their traditions above, and at the expense of, the written word.

The following are some of the sayings of the rab-

\* Eccles. Hist., vol. vi, p. 190.

† Eccles. Hist., Macklaine's translation, vol. ii, p. 293.



bins:—"The words of the scribes are more lovely than the words of the law, and more mighty than those of the prophets."—"He that saith there are no phylacteries, and, in so saying, transgresseth against the words of the law,—he is not guilty: but he that saith there are five phylacteries, and, in so saying, addeth to the words of the scribes,—he is guilty."—"The written law is narrow; but the traditional is larger than the earth."\*

"They compare the Scripture to water, and tradition to excellent wine. The law is the salt; the Mishna is the pepper, and the Talmut are precious spices. They boldly maintain, that *he that sins against Moses may be forgiven*, but that he who contradicts the doctors deserves death."†

Bad as all this is, we have an exact parallel in what now follows. Cardinal Baronius says, "Tradition is the foundation of Scriptures, and excels them in this, that the Scriptures cannot subsist unless they be strengthened by traditions; but traditions have strength enough without Scripture." Linden says, "Traditions are the most certain foundations of faith, the most sure ground of the sacred Scriptures, the impenetrable buckler of Ajax, the suppressors of all heresies. On the other side, the Scripture is a vase of wax, a dead and killing letter without life, a mere shell without a kernel, a leaden rule, a wood of thieves, a shop of heretics."‡

Perhaps I ought to beg pardon of the Jewish rabbis for calling these passages from the Romish doctors

\* See Lightfoot's Works, vol. iii, pp. 96, 97.

† Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, p. 170.

‡ See Elliott on Romanism, vol. i, p. 108.

parallels to the maxims quoted from them ; for the language of the Christian rabbis is so much worse—more extravagant and blasphemous—as almost to destroy all resemblance.

Doubtless many Protestants who contend for tradition as a part of the rule of faith would repudiate the language of the Romish doctors. It is well if, following out the principles they have taken up to their legitimate results, they do not finally fall into the sentiments expressed, though, for the sake of decency, they may not be guilty of using the language.

The practical operations of the traditionary system have been most injurious to religion. It has opened the flood-gates of superstition and error. It has been the means of uniting with the pure doctrine the veriest puerilities and the most shocking blasphemies. It has operated as a dense fog and an impenetrable cloud to obscure the light of the Sun of righteousness. This we shall see illustrated in the next point of comparison.

*Seventhly.* The grossest puerilities and blasphemies have been palmed upon the infinitely wise and holy God upon the authority of tradition.

Upon this point I must only make a few selections, and those not the grosser sort of traditions. A collection of all the ridiculous fables, and *gross* and blasphemous falsehoods, which are to be found in the Talmud, and in the writings of Christian traditionists, would of themselves constitute volumes, and many of them are quite too bad to be repeated.

We are told in the Talmud, “that God, to pass the time, before the creation of the universe, when he was alone, busied himself with building divers worlds,

which he immediately destroyed, till by different essays he had learned to make one so perfect as ours. They relate a trick which a *rabbin* put upon God and the devil; for he entreated the devil to carry him to heaven-gate, that having seen the happiness of the saints, he might die with more tranquillity. The devil granted the *rabbin's* request, who, seeing the gate of heaven open, threw himself headlong in, swearing . . . that he would never go out again: God, who would not suffer him to be guilty of perjury, was obliged to leave him there, while the devil, being tricked, slunk away in great confusion."

"The little story of *Cesar* complaining to *Gamaliel* that God was a robber is ridiculous enough. *Cesar* asked *Gamaliel* why God had stolen a rib from Adam? The daughter answered, instead of her father, that robbers came the night before to her house, and had left a golden vessel instead of an earthen one, which they took away, and that she did not complain of them. The application of the story was easy: God gave a handmaid to Adam instead of a rib; the change was advantageous, and *Cesar* approved of it; but yet he censured God for doing it clandestinely, while Adam slept. The daughter, still ingenious, ordered a piece of flesh to be brought her, that was baked in the ashes, and then presented it to the emperor, who refused to eat it. 'This goes against my stomach,' says *Cesar*. 'Very well,' replied the damsel; 'Eve would have gone against the stomach of the first man, if God had given her to him grossly, without art, after having made her before his eyes.'"\*

\* Basnage's *Hist. of the Jews*, book iii, ch. vi, pp. 170, 171

These specimens of Jewish nonsense must suffice. Those which I shall give from Christian writers will be such as are best authenticated and least offensive. The grosser legends of Romanism I shall entirely omit.

Papias, as Eusebius informs us, wrote "five books, which he entitled 'An Explication of the Doctrine of the Lord.'" He is represented by the historian as an honest and good man, but "a man of a very narrow understanding." "This Papias professes he received the sayings of the apostles from those who had been conversant with them; and was, as he says, the hearer of Aristion and John the elder."\* I will now give some of the traditions preserved by this purely primitive Christian writer. He was a Chiliast, or Millenarian, and gives us the following tradition in relation to the days of the millennium.

He says: "As the elders remember, who saw John the disciple of the Lord, that they heard from him what the Lord taught about those times, and said, 'The days shall come in the which vines shall exist, each containing ten thousand shoots, and in each shoot shall be ten thousand arms, and in every true shoot shall be ten thousand branches, and on every branch ten thousand clusters, and in every cluster ten thousand grapes, and every grape, when pressed, shall give twenty-five firkins of wine, and when any one of the saints shall proceed to gather a cluster, some other cluster shall exclaim, "I am a better cluster, take me, and bless the Lord through me."' In like manner a single grain of wheat shall produce ten thousand ears, and each ear

\* Euseb. Eccles. Hist., fol., p. 19. London, 1709.

shall produce ten thousand grains, and every grain shall afford ten pounds' weight of fine pure flour; and the other fruits, and grains, and herbs, shall abound in the same proportion, and also all animals feeding upon those kinds of food which spring from the earth shall be tame and loving to one another, and in all things be subject to the accommodation of man.'

"He adds also, these things shall be credible to the true believers. And Judas the traitor, not believing this account, and asking him, 'In what way shall all these productions be brought by the Lord?' our Lord replied, 'Those persons shall see them who shall partake of them.' It was in anticipation of these times that Isaiah prophesied, saying, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,'" &c.

Another tradition reported by this weak man relates to Judas the traitor, who, it would seem, did not die by strangulation, as is recorded in Acts. "Judas," says he, "walked about in this world a great example of the effects of impiety; being so much swollen in his body, that he could not find room to pass through an opening which a cart could easily be led through; and thus he was crushed by a cart, and his entrails squeezed out from his body." Another variety of this story which prevailed in the fourth century adds to the above, that "his head was so swollen, as to exceed in dimensions the size of a cart, and that his eyes, in consequence, were so deeply sunk within the projecting flesh, that no optical instrument of the surgeon could render them visible."\*

\* Dr. Shuttleworth. See "Not Tradition, but Scripture," pp. 34-38.

We here see how early floating oral traditions commenced mixing water with the pure wine of divine truth, and even give divine authority to foolish fiction and absolute falsehood.

Tertullian gives us the following list of traditions. He says: "To begin with baptism, when we are ready to enter into the water, and even before we make our protestations before the bishop, and in the church, that we renounce the devil, all his pomps and ministers; after that they make us taste milk and honey, and we bathe ourselves every day during the whole week. We receive the sacrament of the eucharist, instituted by Jesus Christ, when we eat, and in the morning assemblies, and we do not receive it but by the hands of those that preside there. We offer yearly oblations for the dead in honour of the martyrs. We believe that it is not lawful to fast on a Sunday, and to pray to God kneeling. From Easter to Whitsuntide we enjoy the same privilege. We take great care not to suffer any of the wine and consecrated bread to fall to the ground. We often sign ourselves with the sign of the cross. If you demand a law for these particulars, taken from Scripture, we cannot find one there; but we must answer, that it is tradition that has established them, custom that has authorized them, and faith that has made them to be observed."\*

Archbishop Cranmer, after reciting the traditions above from Tertullian, gives the following list from Basil:—"Making a cross upon them that are christened.—To turn our face to the east when we pray.—Consecrating of oil and water in baptism, and of him

\* Quoted in Elliott on Romanism, vol. i, pp. 117, 118.

that is baptized.—Unction with oil.—To put them that be baptized three times in the water.—To renounce the devil and his angels in baptism.” “Other authors,” he says, “rehearse a great number of traditions, as,—The fast of Lent.—’To fast Wednesday and Friday.—Not to fast Saturday nor Sunday.... Giving the pax after mass.—Consecrating of religious men. And a thousand more traditions apostolic there be, if we give credence to St. Denis, De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia, Ignatius, the canons of the apostles, Ecclesiastica et Tripartita Historia, Cyprian, Tertullian, Irenæus, with other old ancient authors.

“And yet an infinite number more we shall be constrained to receive, if we admit this rule, which St. Augustine many times repeateth, that whatsoever is universally observed, and not written in the Scripture, nor ordained by general councils, is a tradition coming from the apostles.”\*

These are some of the earliest appendages supplied to the Christian system by tradition. And well had it been for the cause of religion, if those who thought the gospel needed mending had been satisfied with appending to it such trumpery as is here delineated. But the system of admitting doctrines and usages to be of apostolic origin which could be set afloat upon the credit of tradition, has been “like letting out water.” It has brought in a tide of heresies and corruptions which have completely disfigured and perverted the simple and spiritual institutions of Christianity.

*Eighthly.* In both instances the traditionary system

\* Strype’s Memorials, vol. ii, part i, p. 137. Also, Cranmer’s Works, vol. iv, pp. 223, 224.

has resulted in the restricted reading, or the proscription of the Scriptures. Romanists restrict the free circulation and reading of the Scriptures, and for the alleged reason, that the sense of Holy Scripture can only be ascertained through tradition, in the hands of the living authorized teacher.

In the Index of Prohibited Books, ratified by a bull of the pope, March 24, 1564, we have the following:—

“ IV. Inasmuch as it is manifest from experience, that if the Holy Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to every one, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it, it is, on this point, referred to the judgment of the bishops, or inquisitors, who may, by the advice of the priest, or confessor, permit the reading of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors, to those persons whose faith and piety, they apprehend, will be augmented, and not injured by it; and this permission they must have in writing. But if any one shall have the presumption to read or possess it without such written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he have first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary.”\*

It is said in a popular work of the day, that *the Scriptures are prohibited by the rabbins*; † how far this is the fact, I have not been able to learn. In the Talmud it is said, that “ women, and slaves, and children, are exempt from the study of the law.” ‡ Notwithstanding this, there still seems to be no such horror of

\* See Townley's Illustrations of Bib. Lit., vol. ii, p. 161.

† See Judah's Lion, p. 99.

‡ See The Old Paths, by Rev. A. McCall, p. 9.



the circulation of the Scriptures among the Jews as is entertained among Romanists.

High-Churchmen do not generally follow out the system to its result, though a strong tendency to it is not unfrequently developed. They tell us that we must go to the Church for Scripture, and not to the Scripture for the Church. They utterly repudiate private interpretation, or deny the individual the right of judging of the sense of Scripture for himself. And in England, especially, it is not strange to hear them say that the services of the Church and the Prayer-book are abundantly sufficient to guide the mass in the way of salvation—that “Scripture was never designed for the many.” Now the main principle, as here opposed, that *tradition sets forth the sense of Scripture*, in the most guarded language in which it can be couched, tends to the prohibition of the sacred records. For how shall our divinely-constituted pastors and teachers allow us to meddle at discretion with the dark “unsensed” record? And how shall we dare freely to read a record which we may not judge of without the expositor at hand to preserve us from fatal error? especially since we can no more understand the patristical interpretation than we can the record itself? And why need we desire to consult the record, since *holy mother* is bound to give us the *sense*, and we, as dutiful children, must implicitly believe what she says? As says Archdeacon Manning, “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.*”

And as the duty of the Church herein may be presumed to be done when she gives us the Prayer-book and her public services, we may not feel *obliged* to go any further, and with this provision "the many" may be satisfied.

The Jews by their traditions set aside Moses and the prophets. And what could be expected of a system precisely similar, adopted by Christian teachers, but that it should cast into the background, and indeed trample under foot, Christ and the apostles? This has been its practical result. What is pretended by our traditionists to be the true exhibition of the sense of Holy Scripture, is often the vilest caricature of God's word, and, instead of having been handed down from the apostles, came from heathenism. The grand adversary, by this device, under cover of honouring God and his word, does most effectually dishonour both, and claim for his own doctrines the authority of divine inspiration. But not to enlarge at present upon this obvious tendency of the system of tradition, I would close this section by simply noticing the result which most obviously follows from the parallel I have sketched between the Jewish and Catholic systems.

If the two systems present a perfect parallel in all their essential features and practical workings, then Christ, in condemning the one, condemns the other. And who will attempt to prove, that what was once so evil is now very good—that what Christ, in the days of his flesh, abhorred and condemned, he now loves—and what once made "void the commandments of God" now constitutes an essential part of those commandments, or is, at least, necessary to their right interpretation?

## SECTION III.

Catholic Tradition is wanting in Divine Authority.

CATHOLIC tradition is held by our opponents to be the divinely-appointed commentary upon the Holy Scriptures. It is the *witness* not only of the divine origin and inspiration, but also of the true *sense* of the written word. It might, of course, be expected that it would come down to us with attestations at least as strong and intelligible as those upon which we credit God's written word. As the traditions of the primitive church are, according to the theory we oppose, the appointed channel through which the sense of Holy Scripture is communicated to all who have lived since the apostolic age, it must be as important as the Scripture itself; for of what worth is the Scripture *without sense*? It is reasonable, then, to suppose that this "divine informant" would come down to us properly identified, clearly defined, and fully attested. Without all this it would not be a competent witness. It must have no human mixtures in its composition—it must not have accumulated anything from any other source than the "oral teaching of the apostles"—it must be a clear, evident, and divinely-authenticated testimony of what the apostles delivered in their discourses which were not committed to writing. But what is the fact in the case? The fact is, that there is no such body of traditions, either now in writing, or preserved unwritten down to the present day, in any branch of the Christian church.

In the first place, let it be observed, that the assert

ors of tradition have not yet settled the question whether it is all now *written*, or whether much of it is, mysteriously, and by a constant miracle, preserved *in the minds* of God's appointed ministers, or, in other words, *in the Church*. Some have held that *unwritten* traditions have never been written; others, that they are now to be found in the *permanent records* of the Church. But waiving any difficulty which would arise from the fact that this is still a mooted question, let us see whether we can find out the true apostolical traditions from the records of the Church. To these we are incessantly directed by our traditionists, as to some well-defined system of exegesis. But none of these doctors tell us how many books are embraced in this system, and what they are called. Sometimes, indeed, these learned divines point us to the creeds—at others to the acts of the councils—then they embrace the epistles, homilies, and commentaries of known Christian writers, and anon they refer to certain anonymous compositions, such as the Apostolical Canons, the Apostolical Constitutions, &c. But then when they come to particulars, they admonish us that in this heterogeneous mass there is much objectionable matter. We are now lost in a maze, not knowing where to go.

But here we are met with the famous test, “universality, antiquity, and consent.” And by this rule, it would seem, we are to judge between the precious and the vile. If we have the ability to apply this rule, we shall find, that we must not only throw away entirely many whole books, but we must cut and carve others, retaining some portions, and casting away

others, until we have very little left; not indeed a thousandth part enough to constitute a complete system of theology, or to help to the sense of the sacred writings, in opposition to the numerous heresies and false expositions which have distracted and cursed the Church. Nor, indeed, will one of the learned doctors, or all of them together, be able so clearly and satisfactorily to determine by the test in question what is to be retained, and what rejected, as to satisfy the doubting.

This rule has been adopted by the great mass of the English divines since the Reformation, in their controversies with the Romanists. But it has answered only one single purpose; that is, to convict the Romanists of having introduced into religion "*novelties*," which were unknown to "the old learned doctors." As an *argumentum ad hominem* against Rome, it is conclusive. But in their controversies with dissenters, the divines of the Church of England find the famous rule of Vincentius a broken reed. Indeed, it has been as potent a weapon against them in the hands of their dissenting opponents as they found it to be in their own against Rome. For though they rejected many of the Romish novelties which would not abide the test of Vincentius, yet they retained many others which are equally put under the ban by the monk of Lirin. Indeed, we might safely challenge the Churchmen of our own times, who adhere with such tenacity to "apostolic traditions," to bring their system of "Church principles" to this catholic test, and promise to embrace every one of them that should come out of the ordeal unscathed.

It must be understood that we give not the least authority to that rule as it is commonly understood—that we admit no umpire in matters of religion but the written word of God—and yet we might safely pledge ourselves to receive as true the doctrines of the Tractarians, in relation to baptismal regeneration, the real presence, apostolical succession, &c., when they can be clearly demonstrated by “universality, antiquity, and consent.”

But who knows what writings belong to the system of apostolical traditions? This must be determined by some competent tribunal before the limits and bounds of the system can be known. Admitting the rule of Vincentius, then, who is to determine what writings in the gross, and what in the detail, are to be received as in agreement with it? Have the doctors agreed upon this? Has a general council decided it? Has the Church settled it? Not at all. And until there is a decision of this question by a competent tribunal, after due examination, no one knows what is meant by “antiquity,” or “apostolical traditions.” How are private Christians to judge of this matter when the learned themselves cannot agree, and when the Church has not determined it?

Now let us recur to one class of the compositions for which the claim to apostolical authority is made; I refer to the ancient creeds. It will be admitted by our opponents that if the claim to an apostolical origin in behalf of the creeds cannot be sustained, they may well despair of sustaining the claim to that high character for any other fragments which have come down to us from primitive times. I have in another place

presented evidence upon this point, which I need not here repeat. I have also met the current arguments in favour of the claim to an apostolic origin for the creeds, and am entitled to assume, without further discussion, that there is no conclusive evidence in favour of this claim. But in addition to all I have before urged I will now present two authorities of no small weight, in opposition to the theory sustained by Archdeacon Manning, that the ancient creeds had their origin with the apostles. The first is the learned Mr. Goode. The whole subject is ably and patiently discussed by this author, and he fully and triumphantly sustains the following propositions, namely :—

“ 1. That no precise form of words was left by the apostles as the Christian creed.

“ 2. That there was no such definite summary of the chief articles of belief given by the apostles to the Christian church as the creed, and that what is called ‘The Apostles’ Creed’ is merely the ancient creed of the Church of Rome, and no more entitled to the name than any other of the ancient creeds.

“ 3. That what is called ‘The Apostles’ Creed’ gradually attained its present form, and that two, at least, of the articles it now contains were not inserted in it before the fourth century.

“ 4. That the creeds of the primitive church were derived originally from the Holy Scriptures. And, therefore,

“ 5. That none of the ancient creeds can be considered as an apostolical production.”\*

\* Divine Rule, vol. i, p. 96.

The learned author's reasoning upon these propositions is perfectly conclusive. He shows that there is no notice of any such form of words in the Scriptures; and that the evidence from the ancient fathers is clearly in his favour. He gives us the creeds of Origen, Gregory of Neocæsarea, and Lucian the martyr, and says, "These are the only creeds that remain of the period anterior to the Council of Nice." And further, that "*it is not till quite the close of the fourth century that we hear anything about 'The Apostles' Creed.'*"\*

My other witness is the celebrated Roman Catholic historian, Du Pin. As this learned writer presents, in a condensed form, the argument upon the point in question, pro and con, I shall insert the whole section without abridgment. He proceeds,—

"Having already discoursed of the works of every one of the apostles in particular, it remains that we should now give some account of those that are reputed to be composed by them in general; the most authentic among these is the Apostles' Creed, which is generally believed to have been made by all the apostles. But authors are not agreed about the time wherein it was written by them, nor concerning the manner how it was compiled, nor the design they had in making it. Some are of opinion with Ruffinus,† that they compiled it in the very same year that Jesus Christ died, a little after the descent of the Holy Ghost; whereas Baronius and others conjecture, that

\* Divine Rule, vol, i, p. 110.

† "*Ruffinus.*] In *Exposit. Symboli*: Isidore, lib. ii, de Off., c. 22."



they did not finish it till the second year of the reign of the emperor Claudius, a little before they were separated. As to the manner of their drawing it up, some have imagined that every one of the apostles pronounced\* his article, and that for this reason it is called a symbol, as consisting of divers sentences : others believe that it was compiled by them after they had conferred all together ; and there are some also who assert, that all the disciples had a share therein. Lastly, as to their design in composing it, some determine that it was, that they might be all found unanimously to agree in one and the same doctrine ;† and others, that it was for the benefit of the people, that they might be able to propound to them an abridgment of the Christian faith, which should be easie to be understood, and to be retained in their memory. The etymology of the word symbol is yet more uncertain ;‡ for some affirm, that the creed is so

\* “ *Every one of the apostles pronounced his article.* ] This is the opinion of the author of the 115th Sermon, De Tempore apud Aug. ; of St. Leo, Ep. 13, now 27 ; of Venant. Fortunat. in exegesi Symb. Apost.”

† “ *Some determine that it was, that they might be all found unanimously to agree in one and the same doctrine.* ] The former opinion is maintained by Ruffinus, and the later by the modern authors.”

‡ “ *The etymology of the word symbol is yet more uncertain.* ] The Greek word Σύμβολον, properly signifies a note, sign, or mark, therefore the mystical signs and notes of Pythagoras were called Σύμβολα Πυθαγόρικα. Herodian uses the word to denote a military signal. Other authors, as Dion Cassius and Suetonius, apply it to signify signs or marks, and certain tickets that were given to those that were to be admitted to public shows, and for the distribution of largesses. Some say that the word *symbolum*

called, because it is, as it were, the distinguishing mark and character of Christians;\* others, because it was composed of the sentences of several persons; and, lastly, others, on the account of its being made in a general conference.

“However, although it is an opinion established on very good grounds, that this creed was [as to the substance of it] made by the apostles, and it cannot be

among the Latins, signifies an entertainment, where every one pays his club, or even the club itself; but this does not belong to the neuter *symbolum*, but to the feminine *symbola*, and in Greek *Συμβόλη*, as may be seen in Aristophanes’s Scholiast; in Athenæus and Plutarch; therefore it ought to be read in Terence’s *Andria*, *Symbolam dedit*, and not *symbolum*. Aulus Gellius, lib. vi, c. 1, makes use of the word *symbola* to signify one man’s share in a reckoning, and declares, that this term was also attributed to those questions that were expounded by Taurus the philosopher, in the presence of divers persons. St. Cyprian is the first that applied the word symbol to denote an epitome or abridgment of the Christian faith. Ep. 45. Optatus calls the heretics the deserters of the true symbol, alluding to a military signal. And, to the same effect, St. Chrysologus, in Hom. 62, declares, that the symbol is the covenant that we make with God in baptism.”

\* “*The distinguishing mark and character of Christians.*] This etymology is produced by Maximus Taurinensis and Venantius Fortunatus. It hath been likewise observed by Ruffinus, Isidorus Hispalensis, lib. ii. de Off., c. 22; and Durandus de Mende, lib. 4, Rationalis, c. 25. But the second and third etymology are more common; and the last is maintained by Ruffinus; St. Aug., serm. 181, de Tempore; Isidore, lib. ii, div. Off., c. 22. Rabanus Maurus, lib. ii, Init. Clerical. cap. 56. Durandus supra; Eucherius, Homil. de Symb., and Innocent III., lib. ii. De Sacris Missæ Mysteriis, c. 49. The first, however, is the most probable.”

denied that they all preached and taught the articles therein contained, after one and the same manner, as the main points of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in which it was necessary that all Christians should be instructed; yet it may be justly doubted, without incurring the imputation of rashness, whether they were assembled together to compose this creed, and whether they wrote it word for word, as it is now received in the Church of Rome; nay, there are very weighty reasons whereby it appears that this opinion, though commonly received, is nevertheless very improbable.

“For, first, neither St. Luke, in the Acts, nor any ecclesiastical author before the fifth century, hath made any mention of this assembly of the apostles, and none ever affirmed that they composed the creed of the Church of Rome, either by conferring together, or by pronouncing every one a particular article.

“Secondly. The fathers of the three first ages, disputing against the heretics, endeavour to demonstrate, by many arguments, that the doctrine contained in the creed is that of the apostles, but they do not affirm that it was compiled by them; and yet there could not have been a stronger or more convincing proof brought against those heretics, than to have said thus to them: You impugn the doctrine of the creed, and yet it is certain that the apostles were the authors thereof, therefore you impugn the doctrine of the apostles. However, they did not argue after this manner; on the contrary, they prove by tradition, and the consent of the apostolical churches, that the doctrine comprised in the creed is that of the apostles.

“Thirdly. If the apostles had made a creed, it would have been everywhere the same throughout all churches, and in all ages; all Christians would have learnt it by heart; all churches would have repeated it after the very same manner; in fine, all authors would have expressed it in the same terms. Now the contrary is evident; for it is certain, that not only in the second and third centuries, but also in the fourth, there were many creeds, and all, though the same as to the doctrine, yet differed in the expression. In the second and third ages of the church we find as many creeds as authors;\* and the same author sets the creed down after a different manner in several places of his Works, which plainly shows, that there was not then any creed that was reputed to be the apostles, nor even any regulated and established form of faith. Ruffinus, in the fourth century, compares three ancient creeds of the churches of Aquileia, Rome, and the East; and we may observe in these three creeds, none of which perfectly agrees with the common one, very considerable differences in the terms, as appears from the table that is subjoined at the end of this article. St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, in his Catechetick Lectures, produceth a particular creed, that was used by the church of Jerusalem when this father wrote. The authors that have written commentaries

\* “*As many creeds as authors.*] St. Irenæus exhibits a creed, lib. i, c. 2, and another in lib. ii, c. 1. Tertullian made use of three different creeds in three several places, In præscript. lib. contra Praxeam, and de Virginibus velandis. See Origen, lib. i, Peri Arch. and in Dialog. contra Mare. Optat. lib. i. All which creeds are different from the vulgar.”

on the creed, as St. Augustine in his 119th Sermon, St. Maximus, Petrus Chrysologus, Fortunatus, and others, omit divers expressions that are inserted in our apostolical creed, among others this at the end, 'the life everlasting;' and St. Jerome observes in his Epistle to Pammachius, that the creed concludes with these words, 'the resurrection of the body.'

"It is evident from these reflections, that although the creed be the apostles as to the doctrine which it contains, nevertheless it is not theirs as to all the terms, and that they did not draw up any one form of faith comprehended in a set number of words, which they were all obliged to use: but that having learned the same faith from Jesus Christ, they likewise taught it to all those that were converted to the Christian religion, and instructed them all in the same mysteries. That they that were thus trained up in this faith, had it so deeply imprinted on their mind, as (St. Justin and St. Irenæus observe) that they were always ready to give an account thereof, and as often as they should be required to do it, without making use of any one particular form; and from thence proceeds the difference of the creeds that are set down by the fathers. And, lastly, that for the assistance of the memory, certain forms of these articles of faith were afterward compiled, which were found to be different according to the diversity of the churches wherein they were used. For I doubt not in the least, that besides the above-cited creeds, there were many others, of which we have no knowledge, from whence it must be inferred, that Jesus Christ is the author of the doctrine contained in the creed, and that the apostles preached and

published it throughout the whole world; but that it cannot be determined by whom these forms were collected, wherein this doctrine is comprised.

“It may be objected, that St. Irenæus, Tertullian, Lucifer Calaritanus, and St. Jerome affirm, that the creed is the rule of faith, which the Church hath received from the apostles; that St. Ambrose says, that the Church of Rome hath preserved the apostolical creed in its purity without alteration; that St. Augustine, Ruffinus, Leo, Maximus Taurinensis, Fortunatus, Petrus Chrysologus, and a great many others,\* have taken it for granted, as a thing beyond controversie, that the creed was composed in an assembly of the apostles, that this opinion is authorized by the Church, and that it seems to be a rash presumption to doubt of it; and, lastly, that all Catholicks are agreed in this judgment, and that none but hereticks, or at least persons that are suspected of heresie, durst presume to call it in question.

“To these objections I answer, first, that the testimonies of St. Irenæus, Tertullian, and Lucifer, rather overthrow the vulgar opinion than establish it; for these fathers do not assert that we have received the form of faith from the apostles, but only the faith and doctrine that was communicated to them by Jesus Christ; therefore if there were any force in the objection, it must be concluded, that our Saviour is the

\* “*And a great number of other authors.*] St. Irenæus, lib. i, cap. ii, Tertullian, de Præscript. c. 37, and 13, de vel. Virg. c. i, Lucifer, lib. ii, contra Const. Hier. Ep. ad Pammach. St. Ambrose, Ep. 7, lib. i. As also Ruffinus in Expos. Symboli, Aug. Serm. 115. Maximus, St. Leo, Fortunatus, &c.”

author of the creed. Moreover, it is further to be observed, that by the phrase, *rule of faith*, used by Tertullian, a *set form of faith* is not to be understood, but *the faith itself*, which he declares to have been founded by Jesus Christ; and Lucifer Calaritanus doth not discourse of the creed, but only of the faith of the Church as it relates to our Saviour's divinity. Lastly, when St. Jerome says that the faith of the creed, which is an apostolical tradition, was not written on paper, or with ink, but was engraved on the fleshly tables of the heart, he gives us to understand that he meant nothing else, but that the faith and doctrine comprehended in the creed proceeds from the apostles, who have taught it to all the faithful. After the same manner, when St. Ambrose assures us, that the creed was preserved in its purity by the Church of Rome, he doth not speak of the form of the creed, but of the doctrine therein contained. As for the other authorities that are alleged, they are of little moment. Ruffinus is the first and the only person among the authors of the fifth century that asserts that the creed was composed by the apostles, and yet he proposes this opinion as a matter that depended only on a popular tradition; St. Augustine never approved it, for he doth not so much as mention one word thereof in his 119th Homily, and the 115th, which might be cited to this purpose, cannot be proved certainly to be his: in fine, the other authors who lived after Ruffinus have taken this history from him, and are too modern to give a certain testimony of a matter of fact so ancient as this is; we may also add, that it is related by none but the Latins; that the Greeks never spoke

of it, and that even they that produce it, do in no wise agree among themselves concerning its circumstances, as hath been already shown. To conclude, there is no rashness in departing here from the vulgar opinion, since it is meerly a critical question, that hath no regard to faith, because it is granted on all sides, that Jesus Christ is the author of the doctrine comprised in the creed, and that the apostles taught it to all the Christians. Besides, they that maintain the common opinion, are at last obliged to subscribe to our determination when they are urged; and to acknowledge, when it is objected to them, that the ancient Roman creed was different from our vulgar, that our creed is not the apostles as to the words, but as to the sense, which comes to our opinion at last. And, besides, it is not unusual in critical matters to forsake an opinion that hath been generally received, and to embrace that of some learned and judicious men, even of those that are suspected not to be orthodox. Thus all the world is at present agreed in this, that the Apostolical Constitutions and Canons were not written by the apostles, as we shall show in the following article, and yet scarce any man presumed so much as to doubt thereof before Erasmus.”\*

The reader need go no further than to examine the extract from Du Pin for a full view of the argument in relation to the apostolical origin of the creeds. As a Roman Catholic he was not likely to assert, what Mr. Gooddoes, that the ancient creeds were founded upon the Scriptures. He does, however, clearly prove

\* History of Ecclesiastical Writers. First Century. Vol. i, pp. 9-11.



that the form of words did not originate with the apostles, and in relation to the grounds and reasons for the articles of the "vulgar creed," different opinions had been entertained by the great Romish doctors. Is it not strange that Protestant divines are now found whose views upon this question are less enlightened, and more conformable to the theology of the dark ages, than those of the better sort of Roman Catholics themselves?

If, then, the creeds are not apostolical documents, nor to be certainly understood as precisely and specifically representing the oral preaching of the apostles, where are there any such documents? These are the simplest formulas of Christian doctrine which have been handed down to us from ancient times, and have stronger claims than any other ancient records extant to the character of divine informants as to the sense of Scripture. But the highest honour which can in truth and justice be awarded to them is to say that they are *Scriptural*, and seem well calculated to set forth several leading doctrines of the gospel to the ignorant, whose means of studying the Scriptures may have been limited. That they were drawn up by the apostles, or are founded upon their oral preaching, independent of the Scriptures, is a hypothesis which is wholly destitute of proof.

Another point of importance to be considered here is, what would give the necessary sanction or authority to traditionary explanations of God's written word. Could anything short of a divine revelation, or the attestation of miracles give this authority to the ancient

records of the Church, were they ever so well defined? Our opponents will not allow Scripture to bear witness to its own divine origin and inspiration, and will they contend that tradition can do this? If they should take this ground, it would then be a question of fact, which would still remain to be settled, whether indeed it has done so. Will they resort to the "living judge," that is, the Church, as adequate evidence in the case? Archdeacon Manning, and with him many other Churchmen, repel this idea. Who, then, is to tell us that God speaks in the "*unwritten word*?" I know Romanists and high-Churchmen tell us so, but how do I know that what they tell me is to be relied upon as infallibly true? Where is their commission? Perhaps I shall be told that the bishops, the successors of the apostles, in virtue of their commission, have received the *depositum* from the great Head of the Church, and I must rely upon their word. But, then, these bishops, for the proof of their succession from the apostles, go to tradition; and must they, at the same time, be allowed to attest to the authority of tradition? This would be forming a circle—making tradition attest to the apostolical succession, and the successors of the apostles attest to the authority of tradition, which is a gross sophism.

Here I may be told, that Churchmen do not agree with Romanists in making the Church the "living judge of controversies," but hold the Church to be the "witness" of the catholic doctrine. "She holds herself and delivers to us 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 us.”\*

Now if this “witness” is to be relied upon with infallible certainty, she must have a substantive existence, she must be tangible or accessible to all, and she must have given in a specific, intelligible, and consistent testimony. Well, what is this Church? where is she? where, and what is her testimony? and where the evidence of her divine commission? These are all questions which must be met and answered before a spark of rational faith in her, as a witness to the divine authority of tradition, can light up the soul of the inquirer.

If we go to the *real*, or, as divines say, the invisible church, which consists of all the true disciples of Christ, no one will for a moment expect from her a witness upon the point. Neither Romanists nor high-Churchmen pretend that the invisible church can be consulted upon this question.

If we go to the nominal or visible church, then who will tell us whether we must have the testimony of every individual member, or only of the clergy; and if of the clergy, whether all the clergy or only that of the bishops. These are questions which neither Romanists nor high-Churchmen have, as yet, settled among themselves. There are among Romanists three distinct theories maintained as to what constitutes “the holy Catholic Church.” The *first* is, that the Church is constituted of the baptized, who outwardly profess the true faith, and adhere to the pope of Rome, whether they be truly faithful or

\* Manning’s Rule of Faith, p. 39.

secretly infidels. The *second*, to an outward profession adds internal faith, and excludes all infidels and heretics. The *third* adds *charity*, and has no place in the Church but for those who are "just and free from mortal sin." The first opinion is maintained by Canus, Bellarmine, Duval, and most of the later writers, especially the French. The second is asserted by Alensis, Clemangis, Turrecremata, and Jacobatius. And the *third* is sustained by Bannes, Hugo à Sancto Victore, Cusanus, and Lupus.\*

These differences, however, only relate to the question of what constitutes the *present Church*; there is still another question mooted among Romanists, of equal interest to us in this inquiry, and that is, whether it is the voice of the *present Church*, or of the whole who have constituted the Church from the beginning, that constitutes "the pillar and ground of the truth." This latter opinion was that of Waldensis, and the book in which it was advocated was sanctioned by a bull of Pope Martin V. But other popes, this bull notwithstanding, have assumed that they *alone* constitute the Church, that is, have claimed that their decisions, previous to any consultation either with clergy or laity, and without their concurrence, constitute the voice of the spouse of Christ—of the Church of the living God! Here, then, we are left without any definite description of the Church—there is no agreement upon essential points.

. The Church of England, in her Nineteenth Article,

\* See Placett's *Incurable Skepticism of the Church of Rome*, chap. xxiv; and Bishop Gibson's *Preservative against Popery*, Tit. xiii, pp. 116, 117.

tells us that "the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." And in Article XX, "the Church" is declared to "be a witness and keeper of holy writ," &c. In the Homily for Whitsunday it is said, "The true Church is a universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone. And it hath always these three notes or marks by which it is known: pure and sound doctrine, the sacraments ministered according to Christ's holy institution, and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline."

Now the Church here defined, Mr. Newman says, "is the one catholic church, not an abstract idea of a church which may be multiplied indefinitely."\* Is it, then, this same "one catholic church" which is made both "a keeper and a witness of holy writ," and "a keeper and a witness" of "apostolical traditions?" High-Churchmen now admit that the Roman and the Greek Churches are branches of this "one catholic church;" and that the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country are but branches of this same church. We must, I suppose, either go to these particular churches separately, or to the whole together, for testimony as to what we are to regard as "the undoubted traditions of the Church." But we find these branches of the original stock at

\* See Tract No. 90, pp. 19, 20.

odds upon the most essential points. They give us no "consentient testimony." Here, then, is our difficulty. We cannot harmonize the whole, and make out a consistent sense, for the parts are utterly antagonistic, and we dare not take the testimony of one and reject that of the others, for we find them to have equal claims to a divine commission, and to be equally legitimate branches of the "one catholic church."

To come directly to the point which especially concerns us in this country: How are we to know which bear the true testimony, the adherents of Rome, or the Protestant Episcopal Church? It will not answer for our high-Churchmen to tell us we must compare the two systems, and judge for ourselves, for they require us to take their report of the catholic doctrine upon their *apostolic authority*. Their witness to the catholic doctrine is to be the foundation of our faith, and not a matter of investigation and of "private judgment." Alas for us, into what straits are we brought! Romanists and high-Churchmen both cry out, ever and anon, "Hear the Church!" The anxious inquirer turns this way and that, and asks, Who is the Church? Where is she? What does she say? And in answer to his earnest inquiries, he hears one voice sternly announce, "Her head quarters are in Rome," and another indignantly respond, "Nay, but the true apostolical succession comes through the English bishops." The Church clergy tell us that the Romanists here are schismatics, and the Romish priests indignantly throw back the charge. Now, in all this confusion, who can tell *where* is the *witness*, and *what* is the *testimony*?

Common sense, unbiased by prejudice, under these circumstances, can come to but one conclusion, and that is, that the traditionary system is as utterly destitute of *authority* as it is impracticable and absurd.

There can be but one primary ground upon which the authority of tradition can be made to rest, and that is, the divine will clearly expressed. Where is this to be found? Nowhere in the Bible. Not in tradition itself, for this is the thing to be authenticated and made authoritative before it can be credited. Not by the whole church, for this is physically impossible. Not any one branch of it, for the church catholic has not commissioned any particular church to speak for her, nor has the universal church, nor any one branch of it, given a uniform and consistent expression in favour of the authority of tradition, such as would be necessary to lay a foundation for an unwavering faith. Nor have all the pastors, nor, as we know, the greatest part of them, borne any such testimony. Indeed, there can be but one way of arriving at the expression necessary in a way to answer all queries, and that is through a *pope*. If God has given to any one man the sole right to explain Scripture, to sanction traditions, and to settle controversies, this is the remedy, no doubt. And until I believe this, I shall continue to doubt the authority of tradition.

## SECTION IV.

Records of Antiquity doubtful or defective.

I SHALL next proceed to an examination of the character of the documents which are claimed to constitute a divinely-authorized commentary upon Holy Scripture. And in this investigation it will appear that the records of antiquity are inherently defective as a divine informant as to the sense of the written word.

1. It must be considered that in all the records of antiquity which remain, and are of undoubted authority, we have nothing like an expression from the whole primitive church.

From the first three centuries we have only a few fragments, and most of them not only mutilated, but treating, in general, subjects entirely different from those now in controversy. The following is Daille's account of the writings which remain from this period :

“ All that we have left us of these times, which is certainly known to be theirs, and of which no man doubts, are some certain discourses of Justin, the philosopher and martyr, who wrote his Second Apology a hundred and fifty years after the nativity of our Saviour, Christ; the five books of Irenæus, who wrote not long after him; three excellent and learned pieces of Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived toward the end of the second century; divers books of Tertullian, who was famous about the same time; the epistles and other treatises of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who suffered martyrdom about the year of our Saviour 261; the writings of Arnobius, and of Lactantius his scholar,



and some few others. As for Origen, Cyprian's contemporary—who alone, had we but all his writings entire, would be able, perhaps, to give us more light and satisfaction in the business we are now engaged in than all the rest—we have but very little of him left, and the greatest part of that too most miserably abused and corrupted; the most learned and almost innumerable writings of this great and incomparable person not being able to withstand the ravages of time, nor the envy and malice of men, who have dealt much worse with him, than so many ages and centuries of years that have passed from his time down to us.”\*

Besides these, Eusebius, Jerome, and others, notice the works of about thirty Christian authors who lived during this period, which are now lost.† Had we these writings, and were those which remain in a state of perfection, we might appeal to them with more confidence for the sense of the primitive church. But the popes and their minions have not failed to use the power which they so amply enjoyed, of annihilating most of the records of purely primitive times which

\* Right Use of the Fathers, p. 28.

† Athanasius, after giving a catalogue of the books of the New Testament, says: “Such are the books of the New Testament, those at least that are canonical, and, as it were, the first-fruits or anchors and props of our faith, as being written and composed by the apostles of Christ themselves, and those that associated with him, and were taught by him; but afterward, in accordance with their teaching, and in harmony with them, *myriads of other books, without number*, were composed by the fathers, who in their time were great and excellent in wisdom, and taught by God.”—*Synopsis Script. Sacr.*, sec. 4. See Good's Divine Rule, vol. i, p. 155.

they could not so garble as to make them serve the purposes of heresy and corruption.

But in the place of the genuine writings of the primitive Christians which Rome has suppressed, she has introduced a mass of forgeries. The most prominent of these spurious writings palmed upon the first century, is "The Canons of the Holy Apostles." In the collection of these canons by Labbé and Binius we are told, "they were made by the authority of the holy apostles." But though we have eighty-five canons, the Romish doctors do not altogether agree as to how many of them are genuine. Baronius and Bellarmine admit fifty of them, and reject the rest as apocryphal; but the learned editors, though they admit "only the first fifty as authentic," yet maintain that "the rest may, and ought also to be received, since they contain nothing (two of them excepted) but what is approved by some popes, councils, and fathers."\* Du Pin maintains the opinion of the bishop of Orleans, and also of Bishop Beveridge, "that although these canons are not written by the apostles, yet that they were very ancient, as being properly a collection of the canons of divers councils that were holden before that of Nice."† But Daille maintains that these canons "are of a much later date, and were not collected until about the end of the fifth century." The last opinion is by far the most probable.

Another production fraudulently palmed upon the apostles is "The Apostolical Constitutions." Of these Du Pin says, "The author is an impostor, that endeavours everywhere to pass for Clement, a disciple of

\* Lab., p. 53. Bin., p. 14. † Hist. Eccles., vol. i, p. 13.

the apostles, and who imputes to them all in general, and to every one in particular, divine ordinances that are in nowise consonant to the apostolical ones.”\*

The famous “Decretal Epistles” connected with the lives of the popes, from Clement to the time of Siricius, who lived three hundred years after, pretended to have been written by the several popes, constitute another notable Romish fraud. These “decretals” were received in the Western Church for many centuries as the genuine decrees of the ancient pious popes, transcribed into the canon law, and cited to justify the usurpations and defend the corruptions of the Romish Church; to determine causes and decide controversies in religion:† and yet they are all notorious forgeries; and since the revival of letters many eminent Romish writers have rejected them as such. Cardinal Cusanus says, “That being compared with the times in which they are pretended to have been written, they betray themselves.” And Baronius calls them “late invented evidences of no credit.” These *decretals* were forged by Isidore Mercator near eight hundred years after Christ, and first brought into France by Riculphus, bishop of Mentz.‡

\* Hist. Eccles., vol. i, p. 15. For the period of this writing, see before, p. 109.

† The famous Council of Constance, which burned John Huss and Jerome of Prague, ordained “that such of the *Decretal Epistles* as should be found, upon examination, to be rightly ascribed to the popes whose names they bore, should be of equal authority with the Epistles of the apostles.”—*L’Enfant’s History of the Council of Constance*, vol. i, p. 229.

‡ See Roman Forgeries in the Councils, by Dean Comber, in Bishop Gibson’s Preservative against Popery, tit. xi, p. 47.

Luther burned a copy of the "Decretal Epistles" upon the pile with the pope's bull of excommunication, having become fully satisfied of the spurious origin and injurious tendency of these base forgeries. And who can think of the infamous purposes which these abominable frauds have served, without heartily approving that heroic transaction? Numerous other forgeries of the same character might here be noticed, but I must forbear. Whoever wishes to see a full illustration of Romish piety and veracity will be amply satisfied by a perusal of Dean Comber's *Roman Forgeries*, and Daille's *Right Use of the Fathers*.

We have a volume of what purports to be the writings of the apostolic fathers, translated by Archbishop Wake, which is of very little authority. Some of these writings are unquestionable forgeries, and the whole so corrupted that we can quote but very little of them with any confidence. Verily, should the apostolic fathers arise from the dead, it is quite doubtful whether these writings would not be altogether new to them. But though we were to admit them all as genuine, we should lose nothing in this controversy, for they do not settle one of the questions at issue between us and the Roman and Anglican Catholics. Indeed, their explanations of Scripture are acknowledged by our opponents themselves often to be forced, fanciful, and absurd. Du Pin admits this, and yet proceeds to make apologies for these instances of false interpretation, which undoubtedly seemed to him of weight, but which weigh not the heft of a feather against the objections which they constitute against these writings in the character of "a divine informant."

But when all these "precious monuments of the apostles" are shown to be wholly without authority, our high-Churchmen, like the Romanists, contrive to do without them, by throwing themselves upon the "*Disciplina Arcani*" of the primitive church. The British Critic seems utterly astonished that Mr. Goode should so totally have overlooked this wonderful source of evidence as not to "give any reason to believe that he ever even *heard* of it."\* It would be strange if one so thoroughly acquainted with ecclesiastical affairs had "never even *heard* of the *Disciplina Arcani*:" it is not so strange, however, that he thought it unworthy of special attention. But lest I might, by some wise Catholic, be subjected to the same suspicion of ignorance of the true ground of the argument, I will set down a few notes upon the subject.

"No intimation is given either in the Scriptures, or in the writings of the apostolic fathers, or by Justin Martyr, that any rites or ordinances of religion are to be concealed from the people. Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clemens, are the first who make mention of any such custom of the Church. But it afterward became customary to celebrate the sacrament with an air of the most profound mystery, and indeed to administer baptism, and to perform most of the appropriate rites of religion, with cautious secrecy. Not only were unbelievers of every description excluded from the view of these rites, but catechumens also, and all who were not fully initiated into the Church and entitled to a participation in its ordinances. From all else the time, and place, and manner of administering the

\* Vol. xxxi, p. 91.

sacred rites were concealed, and the *import* of each rite was a profound mystery which none was at liberty to divulge or explain.”\*

The use made by the Romanists of the *secret discipline* of the primitive Christians is thus set forth by Bingham. He says, “The learned Schelstrate with a subtle invention has made a more general use of this ancient practice, to palliate and excuse all the novel doctrines and practices of his own church. He wrote a book, which he intituled *Disciplina Arcani*, a book highly magnified by Pagi and others of his own communion,† as stopping the mouths of the Protestants, when they ask the Romanists, ‘why no footsteps of their modern doctrines and practices appear in the earliest writers of the Church?’ The answer is ready upon all occasions from this *Disciplina Arcani*, ‘that it was because these doctrines and practices were kept secret, and only handed down by tradition, not committed to writing, lest they should come to the knowledge of the uninitiated Jews and Gentiles, and the catechumens of the Church.’ This is the reason, he tells us, why there is no account of the seven sacraments, nor of the worship of saints or images, in the first writers of the Church. The things were really believed and practised from the days of the apostles, as he will have it, but kept secret as the hidden mysteries of religion, which were not to be divulged to any but such as were initiated and prepared to know them.”‡

\* Coleman’s Antiquities of the Christian Church, p. 35.

† Pagi, Critic. in Baron. An. 118, n. 9.

‡ Origines Eccles., b. x, ch. v, sec. 1. Works, vol. iii, p. 97.

Mr. Faber gives this system a heathen origin. He says, "St. Paul, more especially when writing to the Gentile churches, often alludes, with great felicity, to the rites and ceremonies of the pagans. Among other matters, he, again and again, refers most pointedly to the ancient mysteries.\* This last illustrative idea was caught up, more eagerly than wisely, by the governors of the Church, *apparently*, as I have said, about the middle of the second century. The pagans had their venerable mysteries, into which none were admitted unless they had passed through a long previous novitiate: St. Paul might be supposed to countenance the establishment of yet more venerable Christian mysteries. Accordingly, the Church soon determined to have an institution of this nature, into which none should be admitted without passing through the long probationary stage of catechumenism. Henceforth then, with an ill-advised imitation of Gentilism, the bishop or officiating presbyter was made to correspond with the hierophant; the deacon, with the daduchus; the catechumen, with the aspirant; and the baptized communicant, with the illuminated epopt. Such was the mechanism of this singular institution; and the man must be ill-versed in the compositions of the early ecclesiastical writers, who has not observed a studied adaptation of language plainly enough borrowed from the phraseology of the pagan mysteries."†

\* Rom. xi, 25; xvi, 25-27. 1 Cor. ii, 4-8; xv, 47-51. Col. i, 26-28; ii, 1-4; iv, 2-5. Ephes. i, 9, 10, 16-18; v, 31, 32.

† See Tertull. Apol. adv. Gent., p. 821. Clem. Alex. Strom., lib. v, pp. 574-579. Origen. in Levit. Homil. ix. Comment. in Johan. Oper., vol. ii, pp. 97, 98. Lactant. Instit., lib. vii, sec. 26.

But it is of little consequence whence these *Christian mysteries* came, or what they were, since the very notion of *mysteries* furnishes a grand repository for such *traditions* as cannot be found in any authentic written documents. The use a modern Churchman can make of the *Disciplina Arcani* may be seen in Mr. Palmer's Antiquities of the English Ritual. But how it was regarded by an old Churchman may be seen by the following notice taken of the use made of it by Romanists:—

“But in my opinion,” says this learned writer, “the famous Mr. Schelstrate has gone the furthest toward the finding out an expedient which may be of equal force in all controversies. For in the year 1685 he put out a book, intituled *Dissertatio de Disciplina Arcani*, against Ernestus Teutzelius, a Lutheran divine, in defence of his commentaries upon the second Council of Antioch. In this book he shows that the Church concealed her doctrines a long time, and that the stream of tradition, like some rivers, ran for a great way under ground, till at last it broke out and discovered itself in this age or that council. If you inquire why we read nothing of *transubstantiation* in ancient authors? the answer is very easy and ready: *Disciplina Arcani*, (p. 150, 151.) Why the fathers did not assert the worship of images? *Disciplina Arcani*, (p. 124.) Why the doctrine of the trinity was not clearly taught before the Council of Nice? *Disciplina Arcani*, (p. 10–17.) Why we have no accounts of the seven sacraments

Cyrl. Hieros. Præfat. in Catech., pp. 3, 6–9. Cyrosost. Sanct. Miss. in Oper., vol. iv, p. 607.—*Difficulties of Romanism*, chap. vi, pp. 81, 82.



before the seventh century? *Disciplina Arcani*, (p. 104–106.) Why the writings of St. Denys, the Areopagite, lay so long concealed? *Disciplina Arcani*, (p. 120.) And so for any novelty else, *Disciplina Arcani* still returns upon you; and it is so great a charm, that some would be almost afraid of it, for it has a strange faculty of making everything look *aged* that it can but come near. This *Disciplina Arcani* is an occult quality to solve all difficulties by; and say what you will, these two emphatical words shall bear down all before them. And I am persuaded the following considerations will stand out against any attack but that of *Disciplina Arcani*.”\*

Now there can be no doubt but these are times of great anxiety with traditionists. And, under the emergencies which press upon them, that they should have invoked from the shades this same *Disciplina Arcani* to render them the needful aid, need not be thought strange. But it may well be feared that when it shall have a temporary resurrection, it will not, like the shade of Samuel, raised by the witch of Endor, utter oracles.

2. The records of primitive times which have come down to us have, both through ignorance and fraud, been greatly corrupted and mutilated. And what else could be reasonably expected? We receive these writings from the hands of men who acted upon the principle that *the end sanctifies the means*, and whose interest it was to make them speak in favour of the

\* The Authority of General Councils examined, and Roman Forgeries therein detected. By Dr. Comber, late Dean of Durham. Preface.

modern corruptions of the doctrines and institutions of Christianity. The Greeks and the Latins mutually accuse each other of corrupting even the most sacred records of the primitive church, upon points which were in question between them. Even the Nicene Creed has not wholly escaped the touch of hands always ready to make the ancient records what they *ought* to be—or to adjust them to their purpose; to say nothing of *de cælis*—*from heaven*; *secundum Scripturas*—*according to the Scriptures*; and *Deum de Deo*—*God of God*; which Cardinal Julian declared at the Council of Florence to be found in some creeds, and in some others to be wanting. It is now several ages since the Eastern Church accused the Western of having added *Filioque*—*and the Son*, to the article on the procession of the Holy Ghost; and the Western Church, in turn, accused the Eastern of having expunged this word from that article.\*

The popes, in their Indexes, have authorized and required such alterations—additions and retrenchments—of the writings of the fathers as are necessary to make them conform to their various heresies. I have now before me the Index Expurgatorius and Prohibit-

\* “One thing is remarkable,” says Dean Comber, “that Baronius and Binius charge the Greeks with taking away those words—‘and the Son’—out of this creed, and add, that they falsely pretended, this was a late addition of the Latins.<sup>1</sup> Yet Baronius himself avers, that the Western Church added these words—‘and the Son’—to the Nicene Creed, above a hundred years after;<sup>2</sup> so that they accuse the poor Greeks for keeping the creed as Athanasius made it, and as their own church used to recite the Nicene Creed for many years after.”—*Roman Forgeries, Preservative*, tit. ix, p. 81.

<sup>1</sup> Lab., p. 605.

<sup>2</sup> Baron. An. 447.

orius of Pope Sixtus V. This wonderful document furnishes the most ample proof of what I here allege. It contains, together with catalogues of books and authors prohibited or to be expurgated, twenty-two rules by which the inquisitors were to be governed in their work of ridding the literature of the Church of existing heresy, and preventing its introduction in future. The first two of these rules are as follows:—

“RULE I.—Whosoever shall not admit the books of the holy fathers, or writings concerning either faith or manners hitherto received by the Church, must be punished with penalties determined by law.

“RULE II.—But since the same religious teachers, either because they contended against heresies which had before arisen, or against those then springing up, being inflamed with zeal for the faith, have occasionally used some expressions, which the Church, taught by the Holy Spirit of God, has subsequently rejected, therefore it shall henceforth be lawful for no one to retain or use them: yet due reverence should be bestowed on the religious teachers themselves, because they did not write things of this character with the design of receding from the Catholic Church.”\*

\* “REGULA I.—Quicumque sanctorum patrum libros, vel scripta fidem, seu mores concernentia, ab ecclesia hactenus recepta, non admiserint, pœnis à jure statutis puniantur.

“REGULA II.—Quoniam verò iidem sancti doctores, vel quia ante obortas hæreses, vel quia, ut eas surgentes impugnant, fidei zelo accensi, quibusdam interdum locutionibus uti sunt, quas postea Dei ecclesia Spiritu Sancto edocta rejecit, nemini posthac eas tenere, aut eis uti liceat: sanctis verò ipsis doctoribus, quia non animo ab ecclesia catholica recedendi talia scripserunt, debita reverentia deferatur.”—*Index, &c.*, p. 7.

Here we have the law : let us now proceed to look at its practical operations. The following specimens are given by Daille. He proceeds :—

“ We do not here write against these men ; it is sufficient for us to give a hint only of that which is as clear as the sun, namely, that they have altered and corrupted, by their additions in some places, and curtailing in others, very many of the evidences of the ancient belief. These are they, who in this part of the twelfth epistle of Cyprian, written to the people of Carthage—‘ I desire that they would but patiently hear our council, &c., that our fellow-bishops being assembled together with us, we may together examine the letters and desires of the blessed martyrs, according to the doctrine of our Lord, and in the presence of the confessors, *et secundum vestram quoque sententiam*, (and according as you also shall think convenient,’) have maliciously left out these words, *et secundum vestram quoque sententiam* : by which we may plainly understand, that these men would not by any means have us know, that the faithful people had ever anything to do with, or had any vote in, the affairs of the church. These are the same, who, in his fortieth epistle, have changed *Petram* into *Petrum* ; (a *rock* into *Peter* ;) and who, following the steps of the ancient corrupters, have foisted into his tract *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, wherever they thought fit, whole periods and sentences, against the faith of the best and most uncorrupted manuscripts : as, for example, in this place : ‘ He built his church on Him alone, (Peter,) and commanded him to feed his sheep ;’ and in this : ‘ He established one sole chair ;’ and this other : ‘ The pri-

macy was given to Peter, to show that there was but one church, and one chair of Christ ;' and this : ' Who left the chair to Peter, on which he had built his church.' These being additions which every one may see the object of."

"These are the men, who, in Fulbertus, bishop of Chartres, (where he cites that remarkable passage of Augustine, 'This then is a figure commanding us to communicate of the passion of the Lord,') have inserted these words, '*Figura ergo est, dicit hæreticus:*' (It is a figure, then, will a heretic say :) cunningly making us believe this to be the saying of a heretic, which was indeed the true sense and meaning of Augustine himself, and so cited by Fulbertus."\*

It would be tedious to enumerate a tithe of the corruptions which have been detected in the Romish editions of the fathers and councils. The most that I can do is to give a few specimens of the usage to which these ancient authors have been subjected. From these the reader will be able to judge of the amount of confidence which is to be placed in the copies which have come to us from the hands of Romish editors.

We have a curious account of the efforts made to suppress an epistle of Chrysostom, on account of an offensive passage which it contained, given by Archbishop Wake. The following is the passage in the letter to which the Romanists except:—

"Before the bread is consecrated, we call it bread, but when the grace of God by the priest has consecrated it, it is no longer called bread, but is esteemed

\* Right Use of the Fathers, pp. 76, 77, 79.

worthy to be called the Lord's body, although the nature of the bread still remains in it; and we do not say there be two bodies, but one body of the Son; so here the divine nature being joined with the body, they both together make up but one Son, or person. But yet they must be confessed to remain without confusion, after an invisible manner, not in one nature, but in two perfect natures."

The archbishop says, "It is now above a hundred years since this passage was first produced by Peter Martyr, in his dispute with Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, concerning the eucharist. He then professed that he had copied it out of a Florentine manuscript, and that the whole epistle was put by him into Archbishop Cranmer's library. This Gardiner could not deny, who therefore, in his answer to him in 1552, endeavoured first to ascribe it to another John of Constantinople, who lived about the beginning of the sixth century. But still the argument recurred upon them, forasmuch as this other John was in the beginning of the sixth age, and transubstantiation by consequence was not the doctrine of the church then. And indeed Gamachæus is not unwilling to acknowledge this: for having with the rest assigned this epistle to the other John, he tells us, he is to be excused, for that transubstantiation was not so plainly delivered and explained in those days as it is now. But this Cardinal Perron could not bear; he neither thought fit to rely upon an evasion, which he saw would not do their business, nor could he endure to allow so ancient an author as either of the two Johns to have been so directly opposite to their sentiments in this matter. And therefore

flatly accused *Peter Martyr* of *forgery*, and uses abundance of arguments to persuade the world that there was never any such epistle as had been pretended.\* Thus stood this passage, and the whole epistle for its sake ; till about six years since, the learned Bigotius, who had twelve years before brought a copy of it from Florence, resolved to ruin all the endeavours of these men, by publishing this very epistle, which the cardinal had so loudly proclaimed to be a forgery, and proving it to be the genuine offspring of St. Chrysostom, contrary to what the rest had in vain pretended. Being quite finished and ready to come abroad, some of the doctors of the Sorbonne caused it to be suppressed, and the printed leaves cut out of the book, without anything to supply the place of them. And of this the edition of Palladius of that year remains a standing monument, both in the preface and in the book ; and it was publicly complained of by a very learned man, in an expostulation prefixed to a piece of Anastasius, published by him about two years after. But what that reverend person could not then obtain, having since fallen into my hands, I mean the very leaves cut out by these doctors, of Monsieur Bigot's preface, and the epistle raised out of the book ; I was unwilling to come into any part of their fraud, by detaining any longer that which hath so well deserved, and had so long since been prepared, for a public view. As to the authority of this piece, I shall need say no more than

\* As the library of Archbishop Cranmer, at his martyrdom, fell into the hands of the Popish party, they had probably taken care to destroy the copy of the epistle in question which Peter Martyr had there deposited.

what Monsieur Bigot has already done to prove it to be genuine. So many ancient authors have cited it, as St. Chrysostom's Epistle to Cesarius; such fragments of it remain in the most ancient writers as authentic, that he who, after all these, shall call this piece in question, may with the same reasonableness doubt of all the rest of his works, which, perhaps upon less grounds, are on all sides allowed as true and undoubted."\*

After this statement of the facts of this monstrous fraud, the archbishop gives the entire epistle, with M. Bigot's preface.

Another striking instance of authorized corruption in publishing the fathers is given by Du Pin, in his account of the works of St. Ambrose. He says, "The fifth and sixth [editions] appeared under the pontificate of Sixtus V., in 1585 and 1587. This edition was, after that, the pattern and original which was followed in the edition at Paris, begun in 1586, and in all the other following editions, which are very numerous. 'Twas believed that a book published with so much ostentation, valued so much by the publisher, printed in so fine a character, and with so much care, must needs be very correct and perfect; and yet this edition has many essential defects which disfigure it. The first and most considerable is, that the Roman correctors took the liberty to change, cut off, and add what they thought fit, though they had no ground to do so

\* See *The Doctrines in dispute between the Church of England and the Church of Rome truly represented. Appendix. I use the copy in Bishop Gibson's Preservative against Popery, tit. ix, p. 104.*



from the authority of any manuscript. They carried it so far, as that they did not content themselves with changing those terms which appeared to them harsh, and substitute others according to their fancy, but they also blotted out or added whole lines and periods, which made a perfectly new sense, and altogether different from the author's, as may be seen by comparing the ancient editions and the last with this Roman edition. Secondly. They have inserted into the commentaries the whole text of the sacred books, which hinders the reading the commentary of St. Ambrose without interruption. Thirdly. The order which they have observed in ranging the books is not natural. They have placed some letters among the treatises upon the Holy Scripture, they have separated books that ought to follow one upon another, as the complaints of Job and David, whereof one is placed in the first tome, and the other in the second; they have joined together some treatises which should be separated; they have ranked the letters in a very inconvenient order. In a word, by too much refining they have corrupted all, as Faber says in a letter to Fronto Ducæus, where he observes the faults of the Roman edition of St. Ambrose. 'I have found,' says he to him, 'that *nimis fuere ingeniosi in alieno opere*, as in the books *De Interpellatione Sanctorum Job et David*, which they have separated, and placed the one in the first tome, and the other in the second, to do which they were forced, *quædam interpolare minime probabili exemplo*. They have done the same in *priore Apologia David*; and in the second that which is yet worse; for because it is said in the eighth chapter that the

History of David with Bathsheba is not a history, (which shows that this book is none of St. Ambrose's, but some Origenist's, who allegorizes almost all the Bible, as also it seems, by the reading of it, to be collected and made up out of two or three sermons,) they have taken away five or six lines, which are found in all the ancient editions.' Fourthly. They have made a particular class of some supposititious books, and yet they have left a great number of them among St. Ambrose's genuine works. There are some of them whose forgery is so manifest that they cannot be pardoned, such as the books *De Arbore Interdicta*, *De Dignitate Hominis*, *De Vocatione Gentium*, the epistle *Ad Demetriadem in Symbolum Apostolorum*, and many others. They must be very ignorant who believed that these books were written by St. Ambrose, and very impudent who left them among his genuine works, when they had a design to make a distinct class of those that were supposititious.

"In short, the authors of this edition have made no notes, or marked in the margin any different readings; they have only added at the end the theological and scholastical dissertations of one Ferdinand Wellofillus, which are a collection of common-places and passages of the fathers upon different questions, which are of no use at all for understanding the text of St. Ambrose."\*

No commentary upon these curious and instructive pieces of history is necessary. They are but two instances of many in which ancient records have been mutilated and suppressed, lest they should bear testimony against the abominations of Popery. Indeed, the

\* Hist. Eccles., vol. ii, pp. 233, 234.

Church of Rome claims the right to *correct* the fathers when she finds them in *error*. The Jesuit Gutzer says, "The sayings of the fathers, as they are fathers, need no purging;" yet "being considered as sons, their words may be corrected and censured by the Church." "Dr. James refers to two *Expurgatory Indexes*, where certain sentences or words in the text of Gregory Nyssen, Chrysostom, Anastasius, Euchirius, Procopius, Agapetus, and Didymus Alexandrinus, 'against idolatry, satisfactions, Peter's primacy, and for the supremacy of temporal kings and princes,' are ordered to be erased; and testifies to having seen a copy of Chrysostom, in which 'diverse sentences' had been blotted out by the inquisitors."\*

The fact that these corruptions have proceeded so far as to render doubtful almost the whole of the ancient records of the Church which remain, is strongly asserted by the learned Bishop Taylor. He says, "But that the *Indices Expurgatorii*, commanded by authority, and practised with public license, profess to alter and correct the sayings of the fathers, and to reconcile them to the catholic sense, by putting in and leaving out, is so great an imposture, so unchristian a proceeding, that it hath made the faith of all books, and of all authorities, justly to be suspected. For considering their infinite diligence and great opportunity, as having had most of the copies in their own hands, together with an unsatisfiable desire of prevailing in their right, or in their wrong, they have made an absolute destruction of this topic; and when the fathers speak Latin, or breathe in a Roman diocess,

\* Goode's Divine Rule, vol. i, p. 175.

although the providence of God does infinitely overrule them, and that it is next to a miracle that in the monuments of antiquity there is no more found that can pretend for their advantage than there is, which, indeed, is infinitely considerable, yet our questions and uncertainties are infinitely multiplied, instead of a probable and reasonable determination. For since the Latins always complained of the Greeks for privately corrupting the ancient records both of councils and fathers, and now the Latins make open profession not of corrupting but of *correcting* their writings, and at the most it was but a human authority, and that of persons not always learned, and very often deceived, [and the bishop might add, when not unlearned or deceived, *designing to deceive the unlearned,*] *the whole matter is so unreasonable, that it is not worth a further disquisition.*”\*

Now, considering that the Romish editors and copyists have touched with their ruthless hands everything we have from the Latins or Greeks of primitive times, and in view of the numerous mutilations and forgeries which have been detected, and the multitude which have probably escaped detection, who, with a whit of rational confidence, can go to these records for true reports of “the oral preachings of the apostles?” This query I leave for the present for the unprejudiced to solve, without further reflections.

\* Lib. of Prophe., sec. 8. This author goes into a learned investigation of the whole subject of tradition, and the frauds and corruptions of the Romish editors, in his “Second Part of the Dissuasion from Popery,” book i, sec. 3, 6; in which a tolerably full view “of the Expurgatory Indices in the Roman Church” may be seen.

3. The fathers did not agree in many vital points, and later fathers explicitly dissent from the opinions of the more ancient.

Some of the anti-Nicene fathers express themselves dubiously as to the divinity of the Logos, or Word; and several explicitly teach that the Holy Ghost was created. Origen teaches that "the Holy Spirit was made by the Word." Pierius, who succeeded Origen in the school of Alexandria, affirms that "the Spirit is inferior in glory to the Father and the Son." Novatian says, "Every Spirit is a creature," and says the Paraclete is "inferior to Christ." Jerome says that Lactantius "altogether denies the entity of the Spirit." And Eusebius tells us that the Holy Spirit is "one of those things which were made by the Son," and adds, that this is the doctrine of "*the catholic church.*" In opposition to these, Cyprian, Basil, Jerome, and Augustine, bore a decided testimony in favour of the doctrine of the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit.

Another doctrine upon which the fathers have left upon record contradictory opinions is the doctrine of original sin. As a specimen, I oppose here CLEMENT of Alexandria and AUGUSTINE. The former says, "Let them tell us where the new-born infant hath committed fornication, or how *one who has done nothing has fallen under Adam's curse.*"\* On the other hand, Augustine asserts, "The race are propagated by generation, bringing original sin with them, since the vice propagates the vice."†

There is the like disagreement among the fathers upon the intermediate state. IRENÆUS says, "Since

\* Strom., lib. iii.

† C. Jul., vi, 7.

the Lord departed to the valley of the shadow of death, *where the souls of the dead were*, and then afterward rose in the body, and after his resurrection was taken up; it is manifest that the souls of his disciples also, on whose account the Lord did these things, go away to the place appointed for them by God, and there dwell until the resurrection . . . and then having had their bodies restored to them, and risen perfectly, that is, with their bodies, even as the Lord arose, shall thus come to the vision of God.”\* JUSTIN MARTYR says, “The souls of the pious remain somewhere in a better sort of place, and the unjust and wicked souls in a worse, awaiting the time of the judgment.”† Again he says, “If ye meet with some who are called Christians, . . . who say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that, *as soon as they die, their souls are taken up into heaven*, you must not suppose them to be Christians.”‡ And TERTULLIAN says, “It is evident to every wise man . . . that there is a certain place which is called the bosom of Abraham, set apart for the reception of the souls of his children, . . . that that place, therefore, . . . which, although *not in heaven*, is yet above the lower regions, will, in the mean time, afford refreshment to the souls of the just until the consummation of things shall bring about the renovation of all in the fulness of the reward.”§ Others might be quoted to the same purpose, especially CLEMENT of Alexandria and ORIGEN.

But other fathers teach that the souls of the faithful go immediately from the body to heaven. IGNATIUS,

\* Iren., lib. v, c. 31.

† Dial. cum Trypho, § 5.

‡ Ibid., § 80.

§ Tertul. Mare., lib. iv, c. 34.

in his Epistle to the Romans, in the prospect of martyrdom, says, "Suffer me to become the food of wild beasts, through whom it is in my power to attain the presence of God." Again he says, "The living water . . . . says within me, *Come to the Father.*"\*

ST. CYPRIAN says, "How great is the honour, and how great the security, to go home joyful! to depart in triumph amidst afflictions and troubles! to shut in one moment the eyes with which men and the world are seen, and to open them *immediately*, that *God may be seen*, and Christ! How great the speed of the happy journey! You are *suddenly* taken from the earth, that you may be placed in a *state of rest in the heavenly kingdom.*"† EPIPHANIUS, AMBROSE, and others, maintain the same opinions.

But some of the ancient doctors oppose, without the least scruple, the opinions of those who had preceded them, and whose writings, according to the system here opposed, they must have recognised as an infallible echo of "the preachings of the apostles." ORIGEN is taken severely to task by JEROME, and many others. And DIONYSIUS, of Alexandria, is strongly reprehended by BASIL and GENNADIUS. And GREGORY NYSSEN charges THEOGNASTUS with being "deceived" and led astray. JEROME says of LACTANTIUS, that, "in his writings, . . . . he altogether denies the entity of the Holy Spirit; and, by a Jewish error, says that he is to be referred either to the Father or the Son; and that the holiness of each person is pointed out under his name." And, again, "*Many, through ignorance of the Scriptures, assert that*

\* Ep. ad Rom., § iv, et 7.

† De exhort. mart.

the Father and the Son are often called the Holy Spirit. And while we ought clearly to believe in a Trinity, they, taking away the third person, hold it not to be a hypostasis of the Trinity, but a name.”\*

ST. AUGUSTINE, after speaking of the unerring truth of Holy Scripture, turns to the writings of the doctors, and says, “But others, however distinguished they may be for holiness and learning, I so read as not to think anything true, because they thought it to be so, but *because they are able to persuade me, either by those canonical authors, or by some probable reason, that it is agreeable to the truth.*”† Surely Augustine had not been instructed in the doctrine of patristic tradition!

And when we consult the fathers upon particular texts of Scripture, we find them differing among themselves as much as in their dogmatic discourses. ORIGEN acknowledges this difference among Christian teachers. “Celsus remarks,” says he, “that they [that is, the early Christians] were all of one mind; not observing in this, *that from the very beginning there were differences among believers respecting the meaning of the books that were believed to be divine.*”‡ I cannot give place to specimens of these diversities. The subject is set in a just and clear light by Placette.

“How little help,” says this learned author, “there is for Scripture in tradition, appeareth hence, that it can no otherwise teach what is the true sense of Scripture, but by the unanimous consent of the fathers, which, whether it be to be had in any one text of

\* See Goode's Divine Rule, vol. i, pp. 221-223.

† Epist. ad Hieron. 82.

‡ Contra. Cel., lib. iii, § 11.



Scripture, may be much doubted. It was a hard condition, therefore, which Pope Pius IV. prescribed in his profession of faith to all who desired admission into the Church of Rome, and which may for ever silence all the Romish commentators, 'that they will never receive nor interpret Scripture any otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers.' Now I would fain know *how this can be observed*, since I may confidently affirm that *there is no one place of Scripture explained the same way by all the fathers*. For there are many places which none of them have touched, and none which all have interpreted. Nor will it suffice to say, that they agree who have interpreted it, and that the silence of the rest is to be taken for consent, as if they must be supposed to consent who were ignorant of such interpretations, or died, perhaps, before they were made, or, as if the ancients were wont expressly to reject all interpretations different from their own, or those might not be rejected, or, at least, others proposed, in those books of the fathers which are lost. It is not enough, therefore, to have the consent of a few unless we be assured of the concurrence of the rest. But granting that it is, it cannot be denied that our adversaries can collect nothing certain out of any place of Scripture, if any one of the ancients have interpreted it otherwise. Hence Alphonsus à Castro requireth that among the necessary qualifications of a text of Scripture to be produced for the conviction of heretics, this be the chief, 'That it be so plain and undoubted that none of the sacred and approved doctors interpret it in some other sense, according to which such a

proposition cannot thereby be convinced of heresy.' But if this be true, how few places will there be of whose sense we may not doubt? Certainly there are very few explained the same way by all ancient commentators. . . . The anonymous writer of the 'Treatise of the Liberties of the Gallican Church' maintains that there are few places of Scripture which the holy fathers have not differently interpreted. As will also manifestly appear to any one who shall consult those interpreters who are wont to produce the expositions of the ancient writers. Hence the reader may imagine *to what a strait our adversaries would be reduced if they were tied up to their own laws*, and allowed to urge no other places of Scripture against us than what are unanimously interpreted by the fathers. A specimen hereof may be found in *Launoy*, where he weigheth the texts of Scripture produced by Bellarmine for the pope's authority; and showing that they are diversely explained by the ancients, concluding thence, that they are wholly ineffectual. *That the sense of Scripture cannot be learned from tradition here appeareth*; but neither is it taught any better by the Church. At least she hath not yet taught it. For how many decrees are there about the true sense of Scripture? Decrees, I say: for not every simple explication or allegation of a text is to be looked upon as an authentic interpretation of it; but only that which hath an anathema affixed to the deniers of it, or dissenters from it. Of this kind I find but four or five in the decrees of the Council of Trent, and in those of elder councils none at all. For fifteen hundred years the Church delivered not the sense of

so much as one place; whence may be judged both what a faithful interpreter she is of the Holy Scriptures, and how small assistance we are to expect from her in obtaining the true sense of them.”\*

So reasoned a learned French Protestant, who, upon the revocation of the edict of Nantz, took refuge in foreign countries, and from his retreat poured a galling fire upon his persecutors. And let it not be forgotten that Placette’s unanswerable argument against tradition, as now contended for by good Churchmen, was translated by an archbishop of the Church of England,† and is republished by a bishop of that Church,‡ in a great work, containing a multitude of the best tracts against Popery, entitled, “A Preservative against Popery,” &c., three vols., folio, 1738. I could wish our Churchmen of the present day would take an occasional lesson from their ancient and learned bishops and archbishops. But for aught that appears, these great defenders of the Reformation are to be left to “ultra-Protestants,” “dissenters,” and “schismatics!”

4. It is a fact, that doctrines and usages maintained by primitive fathers *as having come from the apostles*, are rejected and opposed by other fathers.

The millennium, or the personal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years, after the resurrection of the just and the unjust, was maintained by the fathers of the first two and a half centuries. And for this doctrine the fathers plead both Scripture and tradition.

\* Incurable Skepticism of the Church of Rome; Preservative against Popery, tit. xiii, pp. 58, 59.

† Archbishop Tennyson.

‡ Bishop Gibson.

IRENÆUS says, "The above-mentioned blessing belongs undeniably to the times of the kingdom, when the just shall rise from the dead and reign; when the creation, renovated and freed, shall bring forth abundantly of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven and the fertility of the earth: *as the presbyters, who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, have related that they heard from him in accordance with what the Lord taught concerning those times, and said, 'The days shall come in the which vines shall spring up, having each ten thousand branches,' &c. . . .* These things also, Papias, a hearer of John, and who became the companion of Polycarp, a man of ancient times, witnesses in writing, in the fourth of his books, for there were five books written by him." And again, "*Then, as the presbyters say, shall those who are worthy of a dwelling in heaven, depart thither; and others shall enjoy the delights of paradise; and others shall possess the beauty of the city; for everywhere shall the Saviour be beheld according as those who see him shall be worthy. . . . That this is the arrangement and classification of those who are saved, the presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, tell us, and that they advance through such stages; and ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father; the Son finally giving up his own creation, as also it is said by the apostles.*"\*

JUSTIN MARTYR, TERTULLIAN, NEPOS, VICTORINUS, PETAMANENSIS, LACTANTIUS, APOLLINARIUS, jr., and SULPITIUS SEVERUS, maintain the same views. After adducing these authorities, Mr. Goode says, "It

\* Iren. Adv. Hær., lib. v, c. 33, 36.

is impossible, then, to deny that the testimony, in favour of this doctrine, *as an apostolic tradition*, is such as can be adduced for hardly any other; and by the earliest fathers it is delivered to us as one which it savours strongly of heresy to deny. They delivered it to us as the undeniable sense of Scripture, and as confirmed by the testimony coming to them by successional delivery from the oral teaching of the apostles.

“Nor is it till we come to the middle of the third century that we find any record of any person of note in the Church opposing it. About that time we find, by an incidental notice of the work in Eusebius and Jerome, that Dionysius of Alexandria wrote a book against it, in refutation of one by Nepos, according to Eusebius, or, as Jerome says, against Irenæus; and was answered by Apollinarius, who (as Jerome tells us) was followed *in this point* by most of the Western Church in Jerome’s part of the world. And after this period we find most of the authors that remain to us opposing, and even ridiculing, the doctrine.”\*

The same may be said with regard to the time of keeping Easter. The Eastern division of the Church, as Eusebius tells us, “observed the fourteenth day of the moon, being the day on which the Jews were commanded to kill the lamb.” But in the West it was solemnly determined “that the mystery of our Lord’s resurrection should never be celebrated on any other day but Sunday.” Now the same authority informs us, that each custom was professedly founded upon “apostolical tradition.”† And Socrates Scholas-

\* See Divine Rule, vol. i, pp. 248-253.

† Euseb. Eccl. Hist., lib. v, c. 22.

ticus says, "The quarto decimani [that is, those who kept the feast of Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon] do affirm, that the observation of the fourteenth day of the moon was delivered to them by John the apostle. But the Romans, and those in the Western parts, say that the usage in force with them was delivered by the apostles Peter and Paul."\*

Irenæus, in his pacific letter to Victor, bishop of Rome, who had pronounced against the Eastern bishops sentence of excommunication for adhering to their tradition, says, "This variety of observing—has not been begun in our age, but a long while since, in the times of our ancestors; who being (as 'tis probable) not so diligent in their presidencies, proposed that as a custom to their successors, which was introduced by simplicity and unskilfulness."†

The following forcible remark upon this matter is from Dean Comber:—

"Though Binius's Notes brag of apostolical and universal tradition, the bishops of Asia produced a contrary tradition, and called it apostolical, for keeping Easter at a different time; *which shows how uncertain a ground tradition is for articles of faith*, when it varied so much in delivering down a practical rite through little more than one century."‡

Conflicting traditions were also plead upon the subject of rebaptizing those who had been baptized by

\* See Eccl. Hist., as published in the English translation of Eusebius. London, 1709.

† Euseb. Eccl. Hist., lib. v, c. 24.

‡ See Roman Forgeries in the Preservative against Popery, tit. xi, p. 55.

heretics. A controversy arose upon this subject in the middle of the third century between Cyprian and Stephen, bishop of Rome. Stephen maintained, as a tradition, that "the apostles forbade that those who came over from any heresy should be baptized, and delivered this to posterity to be observed." But Cyprian replies, "Nor let any one say, we follow that which we have received from the apostles, since the apostles delivered that there was only one Church and one baptism." And Firmilian, bishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia, says, "We to truth *join custom*, and to the custom of the Romans oppose custom, but the custom of truth; holding this to have been from the beginning which was delivered by Christ and the apostles. *Nor do we recollect that this had any beginning with us, since it was always observed here*, that we should acknowledge but one Church of God, and that we should reckon that only to be holy baptism which was of the holy Church."\*

There are other points in which it might be supposed that tradition would, at least for awhile, have preserved the truth, upon which it entirely fails. The following is presented by Mr. Goode:—

"Thus, as to the duration of our Lord's public ministry, we are told by Clement of Alexandria, that he preached only one year, and by Origen, that he preached a year and a few months. Irenæus, on the other hand, shows how contrary this notion is to the testimony of the Gospels themselves, but with equal error asserts that our Lord was forty or fifty years old at the time of his death, for which he refers to Scrip-

\* Firm. ad Cyprian, ep. 75.

ture and *tradition*, asserting that all the elders who had been acquainted with St. John in Asia, testified that he had delivered this to them; some of whom had seen other apostles, and heard the same account from them."

All going most conclusively to show that "the elders," even in those primitive times, were often forgetful, and that the most learned fathers sometimes wrote carelessly and fell into mistakes. And yet, forsooth, they must be taken as *infallible* interpreters of Holy Scripture!

5. The testimony of the fathers is not always to be relied upon when they claim the authority of the Church.

Origen is charged by Jerome with "making his own fancies mysteries of the Church." And Jerome himself maintains it to be "a doctrine of the Church, that the souls of infants are created by God, and transfused into them before their birth." Augustine opposed this dogma as being subversive of the doctrine of *original sin*, which, with "the indubitable damnation of infants, unless they are regenerated in Christ," that is, *baptized*, he asserted to be doctrines of the Catholic Church. Gennadius reckoned among the doctrines of the Church, that "every creature is corporeal, the angels and all the heavenly powers are corporeal, although not of a fleshly substance." That this, however, was the doctrine of the Church, may be fairly doubted from the fact that Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Gregory Nyssen wholly and explicitly dissent from the notion.

Gennadius also reckons it a doctrine of the Church,



that “the angels and all the heavenly powers were made when the darkness yet covered the waters. But Origen tells us, that when and how the angels were created is a point not clearly manifested in the teaching of the Church.”\*

6. As little confidence is to be placed in the decisions of councils, even the largest and most general the Church has ever seen collected, as in the writings of the fathers. We give from Mr. Goode two specimens of a want of *consent* in the decisions of these councils :—

“In less than twenty-five years after the meeting of the first council which had any *pretension* to be called a general council—namely, the first Nicene—the orthodox creed there established was contradicted by a far more numerous assembly of bishops, which met for the Western Church at Ariminum, and for the Eastern at Seleucia ; and of which Bishop Stillingfleet says, ‘The Council of Ariminum, together with that of Seleucia, which sat at the same time, *make up the most general council we read of in church history.* For Belarmine owns that there were six hundred bishops in the Western part of it. So that there were many more bishops assembled than were in the Council of Nice ; there was no exception against the summons, or the bishops present.’

“Again, another proof of this is afforded us in the contradictory determinations of the second Council of Ephesus in 449, and the Council of Chalcedon (called the fourth general council) in 451. It is a well-known fact, that the great question upon which both these

\* See Goode’s *Divine Rule*, vol. i, pp. 271-276.

councils were assembled, that relating to the Eutychian error respecting the person of Christ, was determined by them in a precisely opposite manner; and the leading advocate of each opinion punished and sent into exile by these councils respectively; Flavianus by that of Ephesus, Dioscorus by that of Chalcedon.”\*

The controversy upon the latter instance of contradictory decisions in the general councils between Bishop Jewel and Dr. Cole clearly shows the views the old reformers entertained of the soundness of the decisions of these bodies, and the shifts and evasions to which their opponents were driven.

Says Bishop Jewel, “When ye say, ye could never yet find the error of one general council, I trow this escaped you, for default of memory. *Albertus Pigghius*, the greatest learned man of your side, hath found out such errors to your hands, namely, in his book that he calleth *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, speaking of the second council holden at *Ephesus*, which ye cannot deny but it was general, and yet took part with the heretic abbot *Eutychus* against the godly man *Flavianus*; he writeth thus: ‘*Concilia universalia, etiam congregata legitime, ut bene ita perperam injuste impieque judicare ac definire possunt;*’ that is, ‘General councils, yea, even such as be lawfully summoned, as they may conclude things well, so may they likewise judge and determine things rashly, unjustly, and wickedly.’”

To this Dr. Cole replies, “Ye ground yourself upon Pigghius’s error: for Pigghius holdeth the Council of Ephesus was general, which the Council of Chalcedon denieth. So that I marvel much hearing of you, that

\* Divine Rule, vol. i, pp. 276, 277.

ye allege that for a council which hath no place in the book of councils."

Bishop Jewel responds, "In Pigghius's words there are two things to be noted. The one is, that he saith a general council may err in faith: the other, that he saith, the second Council of Ephesus was general. And forasmuch as ye challenge him only for the latter, I think ye will agree with him in the first; which to my purpose is sufficient. But here ye cause me to marvel, what ye mean, to make so light account of Pigghius: for he, as ye know, hath been taken for the chiefest champion of your side.

"Pigghius saith the Council of *Ephesus* was general; and ye say it was not so. Ye must give me leave to say the truth; if the matter come to a *quid dicunt*, Pigghius will be taken in the country for a man as well learned, and as skilful in the councils, as Doctor Cole. Ye should not so little esteem the doctors of your own side, lest that, not being able to allege any old doctor, and refusing the new, it may haply be thought ye have neither old nor new. And yet, when ye were before the queen's majesty's commissioners, at *Lambeth*, ye said openly there, that Pigghius is full of errors. But forasmuch as ye yourself have begun to find fault with your own doctors, I trust hereafter ye will the better bear with us, if we sometimes shall do the same. Here ye drive me to use the more words, partly to defend Pigghius in his right, and partly to make you see how wilfully ye withstand an open truth, having so little to the contrary. And as ye shall be found true in this, even so am I well content to take you in all the rest.

“First. *Nicephorus* and *Evagrius*, that write the whole story and order of the Council of *Ephesus*, never denied it to be general. *Theodosius*, the emperor, that summoned the bishops together, as it may appear by his words, took it to be general. For thus he writeth to the council: ‘*Cogitantes non esse tutum absque vestra, sancta synodo, et ubique sanctarum ecclesiarum præsulibus, hujusmodi quæstionem de fidei renovari, necessarium duximus vestram sanctitatem conveniere.*’ These words, *sanctarum ecclesiarum, quæ ubique sunt*, import a generality of all churches through the world. Further, there was the emperor’s authority, the bishop of Rome’s legates; which, as some men think, maketh up altogether, and other bishops of all nations. And how could such a council not be general?” After this the bishop quotes the Paris doctors, who say, “That the council be lawfully gathered, it should be sufficient that the solemnity, and form of law, be observed throughout.” This he claims to have been observed in the Council of *Ephesus*.

He then observes, that *Eutyclus* and *Dioscorus* recognise it as a “*general council.*” “But,” proceeds the learned bishop, “if perhaps ye doubt of these words, because the one was *Eutyclus*, the other was *Dioscorus*, by whom they were spoken, (howbeit notwithstanding they were heretics, yet could they not lightly make an open lie in a matter that was so evident,) then read ye the old father, *Liberatus*, that was *archidiaconus carthaginensis*, and lived under *Vigilius*, bishop of Rome, at the least a thousand years ago, and writeth the very story of this council; his words are these: ‘*Fit Ephesi generale concilium, ad quod con-*

venerunt, Flavinus, et Eutychus, tanquam judicandi.’ ‘There is appointed,’ saith he, ‘at Ephesus, a general council, in the which *Flavianus* and *Eutychus* made their appearance, as men standing to be judged.’ Now, if ye will say that *generale concilium* is not, in English, *a general council*, then I would it might be put over to some other court. O master doctor, if ye meant nothing but truth, ye would not do as ye do!”\*

The canons of the councils have been sadly mutilated and corrupted, so that it is now difficult to tell whether they have all been handed down to us, or whether some which are reported have not been forged by unscrupulous hands. The Greeks and the Latins have for centuries mutually charged each other with publishing spurious canons, and suppressing genuine ones.† In some instances it is possible for the scholar to arrive at a probable conclusion in these matters, but in others darkness and mystery reign, and will probably continue to do so to the end of time.

I have previously noticed that there are diversities in the Nicene Creed which indicate undue liberties upon the part either of the Greeks or Latins. I will now give a brief view of the corruptions of the canons of the Council of Nice which have been perpetrated by the Romanists, from Dean Comber:—

“*Sixthly*, therefore, we will consider the impostures and fictions annexed to this council, to give colour to their feigned supremacy. And *first*. Because Eusebius speaks little of the popes, for he could not truly

\* Jewel’s Works, fol., 1609, pp. 34, 35.

† For a tolerably full view of this subject, see Daille’s *Right Use of the Fathers*, pp. 63–69.

say much of them, Baronius and the annotator invent all the calumnies against him imaginable; and the former (though he have little true history in his Annals for three hundred years together which is not taken out of Eusebius) rails at him most unjustly, as being an Arian; a malicious, fraudulent, and partial writer.\* And Binius treats this great historian at the same rate: but Athanasius expressly saith, that Eusebius of Cesarea subscribed the orthodox faith.† Socrates affirms also, that he agreed to the faith of the Nicene Council.‡ Pisanus, his Greek author of the History of this council, brings in Eusebius disputing against the Arians:§ and Valesius, in his Life, clears him from this spiteful accusation, which these men invent merely to be revenged on him, for not countenancing the pope's supremacy; which is not his fault, but his virtue, because there was no such thing pretended to in his days. *Secondly.* These editors publish a letter of Athanasius to Pope Marcus, with that pope's answer,|| among the records of this council; and the annotator often cites them to prove the supremacy and infallibility, because the Roman Church is here called *the mother and head of all churches*, and, *a church which had never erred*; and the pope is called *bishop of the universal church*; yet their being forged is so notorious, that Bellarmine, Possevin, and Baronius,¶ reject them. *Thirdly.* They

\* Baron. An. 318, sec. 46; An. 324, sec. 136, 143, et 152; item An. 325, sec. 192, &c.

† Athan. Apol. cont. Arian., p. 180.

‡ Socrat. Hist., lib. i, cap. 3. § Bin., p. 313 col. 2.

|| Lab., p. 287. Bin., p. 326, col. 1 et 2.

¶ Baron. An. Dom. 336.

likewise publish in these Nicene acts an epistle of Pope Julius, wherein diverse canons for the primacy are fathered on this great council:\* and Pisanus is so bold and so vain as to defend this to be genuine, by an epistle of the Egyptians to Pope Felix, (owned to be forged,†) and by other decretal epistles as false as this, which he defends; but it is so manifest a forgery, this of Pope Julius, that the editors themselves afterward reject it.‡ *Fourthly*. Whereas the ninth canon of Chalcedon allows the clergy to complain to the primate, or to the bishop of the royal city of Constantinople; notes are put upon this to falsify that canon, which say, that Constantinople is here put for Rome.§ *Fifthly*. Here is a canon called the thirty-ninth of Nice, which saith, *He that holds the see of Rome is the head and prince of all patriarchs; because he is first, as Peter, to whom power is given over all Christian princes and people;*|| which must be a forgery of some Roman parasite, because it not only contradicts the sixth canon of the genuine Council of Nice, but the eighth of these pretended canons, which limits the bishop of Rome's jurisdiction to the places near to him.¶ However, the editors say, Steuchus, Turrian, and Cope cite it; and they print Turrian's notes upon it, which affirm it to agree with the sixth canon of the true edition; and would prove it genuine by no better evidence than a forged decretal of Anacletus.\*\* By which we see the

\* Bin., p. 328, col. 2.

† Bin., p. 499, col. 1.

‡ Lab., p. 433. Bin., p. 391, col. 1.

§ Bin., p. 331, col. 1.

|| Lab., p. 303. Bin., p. 337, col. 2.

¶ Lab., p. 294. Bin., p. 333, col. 1.

\*\* Bin., p. 358, col. 1.

most apparent falsehoods shall be published and defended, if they do but promote the supremacy.

“*Lastly.* We will make some remarks on the corrupt editions of this council. *First.* That of Alfonsus Pisanus is so fabulous, that Labbé for mere shame omits it;\* but Binius prints it at large, with all its fictions and impostures;† of which Richerius gives this character, ‘By this History of Pisanus we may learn, not what the Council of Nice was, but what it should be to fit it for a Jesuit’s palate; for he hath scraped together all the falsehoods and forgeries he could find, for enlarging the number of the canons.’‡ But I must add, that there are divers passages in this edition which will not serve the ends of the modern Roman flatterers: for *first.* Pisanus his Greek author highly extols Eusebius;§ for which the Jesuit corrects him with a note in the margin. *Secondly.* The orthodox bishop bids the philosopher ‘believe that which was written, but not to regard things unwritten, because the faith is grounded on Holy Scripture:’|| whereas the margin cautions the reader not to think that ‘this is spoken against ecclesiastical traditions,’ though it be levelled at them. *Thirdly.* Hosius doth not subscribe (as the pope’s legates here do) for Pope Sylvester; wherefore this compiler did not think him to be the pope’s legate.¶ *Fourthly.* It is here said to have been declared at Nice, ‘That every bishop under God was the head of his own church.’\*\*\* *Fifthly.* Here

\* Lab., marg., p. 106.

† Bin., p. 300, col. 1.

‡ Richer. Hist. Concil., lib. i, cap. ii, § ult.

§ Bin., p. 301, col. 2, et 302, col. 2.

|| Bin., p. 316, col. 1.

¶ Bin., p. 322, col. 1.

\*\* Bin., p. 325, col. 2.



is printed that part of the African bishop's letter to Celestine, wherein they blame this legate for falsely citing the Nicene Canons.\* So also the LXXX Canons were not invented by a thorough-paced friend to the Roman modern interest, and therefore probably Baronius will not defend them.† The eighth canon (as was noted) limits the pope's jurisdiction to such places as were near him. The twenty-fourth and sixty-sixth of these canons clearly declare, that some bishops had wives,‡ forbidding bigamy, and compelling them to take their first wife again. And there are other like examples, which are not worth setting down, because they are all forged in later times, as appears by their citing a fabulous discourse out of the Life of St. Anthony, falsely ascribed to the great Athanasius,§ by their quoting a spurious work under the name of *Dionysius Areopagita*, which was (as all agree) writ after the Nicene Council many years: || by their giving the patriarch of Antioch jurisdiction over the archbishop of Cyprus, who was always free from that subjection, as was declared long after in the Council of Ephesus.¶ *Finally*. Though this Pisanus do impudently reject the true story of Paphnutius his advising to leave the clergy at liberty to marry; which history is in his author, and in Gelasius Cyzicenus also; yet he magnifies a ridiculous fiction afterward of two bishops, *which signed the Nicene faith after they*

\* Bin., p. 328, col. 1. † Baron. An. 325, § 53.

‡ Bin., p. 335, col. 2, et p. 341, col. 1.

§ Bin., p. 302, col. 2. Vid. Rivet. Crit. Sacr., lib. iii, cap. 4.

|| Bin., p. 336, col. 2.

¶ Bin., p. 337, col. 1. Vid. Concil. Ephesin. Act. 7.

*were dead and buried.\** A fable so gross, that Baronius rejects it, with a note which I wish he had often remembered, namely, 'That it was not usual among Christians to confirm the faith by miracles, which was attested by more firm evidence of Holy Scripture.'† *Secondly.* Turrian's edition of this council repeats all these LXXX Canons, and in his preface and his notes he vindicates them all; and yet the tracts which he cites to prove these canons genuine are owned to be spurious by all modest Romanists, and his arguments are so trifling, they are not worth confuting. We will only note, therefore, that the seventh and the fortieth of these canons require that synods shall be held twice a year, which (as Turrian confesseth) agrees not with the custom of the Roman Church:‡ and his notes say, the seventy-second canon differs from the thirteenth, and the seventy-third canon is contrary to the forty-ninth;§ but he will rather suppose the holy Nicene fathers contradicted themselves, than own any of these canons to be forged, because some of them seem to favour the pope's supremacy. As to the edition of Gelasius Cyzicenus, it is generally a very modest account of this council, and hath not many errors in it; but, like all other ancient authors, it speaks very little of the pope; for which reason Binius claps it under hatches, and will not produce it till the latter end of his second tome after the Council of Ephesus, to convince us, that all authors are valued or slighted

\* Bin., p. 347, col. 2.

† Baron. An. 325, § 182.

‡ Lab., pp. 294 et 303. Bin., p. 353, col. 2, et 358, col. 1.

§ Lab., p. 315. Bin., p. 363, col. 1 and 2.

merely as they promote or discourage the usurpations of Rome.”\*

Such are the documents of antiquity, which, it is confidently asserted, are designed to convey *the sense of Holy Scripture*. These are the records which contain the *oral explanations of the apostles, made and handed down to us as the true standards of catholic truth, and which make an end of all controversy as to the meaning of Scripture!* Documents which are mutilated and corrupted, until we know not in a single instance whether they speak the voice of the church or the sense of the apostles only by their harmony with the Scriptures—documents often at war with themselves, with Scripture, with reason and common sense, are to be taken as *an essential part of the divine rule of faith and practice!* And to doubt all this, we are gravely told, “undermines the very foundation of Christianity.”† Who does not see that this system itself “undermines the very foundation of Christianity?” It makes it absolutely impossible to ascertain what Christianity is—it involves it in absurdities and contradictions—it brings upon a level the Holy Scriptures and the productions of fallible and even wicked men—it puts the whole system beyond the bounds of rational belief, by making its very principles to depend upon a standard or rule of interpretation which is variable, wholly inapplicable, and grossly absurd. And is not this to peril the faith itself?

\* See *Roman Forgeries in the Councils. Preservative against Popery*, tit. xi, pp. 76–78.

† Manning—*Rule of Faith*, Appendix, p. 111.

## SECTION V.

Traditionists do not follow out their Principles.

It might well be supposed, that the assertors of tradition would themselves believe all the doctrines, and practise all the usages, which they consider to have the sanction of their great rule, *universality, antiquity, and consent*. But it turns out to be a fact, that they reject many doctrines and usages which approach nearer to the terms of this rule than many of those which they adopt. They not only would have us reject all those things in the writings of the fathers which will not bear the test of the rule they adopt from Vincentius, but they themselves reject many others which come as near to the rule as any one of the principles which they call catholic, and which is not settled in the Scriptures. This argument is presented at length by Mr. Goode\* to whom I would refer those who wish to survey the whole field. I can only occupy space for a few specimens, which, however, will be in themselves entirely conclusive, and satisfactory to the unprejudiced.

1. The doctrine taught by the fathers of the first three centuries as to the divine appearances to man under the Old Testament dispensation.

The early fathers maintained that it was Christ who appeared to the ancient patriarchs. There is a sense in which this may be admitted in relation to several of these appearances. But the fathers evidently lost sight of the orthodox sense. They say,—

\* Divine Rule, vol. i, pp. 319-331.

“It was Christ who spoke to Jacob in a dream, Gen. xxxi, 11, 13, where he calls himself *the God of Bethel*. See ch. xxviii, 13, 19.—*Justin M. Dial. cum Trypho*, c. 58; *Cyp. Test.*, ii, 5; *Novatian*, c. 27.

“It was Christ who wrestled with Jacob, Gen. xxxii, 24, where it is expressly said that he was God. Ver. 28, 30.—*Justin M. Dial. cum Trypho*, c. 58, 125; *Irenæus*, p. 238; *Clem. Alex. Præd.* i, 7.

“It was Christ who appeared to Jacob, Gen. xxxv, 1, 9, (*Justin M. Dial. cum Tryph.*, c. 58,) where he says, ‘he is called God, and is God, and will be.’—*Cyp. Test.*, ii, 6.

“It was Christ who appeared to Moses in the bush, Exod. iii, 2, where the person calls himself ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;’ and at verse 14, ‘I am that I am.’—*Justin M. Apol.* i, 26; *Dial. cum Tryph.*, c. 60; *Irenæus*, iv, 10, 12; *Clem. Alex. Cohort. at Gent.*; *Tertul. Adv. Jud.*, c. 9.

“It was Christ who said to Moses, Gen. xx, 2, ‘I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.’—*Clem. Alex. Præd.* i, 7.”

Upon these expositions Mr. Goode says, “The fact is, the Arians stoutly contended for this opinion, as strengthening their cause, and showing that though the Son was God, there was yet some difference between the nature of the Son and the Father, and the earliest supporters of the opinion that some of these appearances might be attributed to the Father are, I think, to be found among the opponents of the Arians.” And again:—“I would ask, then, do our opponents consider themselves bound so to interpret Scripture? If they do, it is more than Augustine did, for he held

that it was probably the Father who appeared on some occasions; and evidently considered, as many others have done since, that the view we have shown to have been taken by some of the anti-Nicene fathers was an Arian view of the subject.”\*

“2. The doctrine taught by the fathers as to the reappearance of Enoch and Elias hereafter on earth—to wage war with antichrist.

“‘Enoch and Elias,’ says Tertullian, ‘are translated, neither is their death found; that is, it is delayed; but they are removed to die at a future time, that they may extinguish antichrist with their blood.’” To the same purpose Mr. Goode quotes Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Pseudo Cyprian, Pseudo Ambrose, or Hilary the deacon, St. Augustine, Chrysostom, and Arethas, and then significantly asks, “Is this to be received as a *revelation*?”

“3. The doctrine of the fathers as to the absolute unlawfulness of an oath.

“Irenæus says, that our Lord ‘hath commanded us not only not to swear falsely, but not to swear at all.’—*Adver. Hær.*, lib. iii, c. 32.

“Justin Martyr, that he has commanded us ‘not to swear at all.’—*Apol.* i, § 16.

“So Clement of Alexandria says, that Plato’s precept against an oath agrees with our Lord’s prohibition of it.—*Strom.*, lib. v.

“‘I say nothing,’ says Tertullian, ‘respecting perjury, since it is not lawful even to swear.’—*De Idol.*, c. 11.” To the same purpose the author quotes Basilides the martyr, Cyprian, Origen, Lactantius, Euse-

\* Divine Rule, vol. i, pp. 322, 323.

bius, Basil, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Jerome, Theodoret, and the Council of Constantinople under Flavianus, A. D. 448.

“ 4. Standing at prayer on Sundays, and during the period between Easter and Whitsuntide.

“ The author of the ‘ Questions and Answers to the Orthodox,’ in the Works of Justin Martyr, gives the following question and answer: ‘ Why on Sundays, and from Easter to Whitsuntide, do they not kneel when praying? And whence was this custom introduced into the churches?’ The answer is, that we are to stand at those times, as a sign of the resurrection; and it is added, that ‘ the custom *commenced from the apostolical times*, as the blessed Irenæus, martyr and bishop of Lyons, says.’—*Quæst.* 115, *Inter Op. Just.*

“ Now let us hear Tertullian: ‘ We account it a *crime* to kneel at prayer on Sundays.’—*Tertull. De Cor. Mil.*, c. 3.

“ Lastly. We have the determination of the great Council of Nice: ‘ Since there are some who kneel on the Sunday and at Whitsuntide, in order that all things may be observed alike in every diocess, the holy synod decrees that they shall offer their prayers to God, standing.’—*Can. xx. Justell. Cod.*, tom. i.

“ Can our opponents get better testimony in the fathers to the apostolicity and *importance* of any custom of the primitive church than we have here? But the Romanists themselves have wholly rejected this custom.”

“ 5. The threefold immersion in baptism, which is witnessed by Tertullian, (*De Cor. Mil.*, c. 3,) Jerome,

(Adv. Lucifer., § 8,) Cyril of Jerusalem, (Cat. Mystag. ii,) Ambrose, (De Sacram., lib. ii, c. 7,) and the writings passing under the name of Dionysius Areopagita, (De Eccl. Hierarch., c. 2,) Athanasius, (Quæst. in Psalm., q. 92,) Augustine, (Serm. 40,) and Basil, (De Spir. Sanct., c. 27.)

“ 6. Infant communion, or the giving of the eucharist to infants.”

Bingham, who is good authority with Churchmen, declares that “ it is beyond dispute, that as she baptized infants, and gave them the unction of chrism with imposition of hands for confirmation, so she immediately admitted them to participation of the eucharist, as soon as they were baptized, and ever after, without exception.”

This he proves from Cyprian, Dionysius, Gualilius, Alcuin, “ the Ordo Romanus, and other public offices of the Church containing the rules of baptism and confirmation.” The practice arose from the notion that the eucharist was necessary to salvation. This reason is urged by St. Augustine, who brings for proof John vi, 53, “ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” Thus clearly proving, not only that these holy fathers, who, it seems, have handed down to us “ the preachings of the apostles,” not only perverted the eucharist, but grossly misunderstood and misinterpreted Holy Scripture.

It will be sufficient to say, that, so far as the Romanists are concerned, in their infallible Council of Trent they condemned this patristic practice as heretical; yet, to save the ancient church, which it was



known practised it, they gave an explanation which contradicts the declarations of St. Augustine, and is, indeed, grossly false. These are their words: "We do not hereby intend to condemn antiquity for observing this custom in some places. For as those holy fathers had a probable reason, considering the state of the times they lived in, for their practice, so it is certain, and without all controversy to be believed, that *they did not do it upon any opinion of its being necessary to salvation.*"\* This explanation or apology for the holy fathers, I say, is a gross falsehood: for it is just as evident that infant communion was practised for at least eight hundred years upon the "opinion that it was necessary to salvation," as that it was practised at all; and the fact of the existence of the usage for this length of time is capable of the clearest proof, and, indeed, is not denied by this celebrated council.

Bingham objects to the resumption of the practice, though he says, "Bishop Bedle and some others have declared entirely for it;" and concludes his section on the subject with the following remarkable passage:— "What I have, therefore, discoursed upon this head, by deducing the matter historically from first to last, is rather to show the vanity of that pretence to infallibility and unerring tradition in the Church of Rome, in matters of doctrine and necessary practice; since they themselves have thought fit to alter one point, which their infallible popes and forefathers observed for so many ages as necessary, in communicating infants upon a divine command; and withal to show, that any other church has a better pretence than they

\* Con. Trident., sess. xxi, cap. 4.

to reform any practice, however generally observed, if, upon better examination, it be found not to be grounded upon a good foundation in the word of God.”\*

7. The practice of exorcism.

Bingham tells us that catechumens “were all exercised for twenty days before baptism:” and that “this custom is often mentioned by the ancient writers, both of the Greek and Latin Church.” This he proves from St. Augustine, Cyprian, Genuadius of Marseilles, Gregory Nazianzen, and Cyril of Jerusalem. Though this practice is still retained by the Romish Church, it is rejected by the English: but that, according to the views entertained by high-Churchmen, it ought to be retained, there can be no rational doubt.

8. Unction before baptism, and chrism before confirmation.

These usages are sustained by the authority of Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Dionysius, Ambrose, and the Apostolical Constitutions;† yet they are disused in the Church of England. Why this leaving off the ancient usages?

I might add still other matters which by the fathers were deemed vital, and which can boast of as fair a claim to *universality, antiquity, and consent*, as any of those “church principles” which are made to rest upon this foundation, but which both Romanists and Churchmen now reject. Romanists can do this with some little consistency, holding, as they do, to the *living judge* in all matters of faith and practice; but it is

\* Origines Eccles., book xv, chap. iv, sec. 7.

† Ibid., book xi, chap. xi.

with a bad grace that our Churchmen, after taking the primitive church, without the living judge, for their pattern, and asserting that the doctrines and usages sanctioned by her must be presumed to have come by oral tradition from the apostles, and, of course, to be of divine authority, receive some of these *apostolical traditions*, and reject others. Recognising no power in the Church to change apostolical institutions, they have still dispensed with many of them. What now becomes of all their high-sounding professions of veneration for antiquity? They talk largely upon this subject, but in practice it would seem they act very much as though they felt themselves at full liberty either to receive or reject the ancient usages, at their own discretion. This course they, it would seem, may adopt with perfect safety, but in *dissenters* it is the worst species of heresy. We charge our opponents, then, with gross inconsistency. Let them meet this charge manfully; and tell us, if they are able, why it is that they profess and contend for a principle which they unscrupulously abandon whenever they please. Would it be supposed possible for our Churchmen to reject infant communion, exorcism, chrism, &c., as human institutions, and not universally obligatory, and yet to insist that baptismal regeneration, the eucharistic sacrifice, the apostolical succession, &c., which are supported by no higher authority, are essential to Christianity? Who have given them the right to cut and carve the system handed down from the apostles? to mould it to suit their humour? to lay reckless hands upon "the venerable remains of antiquity?" But we must not forget that it is often the fate of error to be

inconsistent. It is, indeed, well that it is so, for it then neutralizes itself, and at least partially remedies its own evil tendencies.

I have now gone through with the leading reasons for not admitting tradition as a part of the rule of faith. I need not recapitulate them—the reader, by glancing over the heads of the several sections of this chapter, will readily recall them. And who, after a careful investigation of these reasons, can for a moment yield to the high claims for patristical tradition which are set up by Romanists and high-Churchmen? Who would receive the Bible as a divine revelation, if it were situated precisely as is the system of traditions which are claimed to be “an unwritten revelation?” Who can, without first abandoning his reason and common sense, regard with the same confidence and reverence the Holy Scriptures and “the unwritten word?” Those who do, must in all consistency abandon all independence of thought and action, and submit to a mental slavery as derogatory to the character of man as subversive of all rational Christian liberty; for they will necessarily bow to assumed authority, and believe without the least particle of rational evidence.

I need scarcely apologize for closing this chapter in the eloquent and pithy language of a powerful opponent of the Tractarians. He proceeds:—“Many of these pretended traditionary revelations are utterly unworthy of our belief—because antisciptural and unreasonable. The traditionary doctrines and practices just cited—the dogma of the millennium, as held by the fathers, infant communion, clerical celibacy—and, we might add, many of the speculations on the Trinity, and many

of the ecclesiastical practices, prevalent in ancient times, are opposed alike to the written word of God and the dictates of a calm and sanctified reason. The various customs which are now maintained by Puseyites, such as the use of the cross, the veneration of relics, the practice of asceticism, the burning of candles by day in divine service, all of which find their vindication in the broad authority of ecclesiastical tradition, are customs unwarranted by the letter, and opposed to the spirit of Scripture, and do painful violence to every enlightened understanding. The system of interpreting Scripture adopted by the fathers of the church, and venerated and followed by the Oxford Tract writers, is also utterly unworthy of our regard. It is a system which spiritualizes the Bible throughout, and finds mysteries in every fact, and almost in every verse. The rod of Moses, the peeled sticks that Jacob set up before Laban's flock, and almost all the pieces of wood mentioned in the Bible, are, according to their expositions, symbols of the cross. The number 318, the number of Abraham's servants, is, by a cabalistic interpretation, made to denote the name of Jesus. The waters that gushed from Horeb, the waters in which Elisha made the iron swim, and many other waters mentioned in Scripture, are taken as striking emblems of baptism. And in expounding the history of our Lord's feeding the multitude, one father tells us, that the five loaves brought to Christ signified the five senses that are to be subjugated to his authority; and another, that they denoted the five books of Moses, which he fulfilled. But this is not all—the failings and sins of the patriarchs and others are so spiritual-

ized, that their moral impurity is hidden. Jacob's deceit, we are assured in so many words, was not a lie, but a mystery;\* and Noah's intemperance and nakedness (one shudders at the thought) are said to be images of our Lord's passion! These very instances are all quoted in the Oxford Tracts, and quoted with approbation, not as the private criticisms of the fathers, but as the divinely-authorized traditional *interpretations* of the early church.† These, according to the Tractarians, we are bound to admit, and follow; and we are plainly told that, 'when the sense of Scripture, as interpreted by reason, is contrary to the sense given to it by catholic antiquity, we ought to side with the latter.'‡

"But, for ourselves, we are compelled to confess our sympathy with Milton, rather than with the Puseyites: 'We do injuriously, in thinking to taste better the evangelic manna, by seasoning our mouths with the tainted scraps and fragments of an unknown table, and searching among the venomous and polluted rags

\* "Similar mysteries the Tractarians find in the history of England; and they speak of 'sacred reserve,' as a characteristic of Charles I.—Tract No. 80, p. 56. His was 'retiredness of spirit,' 'solitariness of spirit,' resembling the reserve and concealment which they attribute to the Saviour. What would they say to a similarly 'sacred reserve,' ascribed to Oliver Cromwell? Yet, here they have it—'On this ground, too, I explain to myself Cromwell's reputed confusion of speech. To himself, the internal meaning was seen clear; but the material with which he was to clothe it in utterance was not there. He had lived silent; a great unnamed sea of thought round him all his days; and in his way of life, little call to attempt naming, or uttering that.'—*Carlyle's Heroes*, p. 341."

† See Tract No. 89.

‡ Newman's Lectures, p. 160.

dropped, over-worn, from the toiling shoulders of time, with these deformedly to quilt and interlace the entire, the spotless, and undecayed robe of truth, the daughter not of time, but of heaven, only bred up here below, in Christian hearts, between two grave and holy nurses—the doctrine and discipline of the gospel.\*

“To bring the whole of our argument to a point, let us retrace the steps we have taken. There is no recognition in the written word of the authority of any traditionary doctrines and practices. Tradition is, has been, and ever must be, an extremely perilous vehicle for the conveyance of truth. The earliest writers after the apostles never recognised it as a divine informant, but treated the Holy Scripture as the sole rule of faith and practice. There are insuperable difficulties attendant on an appeal to tradition, as a rule to find out what is true and divine. Consider these facts, and, moreover, ponder those examples which we have given from the treasures of that depository of exposition, which the theologians of Oxford regard as the very ark of the covenant. Look at the doctrines, rites, and interpretations it contains, and then say, is tradition worthy of being regarded as a rule of belief and conduct supplementary to the sacred volume? Can it be entitled to our regard, as of equal authority with the written record? Is it credible, that while the New Testament is proved to be the word of God, both by external and internal evidence; while its proofs are such as to silence every gainsayer, ecclesiastical tradition, which is destitute of external support, and is

\* Of Prelatical Episcopacy, Milton's Works, Birch's edition, vol. i, p. 33.

fraught with internal characteristics, rendering it, to say the least, extremely suspicious, should be intended by the great Head of the church to rank beside those lively oracles? Do the two forms of communication agree? Do they both bear the impress and stamp of *His* wisdom? Is it like Him, to appoint one so clearly and exclusively divine, and to appoint another so dubious, obscure, self-contradictory, and perplexing to the humblest and most docile mind? We ask, is it like Him?

“The Tractarians assume that our chief objection to tradition is, that it adds to Scripture, and that it does not harmonize with it; and they meet the objection by an ingenious collection of certain passages in the Old and New Testaments, supplementary to others, or appearing to contradict them, though all these passages are equally true, and, therefore, perfectly reconcilable; and hence it is argued, that tradition may add to Scripture, and even seem to oppose it, and yet be fully entitled to our belief. They observe that, ‘as distinct portions of Scripture itself are apparently inconsistent with one another, yet are not really so, therefore it does not follow that Scripture and catholic doctrine are at variance with each other, even if they seem to be.’\* Now, in reply, we allege that our first and chief objection to traditionary doctrines is, that they are without authority; that there is no evidence to prove them the genuine and authentic doctrines of the apostles; that they are destitute of external and internal proof; and such being the case, that the fact of their presenting to us something which the Bible

\* Tract No. 85.



does not teach us, and especially the fact of their inconsistency with it, becomes at once a most powerful kind of evidence against them. All parts of Scripture being inspired, we are quite sure that it contains no real contradictions; and when we meet with any apparent ones, we are bound at once to admit that they are only apparent, and that there is some principle on which they can be reconciled, whether we are able to discover it or not; but it is absurd, in the extreme, to allege this as a parallel case to the difficulties arising from the comparison of Scripture with tradition,—the former possessing indubitable evidence of its divine authority, the latter possessing none.

“ Yet tradition, so manifestly an unauthorized teacher, an usurper of the throne of Christian verity, is really exalted by its disciples above the written record of inspiration. Scripture is to be explained by tradition; our notions of Christianity are to be taken from the catholic consent of the church. In the fathers we have the development and the perfection of the truths hinted at, and *covertly* contained, in the writings of apostles! We are to take our faith, not from the simple study of the Scriptures, but from ancient creeds, expositions, treatises, homilies, and forms. To talk of appealing to Scripture for the truth of what is taught by the subsequent records of the church, after being directed to them for the sense and interpretation of Scripture, is absurd in the extreme. This is to allow their interpretation of the law, and afterward to try them by their own interpretation. It must be apparent, then, to every one who has considered the subject, that the system, in fact, gives to the traditions

of the church, the *final authority* in matters of religion. We cannot judge for ourselves, we must go to the tomes of patristical literature, the rich depositories of ancient divinity. In the settlement of religious controversy, when several persons, each examining the Bible for himself, take different views of its meaning, reference is to be made to catholic traditions, and they are to decide the matter. This is to make the bench of the fathers the court of final appeal, and to carry the most solemn causes before them, as occupying the highest seat of Christian judicature. All we say further is, Wo to our Protestantism—wo to our spiritual freedom—wo to our Christianity itself, when this doctrine shall generally prevail!"\*

\* Lectures on Tractarian Theology, by John Stoughton, pp. 27-34. London, 1843.

## CHAPTER IV.

PROOF THAT SCRIPTURE IS A SUFFICIENT RULE OF  
FAITH AND PRACTICE.

## SECTION I.

Proof from the Scriptures themselves.

BEFORE entering upon the argument, it may be necessary to explain what we mean by alleging Scripture as a rule of faith and practice. Archbishop Tillotson says, "A rule (when we speak of a rule of faith) is a metaphorical word, which, in its first and proper sense, being applied to material and sensible things, is the measure according to which we judge of the straightness and crookedness of things; and from hence it is transferred by analogy to things moral or intellectual. A moral rule is the measure according to which we judge whether a thing be good or evil; and this kind of rule is that which is commonly called a law, and the agreement or disagreement of our actions to this rule is suitably to the metaphor, called rectitude or obliquity. An intellectual rule is the measure according to which we judge whether a thing be true or false; and this is either general or more particular. Common notions, and the acknowledged principles of reason, are that general rule, according to which we judge whether a thing be true or false. The particular principles of every science are the more particular rules, according to which we judge whether things in that science be true or false. So that the general

notion of a rule is, that it is 'a measure, by the agreement or disagreement to which, we judge of all things of that kind to which it belongs.'"\*

According to this definition of a rule, we hold the Scriptures to be the rule of faith and practice: that is, we consider the Scriptures the *perfect measure* or *standard of what we must believe and what we must do, in order to glorify God and save our souls*. The reformers express the idea intelligibly in the sixth article of the Church of England, thus: "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 faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

I shall now proceed to the evidence afforded in the Scriptures themselves in favour of this doctrine. A learned author gives us a general view of the Scripture argument as follows:—

"Let it be inquired whether, on the other hand, the Scriptures bear testimony to their own sufficiency, as a rule of faith. By the rule of faith is meant a rule whereby to judge of all matters of faith, and by which all doctrines are to be tried; and when it is said that the Scriptures are, in this sense, a full and complete rule, it is meant that they are sufficient for the purpose of proving and establishing our faith. The Church of England does not in so many words call the Scriptures the rule of faith; but she does what is tantamount, when, in the *sixth* article, she declares, they 'contain all things necessary to salvation;' that is, no

\* Rule of Faith, part i, sec. 1.

doctrine is of necessity to be received, except such as may be proved by this infallible standard.

“ To substantiate the Scriptures to be the rule of faith, it is necessary to prove both their INTELLIGIBILITY and SUFFICIENCY. They may possess the former property, and nevertheless not be adequate to form of themselves a full and complete rule. The questions, then, are in some sort distinct, yet they may be simultaneously discussed; and our position will be granted, if it can be shown that the Scriptures bear testimony to their own intelligibility, and also to their own sufficiency for the establishment of the true doctrine of Christ, without the supplemental accompaniment of tradition.

“ In receiving the sacred Scriptures as an intelligible rule of faith, it is not meant that they are free from all obscurities, and everywhere easy to be understood; quite the contrary; they are often of very difficult interpretation. Why the Deity has vouchsafed a revelation, in which some parts are obscure, some ambiguous; why it should require learning and study to investigate their evidence; and why the dispensation of transcendent grace should appear to be encumbered with many difficulties, are questions which will not be suffered to perplex those who, tutored in the school of Butler, well-know that to judge of what relates to the divine procedure, in granting a revelation, is beyond the grasp of the human intellect.

“ Neither is it intended to assert that the Scriptures are throughout plain and perspicuous, even with all the aids we possess for their elucidation, but that they are a rule, sufficiently intelligible, for the confirmation and

establishment of faith, to all who are competent by learning and talent to apply it; that a saving knowledge may be gained from them by those who, with the requisite ability, apply with becoming diligence to the study of them, and employ the means which Providence has furnished for understanding them; and that such a knowledge may be imparted to all who will attend to the guides instituted for their instruction.

“Now the sufficiency of Scripture is implied in the fact of its being the word of God, written by his authority. It ‘came not of old by the will of man,’ but by the decree of God, and under his superintendence: for what purpose, then, could it have been written, except to preserve an authentic record of his revealed will to his creatures? If so, the whole must be written; for it cannot be supposed that, in causing his will to be thus recorded, he would omit any material portion of it. A partial disclosure of it is wholly inconsistent with the object for which revelation was designed—to be a faithful record of the divine will. The Scriptures, being confessedly such record, must be full and adequate to accomplish the end proposed; and consequently sufficient, in themselves, to form the rule and standard of faith.

“The intelligibility of the Scriptures also, by themselves, is necessarily implied in their very nature as a written revelation; for they would not communicate religious truth, would be, in fact, no revelation, unless they were intelligible to those who understand the languages in which they are written. If God has revealed his will to man, it follows, as a matter of course, that it is discoverable from the writings in which it is

recorded. Now, it will scarcely be denied that the Scriptures contain this revelation of the divine will, and were consequently designed to communicate the knowledge of it; we are, therefore, constrained to infer that God has adapted them to our comprehension; otherwise they will not attain their object. Hence, their meaning must be ascertainable by the same means which are requisite for understanding all other written communications.

“And this is agreeable to the actual fact. Take, for instance, the Epistle to the Romans, which was written by St. Paul before he had ever been in that city, chap. i, 8, 13; xv, 23. Could the Romans understand it *without* an authorized oral interpretation? If they could, so may persons in every succeeding age who have a competent knowledge of the Greek language: if they could not, then we must admit it not to be, what it purposes, a divine revelation, the design of which is to be an intelligible communication. It must, therefore, have been intended to be understood, an intention which the writer, under the guidance of the Spirit, could not fail of accomplishing; and so must have been by itself intelligible to the Romans: and if to them, then also intelligible by itself to us.

“The same inference is deducible from the practice of Christ and the apostles. Our blessed Lord never once refers to tradition for proof, but about twenty times to the Jewish Scriptures; which constant appeal to them, in his discourses, plainly implies their sufficiency for the conviction of his hearers; but which they could not be, unless they were such writings as could be generally understood. In like manner the

apostles endeavoured to convince the Jews from their own Scriptures. Acts xvii, 2, 3; xviii, 28. In their epistles also, whatever truth they are establishing, or whatever error they are combating, they never argue from tradition, but always from the Scriptures; which is a plain demonstration of their entire disregard to Jewish tradition, and of their conviction that the Old Testament at least is sufficiently clear; otherwise an appeal to it would have been nugatory. Those whom they addressed would have been wholly unable to judge of their reasoning, unless they could understand the documents upon which it was founded. If such was the case with the Old Testament, we must, by parity of reason, affirm the same of the New. The latter is explanatory of the former; and no imaginable reason can be assigned why both the text and the commentary should not be equally intelligible, proceeding, as they do, from the same source.

“ By the especial promise of our Lord, the apostles were endued with ability to declare fully the whole doctrine of the gospel; ‘ I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to gainsay nor resist,’ Luke xxi, 15. Though the promise here may seem to imply no more than to bestow wisdom of speech, yet he further promises that the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, ‘ shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you,’ John xiv, 26; comp. chap. xvi, 13. In these words the divine assistance is in no way limited to oral instruction. It would be irrational to suppose that the aid of the Spirit, which enabled them to preach the truth plainly and perspicu-



ously, would desert them when they were committing it to writing. The Holy Ghost, which 'guided them into all truth' in the one case, cannot be supposed to have suffered them to omit anything essential, or to execute their task in a bungling and imperfect manner, when putting the substance of the Christian faith upon record in their writings.

"From the fact of being inspired, it follows that the apostles, when they communicated any Christian truth by writing, did it by the aid of inspiration; and to this effect there are some express declarations. In the book of Revelation, St. John is commanded by the Spirit to *write*, chap. i, 10, 11; ii, 1, 8, 12, &c.; xiv, 12; xxi, 5. St. Peter says, 'This second epistle I WRITE—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,' 2 Epis. iii, 1, 2. St. John says, 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you;' and afterward, as explanatory, adds, 'these things I write,' &c. 1 Epis. i, 3, 4; comp. chap. ii, 1, 12, 13, 14, 26; v, 13. St. Paul writes the things which he delivered to the Corinthians, and which he had 'received of the Lord,' 1 Cor. xi, 23. They did, therefore, commit some part of their preaching to writing. Now the intention of the Spirit, in instigating them either to speak or to write, must have been, that they should communicate the truth, and in an intelligible manner; and this intention, Omnipotence could enable them to accomplish successfully in both speaking and writing.

"Besides, the Scriptures present the only record we possess of our Saviour's miracles and discourses.

How, then, is it possible, as Bishop Taylor argues, that they ‘should not contain all things necessary to salvation; when of all the words of Christ—in which, certainly, all things necessary to salvation must needs be contained, or else they were never revealed—there is not any one saying, or miracle, or story of Christ, in anything that is material, preserved in any indubitable record, but in Scripture.’\* If, therefore, the record of the Lord’s teaching be preserved in Scripture alone, it must be for ever lost to us, unless Scripture be intelligible; and if our Lord’s teaching, as revealed in Scripture, contain all things necessary to salvation, then we must infer the sufficiency of Scripture for life and salvation.

“This is confirmed by the language of the apostles themselves. St. Luke tells us, that he wrote his Gospel that Theophilus ‘might know the *certainty* of those things wherein he had been instructed,’ i, 4. His Gospel, then, is here declared to be a faithful record of the things relating to the religion of Christ, and sufficient to afford Theophilus a sure and certain knowledge of them; it must, consequently, be sufficient to afford the same certainty to all others who are able to consult it. St. John declares, ‘He that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, *that ye might believe,*’ xix, 35: ‘These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and *that believing ye might have life through his name,*’ xx, 31. The evangelist here declares that he had written what is *necessary for faith*; which it could not be, unless what he

\* Dissuasive from Popery, part ii, lib. i, § 2, p. 391.

had written was both intelligible, and sufficiently full for that purpose. That he is not speaking of works and miracles alone, but also of doctrines, is plain; for he declares it to be written, that 'believing we might have life; through the name of Christ;' which is, in fact, declaring it to be sufficient for producing a faith leading to eternal life.

"Many things to the same purpose are found in the apostolical epistles. Thus to the Philippians, St. Paul says, 'To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe,' iii, 1; namely, makes you safe, because, as Macknight remarks, 'having them in writing, they could examine them at their leisure, and have recourse to them as often as they had occasion;' which implies the intelligibility of what was written. To Timothy he says, 'I write these things, that thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God,' 1 Tim. iii, 14, 15; which knowledge his epistle was therefore designed and sufficient to impart. St. Peter's exhortation is, 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,' 1 Epis. iv, 11; meaning that no doctrine or interpretation is to be advanced in opposition to the sacred Scriptures; a matter impossible to be decided, unless the 'any man' spoken of be capable of comprehending them. St. John says, 'These things write I unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God,' 1 Epis. v, 13; which surely declares the things written to be adequate for instruction in the faith.

"In various passages the word of God assures us, either directly or indirectly, of its own intelligibleness

and sufficiency. Thus to the Israelites it is enjoined, 'These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,' &c., Deut. vi, 6-8; comp. ch. xi, 8-21. Blessings are promised to them if they kept God's 'commandments and his statutes which are written in the book of this law,' Deut. xxx, 9, 10; which law was at stated periods to be read 'before all the people in their hearing,' that they might learn to fear the Lord. Deut. xxxi, 11, 13. The king was to write a copy of the law, in which he was to read, that he might learn to keep the divine statutes. Deut. xvii, 19; comp. 1 Kings ii, 3; 2 Chron. xxxiv, 31. The Psalmist says, 'The words of the Lord are pure words,' Psa. xii, 6: 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple,' Psa. xix, 7-11: 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,' Psa. cxix, 105. The prophets exhort the people to have recourse 'to the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isaiah viii, 20; compare chap. xxxiv, 16; Mal. iv, 4.

"Turning to the New Testament, the mind is forcibly struck with our Saviour's severe condemnation of the Jews, who 'transgressed the commandment of God,' and made it 'of none effect by their traditions,' Matt. xv, 3, 6; Mark vii, 7. The traditions here spoken of, says the note in the Rhemish Testament, are such as 'be either repugnant to God's laws, or which at least be frivolous, unprofitable, and impertinent to piety and true worship.' The learned Allix is

much of the same opinion; yet he contends for other traditions of a different description from those so severely condemned by our Lord, and advances many ingenious allegations in their support; but few of them have any solidity; and those which have, apply to Jewish testimony, not to a tradition of doctrines.\*

“If ever people had facilities for preserving tradition pure and uncorrupted, it was the Jewish nation. They had all the same language, and were bound by their institutions to have constant commerce among themselves, without mingling much with foreign nations. They had a specific code of laws in the books of Moses, and specific ordinances, which were to be performed in one place by one tribe and family; and external rites, however numerous, are more easily retained. Their belief was simple; and they had the continual and miraculous presence of God, together with a succession of prophets to teach and instruct them. Yet with all these advantages, their traditions became so corrupt as to merit the rebuke of our Lord; and surely he would not have denounced them so entirely, without any limitation whatever, if he had intended *any* tradition to be received in after-ages by his

“\* Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church, ch. i-iii. Dr. Hey well observes, ‘If we are to judge of tradition (that is, whether it be repugnant to God’s laws, or frivolous) its authority is gone; that is, if we are only to adopt it when we think it useful.’—*Lect. in Divinity*, lib. iv, art. vi, § 4. Forcible is the reasoning of Whitby: ‘Before we can know true tradition from false, we must know true faith from false; and if I must first know this faith, before I can know true tradition, I cannot need tradition to instruct me in the Christian faith.’—*Treatise of Tradition*, part i, p. 70.”

church. His unqualified contradiction of tradition justifies us in rejecting it.

“Again, we find our Saviour rebuking the Sadducees, ‘Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures;’ which therefore might have been known; that is, understood by them, if they had diligently used their reason in discovering the true sense of them. Matt. xxii, 29; comp. Mark xii, 24. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Abraham says, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them;’ which implies that they were capable of understanding them. Luke xvi, 29. When the lawyer asked our Lord, what was to be done in order to obtain eternal life, ‘he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?’ Luke x, 25, 26; and he often refers his hearers to the commandments, Matt. xix, 16; xxii, 35; all which would be a mockery, if they could not understand what they read.

“In Acts xvii, 11, the Bereans are commended because they ‘searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.’ St. Paul says to the Corinthians, ‘I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say,’ 1 Cor. x, 15; namely, in what I am now writing to you, exercise your own judgment whether it be not true; which supposes that he was writing intelligibly to them. Again he tells them, ‘If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them,’ 2 Cor. iv, 3, 4; the plain import of which is, that the gospel is so clear in all things necessary to make men Chris-

tians, that its light can only be hid from those whose minds are blinded by the god of this world; and, as the language is general, it must be true of the gospel written, as well as preached.

“Most of these texts, it is objected, speak of the Old Testament alone, and therefore, if understood exclusively, prove too much, as if the Old Testament alone was sufficient for salvation. But, even if only immediately referable to the Hebrew volume, they evidently go the length of asserting its sufficiency as an intelligible law of faith and manners to those on whom it was bestowed. Immutability cannot change; omniscience cannot err; inspiration admits no imperfection; and if one part of the revealed word be perfect and sufficient for general edification, every other part must of necessity be the same. Now the New Testament, it is universally allowed, is a part of divine revelation; it is expressly denominated ‘Scripture’ by apostolical authority, 2 Pet. iii, 16; and so must be possessed of those characters of perfection and completeness which the sacred writers ascribe to the words of inspiration. It is a part of one grand scheme of revelation, designed to explain and complete the older one; a design which it could not fulfil unless it were in itself intelligible and complete.

“But the objection proceeds upon a false foundation; for some, at least, of the texts above cited have a reference to the New Testament. St. Peter reckons the Epistles of St. Paul to be ‘Scripture.’ St. Paul calls upon the Corinthians to ‘judge’ of what he addressed to them, which implies intelligibility in *his* communications. He declares that ‘the light of the

glorious gospel' is only hid to them whose minds are wilfully blinded, and asserts that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration;' or rather, 'all Scripture is divinely inspired, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'

"The volume of the New Testament closes with this denunciation, 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life,' &c., Rev. xxii, 18, 19. Supposing this denunciation to refer to the book of Revelation, it must *in principle* apply to all the productions of the inspired writers; all of which must, consequently, be both intelligible and sufficient as a revelation; otherwise no man could know whether he added to, or took away from, their words and meaning, or in any way violated the prohibition. The threat is in effect this:—Divine Scripture being vouchsafed, the severest punishment will be inflicted upon whomsoever will be so presumptuous as to alter or corrupt it; which implies its perfection.

"Had it been the design of the apostles to superadd to their writings a body of explanatory and supplemental doctrines for the guidance of the church, some intimation would assuredly have been given in a matter so vastly important.\* But so far from it, we meet, on the other hand, with many intimations, as well as express affirmations, that the apostolical writings are intended, and, consequently, are fitted for a complete rule of faith in after-ages. General perspicuity is

\* Bp. Van Mildert, Bampton Lect. iii, p. 71.



essential to such a design. If they are dark, obscure, and enigmatical, the inspired authors have failed in their intended object; a supposition of revolting irreverence. It is inconsistent with the wisdom of God not to accomplish his own design; it is repugnant to his justice to require from men a faith which he has not clearly revealed to them; and it is opposed to his unfailing promise, that the Holy Spirit would 'bring all things to their remembrance,' and 'guide them into all truth.' Hence their writings must be a sufficiently full and clear communication, not needing any supplementary tradition to render them complete and intelligible; and being intended for perpetuity, they must retain the same character for ever.

"From the examination which has now been made, it must be evident, that nothing like satisfactory Scriptural evidence can be produced in support of the authority of tradition; while, on the contrary, the Scriptures attest their own sufficiency as an intelligible rule of faith and life; it would, therefore, be irrational to exalt tradition to an equality with them. Indisputably, it *may* be a useful aid in Biblical interpretation; it *may* be a valuable *secondary* authority; but the Scriptural evidence proves that it is not, like the New Testament itself, of apostolical origin."\*

This is a perfectly conclusive argument. But as it is often urged by traditionists that there is a paucity of Scripture testimonies in favour of our position upon the sufficiency of Scripture, I will add several other Scripture proofs, which will, by all candid minds, be

\* Holden on the Authority of Tradition in Matters of Religion, pp. 69-80.

considered quite sufficient to settle the controversy. Let any one carefully read the 19th and the 119th Psalms, and see whether the language there held can be at all reconciled with the notion that God's written word is defective and obscure—not capable of being understood, and felt, and practised by all classes of minds. But I shall now proceed to adduce proof more specific and conclusive from the New Testament.

In the New Testament we find the Scriptures referred to, without qualification or reserve, as being intelligible, sufficient, and infallible in their decisions. All this, it will be admitted, is said of the Old Testament Scriptures. But this strengthens rather than weakens the argument. For if the Old Testament Scriptures constituted an adequate rule of faith to the Jews, *à fortiori*, the New Testament, which is more simple and more full in its instructions, is such a rule to us. Indeed, it will not be denied but all I shall quote in relation to the Old Testament Scriptures is much more literally applicable to the New Testament.

*First.* I shall adduce several passages which express the doctrine of the suitableness and sufficiency of the Scriptures to instruct us in religion.

Our Saviour says, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me," John v, 39. Observe here, that the command to "search the Scriptures" is general—it is given to all, without exceptions. And the reason is, that they testify of Christ. Now, their testimony must be intelligible—such as common minds can apprehend, or the reason for this general requisition would not be valid. If it had been a fact that the

sense of the Scriptures was in the traditions of the elders, as the doctors maintained, the Saviour would have said, *Search the traditions*, for they give you the only true sense of Scripture; or, *Consult the rabbins*, for they will give you the traditions, “for they are they which testify of me.” Instead of this, however, the Saviour directs the people to the Scriptures, and condemns tradition as most mischievous in its practical influence—“making the word of God of none effect.”

The apostle says, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Holy Scriptures, might have hope,” Rom. xv, 4.

In this text we have two points clearly presented. The *first* is, that the Scriptures were written for our *learning*, *λίδοσκαλίαν*, *teaching*, *instruction*. They must consequently be intelligible. The Tractarian maxim upon this point is, “Tradition teaches, Scripture proves.” This is, indeed, the ground taken by all traditionists. But here we are told that the Scriptures “were written for our *teaching*,”—a proposition utterly subversive of the traditionary system in all its modifications.

The *second* point clearly presented in the text is, that the Scriptures were written as a foundation for well-grounded and comfortable *hope*. Now, what “hope” would an unintelligible record inspire? what “comfort” would it impart? It is doubtless the *sense* of Holy Scripture which lays the foundation for *hope*; and if that sense lies in tradition, is it not “through patience and comfort of” *tradition* that “we have hope?”

But we need not depend upon the mere verbiage of the passage. Its spirit and design are evidently hostile to the traditionary theory. For if this theory be true, too much stress is laid upon the Scriptures. The omission to notice their defectiveness as a rule of faith and the means by which this deficiency is to be remedied, is, upon the traditionary system, wholly unaccountable.

The next passage to which I shall call the attention of the reader is a truly remarkable one. St. Paul, in addressing Timothy, says, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii, 15-17.

Upon this passage let us remark, 1. Timothy had "known the Holy Scriptures *from a child*"—*βρεφους*, an infant, a babe, a suckling. The Scriptures, then, may be understood by children.

2. The Scriptures are sufficient for the purposes of salvation, without the addenda affixed to them by our Catholics: for, says the apostle, they "are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus." They are not mere "unsensed words," without meaning or power; but are able both to *make men wise* and to *save* them.

3. All Holy Scripture is divinely inspired. Now, will our wise traditionists be so kind as to tell us how the inspiration can be in the unmeaning record. If the

*sense* is in *tradition*, must not the *inspiration* be there? Surely, if there be any inspiration, it must be in the expression of the mind of the Holy Ghost. Well, where is this expression? Why, according to our good Catholics, it is in "the voice of the primitive church." St. Paul was most certainly ignorant of this scheme, or, I should rather say, he most certainly did not adopt it. And it is not at all strange that those who do adopt this system think the Bible a most difficult book to be understood.

4. These Scriptures are profitable for all the great doctrinal and practical purposes contemplated in our holy religion: "Profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;"—*προς παιδειαν την εν δικαιοσυνη*, literally, *for the training, or education, of a child in righteousness*. The Scriptures, then, are an appropriate instrument to be employed in the *education of children*. This principle, as we have seen above, had been practically carried out in the case of Timothy, who had been conversant with the Scriptures from his early childhood. Now, does this accord with the traditionary system? What Jewish rabbi, what Popish priest, what consistent Puseyite, would ever think of giving the Bible to children?

It will be in vain for the traditionist to urge in answer to all this, that he admits the use of the Scriptures in the work of teaching—that the Church, through her pastors, communicates to the learner its true sense, and that thus all the ends contemplated by the apostle are fully answered. For if the traditionary system I here oppose is the legitimate mode by which God communicates the knowledge of his will, then the

rabbinical system of traditions constituted the legitimate and divinely-appointed means of understanding what God required of the Jews. That system, as we have seen, substituted "the traditions of the elders" and the living teacher for the writings of Moses and the prophets. The apostle ought then, in all consistency, to have referred to the evidence through which alone the divine teaching could come—to have told Timothy that he had been taught by the traditions of the elders what the Scriptures mean, and then have proceeded to say that the Scriptures are profitable for education in righteousness only in a very indirect sense:—that they are in the hands of the doctors, who only have the authority to draw their sense from divine traditions. This was especially important, as the views the apostle presents would in future time be applied to such apostolical writings as would be introduced into the sacred canon, and as these writings would be situated precisely like the Jewish Scriptures—have no sense in themselves, but require to be expounded by tradition. Now, I ask, who can persuade himself that the system of rabbinical or of patristical tradition as an interpreter of Scripture ever entered the apostle's mind while he penned the above passages? None, I am sure, not utterly beside himself.

*Secondly.* Portions of the sacred writings, as difficult to be understood as any of the Bible, are addressed expressly to the membership of the church, and not to any authorized expounders of God's word.

St. Paul addresses his Epistle to the Romans, "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," Rom. i, 7:—the First Epistle to the Corinthi-

ans, to "the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," 1 Cor. i, 2. The Second Epistle, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia," 2 Cor. i, 1. The Epistle to the Galatians, to "the churches of Galatia," Gal. i, 2. The Epistle to the Ephesians, "To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," Eph. i, 1. The Epistle to the Philippians, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons," Phil. i, 1. The Epistle to the Colossians, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse," Col. i, 2. And the Epistles to the Thessalonians, to "the church of the Thessalonians," 1 Thess. i, 1; 2 Thess. i, 1. St. James directs his Epistle "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," James i, 1. St. Peter directs his First Epistle "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," 1 Pet. i, 1: and the Second, "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us," 2 Pet. i, 1.

Here we see the sacred writers addressing themselves directly to all classes of people, as though they considered themselves in immediate contact with them. According to the traditionary system, would this have been the natural course? Might we not expect to hear the apostles immediately addressing the ministry, and directing them to give to the people the traditionary *sense* of their Epistles? In one instance St. Paul particularly mentions "the bishops and deacons," but he

does this after first addressing "all the saints," showing that he stands in as direct communication with "the saints" in general as with the pastors of the church.

And in these very writings of St. Paul, St. Peter says there are "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction," 2 Pet. iii, 16. Now, "hard to be understood" as are "some things" in these Epistles of St. Paul, they are all addressed to the body of believers in general, without exception or reserve. Why did not the holy apostle admonish the churches, that it would be extremely dangerous for them to study his writings—that the true sense of them was to be ascertained from "the oral preachings" of himself and his fellow-apostles? He does not even premonish "the unlearned and the unstable" of any danger from reading and studying what he had written. In one instance he solemnly requires that his epistle should "be read to all the holy brethren," 1 Thess. v, 27.

Before leaving this argument, it may be proper to notice that the passage above quoted from St. Peter is used by traditionists to prove the necessity of the traditional sense. But the wonder is, that St. Peter does not take occasion, from the fact that St. Paul's writings were sometimes "hard to be understood," and sometimes wrested to the destruction of the soul, to urge the danger of reading these writings without the commentary, and fully to explain the fact that the remedy for the evil lay in "the oral preachings of the apostles."



*Thirdly.* In these same Scriptures, which we are told are so hard to be understood that we cannot be sure of the true sense until we have consulted tradition, we find all classes of persons, not excepting those in the meanest condition in life, particularly addressed.

St. John addresses "fathers," "young men," and "little children," 1 John ii, 13, 14. The apostle, by these appellations, evidently refers to the different grades of Christians. And he declares that he wrote not only to the *fathers*, but to the *young men*, and even to the *τεκνία*, *little children*, or, as Dr. Pyle understands him, to "new converts and younger Christians." Now, who supposes that by young men and little children the apostle means general councils, archbishops, bishops, or parish priests? Does he not embrace especially under the last appellation the youngest Christians—those whose knowledge and experience were in their incipient stages? And had St. John "written" directly to such, knowing that they could not safely exercise private judgment upon what he had written? Let all judge of the consistency of this language with the traditionary system.

St. Paul particularly addresses "*husbands*," "*wives*," "*fathers*," "*children*," "*masters*," and "*servants*." See Col. iii, 18–25, and iv, 1. Here the Holy Ghost is in direct communication with common minds—even *children* and *servants*. These several classes are addressed as though it were their common privilege to derive instruction directly from the written word of God. Now, how does this quadrature with the notion that "the Scriptures are not designed for the many," as Mr. Newman says? How does it consist with the hypo-

thesis that the sense of Scripture lies far beyond the reach of common minds ?

It will not answer here to change the ground, and say that *some few plain precepts* may be understood by all, while as to the great mass of instructions in the Scriptures we must depend upon tradition. For we find no such limitations in the Scriptures themselves. We nowhere find it stated in the Scriptures that a few plain passages of God's written word may be safely interpreted by the mass of Christians, while the greater part of it has a hidden sense—or, rather, has no sense in itself, but is to be interpreted by "the oral preachings of the apostles." And it would be an anomaly to find direct communications made in a book to classes of persons who could only ascertain the sense of the book through others. If I were to write a book in Latin, would I address myself to mere English readers?—would I talk familiarly with *children* and *slaves*? There might be matter in such a book of more or less interest to these classes of persons, but it would scarcely be thought consistent with a sane state of mind for me to turn to them and give them advice as though I were using a medium of communication open to them.

Now, who would suppose that such passages as those which have just passed in review could be found in the Scriptures, if those Scriptures were "not designed for the many"—if they were not intelligible to all classes? Upon such a hypothesis the language of these passages is grossly absurd—the sense is false and deceptive, and calculated to lead men into conclusions which must peril their salvation. For who would dream of a hidden sense, to be ascertained from tradi-

tion, upon reading such passages in the Scriptures themselves? In fact, upon the traditionary hypothesis the Bible is an enigma, and its utility is quite questionable.

The sacred writers seem to put themselves into immediate contact with all classes and conditions:—they address them directly—they give them doctrinal and practical instructions—they invite their attention to their own teachings, as the sure guide to faith and duty—and they give no intimation that for an understanding of the contents of the sacred volume they are to have recourse to tradition. Now, I put it to all candid and sensible men, whether, upon the traditionary theory, this is not *false dealing*? Can it be reconciled with the inspiration or the *truth* of Holy Scripture? “I trow not.” Indeed, to me this vaunted system of “apostolical traditions” seems calculated to unsettle all rational faith in the book of divine revelation, and to open a highway to universal skepticism. For where can a man find a resting-place for the sole of his foot, if he lets go his hold of a personal faith in the Scriptures founded in evidence brought home to his own mind? There is no response, either from the living or the dead, to all his anxious inquiries as to what he must do to be saved. There is neither prophecy nor urim and thummim in the church, and there is no voice from heaven to guide his wandering feet and to satisfy his anxious mind, and to give comfort to his aching, bleeding heart. The miserable figment of tradition, when he exercises upon it his reason and common sense, he sees to be, like the *Bath Col* of the rabbins, a mero fiction, conjured up by those “blind

guides" who would take away from the people "the key of knowledge." It neither agrees with Scripture, nor with reason, nor with itself, and consequently can be regarded with no rational confidence. If this, then, is the final resort—if there is nothing more rational or substantial than this upon which to build our faith and hopes, who would not despair? Ay, who would not naturally be led to doubt the truth of the whole system of Christianity? Most men who are accustomed to think for themselves—and all should be—would very naturally conclude, that if they are required to swallow all the absurdities of "the catholic system" without inquiry—whether left to grope their way through the labyrinths of patristical tradition, or cast upon the authority of that indefinite, occult, inscrutable something called "the Church,"—it would be vastly better to follow the dictates of natural reason, and reject the whole system of revelation as utterly impracticable and wholly absurd. I know this will be considered as quite irreverent and rationalistic by our traditionists. I am sorry to wound their tender feelings; but I am bound to follow their system to its legitimate results, though it may be at the expense of their good opinion. But I must forbear.

A leading objection to private or personal interpretation of the Holy Scriptures is, that to great masses the thing is wholly impossible. For instance, our attention is called to *children*. It is gravely asked, "Where is their power of free inquiry or deliberate choice? The word of their parents," it is said, "from the very first, supplies to them the place of the *exter-*

*nal* voice of God, correlative and responsive to his voice *within* them. . . . Such, surely, are God's ordinary dealings with children ; nor is this process interrupted when the parent himself commits them to the school system, or trusted friends, or ultimately to some religious community ; they repose their confidence in this very object of regard with the same implicit unreserved submission as before. How long this simple, peaceful, heavenly course of action will proceed, varies, of course, indefinitely with all varieties of external circumstances and inward endowments ; but wherever it ends, it has left the pupil in certain and inalienable possession of an invaluable stock of moral principles, of whose truth his conviction is most certain and secure, and which will be, in time to come, his main stay and support, in temptations from without, in perplexities from within."\*

Here are two positions laid down which deserve attention. The first is, that children first look to their parents, next to their school teachers, and then to their religious instructors, for the elements of religious knowledge ; and that these instructions occupy "the place of the external voice of God." This position need not be controverted. No one thinks of sending children anywhere else but to their parents and teachers for the first elements of religion. Before reason is so far matured as to enable the child to investigate moral truth for himself, God has provided parental instructions and discipline. But what has this to do with the privileges and obligations of the full-grown man ? Because *children* must submit to authority, and receive

\* British Critic, vol. xxxi, pp. 39, 40.

as truth whatever is delivered, until they are able to judge for themselves between truth and error, therefore must *men* of mature minds take everything for truth that the Church delivers as such upon *mere authority* without investigation? As well might it be said, that because children of a certain age are incapable of providing themselves food and clothing, therefore men of mature years are to go to the public coffers for all their supplies. I need say no more to expose the fallacy of this reasoning.

But the other position is, that the truths the child learns or receives on authority from his parents and early teachers will be those "of whose truth his conviction is most certain and secure, and which will be, in time to come, his main stay and support, in temptations from without, in perplexities from within." This, I conceive, is not at all evident. Whether the notions he imbibed in early childhood remain, and are those "of whose truth he is most certain," will depend entirely upon their accordance with his subsequent experience and the decisions of his mature judgment. If the authority of parental instructions is permanent, and the impressions which they make are indelible, how could the errors of the parent ever be eradicated from the mind of the child? How, for instance, could the offspring of heathen parents ever become Christians? Indeed, according to the principle advocated by our Catholics, the children of heathen or Mohammedan parents are bound to make the superstitions into which they were early inducted "their main stay and support, in temptations from without, and in perplexities from within!"

The pupil may see no reason in the first principles of science inculcated by his teacher. He relies implicitly upon the wisdom and virtue of his instructor. But is he therefore *never* to see the philosophy of these principles? Is he always to believe them, and act upon them, on the principles and grounds upon which he first received them, namely, his confidence in the qualifications of his early instructor? This would be a strange doctrine: but an exact parallel to the position now under examination.

And supposing our traditionists should find an infinite multitude besides children who need to be instructed in the very elements of religion, and who are scarcely qualified to judge of any of the reasons upon which the Christian faith is grounded. All such cases are irrelevant. They are not accountable for the use of powers which they do not possess, nor are they bound to throw away those they have because they have no more. A man's responsibility begins with the dawn of his moral powers and his means of information, and is always exactly bounded by them. The instances adduced by our opponents are the exceptions, and not the rule. It is a plain bare-faced sophism to urge, that because there are those who have not the power nor the means to form a correct estimate of the grounds of our faith, therefore all private judgment in religion is wholly unauthorized, and eminently hazardous. But this is Puseyite reasoning.

It is also objected that private judgment is not to be tolerated, because it leads to diverse and contradictory conclusions. Behold, say our Catholics, what a mul-

titude of sects this erroneous principle has originated, all of which claim support from the Scriptures!

This objection would be a little more entitled to respectful consideration, if the system of those who allege it was not attended with the same embarrassments. I have before shown that there is as great a variety of opinions upon controverted questions among Catholics as there is among "the sects," and that their great rule of interpretation is practically inefficient. Now, these wise ones certainly demand too much when they require us to leave our own system, without having one that is better to offer us in its place.

"Nor do the Tractarians forget to refer to the varieties of Protestantism and the controversies of the present day, with a view to show the necessity of some rule, in addition to Scripture, to fix its meaning, and to repress the irregularities of human opinion; though, alas for them! the variations of Popery itself are quite sufficient to show that, tight as may be the rein of church authority, it is totally unable to curb the activity of the human mind. But these sophistries we shall unravel no further. However ingeniously they may be woven, common sense must see the flimsiness of the web, even when it cannot fix on the clew to unwind it. They are old forms of Popish argumentation. The soldiers of Oxford have stolen their weapons from the arsenal at Rome, or, to give them credit for the highest originality they can claim, they have gone 'down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.' But all in the end will be vain. Even the best of weapons will be poor when levelled at the ægis



of truth,—at that round and glorious shield, which, when the heavy spears of the Papacy touched it at the Reformation, shivered them in pieces, and will continue to repel with the same fate the burnished lances of Puseyism.”\*

Again, I have shown that private judgment, after all, is to us inevitable. We must judge of their rule of interpretation—of its truth, and of its application—and here is opened a wide door for diversity of opinion, insomuch that scarcely any two persons would be likely to come to the same result. We cannot even admit the authority of “the Church,” could we find it, without the exercise of private judgment on the sense of Scripture and the fathers, and in this case we should fall into the same danger against which our advisers warn us, and must, indeed, peril our souls by a most daring act, and the adoption of an *uncatholic* principle, before we can get within the reach of the means of grace! Upon the Church—the authority of the Church—the chosen means of instruction—the rule of interpretation—the meaning of the fathers—and the sense to put upon the simplest formularies of the Church, there is as great latitude for diversity of sentiment and the creation of sects—all of which might claim the sanction of *catholic consent*—as there can be in the exercise of private judgment upon the naked Scriptures themselves. We are, then, just as far out at sea as ever, until we can find a POPE whom we can make eyes and ears for us, and to whom we can implicitly intrust the affairs of our salvation.

But, our objectors continue, if men are left to private

\* Stoughton, Lectures, pp. 39, 40.

judgment in religion, they will often judge erroneously in essentials, and so peril their salvation.

And supposing they do, who is in fault? The truth, in all essential points, is not hid in a maze, or sunk in a well. And if men will not take the pains to examine thoroughly before they decide, whose fault is it? and who is to bear the consequences? And here I would turn upon our Catholics, as in the former case, and ask them what security they have to give, that if all the world should lay aside private judgment and follow them, they would be guided infallibly to a safe issue? Do they know that none have ever been lost while devoutly adhering to what assumed to be, and what they verily thought, *the true church*?

The fact is, God has not so laid open the truth that men must see it whether they will or not. Voluntary efforts are necessary. And the divine Being has made all men, in possession of their mental faculties in maturity and unimpaired, accountable for the discovery and practice of moral duty. Nor is he "a hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strawed." If men lose their way, and lose their eternal all, it is not because the way of salvation is so mysterious that they could not, with reasonable diligence, find it out; much less because they do not submit to the assumptions of a class of spiritual monopolists who claim to have "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," but because of their own voluntary neglect or miserable recklessness.

Now, I will lay down a few propositions to which I beg special attention, and which, I am persuaded, are perfectly tenable: and should they be assailed, I

should expect an easy triumph, no matter how Goliath-like the champion with whom I might be called to contend.

1. All things essential to salvation are contained in Holy Scripture.

2. All those matters of faith or practice, contained in Holy Scripture, which are essential to salvation, are clearly and simply stated, and easy to be understood.

3. Those things in the Scriptures not plainly and simply set forth, and not easily understood, are not essential to salvation.

4. There is no evidence that there is couched in those portions of Scripture of difficult interpretation any new doctrine of faith, or moral duty, not clearly set forth in other parts of the sacred volume.

5. The corruptions of the Christian doctrine and institutions have not generally originated from the principle or practice of private interpretation, but from the unhallowed union of philosophy, falsely so called, with the Christian system, or the admixture of heathen or Jewish errors with the simple truth; and these unholy associations and unauthorized admixtures have come in through the *doctors* and professed spiritual *guides* of the church.

Now, if these propositions are founded in truth, the danger of private judgment in matters of religion, and the necessity of *authoritative* instructions, aside from the Scriptures, either from the dead or the living, are mere creatures of the imagination. I shall not attempt, in this place, any proof of the above propositions, as they will be found sufficiently sustained in different parts of this work, and, indeed, may be considered fair

deductions from the great principles which I have laboured to settle upon a firm and an immovable basis, by the aid of Scripture, reason, and common sense.

I cannot better close this section than in the language of Mr. Stoughton. He says, "Tradition, then, is no authoritative rule of faith and practice. It is utterly unsafe—it cannot be trusted. What then follows, but that Scripture is the only rule by which we can be guided? Scripture alone gives us security that we have the genuine teaching of Christ's apostles. By their instructions we must abide. An awful anathema hangs over our head, if we dare to depart from them. Paul, standing in the midst of the Christian church, perceiving, with a divinely-illuminated eye, the shadows of error that were beginning to rise, anticipating the efforts of false apostles, that would transform themselves into angels of light, and, above all, bearing upon him the burden of the Lord, pronounces with a voice of thunder, writes with a pen of flame, the awful words, 'If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached, let him be accursed.' By the gospel which Paul preached, then, we must abide; and as we are sure we have it here, and cannot be sure we have it anywhere else, we must adhere exclusively to the written record. O, we fear that anathema of the apostle! It rings in our ear with a monitory sound; and if we can escape the curse which he threatens, we may smile at all the fulminations either of Rome or her allies. And while Scripture is the only rule to be trusted, it is the only rule that is explicit. That we can understand. The Bible is one book, and all

that it contains is alike authoritative. It speaks on every essential point with a perspicuity that cannot be mistaken. But as to tradition, that we cannot understand. The writings of the fathers consist of many books; the statements they contain are, on several points, contradictory; frequently their teaching is obscure and unintelligible, and they darken counsel with words without wisdom.

“Scripture alone is sufficient. It claims to be a complete rule. Have ye never read, ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?’ Does not this declare the completeness of the written word? And do not the knowledge, faith, purity, love, and zeal of many who are the men of one book, who never heard of the fathers, who are totally ignorant of all their traditionary teaching,—do not their exemplary lives and happy deaths, arising from the knowledge imparted by the Bible, demonstrate that it needs no supplementary rule, no church interpreter? Yes! Scripture is sufficient,—alone it has guided millions to heaven, and thither it is guiding millions still. It is a broad and glorious light shining in a dark place, a noble pharos beaming in the ocean of life, and we need no flickering light of tradition to contribute its feeble and deceitful ray. At the Reformation, when the Bible was translated and circulated, the dayspring from on high visited our land, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace; and we have no wish to

go back to the times when men implicitly followed the *ignis fatuus* of tradition, that deceptive light which springs up from the pestilential marshes of a corrupted religion.

“ We avow, then, and are prepared to maintain with our latest breath, that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is, and ought to be, the religion of Protestants; and we regard with apprehension the efforts of those who would undermine this noble principle, written in the blood of martyrs, and endeavour once more to bring us under the authority of tradition. Oxford is building up a temple like that of Rome, save that it lacks the papal chair, and is cleansed from some of the fouler enormities of its ancient model. She strives to cover it with the richest architectural embellishments, to fill it with the softest music, and to shed over it the associations of the most venerable antiquity, and to allure within its walls admiring multitudes. And when they have entered its aisles, no light from the Bible is to fall upon them, save what is transmitted through the painted windows of tradition. There the people are to be kept in a sort of holy imprisonment, and to be prevented from ever going abroad to breathe the air of spiritual liberty, or to feel the pure sunshine of the gospel. We warn you against these efforts of spiritual despotism. We exhort you to put others on their guard. Surely, with a knowledge of the system, you will never think of surrendering to its usurpations. ‘ Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage.’

“ I have said nothing of the right of private judg-

ment, and can now only observe that this follows as a corollary from the doctrine that the Bible alone is the authoritative rule of faith and practice. If all authority over the conscience be in the Bible,—if there be none in tradition, none in the priesthood, none in the church,—then to what are we left but the study of the Bible in the exercise of our private judgment? And after all the interminable wrangling on the subject, Papists, Tractarians, and Protestants, are all forced practically to admit the inalienable right. The difference between the Catholic and the Protestant is this: the Catholic says, Choose your church first, and then receive your religion on her authority; the Protestant says, Choose your religion first, and then discover the true church by her guidance. But in either case the appeal is first made to private judgment; there is nothing else to appeal to, because in the nature of the case there is no other judge acknowledged. Till a man has actually chosen his religion, and his church, it must be so; and we may safely add, that every intelligent Catholic, whose religion is grounded on the conviction of his conscience,—and no other religion is worth a straw,—was really exercising his own private judgment at the very moment of his surrendering the right for ever.

“The exercise of your private judgment is a right, a sacred right, a birth-right, which all that the world can give, or all that the world can threaten, should never tempt you to sell. But while in reference to your fellow-men it is a right, in relation to God it is a duty. Imagine not that you are at liberty to exercise it or not as you please. The command of God binds

you to employ it. You sin in neglecting to do so. It is equally your duty to refuse to suffer others to judge for you, and to judge conscientiously for yourself. It is equally your sin to surrender your judgment to another, and to retain it inactive in your own keeping. Let me ask, then, while you value the right, do you exercise the duty? In other words, have you employed your minds in the study of religion? Have you tried by diligent search to find out what the Bible means? Have you brought the faculties of your minds to bear on the great questions,—What is religious truth? What is religious duty? What shall I do to be saved? What will take me to heaven? While repudiating Rome, and avoiding Oxford, have you come to the oracles of inspiration to inquire of God? While resisting all forms of spiritual tyranny, are you submitting to the gentle sway of Christ, the Lord of conscience? While you exercise common sense in rejecting the vain and foolish dogmas of superstition, do you exercise the same common sense in caring for your souls, and making the pure truths of the Bible your rule of action, your spring of comfort, and your guide to heaven? While boasting that you are Protestants, are you Christians? After all, the ignorant, deluded, but conscientious devotee of Popery, is safer for eternity, than the intelligent, enlightened, but merely nominal and hypocritical professor of Protestantism; because the former has some religion—the latter none. To the Bible, then, we most affectionately exhort you to apply. Study it carefully. Study it with prayer. Rejecting the interpretations of tradition, seek the teaching of the Spirit. Look up for heavenly light. Submit



your reason to this divine authority, while you refuse to submit it to any other. Ungalled as you are, and as we wish you to be, by the yoke of earthly tyranny, meekly bow to the yoke of Christ. Make his truth your wisdom—his cross your dependance—his salvation your joy. Remember you are responsible for your privileges. The word which Christ delivers to you in the New Testament, the same will judge you at the last day. The possession of the gospel in its unadulterated form, while it now constitutes an unspeakable advantage, will, if slighted, hereafter prove your terrible condemnation. And, of all the lost, none will incur so dreadful and so deep a fall, as you, who must sink from the very gate of heaven into the gulf of hell!"\*

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## SECTION II.

Views of the Fathers upon the Sufficiency of the Scriptures as the Rule of Faith.

IN a previous section I have noticed what is presented from the fathers in favour of patristic tradition. There I proceed upon the ground that the fathers are of authority with our opponents; and though we cannot admit them in matters of faith, yet they are available in a controversy with traditionists as an *argumentum ad hominem*. And I wish the reader to recollect that it is in this light only that I rely upon the patristic testimony which I adduce in this section. And if it is clearly shown that the chosen witnesses

\* Stoughton, Lectures, pp. 40-47.

of our opponents bear testimony against them, the weakness of their cause will appear in a very clear and strong light.

The first three authorities I quote below are from the number of what are called "apostolical fathers;" from the fact of their having lived in the apostolic age. They lived and wrote early in the period during which Archdeacon Manning maintains that "the oral preachings of the apostles" constituted "the chief rule of faith" for all Christians. But, strange as the fact may seem, as I have already had occasion to observe, these writers take no notice whatever of any such rule of faith. More than this, they afford the clearest evidence that the Scriptures, even then, were recognised as alone constituting that rule. This I shall now proceed to show.

CLEMENS ROMANUS has, as they say, left us one epistle. This epistle is directed to the Corinthians, and was written for the purpose of composing certain differences and schisms which had occurred in that church between the pastors and the people. The manner and strain of this epistle furnish an irrefutable argument in favour of our position, that the Scriptures were considered by the writer as the only rule of faith and practice.

The argument of this father is principally founded upon the Scriptures, large quotations being made from the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Epistles of St. Paul, without a single allusion to tradition or "the preachings of the apostles." Nor can it be plead that the occasion was not a fit one upon which to introduce the authority of the oral teaching of the apostles, had

that at the time constituted either the entire rule of faith, or any part of that rule. For it was just such an occasion as now makes special demand for traditional argument. The unity of the church, the divine right of episcopacy, ministerial authority, and the fact that there is no salvation but in connection with the divinely-authorized pastor, are the very points which have for centuries been maintained upon the authority of the oral teaching of the apostles or "the unwritten word." Now, how did this father, at a period when this "divine informant" must have been fully before the church in all its original freshness, and, if ever, must have been well understood, come to overlook it entirely, upon an occasion when it would have been more available than anything else? I hope our traditionalists will give us some light upon this point.

St. Clement, instead of referring to any traditional teachings of Christ or the apostles, goes to the written word. Says he, "Ye are contentious, brethren, and zealous for things that pertain not unto salvation. Look into the Holy Scriptures, which are the true words of the Holy Ghost. Ye know that there is nothing unjust or counterfeit written in them. There you shall not find that righteous men were ever cast off by such as were good themselves."\*

Again, "Ye know, beloved, ye know full well, the Holy Scriptures, and have thoroughly searched into the oracles of God; call them therefore to your remembrance."†

The father does indeed have recourse to other sources of argument besides the Scriptures, but in

\* Archbp. Wake's translation, sec. 45. † Ibid., sec. 53.

each case his facts are of vastly *less* weight than a reference to apostolic tradition would have been. For instance, he refers to the Apocrypha, (in sec. 55,) and in proof of the doctrine of the resurrection he adduces *as a matter of fact* the fabulous account of the phenix, which, he gravely says, "is seen in the eastern countries, that is to say, in Arabia."\*

Now, I do not allude to this instance of strange credulity in the father for the purpose of asking our traditionists whether they consider him as giving us a specimen of "the oral preachings of the apostles," though this query is very naturally suggested; but for the purpose of urging that the "unwritten revelation" upon the resurrection, now found in the Apostles' Creed, could scarcely have had a substantive existence at the time. Why was it that, in writing to Christians who had heard Paul preach, he does not refer to his "preachings," or to the creed which had been composed by the apostles, as a digest of the matter of their "preachings," when the questions he urges were then, by an authority which all Christian churches must have acknowledged, explicitly settled? How does it come to pass that he has recourse to Scripture—to Moses and the prophets—to Christ and the apostles—to apocryphal Jewish stories, and to heathen fables, to enforce his exhortations, and yet takes no notice at all of the grand "depositum" of "oral traditions" which were to be used through all succeeding ages as a divinely-authorized commentary upon the written word? This is a mystery, which upon the traditionary system it is hard for me to unravel.

\* Archbp. Wake's translation, sec. 25.

Finally. It is worthy of note that this father refers especially to St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, and not to his "preachings" among them. He says, "Take the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle into your hands; what was it he wrote to you at his first preaching the gospel among you? Verily he did by the Spirit admonish you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because that even then ye had begun to fall into parties and factions among yourselves."\*

Now, let it be considered that St. Paul had exercised his personal ministry among the Corinthians for a considerable space of time together†—Dr. Clarke thinks "about two years"—and during that time must have preached many sermons, and, upon the traditionary system, have deposited these traditions in no small store for the future use of the church in their endeavours to understand his writings and the other Scriptures. Now, how it comes to pass that Clement refers to "the unsensed record," and says nothing about the independent commentary, is a little difficult to determine. Why did he not say, Dear Corinthian brethren, remember "the preachings" of the blessed Paul; who, while he was with you, delivered to you "the depositum" of "apostolical tradition," which is now your "chief rule of faith," and which in all subsequent ages is to be regarded as an "unwritten revelation," and as expressive of "the sense of the written record?" But, strange to tell, we have nothing of the kind from the holy father. He simply directs the Corinthian Christian to one of the apostle's written epistles, just as

\* Archbp. Wake's translation, sec. 47.

† See Acts xviii, 11, 18.

though he had considered them capable of understanding its "sense" without reference to an independent oral revelation, or anything of the sort. Overlooking wholly what Archdeacon Manning now tells us constituted "the chief rule of faith," the simple-hearted father, in quite an "anticatholic" and "ultra-Protestant" strain, directs their attention to the "unsensed record!" Had the father lived in our own times, he might have profited by the lessons of instruction which are dispensed by our Romish and Anglican Catholics. He would then not have been guilty of such a slight upon a necessary portion of the rule of faith. He would have kept back no part of *the word of God*, but would have treated with the same respect the *unwritten* as the *written* word. But the good father lived a little too early to avail himself of Popish or high-Church light, and it is not wonderful that his epistle is scarcely up to the standard of *catholicity* which our apostolic Catholic doctors have now attained.

ST. IGNATIUS says, "I therefore did as became me, as a man composed to unity. For where there is division and wrath, God dwelleth not. But the Lord forgives all that repent, if they return to the unity of God, and to the council of the bishop. For I trust in the grace of Jesus Christ that he will free you from every bond. Nevertheless, I exhort you that you do nothing out of strife, but according to the instruction of Christ. Because I have heard of some who say, Unless I find *it written in the originals*,\* I will not believe *it to be written in the gospel*. And when I said, It is written, they answered what lay before them in

\* Archives.

their corrupted copies. But to me Jesus Christ is instead of all the uncorrupted monuments in the world: *together with* those undefiled monuments, his cross, and death, and resurrection, and the faith which is by him: by which I desire, through your prayers, to be justified.

“The priests indeed are good; but much better is the High Priest to whom the holy of holies has been committed, and who alone has been intrusted with the secrets of God. He is the door of the Father; by which Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all prophets enter in; *as well* as the apostles and the church. And all these things *tend* to the unity *which is* of God. Howbeit the gospel has somewhat in it *far above all other dispensations*; namely, the appearance of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, his passion and resurrection. For the beloved prophets referred to him: but the gospel is the perfection of incorruption. All *therefore* together are good, if ye believe with charity.”\*

From this it appears that the *written* Gospels were the ultimate appeal in which all professing Christians agreed, and the only question raised by heretics was, as to which were the authentic copies. Neither the orthodox nor heterodox make as yet any claim to oral traditions as authoritative expositions of the written record.

ST. POLYCARP affords us some rays of light upon the question at issue. His epistle is directed to the Philippians. In this he says, “These things, my brethren, I took not the liberty of myself to write unto you concerning righteousness, but you yourselves before encouraged me to it. For neither can I, nor any

\* Archbp. Wake's translation, sec. 8, 9.

other such as I am, come up to the wisdom of the blessed and renowned Paul; who being himself in person with those who then lived, did with all exactness and soundness teach the word of truth; and being gone from you, wrote an epistle to you; into which if you look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith that has been delivered unto you; which is the mother of us all; being followed with hope, and led on by a general love, both toward God and toward Christ, and toward our neighbour. For if any man has these things, he has fulfilled the law of righteousness; for he that has charity is far from all sin.”\*

Observe, *first*, that this father expressly denies being the receptacle of that “wisdom” which, upon the traditionary system, must have been deposited with all the successors of the apostles. Paul, he says, “being himself in person with those who then lived, did with all exactness and soundness teach the word of truth.” This “exactness and soundness” he does not arrogate to himself. But why not, if he had received the “depositum” in all its integrity from the apostles themselves?

Observe, *secondly*, that he, as Clement does in addressing the Corinthians, directs their attention to the *epistle* which Paul had written to them, and says, “into which if you look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith that has been delivered unto you.” “The faith” had been “delivered” to the Philippians by the oral preaching of Paul, which was, doubtless, to them who heard it, a portion of the rule of faith. But the generation to whom St. Paul preached

\* Archbp. Wake’s translation, sec. 3.



in person may by this time be presumed to have followed the apostle to the world of spirits. And now their children and successors are directed, not to any tradition of the oral preaching of the apostle, but to his written epistle.

Again this father says, "And whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there shall neither be any resurrection, nor judgment, he is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore leaving the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word that was delivered to us from the beginning; *watching unto prayer*, [1 Pet. iv, 7,] and persevering in fasting: with supplication beseeching the all-seeing God *not to lead us into temptation*; [Matt. vi, 13,] as the Lord hath said, 'The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak,' [Matt. xxvi, 41.]"\*

And again, "For I trust that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you."†

JUSTIN MARTYR embraced Christianity A. D. 132, and suffered martyrdom A. D. 164. Mr. Goode presents his testimony as follows:—

"I proceed to Justin Martyr, of whom we may observe, first, that in his conference with Trypho the Jew, he makes it a rule to ground all his statements upon Scripture, and Scripture only;‡ and exhorts Trypho to despise the tradition of his Jewish teachers, as under that name they palmed their own fancies upon

\* Archbishop Wake's translation, sec. 7.

† Ibid., sec. 12.

‡ Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph., § 28. Ed. Bened. Paris. 1742, p. 126. (Ed. Colon. 1686, p. 245.)

the world.\* As these remarks, however, apply only to Jewish traditions, and not to those of the Christian church, (though it is hard to see why one should be secure from error, though the others were not,) I shall not press them as evidence on our present subject.

“ Again, in a passage already quoted, he says,—alluding to a heterodox doctrine prevailing among some professed Christians at the time,—‘ With whom I do not agree, nor could agree, even though the great majority of those who are of my own religion should say so; since we are commanded by Christ himself to be ruled by not the doctrines of men, but those preached by the blessed prophets, and taught by him.’

“ Further, as to the question of the fulness of the revelation made in the Scriptures, we may observe the following passages:—‘ Those,’ saith he, ‘ who have left us a relation of *all things that concern our Saviour Jesus Christ*, have thus taught us.’† Again: ‘ Neither did God ask Adam where he was, as one who knew not, nor Cain where Abel was; but for the purpose of convincing each of them what he was, *and that the knowledge of all things might be conveyed to us by their being committed to writing.*’”‡ §

ST. IRENÆUS was constituted bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, A. D. 174. His testimony is presented by the above learned author as follows:—

“ We now come to an author who is very confidently

\* Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph., § 38, p. 135. Ed. Col., p. 256.

† Id., Apolog. Prim., § 33, p. 64. (Ed. Col. Apol. Sec., p. 75.)

‡ Id., Dial. cum Tryph., § 99, p. 195. (Ed. Col., p. 326.)

§ Divine Rule, vol. ii, p. 208. Epistle to the Philadelphians.

appealed to, both by the Romanists and our opponents, as a supporter of their views, namely, Irenæus. The claim is made upon the authority of one or two passages, which need only to be compared with other parts of the work in which they occur, to show that they afford no support to the views in defence of which they are adduced.

“ ‘By no other,’ says Irenæus, ‘have we come to the knowledge of the plan of our salvation, but those through whom the gospel came to us, which they then preached, but afterward, by the will of God, delivered to us *in the Scriptures* to be THE FOUNDATION AND PILLAR OF OUR FAITH;’\* a testimony which one might suppose would be sufficient of itself to settle the question. But it stands not alone.

“ After having spoken of the witness borne by *Scripture* to the truth of his doctrine respecting God, he says, ‘Having, therefore, the truth itself as *our rule*, and the testimony respecting God placed clearly before us, we ought not to cast away the firm and true knowledge of God,’ &c.†

“ And again: ‘But we, following the only true God as our teacher, and taking *his words* as our *rule of truth*, always teach the same all of us on the same points.’‡

“ And again: ‘Therefore the disciple of the Lord, wishing to proscribe all such things, and to constitute *a rule of truth* in the church . . . thus commenced the

\* Irenæi adv. Hær., lib. iii, c. 1. Ed. Grabe Oxon. 1702, fol., p. 198. (Ed. sec. Massuet. Ven. 1734, vol. i, p. 173.)

† Ib. ii, 47, p. 173. (M. ii, 28, p. 156.)

‡ Ib. iv, 69, p. 368. (M. iv, 35, p. 277.)

doctrine taught in his gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word, &c.'\*

"And when, after having in his first and second books explained and shown the absurdity of the doctrines of the heretics whom he was opposing, he proceeds to *prove* their opposition to the doctrine of the apostles, he professes only to be about to give that proof from their *writings*;† and he manifestly alludes to the tradition preserved in the churches founded by the apostles, only for the sake of convincing the heretics with whom he had to deal, who, he tells us, 'when reproved from the Scriptures, immediately began to accuse the Scriptures themselves, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and as if they were *ambiguous*; and *as if the truth could not be discovered from them, by those who were ignorant of tradition, FOR THAT THE TRUTH WAS NOT DELIVERED IN WRITING, BUT ORALLY.*'‡ To meet these *heretics*, therefore, on their own ground, (to the similarity of whose views to those of our opponents I need hardly point the attention of the reader,) he introduces *incidentally*, and *beyond his professed design*, the testimony borne by the creed professed in the various churches founded by the apostles, to the correctness of his doctrine. So evident is this, that the learned Romanist, Erasmus, scruples not to say that Irenæus in this work 'fights against a host of heretics, with the *SOLE* aid of *THE SCRIPTURES.*'§

\* Irenæi adv. Hær., ii, 11. (M. ib., p. 188.)

† Ib. ii, 66, pp. 194, 195. (M. ii, 35, pp. 170, 171.)

‡ Ib. iii, 2. (M. ib., p. 174.)

§ Erasmi, Præf. in Iren. Vide ed. Mass., vol. ii, p. 152.

“ I will add two more passages in proof of this :—

“ ‘ On this account,’ he says, ‘ we labour to adduce those proofs which are derived from the Scriptures, that confuting them by the very words of God, we may, as far as is in our power, drive them from their enormous blasphemy.’\* ”

“ And again : ‘ Using *those proofs which are from the Scriptures*, you may *easily* overturn, as we have demonstrated, all those heretical notions which were afterward invented.’ ” † ‡

TERTULLIAN was the earliest Latin father whose works are extant, and was born at Carthage about the middle of the second century. Toward the latter part of his life he joined the *Montanists*, who differed from the Catholics, as they called themselves, upon some points of discipline. Though, according to the rule of Vincentius, *not dying in the catholic faith*, he is not good catholic authority, yet he is quoted by Catholics whenever they find it convenient to avail themselves of his opinions. As we have already seen, Archdeacon Manning presses him into the service of tradition : and the Oxford divines give us a translation of his Works in their “ Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church.” He was a writer of great eloquence and power, though he broached several strange and singular conceits. And it must be admitted that he rests certain ceremonial observances, not authorized in Scripture, upon the authority of tradition ; § though

\* Erasmi, iv, 68, p. 367. (M. iv, 34, p. 276.)

† Ib., v, 14, p. 422. (M. ib., p. 311.)

‡ Divine Rule, vol. ii, pp. 208–210.

§ See his Works in Library of Fathers, vol. i, pp. 161–165.

he still quotes the Scriptures as the only rule of faith. Mr. Goode has collected the evidence from this father, and presented it as follows :—

“ Next in importance to the testimony of Irenæus is that of Tertullian, and their views on our present subject appear to be precisely the same.

“ Is, then, Scripture the sole authoritative rule of faith with Tertullian ?

“ The following passages will show how frequently it is referred to by him as the authoritative rule of faith, (not indeed under that name, because he uses that term more particularly for the creed established by the consent of the apostolical churches, but as being what that title signifies with us,) and we shall show hereafter what were the only exceptions he would have made against its being regarded as the *sole* authoritative rule of faith.

“ In his treatise, then, ‘ Against Hermogenes,’ he distinctly calls it ‘ the rule of truth ;’\* and elsewhere he says of a doctrine in question, ‘ Nothing is certain respecting it, because the Scripture does not declare it.’† And in his treatise ‘ Against Praxeas,’ he says, ‘ You ought to prove this as clearly from the Scriptures as we prove that He made his Word his Son.’‡ And elsewhere he urges the refutation of error by ‘ referring the points in dispute to the Scriptures of God.’§

“ Nay, in his treatise ‘ Against Hermogenes,’ he says plainly, ‘ That all things were made of some

\* Tertull. adv. Hermog., c. 1. Ed. Paris. 1664, fol., p. 233.

† Id. De carne Christi, c. 6, p. 312.

‡ Id. Adv. Prax., c. 11, p. 505.

§ Id. De anima, c. 2, p. 265.

subject matter, I have nowhere as yet read. Let the shop of Hermogenes show that it is *written*. *If it is not written*, let him fear that wo that is destined for those who add to or take from Scripture.\* And so he says elsewhere, ‘Take from the heretics the principles they hold in common with the heathen, so that they may be left to *prove their points from the Scriptures alone*, and they will *not be able to stand*.’†

“And hence, in his treatise, ‘On Præscription against the Heretics,’ he calls the Scriptures ‘*the documents of the doctrine* [of religion.]’‡

“And, in a word, throughout all his treatises, with a few exceptions, he refers to the Scriptures alone for the proof of the doctrines of religion, and that, not as Mr. Newman does, who would have us suppose that it would be no proof unless tradition had delivered the doctrine, that is, in other words, that it is no proof at all, but as a real proof speaking to the common sense of every man.

“Moreover, that Scripture contains all the points of faith belonging to the Christian religion, we have these testimonies:—‘I adore,’ he says, ‘*the fulness of Scripture* which manifests to me both the Creator and his works. But in the gospel I find discourse very abundantly serving as the minister and witness of the Creator. But that all things were made of some subject matter I have nowhere as yet *read*. Let the shop of Hermogenes show that it is *written*. If it is

\* Tertull. Adv. Hermog., c. 22, p. 241.

† Id. De resurr. carn., c. 3, p. 327. That the arguments of the heretics from Scripture may be refuted from Scripture, he also intimates, *ib.*, c. ult., p. 365.

‡ Id. De Præscript., c. 38.

*not written*, let him fear that what is destined for those who add to or take from Scripture.\*

“This testimony is surely plain and distinct. The cavil of the Romanists that it applies only to one particular article is too absurd to need refutation. The latter part of the passage, in particular, is so utterly irreconcilable with such a notion, that no impartial reader could entertain it for a moment.

“Again, in his treatise ‘On Præscription against the Heretics,’ he says, speaking of the Church of Rome, ‘*She joins the law and the prophets with the writings of the evangelists and apostles, and THENCE she draws the faith.*’† In those writings, then, ‘the faith’ is to be found; and in another part of the same treatise is a passage strongly, though indirectly, showing his mind in this matter: ‘The heretics,’ he says, ‘to show the ignorance of the apostles, bring forward the fact that Peter, and they that were with him, were blamed by Paul. . . . But we might here say to those who reject the Acts of the Apostles, You have first to show who that Paul was, both what before he was an apostle, and how he was an apostle. . . . But they may believe, forsooth, *without the Scriptures*, that they may believe contrary to the Scriptures.’”‡§

CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS succeeded Pantænus in the catechetical school of Alexandria about the year 189, and taught there until the edict of Severus, in 202,

\* Tertull. Adv. Hermog., c. 22, p. 241. See also his reference to Scripture in c. 33 of the same treatise, p. 245; and *De carne Christi*, c. 7, p. 312.

† Id. De Præscript., c. 36, p. 215.

‡ Id. De Præscript., c. 23, p. 210. See also c. 8, p. 205.

§ Divine Rule, vol. ii, pp. 219–221.



obliged him to change his residence. He was in Cappadocia in 210, and afterward visited Antioch, but nothing further of his history is known.\* As I cannot better serve the reader, I shall, as in several other instances, give the digest of his views upon the subject in question from Mr. Goode:—

“We come to Clement of Alexandria, one of the most learned of the early fathers whose remains are extant, but one whose works, valuable as they are, exhibit strong traces of feelings and habits of thought derived more from human philosophy than from divine revelation.†

“In entering upon a review of his opinions on the subject before us, we have at once to remark his advocacy of a notion somewhat similar to that of our opponents, and which might by an incautious reader be confounded with it, but which nevertheless is far from being the same, and, moreover, is one almost *peculiar to himself*, of the fathers yet extant. It was his opinion, then, as we learn from Eusebius, that ‘the Lord, after his resurrection, conferred the gift of knowledge upon James the Just, John, and Peter, which they delivered to the rest of the apostles, and those to the seventy disciples.’‡ And in the first book of his *Stromata*, he says that the teachers from whom he had learned the Christian doctrine ‘preserved the true tradition of the blessed gospel as delivered by Peter, and James, and John, and Paul, the holy apostles, having received it in succession the son from his

\* Gorton.

† See especially the first book of his *Stromata*.

‡ Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. ii, c. 1. (Ed. Col. 1612.)

father, though few are like the fathers ; and at length, by God's help, are depositing with us those seeds received from their forefathers and the apostles.\* A knowledge of this tradition he considers to be necessary to constitute a perfect Christian, whom he calls a Gnostic, distinguishing him from the ordinary Christian, whom he speaks of as having only common faith.†

“ This ‘ Gnostic tradition,’ however, as he frequently calls it,‡ was not intended for Christians in general. The Lord, he tells us, ‘ permitted the divine mysteries and the holy light to be communicated to those who were capable of receiving them. He did not immediately reveal them to many, because they were not adapted to many, but to a few, to whom he knew them to be adapted, and who were both able to receive them and to be conformed to them. Secret things, like God, are intrusted to speech, not to writing.’§ And hence he exhorts the Gnostic, ‘ Be cautious in the use of the word, lest any one who has fallen in with the knowledge taught by you, and is unable to receive the truth, should disobey and be ensnared by it ; and to those who come without understanding, shut the fountain, whose waters are in the deep, but give drink to those who are athirst for truth. Conceal, therefore, this fountain from those who are not able to receive the profundity of the knowledge. The Gnostic, who is

\* Clem. Alex., Strom., lib. i, pp. 322, 323. Ed. Potter. Ox. 1715, (pp. 274, 275, edd. Par. 1641, and Col. 1688.) See also Strom., lib. vi, p. 771, (or 645.)

† See Strom., lib. v, pp. 659, 660, (or 557, 558.)

‡ Id. Strom., lib. iv, p. 564, (or 475,) and lib. v, p. 683, (or 577,) &c.

§ Id. Strom., lib. i, p. 323, (or 275.)

master of this fountain, will himself suffer punishment, if he gives occasion to one who as yet is only conversant with little things of taking offence, and of being swallowed up as it were by the greatness of his discourse, or if he transfers one who is only an operative to speculation, and leads him away by occasion of a momentary faith [which has no solid grounds in his mind to rest upon.]\*

“Of this tradition Clement professes to give in his *Stromata* some account, though not of the whole of it, concealing some part intentionally, as too profound for common ears, and delivering the rest so that a common reader would not understand its full Gnostic sense,† and, moreover, acknowledging that some part of what had been delivered to him had escaped his recollection, not being committed to writing, and other parts partially obliterated by the lapse of time,—a tolerably good proof of the insufficiency of oral tradition for the conveyance of truth. But we will quote his own words.

“After stating that he is about to deliver the tradition which he had been taught by his Christian instructors, he adds, ‘But I well know that many things have escaped us, having by the length of time fallen from my recollection, being unwritten, whence, in order to assist the weakness of my memory, and supply myself with a systematic exposition of the principal points, as a useful record for keeping them in remembrance, I have found it necessary to use this delineation of them. There are indeed some things which I do not

\* Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, lib. v, p. 678, (or 573.)

† Id. *Strom.*, lib. i, pp. 323, 324, (or 275;) and lib. vii, p. 901, (or 766;) and see p. 326, (or 278.)

recollect, for there was in those blessed men great power. And there are some things which remained unnoted for some time, and which have now escaped me; and some things are nearly obliterated from my memory, perishing in my own mind, since such a service is not easy to those who are not experienced. But reviving the recollection of these things in my writings, I purposely omit some things, making a prudent choice, fearing to write what I even speak with caution and reserve; not in the spirit of envy, for that would be unjust, but fearing for my readers, lest by any means they should otherwise be made to fall, and we should be found putting, as those who speak in proverbs say, a sword into the hands of a child.\*

“Now certainly our opponents have here a patron not only of oral tradition, but also of ‘reserve in the communication of religious knowledge,’ but, unfortunately for their cause, not the sort of tradition for which they are contending. The notion of this Gnostic tradition delivered only by our Lord to three or four of the apostles, and disclosing certain hidden meanings of the truths and doctrines of Christianity not intended for Christians in general, is one of which Clement is, of those whose writings remain to us, almost the only supporter.

“Nay, his statements on this point are directly opposed to those of Irenæus and Tertullian, who both inveigh strongly against any such notion. The former speaks of it as a tenet of the Carpocratian heretics, who, he tells us, ‘said that Jesus spoke some things privately in a mysterious manner to his disciples and

\* Clem. Alex., Strom., lib. i, p. 324, (or 276.)

apostles, and commanded them to deliver those things to those that were worthy and obedient.\* And he says, ‘That Paul taught *plainly* what he knew, not only to his companions, but to *all who heard him*, he himself manifests. For in Miletus the bishops and presbyters being assembled, . . . he says, ‘I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.’ Thus the apostles *plainly* and willingly delivered to *all*, those things which they had themselves learned from the Lord.† And again, he says, ‘The doctrine of the apostles is *manifest* and firm, and *conceals nothing*, and is not that of men who teach one thing in secret and another openly. For this is the contrivance of counterfeiters, and seducers, and hypocrites, as the Valentinians do.‡

“And thus Tertullian:—‘All the sayings of the Lord are proposed to all.’§ And he accuses those of ‘*madness*’ who ‘think that the apostles *did not reveal all things to all*, but that they *committed some things openly to all, without exception, and some secretly to a few.*’||

“Most justly, therefore, is this notion of Clement, as to a secret tradition reserved for a few, pronounced by a learned prelate of our Church, who is referred to with approbation by our opponents, to be ‘destitute of solid foundation.’¶

\* Iren. adv. Hær., lib. i, c. 24, (ed. Grabe.)

† Id., lib. iii, c. 14.

‡ Id., ib., c. 15.

§ Tertull. De Præscript. adv. Hæret., c. 8, p. 205.

|| Ib., c. 25, p. 210.

¶ Bishop of Lincoln’s Account of the Writings and Opinions of Clement of Alexandria, ch. viii, p. 368.

“ And the reserve recommended, is a reserve only in communicating this Gnostic tradition, not in preaching the great doctrines of Christianity; and one which even to this limited extent is entirely opposed, as we have shown, to the views of Irenæus and Tertullian.

“ At any rate, as this Gnostic tradition is confessedly delivered by Clement so that the uninitiated cannot avail themselves of it, his writings will not serve to show us its true nature; and unless our opponents can lay claim to the possession of the key which unlocks this treasure, his tradition, and his notions respecting it, are to us equally useless and inapplicable. The knowledge of the profundities of this mystic tradition is gone, and with it the applicability to any practical purpose of all that is said respecting it.

“ But, with this exception, he speaks agreeably to the view we have been attempting to establish, as I shall now proceed to show. For,

“ *First.* He acknowledges no divine informant but Scripture, and this supposed Gnostic tradition.

“ *Secondly.* With respect to the claims of Scripture as the rule of faith, he speaks thus:—‘ He, therefore,’ he says, ‘ who believes the divine Scriptures with a firm conviction, receives an incontrovertible demonstration, namely, the voice of God, who gave the Scriptures.’\* ”

“ Again: ‘ But the just shall live by faith; *that faith, namely, which is according to the Testament and the commandments*; since these [Testaments], which are two as it respects name and time, having been given by a wise economy, according to age and proficiency,

\* Id. Strom., lib. ii, p. 433, (or 362.)

are one in effect. Both the Old and the New were given by one God, through the Son.\*

“ Again : ‘ But since a happy life is set before us by the commandments, it behooves us all to follow it, not disobeying anything that is said, nor lightly esteeming what is becoming, though of the most trifling nature, but following whithersoever the word may lead ; if we err from it, we must necessarily fall into endless evil. But they *who follow the divine Scripture, by which believers walk*, that they may become, as far as they can, like the Lord, ought not to live carelessly, but, &c.†

“ Again, he tells us, that for those who, ‘ for the benefit of their neighbours, betake themselves, some to writing, and others to the oral delivery of the word, while learning of another kind is *useful*, the perusal of the Dominical Scriptures is *necessary for the proof of what they say.*‡

“ And in the seventh book of his *Stromata*, replying to the objection of the heathen to Christianity, on the ground of its followers being divided into so many sects, he says, ‘ But when proof is being given, it is necessary to descend to the particular questions, and *to learn demonstratively, from the Scriptures themselves*, how, on the one hand, the sects were deceived, and how, on the other, both the most perfect knowledge, and that which is in reality the best sect, are in the truth alone and the ancient church.‡

“ Nor let it be supposed that by the words ‘ the an-

\* *Id. Strom.*, lib. ii, p. 444, (or 372.)

† *Ib.*, lib. iii, p. 530, (or 443.)

‡ *Ib.*, lib. vi, p. 786, (or 600.)

§ *Ib.*, lib. vii, p. 888, (or 755.)

cient church,' he says anything opposed to our view ; for, by that phrase, he means the church under the apostles ; as is evident, not only by the time when he wrote, but from his own words a little further on.\*

“ Again, he says, ‘ They who are willing to labour for the acquisition of those things which are of the greatest excellence, *will not desist from their search for truth, before they have received a proof from the Scriptures themselves.*’ †

“ And again : ‘ Thus, therefore, we, giving perfect proof respecting the Scriptures from the Scriptures themselves, persuade through faith demonstratively.’ ‡

“ ‘ The truth,’ he says, . . . ‘ is found, by considering attentively what is perfectly proper and becoming for the Lord and the almighty God, and by confirming each of the things demonstrated by the Scriptures from like Scriptures.’ §

“ And a little further on, his language clearly shows that he appealed to the Scripture alone as the rule and judge of controversies, in disputing with those who differed from him, where he says, ‘ When we have overthrown them *by demonstrating that they are clearly opposed to the Scriptures,* you will see the leaders of the doctrine opposed do one of two things ; for either they give up the consequence of their own doctrines, or the prophecy itself, or rather their own hope.’ ||

“ ‘ They,’ he says, ‘ who do not follow God whithersoever he may lead them, fall away from that exalted

\* Id. Strom., lib. vii, pp. 898, 899, (or 764, 765.)

† Ib., lib. vii, p. 889, (or 755.)

‡ Ib., lib. vii, p. 891, (or 757.)

§ Ib., lib. vii, p. 891, (or 758.)

|| Ib., lib. vii, p. 892, (or 758.)



state [which he has been describing ;] and God leads *by the divinely-inspired Scriptures.*\*

“ From these passages, I think it is evident that the Holy Scriptures were proposed by Clement as the authoritative rule of faith and judge of controversies for all Christians, and, to all but his Gnostic Christian, the *sole* and *exclusive* rule and judge.

“ Unless, then, our opponents are willing to contend for his notions about a Gnostic tradition, delivered to four of the apostles, and left as deposite with certain rabbies of the church for the benefit of a few mature Christians,† they will derive no benefit from Clement’s testimony on this matter.

“ Moreover, notwithstanding his notions about a Gnostic tradition, it is evident that he considered it to be only an *exposition* of Scripture, and not as containing any additional doctrines or points of faith ; for he says, ‘ We offer them that which cannot be contradicted, even that of which God is the author ; and *of each of those things which form the subject of our inquiries, he has taught us in the Scriptures.*’‡

“ And it is clear from many passages, that he considered the Gnostic tradition as only explanatory of Scripture, and not adding to it any new points of faith. Thus he says, when about to give a description of the Christian faith, ‘ We shall bring testimonies from the Scriptures hereafter, in their proper places ; but we shall give what they deliver, and describe the Christian faith (or Christianity) in a summary way . . . and

\* Id. Strom., lib. vii, p. 894, (or 761.)

† See Strom., lib. vii, pp. 864, 865, (or 731, 732.)

‡ Id. Strom., lib. v, p. 646, (or 547.)

if what we say should appear to any of the vulgar contrary to the Dominical Scriptures, they must know that, from that source, they have their breath and life; and taking their origin from them, profess to give the sense only, not the words.\*

“So, also, he intimates elsewhere, that the Gnostic tradition delivered only things ‘agreeable to the divinely-inspired oracles.’† And that ‘the Gnostic knows ancient things, and conjectures things to come, by the Scriptures.’‡

“Hence, he says, that ‘they who have only tasted the Scriptures are believers; but they who have advanced further are perfect indexes of the truth, namely, the Gnostics, as, in things pertaining to this life, those who understand any art possess something more than the ignorant, and produce that which is superior to the ideas of the vulgar.’§

“It is evident, therefore, that (as the learned prelate already quoted has observed) ‘the same Scriptures were placed in the hands of Clement’s Gnostic, and of the common believer; but he interpreted them on different principles; he affixed to them a higher and more spiritual meaning. *The same doctrines were proposed as the objects of his faith*; but he explained them in a different manner; he discovered in them hidden meanings, which are not discernible by the vulgar eye.’”¶

\* Id. Strom., lib. vii, p. 829, (or 700.)

† Ib., lib. vii, p. 896, (or 762.)

‡ Ib., lib. vi, p. 786, (or 660.) See also lib. vi, p. 802, (or 676.)

§ Ib., lib. vii, p. 891, (or 757.)

¶ Bp. of Lincoln’s Account of Clem. of Alex., pp. 367, 368.

¶ Divine Rule, vol. ii, pp. 225-233.

ORIGEN was born in Alexandria A. D. 185, and, as is generally supposed, died at Tyre A. D. 254. And here again I shall present the evidence as collected by Mr. Goode. He proceeds:—

“ Our next witness shall be Origen. He says, ‘ To me it seems good to cleave close, as to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, so also to his apostles, *and to take my information from the divine Scriptures, according to their own tradition.*’\* ”

“ Again: ‘ These two things are the works of a priest; that he should either be *learning from God, by reading and frequently meditating upon the divine Scriptures*, or be teaching the people. But let him teach those things which he himself shall have *learnt from God*, not from his own heart, *or from the human understanding*, but *what the Holy Spirit teaches.*’ † ”

“ ‘ We must take the Scriptures as witnesses [to prove the truth of what we say.] For our doctrines and interpretations, without such witness, are not to be believed.’ ‡ ”

“ ‘ *If the oracles of God are in the Law and Prophets, and Gospels and Apostles*, it behooves him, who is a disciple of God, to reckon God his master for those oracles.’ § ”

“ Speaking of our Saviour silencing the Sadducees by a reference to Scripture, he says, ‘ As our Saviour imposed silence on the Sadducees by the word of his doctrine, and confidently refuted the false dogma which

\* See Divine Rule, vol. ii, p. 193.

† Origen. In Levit. hom. 6, § 6, tom. ii, p. 219, ed. Bened. Paris. 1733. ‡ In Jerem., hom. 1, § 7, tom. iii, p. 129.

§ In Jer., hom. 10, *init.* (sec. Hieron., hom. 8,) tom. iii, p. 182.

they esteemed to be the truth, so will the followers of Christ also do by instances from the Scriptures, by which, according to sound doctrine, it behooves every voice of Pharaoh to be silent. . . . We ought to treat of those things that are not written according to the things that are written.\*

“ Again: St. Paul, ‘ as is his custom, is desirous of confirming what he had said from the Holy Scriptures ; and at the same time affords an example to the teachers of the church, that in what they preach to the people they should bring forward, not their own imaginations, but things that are supported by the divine testimonies.† Similarly to what he says elsewhere, that ‘ he is circumcised and clean who always speaks the word of God, and brings forward sound doctrine, supported by evangelical and apostolical admonitions.‡

“ ‘ See,’ he says, ‘ how close they are upon danger who neglect to be versed in the divine Scriptures, *which alone* ought to direct our judgment in such an examination,’ that is, as to who are true and who are false ministers of Christ.§ A very remarkable testimony this as it respects other points in the present controversy, besides that immediately before us. For we here see that the Scriptures are considered by Origen as the proper test of orthodoxy and the true church. And hence we see what is meant by those passages that are often triumphantly adduced in defence of pseudo-catholic views, such, for instance, as

\* In Matt. Comment. Series § 1, (al. Tract 23,) tom. iii, p. 830.

† In Epist. ad Rom., lib. iii, § 2, tom. iv, p. 504.

‡ In Genes., hom. iii, § 5, tom. ii, p. 69.

§ In Epist. ad Rom., lib. x, § 35, tom. iv, p. 684.

the following: 'It is a capital sin,' says Origen, 'to think otherwise of the divine doctrines than the faith of the church contains.\*' No doubt it is; but it is not here intended that the dictum of any certain body of men should be laid down as *the ground* upon which our faith is to rest. It is true in the mouth of all parties, that he who in fundamental points does not hold the faith of the true church of Christ is in fundamental error. But before we can make the creed of the church the ground of our faith, we must determine infallibly who constitute that church; and one of the necessary evidences by which we must discern that church is its holding the orthodox faith, which, therefore, must be determined before we can discover that church. And when we consider these words in connection with him who uttered them, we shall see most forcibly how little practical meaning they have. For what sort of exposition would Origen have given of the doctrines of the church? An exposition unsound even in the highest points, and full (as Jerome will tell us†) of his own vagaries.

"Further, Holy Scripture is with him the complete rule of faith. For, commenting on Lev. vii, 17, 18, on the words that the sacrifice was to be eaten within two days, and that if any remained to the third day it was to be burnt, he says, 'By these two days I think that the two Testaments may be understood, in which every word which belongs to God (for this is the sacrifice) may be sought and discovered, and a knowledge of all things obtained from them. *But if anything shall re-*

\* In Levit., hom. viii, § 11, tom. ii, p. 235.

† See Divine Rule, vol. i, p. 171, *note*, and p. 174.

*main which the divine Scripture does not determine, no other third scripture must be taken as an authority for our information, because this is called the third day, but we must put into the fire what remains, that is, we must leave it with God. For God does not intend that in the present life we should know all things. . . . Lest, therefore, our sacrifice should not be accepted, and this very thing, namely, that we desire to inform ourselves from the divine Scriptures, become to us a cause of sin, let us keep ourselves within those limits which the spiritual law announces to us by the legislator.\** Absurdly fanciful as this interpretation is, it shows most forcibly Origen's views upon the point now in question.

“Again: ‘Therefore, in proof of all the words we utter when teaching, we ought to produce the doctrine of Scripture as confirming the doctrine we utter. For as all the gold that is without the temple is not sanctified, so every doctrine that is not in the divine Scripture, although it may seem admirable to some, is not sacred, because it is not contained by the doctrine of Scripture, which sanctifies that doctrine alone which it contains within itself, as the temple [renders sacred] the gold that is in it. We ought not, therefore, for the confirmation of our instructions, to swear by and take as evidence our own notions, which we individually hold, and think to be agreeable to truth, unless we are able to show that they are sacred, as being contained in the divine Scriptures as in some temples of God.†’

“And hence, when discussing the question concern-

\* In Levit., hom. v, § 9, tom. ii, p. 212.

† In Matt. Com. Series, § 18, (al. Tract. 23,) tom. iii, p. 842.

ing the guardian angels of children, when they were appointed to them, at their birth or baptism, he says, (if the ancient Latin version may be trusted,) ‘ You see that he who would discuss both of them with caution, it is his duty to show which of them is true, and to adduce in proof Scripture testimony agreeing with one of the two.’\*\*†

CYPRIAN, bishop of Carthage, was converted to Christianity A. D. 246, and suffered martyrdom A. D. 258. In his epistle to Quirinus, introductory to his “three testimonies against the Jews,” he says, “This will be sufficient to draw the outlines, and to form in your mind the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. You will daily get more ground and strength in it, and the eyes of your understanding will be more and more enlightened as you get a fuller acquaintance with the books of the Old and New Testaments, and take along with you the whole thread of the inspired writings. At present I have only sent you a taste of them drawn from the fountain-head; you may take for yourself a larger draught, and entirely quench your thirst in the waters of life, if you will in your own person resort to them, and apply them to their proper use.”‡

But in his celebrated dispute with Stephen, bishop of Rome, on the baptism of heretics, he is perfectly explicit. The first section of his letter to *Pompeius* is as follows:—

“Although, my dear brother, I have comprised the

\* In Matt., tom. xiii, § 27, *sec. vet. interpret.*, tom. iii, p. 607.

† Divine Rule, vol. ii, pp. 233–237.

‡ See Cypriani Opera, Venetiis, 1758, p. 628. Also Marshall’s translation of the Works of St. Cyprian, part i, p. 19.

substance of what may be said upon the case of baptizing heretics, in those several letters, of which I have sent you copies; yet, inasmuch as you desire to be made acquainted with what our brother Stephen hath returned in answer to my letters upon that subject, I have herewith sent you a copy of such his answer; in reading which you will more and more observe his error, who labours to maintain the cause of heretics against Christians and the church of God. For among other things written by him, unwarily and unskilfully, with great pride, impertinence, and self-contradiction, he hath proceeded so far as to dictate thus: 'If any come over to us from any heresy whatsoever, let no innovations be made in the custom handed down to us from tradition; and therefore let such persons be received by imposition of hands, in order to their penance; forasmuch as they, who are properly heretics, baptize not the persons who come over to them from any other sect, but receive them by communion only.' In which words he hath forbidden those to be baptized who come over from 'any heresy whatsoever;' that is, indeed, he hath pronounced the baptisms of *all* heretics to be legal and valid. And whereas each particular heresy hath a distinct baptism, and holds its distinct errors; he, by communicating with each upon the foot of such baptism, amasseth their whole heap of errors, and sheltereth them within his own bosom. He hath been pleased, moreover, to issue out his further orders; forbidding any 'innovations to be made in the custom handed down to us from tradition;' as if he could be censured for making any such innovations who is for maintaining the unity of the church, and for insisting



on her title to baptism exclusive of other pretensions ; and not rather he, who, overlooking all regards of unity, declares himself in favour of injurious usurpations, and of false and pretended baptisms. ‘ Let no innovations,’ saith he, ‘ be made in the custom handed down to us from tradition.’ But from whence, I would ask, have we this tradition ? Do we derive it from the immediate authority of our Lord himself in the gospel ? Or cometh it down to us from the directions of the apostles in any of their Epistles ? For God hath most plainly given us to understand, that his *written* will is to be followed, where we find him thus directing Joshua, and saying, ‘ This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all which is written therein,’ Josh. i, 8. Our Lord also, when he sent forth his apostles, ordered, that the ‘ Gentiles should be baptized, and taught to observe all things which he had commanded them,’ Matt. xx, 28. If, then, there be anywhere extant, either in the Gospel itself, or in the Epistles or Acts of the Apostles, an express direction, that heretics should not be baptized, but only receive imposition of hands, in order to their penance, let such a holy and heavenly tradition be, by all means, observed. But now, on the other hand, if heretics have everywhere in Scripture the character of enemies and antichrists ; if they are to be avoided as persons ‘ subverted and self-condemned,’ Tit. iii, 11 ; how is it, that we must not condemn them, when, as the apostle hath borne witness, they are condemned by themselves ? So that no one should presume to defame the apostles, as if they approved the baptisms

of heretics, or admitted them to communion without baptizing them ; when yet there are extant such severe censures of the apostles upon heretics ; and these recorded at a time when the ranker sorts of heresy had not yet broke out upon the church ; when Marcion had not yet appeared from Pontus, whose master, Cerdon, came to Rome in the pontificate of Pope Hyginus, the ninth bishop of that see ; whom Marcion so followed, as to improve upon his master's errors, and to blaspheme with more daring impudence than others against God, the Father and Creator ; and to point his audacious heresy, wherewith he rebelled against the church, with a keener malice, as well as to arm it with a new set of offensive weapons. Now if it be apparent, that more and worse heresies started up in after-times, and if it was never in times before commanded, or written, that hands should only be laid upon heretics, in order to their penance, and so they should be admitted to communion ; if, further, there be but one baptism, and that with us, in the pale of the church, and granted by the favour of God to her only ; what obstinate and hardy presumption must it be, to prefer the tradition of men before the appointment of God ; nor at the same time to consider, that God is always angry, whenever human tradition overlooks, or weakens, the authority of the divine commands ? Thus he hath complained by his prophet, saying, ' This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far removed from me : but in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,' Isa. xxix, 13. And our Lord hath accordingly censured this practice in his gospel, where he saith, ' Ye reject the commandment

of God, that ye may keep your own tradition,' Mark vii, 13. Which observation and censure the blessed apostle St. Paul bearing in mind, hath added this further comment thereupon, and thus instructed us, saying, 'If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to his doctrine; his pride hath stupified him, and he knoweth nothing; from such we must withdraw,' 1 Tim. vi, 3-5."\*

Again, the learned father says, "They, who simply and honestly mean the truth, and would rid themselves of error, have a short and easy way to both these ends. For if we will apply ourselves to the fountain-head of divine tradition, all human errors will presently disappear; and when we thence discern the method and economy of God's holy sacraments, all clouds and darkness will vanish, and the light of truth will break out from under them. Should a pipe, through which water was used to be carried in great abundance, be stopped on a sudden, would you not go to the spring which furnished it, and there look out for the reason of the failure? Whether the veins of water which supplied the fountain were dried up; or whether the streams flowed thence in their accustomed plenty, and were stopped in the middle of their passage; so that if the hinderance of the waters flowing proceeded from any stoppage or leakage in the pipe, it might be forthwith repaired, and the water might pass on in the same quantity wherein it came originally from its spring-head, for the several uses of the place it was designed for? Thus should the bishops of God behave

\* Opera, pp. 329-333. Marsh. trans., part ii, pp. 244-246.

upon the present occasion, if we would keep his commandments; that is, in any case where the truth is shocked or disputed, we should resort to our fountain-head, to the gospel of our Lord, and the tradition of his apostles; and thence our conduct should take its rise, from whence our religion and all its ordinances took theirs.”\*

FIRMILIAN was a pupil of Origen, and bishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia. In a letter to Cyprian he fiercely assails Pope Stephen’s traditionary argument. Thus he proceeds:—

“As to what Stephen hath asserted, concerning the apostle’s forbidding persons to be baptized who come over from heresy, and their handing down this rule to posterity, you have given a full and sufficient answer, that no one surely can be so weak as to believe the apostles made any such rule, inasmuch as these execrable heresies have taken rise since their times. For Marcion is known to have been the disciple of Cerdon, and to have introduced his blasphemous opinions against God, long after the age of the apostles; and so is Apelles, who grafted upon his blasphemy some further articles, more repugnant to truth, and more injurious to our faith. Valentinus and Basilides are also known to have vented their pernicious errors against the church long after the apostolic times; and so, indeed, are the rest of the heretical tribe; all which are manifestly self-condemned, and have pronounced against themselves an irreversible sentence even before the day of judgment: he, therefore, who is for confirming their baptism judgeth, in effect, his own

\* Opera, pp. 338, 339. Marsh. trans., part ii, pp. 249, 250.

case the same with theirs, and accordingly condemns himself by becoming a partaker with them.

“ But now, that the Romanists are no exact observers of tradition, and have very little title to urge the authority of the apostles, a man may easily guess, who shall attend to their different manner of keeping Easter, with diverse other variations from the customs retained by the church of Jerusalem. As, indeed, among several other provinces there is a like diversity, but without any breach, upon such accounts, of the peace and unity of the catholic church. This breach of peace hath Stephen adventured to make with you, which his predecessors all along maintained, in all fit expressions of love and honour to you; he hath, moreover, cast a reflection upon the memory of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul; as if he had derived his practice from a tradition delivered by them, who in their epistles have severally pronounced their censures upon heretics, and admonished us to avoid them. From whence it is apparent, that this pretended tradition is merely human, which avoweth the cause of heretics, and insisteth, that they have true baptism among them, which indeed belongeth to none, but to the church only.”\*

ATHANASIUS was constituted bishop of Alexandria A. D. 326, and died A. D. 373.

I have, in a preceding section of this work, noticed that traditionists claim the Nicene Creed as a specimen of primitive tradition:—that they maintain its language to have come from the apostles, and not to have been founded upon the Scriptures. In opposition

\* See Cypriani Opera, pp. 343, 344. Marsh. trans., part ii, pp. 253, 254.

to this theory we have a passage from Athanasius, and none is better qualified to give us a commentary upon the Nicene Creed, which explicitly asserts that the language of that creed is founded upon the Scriptures, and is expressive of its sense: so far is this great defender of this creed from giving it an origin *independent* of the Scriptures.\*

The Arians objected that the terms of the creed were not taken from the Bible. To this the great orthodox doctor replies, "But I well know that if they hold the *sense* of the council, they will fully accept the *terms* in which it is conveyed; whereas, if it be the *sense* which they wish to complain of, all must see that it is idle in them to discuss the *wording*, when they are but seeking handles for irreligion.

"This, then, was the reason of these expressions; but if they still complain that such are not Scriptural, that very complaint is a reason why they should be cast out, as talking idly and disordered in mind; and next why they should blame themselves in this matter, for they set the example, beginning their war against God with *words* not in *Scripture*. However, if a person is interested in the question, let him know, that, even if the *expressions* are not *in so many words* in the Scriptures, yet, as was said before, *they contain the*

\* Archdeacon Manning asserts, and labours to prove, "that the *oral preaching* of the apostles, and *not the Scriptures*, was the original source of the creed." That under the term creed he embraces the Nicene formulary, may be seen in his summing up, where he says, "It cannot be doubted that the Nicene and the Apostles' Creeds are the offspring and representatives of the oral preaching of the apostles."—*See Rule of Faith, Appendix*, pp. 37, 75.

*sense of Scripture*, and *expressing it*, they convey it to those who have their hearing unimpaired for religious doctrine. Now this circumstance it is for thee to consider, and for those ill-instructed men to learn. It has been shown above, and must be believed as true, that the word is from the Father, and the only offspring proper to him and natural. For wherein may one conceive the Son to be, but from God himself? However, *the Scriptures also teach us this*, since the Father says by David," &c.\*

Now we ask Archdeacon Manning why Athanasius does not vindicate the language of the creed upon the ground of its *apostolical origin, independent of the Scriptures*? How much more direct and conclusive would it have been for him to urge, that the formulary in question came from the apostles—was communicated orally as a divinely-authorized commentary upon the Scriptures—and consequently was *in its language*, as well as its *sense*, of *divine authority*? This, upon the traditionary system, would have been the legitimate course of argumentation, and would have been entirely conclusive. The question whether this language was indeed expressive of "the sense of Scripture" would then have been fully settled by an infallible interpreter. But Athanasius evidently considers this point as still open for discussion, and proceeds without seeming to know that it had been settled by apostolical traditions.

Again this father says: "And if so be the same terms are used of God and man in divine Scripture,

\* Defence of the Nicene Definition, chap. iii, sec. 6, 7. See Library of Catholic Fathers, vol. viii, pp. 36, 37.

yet the clear-sighted, as Paul enjoins, will study it, and thereby discriminate, and dispose of what is written according to the nature of each subject, and avoid any confusion of sense, so as neither to conceive of the things of God in a human way, nor to ascribe the things of man to God.”\*

Here observe, for the difficulty involved in the “terms” of “divine Scripture” we have not the Catholic remedy—the *traditional sense*—but the “study” of the Scriptures themselves, that we may “dispose of what is written *according to the nature of each subject*,” and not according to the *traditional interpretation*.

Again this father says: “For, behold, we take divine Scripture, and therein discourse with freedom of the religious faith, and set it up, as a light upon its candlestick.”†

I give but one more quotation from Athanasius, and this is entirely decisive of his views of the *sufficiency* of Scripture. He says, “Let not any one any longer ask such questions, but *learn only what is in the Scriptures*; for the illustrations we have of this matter in them are sufficient of themselves, and need no addition.”‡

CYRIL, bishop of Jerusalem, finished his course A. D. 386.

The testimony of this father is very clearly in our favour. He says, “This seal have thou ever on thy

\* Nic. Def., chap. iii, sec. 8.

† Ibid., sec. 2.

‡ Ep. i. ad Serap., sec. 19. This last quotation I take from Mr. Goode, who gives us a multitude more of the same class, which the reader will do well to consult. See *Divine Rule*, vol. ii, pp. 270-276.



mind; which now by way of summary has been touched on in its heads, and if the Lord grant, shall hereafter be set forth according to our power, with Scripture proofs. For concerning the divine and sacred mysteries of the faith, we ought not to deliver even the most casual remark without the Holy Scriptures: nor be drawn aside by mere probabilities and the artifices of argument. Do not then believe me because I tell thee these things, unless thou receive from the Holy Scriptures the proof of what is set forth: for this salvation, which is of our faith, is not by ingenious reasonings, but by proof from the Holy Scriptures.”\*

Again he says, “But take thou and hold that faith only as a learner and in profession, which is by the church delivered to thee, and is established from all Scripture. For since all cannot read the Scripture, but some as being unlearned, others by business, are hindered from the knowledge of them; in order that the soul may not perish for lack of instruction, in the articles, which are few, we comprehend the whole doctrine of the faith. . . . For the articles of the faith were not composed at the good pleasure of men: but the most important points chosen from all Scripture, make up the one teaching of the faith.”†

And again: “And first we have to inquire, wherefore Jesus came down? Now heed not any ingenious views of mine; else thou mayest be misled; but unless thou receive the witness of the prophets concerning each matter, believe not what is spoken; unless

\* Catechetical Lectures, lect. iv, sec. 17.

† Ibid., lect. v, sec. 12.

thou learn from Holy Scripture concerning the Virgin, and the place, and the time, and the manner, receive not witness from man.”\*

Upon these passages comment is unnecessary. He does not allow “the most casual remark” to be put forth “concerning the divine mysteries of the faith—without the Holy Scriptures;” and refuses his pupils the liberty of receiving his own “ingenious views,” or any “witness from man,” unless they “learn” the same “from Holy Scripture.”

MACARIUS *the Egyptian* was born A. D. 301, and died A. D. 391.

This ancient monk was a member of the Council of Nice, and among other writings attributed to him are fifty homilies upon experimental and practical religion. In these discourses he makes the Scriptures his great and almost only text-book. He always explains and applies them independently of any traditional sense. And though his expositions are often fanciful enough, and might be used with good effect in showing the vanity of giving the sense of Scripture, as presented by the ancient fathers, any authority, yet they furnish the clearest evidence that, in his opinion, the Scriptures were to be consulted by all, and that, in arriving at their sense, men were not to take the authority of tradition, but to judge for themselves, as they would of the sense of any other writing.

“These proofs,” says he, “have we brought out of the Scriptures, in order to make it plain beyond dispute, that the energy of the grace of God in man, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, which the faithful soul is

\* Catechetical Lectures, lect. xii, sec. 5.

thought worthy to receive, is attended with great conflict, much patience, and long-suffering, and temptations, and trials; the genuine inclinations of the will being tried by all manner of afflictions."\* Here observe, he makes his point "plain beyond dispute" simply from the Scriptures.

Again he says: "As from the works which are manifest, we perceive the designs which were concealed: so from what passes in the soul may we understand the relations of Scripture."† Here he teaches that we may "discover the relations of Scripture from what passes in the soul." It is not material to my argument to ascertain precisely what the father means by "what passes in the soul," whether it be divine illumination or the mere exercise of our rational faculties, as in either case, or whatever else he may mean, he certainly looks at something which is within the reach of all, and cannot mean *oral tradition*.

And again: "But we men endeavour to proclaim some part of his works, *supported* by Scripture; but rather *instructed* by it. For 'who,' saith he, 'hath known the mind of the Lord?'"‡

Our Catholics say, "tradition instructs," but the father says, we are "instructed" into "the mind of the Lord" by "Scripture."

Finally, the father has a short homily upon the mode of deriving advantage from the Scriptures, which I will give entire. "As a king," says he, "that has written letters to them, upon whom he has a mind to bestow codicils and special gifts, signifies to them all, 'Ye must make haste to come to me, that ye may re-

\* Homily ix.

† Homily xxxvii.

‡ Ibid.

ceive from me royal gifts ;' and if they will not go and receive them, they shall be nothing the better for having read the letters, but rather are worthy of death for not having the will to go, and accept of the honour from the king's own hand : in like manner also has God the King sent his divine writing, as his letters, signifying by them, that with calling upon God, and believing in him, they should ask and receive the heavenly gift from the substance of his Godhead. For it is written, 'That we may be partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Pet. i, 4. But if man will not come to Him, and ask, and receive, he will be nothing the better for having read the Scriptures ; but rather will be in danger of death, because he would not receive the gift of life from the heavenly King, without which it is impossible to obtain the life immortal, which is Christ himself. To whom be glory for ever ! Amen."\*

Here God is represented, in "his divine writings," as "signifying by them" our duty to him. And those who do not through this medium "receive the gift of life from the heavenly King," "will be in danger of death." What sense is there in the argument of this homily on any other principle than that men may read and understand the Scriptures for themselves, and that they are justly held criminal for not doing so ? Where is there anything about "the traditionary sense ?"

BASIL, bishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia, was born A. D. 328, and died A. D. 379.

Though, in a corrupted portion of this father's work on the Holy Spirit, several passages are found

\* Homily xxxix.

which give divine authority to tradition,\* where he is permitted to speak for himself he is a clear witness to the truth for which I contend. I copy from the learned Bishop Taylor the following decisive passages, with his remarks:—

“St. Basil, in his *Ethics definit.* 26, Δεῖ πᾶν ῥῆμα ἢ πρᾶγμα πιστοῦσθαι τῇ μαρτυρίᾳ τῆς θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς, εἰς πληροφορίαν μὲν τῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἐντροπὴν δὲ τῶν πονηρῶν—‘Whatsoever is done or said ought to be confirmed by the testimony of the divinely-inspired Scripture; both for the full persuasion of the good, as also for the condemnation of the evil:’ πᾶν ῥῆμα ἢ πρᾶγμα, that is, everything that belongs to faith and manners, not every indifferent thing, but everything of duty; not everything of a man, but everything of a Christian; not things of natural life, but of the supernatural. Which sense of his words clearly excludes the necessity of tradition, and yet intends not to exclude either liberty, or human laws, or the conduct of prudence.”†

Again: “St. Basil, to the question, Whether new converts are to be accustomed to the Scriptures? answers, ‘It is fit that every one should out of the Holy Scriptures learn what is for his use; yea, it is necessary, εἰς τε πληροφορίαν τῆς θεοσεβείας, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ προσεθεσθῆναι ἀνθρωπίναις παραδόσεσιν, both for the full certainty of godliness, and also that they may not be accustomed to human traditions.’

\* The latter half of this work, according to Erasmus, is an evident forgery. See his Dedication to his Latin translation, Opera D. Basilii Magni. Basileæ, 1565.

† Cases of Conscience, book ii, chap. 3.

Where it is observable, he calls all human traditions which are not in Scripture; for if there were any divine traditions which are not in Scripture, he ought to have advised the learning of them besides Scripture, for the avoiding of traditions which are not divine: but the Scripture being sufficient for all, whatsoever is besides it is human, and to be rejected. I sum up this particular with an excellent discourse of the same saint to the same purpose. He asks a question, 'Whether it be lawful or profitable to any one to permit himself to do or to speak what himself thinks right, without the testimony of the Holy Scriptures?' He answers, (after the quotation of many places of Scripture,) 'Who therefore is so mad, that of himself he dare so much as in thought to conceive anything, seeing he wants the Holy and good Spirit for his guide, that he may be directed both in mind, in word, and in action, into the way of truth, or that he would remain blind, without our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Sun of righteousness, &c.? But because of those things which are disputed among us, some are determined by the commandment of God in Holy Scripture, others are passed over in silence; as for those things which are written, there is absolutely no power at all given to any one, either to do any of those things which are forbidden, or to omit any of those things which are commanded: since our Lord hath at once denounced and said, Thou shalt keep the word which I command thee this day; thou shalt not add to it, nor take from it. For a fearful judgment is expected, and a burning fire to devour them who dare any such thing. But as for those things which are passed over in silence, the

apostle Paul hath appointed us a rule, saying, All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient ; all things are lawful, but all things do not edify : let no man seek to please himself, but every one another's good. So that it is altogether necessary to be subject to God, according to his commandment.' The sum is this : Nothing is matter of duty either in word or deed, in faith or manners, but what is written in the Scriptures : whatsoever is not written there, it is left to our liberty, and we are to use it as all indifferent things are to be used, that is, with liberty and with charity. Now, if concerning such things as these there be any traditions, it matters not ; they are no part of our religion, but to be received like laws of man, or customs, of which account is to be given in the proper place."\*

AMBROSE, bishop of Milan, was born about A. D. 340, and died A. D. 396.

I will give from this father two short, but explicit passages. He says, " But I do not wish you, O sacred emperor, to trust in my argument and disputation : let us examine the Scriptures, let us interrogate the apostles, let us interrogate the prophets, let us interrogate Christ."† " I do not wish you to trust to me—let the Scripture be recited."‡

JEROME, or HIERONYMUS, was born A. D. 331, and died A. D. 422.§

\* Cases of Conscience, book ii, chap. 3.

† De Fide, lib. i, c. 6. ‡ In De Incarn. Dom. Sacrem, c. 3.

§ Gorton. Du Pin's account varies somewhat from this. According to him, Jerome " came into the world about the 345th year of Jesus Christ—and died very old, in the year of Christ 420."

Among the many testimonies which might be collected from the works of this father, I present the following:—

“The error, neither of parents nor ancestors, is to be followed; but the authority of the Scriptures, and the government of God as our teacher.”\*

Again: “They therefore err, because they know not the Scriptures; and because they are ignorant of the Scriptures, they consequently know not the power of God, that is, Christ who is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”†

And again: “Some think that Zacharias, the father of John, is to be understood; proving it from some dreams of apocryphal writers, that he was put to death, because he preached the advent of the Saviour. But this, *as it has no authority from the Scriptures*, is as easily despised as proved.”‡

And yet again: “The princes of the people, that is, the apostles and evangelists, of those who were in her, [that is, Zion,] observe what he says: those who *were*, not those who *are*, that *excepting the apostles*, whatsoever should be spoken afterwards might be cut off, *it has no longer any authority*. Although, therefore, there may be some saint or wise man, [that is, after the apostles,] *he has no authority*, since our Lord *speaks through the Scriptures* of the people, and of those princes who were in her.”§

AUGUSTINE, OR AUSTIN, was born A. D. 354, and died A. D. 430.

\* Hieron. In Jerem., c. 9, vv. 12-14.

† Id. In Matt., c. 22, v. 29.

‡ Ib., c. 23, vv. 35, 36.

§ Comment. in Psalm. 86.



The following are a few of many clear testimonies which I might bring forward from this author :—

“ But who does not know that the holy canonical Scripture of the Old as well as of the New Testament is restrained within its own proper bounds, and that it is so preferred to all succeeding writings of bishops, that we cannot possibly doubt or hesitate as to anything that shall appear to be written in it, whether it is true or right : but it is allowable that the writings which were written after the canon was confirmed, or are being written, should be reprov'd both by the voice of any one of the wiser who is more skilled in the matter, and by the more weighty authority and learned wisdom of other bishops, and by councils, wherever there is a deviation from truth ; and that those councils which are created by single districts or provinces yield without any doubt to the authority of plenary councils which are formed from the whole Christian world, and that those plenary councils are often corrected, the former by the latter, when experience discovers what was hid, and brings to light that which was concealed, without any exhibition of sacrilegious pride, without any haughty neck of arrogance, without any contention of dark envy, with holy humility, with catholic peace, with Christian charity.”\*

Again he says, “ But what shall I say concerning those interpreters of the divine Scriptures who flourished in the catholic church, and who have not endeavoured to turn them to another sense, because they were fixed in the most ancient and sound faith, and were moved by no new error : whom if I should wish

\* De Bapt. contra Donat., lib. ii, c. 3.

to collate and use as testimony, perhaps I should be too tedious, or appear to rely less than I ought upon the canonical authorities from which we ought not to be diverted ?”\*

And again. After speaking of the infallibility of the sacred writers, he turns to those which are uninspired, and says, “ But others I so read, that however much they may excel in holiness and learning, I do not therefore think anything true because they so thought, but because they have been enabled to persuade me by those canonical authors, or by some good reason, that it was not repugnant to the truth.”†

And yet again: “ But now, neither ought I as prejudging to bring forward the Council of Nice, nor you that of Ariminum. Nor should I be held by the authority of one, nor you of the other. Let the points, and causes, and reasons, contend with each other on the authority of the Scriptures, which are not the exclusive tests of either, but the common tests of each.”‡

Upon this passage Bishop Taylor says:—

“ By which words, if St. Austin’s affirmative can prevail, it is certain that nothing ought to be pretended for argument but Scripture in matters of religion. For if a general council, which is the best witness of tradition, the best expounder of Scripture, the best determiner of a question, is not a competent measure of determination, then certainly nothing else can pretend to it, nothing but Scripture. And if it be replied, that this is only affirmed by him in case that two councils are or seem contrary; I answer, that if councils can

\* De Nupt. et Concup., lib. ii, c. 29. † Epist. ad Hieron. 82.

‡ Contra Maximin. Arian., lib. ii, cap. 14.

be or seem contrary, so that wise and good men cannot competently insist upon their testimony, it is certain a man may be deceived, or cannot justly be determined by any topic but the words and consequences of Scripture; and if this be the only probation, then it is sufficient, that's certain. But that will be a distinct consideration. In the mean time, that which I intend to persuade by these testimonies is, that the fathers of the primitive church did in all their mysterious inquiries of religion, in all matters of faith and manners, admit no argument but what was derived from Scripture."\*

CHRYSOSTOM, JOHN, was born A. D. 347, and died A. D. 407.

In his commentary upon 2 Tim. iii, 14-16, this learned father is very explicit in relation to the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. He says, "*Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.* For the Scriptures suggest to us what is to be done, and what is not to be done. For hear this blessed one elsewhere saying, 'Thou art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes,' Rom. ii, 19, 20. Thou seest that the Law is the light of them which are in darkness; and if that which showeth the letter, the letter which killeth, is light, what then is the Spirit which quickeneth? If the Old Covenant is light, what is the New, which contains so many, and so great revelations? where the difference is as great, as if any one should open heaven to those who only know the earth, and make all things there visible."

\* Rule of Conscience, book ii, chap. 3.

Again: "*For I am now ready to be offered up*, he says. For this reason he writes, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' All what Scripture? all that sacred writing, he means, of which I was speaking. This is said of what he was discoursing of; about which he said, 'From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.' All such, then, 'is given by inspiration of God;' therefore, he means, do not doubt; and it is 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'

"*For doctrine.* For thence we shall know, whether we ought to learn or to be ignorant of anything. And thence we may disprove what is false, thence we may be corrected and brought to a right mind, may be comforted and consoled, and if anything is deficient, we may have it added to us.

"*That the man of God may be perfect.* For this is the exhortation of the Scripture given, that the man of God may be rendered perfect by it; without this, therefore, he cannot be perfect. Thou hast the Scriptures, he says, in place of me. If thou wouldest learn anything, thou mayest learn it from them. And if he thus wrote to Timothy, who was filled with the Spirit, how much more to us!

"*Thoroughly furnished unto all good works; not merely taking part in them, he means, but thoroughly furnished.*"\*

\* See Homilies on Timothy and Titus, (Library of the Fathers,) pp. 245, 246, and p. 250.

Can language be more explicit for the fulness of Holy Scripture? Here we are taught "what we ought to learn or be ignorant of:—thence we may disprove what is false, thence we may be corrected and brought to a right mind, may be consoled, and if anything is deficient, may have it added to us." What room here for the traditionary system?

But we have a notice of a rule of interpretation, adopted by this father, equally against the scheme I here oppose. Upon Gal. i, 17, "*Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me,*" he observes, "These words, weighed by themselves, seem to breathe an arrogant spirit, and to be foreign to the apostolic temper. For to give one's suffrage for one's self, and to admit no man to share one's counsel, is a sign of folly. . . . This then let us do; for it is not the right course to weigh the mere words, nor examine the language by itself, as many errors will be the consequence, but to attend to the intention of the writer. And unless we pursue this method in our own discourses, and examine into the mind of the speaker, we shall make many enemies, and everything will be thrown into disorder. Nor is this confined to words, but the same result will follow, if this rule is not observed in actions."\*

He then proceeds to construe the language of the apostle upon the principle laid down. He brings forward no *tradition*, which, had there been any, would have been most convenient for the occasion; but he arrives at his results, aided solely by the sacred story

\* Homily on Galatians and Ephesians, (Library of the Fathers,) p. 22.

and his own reasoning powers—comparing Scripture with Scripture.

*Bishops Jewel and Taylor* quote another very decisive passage from Chrysostom, which I will here insert from the former, together with his preliminary note:—“And as the word of God is the light to direct us, and to bewray errors; so is it also the standard and beam to try the weights of truth and falsehood. Chrysostom, writing upon the four-and-twentieth of St. Matthew, showeth it were impossible for a man to stay himself, and find out which is the true church, but by the word of God: ‘For it could not be tried by working of miracles, because the gift of working miracles is taken away: and such false miracles as carry some show, are rather to be found among false Christians: nor yet by their conversation and life, because Christians live either as ill, or worse than heretics. *Nulla probatio potest esse veræ Christianitatis, neque refugium potest esse Christianorum aliud, volentium cognoscere fidei veritatem, nisi tantummodò per Scripturas*:—There can be no trial of true Christianity; and Christians, which desire to know the truth, whereupon they may build their faith, have no other refuge, but to try and learn this by the Scriptures. For (saith he) heretics have the counterfeit and likeness of those things which are proper to Christ. They have churches, they have the Scriptures of God, they have baptism, they have the Lord’s supper, and all other things like the true church: yea, they have Christ himself. He, therefore, that will know which is the true church of Christ, how may he know it, but by the Scriptures? Therefore our Lord, knowing that

there should be such confusion of things in the latter days, commandeth, that Christians which live in the profession of Christian faith, and are desirous to settle themselves upon a sure ground of faith, should go to no other thing but to the Scriptures. Otherwise, if they had regard to other things, they should be offended and perish, and not understand which is the true church.'”\*

Again this author quotes Chrysostom, as follows:—  
 “Therefore hath the grace of the Holy Spirit disposed and tempered them so, that publicans, and fishers, and tent-makers, shepherds, and the apostles, and simple men, and unlearned, might be saved by these books: that none of the simpler sort might make excuse by the hardness of them: and that such things as are spoken might be easy for all men to look on: that the labouring man, and the servant, the widow woman, and whosoever is most unlearned, may take some good when they are read. For they whom God ever from the beginning endued with the grace of his Spirit, have not gathered all these things for vain-glory, as the heathen writers use, but for the salvation of the hearers.”†

THEODORET, bishop of Cyrus, a town in Syria, was born A. D. 386, and died A. D. 457 or 458.

This writer is exceedingly clear in his testimony in favour both of the perspicuity of Scripture, and of its being the only infallible guide in matters of faith:—

“But we are taught by these not to quench the Spirit, but to kindle up the grace which we have received, and to bring in nothing not belonging to the

\* Treatise of the Holy Scriptures, p. 34. † Ibid., p. 44.

Holy Scripture, but to rest satisfied with the teaching of the Spirit, and to hate those heresies, some of which have placed fables above the divine word, and others preferred their own impious maxims to the sentiments of Scripture.”\*

*Bishop Jewel* gives us the following very clear testimony, from this father, upon the readiness with which the necessary knowledge of the doctrines of Scripture is gained by all descriptions of people. I give the bishop’s translation and remarks :—“ And now to conclude what the learned fathers, and ancient doctors, have said in this matter. *Theodoret* saith, ‘ Passim videas hæc nostratia dogmata non ab iis solùm teneri, qui sunt ecclesiæ magistri, populorumque præceptores, sed ab ipsis quoque sutoribus, fabrisque, ferrariis, lanificibus, &c. :— Ye may commonly see, that our doctrine is known, not only of them that are the doctors of the church, and the masters of the people ; but also even of the tailors, and smiths, and weavers, and of all artificers : yea, and further also of women, and that not only of them that be learned, but also of labouring women, and sewsters, and servants, and handmaids : neither only the citizens, but also the country folks do very well understand the same. Ye may find, yea, even the very ditchers, and delvers, and cow-herds, and gardeners, disputing of the holy Trinity, and of the creation of all things.’ Thus we see there was a time, before ignorance crept into the church, and got the upper hand, when the word of God was not counted hard, and dark, and doubtful : when children, and women, and servants, and men of the country had the know-

\* Quæst. in Levit., q. 9.



ledge of God, and were able to reason of the works of God. Then went it well with them: they could not easily be deceived, because they had that word which bewrayeth the thief: they carried with them, like good exchangers, the weights, and touchstone, and were able to try coins whether they were true or false. Such were the people, such was the state of God's church in those days."\*

Upon this collection of testimonies I have two observations to make: one is, that they are from our opponents' own chosen witnesses. They go to these fathers for the proof of all their peculiar dogmas, and rely upon them especially for the establishment of their doctrine of tradition. One point which Archdeacon Manning labours hard to prove is, 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.*"† In opposition to this I have shown that these "writers" recognise *the Scriptures alone as the rule of faith*; and that the language they employ excludes all *human testimony* and all *oral traditions* from any participation in this rule.

My *second* observation is, that whatever may be found in the writings of the fathers which may seem to indicate a respect for oral traditions—and though the most explicit passages might be adduced from these sources in favour of the traditionary theory, what I have adduced will be amply sufficient to prove that the *universal consent* of antiquity is fairly out of the question. While these passages, and a multitude

\* Treatise of the Holy Scrip., p. 46. † Rule of Faith, Ap., p. 51.

more of the same character, are to be found scattered through the writings of the fathers, it is folly, approaching madness itself, to pretend to sustain the traditionary theory upon Vincent's rule. In an appeal to the fathers we are not bound to prove that they are always consistent with themselves. All that fairly devolves upon us is to show that the testimony derived from the writings of the fathers, upon the ground which our opponents have chosen, entirely fails to sustain them. As they profess not to build their theory upon a single father, nor upon a single testimony from each of the fathers, but upon what *was believed always, everywhere, and at all times*,—if we show that such *universal consent* to the traditionary system cannot be fairly plead, our point is gained. But when it appears that the testimonies produced by our opponents are wholly irrelevant, and that we have a multitude of statements in the succession of fathers, for more than four centuries after Christ, wholly inconsistent with their theory, our argument is completely triumphant, and we may confidently conclude that the traditionary theory cannot fairly be sustained by the testimony of the primitive church. This conclusion any one may arrive at with the utmost safety without any further investigation of the fathers than that which I have prosecuted in this work. And I am fully persuaded, that whoever will examine the evidence here presented *pro* and *con*, will arrive at the same conclusions to which I have been conducted, namely, that *the holy fathers cannot be made to prove the traditionary theory upon the principles of construction which traditionists have themselves adopted.*

## SECTION III.

## Romish Evidence against Tradition.

My object in this section shall be to show that, prior to the Council of Trent, there was no universal consent, even in the Romish Church, in favour of the doctrine of tradition, as now maintained by Romanists and high-Churchmen. This evidence I find collected and condensed in an elaborate Tract in the Preservative against Popery, in a way so well suited to my purpose, that I shall copy it verbatim. And as the work from which I copy, and the authorities referred to, are now within the reach of very few who will read these pages, I shall so far vary from my general course as to give the originals in the margin. The learned author proceeds:—

“ Before I come to particulars, I shall lay down some reasonable *postulata*.

“ 1. That a catholic tradition must be universally received among the sound members of the catholic church.

“ 2. That the force of tradition lies in the certainty of conveyance of matters of faith from the apostolical times. For no new doctrines being pretended to, there can be no matter of faith in any age of the church, but what was so in the precedent, and so up to the apostles' times.

“ 3. That it is impossible to suppose the divines of the catholic church to be ignorant, what was in their own time received for catholic tradition. For, if it be so hard for others to mistake it, it will be much more

so for those whose business is to inquire into, and to deliver matters of faith.

“These things premised, I now enter upon the points themselves; and I begin with,

“I. *Traditions being a rule of faith equal with Scriptures.*

“This is declared by the Council of Trent as the groundwork of their proceedings.

“The words are, sess. 4, ‘That the council receives traditions, both as to faith and manners, either delivered by Christ himself with his own mouth, or dictated by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the catholic church by a continual succession, with equal piety of affection and reverence, as the proofs of Holy Scripture.’\* ”

“Where the council first supposes ‘there are such traditions from Christ and the Holy Ghost, distinct from Scripture, which relate to faith;’ and then it declares ‘equal respect and veneration due to them.’ No one questions but the word of Christ, and dictates of the Holy Ghost, deserve equal respect, howsoever conveyed to us; but the point is, whether there was a catholic tradition before this time for an unwritten word, as a foundation of faith, together with the written word.

“1. It is therefore impertinent here to talk of a ‘tradition before the written word;’ for our debate is concerning both being joined together to make a per-

\* “Necnon traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus à Christo vel à Spiritu Sancto dictatas, et continuâ successione in ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentiâ suscipit et veneratur.”

fect rule of faith : and yet this is one of the common pleas on behalf of tradition.

“ 2. It is likewise impertinent to talk of that tradition, whereby we do receive the written word. For the council first supposes the written word to be received and embraced as the word of God, before it mentions the unwritten word ; and therefore it cannot be understood concerning that tradition whereby we receive the Scriptures. And the council affirms, ‘ that the truth of the gospel is contained partly in books that are written, and partly in unwritten traditions.’ By the truth of the gospel they cannot mean the Scriptures being the word of God, but that the word was contained partly in Scripture, and partly in tradition ; and it is therefore impertinent to urge the tradition for Scripture to prove tradition to be part of the rule of faith, as it is here owned by the Council of Trent.

“ 3. The council doth not here speak of a traditional sense of Scripture, but of a distinct rule of faith from the Scripture. For of that it speaks afterward in the decree about the use of the Scripture ; where it saith, ‘ No man ought to interpret Scripture against the sense of the church, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and meaning of Scripture, nor against the unanimous consent of the fathers.’ Whereby it is evident, the council is not to be understood of any consequences drawn out of Scripture concerning things not expressly contained in it ; but it clearly means an unwritten word distinct from the written, and not contained in it ; which, together with that, makes up a complete rule of faith. This being the true sense of the council, I shall now show that there was no catho-

lic tradition for it. Which I shall prove by these steps:—

“ 1. From the proceedings of the council itself.

“ 2. From the testimony of the divines of that church before the council for several centuries.

“ 3. From the canon law received and allowed in the Church of Rome.

“ 4. From the ancient offices used in that church.

“ 1. From the proceedings of the council about this matter.

“ By the *postulata* it appears, that a catholic tradition is such as must be known by the sound members of the church, and especially of the divines in it. But it appears by the most allowed histories of that council, this rule of faith was not so received there. For Cardinal Pallavicini tells us, that it was warmly debated, and canvassed even by the bishops themselves. The bishop of Fano (Bertanus) urged against it,\* ‘that God had not given equal firmness to tradition as he had done to Scripture, since several traditions had failed.’ But the bishop of Bitonto (Mussus) opposed him, and said, ‘Though all truths were not to be equally regarded, yet every word of God ought, and traditions, as well as Scripture, were the word of God, and the first principles of faith; and the greater part of the council followed him.’ It seems, then, there was a division in the council about it; but how could that be, if there were a catholic tradition about this rule of faith? Could the bishops of the catholic church, when assembled in council to determine matters of

\* Hist. Concil. Trident., lib. vi, c. 14, n. 3.

faith, be no better agreed about the rule of faith; and yet must we believe there was at that time a known catholic tradition about it, and that it was impossible they should err about such a tradition? Nay, further, the same author tells us, that although this bishop had gained the greatest part of the council to him, yet his own heart misgave him, and in the next congregation himself proposed, that instead of *equal*, it might be put a *like veneration*; and yet we must believe there was a catholic tradition for an equal veneration to Scripture and tradition. 'But the bishop of Chioza,' (Nacclantus,) he saith, 'inveighed more bitterly against this equality, and in the face of the council charged the doctrine with impiety; and he would not allow any divine inspiration to traditions, but that they were to be considered only as laws of the church.\*' It is true, he saith he professed to consent to the decree afterward, but withal, he tells us, that he was brought under the Inquisition not long after, upon suspicion of heresy; which shows they were not well satisfied with his submission. We are extremely beholden to Cardinal Pallavicini for his information in these matters, which are passed over too jejune by Father Paul.

"2. I proceed to the testimony of the divines of the Roman Church before the Council of Trent. It is observed by some of them, that when the fathers appealed to the tradition of the church in any controverted point of faith, they made their appeal to those who wrote before the controversy was started; as St. Augustine† did against the Pelagians, &c. This is a

\* Hist. Concil. Trident., lib. vi, c. 14, n. 4.

† Aug., lib. ii, c. Julian.

reasonable method of proceeding, in case tradition be a rule of faith: and therefore must be so even in this point, whether tradition be such a rule or not. For the divines who wrote before could not be ignorant of the rule of faith they received among themselves.

“*Gabriel Biel* lived in the latter end of the fifteenth century, and he affirms,\* ‘that the Scripture alone teaches all things necessary to salvation;’ and he instances ‘in the things to be done and to be avoided, to be loved and to be despised, to be believed, and to be hoped for.’ And again,† ‘that the will of God is to be understood by the Scriptures, and by them alone we know the whole will of God.’ If the whole will of God were to be known by the Scripture, how could part of it be preserved in an unwritten tradition? And if this were then part of the rule of faith, how could such a man, who was professor of divinity at Tubing, be ignorant of it? I know he saith he took the main of his book from the lectures of *Eggelingus*, in the cathedral church at Mentz; but this adds greater strength to the argument, since it appears hereby, that this doctrine was not confined to the schools, but openly delivered in one of the most famous churches of Germany.

“*Cajetan* died not above twelve years before the council, who agrees with this doctrine of *Biel* or *Eggelingus*, (and he was accounted the oracle of his time for divinity,) for he affirms,‡ ‘that the Scripture gives

\* “Et cætera nostræ salutis necessaria, quæ omnia sola docet sacra Scriptura.”—*Lectio. in Canon. Missæ* 71.

† “Hæc autem in sacris Scripturis discuntur, per quas solas plenam intelligere possumus Dei voluntatem.”—*Ibid.*

‡ “Ecce quo tendit utilitas divinæ Scripturæ ad perfectionem



such a perfection to a man of God, (or one that devoutly serves him,) that thereby he is accomplished for every good work.' How can this be, if there be another rule of faith quite distinct from the written word?

"*Bellarmino* indeed grants,\* 'that all things which are simply necessary to the salvation of all, are plainly contained in Scripture;' by which he yields, that the Scripture alone is the rule of faith as to necessary points; and he calls the Scripture† 'the certain and stable rule of faith,' yea,‡ 'the most certain and most secure rule.' §If there be, then, any other, it must be *less certain*, and about points *not necessary* to salvation; that is, it must be a rule where there is no need of a rule. For if men's salvation be sufficiently provided for by the written rule, and the divine revelation be in order to men's salvation, what need any other revelation to the church, besides what is written?

"He asserts further,|| 'that nothing is *de fide*, but what God hath revealed to the prophets and apostles, or is deduced from thence.' This he brings to prove

hominis Dei (hoc est, qui totum seipsum Deo dat) perfectionem inquam talem ut sit perfectus ad omne bonum exercendum."—*In 2 ad Tim.* iii, 16.

\* "Dico illa omnia Scripta esse ab apostolis quæ sunt omnibus necessaria, et quæ ipsi palam omnibus vulgo prædicaverunt."—*Bellarmino. de verbo Dei*, lib. iv, c. 11.

† "Illud imprimis statuendum erit, propheticos et apostolicos libros juxta mentem ecclesiæ catholicæ verum esse verbum Dei, et certam ac stabilem regulam fidei."—*Id.*, lib. i, c. 1.

‡ "At sacris Scripturis quæ prophetis et apostolicis literis continentur, nihil est notius, nihil certius."—*Id.*, c. 2.

§ "Quare cum sacra Scriptura regula credendi certissima tutissimaque sit."—*Ibid.* || *Lib. iv, c. 9.*

‘ that whatsoever was received as a matter of faith in the church, which is not found in Scripture, must have come from an apostolical tradition.’ But if it be *necessary to salvation*, according to his own concession, it must be written ; and if it be not, how comes it to be received as a matter of faith ? unless it be first proved, that it is necessary to salvation to receive an unwritten rule of faith, as well as a written : for, either it must be necessary on its own account, and then he saith it must be written ; and if not, then it can be no otherwise necessary than because it is to be believed on the account of a rule, which makes it necessary. And consequently that rule must be first proved to be a necessary article of faith ; which Bellarmine hath nowhere done ; but only sets down rules about knowing true apostolical traditions from others in matters of faith, wherein he wisely supposes that which he was to prove.

“ And the true occasion of setting up this new rule of faith is intimated by Bellarmine himself, in his first rule of judging true apostolical traditions. Which is, ‘ When the church believes anything as a doctrine of faith, which is not in Scripture,’ then, saith he, ‘ we must judge it to be an apostolical tradition.’ Why so ? ‘ Otherwise the church must have erred in taking that for a matter of faith which was not.’ And this is the great *secret* about this *new rule of faith* ; they saw plainly several things were imposed on the faith of Christians, which could not be proved from Scripture ; and they must not yield they had once mistaken, and therefore this new, additional, less certain rule for *unnecessary points* must be advanced, although they

wanted tradition among themselves to prove tradition a rule of faith; which I shall now further make appear, from their own school divines, before the Council of Trent.

“ We are to observe among them, what those are which they strictly call theological truths, and by them we shall judge what they made the rule of faith. For they do not make a bare revelation to any person a sufficient ground for faith; but they say,\* ‘ the revelation must be public, and designed for the general benefit of the church;’ and so Aquinas determinest† ‘ that our faith rests only upon the revelations made to the prophets and apostles;’ and theological truths are such as are immediately deduced from the principles of faith, that is, from public divine revelations owned and received by the church. The modern schoolmen‡ who follow the Council of Trent, make theological truths to be deduced from the unwritten, as well as the written word; or else they would not speak consonantly to their own doctrine. And therefore, if those before them deduce theological truths only from the written word, then it will follow, that they did not hold the unwritten word to be a rule of faith.

“ *Marsilius ab Inghen*§ was first professor of divinity at Heidelberg, (at the latter end of the fifteenth century, saith Bellarmine, but Trithemius saith the fourteenth,) and he determines, ‘ that a theological proposition is that which is positively asserted in Scripture,

\* “ Et quantum ad ea quæ proponuntur omnibus credenda, quæ pertinent ad fidem.”—2. 2. q. 171, *prol.*

† 1. q. 1, a. 5. ‡ Melch. Can., lib. xii, c. 3.

§ Marsil. in 4 lib. Sentent., lib. i, Proœm., q. 2, art. 2.

or deduced from thence by good consequence; and that a theological truth, strictly taken, is the truth of an article of faith, or something expressed in the Bible, or deduced from thence.' He mentions apostolical traditions afterward, and joins them with ecclesiastical histories and martyrologies. So far was he from supposing them to be part of the rule of faith.

"In the beginning of the fifteenth century lived *Petrus de Alliaco*,\* one as famous for his skill in divinity as for his dignity in the church: he saith, 'that theological discourse is founded on Scripture, and a theological proof must be drawn from thence; that theological principles are the truths contained in the canon of Scripture; and conclusions are such as are drawn out of what is contained in Scripture.' So that he not only makes the Scripture the foundation of faith, but of all sorts of true reasoning about it. He knew nothing of Cardinal Pallavicini's two first principles of faith.

"To the same purpose speaks *Gregorius Ariminensis*,† about the middle of the fourteenth century; he saith, 'All theological discourse is grounded on Scripture, and the consequences from it;' which he not only proves from testimony, but *ex communi omnium conceptione*, from the general consent of Christians. For, saith he, 'all are agreed, that then a thing is proved theologically, when it is proved from the words of Scripture.' So that here we have plain tradition, against traditions being a distinct rule of faith, and this delivered by the general of an order in the Church

\* Pet. de Alliaco in Sent., lib. i, q. 1, a. 3.

† Greg. Arimin., q. 1, a. 2.

of Rome. He affirms, that the principles of theology are no other than the truths contained in the canon of Scripture; and that the resolution of all theological discourse is into them; and that there can be no theological conclusion but what is drawn from Scripture.

“ In the former part of that century lived *Durandus*;\* he gives a threefold sense of theology:—‘ 1. For a habit whereby we assent to those things which are contained in Scripture, as they are there delivered. 2. For a habit whereby those things are defended and declared which are delivered in Scripture.† 3. For a habit of those things which are deduced out of articles of faith; and so it is all one with the Holy Scripture.’‡

“ And in another place he affirms, ‘ that all truth is contained in the Holy Scripture at large;§ but, for the people’s conveniency, the necessary points are summed up in the Apostles’ Creed.’

“ In his preface before his book on the ‘ Sentences,’ he highly commends ‘ the Scriptures for their dignity, their usefulness, their certainty, their depth;’ and after all, concludes, ‘ that in matters of faith, men ought to speak agreeably to the Scriptures; and whosoever doth not, breaks the rule of the Scriptures,’ which he calls ‘ the measure of our faith.’ What tradition did appear, then, for another rule of faith in the fourteenth century?

“ But before I proceed higher, I shall show the consent of others with these school divines in the three last centuries before the Council of Trent. In the middle of the fifteenth lived *Nicolaus Panormitanus*,

\* Durand. Prol., q. 5, n. 9.

† A. 13.

‡ N. 21.

§ Lib. iii, Dist. 25, q. 2.

one of mighty reputation for his skill in the canon law. In the chapter, *Significasti primo l. de Electione*, debating the authority of pope and council, he saith,\* ‘If the pope hath better reason, his authority is greater than the council’s; and if any private person, in matters of faith, hath better reason out of Scripture than the pope, his saying is to be preferred above the pope’s.’ Which words do plainly show, that the Scripture was then looked on as the *only* rule of faith; or else no man’s grounding himself on Scripture could make his doctrine to be preferred before the pope’s; who might allege tradition against him, and if that were an equal rule of faith, the doctrine of one rule could not be preferred before the other.

“At the same time lived *Tostatus*, the famous bishop of Avila, one of infinite industry and great judgment, and therefore could not be mistaken in the rule of faith. In his Preface on Genesis, he saith,† ‘that there must be a rule for our understandings to be regulated by, and that rule must be most certain; that divine faith is the most certain, and that is contained in Scripture, and therefore we must regulate our understandings thereby. And this he makes to be the measure of truth and falsehood.’ If he knew any other

\* “Nam in concernentibus fidem, etiam dictum unius privati esset præferendum dicto papæ, si ille moveretur melioribus rationibus novi et veteris Testamenti quam papæ.”

† “Cùm ergo in omni veritate veritas divina sit certior et immutabilior, ergo omnes aliæ debent regulari per illam, et in quantum conformantur illi, sunt veræ; in quantum autem deviant ab illa, deviant à natura veritatis. Sacra autem Scriptura veritas divina est, ideo iudicium nostrum debemus regulare per illam applicando ad eam,” &c.—*Tostat. in Ep. Hieron.*, c. 6, p. 28. D.

rule of faith besides the Scriptures, he would have mentioned it in this place; and not have directed men only to them, as the 'exact measure of truth and falsehood.'

"In the beginning of this century, *Thomas Walden* (confessor to our Henry V., saith Trithemius) disputed sharply against Wickliffe; but he durst not set up the church's authority, or tradition, 'equal with the Scriptures.' For when he mentions tradition after Scriptures, he utterly 'disclaims any such thought as that of equality between them;'<sup>\*</sup> but he desires a due distance may be kept between canonical Scripture, and ecclesiastical authority, or tradition. In the first place, he saith, 'we ought to believe the Holy Scriptures;' then 'the definitions and customs of the catholic church;'<sup>†</sup> but he more fully explains himself in another place, where he plainly asserts,<sup>‡</sup> 'that nothing else is to be received by such faith as the Scripture and Christ's symbolical church; but for all other authorities, the lowest degree is that of catholic tradition; the next of the bishops, especially of the apostolical churches, and the Roman in the first place; and above all these, he places that of a general council;' but when he hath so done, he saith, 'All these authorities are to be regarded but as the instructions of elders, and admonitions of fathers.' So that the chief opposers of Wickliffe had not yet found out this new rule of faith.

\* "Non quod in auctoritate æquantur, absit; sed sequantur; non quidem in subsidium auctoritatis canonicæ, sed in admonitionem posterorum."—Lib. ii, art. 2, c. 22.

† C. 28.      † C. 27.

“Much about the same time lived *Joh. Gerson*,\* whom Cardinal Zabarella declared, in the Council of Constance, ‘to be the greatest divine of his time,’ and therefore could not be ignorant of the true rule of faith. He agrees with Panormitan in this, ‘that if a man be well skilled in Scripture, his doctrine deserves more to be regarded than the pope’s declaration; for,’ saith he, ‘the gospel is more to be believed than the pope, and if such a one teaches a doctrine to be contained in Scripture, which the pope either knows not, or mistakes, it is plain whose judgment is to be preferred.’ Nay, he goes further, ‘that if, in a general council, he finds the majority incline to that part which is contrary to Scripture, he is bound to oppose it,’ and he instances in Hilary. And he shows, ‘that since the canon of Scripture is received by the church, no authority of the church is to be equalled to it.’† He allows a judgment of discretion in private persons, and a certainty of the literal sense of Scripture attainable thereby. He makes‡ ‘the Scripture the only standing infallible rule of faith for the whole church to the end of the world. And whatever doctrine is not agreeable thereto, is to be rejected either as here-

\* *Joh. Gerson*, Exam. Doctr., p. 540, part. i, cons. 5.

† Cons. 6.

‡ “Nihil audendum dicere de divinis, nisi quæ nobis à sacra Scriptura tradita sunt. Cujus ratio est, quoniam Scriptura nobis tradita est tanquam regula sufficiens et infallibilis, pro regimine totius ecclesiastici corporis et membrorum usque in finem seculi. Est igitur talis ars, talis regula, vel exemplar, cui se non conformans alia doctrina, vel abjicienda est ut hæreticalis, aut suspecta, aut impertinens ad religionem prorsus est habenda.”—*Exam. Doctr.*, part. ii, consid. 1.



tical, suspicious, or impertinent to religion.' If the Council of Trent had gone by this rule, we had never heard of the creed of Pius IV.

"In the beginning of the fourteenth century lived *Nicolaus de Lyra*,\* who parallels 'the Scriptures in matters of faith' with 'first principles in sciences;' for 'as other truths are tried in them by their reduction to first principles, so are matters of faith by their reduction to canonical Scriptures, which are of divine revelation, which is impossible to be false.' If he had known any other principles which would have made faith impossible to be false, he would never have spoken thus of Scripture alone. But to return to the school divines.

"About the same time lived *Joh. Duns Scotus*,† the head of a school, famous for subtilty; he affirms, 'that the Holy Scripture doth sufficiently contain all matters necessary to salvation; because by it we know what we are to believe, hope for, and practise.' And after he hath enlarged upon them, he concludes in these words, '*Patet quod Scriptura sacra sufficienter continet doctrinam necessariam viatori.*' If this be understood only of 'points simply necessary,' then however it proves, that all such things necessary to salvation are therein contained; and no man is bound to inquire after unnecessary points. How, then, can it be necessary to embrace another rule of faith, when all things necessary to salvation are sufficiently contained in Scripture?

"But *Thomas Aquinas* is more express in this mat-

\* *Lyra*, Præfat. ad lib. *Tobiæ*.

† *Scot.* in *Sentent.* Prolog., q. 2, n. 14.

ter; for he saith,\* ‘that those things which depend on the will of God, and are above any desert of ours, can be known no otherways by us, than as they are delivered in Scripture, by which the will of God is made known to us.’

“This is so remarkable a passage, that *Suarez*† could not let it escape without corrupting it; for instead of Scripture, he makes him to speak of divine revelation in general, namely, under Scripture he comprehends all, that is, under the *written word*, he means the *unwritten*. If he had meant so, he was able to have apprehended his own mind more plainly; and Cajetan expressed no such meaning in his words. But this is a matter of so great consequence, that I shall prove from other passages in him, that he asserted the same doctrine, namely, ‘that the Scripture was the only rule of faith.’

“1. He makes ‘no proofs of matters of faith to be sufficient,‡ but such as are deduced from Scripture; and all other arguments from authority to be only probable; nay, although such persons had particular revelations.’ How can this be consistent with another rule of faith distinct from Scripture? For if he had

\* “Ea enim quæ ex sola Dei voluntate supra omne debitum creaturæ, nobis innotescere non possunt, nisi quatenus in sacra Scriptura traduntur, per quam divina voluntas nobis innotescit.”—3. q. 1, a. 3, *in C.* † *Suarez*, in 3, p. 117.

‡ “Authoritatibus autem canonicæ Scripturæ utitur propriè ex necessitate argumentando; autoritatibus autem aliorum doctorum ecclesiæ, quasi arguendo ex propriis sed probabilitér. Innititur enim fides nostra revelationi apostolis et prophetis factæ, qui canonicos libros scripserunt; non autem revelationi si qua fuit aliis doctoribus facta.”—1. q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

owned any such, he must have deduced necessary arguments from thence, as well as from canonical Scriptures. But if all other authorities be only probable, then they cannot make anything necessary to be believed.

“2. He affirms,\* ‘that to those who receive the Scriptures, we are to prove nothing but by the Scriptures, as matter of faith.’ For by ‘authorities,’ he means nothing but the Scriptures; as appears by the former place, and by what follows,† where he mentions the ‘canon of Scripture’ expressly.

“3. He asserts,‡ ‘that the articles of the creed are all contained in Scripture, and are drawn out of Scripture, and put together by the church only for the ease of the people.’ From hence it necessarily follows, that the reason of believing the articles of the creed is to be taken from the written word, and not from any unwritten tradition. For else he needed not to have been so careful to show, that they were all taken out of Scripture.

“4. He distinguisheth the matters of faith in Scripture, ‘some to be believed for themselves,’ which he calls *prima credibilia*; these, he saith, ‘every one is

\* “Quæ igitur fidei sunt, non sunt tentanda probari nisi per auctoritates his qui auctoritates suscipiunt.”—1. q. 32, a. 1, c.

† “Si autem ad veritatem eloquiorum, sc. sacrorum respicit, hoc et nos canone utimur.”—*Ibid.*

‡ “Dicendum quod veritas fidei in sacra Scriptura diffusè continetur . . . ideò fuit necessarium ut ex sententiis sacræ Scripturæ aliquid manifestum summarè colligeretur, quod proponeretur omnibus ad credendum; quod quidem non est additum sacræ Scripturæ, sed potius ex sacra Scriptura sumptum.”—2. 2. q. 1, a. 9, *ad primum.*

bound explicitly to believe ; but for other things he is bound only implicitly, or in a preparation of mind, to believe whatever is contained in Scripture ; and then only is he bound to believe explicitly, when it is made clear to him, to be contained in the doctrine of faith.\* Which words must imply the Scripture to be the only rule of faith ; for otherwise, implicit faith must relate to whatever is proved to be an unwritten word.

“ From all this it appears, that Aquinas knew nothing of a ‘ traditional rule of faith ;’ although he lived after the Lateran Council, A. D. 1215, being born about nine years after it.

“ And *Bonaventure*, who died the same year with him, affirms,† ‘ that nothing was to be said’ (about matters of faith) ‘ but what is made clear out of the Holy Scriptures.’

“ Not long after them lived *Henricus Gandavensis* ; and he delivers these things, which are very material to our purpose :—

“ 1. ‘ That the ‡ reason why we believe the guides

\* “ Quantum ad prima credibilia, quæ sunt articuli fidei, tenetur homo explicitè credere, sicut et tenetur habere fidem. Quantum autem ad alia credibilia non tenetur homo explicitè credere, sed solùm implicitè, vel in præparatione animi in quantum paratus est credere quicquid Scriptura continet ; sed tunc solùm hujusmodi tenetur explicitè credere, quando hoc ei constiterit in doctrina fidei contineri.”—2. 2. q. 2, a. 5, c.

† “ Et nihil nobis dicendum est, præter ea quæ nobis ex sacriis eloquiis clarent.”—*Bonav. in 3 Sent.*, dist. 1, art. 2, q. 2.

‡ “ Quod autem credimus posterioribus circa quos non apparent virtutes divinæ, hoc est, quia non prædicant alia quàm quæ illi in scriptis certissimis reliquērunt, quæ constat per medios in nullo fuisse vitata ex consensione concordi in eis omnium succedentium usque ad tempora nostra.”—*Hen. Gand Sum.*, art. 9, q. 3, n. 13. 2.

of the church since the apostles, who work no miracles, is, because they preach nothing but what they have left in their most certain writings, which are delivered down to us, pure and uncorrupt, by a universal consent of all that succeeded to our times.' Where we see he makes the Scriptures to be the only certain rule, and that we are to judge of all other doctrines by them.

"2. 'That truth is more certainly preserved in Scripture than in the church;\* because that is fixed and immutable, and men are variable, so that multitudes of them may depart from the faith, either through error or malice; but the true church will always remain in some righteous persons.' How then can tradition be a rule of faith equal with Scriptures, which depends upon the testimony of persons who are so very fallible?

"I might carry this way of testimony on higher still, as when *Richardus de S. Victoire* saith, in the thirteenth century,† 'that every truth is suspected by him, which is not confirmed by Holy Scripture;' but instead of that, I shall now proceed to the canon law, as having more authority than particular testimonies.

"3. As to the canon law, collected by *Gratian*, I do not insist upon its confirmation by *Eugenius*, but upon

\* "Quia veritas ipsa in Scriptura immobiliter et inpermutabiliter semper custoditur. . . . In personis autem ecclesiæ mutabilis est et variabilis, ut dissentire fidei possit multitudo illorum, et vel per errorem, vel per malitiam à fide discedere licet; semper ecclesia in aliquibus justis stabit."—Art. 8, q. 1, n. 5.

† "Suspecta est mihi omnis veritas, quam non confirmat Scripturarum auctoritas."—*Rich. de S. Victore, De Præpar. Animi ad Contempl.*, part i, c. 81.

its universal reception in the Church of Rome. And from thence I shall evidently prove, that tradition was not allowed to be a rule of faith equal with the Scriptures.

“*Dist. 9, c. 3-5, 7-10.* ‘The authority and infallibility of the Holy Scripture is asserted above all other writings whatsoever; for all other writings are to be examined, and men are to judge of them as they see cause.’

“Now *Bellarmino* tells us,\* ‘that the unwritten word is so called, not that it always continues unwritten, but that it was so by the first author of it.’ So that the unwritten word doth not depend on mere oral tradition, according to him, but it may be found in the writers of the church;† but the canon law expressly excludes all other writings, let them contain what they will, from being admitted to any competition with canonical Scripture; and therefore, according to that, no part of the rule of faith was contained in any other than canonical Scriptures.

“*Dist. 37, c. Relatum.* A man is supposed to ‘have an entire and firm rule of faith in the Scriptures.’‡

“*Caus. 8, q. 1, c. Nec sufficere,*§ ‘The Scriptures are said to be the only rule both of faith and life.’

“And the Gloss on the canon law there, owns the Scripture to be the rule for matters of faith; but very pleasantly applies it to the clergy, and thinks images enough for the laity.

\* De verbo Dei, lib. iv, c. 2. † C. 12.

‡ “Cùm enim ex divinis Scripturis integram quis et firmam regulam veritatis susceperit.”

§ “Quibus sacris literis unica est credendi pariter et vivendi regula præscripta.”

“ *Caus. 24, q. 1, c. Non afferentes.* The Scriptures are acknowledged to be the true balance ; and that we are not so much to weigh what we find there, as to own what we find there already weighed. Which must imply the Scripture alone to be that measure we are to trust to.

“ *Dist. 8, c. 4-9.* It is there said, ‘ that custom must yield to truth and reason, when that is discovered, and that for this reason, because Christ said, I am truth, and not custom.’ Now, if tradition be an infallible rule of faith, custom ought always to be presumed to have truth and reason of its side. For, if we can once suppose a custom to prevail in the church against truth and reason, it is impossible that tradition should be infallible ; for what is that but ancient custom ?

“ *Caus. 11, q. 3, c. 101. Si is qui præ est.* ‘ If any one commands what God hath forbidden, or forbids what God hath commanded, he is to be accursed of all that love God. And if he requires anything besides the will of God, or what God hath evidently required in Scripture, he is to be looked on as a false witness of God, and a sacrilegious person.’ How can this be, if there be another infallible way of conveying the will of God besides the Scriptures ?

“ *Caus. 24, q. 3, c. 30, c. Quid autem.* \* ‘ In matters of doubt, it is said, that men are to fly to the written word for satisfaction, and that it is folly not to do it.’ It is true, men’s own fancies are opposed to Scripture,

\* “ *Sed in hanc insipientiam cadunt, qui cum ad cognoscendam veritatem aliquo impediuntur obscuro, non ad propheticas voces, non ad apostolicas literas, nec ad evangelicas auctoritates, sed ad seipsos recurrunt.*”

but against men's fancies no other rule is mentioned but that of the written word.

“*Joh. 22, Extravag., c. Quia quorundam, tit. 14,* makes his appeal to Scripture in the controversy then on foot about use and property, *Dicant nobis ubi legunt, &c.*, and he shows,\* ‘that if it were a matter of faith, it must be contained in Scripture, either expressly, or by deduction; otherwise the Scripture would be no certain rule; and by consequence, the articles of faith, which are proved by Scripture, would be rendered doubtful and uncertain.’

“The glosser there saith, ‘Whence comes this consequence?’ and refers to another place, where he makes it out thus: ‘That faith can only be proved by the Scripture, and therefore, if the authority of that be destroyed, faith would be taken away.’† The Roman editors, for an antidote, refer to Cardinal *Turrecremata*,‡ who doth indeed speak of catholic truths, which are not to be found in the canon of Scripture; and he quotes a passage in the canon law for it, under the name of *Alex. 3. c. cum Marthæ. Extrav. de Celebr. Missæ*, but in truth it is *Innoc. 3. Decretal. l. 3, tit. 41*, and yet this will not prove what he aims at; for the question was about the author of the words added in the eucharist to those of Christ's institution; and he pleads that many of Christ's words and actions are omitted by the evangelists, which the apostles after-

\* “*Nec quasi hoc sacra Scriptura contineat, quo negato tota Scriptura sacra redditur dubia; et per consequens articuli fidei, qui habent per Scripturam sacram probari, redduntur dubii et incerti.*”

† *Extrav. Joh. 22. Cum inter Gloss. per consequens.*

‡ *Turrecrem. de Ecclesia, lib. iv, part 2, c. 9.*



ward set down; and he instances in St. Paul, as to those words of Christ, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive;' and elsewhere. But what is all this to catholic truths not being contained in Scripture, either in words, or by consequence? The cardinal was here very much to seek, when he had nothing but such a testimony as this to produce in so weighty and so new a doctrine. The best argument he produces\* is a horrible blunder of Gratian's, where St. Augustine seems to reckon the decretal epistles equal with the Scriptures, *Dist. 19. c. in Canonicis*; which the Roman correctors were ashamed of, and confess that St. Augustine speaks only of canonical epistles in Scripture. So hard must they strain, who among Christians would set up any other rule equal with the written word.

"4. I proceed to prove this from the ancient offices of the Roman Church.

"In the office produced by *Morinus*† out of the Vatican MS., which he saith 'was very ancient,' the bishop, before his consecration, was asked, 'if he would accommodate all his prudence, to the best of his skill, to the sense of Holy Scripture?'

"*Resp.* 'Yes, I will with all my heart consent, and obey it in all things.'

"*Inter.* 'Wilt thou teach the people, by word and example, the things which thou learnest out of Holy Scriptures?'

"*Resp.* 'I will.'

"And then immediately follows the *Examen* about manners.

\* *Turrecrem.*, lib. ii, c. 18.

† *Morin. de Ordin. Sacris*, p. 275.

“ In another old office of *St. Victor's*,\* there are the same questions in the same manner.

“ And so in another of the church of Rouen, lately produced by *Mabillon*,† which, he saith, was about William the Conqueror's time, there is not a word about traditions ; which crept into the *Ordo Romanus*, and from thence hath been continued in the Roman Pontificals. But it is observable, that the *Ordo Romanus* owns that the *Examen* was originally taken out of the Gallican offices, (although it does not appear in those imperfect ones lately published at Rome by *Thomasius*,) and therefore we may justly suspect, that the additional questions about traditions were the Roman interpolations, after it came to be used in that Pontifical.

“ And the first office in *Morinus* was the true ancient Gallican office. But if tradition had been then owned as a rule of faith, it ought no more to have been omitted in the ancient offices than in the modern.

“ And the ancient writers about ecclesiastical offices speak very agreeably to the most ancient offices about this matter. *Amalarius*‡ saith, ‘ the gospel is the fountain of wisdom ; and that the preachers ought to prove the evangelical truth out of the sacred books.’ *Isidore*,§ ‘ that we ought to think nothing’ (as to matters of faith) ‘ but what is contained in the two Testaments.’ *Rabanus Maurus*,|| ‘ that the knowledge of the Scriptures is the foundation and perfection of prudence.

\* *Morin.*, p. 333. † *Mabillon Analect.*, tom. ii, p. 468.

‡ *Amalarius de Officiis*, lib. iii, c. 5.

§ *Isidor. de Offic.*, lib. ii, c. 23.

|| *Rab. Maur. de Inst. Cler.*, lib. iii, c. 2 ; lib. ii, c. 53.

That truth and wisdom are to be tried by them; and the perfect instruction of life is contained in them.' Our venerable *Bede*\* agrees with them, when he saith, 'that the true teachers take out of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments that which they preach: and therefore have their minds employed in finding out the true meaning of them.' †

From all this it would seem that the ante-Tridentine doctors in the Romish Church were far from being *unanimous* in favour of the *divine authority of tradition*, and against the *sufficiency of Scripture*. A respectable portion of them, at least, considered the question still open, and thought themselves at liberty to advance their own opinions and arguments upon the subject. Even their *canon law* and authorized *offices* go strongly for the Scriptures as the ultimate authority in all matters of dispute.

Archdeacon Blackburn says, "It is a question of some difficulty when the Church of Rome began to derogate from the authority of Scriptures, and to raise their traditions to an equality with them." He finds "no formal decree to such effect till the year 1415, when the Council of Constance, in the condemnation of the 38th article of Wicliff's heresy, ordained, 'that such of the *decretal epistles* as should be found, upon examination, to be rightly ascribed to the popes whose names they bore, should be of equal authority with the epistles of the apostles.' †

\* *Bed. in Cant., lib. v. De Tabernaculo, lib. i, c. 6.*

† *Preservative, vol. ii. General Discourses against Popery, pp. 110-116.* † See "The Confessional," p. 114.

## SECTION IV.

## Church of England Authorities.

BEFORE I proceed to adduce my authorities under this head, a brief survey of Protestantism, so far as it respects the question at issue, may be proper.

A distinguished writer and historian of our own age has said, "At the epoch of the Reformation, if I may so speak, three distinct eras had occurred in the history of the church:—1. That of evangelical Christianity, which, having its focus in the times of the apostles, extended its rays throughout the first and second centuries of the church. 2. That of ecclesiastical Catholicism, which, commencing its existence in the third century, reigned till the seventh. 3. That of the Papacy, which reigned from the seventh to the fifteenth century.

"Such were the three grand eras in the then past history of the church; let us see what characterized each one of them.

"In the first period, the supreme authority was attributed to the revealed word of God. In the second, it was, according to some, ascribed to the church as represented by its bishops. In the third, to the pope.

"We acknowledge cheerfully that the second of these systems is much superior to the third; but it is inferior to the first! In fact, in the first of these systems it is GOD who rules. In the second, it is MAN. In the third, it is, to speak after the apostle, 'THAT WORKING OF SATAN, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,' 2 Thess. ii, 9.

“The Reformation, in abandoning the Papacy, might have returned to the second of these systems, that is, to ecclesiastical Catholicism; or to the first, that is, to evangelical Christianity.

“In returning to the second, it would have made half the way. Ecclesiastical Catholicism is, in effect, a middle system—a *via media*, as one of the Oxford doctors has termed it, in a sermon which he has just published. On the one hand, it approaches much to Papacy, for it contains, in the germ, all the principles which are there found. On the other, however, it diverges from it, for it rejects the Papacy itself.

“The Reformation was not a system of pretended *juste milieu*. It went the whole way; and rebounding with that force which God gives, it fell, as at one single leap, into the evangelical Christianity of the apostles.”\*

Almost simultaneously with the outbreak of the Reformation, the agents whom God in his providence had raised up for its support began to call in question the validity of human authority in matters which lie between God and the human conscience, and to appeal to the canonical Scriptures as the only rule of faith. Luther, in his Defence of the Articles condemned by the Bull of Leo X., takes the following just and elevated position in relation to the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures:—“The sacred writings,” says he, “are not to be understood, but by that Spirit with which they were written; which Spirit is never felt to be more powerful and energetic than when *he* attends the

\* See Puseyism Examined; by J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, D. D., pp. 30-32.

serious perusal of the writings which *he himself* dictated. Setting aside an implicit dependance on all human writings, let us strenuously adhere to the Scriptures alone. The primitive church acted thus: she must have acted so; for she had seen no writings of the fathers. The Scripture is its own interpreter, trying, judging, and illustrating all things. If it be not so, why do Augustine and other holy fathers appeal to the Scripture as the first principles of truth, and confirm their own assertions by its authority? Why do we perversely interpret the Scriptures, not by themselves, but by human glosses, contrary to the example of all fathers? If these fashionable modes of exposition be right, we had better at once admit, that the writings of the fathers are more perspicuous than the Scriptures. Again: If this be the case, the fathers themselves acted very absurdly, when they undertook to prove their own writings by the authority of Scripture; and it will follow, that we ought to pay more regard to expositors than to the word of God. The apostles themselves proved their assertions by the Scriptures; yet they surely had more right to plead their own authority than any of the fathers had. Let the fathers be allowed to have been holy men; still, they were only men, and men inferior to apostles and prophets: let them, however, be an example to us; and, as they in their time laboured in the word of God, so let us in our days do the same. There is one vineyard, and there are labourers employed at different hours. It is enough that we have learned from the fathers the duty of studying, and diligently labouring in the Scriptures; it is not necessary that we should

approve of all their works. There are seasons, when the diligence of many does not afford what a critical opportunity alone gives to one,—provided that that opportunity be connected with the incomprehensible energy of the Holy Spirit.”

And Melancthon, in reply to the chancellor of Ingolstadt, Dr. Eck, says, “How often has not Jerome been mistaken!—how often Augustine!—how often Ambrose! How often do we not find them differing in judgment—how often do we not find them retracting their errors! The sense of Scripture is one and simple, as heavenly truth itself. We enter into it by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and deduce it from the thread and connection of the whole. There is a philosophy enjoined us with respect to the Scripture given by God; it is to bring to them all the thoughts and maxims of men, as to the touchstone by which these are to be tried.”

These views were adopted by the continental churches, and inserted in their confessions of faith. The following is the article of the Helvetic confession “concerning the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures—the fathers, councils, and traditions:”—

“*The true interpretation of Scripture.*—‘The Holy Scriptures,’ says the apostle Peter, ‘cannot receive a private interpretation.’ Moreover, we do not receive every interpretation, hence we do not acknowledge, that should be received as a true and genuine interpretation of the Scriptures which the Roman Church calls the sense, and which the defenders of the Romish Church plainly endeavour to force on every one; but that interpretation only shall be

received as orthodox and genuine which is derived from the Scriptures themselves, (which are to be interpreted with reference to the genius of the language in which they were written—with reference to the circumstances—and explained according to the spirit of the greater number of clearer passages, both similar and dissimilar,) and which agrees with the rule of faith, and charity, and tends most to the glory of God, and the salvation of man. Moreover, we do not reject the interpretations of the Greek and Latin holy fathers: neither do we condemn their disputations and treatises of holy things which agree with the Scriptures. Nevertheless, we modestly recede from them when they are found to teach different from the Scriptures, or to go contrary to them. Nor do we think that they do us any injury in this thing if they do not all with one consent wish to conform their writings to the canons, but desire to prove to what extent they themselves either agree or disagree with them, and wish to receive those things that agree with them, and reject those which differ. The definitions of the councils and of the canons are placed in the same rank.

“Wherefore we do not permit ourselves to be influenced in religious controversies, or in matters of faith, by the bare opinion of the fathers, or decisions of the councils, much less by received customs, or even by a multitude of those thinking the same thing, or by the authority of established usage. Therefore we admit no other judge in matters of faith than God himself, as he makes known through the Holy Scriptures what is true, what is false, what is to



be followed, and what is to be avoided. Hence we acquiesce only in the judgments of spiritual men, obtained from the word of God. Jeremiah, and other prophets, have certainly greatly condemned the sacerdotal councils instituted contrary to the law of God, and carefully admonished us not to listen to, or follow the way of those fathers who, walking in their own inventions, have turned aside from the law of God.

“ In like manner we reject human traditions, which, though inscribed with splendid titles, as if they were divine and apostolic, and, as it were, coming from the mouth of apostles, and handed down by apostolical men to succeeding bishops, and through them to the church, but, though their style is Scriptural, they differ from the Scriptures, and such is the difference, they show at once they are by no means apostolical. For as the apostles have not taught among themselves different things, so the apostolical men (*apostolici*) have not held forth things contrary to the apostles.

“ But certainly it would be impious to assert that the apostles have transmitted by word of mouth things contrary to Scripture. The apostle Paul clearly says that he taught the same everywhere in every church. 1 Cor. iv, 17. And again he says, ‘ For we write no other things unto you than what ye read or acknowledge,’ 2 Cor. i, 13. And in another place he declares that he and his disciples, that is, the apostolical men, (*apostolici*,) walked in the same spirit, and in the same steps. 2 Cor. xii, 18. The Jews had formerly the traditions of their elders, but were heavily censured by our Lord, who showed them that their own obser-

vance was contrary to the law of God, and that they worshipped him in vain.”\*

The following is the article of the Belgic confession, upon “the perfection of the Holy Scriptures :”—

“We believe that the Holy Scripture is entirely the most perfect, containing the will of God, and fully teaches all necessary for man to believe, in order to obtain salvation. Since, indeed, in that is described most exactly and extensively the entire spirit of divine worship which God requires from the faithful, no man gifted even with apostolical dignity, not even an angel from heaven, has a right, as the sainted apostle Paul says, to teach different from what we have before learned in the Holy Scriptures. Since, indeed, it is forbidden either to add to or take from the word of God, it is sufficiently evident from this, that the Holy Scripture, in its whole and parts, is perfect and absolute. Every one, therefore, ought to be carefully on his guard, neither to add to or detract from it, in such a manner as in any way to mingle human wisdom with divine. Therefore, no writings of men, however gifted with holiness, no custom, no number of men, no antiquity, no prescription of times, no succession of persons, no councils, no decrees or statutes of man, can be compared with these divine Scriptures and this truth of God, since the truth of God supersedes all things. For all men are liars, and their wisdom cannot be subjected to God; for they are more vain than vanity itself. Therefore we reject, with our whole heart, all things whatsoever which do

\* See *Collectio Confessionum in Ecclesiis Reformatis Publicatarum*, edidit Dr. H. A. Niemeyer, Lipsiæ, 1840, pp. 469, 470.

not agree with this most infallible rule, for so we are taught by the apostles, who say, 'Try the spirits whether they are of God : ' and again, ' If any one cometh to you having not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.' "\*

This element of Protestantism was early infused into the English Church ; but owing to the fact that the Reformation in Great Britain became connected with a great civil and political change, it never became universal, but has up to this time had to contend against the antagonist principle which constitutes a leading feature of both "ecclesiastical Catholicism" and "the Papacy."

To show how fully the Romish system of tradition was adhered to by Henry VIII. and his clergy upon their breaking with the pope, I will now present their views from authorized documents. The following is the first thing we meet with under the head of "The Articles of our Faith," in "Articles about Religion," &c. :—

"*First.* As touching the chief and principal articles of our faith, sith it is thus agreed as hereafter followeth by the whole clergy of this our realm, we will, that all bishops and preachers shall instruct and teach our people, by us committed to their spiritual charge, that they ought and must most constantly believe and defend all those things to be true, which be comprehended in the whole body and canon of the Bible, and also in the three creeds or symbols, whereof one was made by the apostles, and is the common creed which every man useth ; the second was made in the holy Council of Nice, and is said daily in the mass ; and

\* See *Collectio Confess.* in *Eccl. Ref. Pub.*, pp. 362, 363.

the third was made by Athanasius, and is comprehended in the psalm *Quicumque vult*: and that they ought and must take and interpret all the same things according to the self-same sentence and interpretation, which the words of the self-same creeds or symbols do purport, and the holy approved doctors of the church do entreat and defend the same.

“*Item*, That they ought and must repute, hold, and take all the same things for the most holy, most sure, and most certain, and infallible words of God, and such as neither ought, nor can be, altered or convell'd by any contrary opinion or authority.

“*Item*, That they ought and must believe, repute, and take all the articles of our faith contained in the said creeds to be so necessary to be believed for man's salvation, that whosoever being taught will not believe them as is aforesaid, or will obstinately affirm the contrary of them, he or they cannot be the very members of Christ and his spouse the church, but be very infidels or heretics, and members of the devil, with whom they shall perpetually be damned.

“*Item*, That they ought and must most reverently and religiously observe and keep the self-same words, according to the very same form and manner of speaking, as the articles of our faith be already conceived and expressed in the said creeds, without altering in anywise, or varying from the same.

“*Item*, That they ought and must utterly refuse and condemn all those opinions contrary to the said articles, which were of long time past condemned in the four holy councils, that is to say, in the Council of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedonense,

and all other sith that time in any point consonant to the same.”\*

In “The Institution of a Christian Man,” published in 1537, we have the same thing in a more condensed form, as follows:—

“Thirdly. That all true Christian men ought and must not only repute, take, and hold all the same things for the most holy, most sure, and most certain and infallible words of God, and such as neither ought nor can be altered or convelled by any contrary opinion or authority; but also must take and interpretate all the same things according to the self-same sentence and interpretation which the words of Scripture do purport and signify, and the holy approved doctors of the church do entreat and defend the same.”†

And also in “A necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man,” published A.D. 1543, under the head of “Faith,” it is said, “And also, that all those things which were taught by the apostles, and have been by a whole universal consent of the church of Christ ever sith that time taught continually, and taken always for true, ought to be received, accepted, and kept, as a perfect doctrine apostolic.”‡

And again, in the “Notes for the better understanding of the Creed,” we have the following:—

“Thirdly. That all true Christian men ought and must not only repute, take, and hold all the said things for the most holy, most sure, and most certain and in-

\* See “Articles about Religion, Anno M.D.XXXVI. Formularies of Faith put forth by authority during the Reign of Henry VIII.,” pp. 5, 6.

† Formularies of Faith, p. 61.

‡ Ibid., p. 221.

fallible truths of God's word, and such as neither ought nor can be altered or convelled by any contrary opinion or authority ; but also must take and interpretate all the same things according to the self-same sentence and interpretation which the words of Scripture do signify, and the holy approved doctors of the church do agreeably entreat and defend."\*

And in a canon concerning preachers, passed in convocation in 1571, the traditionary system was again officially recognised and established. In this it is said, "Let preachers above all things be careful that they never teach aught in a sermon, to be religiously held and believed by the people, except that which is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments ; *and which the catholic fathers and ancient bishops have collected from that very doctrine.*"

I have italicised the words of this canon, to which I wish to direct the attention of the reader. In the Creed of Pope Pius IV., the Catholic is required to promise that he will not "receive or expound—the sacred Scriptures—but according to the uniform consent of the fathers." And we have precisely the same principle in the above canon, and more largely drawn out in the preceding enactments of the "supreme head of the church" and his "convocation" of bishops. In all these formularies we are required to go to "the fathers" to learn what the Scriptures say, and are forbidden to form any judgment with regard to the sense of the divine oracles not deduced therefrom by "the catholic fathers and ancient bishops." This is the system, precisely, as maintained by the Church of Rome.

\* Formularies of Faith, p. 227.

But before I leave this point, I should observe, that it is a matter of controversy in what light the above canon is to be regarded. It is represented by Dr. Pusey,\* and by Mr. Palmer,† as an expression of the sense of the English Church and the doctrine of the English Reformation. Mr. Goode, however, maintains that, as the canon was not revived under the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and as it has never since been by authority inserted among the canons of the Church, it is of no force.‡

Whatever authority is to be allowed to this canon, or whether it is to be regarded as entirely obsolete, so far as the written formularies of the Church are concerned, it is still a lamentable fact that its real principles are embraced and propagated by a large portion of the clergy of the English Church. The learned author of the "Treatise on the Church," Mr. Palmer, maintains that the right of private judgment, so explicitly prohibited in this canon, is also precluded by the articles of religion. He says, "The doctrine then maintained was THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH: 'The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and AUTHORITY IN CONTROVERSIES OF FAITH.'§ And accordingly it is afterward said, 'Whosoever, through his *private judgment*, willingly and purposely doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the word of God, and be ordained and approved by common autho-

\* See Library of the Fathers, vol. i, Preface, p. ii.

† See Treatise on the Church, vol. i, p. 459.

‡ See Divine Rule, vol. ii, pp. 443, 444.

§ Article XX, A. D. 1562.

riety, ought to be rebuked openly,' &c.;\* the Church herself, of course, being the judge of this repugnance.† Even the parliaments which established the Reformation acknowledged the authority of tradition, and of the Catholic Church. The act (1547) appointing communion in both kinds, and the people to receive it with the priest, went on the ground of 'the practice of the church for five hundred years after Christ,' and 'the primitive practice.'‡ The Act for the Royal Supremacy (1559) declared, that such persons as should be commissioned by the queen to reform and order ecclesiastical matters, should judge nothing to be heresy but what had been already so judged by the authority of the canonical Scriptures, or by the first four general councils, or by any other general council in which such doctrines were declared to be heresies by the express and plain words of Scripture. All other points, not so decided, were to be judged by the parliament, with the assent of the clergy in their convocation.§

"It is strange that in opposition to the weight of such facts, the principle of the Reformation should be assumed to be that of the right of individuals to oppose their own judgments to the true doctrine of Scripture, taught by the tradition of the universal church in all ages. I know not what answer can be made to the above facts, except that the principle of the Reforma-

\* Article XXXIV.

† "Towgood the dissenter says, 'Of this repugnance and contrariety, the Church alone, you will observe, and not every private person, is allowed to be the proper judge, for otherwise the article is absurd; it actually overthrows itself, and takes away with one hand what it gives with the other.'—*On Dissent*, p. 6."

‡ Act 1 Edw. VI., c. 1.

§ Act 1 Eliz., c. 1.



tion *ought* to have been this, and that it is indefensible on any other: but we are satisfied with the principle of the English Reformation as it actually was, because we believe it was orthodox, and consistent with common sense, and accordingly always and in all places received by Christians; and as for the defence of the Reformation, we are content to undertake it without the aid of the principle which later ages have attempted to create for it.”\*

The XXth Article, as it now stands, only varies a trifle in its phraseology from its original form as quoted by Mr. Palmer, the sense being preserved and remaining the same, and the XXXIXth remains without verbal change.

But the question, Who is to decide whether a doctrine or a tradition is “repugnant to the word of God?” is a very grave one. “Towgood the dissenter” maintained that “the Church alone, and not any private person, is allowed to be the proper judge.” And though this “dissenter” had made a strong argument against the Church of England upon these two articles,† Mr. Palmer quotes him, it seems, for the only

\* Treatise on the Church, vol. i, pp. 461, 462.

† This argument is really too good to leave with the short notice given of it by Mr. Palmer. The whole is as follows:—“The Church, you say, and solemnly subscribe it, ‘hath power to decree rites, and authority in matters of faith.’ This is the grand hinge upon which the whole controversy turns. Now here, sir, let me ask you,

“First. *What* Church is it, to whom this authority and power is given? You will, doubtless, say, the Church of England; for the Church of England expressly claims and exercises this power; and you *avow* and *defend* it in this exercise and claim. Yea, this is the very basis on which its whole frame and hierarchy

purpose of *admitting his positions!* Now, if the construction of the articles here distinctly admitted by the

stand. It obliges all its ministers to subscribe to articles of faith, which it hath authoritatively decreed; and to use in religious worship ceremonies and rites, which it hath authoritatively enjoined.

“ But mind, sir, I beseech you, the consequences of this claim. If the Church of England hath really this authority and power, hath not the Church of France—the Church of Spain—the Church of Rome the very same? Hath England, in this matter, any privilege from God, any spiritual prerogative, any charter from Heaven, which its neighbour countries have not? You will not pretend it has. But if it has *no* privilege nor prerogative of this kind, then the Church of France, and the Church of Rome, have also, you acknowledge, ‘power to decree rites and ceremonies in God’s worship,’ and ‘authority in points of faith;’ consequently, all the fopperies and superstitions of the Romish Church, at least, which cannot be proved to be contrary to the word of God, are to be reverently submitted to by all the members of that church, and cordially received.

“ But will not your claiming this power for the Church absolutely overthrow the Reformation itself, and subvert the very foundation of the Church you seek to establish? For till you can show why the Church of England is possessed of this power, but not the Church of Rome; why a body of acknowledged fallible men in Britain have authority to make and to enjoin articles of faith, but not a body of pretended infallible men at Trent; whence England came thus spiritually gifted, and endowed beyond all its neighbour kingdoms—your separation from the Church of Rome is incapable of a just and solid defence.

“ To this, perhaps, you will reply, But our Church hath expressly guarded against any such abuse of the power it claims, by adding in the XXth Article, ‘Yet is it not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s word written; neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.’ But, upon this I entreat your patience for these two remarks:—

learned author of the "Treatise" be the true one, what liberty of private judgment does the Church of

"1st. Whatever ceremony or rite, then, cannot be shown to be 'contrary to God's word,' your Church, yea, the Church of Rome hath, you acknowledge, full authority to enjoin: consequently, as your Church, by virtue of this authority, hath enjoined the cross in baptism, it hath full power also to require you to cross yourselves, whenever you enter the place of worship, say your prayers, look toward the east, touch the Bible, sit at meat—it hath full power to enjoin the use of salt and spittle in baptism, chrism, extreme unction, and a hundred other things which are no more 'contrary to God's word' than the cross in baptism is.

"As your Church now consecrates ground, it has every whit as much 'power' to consecrate the other element, and to make 'holy water,' as well as 'holy earth;' and to order it to be decently sprinkled upon its members, ('for all things,' you know, 'are to be done decently and in order,') in token that they shall keep themselves pure from sin: it hath 'power' to consecrate 'holy knives' to cut the sacramental bread; holy 'basins' and 'ewers' for the priests to wash in before the sacrament, 'holy vestments and robes,' and a great variety of 'holy utensils,' lighted 'tapers' for the altar, &c., (all which, you know, sir, was done by your admired Bishop Laud,) knocking on the breast, bowing toward the east, prostration before the altar:—all these, I say, and innumerable other ceremonies, your Church claims 'authority' and 'power' to enjoin; for none of these can be shown to be more 'contrary to the word of God,' or to be a whit more superstitious, ridiculous, or absurd, than the 'crossing' at baptism, or the solemn consecration of churches and their yards.

"But, 2dly. The limitation, or guard, which the article seems to put upon 'this power' of the Church, is really of no force, and amounts to nothing at all.

"For though it says, that 'the Church may not ordain anything contrary to God's word, nor so expound one Scripture as to be repugnant to another:?' yet of this repugnance and contrariety, the 'Church alone,' you will observe, and not every 'private person,' is allowed to be the proper judge: for else the

England allow? Why, just none at all. She claims the right "to decree rites and ceremonies," and "authority in matters of faith." And though she concedes that "it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written," yet, "*the Church herself, of course, being the judge of this repugnance,*" what security is given to individuals against error and corruption in the exercise of these powers? For if the Church is to decide whether her own decrees are according to God's word, her decisions are paramount law, and the Scripture is a mere tool! and all that private individuals have to do is to adhere implicitly to the decisions of the Church, without presuming to judge whether they accord with the Scriptures. And be it known to the reader, that this same "Treatise on the Church," which affords us such a truly "catholic" exposition of the articles in question,

article is absurd; it actually overthrows itself; and takes away, with one hand, what it gives with the other. For, if every 'private person' hath authority to judge of the Church's decisions, and to reject them, if they appear to him repugnant to Scripture, then the 'Church's authority' in points of faith comes to just nothing at all. It is an authority to decree, where none are bound to submit; that is, an authority over nobody, an authority to do nothing. But such a senseless, unmeaning, impertinent claim, can never be the design and import of this article. It does claim, therefore, for the Church some real authority to settle points of faith; consequently, to points thus authoritatively settled by it, private Christians, its members, are reverently to submit, even though to their own judgments they appear repugnant to the word of God."—See "*A Dissent from the Church of England fully justified, &c.: being the dissenting Gentleman's three Letters and Postscript, in answer to Mr. John White's on that subject,*" pp. 4-7.

has been edited in this country by a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church,\* and pronounced not only "the first complete treatise on the subject in our language," but "*the best in any language*:"† and that the articles thus expounded are the same in the Prayer-book as amended by the Protestant Episcopal Church as in that of the Church of England, and of course must mean the same thing in the former as in the latter. And will American Churchmen swallow this construction? Many of them doubtless will. I would that more of them might reject it, and come back to the true principles of the Reformation.

These principles, I rejoice to say, have been recognised by many of the great lights of the Church of England, and are found in her authorized standards of doctrine. This I shall now proceed to show.

The following extract is from her Homilies:—

"Unto a Christian man there can be nothing either more necessary or profitable than the knowledge of Holy Scripture, forasmuch as in it is contained God's true word, setting forth his glory, and also man's duty. And there is no truth nor doctrine necessary for our justification and everlasting salvation, but that is, or may be, drawn out of that fountain and well of truth. Therefore, as many as be desirous to enter into the right and perfect way unto God, must apply their minds to know Holy Scripture; without the which, they can neither sufficiently know God and his will, neither their office and duty. . . . Therefore, forsaking the corrupt judgment of fleshly men, which care not but for

\* Bishop Whittingham, of the diocese of Maryland.

† See Preface, p. xvi.

their carcass; let us reverently hear and read Holy Scripture, which is the food of the soul. Let us diligently search for the well of life in the books of the New and Old Testaments, and not run to the stinking puddles of men's traditions, devised by men's imagination, for our justification and salvation. For in Holy Scripture is fully contained what we ought to do, and what to eschew, what to believe, what to love, and what to look for at God's hands at length. . . . He that is ignorant may there learn and have knowledge. He that is hard-hearted, and an obstinate sinner, shall there find everlasting torments, prepared of God's justice, to make him afraid, and to mollify or soften him. He that is oppressed with misery in this world shall there find relief in the promises of everlasting life, to his great consolation and comfort. He that is wounded by the devil unto death, shall find there medicine whereby he may be restored again unto health; if it shall require to teach any truth, or reprove any false doctrine, to rebuke any vice, to commend any virtue, to give good counsel, to comfort or to exhort, or to do any other thing requisite for our salvation,—all those things, saith St. Chrysostom, we may learn plentifully of the Scripture. There is, saith Fulgentius, abundantly enough, both for men to eat, and children to suck. There is whatsoever is meet for all ages, and for all degrees and sorts of men. These books, therefore, ought to be much in our hands, in our eyes, in our ears, in our mouths, but most of all in our hearts. For the Scripture of God is the heavenly meat of our souls; the hearing and keeping of it maketh us blessed, sanctifieth us, and maketh us holy; it turneth our

souls, it is a light lantern to our feet; it is a sure, steadfast, and everlasting instrument of salvation; it giveth wisdom to the humble and lowly hearts; it comforteth, maketh glad, cheereth, and cherisheth our conscience: it is a more excellent jewel or treasure than any gold or precious stone; it is more sweet than honey or honeycomb; it is called the 'best part,' (Luke x,) which Mary did choose, for it hath in it everlasting comfort. The words of Holy Scripture be called words of 'everlasting life,' (John vi :) for they be God's instrument, ordained for the same purpose. They have power to turn through God's promise, and they be effectual through God's assistance, and (being received in a faithful heart) they have ever a heavenly spiritual working in them: they are lively, quick, and mighty in operation, and 'sharper than any two-edged sword, and enter through, even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, of the joints and the marrow.' Heb. iv. Christ calleth him a wise builder, (Matt. vii,) that buildeth upon his word, upon his sure and substantial foundation. By this word of God we shall be judged: for 'the word that I speak,' saith Christ, 'is it, that shall judge in the last day,' John xii."\*

"But they that have no good affection to God's word (to colour this their fault) allege commonly two vain and feigned excuses. Some go about to excuse them by their own frailness and fearfulness, saying, that they dare not read Holy Scripture, lest through their ignorance they should fall into any error. Others pretend that the difficulty to understand it and the hardness thereof is so great, that it is meet to be read

\* Homily on reading the Scriptures, part i.

only of clerks and learned men. As touching the first : Ignorance of God's word is the cause of all error, as Christ himself affirmed to the Sadducees, saying, that 'they erred, because they knew not the Scripture,' Matt. xxii. How should they then eschew error, that will be still ignorant ? And how should they come out of ignorance, that will not read nor hear that thing which should give them knowledge ? He that now hath most knowledge was at the first ignorant ; yet he forbore not to read for fear he should fall into error : but he diligently read, lest he should remain in ignorance, and through ignorance in error. And if you will not know the truth of God (a thing most necessary for you) lest you fall into error ; by the same reason you may then lie still, and never go, lest, if you go, you fall into the mire ; nor eat any good meat, lest you take a surfeit ; nor sow your corn, nor labour in your occupation, nor use your merchandise, for fear you lose your seed, your labour, your stock, and so by that reason it should be best for you to live idly, and never to take in hand to do any manner of good thing, lest, peradventure, some evil thing may chance thereof. And if you be afraid to fall into error by reading of Holy Scripture, I shall show you how you may read without danger of error. Read it humbly with a meek and a lowly heart, to the intent you may glorify God, and not yourself, with the knowledge of it : and read it not without daily praying to God, that he would direct your reading to good effect ; and take upon you to expound it no further than you can plainly understand it. For, as St. Augustine saith, the knowledge of Holy Scripture is a great, large, and a high place ; but the



door is very low, so that the high and arrogant man cannot run in; but he must stoop low, and humble himself, that shall enter into it. Presumption and arrogancy are the mother of all error; and humility needeth to fear no error. For humility will only search to know the truth; it will search, and will bring together one place with another, and where it cannot find out the meaning, it will pray, it will ask of others that know, and will not presumptuously and rashly define anything which it knoweth not. Therefore the humble man may search any truth boldly in the Scripture, without any danger of error. And if he be ignorant, he ought the more to read and to search Holy Scripture, to bring him out of ignorance. I say not nay, but a man may profit with only hearing; but he may much more profit with both hearing and reading. This have I said as touching the fear to read, through ignorance of the person. And concerning the hardness of Scripture; he that is so weak that he is not able to brook strong meat, yet he may suck the sweet and tender milk, and defer the rest until he wax stronger, and come to more knowledge. For God receiveth the learned and unlearned, and casteth away none, but is indifferent unto all. And the Scripture is full, as well of low valleys, plain ways, and easy for every man to use and to walk in; as also of high hills and mountains, which few men can climb unto. And whosoever giveth his mind to Holy Scriptures with diligent study and burning desire, it cannot be, saith St. John Chrysostom, that he should be left without help. For either God Almighty will send him some godly doctor to teach him, as he did to instruct the eunuch, a nobleman of

Ethiopia, and treasurer unto Queen Candace, who having a great affection to read the Scripture, (although he understood it not,) yet, for the desire that he had unto God's word, God sent his apostle Philip to declare unto him the true sense of the Scripture that he read; or else, if we lack a learned man to instruct and teach us, yet God himself from above will give light unto our minds, and teach us those things which are necessary for us, and wherein we be ignorant. And in another place Chrysostom saith, that man's human and worldly wisdom or science is not needful to the understanding of Scripture, but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them that with humility and diligence do search therefore. 'He that asketh shall have, and he that seeketh shall find, and he that knocketh shall have the door open,' Matt. vii. If we read once, twice, or thrice, and understand not, let us not cease so, but still continue reading, praying, asking of others, and so by still knocking, at the last the door shall be opened; as St. Augustine saith, Although many things in the Scripture be spoken in obscure mysteries, yet there is nothing spoken under dark mysteries in one place, but the self-same thing in other places is spoken more familiarly and plainly, to the capacity both of learned and unlearned. And those things in the Scripture that be plain to understand, and necessary for salvation, every man's duty is to learn them, to print them in memory, and effectually to exercise them. And as for the dark mysteries, to be contented to be ignorant in them, until such time as it shall please God to open those things unto him. In the mean season, if he lack either

aptness or opportunity, God will not impute it to his folly: but yet it behooveth not, that such as be apt should set aside reading, because some other be unapt to read; nevertheless, for the hardness of such places, the reading of the whole ought not to be set apart. And briefly to conclude, as St. Augustine saith, by the Scripture all men be amended, weak men be strengthened, and strong men be comforted. So that surely none be enemies to the reading of God's word, but such as either be so ignorant, that they know not how wholesome a thing it is; or else be so sick, that they hate the most comfortable medicine that should heal them; or so ungodly, that they would wish the people still to continue in blindness and ignorance of God.\*

I next present Archbishop CRANMER, the father of the English Reformation, and martyr for the truth. In his Answer to Smythe, he says. "As for me, I ground my belief upon God's word, wherein can be no error, having also the consent of the primitive church, requiring no man to believe me further than I have God's word for me. But these Papists speak at their pleasure what they list, and would be believed without God's word, because they bear men in hand, that they be the church. The church of Christ is not founded upon itself, but upon Christ and his word; but the Papists build their church upon themselves, devising new articles of the faith from time to time, without any Scripture, and founding the same upon the pope and his clergy, monks, and friars, and by that means they be both the makers and judges of their faith themselves. Wherefore this Papist, like a politic man, doth right

\* Homily on reading the Scriptures, part ii.

wisely provide for himself and his church, in the first entry of his book, that all men should leave searching for the truth, and stick hard and fast to the church, meaning himself and the Church of Rome. For from the true catholic church, the Romish Church which he accounteth catholic, hath varied and dissented many years passed, as the blindest that this day do live may well see and perceive, if they will not purposely wink and shut up their eyes.”\*

Again, in his “Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament,” he says, “The fifth, that no man ought to be so arrogant and presumptuous to affirm for a certain truth in religion, anything which is not spoken of in Holy Scripture. And this is spoken to the great and utter condemnation of the Papists, which make and unmake new articles of our faith from time to time, at their pleasure, without any Scripture at all, yea, quite and clean contrary to Scripture. And yet will they have all men bound to believe whatsoever they invent, upon peril of damnation and everlasting fire.”†

A tract is published in the Works of the archbishop, already referred to, entitled “A Confutation of Unwritten Verities.” The editor of Cranmer’s Works seems unwilling to admit the authenticity of this tract, asserting that “it cannot be safely quoted as evidence of Cranmer’s tenets.” Yet he admits that the archbishop “certainly brought together most of the materials from which it was composed :” and also that it “was known to his contemporary, Bale.”

Upon the whole, I see no good reason to doubt the

\* See Cranmer’s Works, vol. iii, p. 3. † Ibid., vol. ii, p. 395.

authenticity of this tract. And certainly nothing will be gained by the opposition by calling it in question, so long as the archbishop has expressed himself in other works, which are beyond question, in equally strong terms against "unwritten verities." This may be seen in the above extracts. In this tract the archbishop brings arguments against the Romish doctrine of tradition from the Scriptures, from the fathers, and from reason, and answers many arguments which are urged in its favour. I insert the whole of the eighth chapter, as follows:—

"*Reasons against Unwritten Verities.*\*—The Old Testament was sufficient for the Jews, and why shall not both the New and Old suffice us?

\* ["The reasons against unwritten verities are thus stated in Cranmer's Common-place Book at the British Museum:—

"*Reasons in idem.*—If traditions apostolic have the strength of God's word, so that every man is bound to the observation of them, the bishop of Rome hath a great advantage thereby to establish his primacy, (not such a primacy as he hath lately usurped, but such a primacy as he hath had by prerogative from the beginning,) that is to say, to be one of the four patriarchs of Christendom, and the chief of all four. And the traditions be the chief anchors whereupon Pighius stayeth himself. And furthermore, if we admit traditions to be of such authority, it is to be feared that we must resort to the Church of Rome, to fetch there our traditions, as of the oldest and the mother church.

"Cyprianus calleth Rome, Petri cathedram, et Ecclesiam principalem."

"Here follow some other citations. The reasons are then continued:—

"The Old Testament was sufficient for the Jews, and is not both the Old and the New sufficient for us?

"What things came by traditions from the apostles, no man can tell certainly; and if we be bound to receive them as articles

“ Christ and the apostles proved all their doctrines by the law and prophets. What an arrogance is it then in us, to teach anything which we can neither prove by the law, the prophets, the apostles, nor the evangelists.

“ The devil, when he tempted Christ, was not so far past all shame to persuade anything without the testimony of the Scriptures, although he did (as his dear children, the Papists, do) falsely allege them, wrest them from their true meaning to a contrary sense, and also cut off that which should make against him, or declare the true meaning of the Scriptures.

“ This word, ‘unwritten verities,’ is a new term lately invented, and never heard or read among the old writers; of which they could not have been ignorant, if there had been any such thing needful to salvation.

“ All contention which the old fathers had with heretics was for the Scriptures, which heretics partly denied, as Marcion, Manichæus, and Faustus, partly

of our faith, then is our faith uncertain, for we be bound to believe we know not what.

“ ‘Faith must needs be grounded upon God’s word, for St. Paul saith, *Fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Dei.* Rom. x.

“ ‘*Omnis Scriptura divinitus inspiratur, &c.* This text St. John Chrysostom, Theophylactus, Thomas, with many other authors both old and new, do expound plainly as the words be, that whatsoever truth is necessary to be taught for our salvation, or the contrary to be reprov’d, whatsoever is necessary for us to do, and what to forbear and not to do, all is completely contained in the Scripture, so that a man thereby may be perfectly instructed unto all manner of goodness.’—Royal MSS. 7, b. xi, p. 94. Strype, *Memorials*, vol. ii, part i, p. 138.”]

they wrongly expounded ; but for things which are not contained in the Scriptures, they never accused any man of heresy.

“ If there were any word of God besides the Scripture, we could never be certain of God’s word ; and if we be uncertain of God’s word, the devil might bring in among us a new word, a new doctrine, a new faith, a new church, a new god, yea, himself to be god, as he hath already done in the Popish kingdom. For this is the foundation of antichrist’s kingdom, to settle himself in God’s temple, which is the heart and conscience of man, of him to be feared and worshipped, as though he were God himself.

“ If the church and the Christian faith did not stay itself upon the word of God certain, as upon a sure and strong foundation, no man could know whether he had a right faith, and whether he were in the true church of Christ, or in the synagogue of Satan.

“ If we be bound to believe certain things, delivered from the apostles by word of mouth only, without writing, as they would make us believe, but what those things be, no man can tell, it should hereof follow, that we are bound to believe we wot not what.

“ Without faith it is not possible to please God, and faith cometh by hearing of God’s word. *Ergo*, where God’s word lacketh, there can be no faith.

“ Almighty God, afore he gave to Moses the law written of the Ten Commandments, (wherein he fully taught the true worshipping of him,) as it were a preservative against a plague or a poison to come, gave them this notable lesson, worthy alway to be had in memory, *You shall add nothing to the words, &c.*, and

again he oftentimes repeateth the same sentence both in the law and the prophets, in the Gospels, and the Epistles of the apostles. And because his people should never forget it, St. John commandeth the same in the last words of all the New Testament, threatening terrible plagues, that is, the loss of his everlasting joys of heaven, and the pain of eternal fire of hell, to all them that either put to or take aught from the word of God.\*

My next authority is Bishop HOOPER, who with Cranmer suffered martyrdom under "bloody Mary." He says, "This law [the Scripture] teaches man sufficiently, as well what he is bound to do unto God, as unto the princes of the world. Nothing can be desired necessary for man, but it is prescribed in this law: of what degree, vocation, or calling soever he be, his duty is showed unto him in the Scripture. And in this it differs from man's laws, because it is absolute, perfect, and never to be changed; nothing to be added unto it, nor taken from it. And the church of Christ, the more it was and is burdened with man's laws, the further it is from the true and sincere verity of God's word. The more man presumes and takes authority to interpret the Scripture after his own brain and subtle wit, and not as the verity of the text requires, the more he dishonours the Scripture, and blasphemeth God, the author thereof.

"It is the office of a good man to teach the church, as Christ taught, to revoke all errors, and bring back such as err unto the fold of Christ, only by the word of Christ. For the water at the fountain-head is more

\* Cranmer's Works, vol. iv, pp. 215-217.



wholesome and pure, than when it is carried abroad in rotten pipes or stinking ditches. I had rather follow the shadow of Christ, than the body of all the general councils or doctors since the death of Christ. The devil has never slept, but always by his ministers attempted to destroy the verity of Christ's religion, and quite to put out the light of truth, which was perfect in Christ's time and in the time of the apostles. None since that time so pure. St. Jerome saith, that his time was darkness compared with the apostles' time.

“The antiquity of the world darkens the verity of God's word; as Varro saith the truth, ‘that age corrupteth and taketh away many things;’ and ‘the third century doth not see the same man which the first saw.’ The truth of God's verity, the more it is used, practised, and taught, after the wisdom of man, the more is the glory and perfection thereof darkened. It is the contrary in all human arts, as Cicero saith: ‘In human discoveries nothing is invented and perfected all at once, but is improved by use and practice; so that the arts of every kind are more advanced in excellence the further they are removed from their first origin and inventors.’

“The church of God must therefore be bound to no other authority than unto the voice of the gospel and unto the ministry thereof, as Isaiah saith, (chap. viii,) ‘Seal the law among my disciples.’ The prophet speaketh of such darkness as should follow his time, concerning the coming of Messias, the true teacher of the church. Therefore he prayed to preserve the true heirs of the promise, and that it would please him to confirm the doctrine of truth in their hearts, lest the

word, and true understanding of the word, should be put out by the devil. And seeing the church is bound unto this infallible truth, the only word of God, it is a false and usurped authority that men attribute unto the clergy, and bind the word of God and Christ's church to the succession of bishops, or any college of cardinals, schools, ministries, or cathedral churches.

“ Paul would have no man to give faith to any person or minister in the church of God, but when he preaches the word of God truly. Gal. i. Men may have the gift of God to understand and interpret the Scripture unto others, but they never have authority to interpret it otherwise than it interprets itself; which the godly mind of man, by study, meditation, and comparing one place with the other, may find; howbeit some more, some less, as God gives his grace. For the punishment of our sins God leaves in all men great imperfection; and such as were endued with excellent wit and learning saw not always the truth. As it is to be seen in Basilius, Ambrose, Epiphanius, Augustine, Bernard, and others, though they stayed themselves in the knowledge of Christ, and erred not in any principal article of the faith: yet they did inordinately and more than enough extol the doctrine and tradition of men; and after the death of the apostles, every doctor's time was subject unto such ceremony and man's decrees as were neither profitable nor necessary. Therefore Paul diligently exhorted the church of Christ principally to consider and regard the foundation of all verity; meaning that doctors of the church had their imperfection and faults. ‘Other foundation,’ saith he, ‘can no man lay, besides that which is laid,

which is Jesus Christ.' In these few words is established all our faith, and all false religion is reprehended."\*

I next give the words of Bishop JEWEL, as Hooker says, "the worthiest divine that Christendom hath had for the space of some hundreds of years,"† and whose "Apology for the Church of England" was "published by the queen's authority, and with the advice of some of the bishops, as the public confession of the catholic and Christian faith."‡ From a multitude of similar passages scattered through his works, I select the following. He says:—

"What shall a godly-disposed simple man do? How shall he settle himself? To which side may he safely join himself? If he make reckoning of learning, there are learned men on both sides; if he make reckoning of virtue and of godly life, there be virtuous men and of godly life on both sides; if he make reckoning of

\* Declaration of Christ and his Office, chap. iv.

† Eccl. Pol., book ii, chap. vi. And whom James calls "one of the most precious and peerless jewels of these latter times, for learning, knowledge, judgment, honesty, and industry." See "A Treatise of the Corruptions of Scripture, Councils, and Fathers, by the Prelates, Pastors, and Pillars of the Church of Rome, for the Maintenance of Popery. By Thomas James, Student in Divinity; chief Keeper of the Public Library in the University of Oxford." I have just received a copy of a new edition of this invaluable work, edited by Rev. J. E. Cox, M. A. London: John W. Parker, West Strand. I could wish it might be republished in this country. It is a fearful exhibition of the frauds and forgeries of the Romanists, and shows just how much confidence is to be placed in the writings of the fathers, and the decrees of councils which have come through their hands.

‡ See Strype's Life of Archbishop Parker, fol., 1711.

zeal, either side is zealous in the religion they hold ; if he make reckoning of the name of the church, they take it as well to the one side as to the other ; if he make reckoning of the multitude, there are many on either side, but neither side hath so many as hath the Turk. Whither, then, may a man turn himself, and to which side may he safely join ? In this case we find the comfort and profit of *the word of God*. In this case St. Paul telleth us, ‘ Whatsoever things are written aforetime are written for our learning,’ to lighten our eyes, to resolve our doubts, and to guide our feet. . . . With this word Christ confounded the scribes and Pharisees, and put them to silence. . . . *This word* confounded the Arians and all sorts of heretics. What is become of Marcion, of Nestorius ? . . . they are blown away as smoke before the wind, *the word of God* hath confounded them, and beat them away. As Dagon fell, and broke his hands and neck, and could not stand in the presence of the ark of the Lord, even so shall all falsehood fall and hide itself in the presence of the truth of God. As the rod of Moses devoured the rods of the charmers, as the beams of the sun drive away and consume darkness, so shall the word of God chase away errors. . . . They [that is, ‘ *the Scriptures*’] bring us to God ; *teach us the truth*, and give us reason of all things ; they keep us in safety, suffer not wolves to devour us, keep off heretics, bewray a thief, and make known who is antichrist. . . . And as the word of God is the light to direct us, and to bewray errors, so is it also the standard and beam to try the weights of truth and falsehood. . . . The master of the ship, when he is on the main sea, casteth his eye always upon the load-

star, and so directeth and guideth his ways. Even so must we, which are passengers and strangers in this world, ever settle our eyes to behold the word of God. So shall no tempest overblow us, so shall we be guided without danger, so shall we safely arrive in the haven of our rest. . . . This is *THE rule of our faith*; without this our faith is but a fantasy, and no faith, for faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Therefore Christ saith, ‘Search the Scriptures, they are they which testify of me.’ There shall ye find testimony of my doctrine, there shall ye know what is the will of my heavenly Father, and there shall you receive the comfort for everlasting life.”\*

Again: “You know, right well, we despise not the authority of the holy fathers, but rather, in this self-same place, have alleged together St. Augustine, St. Hierome, and St. Ambrose, three of the most ancient and approved fathers; and throughout the whole discourse of this Apology in defence of the *catholic truth of our religion*, next unto God’s holy word, have used no proof or authority so much as the expositions and judgments of the holy fathers. We despise them not, therefore; but rather give God thanks in their behalf, for that it hath pleased him to provide so worthy instruments for his church. . . . To come near the matter, we say not that all cases of doubt are, by manifest and open words, plainly expressed in the Scriptures. For so there should need no exposition. But, we say, *there is no case in religion so dark and doubtful, but it may necessarily be either proved or reproved by collection and conference of the Scriptures*. . . . In this conference

\* Treatise of the Holy Scriptures, (Works,) pp. 32–34.

and judgment of the Holy Scriptures, we need oftentimes the discretion and wisdom of learned fathers. But, notwithstanding, may we not give them herein greater credit than is convenient ; or than they themselves, if it were offered, would receive. We may reverently say of them, as Seneca in the like case sometime said, '*They are our leaders, but not our lords.*' They are not the truth of God itself, but only witnesses unto the truth. . . . St. Augustine saith, '*Solis canonicis Scripturis sine ulla recusatione consensum debeo:*'— 'I owe my consent without gainsaying (not unto the doctors or fathers, but) only unto the canonical Scriptures.' But the bishops in those councils, saith M. Harding, brought forth and followed the expositions of the ancient learned fathers. And wherefore might they not ? What man ever taught or said the contrary ? Yet notwithstanding *they alleged them not as the foundations or grounds, but only as approved and faithful witnesses of the truth.* St. Augustine in another case concerning the Arians . . . likewise refuseth the determinations of all councils and fathers, and standeth only to the Scriptures : 'Neither will I,' saith he, 'allege against thee the Council of Nice ; nor shalt thou allege against me the Council of Ariminum,' &c. Neither doth St. Augustine only say thus ; but also yieldeth a reason why he saith it. These be his words : 'Have away all those authorities that either of us allegeth against the other ; saving only such as be taken out of the heavenly canonical Scriptures. But perhaps some man will ask me, Wherefore would ye have all such other authorities put away ? I answer, Because I would have the holy church to be proved, not by the doctrines

of men, but by the word of God.' . . . *Fain would M. Harding have his reader believe* [so similar were his tactics to those of the Tractators] *that we utterly despise all holy fathers.* . But we despise them not, M. Harding, as may partly appear by that we have already said. We read their works, we reverence them, we give God thanks for them; we call them the pillars, the lights, the fathers of God's church; we despise them not. This thing only we say, Were their learning and holiness never so great, yet be they not equal in credit with the Scriptures of God. . . . As the Scriptures were written by the Spirit of God, so must they be *expounded by the same.* For without that Spirit we have neither ears to hear, nor eyes to see. It is that Spirit that openeth, and no man shutteth; the same shutteth, and no man openeth. The same Spirit prepared and opened the silkwoman's heart, that she should give ear to and consider the things that were spoken by St. Paul. And in respect of this Spirit, the prophet Esay saith, 'They shall be all taught of God.' But God hath not bound himself that this Spirit should evermore dwell in Rome, *but upon the lowly and humble-hearted that trembleth at the word of God.* . . . *Whereas we make reasonable request that God may be umpire in his own cause, and that all our controversies may be judged and tried by the Holy Scriptures, M. Harding thereto answereth thus, The Scripture standeth not in the words, but in the sense; and the same sense is continued by tradition in the church. Otherwise he saith, The Jews, the Arians, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, and all other heretics, were always able to claim by the Scriptures.* . . . *Notwithstanding Pharisees and heretics*

*wickedly misalleged the Scriptures, as ye sometimes do, to serve your purpose, yet for all that, Christ said unto them, 'Search the Scriptures.'* And, as it is said before, *the catholic learned fathers, in all their cases and controversies, appealed evermore to the Scriptures. . . . To conclude, WHEREAS M. HARDING SAITH, WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES WITHOUT TRADITION, [the very words of the Tractators,] THE ANCIENT FATHER IRENÆUS SAITH, THIS IS ONE SPECIAL MARK WHEREBY WE MAY KNOW A HERETIC.\**

“ But what say we of the fathers, Augustine, Ambrose, Hierome, Cyprian, &c. ? What shall we think of them ; or what account may we make of them ? They be interpreters of the word of God. They were learned men, and learned fathers ; the instruments of the mercy of God ; and vessels full of grace. We despise them not, we read them, we reverence them, and give thanks unto God for them. They were witnesses unto the truth ; they were worthy pillars and ornaments in the church of God. Yet may they not be compared with the word of God. We may not *build upon them ; we may not make them the foundation and warrant of our conscience,*—we may not put our trust in them. Our trust is in the name of the Lord. And thus are we taught to esteem of the learned fathers of the church, by their own judgment ; by that which they have written, either for the credit of their own doings, or of the authority which they have thought due to the writings of others.”†

“ But they say, the Scriptures be dark, therefore we

\* Defence of Apology, pp. 53–69.

† Treatise of the Holy Scriptures, p. 36.



must seek *the meaning of them in the doctors.* THE DOCTORS AGREE NOT. Then must we weigh and try them by the Master of the Sentences. The Master of the Sentences himself sometimes is not holden. Then must we seek further to the school-doctors. The school-doctors can in nowise agree. There is Scotus against Thomas, and Occam against Scotus, and Alliacensis against Occam; the nominals against the reals, the scholasticals against the canonists; the contention is greater, and the doubts darker, than ever they were before.”\*

And again: “They say, the Scriptures are hard, and above the reach of the people. So said the Pelagian heretic, Julian, whom St. Augustine therefore reproveth. . . . But God himself, and the ancient fathers of the church, said otherwise. . . . Some things in the Scriptures are hard; I deny it not. It is very expedient that somewhat should be covered, to make us more diligent in reading, more desirous to understand, more fervent in prayer, more willing to ask the judgment of others, and to presume the less of our own judgment. . . . It is true which St. Peter hath said, some things are hard to be understood. But it is also true, that they which pervert them unto their own destruction are unlearned and unstable; that is, they to whom they are hard have not their eyes opened that they may see the light of the word; or they be wicked, and turn the truth of God into lies, and abuse the Scriptures to their own damnation. The owlet seeth not by the brightness of the sun; not because the sunbeams are dark, but for that his eyes are weak, and cannot abide

\* Reply to Harding's Answer, p. 193.

so clear light: it is, therefore, but a *pretence and colour for their ignorance, and a means to deceive the people more boldly with their errors, when they charge the word of God with darkness and hardness.* . . . The ways of the Lord are straight, and his words plain, even unto the simple. Chrysostom saith, 'All things are clear and plain in the Holy Scriptures: whatsoever these things are necessary for us, are also manifest.' Some things are covered, as men cover precious stones and precious garments. They are covered, and yet we see them. We see them, and yet they are covered. *Yet all things that are necessary are plain and open.* . . . [and after quoting a passage from Theodoret, he adds.] Thus we see there was a time, before ignorance crept into the church, and got the upper hand, when the word of God was not counted hard, and dark, and doubtful: when children, and women, and servants, and men of the country, had the knowledge of God, and were able to reason of the works of God. Then went it well with them: they could not easily be deceived, because they had that word which bewrayeth the thief: they carried with them, like good exchangers, the weights and woolsstone: and were able to try coins, whether they were true or false. Such were the people, such was the state of God's church in those days.\*

- We teach not the people to presume of knowledge, as you teach them to presume of ignorance. But only we exhort them, for the better satisfaction of their consciences, to read the Scriptures, and *therein to learn the good will of God.* . . . But ye will say, the Scriptures are hard, and above the reach of the people. Even so

\* *Treatise of the Holy Scriptures*, pp. 43-46.

said the Pelagian heretic, Julianus, and therefore St. Augustine thus reproveth him for the same.”\*

“Whereas M. Harding, to withdraw the people’s hearts from reading, saith, the Scriptures are dark and dangerous, and no man able to wade in them without a guide, St. Chrysostom contrariwise, to encourage the people to read the Scriptures, saith they be plain and easy: and *that the ignorant and simple man, by prayer unto God, may attain the knowledge of them, without any master or teacher, by himself alone.*”†

“Notwithstanding a few certain places in the Holy Scriptures be obscure, yet generally the Scriptures are a candle to guide our feet: generally, God’s commandment is light, and lighteneth the eyes: and therefore, generally, the word of God is full of comfort. . . . [And then proceeding to quote from Chrysostom and others, he adds.] Thus, notwithstanding certain clauses and sentences in the Holy Scriptures be hard and dark, yet by these holy fathers’ judgments, *the Scriptures generally are easy and clear.* . . . True it is, flesh and blood is not able to understand the holy will of God, without special revelation. Therefore Christ gave thanks unto his Father, ‘For that he had revealed his secrets unto the little ones,’ and likewise ‘opened the hearts of his disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures.’ Without this special help and prompting of God’s Holy Spirit, the word of God is unto the reader, be he never so wise or well learned, as the vision of a sealed book. *But this revelation is not special unto one or two, but general to all them that*

\* Defence of Apology, pp. 516, 517.

† Reply to Harding, p. 152.

*be the members of Christ, and are endued with the Spirit of God.*"\*

The following is the testimony of "the judicious HOOKER:"—

"When the question, therefore, is, whether we be now to seek for *any revealed law of God, otherwise than only in the sacred Scripture*; whether we do now stand bound in the sight of God to yield to *traditions*, urged by the Church of Rome, the same obedience and reverence we do to his *written law*, honouring equally, and adoring both as *divine*; *our answer is, No.* They that so earnestly plead for the authority of TRADITION, as if nothing were more safely conveyed, than that which spreadeth itself by report, and descendeth by relation of former generations unto the ages that succeed, *are not all of them—surely a miracle it were if they should be—so simple as thus to persuade themselves*; howsoever, if the simple were so persuaded, they could be content, perhaps, very well to enjoy the benefit, as they account it, of that common error. *What hazard the truth is in when it passeth through the hands of report, how maimed and deformed it becometh, they are not, they cannot possibly be ignorant.* Let them that are indeed of this mind consider but only that little of things divine which the heathen have in such sort received. How miserable had the state of the church of God been, long ere this, if, wanting the sacred Scriptures, we had no record of his laws, but only the memory of man receiving the same by report and relation from his predecessors!"†

\* Reply to Harding, pp. 393, 394.

† Eccles. Pol., book i, chap. 13.

Again, he says, "They which add traditions as a part of supernatural necessary truth, have not the truth, but are in error. For they only plead that whatsoever God revealeth as necessary for all Christian men to *do or believe*, the same we ought to embrace, whether we have received it by writing, or otherwise; *which no man denieth*: when that which they should confirm, who claim so great reverence unto TRADITIONS, is, that the same traditions are necessarily to be acknowledged divine and holy. For we do not reject them only because they are not in the Scripture, but *because they are neither in Scripture, nor can otherwise sufficiently, by any reason, be proved to be of God*. That which is of God, and may be evidently proved to be so, we deny not but it hath in his kind, although unwritten, yet the self-same force and authority with the written laws of God."\*

Archbishop USHER is perfectly clear and full upon this subject. He says: "*First*. They [the Scriptures] are perfectly holy in themselves, and by themselves: whereas all other writings are profane, further than they draw some holiness from them; which is never such but that their holiness is imperfect.

"*Secondly*. The authority of these holy writings, inspired of God, is highest in the church, as the authority of God; whereunto no learning or decrees of angels or men, under what name or colour soever it be commended, may be accounted equal, (Gal. i, 8, 9; 2 Thess. ii, 2,) neither can they be judged or sentenced by any.

"*Thirdly*. The books of Holy Scripture are so suffi-

\* Eccles. Pol., book i, chap. 14.

cient for the knowledge of Christian religion, that they do most plentifully contain all doctrine necessary to salvation. They being perfectly profitable to instruct to salvation in themselves; and all other imperfectly profitable thereunto, further than they draw from them. Whence it followeth that we need no unwritten verities, no traditions or inventions of men, no canons of councils, no Sentences of fathers, much less decrees of popes, for to supply any supposed defect of the written word, or for to give us a more perfect direction in the worship of God, and the way of life, than is already expressed in the canonical Scriptures. Matt. xxiii, 8; John v, 39; Matt. xv, 9. Finally. These Holy Scriptures are the rule, the line, the square, and light, whereby to examine and try all judgments and sayings of men and angels. John xii, 48; Gal. i, 9. All traditions, revelations, decrees of councils, opinions of doctors, &c., are to be embraced so far forth as they may be proved out of the divine Scriptures, and not otherwise. So that from them only all doctrine concerning our salvation must be drawn and derived: that only is to be taken for truth, in matters appertaining to Christian religion, which is agreeable unto them; and whatsoever disagreeeth from them is to be refused.”\*

Again: “The Scriptures, you say, are a rule and a line: but are they not (as the Church of Rome imagineth) like a rule of lead which may be bowed every way at men’s pleasures?

“They are as a rule of steel, that is firm and changeth not. Matt. v, 18; Psalm xix, 9. For seeing they are sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, (as is before

\* Body of Divinity, p. 15.

proved,) it followeth of necessity, that there is a most certain rule of truth for instruction, both of faith and works, to be learned out of them, by ordinary means of reading, prayer, study, the gifts of tongues, and other sciences; to which God promiseth the assistance of his grace. John v, 39; James i, 5. And this sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God written, as the example of Christ our general Captain showeth, (Matt. iv,) is delivered unto us by the Holy Ghost, both to defend our faith, and to overcome all our spiritual enemies, which are the devil and his instruments, false prophets, heretics, schismatics, and such like. Ephes. vi, 12. Therefore the Holy Scriptures are not as a nose of wax, or a leaden rule, (as some Papists have blasphemed,) that they be so writhed every way by impudent heretics, but that their folly and madness (as the apostle saith, 2 Tim. iii, 9) may be made manifest to all men."

"Are the Scriptures, then, plain and easy to be understood?"

"There are some hard things in the Scriptures that have proper relation to the time in which the Scripture was written and uttered, or which are prophecies of things to be fulfilled hereafter; which if we never understand, we shall be never the worse for the attaining of everlasting salvation. There are other things in Scripture belonging unto the saving knowledge of God: all which are dark and difficult unto those whose eyes the god of this world hath blinded; (2 Cor. iv, 4; 2 Pet. iii, 5; John viii, 43;) but unto such as are by grace enlightened, and made willing to understand, (Psalm cxix, 18,) howsoever some things remain ob-

scure (2 Pet. iii. 16) to exercise their diligence, yet the *fundamental doctrines* of faith, and precepts of life, are all plain and perspicuous. For all doctrine necessary to be known unto eternal salvation is set forth in the Scriptures most clearly and plainly, even to the capacity and understanding of the simple and unlearned: so far is it that the Scriptures should be dangerous to be read of the lay-folks, as Papists hold.\*

My next witness is the learned Dr. THOMAS JACKSON. He says, "When we affirm that the Scriptures are the only infallible rule in matters of faith and Christian obedience, we understand such a rule in those matters, as Aristotle's *Organon* may be said of logic: supposing it were sound, and free from all suspicion of error in every point, and contained in it all the general and undoubted principles, from which all true forms of argumentation must be deduced, and into which all must be finally resolved. To illustrate this truth by a known practice: Our younger students are bound to yield their absolute assent unto Aristotle's authority, in matters of logic: but not unto any interpreter that shall pretend it, save only when he shall make evident unto them that this was Aristotle's meaning. And while they so only, and no otherwise, yield their assent, they yield it wholly and immediately unto Aristotle, not to the interpreter, although by his means they came to know Aristotle's meaning: which once known, without any further confirmation of other testimony or authority, commands their obedience and assent. But ere they can fully assent unto this great master, or thoroughly perceive his meaning, they must condition-

\* Body of Divinity, p. 18.



ally assent unto their private tutors, or other expositors, and take his sense and meaning upon their trust and credit. In like manner, (say we,) in all matters, doctrines, or controversies of faith and Christian obedience, we are bound to yield our assent, directly, absolutely, and finally, unto the authority of Scriptures only: not unto any doctor, expositor, or other, whosoever he be, that shall pretend authority out of Scripture over our faith, save only when he shall make it clear and evident unto us, that his opinion is the true meaning of the Scripture. And thus yielding our absolute assent unto the truth explained by him, we yield it not to him, but unto the Author of truth, whose words we hold to be infallible in whose mouths soever: and once known to be his words, they need not the testimony or authority of him that did bring us to the true knowledge of them. And before we be brought to see their truth with our own eyes, and feel it by our sense, (by the effects or experiments of it upon our own souls,) we are to limit our assent and obedience (as it is set down before) according to the probabilities, or impartial inducements, which we have of the expositor's skill and sincerity in dispensing divine mysteries. And these motives or inducements, which we have of his skill and sincerity, must be framed according to the rules or precepts of Scripture, not according to our affections or humours: we may not think him most to be believed that is in highest place, or hath the greatest stroke in other affairs. For as the faith of Christ, so must our persuasion of the faithful dispensers, or skilful seedsmen of faith, be had without respect of persons."\*

\* Comment on the Apostles' Creed, b. ii, ch. xi, sec. 1.

BISHOP STILLINGFLEET gives us the Romish positions, and his answer in brief, as follows:—

The Romanist urges, “That it is not the words, but the sense of Scripture is the rule; and that this sense is not to be taken from men’s private fancies, which are various and uncertain; and therefore where there is no security from errors, there is nothing capable of being a rule.”

To this the bishop answers: “To clear this, we must consider,

“1. That it is not necessary to the making of a rule, to prevent any possibility of mistake, but that it be such that they cannot mistake without their own fault. For certainty in itself, and sufficiency for the use of others, are all the necessary properties of a rule; but after all, it is possible for men not to apply the rule aright, and then they are to be blamed, and not the rule.

“2. If no man can be certain of the right sense of Scripture, then it is not plain in necessary things; which is contrary to the design of it, and to the clearest testimonies of antiquity, and to the common sense of all Christians, who never doubted or disputed the sense of some things revealed therein; as the unity of the Godhead, the making of the world by him, the deluge, the history of the patriarchs, the captivity of the Jews, the coming of the Messias, his sending his apostles, his coming again to judgment, &c. No man who reads such things in Scripture can have any doubt about the sense and meaning of the words.

“Where the sense is dubious, we do not allow any man to put what sense he pleases upon them; but we

say, there are certain means, whereby he may either attain to the true sense, or not be damned if he doth not. And the first thing every man is to regard, is not his security from being deceived, but from being damned. For truth is made known in order to salvation; if, therefore, I am sure to attain the chief end, I am not so much concerned as to the possibility of errors, as that I be not deceived by my own fault. We do not, therefore, leave men *either to follow their own fancy, or to interpret Scripture by it*; but we say, They are bound, upon pain of damnation, to seek the truth sincerely, and to use the best means in order to it; and if they do this, they either will not err, or their errors will not be their crime.\*

DR. CLAGET gives us the following positions upon the Scriptures as a rule of faith, together with canons of interpretation; all of which are clearly antitractarian, and well worthy of attention:—

“As reason is a rule to all men, so is Scripture a rule to all Christians,—at least it ought to be so; and all pretend to make it a rule for their judgment, by appealing to it. The Church of Rome, indeed, allows it to be but *part* of the rule of faith; we say it is an *entire* and perfect rule thereof. However, so long as she acknowledges the Scriptures to be a rule, though she pretends there is another rule besides that, she is to be concluded by the authority of the Scriptures; and so we are to be acquitted by her, in not believing her *against the Scriptures*.”

\* The Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome truly represented. Preservative against Popery, tit. ix, p. 289.

“ Now everybody must grant that we do not judge rightly by the Scriptures where we mistake the meaning of the text. And we ought to be sure that the sense wherein we take any place is the true sense, before we make our interpretation of it a rule whereby to examine other things.

“ Where the sense is very plain, it requires nothing more than common sense and common honesty to understand it; and it is very reasonable to suppose that God hath revealed all points necessary to salvation so clearly and plainly, that it is not difficult for an honest man to understand what they are.

“ But because there are many obscure places in the Scriptures, we must be very careful not to ground any doctrine upon them, till we have well weighed and examined the meaning of those places; and the way to be secure from any dangerous mistake in concluding from places of Scripture that are more or less hard to be understood, is to observe such cautions as these are, which I think all Christians must allow to be reasonable :—

“ 1. That we take no text in a sense which is repugnant to common sense and natural reason.

“ 2. That we put no sense upon a place of Scripture that is repugnant to the general scope and design of the whole word of God.

“ 3. That we understand no difficult places in a sense that is contrary to those places whose meaning is plain and manifest to all men.

“ 4. That we mistake not those places for plain, which are not so.

“ 5. That we put no other sense upon a text than

what agrees with the scope and design of that particular discourse wherein we find it.”\*

Good BISHOP BURNET presents the great question at issue thus:—“After we are well settled in the belief of the Christian religion, our next inquiry must naturally be into the way and method of being rightly instructed in the doctrine and other parts of this religion; and that chiefly in one great point, Whether we ought to employ our own faculties in searching into this, and particularly into the meaning of those books in which it is contained? or, Whether we must take it from oral tradition, and submit to any man, or body of men, as the infallible depositaries and declarers of this tradition?”

“In this single point consists the essence of the differences between us and the Church of Rome: while we affirm that the Christian doctrine is completely contained in the Scriptures, and that every man ought to examine these with the best helps, and all the skill and application of which he is capable: and that he is bound to believe such doctrines only as appear to him to be contained in the Scriptures; but may reject all others that are not founded upon that authority. On the other hand, the foundation upon which the Church of Rome builds is this, ‘That the apostles delivered their doctrine by word of mouth to the several churches, as the sacred *depositum* of the faith.’†

The following are his views of private judgment:—

\* A Persuasive to an Ingenuous Trial of Opinions in Religion. Preservative against Popery, tit. xiii, p. 136.

† See Four Discourses to the Clergy, pp. 165, 166.

“ In such matters every man must judge for himself, and every man must answer to God for the judgment that he has made : he judges for nobody else, but for himself. He, and He only, can be the judge ; and if he uses a due degree of industry, and frees himself from every corrupt bias, from pride, vain-glory, and affectation of singularity, or the pursuing any ill ends ; under those appearances of searching for truth, and the adhering to it, he is doing the best thing which, according to that nature of which God has made him, he can do ; and so he may reasonably believe that he shall succeed in it : nor is there any pride in this, for a man to think according to his own understanding, no more than to see with his own eyes. His humility ought to make him slow and cautious, modest and fearful ; but no humility can oblige him to think otherwise than he feels he must needs think.”\*

Upon the church's decisions he speaks thus :—  
“ Others are for the diffusive church of the present age, and put infallibility there : for they reckon thus, That every age of the church believes as the former age believed, till this is carried up to the apostles themselves. This is to resolve all matters into *oral tradition*, and to suppose it infallible : and indeed, if we can believe that the generality of Christians have in all ages been wise, honest, and cautious, and that the generality of the clergy have in all ages been faithful and inquisitive, we may rely upon this, and so believe an infallibility : but at the same time, and upon this supposition, we shall have no occasion for it ; since, if mankind could be brought to such a pitch

\* See Four Discourses, &c., pp. 189, 190.

of reformation, there would be no controversies, and so no need of a judge to decide them infallibly: but if we will admit that, which we see to be true, and know to have been true in all ages, that men are apt to be both ignorant and careless of religion; that they go easily into such opinions as are laid before them by men of authority and reputation; and that they have a particular liking to superstitious conceits, to outward pomp, and to such doctrines as make them easy in their ill practices; then the supposition of every age believing nothing but that which it learned from the former, falls quite to the ground. If we can also imagine that the clergy have been always careful to examine matters, and never apt to add explanations or enlargements even in their own favours; or if, on the contrary, we see a gross ignorance running through whole ages; if we find the clergy to have been ambitious and quarrelsome, full of intrigues and interests; then all this general specious prejudice in favour of *oral tradition* vanishes to nothing.”\*

And upon the infallibility of a general council he holds the following language:—“And to sum up all that belongs to this head: The decisions of those councils must have an infallible expounder, as well, as it is urged, that the books of the Scriptures cannot be of use to us if there is not in the church a *living speaking Judge* to declare their true sense. Now this is rather more necessary with relation to the decrees of councils, which, as they are writings as well as the Scriptures, so they being much more voluminous, and more artificially contrived and couched, need a com-

\* See *Four Discourses, &c.*, pp. 203, 204.

mentary much more than a few plain and simple writings, which make up the New Testament. If, then, the councils must be expounded, there must be, according to their main reasoning, an infallibility lodged somewhere else, to give their sense: and the necessity of this has appeared evidently since the time of the Council of Trent; for both upon the article of 'divine grace,' and upon their sacrament of 'penance,' there have been, and still are, great debates among them concerning the meaning of the decrees of that council; both parties pretending that they are of their side. Who, then, shall decide these controversies, and expound those decrees? This must not be laid over to the next general council, for then the infallibility will be in an abeyance, and lost during that interval."\*

I next present the views of Archbishop SECKER upon the leading topics in question. He says, "In the books of Scripture, then, the doctrines of our religion are truly and fully conveyed to us: and we cannot be so sure of any other conveyance. It is a confirmation of our faith indeed, that the earliest Christian writers, after those of Scripture, in all material points agree with it. But if they did not, no writers can have equal authority with inspired ones. And no unwritten tradition can long be of any authority at all. For things, delivered by word of mouth, always vary, more or less, in going through but a few hands. And the world hath experienced, that articles of belief, for want of having recourse to the written rule of them, have greatly changed in many churches of Christians: but in few or none more than that of Rome, which absurdly pre-

\* See Four Discourses, &c., pp. 225, 226.



tends to be unchangeable and infallible. It is in the Scripture alone, then, that we, who live in these later ages, can be sure of finding the Christian faith preserved, complete and undefiled: and there we may be sure of it.

“For as to any pretence or fear of these books being corrupted and altered, either by design or mistake: had the Old Testament been depraved in anything essential, our Saviour and his apostles would have given us notice of it. And for the New, the several parts of it were so immediately spread through the world, and so constantly read, in public and in private, by all Christians, and so perpetually quoted in all their discourses, and all the disputes of one sect with another, that they could not possibly be changed, by any of them, in anything considerable. For the rest would immediately have discovered it, and charged them with it, which must put an end to the danger. And indeed it is an agreed point, among all who understand these matters, that nothing of this kind either hath happened or can happen, so as to affect any one article of faith.

“But perhaps it will be alleged, that the Bible was written originally in languages which have long been out of common use, and with which but a small part of Christians now are acquainted: and how shall the rest be sure that we have them rightly translated into our own? The plain answer is, That all translations, made by all parties, agree in most places, and those of the most importance: and where they disagree, moderate consideration and inquiry will enable any persons, who live in a country of knowledge and freedom, which, God be thanked, is our case, to judge on

some good grounds, as far as they need judge, which is right, and which is wrong; which is clear, and which is doubtful. Nor doth any sect of Christians pretend to accuse our common translation of concealing any necessary truth, or asserting any destructive error.

“But supposing all this, yet it may be urged, that many parts of Scripture in our translation, and in the original too, are dark and obscure: and how can it then be the guide and rule of our faith? I answer: These are few in proportion to such as are clear: and were they more, the Spirit of God, we may be sure, would make all necessary points, in one part or another, sufficiently clear. These, therefore, the most ignorant may learn from Scripture; at least by the help of such explanations as they are willing to ask and trust in all other cases, and much admirable instruction besides: which if they do but respect and observe as they ought, they may be content to leave, for the use of others, what a little modesty will show them is above their own reach.”\*

The last witness I shall introduce is the renowned CHILLINGWORTH. He holds the following language:

“It remains now that I should show that many reasons of moment may be alleged for the justification of Protestants, which are dissembled by you, and not put into the balance. Know then, sir, that when I say the religion of Protestants is in prudence to be preferred before yours, as, on the one side, I do not understand by your religion the doctrine of Bellarmine, or Baronius, or any other private man among you; nor the doctrine of the Sorbonne, or of the Jesuits, or of the

\* See Lectures on the Catechism, vol. i, pp. 72-75.

Dominicans, or of any other particular company among you, but that wherein you all agree, or profess to agree—the doctrine of the Council of Trent; so accordingly, on the other side, by the religion of Protestants, I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon; nor the confession of Augusta, or Geneva, nor the catechism of Heidelberg, nor the Articles of the Church of England, no, nor the harmony of Protestant confessions; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of their faith and actions: that is, the Bible. The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants! Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion: but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I, for my part, after a long, and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with mine own eyes, that there are popes against popes, councils against councils, some fathers against others, the same fathers against themselves, a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age, the church of one age against the church of another age. Traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended; but there are few or none to be found: no tradition, but only of Scripture, can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly

proved, either to have been brought in, in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only, for any considering man to build upon. This, therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe; this I will profess; according to this I will live; and for this, if there be occasion, I will not only willingly, but even gladly, lose my life, though I should be sorry that Christians should take it from me. Propose me anything out of this book, and require whether I believe it or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this—God hath said so, therefore it is true. In other things I will take no man's liberty of judgment from him; neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse man, nor the worse Christian, I will love no man the less, for differing in opinion from me. And what measure I mete to others, I expect from them again. I am fully assured that God does not, and therefore that men ought not, to require any more of any man than this—to believe the Scripture to be God's word, to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it.”\*

It would be easy to extend this section much further, but this is precluded both by the limits I have set to the work, and the fact, that I have already presented more than a sufficient number of testimonies from the standard writers of the English Church to answer the object I have in view. It hence clearly appears that

\* See Works, American edition, pp. 480, 481.

there has never been, since the Church of England broke with Rome, any *consent* in that Church in favour of the traditionary system. This conclusion will not be disputed. Having, then, shown that the *unanimous consent*, neither of the primitive Church, nor of the Romish Church, nor of the Church of England, is in favour of tradition as a portion of the rule of faith, it remains certain, that according to the *catholic* notions of "the Church," maintained by high-Church divines, it cannot be fairly plead that she has ever sanctioned the traditionary system. In this whole argument I go upon the principles contended for by our opponents. I try them by their own "catholic rule."

In conclusion, I would say, that it will not be consistent for me further to enlarge this work by animadversions upon the controversy now in progress among Churchmen both in England and this country. Many instructive facts might be gathered from the chronicles of the times touching the subject of this work. The strong and decided testimonies which have been set forth in the Charges of several English bishops, and of at least one bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, show that the spirit of Protestantism is still active in both these Churches. For this, as a true-hearted Protestant, I am grateful to God: and I most heartily wish success to the noble spirits who have thrown themselves into the breach in the hour of peril. I can but hope that the truth will finally triumph, even where it has seemed to be in the most imminent danger. The books and pamphlets now constantly teeming from the press will, it is to be hoped, awaken

a spirit of inquiry among Churchmen which will not be satisfied with partial discoveries of truth; and stand out as beacon lights to warn the sons and successors of those who are now fighting the battle, of the danger of the slightest approximation to Rome.

The Pusey party have doubtless been forced by circumstances to an unexpected issue. The developments of their system have been too rapid. They intended to have gained upon the popular mass so far as to ensure success before they should be compelled to avow the whole theory in all its parts and practical bearings. But, in this country especially, they have not been quite sufficiently baptized with the spirit of Loyola to keep themselves under ground until the train was fully prepared. Or perhaps it will be more consistent to attribute the forced developments which have been made of the true character and tendency of the new system to an interference of divine Providence, for the purpose of saving a branch of the great Protestant family from being insensibly, and yet completely, imbued with the deadly leaven. At all events, for one I can heartily say, God be praised that the issue is joined so soon—that the battle is begun—and that there is so much strength enlisted upon the side of truth! May God defend his own cause—carry on his own work—and lead on the sacramental host of his elect to complete and final triumph. AMEN.

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