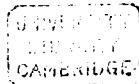


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AN
HISTORICAL VIEW
OF THE
PLEA OF TRADITION,
AS MAINTAINED IN THE CHURCH OF ROME;
WITH STRICTURES ON
A DISSERTATION UPON THE USE AND IMPORTANCE
OF UNAUTHORITATIVE TRADITION BY EDWARD
HAWKINS, FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD;
AND
AN APPENDIX
CONTAINING ORIGINAL AUTHORITIES.

3



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TO THE
ROMAN-CATHOLIC CLERGY
OF
IRELAND
THE FOLLOWING HISTORICAL VIEW
OF A
MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION
IS
RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED
BY THE AUTHOR.

HISTORICAL VIEW

OF THE

PLEA OF TRADITION.

TO enter into the argument concerning tradition is not the object proposed by the writer of this treatise. The question concerning the authority of tradition, as a rule of faith, has, it is conceived been recently considered in all its bearings with so much distinctness of statement, and cogency of argument, first by bishop Marsh, in his Comparative View of the Churches of England and Rome, and very lately by Mr. Jackson, in his Two Main Questions in Controversy between the Churches of England and Rome, Stated and Discussed, that it may well be deemed at present superfluous for any protestant to agitate the controversy further. It has however appeared to the writer, that it would be satisfactory to examine as a question of history, the tradition alleged by the church of Rome in support of its peculiar

tenets. It has been customary to select from the works of ecclesiastical writers passages favouring the authority of scripture, or of tradition, agreeably to the view of the enquirer ; but it does not seem to have hitherto occurred to any person, that it might be useful to investigate the opinions of those writers from age to age, and thus to trace the history of the plea. The whole controversy, as bishop Marsh * has remarked, depends on the resolution of this question, do these divine and apostolical traditions exist or not ?

The bishop has indeed considered the question generally, and has assigned strong reasons for disputing the assertions of those who maintain the existence of such traditions. The question however, as a question of fact, may best be resolved, like other questions of fact, by an examination of the history, in which traces of the reality of such traditions, if they be indeed real, ought to be discovered. If from such an enquiry it should on the contrary appear, that indications of their non-existence are manifest in the earlier history of the church, and even that the subsequent allegation of their existence can be so explained, that it should carry with it no authority to convince our minds, it ought surely to be inferred, agreeably to such principles of reasoning as in any other case would be

* Comparative View, p. 60. Lond. 1816.

deemed incontrovertible and decisive, that the notion is a mere fiction, not warranted by historical testimony, but devised for justifying that, which could not be justified from the authentic declarations of the sacred writings.

The immediate occasion of this treatise has been furnished by a resolution, which certain roman-catholics adopted in a meeting held at Carlow in the last summer, and by an exhortation, which doctor Doyle, roman-catholic bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, has subsequently addressed to his clergy of Carlow and its vicinity. The resolution stated, " that the scriptures alone cannot be a sufficient guide in matters of faith, but require the authority of tradition to expound their meaning." In the exhortation the bishop (1) has maintained the same principle, claiming for it the authority of Tertullian. It has thus been explicitly alleged, both that the written word is insufficient to communicate the knowledge necessary for salvation, and also that, without the aid of tradition, its own meaning cannot be understood. It has not been simply asserted, that the revelation of Jesus Christ has been transmitted to us partly by the sacred scriptures, and partly by tradition, and that therefore it is not sufficient for a christian to seek in the scriptures a knowledge of his religion ; but tradition has been re-

(1) Appendix.

presented as the indispensable interpreter of those scriptures, and as giving authority to the meaning, which it shall pronounce to be true. It has therefore become at this time necessary to enquire, whether there is indeed any such tradition, or whether it is an unauthorised pretension, set up by churchmen in the ambitious desire of arrogating to themselves a dominion over the understandings and consciences of christians. If indeed there be such a tradition, then have the sacred scriptures been written in vain. The same tradition, which is indispensably necessary, not only for supplying the deficiencies, but also for interpreting the meaning of the scriptures, may more directly be regarded as the sole authority for the doctrines of our religion; and every pious christian, according to this principle, ought to submit his mind implicitly to the dictation of the clergy, withdrawing his attention from the authenticated word of our Redeemer and his apostles, and fixing it wholly upon the communications of those, who claim to be acquainted with the mysteries of this other more satisfactory exposition of the faith.

It cannot however be admitted, that the roman-catholic clergy of the nineteenth century should assert without proof, or even that the council of Trent, assembled in the sixteenth, should by its mere authority maintain, the

reality of such a tradition. Even roman-catholics themselves are bound to admit the incompetency of the council to determine such a question, for the question concerning the existence of such a tradition is a question of fact, not of doctrine, and it has never been acknowledged, as belonging to the assumed infallibility of the church, or of its governors, that it should decide a question of fact. This question therefore, like others of the same kind, must be determined by a reference to the records of history. That history is accessible to both parties. Let its records be fairly examined, and let it be thus ascertained, whether such a tradition was indeed acknowledged in the earlier ages of the church. If it can be proved from history, that such a stream did not flow from the fountain of truth, and if the true source of the stream, which claims to have flowed from it, can even be pointed out in the region of superstition, we may surely reject as false every allegation, which would maintain its pretended origin.

The very notion indeed of an oral tradition, which should be not merely coordinate with, but even paramount to, a written communication received confessedly from the same original, is so repugnant to all our conceptions of the nature of historical evidence, that the strongest proofs would be necessary for esta-

blishing its existence. It is notorious that oral tradition is subjected to disadvantages, which do not affect the validity of a written communication, and that these disadvantages are increased in every instance of its transmission from one individual to another. All the causes, which may lead one man to misconceive the meaning of a communication orally received from another, or which may dispose him to falsify that, of which no written document exists to refute his report, cooperate to depreciate it in the comparison with testimony committed to writing, and consequently permanent and invariable. That oral tradition, thus in its nature imperfect and questionable, should have been employed by the divine providence, in preference to a written communication, for conveying the truths of religion to succeeding ages, and even for furnishing the interpretation of the written word, so that the latter must be unintelligible without its aid, is a principle which can be admitted only on the most positive and explicit evidence.

Instead however of discovering such evidence in the authentic records of our religion, we find our Saviour condemning in the strongest language those Jews, who, as he * remarked, had made the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions. Is it then to be con-

* Matt. ch. 15. v. 6. Mark, ch. 7. v. 13.

ceived, that the divine providence would adopt in the christian dispensation of religion a mode of communication, which was thus at the very time condemned by Jesus Christ himself, as having made, in that of the Jews, the law of God of none effect? Is it at all to be imagined, that this mode of communication should be adopted, not merely as supplementary to the doctrinal instructions of the scriptures, but even as indispensable for the just interpretation of those instructions, which the scriptures actually contained? For rendering these things reconcileable to the strong censure pronounced by our Saviour on the tradition of the Jews, it would have been necessary that he should at the same time draw a line of distinction between the spurious traditions, which he condemned, and those genuine traditions, by which he proposed to regulate the opinions of the christian church. No distinction however of this kind accompanied the censure. The natural inference therefore is, that oral tradition was not contemplated by our Saviour as a mode of communication, on which a general and secure dependence could be placed for religious instruction.

It is indeed * admitted that the unwritten word was, as Bossuet has remarked, the first rule of christianity, Jesus Christ having laid the

* Bishop Marsh's Comp. View, p. 61, 62.

foundation of his church by preaching. "As nothing was recorded," says bishop Marsh, "at least not to our knowledge, during the life of our Saviour, the doctrines, which he taught, were, during that period, so many divine traditions. And divine traditions they remained, 'till they were recorded in the gospels. Again, as several years probably elapsed, after the apostles had begun to teach under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, before they committed their doctrines to writing, the doctrines, which they taught during that period, were so many apostolical traditions. And apostolical traditions they remained, 'till they were recorded in the apostolical epistles." But, as the bishop has in the same passage proceeded to remark, it cannot also be admitted, according to the statement of Bossuet, that the writings of the New Testament were *added* to this primitive tradition, because this statement assumes the very principle in dispute, namely, that a part at least of God's word, as delivered by Christ and his apostles, was not recorded in the New Testament. The principle of the Reformation is directly the opposite of this, the reformers having maintained, that the whole of God's word was contained in scripture, or the written word. Which of the two is agreeable to the truth, must be determined by examining the scripture and the history of the church.

In examining the scripture for a determination of this important question, we find indeed that Paul * has enjoined, that the Thessalonians should hold the traditions, which they had been taught, either by word, or by his epistle; and the injunction is quoted in the church of Rome as decisive of the controversy. But what inference does this passage authorise beyond the admission, which has been already made, that preaching was employed by the apostles in laying the foundation of the christian church, and that the instructions so communicated continued to be traditions, until they were recorded in the scriptures? What † is there in this passage, which can warrant the belief, that the apostle has alluded to any doctrine, which was not afterwards recorded by him in any of his subsequent epistles? "His epistles to the Thessalonians," the bishop has

* 2 Thessal. ch. 2. v. 15.

† Compar. View, p. 66, 67. The bishop has further argued, that the context of this particular epistle indicates, that the term was here used in reference to discipline, not to a rule of faith, the same term being thus applied in the sixth verse of the succeeding chapter, after an interval of only seven verses. The inference however does not appear conclusive. Macknight has accordingly referred the term in the earlier passage to the christian doctrine generally, the christian doctrines, as having been received by revelation, and so *delivered* by the apostles, being fitly denominated traditions, or things delivered. Macknight on the Epist. vol. 2. p. 571, vol. 3. p. 115, 116. Lond. 1816.

remarked, "were among the earliest, if not the very earliest, which he composed. And who will undertake to prove, that doctrines, unrecorded in the two comparatively short epistles to the Thessalonians, were not afterwards recorded, either in the epistle to the Romans, or in the epistles to the Corinthians, or in the epistles to the Ephesians, the Colossians, the Philippians, or the epistles to Timothy and Titus?"—"There is also," he has added, "another possibility, which is sufficient to destroy the inference. They may have been afterwards recorded in other apostolical epistles; or they may have been doctrines taught by Christ himself, and recorded in the gospels."

From these observations it is concluded, that the scriptures afford no testimony, which would warrant us in maintaining, that any rule of faith, distinct from the written word, has been orally transmitted for the instruction of succeeding ages. This is of itself sufficient to destroy the authority of any alleged tradition, for, though cardinal Bellarmine, the ablest of the champions of the church of Rome, has told us, that the tradition, for which he contends, is termed *unwritten*, not because it is not any where written, but because it was not written by the original author, his explanation of the term however substitutes an uninspired

|| De Verbo Dei, lib. 4. cap. 2.

for an inspired authority, and consequently subjects tradition to all the diminution of credit, which belongs in such circumstances to merely human testimony. Even if the sacred writers had informed us, that some portion of the christian doctrine had been transmitted only by oral communication, though we should in this case have been bound to receive with reverence and attention any well attested tenet offered to us as a part of such tradition, yet, when not only the specific purport, but also the very existence and reality of such a communication, must be determined wholly by the testimony of uninspired men, the scriptures affording no information in a case, in which it might so naturally be expected, the credibility of such testimony is, in the most favourable circumstances of proximity, liable to much impeachment, and must be regarded as utterly destroyed at any distance from its alleged original.

Let the enquiry be now prosecuted among those writers, in whose works a tradition, originally unwritten, should be found according to the definition of the cardinal, and let the testimony of the existence, and of the particulars, of a traditional doctrine be fairly investigated and appreciated. When it shall have been ascertained, at what distance the written record is found from the inspired authority of the sacred writings, we shall be enabled to de-

termine, what degree of credit should be given to its testimony.

The writers distinguished by the appellation of apostolic fathers, as having conversed with the apostles, and having succeeded immediately to them in the government of the church, demand our first attention. To these men a tradition of doctrine must have been imparted by the apostles, if it was to be transmitted to succeeding ages, and we must believe that they would have taken care to announce to their fellow-christians, that they had been intrusted with the care of a deposit so important to the church. In their zealous anxiety for the maintenance and the propagation of the religion of Christ, they must naturally, if they were indeed charged with the preservation of a traditional rule of faith, indispensable for supplying the deficiency, and for interpreting the meaning of the scriptures, have been solicitous to inform christians as soon as possible, that such a tradition was in existence, and to record the particulars which it comprehended. This would have been their bounden duty, as they were successors of the apostles. It would also have been their obvious policy, as they were rulers of the church, and even their interest, as they were men, actuated by the same feelings, which ordinarily influence our nature. Policy would have impelled them to declare, that they had

received such a deposit from the apostles, as they might thus most effectually secure to themselves the reverence and submission of the church. The ordinary influence of human feelings would have disposed them to magnify their own importance by a communication, which would have placed them in the same rank with the apostles, as authorised teachers of the doctrines of religion.

The apostolic fathers were Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Of these the first * was the companion of Paul, has been frequently mentioned in the scriptures, and is believed to have written his epistle, the only work ascribed to him, about the year 71, probably with a design of availing himself of the recent destruction of Jerusalem, for detaching christians from the still subsisting veneration entertained for the jewish law. Clemens, stated || by ancient writers to have been the same person, whom Paul has described as one of his fellow-labourers, is concluded to have addressed, in the year 96, an epistle to the church of Corinth, then agitated by dissension. Hermas, one † of those whom Paul, in the conclusion of his epistle to the Romans, has desired to be saluted, published about the year 100 his *Pastor* or *Shepherd*, a work consisting

* Lardner's Works, vol. 2. p. 11 etc. Lond. 1788.

|| Ibid. vol. 2. p. 22 etc.

† Ibid. p. 50 etc.

of three parts, the first containing four visions, the second twelve commands, and the third ten similitudes. Ignatius, the * second after Peter in the succession of the church of Antioch, was in the year 107 sent from Syria to suffer martyrdom at Rome, and in his progress wrote several epistles, to confirm his brethren of various churches in the true faith. Polycarp, who closed this illustrious series, was† a disciple of John, by whom he had been constituted the first bishop of Smyrna: he, we are informed by Irenæus, wrote several epistles, of which however one only, addressed to the Philippians, probably in the year 108, is now extant, and seems to have been also the only one, which had remained to the time even of Eusebius and Jerome.

Of the curious and interesting writings of these primitive fathers, as they are now extant, it may be stated in the most unqualified manner, that they do not contain a single expression, which may be fairly understood to signify, or to suppose, any system of doctrine transmitted to them merely by oral communication. Neither has Barnabas, in his general epistle, pleaded any traditional instruction for dissolving the obligation of the Jewish ceremonial; nor has Clement urged any such communication, that he might compose with more au-

* Lardner, p. 65 etc.

† Ibid. p. 86 etc.

thority the dissensions of the church of Corinth; nor has Hermas, to pass over his visions, and his similitudes, referred to any such deposit for sanctioning his twelve commands; nor has Ignatius, in all that anxiety for the soundness of the faith of his fellow-christians, which animated him to disregard the terrors of his approaching martyrdom, ever called on them to reverence the exhortations of a man, who had received the traditions of the apostles; nor yet has Polycarp, to whom an epistle had been specially addressed by Ignatius, ever intimated, that he held those traditions in trust for the due direction of the faith of christians.

Eusebius has (2) indeed told us that Ignatius exhorted the churches of Asia to adhere firmly to the tradition of the apostles. But we should consider what signification is here attached to the term tradition. It appears from the passage itself, that it is directly opposed to heresies, then first springing up and spreading, and may therefore most naturally signify the doctrine of the apostles, as contrary to those heresies. The epistles too, in which Ignatius was said thus to have recommended the tradition of the apostles, we have at this day, and we find in them nothing, which would warrant the notion of an oral tradition, the sub-

(2) Appendix.

ject of the present enquiry. Eusebius moreover has proceeded to quote from those epistles some passages, in confirmation of his statement ; and in none of these passages does any expression occur, which would favour such a notion. In one Ignatius expresses the pious resolution, with which he was prepared to undergo his martyrdom : in another he recommends the church of Antioch to the care of Polycarp : in a third indeed he introduces (3) a relation concerning our Saviour, of which the historian has said, he knew not whence it had been received ; but of this relation it may be remarked, that it has not been given as an apostolic tradition, Eusebius having professed himself ignorant of its origin, and that it has manifestly confounded the weakness of Peter in denying Christ, with the incredulity of Thomas in doubting the reality of his resurrection. That the relation is erroneous, is certain, for it is not consistent with the written gospel ; and even if it were true, it would not affect the question, for it professes to relate a fact, not to teach a doctrine.

But it does not appear merely from the absence of all expressions favourable to the notion of an oral tradition, that it was not entertained by the primitive fathers of the church, for a minute examination will discover various passages, which clearly imply the contrary, and

(3) Appendix.

enable us to furnish a direct proof of the negative opinion.

One of the particulars, for which the authority of an express tradition has been pronounced to be indispensably necessary, was the change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. We find however that Barnabas (4) has impliedly denied the existence of any such tradition by assigning a different reason, namely that the eighth day was the beginning of a new creation, being that on which Jesus Christ arose from the dead. Can we believe, that he would thus have reasoned about the change, if he could have urged the authority of an apostolic injunction, which must have been communicated immediately to himself? We collect from the sacred writings the practice observed in this respect by the apostles, and we explain and justify it in the same manner, in which it was explained and justified by the earliest of the apostolic fathers. Neither did Barnabas, nor do we acknowledge any traditional instruction for making the alteration. Hermas again, instead of proclaiming that he had been intrusted with a deposit of traditional truth, by which he was enabled to remove all the difficulties of the written word, refers (5) to the immediate action of the divine influence the faculty of understanding all things in religion. This agency

(4) Appendix.

(5) Ibid.

would however have been exercised without necessity, if he had been already furnished by oral tradition with all the instructions, which could be required for regulating the faith of christians; nor can we suppose that Hermas would have looked to this source of divine knowledge, if he were conscious of actually possessing in the apostolic traditions a supplement of the scriptures, and an unerring rule of interpretation of scriptural difficulties. Clement, in his anxious desire to compose the dissension of the church of Corinth, urges the male-contents to submit to ecclesiastical authority, yet without any where intimating the possession of a tradition, which should empower the superiors of the church to regulate the faith of christians. Can it be believed that a topic, so favourable to the importance and the authority of the clergy, should have been omitted on such an occasion, if it could have been pleaded consistently with truth? Ignatius (6) tells the Ephesians that, in a second epistle, which he proposed to address to them, he would more fully explain to them the doctrines of christianity, especially if the Lord should reveal them to him; he therefore could not have been acquainted with a traditional doctrine, adequate to the explanation of all christian mysteries. This, it may be remarked, is the father, con-

(6) Appendix.

cerning whom a passage has been quoted from the history of Eusebius. Polycarp, lastly, (7) tells the Philippians, that Paul had written to them epistles, into which if they would attentively look, they should be able to perfect their faith. The expression is inaccurate, in representing more than one epistle as addressed by Paul to that church; but * it has been with probability explained to comprehend also the epistles addressed to the Thessalonians, the Philippians being included within the province of Macedonia, of which Thessalonica was the principal city. However this may have been, whether we suppose Polycarp to have committed an error, or to have been simply inaccurate, one thing is certain, that he who told the Philippians, that they might by perusing the writings of Paul be enabled to perfect their faith, could not have believed, that there was any oral tradition of doctrine necessary for that purpose.

It appears therefore, that we have not any reason whatsoever for believing, that these primitive fathers of the church, who had conversed with the apostles, and were their immediate successors in the superintendence of christians, received from them any deposit of doctrinal truths, distinct from those communicated in the records of our religion, and of in-

c 2

(7) Appendix.

* Lardner, vol. 2. p. 92.

dependent, and even of paramount authority; but that, on the contrary, something in the recorded language of each of those fathers unequivocally indicates, that the author claimed credit for no such trust, appealing to some other principle of persuasion, and the last of them referring directly and explicitly to a diligent examination of the scripture for perfect instruction in the faith. If these patriarchs of the christian church knew no such tradition, as has been alleged in later ages, how could it have reached their successors? Can we believe that this tradition could have been orally transmitted from the apostles by inferior members of the church, when no communication of this kind had been made to Barnabas, to Clement, to Hermas, to Ignatius, and to Polycarp, men with whom the apostles were in habitual communication, men distinguished by their zeal, and eminent by their station? If the stream be cut off, where it should have flowed from the fountain, can any one reasonably claim to have drunk of the water of this fountain at a greater distance from the source?

Here, it should seem, the enquiry might cease, for, if these immediate successors of the apostles knew no distinct system of doctrinal tradition, others, who followed them, could not with any appearance of reason pretend to have received it from them. It has however

been customary to consider the authority of the fathers as of a collective body, and to search for testimonies in their writings, without any reference to that order of succession, which is indispensable to the consideration of any question of history. It may therefore be satisfactory, to prosecute this enquiry further, not only as it may discover new arguments for rejecting the pretension of the advocates of tradition, but yet more as it may conduct us to a knowledge of the manner, in which that pretension was introduced into the church, and at length constituted the guardian of the tenets and practices peculiar to roman-catholics.

The first distinguished writer of the church, who came after the apostolic fathers, was Justin Martyr, who published his treatises about the middle of the second century. The works of this father however are such, as could not be expected to have any relation to the subject now discussed. These, as we have them, consist chiefly of two apologies for the christians, addressed one of them to Antoninus Pius and his sons, and the senate and people of Rome, the other to the succeeding emperor Marcus Antoninus; and of a dialogue, in which he maintains the truth of christianity against a Jew, named Trypho. In such compositions the argument from tradition could not be expected to occur, because this argument could be addressed only

to those, who admitted the authority of Jesus Christ and his apostles, from whom that tradition claims to be derived. To pagans and to Jews the argument could not bring conviction, and therefore from the omission of it no inference unfavourable to it can be collected, as neither is any support afforded to it by these compositions. Justin employed himself in maintaining the cause of the church against its outward adversaries, not in vindicating its genuine doctrines from the misrepresentations of those who corrupted its truth.

To this other object Irenæus devoted his exertions in the latter part of the second century, and accordingly in his treatise written against the heresies of his time we find the first mention of tradition, as distinguished from the sacred writings. But, though Irenæus has in this treatise employed the argument from tradition, it appears from this very treatise, that the notion of tradition entertained by Irenæus was very different from that, which is maintained by the church of Rome; and it also appears, that the use of the argument had been forced upon him by the heretics, against whom he contended, the true inventors of the doctrine of a tradition distinct from, and independent of the written word.

Almost in the beginning of his work Ire-

næus (8) has stated the faith, which the church had received from the apostles and their disciples, and we find it, though somewhat amplified for the confutation of his heretical adversaries, yet agreeing intirely in substance with the strictly scriptural tenets of the creed ascribed to the apostles. This, he (9) adds, is a tradition, which no person has authority to enlarge, or to diminish; and the difference of the knowledge of divine things, observable in different persons, he (10) refers to wisdom employed in the study of the scriptures, not to tradition, describing it also as appertaining to a consideration of the economy of the divine dispensations. In a subsequent chapter he again (11) states the rule of faith, as opposed to heretics, in a summary of the same articles of belief, though more particularly contrasted to the tenets of the *gnostic* heretics, whom he wished to confute. In (12) another place the scripture is represented, as affording all the knowledge of divine things attainable by men, the rest being referred to God. In yet (13) another passage he describes our knowledge of salvation as received from those, who had first preached the gospel, but afterwards, by the will of God, delivered it to us in the scriptures, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith.

(8) Appendix.

(11) Ibid.

(9) Ibid.

(12) Ibid.

(10) Ibid.

(13) Ibid.

Here then we have from Irenæus explicit declarations, in which he clearly states the genuine faith of the church to be comprehended in tenets deducible simply from the scriptures; represents this faith as a tradition, which no person could enlarge or diminish; refers any difference of knowledge of divine things only to a difference of intelligence in studying the scriptures, considering it however as not appertaining to the subject of faith, but to the conduct of divine providence in the government of the church; describes the scriptures as containing all knowledge of such matters, which is attainable by men; and pronounces that the writers of the New Testament committed to the scriptures, agreeably to the will of God, that gospel which they had previously preached, to be the basis and the support of the faith of christians, thus in express words declaring the scriptures to be the exclusive vehicle of evangelical tradition.

It may well seem surprising that a writer, who had so distinctly expressed sentiments most adverse to the romish doctrine of tradition, should have been supposed to be an authority in favour of that doctrine, as he has been frequently represented. The error however may be easily explained, and the true origin of this most unreasonable doctrine be at the same time exposed. The heretics of the time of

Irenæus, who * had corrupted the religion of Christ by an admixture of the most extravagant notions, derived from the oriental philosophy, were easily confuted from those scriptures, from which they so widely differed. Unable therefore to deny, that their doctrines were inconsistent with the scriptures, they, says (14) Irenæus, accuse the scriptures themselves, alleging that they were contradictory, and of no authority, and, precisely as the roman-catholics of the present day, that the truth could not be discovered from them by those who are ignorant of tradition. Here then is the true origin of the pretension of the church of Rome. Heretics, whom the scriptures plainly confuted, and whose doctrine no man of whatever persuasion would now defend, pleaded it in opposition to the written revelation of God. Ire-

* They all agreed in maintaining, though under various modifications, the doctrine of *emanations*, which appears to have been anciently taught by Zoroaster, proposing to explain the origin of evil, by referring it to a gradual deterioration in the progress of these emanations, as they receded further from the original source of all existence. In these fanciful theories the creation of the world was attributed to a being so far removed from the first cause, as to be allied to matter, and thereby qualified to act upon it. As this notion degraded the character of the second Person of the Trinity, to whom the work of creation is attributed in the christian scriptures, the fathers enlarged upon the part of the creed, to which it was opposed.

(14) Appendix.

næus on the other hand, perceiving that it would be vain to argue further with such men from the scriptures, judged it necessary to meet his adversaries on that ground, which they had chosen for their defence, and challenged, as he reasonably might, the authority of tradition for those churches, which had received their doctrines through a direct succession from the apostles. That he adopted the argument merely to refute those, who had refused to be convinced by any argument drawn from the scriptures, is manifest from the conditional language, which he has employed. If, says (15) he, the apostles had known secret mysteries, which they taught the perfect separately and secretly from the rest, they would deliver them chiefly to those, to whom they also committed the churches themselves. The argument is hypothetical, and manifestly used but to retort the plea of the heretics.

On this merely defensive argument of Irenæus, though conditional in its very form and expression, and restrained and qualified by so many testimonies borne in other passages to the authority of the scriptures, and therefore evidently employed only to repel an unauthorised pretension, the romish plea of tradition is primarily founded. Roman-catholics do not find it convenient to urge the plea, as devised by

(15) Appendix

its true authors, the *gnostic* heretics of the second century; but when Irenæus retorts on those heretics their own allegation, having found it useless to contend with them from the authority of the scriptures, which they disregarded, then tradition becomes the important secret of the christian doctrine, though Irenæus himself pleaded it only in justification of a summary of tenets manifestly scriptural.

It is admitted that Irenæus, in pressing this argument, has (16) demanded, whether a church might not be founded on tradition alone, though the apostles should not have left any record of their doctrines. But he has himself explained what he meant by such a tradition, describing certain barbarous nations of his own time as cherishing by tradition doctrines stated in the apostles' creed, which is but a summary of the obvious declarations of the written word. In (17) a subsequent passage he declares, in terms which cannot be misconceived, his opinion of the exclusive authority of the scriptures, where they are known. The true knowledge, says he, arguing against that pretended knowledge, from which * the *gnostics* derived their assuming

(16) Appendix.

(17) Ibid.

* The name had probably been borrowed by the oriental philosophers from the Greeks before the existence of the christian heresies, when the platonic philosophers of Alexandria visited the eastern schools; and the doctrine was accordingly an object of reprehension to Paul, when he cautioned Timothy against *oppositions of science falsely so called*; 1 Epist. to

appellation, is the doctrine of the apostles, to be found in the legitimate and diligent study of the scriptures. In (18) the conclusion also of his argument, in which he exhorts all christians to shun the doctrines of the heretics, he admonishes them, not only to fly to the church, and to be educated in its bosom, but also to be nourished in the scriptures of the Lord, comparing the church to paradise, and the scriptures to the trees, of which our first parents were commanded to eat. He has even (19) in one passage explained the term tradition to signify the written word, for he has described Clemens, the apostolic father, as a man who had yet the preaching of the apostles in his ears, and their tradition *before his eyes*.

Irenæus, it must also be admitted, has incidentally recorded a tradition concerning the millenium, as derived directly from apostolic authority, but one which will not gain much credit for such communications, as constituting a standard for religious doctrine. He (20) has told us, on the authority of Papias, the disciple of John, from whom the tradition is alleged to have been received by Papias, that the days

Tim. ch. 6. v. 20; and when he warned the Colossians against *philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ*: Epist. to the Coloss. ch. 2. v. 8.

(18) Appendix.

(19) Ibid.

(20): Ibid.

shall come, in which vines shall grow, having each ten thousand branches, and on one branch ten thousand arms, and on one arm ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand clusters, and in every cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape, being pressed, shall yield twenty-five vessels of wine: and when some of the saints shall have laid hold of a cluster, another shall cry, I am a better cluster, take me, by me bless the Lord: and, in the like manner, that a grain of wheat should produce ten thousand ears. These things, he added, are credible to believers: and when the traitor Judas did not believe, and asked, how then shall such productions be accomplished by the Lord, the Lord said, they shall see, who shall come to these things. It seems indeed as if the providence of God had preserved such a testimony of a tradition, represented not only as coming from an apostle, but even from Jesus Christ himself, with the express purpose of manifesting the folly of depending on tradition for doctrinal information. We are quite certain, that such a compound of folly could never have come from our Lord and his beloved disciple; and Grabe has conjectured, that it had probably been formed out of some tradition of the Jews. Even the church of Rome does not maintain its authority, though an equal appearance of authenticity cannot be claimed for

any one of those traditions, for which it now strenuously contends.

Nor is this all of the primitive tradition, which the catholic church has judged it necessary to reject. The same Irenæus has, on authority not less direct, communicated some particulars relative to the future state of the virtuous, which are not now respected by any class of christians. And as, says (21) this father, the elders say, then those who shall be worthy of the conversation of the heavens, shall pass thither; others shall enjoy the delights of paradise; but others shall possess the splendour of the city: for the Saviour shall be every where seen, as they shall be worthy who see him: but that there is this distance of the habitation of those who have borne fruit a hundred-fold, and of those who have borne sixty-fold, and of those who have borne thirty-fold: of whom some shall be taken up into heaven, others shall live in paradise, others shall dwell in the city: and that on this account the Lord hath said, that with the Father there are many mansions: for all things are of God, who affords to all a fit habitation: as his Word says, that to all was distributed by the Father, according as each is, or shall be worthy: and this is the feast-chamber, in which they shall repose, who feast being invited to the marriage: that this is the arrangement and the distribution of those

(21) Appendix.

who are saved, say the elders, the disciples of the apostles.

We even find (22) in the writings of Irenæus a difference occasioned by two contradictory traditions, each claiming apostolic authority, in regard to the day, on which the festival of easter should be observed, Polycarp maintaining one practice, as sanctioned by John and the other apostles, and the pope Anicetus a different one, as authorised by the preceding elders. Another (23) difference, relating to the mode of observing a fast preparatory to that festival, has been by Irenæus himself supposed to have arisen from simplicity and ignorance, transmitting to posterity unauthorised usages. The authority of the same father (24) has also been given for a custom, as of apostolic origin, by which the knee was not bent in prayer on the Lord's day, to express our resurrection and deliverance from sin and death.

That some traditions indeed should have been transmitted from the age of the apostles, is most natural. We naturally cherish the memory of the distinguished persons, with whom we have associated, and we are eager to communicate to the succeeding generation all the little particularities of their intercourse. Such accounts however, when orally transmitted, must in any case be subject to much uncertain-

(22) Appendix.

(23) Ibid.

(24) Ibid.

ty; and invention is but too frequently employed, to supply the want of genuine information, and even to procure a spurious credit for unauthorised practices and opinions received from other originals. Of this description accordingly we find the traditions, which have been recorded by Irenæus. That father was however too wise, to regard them as in any degree constituting the standard of the belief of a christian. He has indeed recorded them with sufficient simplicity, and we may benefit by that simplicity in the opportunity which it has afforded, of forming a judgment concerning the little dependence to be placed on traditional relations; but he has taken good care to refer all christians to the written word, as the true and only standard of their faith, and has accordingly given, as the traditionary faith of the church, only such a summary of the facts and doctrines of the gospel, as was gradually formed into the creed, since distinguished by the name of the apostles.

The great reliance of the advocates of tradition is however placed on Tertullian, who has been referred to the close of the second century, having followed Irenæus at an interval of about thirty years. He, like Irenæus, combated the opinions of the *gnostic* heretics, and, like him, had accordingly occasion to speak of tradition. The course indeed, which the controversy had

then taken, led him apparently to reject, in favour of tradition, the argument from the scriptures; but it may be easily and clearly shown, that he did this without any intention of setting up an oral tradition in opposition to the written word, or as supplying its deficiency, or interpreting its meaning.

Tertullian contended with the same adversaries, who had been before encountered by Irenæus, but these appear in his time to have adopted a different mode of defence, probably because they had been unable to resist the arguments of their earlier antagonist. In the time of Irenæus, conscious of the want of all scriptural authority for their wildly extravagant opinions, they had endeavoured to justify themselves by pleading the sanction of a secret tradition. From this defence they seem to have been driven by that father, who urged against them, that whatever authority tradition could bestow, must be found with those, who could trace the history of their churches to the apostles through a regular succession. Forced from this pretension, they found it necessary to allege the authority of scripture; but to the genuine and acknowledged records of christianity they could not appeal in defence of their extravagancies. That heresy, says (25) Tertullian, rejects certain scriptures, and those which

(25) Appendix.

it receives, it does not receive entire : by additions and omissions it perverts them to its own purpose ; and where it does admit them in some degree entire, it wrests them by different expositions : the adulterated sense is as adverse to the truth, as the corrupted language. They are necessarily unwilling to acknowledge those things, by which they are refuted ; they rely on those which they have fabricated, and those which they have made their own by ambiguity of interpretation.

This new mode of defence seems to have much embarrassed the champion of orthodoxy. What advantage wilt thou gain, he goes on to say, thou who art most exercised in the scriptures, when, if thou maintainest any thing, it is denied ; on the contrary, if thou deniest any thing, it is maintained ? And thou indeed wilt lose nothing, except thy voice in the contention ; wilt gain nothing, except bile from the blasphemy. But will he, if there is any person, on whose account thou enterest into a controversy of the scriptures, that thou mayest confirm him doubting, incline more to the truth, or to heresies ? Moved by this very thing, that he sees thee to have gained no advantage, the opposite party equally denying and defending, he will depart rendered more uncertain by the altercation, not knowing which opinion he should judge to be heresy. And remarking that the

heretics might retort the charge of falsification of the scriptures on the orthodox, he suffers himself to be driven to the conclusion, that no appeal to the scriptures should be allowed, nor any controversy maintained in them, in which, as he says, there is either none, or an uncertain victory, or equal to one uncertain.

In this difficulty what is the expedient of Tertullian ? He was, we * are told, well acquainted with the roman-law, and accordingly, instead of fairly arguing the main question, he pleads that which he names a *præscription*, || and which we may perhaps name in a legal sense an *exception*. He (26) contends that these heretics should not be admitted to argue from the scriptures, but that the authority of faith and of the scriptures should be presumed to be upon the side of those, who could trace to apostles the originals of their churches.

For doing justice to Tertullian in regard to this mode of defence it is necessary to consider, that the turn, which the *gnostic* controversy had recently taken, brought the canon of scripture and its just interpretation into dispute, so that it appeared difficult to appeal with success to scriptural authority. A more temperate dis-

* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 2. cap. 2.

|| Cum ex præscriptione lis pendet, de ipsâ re quæri non est necesse Quinctil. lib. 7. cap. 5.

(26) Appendix.

putant than this impetuous African would indeed have referred his adversaries to the apostolic origin of his church, in proof of the genuine canon and text of the scriptures, and would then have confuted them from the scriptures, which he had so authenticated. Tertullian however, alarmed with the apprehension of the doubtful issue of such a contest, adopted a summary proceeding for the maintainance of his cause, by *prescribing* to his adversaries, contending that they were bound to submit without dispute to those, who could claim for their church a direct succession from the apostles.

This, as has been intimated, is not the defence, which Tertullian should have made; but the canon and the text and even the meaning of the scriptures were then recently questioned, and allowance should be made for the eagerness of an ardent spirit, perplexed by new difficulties, which he was not prepared to remove. Tertullian * was indeed in that period the scholar of the western, as Origen was in the following century of the eastern church. His eager and uncontrollable spirit was however, before the close of his life, sufficiently manifested in his unhappy adoption of the opinions of || Montanus, an illiterate enthusiast

* Vincentius Lirinensis, *Commonit.* 1, ch. 24. in Reeves's *Apologies*, vol. 2. Lond. 1709.

|| Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.* vol. 1. p. 236—239. Lond. 1782.

of Phrygia, who claimed, not indeed to be the Holy Spirit, but yet to be that *Paraclete* or Comforter, who had been promised, as he taught, to the followers of Christ, for perfecting the gospel by the addition of some new doctrines, and illustrating the obscurity of those, which had been already revealed. Thus did the enlightened, and even eloquent Tertullian, stimulated, as we * are informed, by the envy and the insults of the roman clergy, submit to become the follower of an ignorant and silly enthusiast, who in his absurd extravagance exhibited the original example, which was afterwards twice imitated by artful impostors, by Manes in the third century, when he founded the odious sect of the manicheans, and by Mohammed in the seventh, when he proclaimed himself the apostle of the koran.

Perhaps indeed the same spirit, which prompted the system of authoritative dictation, published by Tertullian under the title of "the præscription of heretics," when he refused to enter into a discussion of the scriptures, and required his adversaries to yield to the declarations of the apostolic churches, urged him onward to this other measure of embracing the pretensions of Montanus, for an infallible leader actually living would furnish a more direct and cogent authority, than a tradition even then re-

* Hieronymus in *Catal. Script. Ecclesiast.*

quiring to be traced through more than a century. Neither is such an aberration of a vigorous and informed mind essentially different from the conduct of that church, with which we are at this day contending for the truth. Montanus, in claiming to be the *paraclete*, was but a prototype of a church arrogating infallibility; and Tertullian, in passing from his "præscription of heretics," to the pretension of Montanus, but acted like those, who in later ages have sought in such a pretension a support for the weakness of a spurious tradition.

But whatever may have been the indiscretion and the error of Tertullian, we are concerned only in endeavouring to ascertain his precise opinion concerning the nature of the tradition, by which, before his strange and unhappy apostacy from sound doctrine, he wished to have heretics at once concluded. The single question, which belongs to the present enquiry, is whether this father, whose general knowledge of the state of religion is abundantly proved by his writings, was acquainted with any oral tradition existing in his time, distinct from the written word, and by him respected as necessary to be combined with it for an adequate apprehension of religion. This question may be answered decidedly with a negative.

It has been already remarked that Tertullian, like Irenæus, has (27) explicitly stated his

(27) Appendix.

notion of the rule of faith, as opposed to the *gnostic* heretics, and that this notion comprehended only articles, of which the creed named from the apostles was at length composed. His rule of faith therefore, like that of Irenæus, was a known and specified summary of the facts and doctrines of the written gospel, not a distinct tradition deposited with the rulers of the church, to be brought forth as occasion might require, for supplying the deficiencies, and illustrating the obscurities of the written revelation.

This rule of faith is however very far from being the only indication of the opinion of Tertullian, concerning the nature of that tradition, in favour of which he *prescribed* to the heretics. It is supported by various incidental expressions, clearly manifesting the exclusive reverence, in which he held the authority of the scriptures. We, says (28) he, have no need of curiosity after Jesus Christ, nor of enquiry after the gospel: when we believe, we desire to believe nothing further; for we already believe that there is nothing further, which we ought to believe. This passage precludes the notion of any secret reservation of an oral tradition, to be communicated according to the discretion of the rulers of the church, and even points directly to the written gospel, as containing all which a chris-

(28) Appendix.

tian needs to know, in opposition to the vain pretensions of the *gnostic* heretics to a superior knowledge of divine things. In a subsequent passage he speaks more explicitly of the exclusive authority of the scriptures in determining religious doctrine. But they, says (29) he, treat of the scriptures, and persuade from the scriptures: could they indeed speak of matters of faith from any other authority than the writings of faith?

Unhappily this very appeal of the *gnostics* to the scripture, corrupted indeed and falsified to suit their defence, embarrassed Tertullian, and drove him to the compendious argument of traditional authority, though limited to doctrines obviously scriptural. When (30) he perceived that the artifices of the heretics wearied the strong, inveigled the weak, and left scruples in the minds of the intermediate classes, he resolved to refuse them admission to dispute about the scriptures, as being heretics, who were to be corrected, not to be convinced by disputation. A rule of faith was therefore proposed on the authority of apostolical tradition, and the heretics were required to submit. This was weakness; but it is manifest from the particulars of that rule of faith, that Tertullian urged his plea of tradition only to support a

(29) Appendix.

(30) Ibid.

system of facts and doctrines collected exclusively from the scriptures.

We can indeed prove yet more directly from the writings of Tertullian, that he rejected the notion of any secret store of theological knowledge, distinct from that which was accessible to every christian in the study of the written word, for he has expressly contended against the existence of any such store, as it was maintained by the *gnostic* heretics to justify their peculiar opinions. They, says (31) he, are accustomed to say, that the apostles did not know all things, actuated by the same folly, with which they again turn round, alleging that the apostles indeed knew all things, but did not deliver all things to all persons; in each subjecting Christ to censure, as having sent apostles either ill-instructed, or not ingenuous. Who therefore of a sound mind can believe, that they were ignorant of any thing, whom the Lord gave as masters, having them inseparably in his train, in his school, in his society; to whom he privately explained all obscurities, telling them that to them it was given to know secret things, which it was not allowed to the people to understand.—But, as we have said, there is the same folly, when they confess indeed that the apostles were not ignorant of any thing, nor disagreed in preaching, yet are willing to believe, that they did not reveal

(31) Appendix.

all things to all men : for that they committed some things openly, and to all ; some secretly, and to few.—The Lord, he adds, spake openly, without any signification of any concealed sacrament. He had directed, if they should have heard any thing in darkness, or in secret, that they should preach it in the light, and in uncovered places. He himself by a similitude had prefigured, that they should not reserve even one of his words in secret without fruit. He himself taught, that it was not customary that a candle should be set aside under a bushel, but that it should be placed on a candlestick, that it might shine to all who are in the house. These things the apostles either neglected or misunderstood, concealing anything of the light, that is, of the word of God, and of the sacrament of Christ.

The whole argument is concluded by Tertullian in a manner, which proves that, by appealing to tradition against these heretics, he intended only to claim authority for the doctrine, which was fairly and plainly deducible from the scriptures, as acknowledged by the apostolic churches. What we are, that, says (32) he, are the scriptures from their beginning : from them we are, before there was any change, before they were interpolated by you. Another passage manifests this principle even more

strongly. Whether, says (33) Tertullian, all things were made of any subject matter, I have yet read no where. Let the shop of Hermogenes inform us, that it has been written. If it has not been written, let it fear that woe, destined for those, who add, or take away.

One instance indeed of an usage, for which the authority of a mere tradition is pleaded, occurs in the writings of Tertullian. It will however be seen, that in this case the word is employed simply to denote, that continued and prevailing practice had probably some sufficient authority, even from the apostles, but representing this opinion only as an inference of probable reasoning, not at all as a doctrine to be implicitly received ; this too is gradually brought down to a mere usage, and is at length no more than ecclesiastical tradition, or mere usage of the church.

A christian soldier, being questioned for not having worn a crown at some pagan festival, pleaded that he was bound to disregard this observance, as contrary to a traditional obligation of his own religion ; and his conduct was justified by Tertullian in * a treatise, which he composed on the occasion. Tertullian in his vindication, contends at first for the authority of an unwritten tradition, but in the progress of his description of it he reduces the preten-

sion to that of a reasonable custom, which any of the faithful might of himself introduce, as conducive to good discipline. Custom, says (34) he, even in civil matters, is received as a law, when the law is deficient: nor is there any difference, whether it be established by writing, or by reason, since reason also recommends the law. Moreover if the law is established by reason, every thing, which shall have been established by reason, will be a law, by whomsoever produced. Dost thou not think, that every believer may conceive and constitute, provided that it be agreeable to God, that which may conduce to discipline, that which may be profitable to salvation, the Lord saying, but why do you not even for yourselves judge that which is just? And not concerning judgment only, but concerning every opinion of things to be examined.—This, namely the divine reason, now earnestly require, the respect of tradition being observed, by whomsoever it is supposed to be transmitted: nor regard the author, but the authority, and chiefly of the custom itself; which is therefore to be observed, lest it should not be the interpreter of reason: that, if God has also given this, thou mayest then learn, not whether thou shouldst observe the custom, but why the reason of christian observances is made stronger, when

(34) Appendix.

nature also defends them, which is the first discipline of all things. Though the meaning in this and other passages is not very convincing, it is sufficiently evident that Tertullian has placed the duty of observing an established custom, which he has named traditional, on the ground of usage or general reason. Dost thou seek therefore, says (35) he, the law of God? Thou hast that general law in the public course of the world, in natural tables, to which also the apostle is accustomed to appeal, as when in the case of the veil of a woman: does not nature, he says, teach you? As when in the epistle to the Romans, saying that the gentiles do by nature the things which are of the law, he suggests both that the law is natural, and nature legal.

To what then does the authority of Irenæus and Tertullian amount in favour of tradition? Irenæus urged the plea of traditional authority against those, who had pretended a secret tradition, favourable to their own extravagant peculiarities of opinion; but he manifestly urged it only in support of opinions directly and plainly authorised by the written word. Tertullian afterwards, when the canon and the interpretation of scripture had been falsified by the same heretics, appealed also to tradition, in support of the received

(35) Appendix.

doctrines ; but he appealed to it only for its testimony, not for any peculiar doctrines or expositions, confining his faith in these respects, like Irenæus, to the scriptures, and contending like him, against the acknowledgment of any secret transmission of doctrines, different from those which had been communicated to all in the received records of our religion, while, in regard to observances, he relied only on the authority of common reason, as justifying an established usage.

As these were only measures of defence, opposed to the false pretences of heretics, who would not enter fairly into the consideration of the scriptures, so do they appear to have been abandoned by the church, as soon as the fallacies of these heretics had been sufficiently exposed. Of this we have a remarkable proof in the writings of Cyprian, who was put to death in the year 258, and consequently followed Tertullian at an interval of about the half of a century. This eminent bishop of Carthage contended against the allowance of the baptism of heretics, and when tradition was urged in defence of the practice, he (36) thus spoke of tradition. Whence is that tradition ? Whether descending from the authority of the Lord and of the gospel, or coming from the mandates and epistles of the apostles ? For that those things

(36) Appendix.

should be done which have been written, God testifies, and proposed to Jesus Nave [Joshua the son of Nun] saying, the book of this law shall not depart from before thine eyes, but thou shalt meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all things which have been written in it. The Lord also sending his apostles, commands that the nations should be baptized and taught, that they should observe all things whatsoever he hath directed. If therefore it is either directed in the gospel, or is contained in the epistles or acts of the apostles, that persons coming from any heresy should not be baptised, but only that a hand should be laid upon them for penitence, let this divine and holy tradition be observed. Words cannot more plainly express, that he did not think that any mere tradition merited attention.

That no disposition existed in the early church to plead the authority of tradition, except against the *gnostic* heretics, who had first invented the plea, and had then falsified the scriptures, may perhaps be most conclusively inferred from the well-known forgery of the Constitutions and Canons of the Apostles. These pretended ordinances purport to have been framed by the apostles themselves for the government of the christian church, and are announced expressly in their names. The forgery is however very gross and palpable, for many

particulars are found in this work, some of which are contradictory to known facts, and others unquestionably belong to a later age. What this age was has not been agreed. Beveridge thought that the Constitutions and Canons had been collected before the close of the third century, and probably by Clement of Alexandria; Dallè was of opinion, that the collection had not been formed before the close of the fifth; and Lardner has stated, that he inclined to the opinion of those, who referred the work to the latter part of the fourth, or to the beginning of the fifth century. Now in all these regulations no mention whatsoever occurs of any tradition of doctrine transmitted from the apostles. It is true, that the apostles could not with propriety speak of such a tradition, as received by themselves from any person except in reference to such as they might have received from our Saviour; but they might have been represented as referring to a tradition delivered by themselves to their successors in the government of the church, and indeed the numerous anachronisms, which have exposed the forgery of the collection, destroy the force of the argument from propriety, as they prove that it was in many instances neglected by the authors. Is it indeed conceivable, that a large collection of ordinances should have been framed after the second century, a prin-

cipal object of which manifestly was (37) to magnify the authority of bishops, and yet that it should contain no reference, however indirect, to a matter so intimately connected with the importance of the episcopal order, as the transmission of a tradition, which should place in their hands both the completion and the exposition of the written revelation?

The inference, thus drawn from the spurious constitutions and canons of the apostles, is reinforced by the consideration of the history of the first general council, convened in the year 325. In this council two dissensions of the church were examined, one relating to the arian doctrine, the other to the proper time for celebrating the festival of easter. In regard to neither of these was any reference made to tradition. The discussion of the arian controversy turned upon the use of the (38) term translated *substance* in the creed then framed, this being the only term to which the arians made objection. The objection was that the term was not scriptural; the reply (39) that terms not used in the scripture might without impropriety be employed, as they had been employed by certain bishops, more ancient by almost a hundred and thirty years, but without any reference to apostolic tradition. In the latter controversy the grand arguments were de-

(37) Appendix.

(38) Ibid.

(39) Ibid.

duced (40) from the propriety of agreeing in celebrating the festival, and from the impropriety of receiving from the Jews, who had crucified the Redeemer, a determination of the time for observing the festival of his resurrection. The emperor, in opening the deliberations, exhorted the council to decide (41) according to the written word; and in the letter, by which he announced its decisions, claimed obedience to them (42) on the ground of the authority, not of tradition, but of so many assembled bishops.

The distinction between the *gnostic* and the arian controversy was, that in the latter the two contending parties agreed in regard to the scriptures, differing only in their interpretations; the arians therefore neither appealed, like the *gnostics*, to an imaginary tradition against the scriptures, nor pleaded any scriptural authority, which their adversaries did not equally acknowledge. It may be thought that tradition was not at all concerned in such a controversy, and that on this account only no mention of it occurs. But if it be the office of tradition to explain the obscurities of the scripture, would it not, if it was known to exist, have been adduced by one or other of the contending parties, as favourable to their tenet? It is manifest therefore that tradition was not in the earlier

(40) Appendix.

(41) Ibid.

(42) Ibid.

part of the fourth century considered as furnishing the interpretation of scripture. The trinitarian party would surely have appealed to an apostolic tradition, rather than to the language of bishops, who had lived near the close of the second century. The controversy about the time of celebrating easter, proves that neither was any appeal made to tradition in regard to an observance; and as an observance might more properly be so transmitted, than an article of faith, so may we conclude in the last place, that tradition could not have been then esteemed as supplementary to the scripture, in communicating doctrines not revealed by the written word.

If indeed we consider, that the traditions which Irenæus and Tertullian had pleaded against their adversaries, really comprised only such a summary of scriptural doctrine, as was afterwards formed into the creed named from the apostles, we shall perceive a sufficient reason, why no reference should be made to it in the arian controversy. Such a tradition was but a brief compendium of tenets plainly contained in the scriptures, and therefore could not be useful in furnishing an interpretation of scriptural difficulties. Against the *gnostics* it might be urged with advantage, because they either maintained a spurious tradition, or falsified the scriptures; against arians however it

could not avail, because in this other controversy the question related to one of those difficulties, which a brief summary of obvious doctrine could not reach. That tradition on the other hand, for which Tertullian had contended in regard to observances, was not apostolic, but merely such as might be pleaded for any public usage, and amounted only to a consent of the church. If the contending parties in the council of Nice consulted the records of the church for regulating the observance of Easter, they must have seen that, in the second century, the eastern and western churches had pleaded two contending and inconsistent traditions, the * former alleging the authority of the apostles John and Philip, the latter that of two other apostles, Peter and Paul. This discovery would have afforded little encouragement to resort to such a criterion.

We are by these considerations authorised to pronounce, that tradition was not regarded by the first general council, as having any authority whatsoever in ascertaining the true interpretation of the sacred writings, or in establishing any doctrine, or observance, not specified in the scriptures. The same conclusion is indeed distinctly affirmed in the express words of a creed, framed sixteen years afterwards by the second council of Antioch,

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 1. p. 209, 210.

which (43) has been recently adduced, though primarily for the determination of another question, by the very learned bishop Burgess. This creed pronounces, if any one should speak of the Son of God "not as the divine scriptures have delivered, each of the aforesaid (doctrines) from its (respective scripture); or if he teaches any thing else, or shall preach any other gospel, contrary to that which we have received, let him be accursed. For we truly and fearfully both believe and follow all things delivered from the divine scriptures, both by the prophets and by the apostles."

Archbishop Usher (44) has collected testimonies of twelve distinguished writers of the church, who lived in various times from the second to the fifth century, all directly adverse to the pretended authority of tradition; and has concluded his recital with saying, by the verdict of these twelve men you may judge, what opinion was held, in those ancient times, of such traditions, as did cross either the verity, or the perfection, of the sacred scripture; which are the traditions we set ourselves against. This jury of the faith, which has been thus impanelled by the archbishop, consists of the following respected names; Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus the martyr, Athanasius, Ambrose, Hilary, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, Au-

(43) Appendix.

(44) Ibid.

gustine, Cyril of Alexandria, and Theodoret. These are the men, through whom authoritative traditions of doctrine, if any such were transmitted, must be conceived to have been communicated to succeeding ages ; yet from the writings of these very men have been collected passages, expressing, as strongly as language could express, a decided rejection of every other authority for doctrine, than the recorded word of God.

The archbishop has limited his verdict to a rejection of such traditions, " as did cross either the verity, or the perfection of the sacred scriptures ; which are the traditions we set ourselves against." It is not denied that, in the writings of some of these eminent and venerable men, some favourable mention of traditions may be found ; but these relate either to doctrines contained in the scriptures, or to mere practices, and for practices do not positively assert any apostolic authority. The notion of tradition entertained by Tertullian has been already explained. Augustine (45) contends only for the authority of tradition in supporting a custom relative to baptism, and founds his belief of its apostolic original, not on any transmission, which could be authenticated, but only on the actual universality of the observance in the church, so that the reality of its apostolic ori-

gin is a mere inference from a practice prevailing towards the close of the fourth century. Jerome, who has also spoken of tradition, is yet more reserved on the subject. He too, like Augustine, speaks (46) of tradition only in relation to practices, not to doctrines, exemplifying them by the custom of dipping the head thrice in the font, of tasting milk and honey after these immersions, of standing in prayer on the sabbath and the day of pentecost, and of suspending a fast on those days. To traditional practices however he ascribes no other authority, than that which a respect for established usages may be conceived to bestow. Many of those things, which by tradition are observed in the churches, have, he says, " usurped the authority of the written law ;" a plain proof that he did not consider any tradition, as possessing an authority independent of, and even paramount to that law. In regard to traditions too in general he directs that they should be observed, " especially those which may not be injurious to the faith," intimating, in these remarkable words, that the faith is a standard, by which tradition should be tried, not tradition the standard of faith. He admits also that traditions may be contradictory, and inconsistent, admonishing that care should be taken, lest the custom of some should be subverted by the

contrary custom of others, hereby reducing all to the rank of merely local usages.

The plea of tradition would not naturally occur to a church possessing written documents of its faith, so long as that church should not be generally contaminated by unauthorised practices or doctrines. It accordingly originated, not with the genuine church, but with heretics, to whose extravagant opinions the written word afforded no sanction. Against these heretics it was deemed expedient to turn their own plea, and thus to refute them even by their own argument. When these had been suppressed, the plea was abandoned by the church as not necessary to its defence, because the succeeding controversies were maintained between parties, who agreed in acknowledging the scriptures. The rulers of the church, even in the fourth century, were indeed as desirous, as those of later times, to rule with authority the opinions of the laity, for an episcopal dominion was established in it, before the see of Rome had erected its ecclesiastical monarchy; but the claim of a divine superintendence of the councils of the church was a more obvious and satisfactory expedient, than the pretence of a tradition even then ancient, and consequently liable to be disputed. The claim of this authority by divine right was accordingly coeval with general

councils, for it was (47) urged by the emperor Constantine, in the letter by which he promulgated the decrees of the council assembled under his protection, even (48) though, in opening the council, he had recommended to it to reject all other authority than that of the scriptures. Augustine, in the intemperate eagerness of his character, went* so far as to declare, that he believed the scriptures only on the authority of the church, forgetting that this authority itself must depend wholly on the credibility and the interpretation of those very scriptures.

The plea, which had thus been practically renounced by the church, was however at length adopted, though for a very long time it was confined to practices, for which scriptural authority could not be alleged; and it began to be urged in the west and east at two very different times, as it was found necessary for sanctioning practices, which arose separately in the two great districts of the general church. In the west it appears to have been (49) first alleged in the year 428 by the second council of Carthage, for enforcing the celibacy of the clergy; and in the east (50) at the second council of

(47) Appendix.

(48) Ibid.

*F. Paul's Hist. of the Council of Trent. p. 142. Lond. 1676.

(49) Appendix.

(50) Ibid.

Nice, assembled in the year 787, for authorising the worship of images.

It is remarkable that, though monkery had its origin in the desert of Egypt, and was by Basil firmly established in the greek church, yet the enforcement of celibacy among the secular clergy was a western institution. In the eastern churches celibacy appears to have been considered as belonging only to monastic life; and || accordingly, when it was proposed in the first council of Nice that celibacy should be required of the secular clergy, Paphnutius, who had been bred a monk, and was illustrious for his chastity, resisted and defeated the measure. From this time the greek church has continued to permit the parochial clergy to retain their wives, whom they had married before ordination; the bishops however, being selected from monasteries, which is indeed rendered necessary by the grosser ignorance of the parochial clergy, are necessarily subject to the law of celibacy. In the western church on the contrary, to which monkery was not so congenial, the general enforcement of celibacy was begun about the same time, in which it was successfully opposed at Nice. In * the council of Elibertis or Elvira in Spain it was decreed, that

|| Socratis lib. 1. cap. 11. Sozomen. lib. 1. cap. 23.

* Summa Concil. et Pontif. per F. B. Carranzam Mirandenum, p. 69. Salmant. 1551.

bishops, priests, deacons, and subdeacons, should abstain from all intercourse with their wives. This and some other ordinances were probably found not sufficiently effectual, so that at length, in the year 428, it was deemed necessary to appeal to a supposed tradition for sanctioning a regulation so irksome.

The worship of images, or rather of pictures, was on the contrary the result of the lively fancy of the greek christians, who could not be satisfied without calling in the aid of art, to represent to their senses the objects of their worship. So much contrasted were the feelings of the western and eastern churches in regard to this practice, equally as in respect to the former, that a direct prohibition of the use of pictures in churches || is found among the ordinances of the same council, in which the secular clergy were first required to practise a rigorous celibacy. The adoration of images was indeed * checked in Greece itself during a considerable time by the advancement of Leo the Isaurian to the throne of the east. Under three successive emperors, and during sixty-one years, the sect of the *iconoclasts*, or breakers of images, maintained the ascendancy, probably supported chiefly by the censures of Jews and

|| Carranza, p. 69.

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. 5. p. 76, 7. .
Dubl. 1783.

Arabs, and of the *gnostic* and arian sects of christians ; but at length, when a female, Irene, became possessed of the sovereign power, the popular superstition prevailed, and the second council of Nice proclaimed to the christian church, that the adoration of images was sanctioned by the authority of apostolic tradition.

This same plea had indeed been already urged in behalf of image-worship * by pope Gregory II. about the year 728, when he protested against the efforts of the emperor Leo, to reduce in this respect the worship of the church to its original simplicity. But the western church was even after this time adverse to the admission of images, and the argument of Gregory was inoperative, except so far as it was connected with the act of throwing off the dominion of the emperor, and asserting the independence of the papacy. The decree of the second council of Nice † was accordingly long neglected among the western christians.

* Decline and Fall etc. vol. 5. p. 83.

† Even when the decree of the council was promulgated, "the churches of France, Germany, England, and Spain, steered a middle course between the adoration and the destruction of images, which they admitted into their temples, not as objects of worship, but as lively and useful memorials of faith and history. An angry book of controversy was composed and published in the name of Charlemagne ; under his authority a synod of three hundred bishops was assembled at Frankfort : they blamed the fury of the iconoclasts, but they pronounced

If these ordinances, the one enjoining a rigorous celibacy, the other ratifying, with || whatever qualifications, the adoration of images, were to be enacted by christian councils, there was a manifest necessity for resorting to some other authority, than the written revelation, by which both were distinctly condemned. These then formed natural occasions, for introducing the plea of apostolic tradition, to furnish a justification of practices, which the written revelation could not be alleged to sanction. Still however it was not pretended, that any doctrine of religion should be so established, much less, as is now maintained, that the scriptures could not furnish doctrinal directions with sufficient clearness, and that their just interpreta-

a more severe censure against the superstition of the Greeks, and the decrees of their pretended council, which was long despised by the barbarians of the west." Decline and Fall etc. vol. 5. p. 104.

|| It is admitted, that the decree of the second council of Nice has declared, that honour should not be given to the material, or to the colours, but that, when offered to the image, it should be referred to the prototypes. It was not before the eleventh century, that any person thought of maintaining, "that in the images of Jesus Christ and the saints there resided a certain kind of inherent sanctity, that was a proper object of religious worship." A council assembled at Constantinople for deciding the question, determined indeed that images should be honoured only with a relative worship, but taught that "they were enriched with a certain portion of divine grace." Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 2. p. 557, 558.

tion must be learned from the tradition of the church. In this period the authority of tradition was pleaded for practices, not for doctrines. The scriptures were therefore deemed to be sufficiently explicit, and tradition was introduced but as supplementary for regulating the practice of christians.

It however deserves especial attention, that, in each of these original instances of the allegation of a traditional authority, the pretension of the one church has been strenuously rejected by the other. The celibacy of the church of Rome, for which the plea of tradition was first adduced, could never even to this day obtain admission into that of Greece; and the image-worship of the latter, in favour of which also tradition was pleaded by the Greeks, was long resisted in the west notwithstanding this alleged authority. Each of the two churches may thus be regarded as bearing its testimony against the pretension of the other: and this testimony, it should be observed, relates to the reality of a matter of fact, of which neither could be ignorant, namely the existence of a tradition received and acknowledged among christians.

For the extension of the plea of tradition to the determination of doctrinal questions, it seems that we should look to * a much later

* Vincentius Lirinensis, so surnamed from the monastery of

period, that of the council of Trent. The two ordinances which had been ratified by a pretended tradition, may be regarded as the pillars of the papal supremacy. The rigorous enforcement of celibacy detached the clergy of the western church from all local connections, and disposed them to consider themselves only as subjects of the ecclesiastical dominion, exercised by a foreign prelate. By the general establishment of image-worship on the other hand, the imaginations and feelings of the laity were all interested for an ecclesiastical system, which presented sensible objects to their adoration. The one secured the clergy, the other captivated the people; and both together enabled the papacy to assume to itself, at least in conjunction with a council, an authority exceeding that, which had been originally main-

Lerins, an island of the Mediterranean adjacent to the coast of France, has indeed stated, in his first Commonitory, composed in the year 434, that the sum of all the answers, which he had obtained from very many persons of the highest rank for piety and learning, whom he had consulted about a certain general rule, for distinguishing the true catholic faith from the depravities of heresy, was that it should be secured upon these two foundations: first, upon the authority of holy scripture; and, after that, upon the tradition of the catholic church. Ch. 1. in Reeves's Apologies, vol. 2. But, besides that there was in this case no public act of the church, the opinion of tradition entertained by Vincentius was so much limited in its application, as to differ widely from that which is maintained by the church of Rome. This shall be explained.

tained by the assembled bishops. When the papal power had become thus authoritative, the plea of tradition would have derogated from its dignity, for infallibility would have been disparaged by its aid. We accordingly find that, when Innocent III. at length, in the year 1215, achieved the great victory of transubstantiation over the reason and the senses of mankind, the || doctrine was simply enunciated, as without any reference to the sacred scriptures, or to the special superintendence of God, so likewise without any to apostolic tradition.

The time however at last arrived, when the question of doctrinal tradition was brought under the consideration of the roman pontiff and a council by the efforts of the reformers. For confuting Luther and his followers it was found to be necessary, that the council of Trent should uphold the tradition of the church. It* was indeed suggested in the council by Vincenzo Lunello, a franciscan friar, that the authority

|| Carranza, p. 576.

* F. Paul, p. 141, 142. This was denied by Pallavicini, because he did not find it either in the Acts of the Council, or in the official reports of the legates; but the objection has been disregarded by Le Courayer, the french translator of Paolo, because the Acts and the Reports do not mention all the suggestions of the theologians, and because the cardinal has himself admitted, that there were some persons, who wished to speak of the authority of the church: v'hebbè, dit Pallavicin, che desidero di congiugnervi gl'istituti della chiesa. Tome 1. p. 236. note. Lond. 1735.

of tradition should be founded on that of the church, by the testimony, or the determination of which, it must necessarily be established; but his opinion was not adopted, it not being judged convenient to expose this other question to controversy. It was therefore determined to assert at once the authority of tradition, as (51) equal to that of the scriptures.

Such appears to have been the history of that tradition, which is now maintained by roman-catholics in Ireland, as indispensably necessary to the just interpretation of the sacred writings. Apparently unknown to the apostolic fathers, who might naturally be supposed to have been inclined to announce their possession of a deposit so important to the church, and so creditable to themselves, it is discovered first among the *gnostic* heretics, who, in the affectation of a superior knowledge of divine things, had corrupted the simplicity of the gospel with many inventions, which required some other sanction than the authority of the scriptures. It was then adopted from them by two fathers of the church, but only to repel the arguments of those, who had first pleaded against the scriptures a spurious tradition, and had then so falsified the records of christianity, as to embarrass any inference from their genuine communications. When this use had been made of the

(51) Appendix.

argument, it seems to have been felt that such an appeal was incongruous and unnecessary, for it was immediately abandoned by the church, nor does it appear to have been resumed in the great controversy of arianism by either party for the support of its tenets. After an interruption indeed of almost two centuries and a half among the western christians, and in Greece of the much longer period of more than five centuries and a half, we again find tradition pleaded as an authority, but in each case for a practice, not for a doctrine, each practice also plainly condemned by the written word: the argument was then again abandoned, and each plea disowned by one of the two churches until the very crisis of the Reformation, when it was once more brought forward to oppose the appeal, which the reformers had made to the scriptures; and, as these reformers had objected to doctrines, not less than to practices, the tradition of the church was then for the first time pleaded in favour of doctrines. Even then however, in the very agony of the papal power, it was not pleaded that the scripture was not intelligible without the aid of tradition, the latter being represented only as entitled to equal reverence, not as a superior and controlling authority for divine truth. This last step was taken about the close of the sixteenth century, by cardinal Bellamine, who, in his * too

* His candour and plain-dealing, in collecting, and stating

candid defence of the church of Rome, did not hesitate to (52) maintain, that the gospel, without unwritten tradition, is an empty name, or words without sense. The roman-catholics of Ireland, imitating the boldness of the cardinal, have declared, that the scriptures are not intelligible without the aid of tradition.

If however tradition should be regarded as indispensably necessary even for discovering the meaning of the written word, it is not easy to perceive how this can be at all useful, or why a written revelation should ever have been communicated. Those, who do not possess this indispensable assistance, should not venture to read the scriptures, because, in attempting to form opinions for themselves, they must ever be exposed to the danger of conceiving erroneous notions in regard to matters of infinite importance. To those, who do possess the inestimable deposit, what can it avail to study scriptures, which are intelligible only by its aid? These have already a surer and a safer guide, and may well discharge themselves from the useless labour of perusing records, not to be understood without a tradition, which has already communicated to them an explicit know-

the objections of his adversaries, exposed him to the censures of several divines of his own communion. Mosheim, vol. 4. p. 222.

(52) Appendix.

ledge of the true faith. The church of Christ is accordingly by such a tenet reduced to this extraordinary condition, that it possesses a written revelation, which the laity dare not, and the clergy need not study : the laity dare not study it, because they have not among them the tradition of the church ; and the clergy need not, because they have that tradition. The authority therefore of the Bible and the authority of a distinct and independent tradition, interpreting scripture, cannot exist together. Either the written word must supersede such a tradition, as unnecessary ; or such a tradition must render the written word unmeaning and useless : the former is the principle of protestants, the latter appears to be the principle of roman-catholics.

It has been distinctly shown by || bishop Marsh, that our own church has been built on the sole acknowledgment of the authority of scripture. In the thirty-fourth article, the only one in which traditions are mentioned, they are described merely as usages, received from preceding times, which may be different in different churches, and may from time to time be changed in the same church. In the sixth, on the other hand, the sufficiency of the scriptures for the salvation of men is expressly declared ; in the twentieth, though the church is pro-

|| Compar. View, ch. 3.

nounced to have authority in matters of faith, yet that authority is precisely limited by the sacred scripture, the church being represented as but a witness and keeper of holy writ, so that its own authority can claim only a respectful consideration ; and in the twenty-first it is determined that, since general councils may err, and * sometimes have actually erred, their or-

* Bishop Marsh has clearly proved, that the decrees of the council of Trent are in one instance contradictory, so that in this case error is undeniable. The decree made in the thirteenth session, relative to transubstantiation, declared that the *whole* substance of the bread is changed into the substance of Christ's body, and the *whole* substance of the wine into the substance of his blood : but in the twenty-first session it was decreed, that *the whole and entire* Christ is received under one kind only. The council, he concludes, must surely have forgotten, under Pius the fourth, what the thirteenth session had decreed under Julius III. Compar. View, p. 45, 46, note.

Even the first and purest of the general councils may justly be charged with error, in having concluded its profession of faith with sundry anathemas denounced against arianism, which have been relinquished by the church, especially as these appear to have been all founded on an erroneous and unscriptural notion, devised by Athenagoras in the second century, that the Second Person of the Trinity had been generated a limited, and even a short time, before the creation of the world. Arius had maintained, that if the Father begot the Son, he that was begotten, has a beginning of existence. To condemn Arius, the first council of Nice pronounced its anathema against those, who should deny that the Son existed before he was begotten. Socratis, lib. 1. cap. 5, 8. The true answer would have been, that he, who " was in the beginning with God, and was God," must have been coeternal with the Father,

dinances, in regard to salvation, can have no authority, except as they are supported by the holy scripture. The intire sufficiency of the scriptures for instruction in all matters appertaining to salvation, was the basis, on which Luther originally established the Reformation: and on the same basis was the protestant religion of this empire afterwards constituted.

It does not however follow from this principle, that every man should consider the single volume, denominated the Bible, as capable of affording him all desirable information in religion, without the assistance of any collateral instruction, either from books, or from living teachers. A collection of various treatises on the most mysterious subject, the redemption of our fallen nature, written in several times, even from the most remote antiquity to a period distant by almost eighteen centuries from our own, composed in languages now preserved only in books, and abounding in allusions to customs wholly different from those, with which we are familiar, may well require even for the most enlightened minds, all the aid which learning and reasoning can supply. As the gospel was originally preached to the poor, there must be

however, in accommodation to our notions of derived existence, he may in the scriptures be said to have been begotten. The measures of successive duration cannot have any application to the unchanging stability of an all-perfect nature.

much in the sacred volume, which will benefit even the most simple in his own unassisted perusal; but we have not any authority for believing, that the study of the written word of God should be conducted in a manner different from every other, in a neglect of the assistance, which might be received from the recorded opinions, or from the living instructions of other men. The Bible should be open to all, because every man is primarily charged with the care of his own salvation, and the simplest may receive much advantage from the study. All should however avail themselves of all the means of information placed within their reach, that they may penetrate, as far as possible, into its mysterious communications. That plan of redemption, into which even angels desire to look, is surely an adequate object for the best efforts of human study.

For guiding christians in the search of scriptural truth Vincentius Lirinensis has proposed his famous || criterion, perpetual and universal assent throughout the church. This would indeed, if it could in any case be found, claim from us the deepest reverence; for who would be willing to oppose his private opinion to the uninterrupted and uniform consent of the whole

|| Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est. Hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum. Common. 1. ch. 3.

christian world? But if it did really exist, it would be unimportant as a criterion, for no criterion of true doctrine could be required, when no difference of opinion disturbed the uniformity of belief. To be capable of any useful application, the rule must be so qualified, as to destroy its principle. This has accordingly been done by Vincentius himself. In the chapter succeeding that, in which the rule is proposed, both the required qualities of universality and perpetuity are at once abandoned, and the determination of the catholic faith is referred to the judgment of the most approved of the ancient writers of the church. If, says he, some part of the church shall cut itself off from communion with the catholic faith, which case he in the next chapter illustrates by the example of the schism begun by Donatus in Africa, we must prefer the sound body to the corrupted member. If some new error, as in the case of the arian heresy, should overspread almost the whole church, we must look to antiquity for pure doctrine, especially if its judgment should have been pronounced in some general council. If a question should arise, concerning which no determination is extant, we must compare together what those authors have said, at several times and in distinct places, who, persevering in the faith and communion of the one catholic church, may be considered as approved

teachers. Thus the perpetuity and universality of sound doctrine are suddenly reduced to the judgment of a few persons, writing at several times, and in distinct places, selected too by a reference to one catholic church, for the determination of which the criterion itself is required.

If indeed the rule of Vincentius had directed us merely to respect the opinions of || the earlier fathers of the church, in an investigation of the true meaning of the sacred scriptures, it would have prescribed only that, which the soundest criticism would dictate, and which has been actually practised by the wisest and the best members of the church of England. Of all the collateral aids, which can be found for the interpretation of those writings, the conceptions of those who lived nearest to the time of the apostles, must surely be entitled to the greatest attention, because, independently of any consideration of traditional communication, such persons were least affected by the action of those corrupting principles, which are always operating to vitiate the religious notions of

|| The author of this treatise has himself cited a passage from Justin Martyr, to support a proposed alteration of the received version of the New Testament, by which, instead of "the first-born of every creature," should be read "the begotten before all creation." *Observations on the Doctrines of Christianity* etc. p. 192, note.

men. The pride of superior knowledge had yet corrupted only the extravagant sects of the *gnostics*, leaving the main body of the church untainted; the spirit of ecclesiastical domination could not very mischievously actuate men, who were subject to the authority, and even exposed to the persecution, of a pagan government; and superstition could scarcely prevail much in the christian church, until the credit given to it by the accession of the sovereign, drew into it a multitude of imperfectly converted pagans, who brought with them many of the follies of their exploded religion. Vincentius, who was tormented by the heresies of his own time, yet lived before the gross corruptions of the church were introduced, would accordingly have the opinions of the primitive fathers respected as unerring standards of divine truth. Experience has indeed taught us, that the sacred scripture is the only infallible guide in our religious enquiries; but we consider the early fathers, as most useful, though still as fallible commentators.

A * treatise has been recently published, in which a new notion of tradition has been presented, certainly not objectionable in its application, but liable to some question in regard

* A Dissertation upon the Use and Importance of Unauthoritative Tradition, by Edward Hawkins, Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, 1819.

to the principles, from which it appears to be derived. According to this writer it has been from the beginning necessary, that a system of oral instruction should be traditionally transmitted, to be verified indeed by the scripture, and therefore itself unauthoritative, but yet indispensable for supplying the deficiency of a revelation not communicated in a systematic form, and consequently not fitted to convey generally distinct conceptions of religious truth.

It is readily admitted, that the knowledge of christian doctrine was first communicated by oral instruction, and that in every age the efforts of preachers, of catechists, of parents, and of other instructors, have been most usefully, and even indispensably, instrumental to the maintenance, and to the diffusion, of the influence of religion. But when these efforts, exerted in successive ages, are characterised as a tradition, this appears to imply that, however corrected from time to time by a reference to the records of revelation, they yet constitute a distinct series of instruction, orally transmitted from the apostles, especially as the writer has expressed his satisfaction in adopting, though with the necessary distinctions, the term already employed and cherished by the church of Rome. The main principle also, on which the argument rests, namely that the sacred writings, on account of their unsystematic form,

are not fitted to convey precise notions of religious doctrine, and therefore require the assistance of this traditional instruction, seems to derogate from the sufficiency of those records, which the divine providence has left for the direction of the church, as if they had been purposely left in an imperfect form, that a necessity might exist for the aid of oral teaching. It is indeed argued in the treatise, that this aid must have been intended by the divine providence, since the indirectness of the instruction afforded in the New Testament, is such as to embarrass the minds even of honest enquirers.

The former of these objections is indeed of comparatively small importance, because the author has expressed an anxious desire of divesting of all authority this new notion of tradition, so that it can be hurtful only by a confusion of ideas, against which he has certainly employed much pains to guard his readers. The other deserves very serious consideration, because the argument, to which it is opposed, affects the character of the records of our salvation, and even professes to investigate the intention of its great author in regard to the mode of communication.

The necessity of oral instruction is sufficiently apparent from other considerations, than that of any insufficiency in the form and ar-

rangement of the written word. It is plain that knowledge, to be collected merely from the study of the scriptures, would to all men come too slowly and too late, and to many would never come at all; and that in every case the opportunity of forming to religious sentiment the tender mind of youth, would be lost in waiting for that maturity of reason, which should investigate in the sacred records the true principles of religious conviction. For establishing therefore the necessity of oral instruction in religion, we need not to assume any insufficiency in the mode, in which the written word has conveyed to us the doctrines of revelation. No systematic statement of articles of belief could have supplied the deficiency. A systematic form, however copiously elucidated, would still have required study for collecting its meaning; and for this study few would find leisure or inclination, children could not possess ability. It was therefore unquestionably the design of the divine providence, that we should in this, as in every other respect, depend one upon another for assistance. No change in the form of the scriptures could have superseded a dependence, resulting not only from the varied condition and occupation of later life, but primarily and universally from the slow and gradual development of our intellectual and moral faculties.

It has * been observed even by Mr. Hawkins, the writer of the treatise, that uneducated persons cannot well imbibe and apprehend moral instruction, when presented to them in a very systematical form; and this remark, which he has taken from Burnet, he has extended to doctrinal instruction also, inferring from it, that the New Testament will thus appear adapted to the peculiar wants of the poor. Where then in regard to the multitude would have been the advantage of a systematic arrangement? Instead of facilitating the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, it would to the mass of mankind have presented it in a form alien from their minds, and repulsive to their enquiry.

It is admitted also that the actual form of the scriptures possesses another advantage of no mean importance to very many, even of educated persons, in that it renders those who are not conversant with the details of biblical criticism, and who are consequently incompetent to decide between contending authorities, independent of controverted passages, by enabling them to collect their convictions from the general tenor of writings abounding in indirect allusions to the essential doctrines of chris-

tianity, which cannot be separated from them without an intire dissolution of the text.

It appears therefore from the acknowledgment of Mr. Hawkins himself, that not only to the uneducated, who are the great mass of mankind, but even among the educated to all except biblical critics, the scriptures are most satisfactory and convincing in that very form, which he seems to have represented as designedly imperfect, that men might be dependent on other means of information in religion. Who then would have been benefited by a systematic arrangement of the revelations of God? Biblical critics alone remain to be considered. Yet in regard to these men also the actual form of the scriptures is acknowledged to possess advantages, which would be lost by the change. Disputes, it is said, would be precluded by the direct form of writings, the authority of which was admitted; but doubts would be precluded likewise, which at present continually lead to study, and study to conviction. Neither is it, adds the writer, by any means a disadvantage, that the indirectness of the scriptural method of teaching imposes upon us a necessity for continual study of them, if only that we may keep up our conviction of the genuine faith of Christ.

The admissions of this writer thus exclude from all benefit, which might be derived from

* Dissertation on the use and Importance of Unauthoritative Tradition, p. 59—61.

a systematic form of scriptural revelation, every description of men: the uneducated, because they cannot apprehend instruction conveyed in such a form; those of the educated who are not conversant with biblical criticism, because they are not qualified to compare authorities relating to controverted texts; and biblical critics, because in the change they would lose the very subject of their criticism, the incentive of their study, the support of their religious conviction.

But what if the indirectness of scriptural instruction be a perfection, not a defect? It seems to have been of the spirit of the christian revelation, to preclude that faith, which should be only of the head, not also of the heart. The faith of a christian is a conviction, which occupies the whole man, the heart together with the understanding, for it is a faith which *worketh by love*. It may well deserve consideration, whether such a faith might best be formed in the heart by systematic instructions precisely expressed, and accurately divided and subdivided, rather than by instructions delivered incidentally, and as the occasion happened to demand. In the former case men might become more expert theologians, more prepared to state with precision the formal articles of their belief, and to defend them with the subtleties of metaphysical disputation. In the latter they must have been penetrated by the spirit of the

gospel of Christ, while they were collecting their christian creed from its interesting narratives and apposite illustrations, and from the solemn exhortations and reproofs addressed by the apostles to the primitive churches. The perfection of the systematic method was the scholastic theology of the middle ages, generated by a strange mixture of the logic of Aristotle with the religion of Christ. Who can desire that this should in the first ages have been substituted for the simplicity of the gospel? The prevalent sentiment (53) in the first general council was very different, for when some dialecticians attempted to introduce their subtleties into the discussion, they were discountenanced by the assembly, though the chief object of the meeting was to pronounce a distinct judgment on the great question concerning the divinity of Christ.

Dismissing then this new pretension of tradition, which, though not claiming for it any independent authority, yet represents the scriptures as insufficient for affording to christians the information necessary for their faith, let the writer, in conclusion, most earnestly and solemnly entreat the roman-catholic clergy of Ireland to consider, with all the seriousness which the importance of the question demands, how far, in maintaining their doctrine of an

authoritative and indispensable tradition, they may be liable to that denunciation, which our Saviour has pronounced against those, who had corrupted by their traditional expositions the genuine revelation of the Jews. "Woe unto you lawyers," says he, "for you have taken away the key of knowledge: you entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in, you hindered." The question deserves, and should obtain, their deepest attention. It is a question, the interest of which will remain undiminished, when all the concerns of place and time shall have been swallowed up in the immensity of everlasting duration, and men shall wonder, that they had ever permitted the schemes of this brief existence to have any serious influence upon opinions connected with the hopes of eternity. The question is not whether a roman-catholic should become a protestant, or a protestant should become a roman-catholic; but whether the written revelations of God should be respected as the true and sole standard of the faith of a Christian, or a tradition should be set up to modify and prescribe its interpretation, which if it were indeed necessary for this purpose, we cannot conceive any reason, why a written revelation should ever have been communicated. If it be in the philosophy of material nature a sound principle of reasoning, that God does nothing in

vain, let us adhere to it also in reasoning about religion, and conclude that, since the scriptures must have been given in vain, if they cannot be interpreted without the aid of tradition, therefore no such tradition has been authorised by God. This seems to be the fair conclusion of reason from the present state of the question. The records of ecclesiastical history have been already cited to prove that no unwritten tradition derived from the apostles has in fact existed in the church.

APPENDIX.

(1) "THIRDLY, because all experience has proved the justice and truth of Tertullian's remarks in his book on Prescription, wherein he says, that disputes with heretics weary the weak, create anxiety in the mind of others, and that the only thing we obtain by them is, to have our anger excited by their *blasphemy*. The reason assigned by him for this opinion is quite obvious ; it is, that heretics despise authority, which alone can determine disputes ; that they disregard tradition, without which it is impossible to understand rightly that part of the revelation which is written ; and because they appeal to the scriptures, which are mute, and cannot therefore decide. *Ite, quibus [scripturis] incerta est victoria, aut par incertæ.*"

The true meaning of Tertullian is explained in the treatise.

(2)—ἐν πρώτοις μάλιστα προφυλάττεισθαι τὰς αἰρέσεις ἅρτι τότε πρώτον ἀναφύεισας καὶ ἐπιπολαζούσας παρήναι· προὔτρεπέ τι ἀπρὲς ἔχεισθαι τῆς τῶν ἀπόστολων παραδόσεως, ἣν ὑπὲρ ἀσφαλείας, καὶ ἐγγράφως ἡδὴ μαρτυρόμενος διατυποῦσθαι ἀναγκαῖον ἡγήτο. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 3. cap. 36.

(3) 'Ο δ' αὐτὸς Σμυρναίοις γράφων, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπόθεν ῥητοῖς συκίχρηται, τοιαῦτά τινα περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διεξιὼν· ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐν σαρκὶ αὐτὸν οἶδα, καὶ πιστεύω ὄντα. καὶ ὅτε πρὸς τοὺς περὶ Πίτρον—

(4) Πίρας γέ τοι λέγει αὐτοῖς. τὰς νομηνίας ὑμῶν, καὶ τὰ σάββατα ὑμῶν οὐκ ἀνίχομαι. Ὁρᾷτε, πῶς λέγει· οὐ τὰ νῦν σάββατα ἐμοὶ δεκτά· ἀλλ' ἃ πεποίηκα, ἐν ᾧ καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα, ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ὀγδόης ποιῶσα, ὃ ἐστὶν ἄλλου κόσμου ἀρχήν. Διὸ καὶ ἄγομαι τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν

ὁ γδὲν εἰς εὐφροσύνην, ἐν ᾗ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ φανερωθεὶς ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς. Epist. Cathol. cap. 15.

(5) ὅπου γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς κατοικεῖ, ἐκεῖ καὶ σύνεσις πολλή· κολλήθητι οὖν τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ πάντα νοήσεις. Pastor. lib. 2. mandat. 10.

Quicumque Dei servus est, Dominumque habet in præcordiis suis, petit ab eo intellectum, et obtinet, et omnem similitudinem explicat, et intelligit verba Domini, quæ inquisitione egent: quicumque vero inertes sunt, et pigri ad orandum, illi dubitant petere a Domino, cum sit Dominus tam profundæ bonitatis, ut petentibus a se cuncta sine intermissione tribuat. Tu ergo, qui confirmatus es ab illius nuncio, et accepisti orationem tam potentem, cum piger non sis, cur jam a Domino intellectum non petis, et accipis? Ibid. lib. 3. similit. 5.

(6) Ἐάν με κατὰξιώσῃ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ ὑμῶν, καὶ θέλημα ᾗν, ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ βιβλιδίῳ, ὁ μέλλων γράφειν ὑμῖν, προσδηλώσω ὑμῖν ἥς ἡρξάμεθα οἰκονομίας εἰς τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ [πίσει, καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ] ἀγάπῃ, ἐν πάθει αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνάστασι, μέγιστα ἢ ἐν ὁ κυρίως μοι ἀποκαλύψῃ—Ad Ephesios, cap. 20.

(7)—ὃς καὶ ἅπαν ὑμῖν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς, εἰς ἃς ἔαν ἐγκύπτῃτε, θυμησέσθε οἰκοδομεῖσθαι εἰς τὴν δοθεῖσαν ὑμῖν πίσιν. ad Philipp. cap. 3.

(8) Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἐκκλησία, καίπερ καθ' ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἕως περάτων τῆς γῆς διασπαρμένη, παρὰ δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῶν ἐκείνων μαθητῶν παραλαβοῦσα τὴν εἰς ἕνα Θεὸν πατέρα παντοκράτορα, τὸν πεποιηκότα τὸν οὐρανὸν, καὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ τὰς θαλάσσας, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, πίσιν· καὶ εἰς ἕνα Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν σαρκωθέντα ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας· καὶ εἰς πνεῦμα ἅγιον, τὸ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν κηρυχθὲς τὰς οἰκονομίας, καὶ τὰς ἐλεύσεις, καὶ τὴν ἐκ παρθένου γέννησιν, καὶ τὸ πάθος, καὶ τὴν ἔγερσιν ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ τὴν ἑνσαρκίαν εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ἀνάληψιν τοῦ ἡγαπημένου Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς παρουσίαν αὐτοῦ, ἐπὶ τὸ ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἀναστήσαι πᾶσαν σάρκα πάσης ἀνθρωπότητος, ἵνα Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, καὶ Θεῷ, καὶ σωτῆρι, καὶ βασιλεῖ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῦ ἀοράτου, πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἰπουραγίαν καὶ ἱπυρίαν καὶ καταχθονίαν, καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἑξομολογήσεται αὐτῷ, καὶ κρίσιν δικαίαν ἐν τοῖς

πᾶσι ποιήσεται· τὰ μὲν πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας, καὶ ἀγγέλους παρὰθεηκότητας, καὶ ἐν ἀποστασί γεγονότας, καὶ τοὺς ἀσθεῖς, καὶ ἀδίκους, καὶ ἀνόμους, καὶ βλασφήμες τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰς τὸ αἰώνιον πῦρ πέμψῃ· τοῖς δὲ δικαίοις, καὶ ὁσίοις, καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ τητηκόσι, καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ αὐτοῦ διαμενηκόσι, τοῖς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, τοῖς δὲ ἐκ μετανοίας, ζῶν χαρισάμενος, ἀφθαρσίαν δαρήσεται, καὶ δόξαν αἰώνιαν περιποιήσῃ. Advers. Hæreses, lib. 1. cap. 2. Oxon. 1702.

(9) Καὶ οὔτε ὁ πᾶν δυνατὸς ἐν λόγῳ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις προεσώτων, ἕτερα τούτων ἐρεῖ· (οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον) οὔτε ὁ ἀσθενὴς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ἐλαττώσει τὴν παράδοσιν. μιᾶς γὰρ καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς πίσεως οὗτης, οὔτε ὁ πολὺ περὶ αὐτῆς δυνάμενος εἰπεῖν ἐπλεόνασεν, οὔτε ὁ τὰ ὀλίγον, ἡλαττόνησι. Ibid. cap. 3.

(10) Τὸ δὲ πλεῖον ἢ ἐλαττον κατὰ σύνεσιν εἶδεναι τινὰς, οὐκ ἐν τῇ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν αὐτὴν ἀλλάσσειν γίνεται, καὶ ἄλλον Θεὸν παρεπινοεῖν παρὰ τὸν δημιουργόν, καὶ ποιητὴν, καὶ τροφέα τοῦ δὲ τοῦ παντός, ὡς μὴ ἀρχομένους τούτους, ἢ ἄλλον Χριστὸν, ἢ ἄλλον Μοινογενῆ· ἀλλὰ ἐν τῷ τὰ, ὅσα ἐν παραβολαῖς εἴρηται, προσεπεργάζεσθαι, καὶ οἰκεῖν τῇ τῆς πίσεως ὑπόθεσιν καὶ ἐν τῷ τὴν τε πραγματείαν καὶ οἰκονομίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι γινομένην ἐκδηγεῖσθαι. Ibid. cap. 4.

(11) Cum teneamus autem nos regulam veritatis, id est, quia sit unus Deus omnipotens, qui omnia condidit per Verbum suum, et aptavit, et fecit ex eo, quod non erat, ad hoc ut sint omnia, quemadmodum scriptura dicit: Verbo enim Domini cœli firmati sunt, et Spiritu oris ejus omnis virtus eorum. Et iterum: omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil. (Ex omnibus autem nihil subtractum est; sed omnia per ipsum fecit Pater, sive visibilia, sive invisibilia, sive sensibilia, sive intelligibilia; sive temporalia propter quandam dispositionem, sive sempiterna,) et ea omnia, non per angelos, neque per virtutes aliquas abscissas ab ejus sententia: nihil enim indiget omnium Deus; sed per Verbum et Spiritum suum omnia faciens et disponens, et gubernans, et omnibus esse præstans: hic qui mundum fecit, etenim mundus ex omnibus: hic qui hominem plasmavit, hic qui Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, et Deus Jacob, super quem alius Deus non est, neque initium, neque virtus, neque pleroma: hic Pater Domini

nostri Jesu Christi, quemadmodum ostendemus: hanc ergo tenentes regulam, licet valde varia et multa dicant, facile eos deviasse a veritate arguimus. Ibid. cap. 19.

(12) Si autem omnium quæ in scripturis requiruntur absolute non possumus invenire, alterum tamen Deum, præter eum qui est, non requiramus. Impietas enim hæc maxima est. Cedere autem hæc talia debemus Deo, qui et nos fecit, rectissime scientes, quia scripturæ quidem perfectæ sunt, quippe a Verbo Dei et Spiritu ejus dictæ; nos autem secundum quod minores sumus, et novissimi a Verbo Dei et Spiritu ejus, secundum hoc et scientiâ mysteriorum indigemus. Ibid. lib. 2. cap. 47.

(13) Non enim per alios dispositionem salutis nostræ cognovimus, quam per eos, per quos evangelium pervenit ad nos: quod quidem tunc præconiaverunt, postea vero per Dei voluntatem in scripturis nobis tradiderunt, fundamentum et columnam fidei nostræ futurum. Ibid. lib. 3. cap. 1.

(14) Cum enim ex scripturis arguuntur, in accusationem convertuntur ipsarum scripturarum, quasi non recte habeant, neque sint ex autoritate, et quia variè sint dictæ, et *quia non possit ex his inveniri veritas ab his, qui nesciant traditionem.* Ibid. cap. 2.

(15) Etenim si recondita mysteria scissent apostoli, quæ seorsim et latenter ab reliquis perfectos docebant, his vel maximè traderent ea, quibus etiam ipsas ecclesias committerebant. Ibid. cap. 3.

(16) Quid autem si neque apostoli quidem scripturas reliquissent nobis, nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis, quam tradiderunt iis, quibus committebant ecclesias? Cui ordinationi assentiunt multæ gentes barbarorum, eorum qui in Christum credunt, sine charta vel atramento scriptam habentes per Spiritum in cordibus suis salutem, et veterem traditionem diligenter custodientes, in unum Deum credentes fabricatorem cœli et terræ, et omnium quæ in eis sunt, per Christum Jesum Dei filium. Qui propter eminentissimam erga figmentum suum dilectionem, eam quæ esset ex virgine generationem sus-

tinuit, ipse per se hominem adunans Deo, et passus sub Pontio Pilato, et resurgens, et in claritate receptus, in gloria venturus Salvator eorum qui salvantur, et iudex eorum qui judicantur, et mittens in ignem æternum transfiguratores veritatis, et contemptores Patris sui et adventus ejus. Hanc fidem qui sine literis crediderunt, quantum ad sermonem nostrum, barbari sunt: quantum autem ad sententiam, et consuetudinem, et conversationem, propter fidem perquam sapientissimi sunt, et placent Deo, conversantes in omni justitia et castitate et sapientia. Ibid. cap. 4.

(17) Γνωστis ἀληθῆς, ἡ τῶν ἀποστόλων διδασχὴ καὶ τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς ἐκκλησίας σύστημα κατὰ παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου et character corporis Christi secundum successiones Episcoporum, quibus illi eam quæ in unoquoque loco est ecclesiam tradiderunt, quæ pervenit usque ad nos custodita sine fictione scripturarum tractatio plenissima, neque additamentum neque ablationem recipiens, et lectio sine falsatione, et secundum scripturas expositio legitima, et diligens, et sine periculo, et sine blasphemia—Ibid. lib. 4. cap. 63.

(18) Fugere igitur oportet sententias ipsorum, et intentius observare, uti ne vexemur ab ipsis: confugere autem ad ecclesiam, et in ejus sinu educari, et dominicis scripturis enutriri. Plantata est enim ecclesia paradisi in hoc mundo. Ab omni ergo ligno paradisi escas manducabitis, ait Spiritus Dei, id est, ab omni scriptura dominica manducate—Ibid. lib. 5. cap. 20.

(19)—*μετὰ τοῦτον δὲ τρίτῳ τόπῳ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν κληροῦται Κλήμης, ὁ καὶ ἑωρακὼς τοὺς μακαρίους ἀποστόλους, καὶ συμβούλιον αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔτι ἑναυλον τὸ κήρυγμα τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τὴν παραδοσιν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἔχον—*

(20)—quemadmodum presbyteri meminerunt, qui Joannem discipulum Domini viderunt, audisse se ab eo, quemadmodum de temporibus illis docebat Dominus, et dicebat: venient dies, in quibus vineæ nascentur, singulæ decem millia palmitum habentes, et in una palmite dena millia brachiorum, et in uno vero palmite dena millia flagellorum, et in unoquoque flagello dena millia botrum, et in unoquoque botro dena millia acino-

rum, et unumquodque acinum expressum dabit vigintiquinque metretas vini. Et cum eorum apprehenderit aliquis sanctorum botrum, alius clamabit: botrus ego melior sum, me sume, per me Dominum benedic. Similiter et granum tritici decem millia spicarum generaturum, et unamquamque spicam habituram decem millia granorum, et unumquodque granum quinque bilibres similæ claræ mundæ: et reliqua autem poma, et semina, et herbam secundum congruentiam iis consequentem: et omnia animalia iis cibis utentia, quæ a terra accipiuntur, pacifica et consentanea invicem fieri, subjecta hominibus cum omni subjectione. Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Παπίας Ἰωάννου μὲν ἀκουσῆς, Πολυκάρπου δὲ ἐταῖρος γεγονώς, ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ, ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ τῶν αὐτοῦ βιβλίων. ἔτι χάρις αὐτῷ πάντε βιβλία συντεταγμένα. Et adjecit, dicens: hæc autem credibilia sunt credentibus. Et Juda, inquit, proditore non credente, et interrogante: quomodo ergo tales genituræ a Domino perficiuntur? dixisse Dominum: videbunt qui venient in illa. Ibid. lib. 5. cap. 33.

(21) Ὡς οἱ πρεσβύτεροι λέγουσι, τότε καὶ οἱ μὲν καταξιοθῆντες τῆς ἐν οὐρανῷ διατριβῆς, ἐκείσε χωρήσουσιν, οἱ δὲ τῆς τοῦ παραδείσου τρυφῆς ἀπολαύσουσιν, οἱ δὲ τὴν λαμπρότητα τῆς πόλεως καθέξουσιν πανταχοῦ γὰρ ὁ Σωτὴρ ὁραθήσεται, καθὼς ἄξιοι ἔσονται οἱ ὁρῶντες αὐτόν. Ἔιναι δὲ τὴν διαβολὴν ταύτην τῆς δίκης τῶν τὰ ἑκατὸν καρποφορούντων, καὶ τῶν τὰ ἑξήκοντα, καὶ τῶν τὰ τριάκοντα ὧν οἱ μὲν εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ἀναληφθήσονται, οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ διατρίψουσιν, οἱ τὴν πόλιν κατοικήσουσιν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εἰρηκέναι τὸν Κύριον, ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου μοναῖς εἶναι πολλὰς. Τὰ πάντα γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς τοῖς πᾶσι τὴν ἀρμόζουσαν οἶκον παρέχει. Quemadmodum Verbum ejus ait, omnibus divisum esse a Patre secundum quod quis est dignus, aut crit. Et hoc est triclinium, in quo recumbent ii, qui epulantur vocati ad nuptias. Hanc esse adordinationem et dispositionem eorum qui salvantur, dicunt presbyteri apostolorum discipuli——

(22) Οὐτε γὰρ ὁ Ἀνίκητος τὸν Πολυκάρπον πῦσαι ἔδυνάτο μὴ τηρεῖν· ἅτε μετὰ Ἰωάννου τοῦ μαθητοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, καὶ λοιπῶν ἀποστόλων, οἷς συνδιέτριψεν, αἰεὶ τιτηρηκότα· οὔτε μὲν ὁ Πολυκάρπος

τὸν Ἀνίκητον ἔπαισε τηρεῖν, λέγοντα τὴν συνήθειαν τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ πρεσβυτέρων ὀφείλειν κατέχειν. Fragm. Epist. ad Victorem Papam Romanam.

(23) Καὶ τοιαύτη μὲν ποιικιλία τῶν ἐπιτηρούντων, οὐ νῦν ἐφ' ἡμῶν γιγνομένη, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολὺ πρότερον ἐπὶ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν, τῶν παρὰ τὸ ἀκριβές, ὡς εἰκός, κρατούντων, τὴν καθ' ἀπλότητα καὶ ἰδιωτισμὸν συνήθειαν εἰς τὸ μετέπειτα πεποιηκότων. Ibid.

(24) Τὸ δὲ ἐν κυριακῇ μὴ κλίνειν γόνυ, σύμβολον ἐστὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως, δι' ἧς τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χάριτι, πάντε ἀμαρτημάτων, καὶ τοῦ ἐπ' αὐτῶν τεθανατωμένου θανάτου ἡλευθερώθημεν. ἐκ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν δὲ χρόνων ἡ τοιαύτη συνήθεια ἔλαβε τὴν ἀρχὴν, καθὼς φησὶν ὁ μακάριος Εὐγενῆσιος—Allegatio libri de Paschâ in Justini respons. ad Quæst. 115 ad Orthodoxos.

(25) Ista hæresis non recipit quasdam scripturas: et si quas recipit, non recipit integras: adjectionibus et detractionibus ad dispositionem instituti sui intervertit: et si aliquatenus integras præstat, nihilo minus diversas expositiones commentata convertit. Tantum veritati obstreperit adulter sensus, quantum et corruptor stilus. variæ præsumptiones. necessario nolunt agnoscere ea, per quæ revincuntur. his nituntur, quæ ex falso composuerunt, et quæ de ambiguitate ceperunt. Quid promovebis exercitatissime scripturarum, cum si quid defenderis, negetur: ex diverso, si quid negaveris, defendatur. Et tu quidem nihil perdes, nisi vocem in contentione: nihil consequeris, nisi bilem de blasphematione. Ille vero, si quis est cujus causa in congressum descendis scripturarum, ut eum dubitantem confirmes, ad veritatem, an magis ad hæreses diverget? hoc ipso motus, quod te videat nihil promovisse, æquo gradu negandi et defendendi adversa parte, statu certe pari, altercatione incertior discedet, nesciens quam hæresin judicet. Tertulliani Opera, p. 236, 237, Lutetiæ 1634.

(26) Hinc igitur dirigimus præscriptionem, si Dominus Jesus Christus apostolos misit ad prædicandum, alios non esse recipiendos prædicatores, quam Christus instituit; quia nec alius Patrem novit nisi Filius, et cui Filius revelavit, nec aliis videtur revelasse Filius, quam apostolis quas misit ad prædicandum, utique quod illis revelavit. Quid autem prædicaverint,

id est, quid illis Christus revelaverit, et hinc præscribam non aliter probari debere, nisi per easdem ecclesias, quas ipsi apostoli condiderunt, ipsi eis prædicando, tam viva, quod aiunt, voce, quam per epistolas postea. Ibid. p. 238.

(27) Regula est autem fidei, ut jam hinc quid defendamus profiteamur, illa scilicet qua creditur: unum omnino Deum esse; nec alium præter mundi conditorem; qui universa de nihilo produxerit, per Verbum suum primo omnium demissum: id Verbum filium ejus appellatum, in nomine Dei varie visum a patriarchis, in prophetis semper auditum, postremo delatum ex spiritu patris Dei et virtute, in virginem Mariam, carnem factum in utero ejus, et ex eâ natum egisse Jesum Christum: exinde prædicasse novam legem, et novam promissionem regni cælorum: virtutes fecisse: fixum cruci; tertiâ die resurrexisse: in cælos ereptum sedisse ad dexteram Patris: misisse vicariam vim Spiritûs Sancti, qui credentes agat: venturum cum claritate ad sumendos sanctos in vitæ æternæ et promissorum cælestium fructum, et ad profanos adjudicandos igni perpetuo, factâ utriusque partis resurrectione cum carnis restitutione. Tertulliani Oper. p. 235. Lutetiæ 1634.

(28) Nobis curiositate opus non est post Christum Jesum, nec inquisitione post evangelium. Cum credimus, nihil desideramus ultra credere. Hoc enim prius credimus, non esse quod ultra credere debeamus. Ibid. p. 233.

(29) Sed ipsi de scripturis agunt, et de scripturis suadent. Aliunde scilicet loqui possent de rebus fidei, nisi ex litteris fidei? Ibid. p. 236.

(30) Scripturas obtundunt, et hac sua audacia statim quosdam movent: in ipso vero congressu firmos quidem fatigant, infirmos capiunt, medios cum scrupulo dimittunt. Hunc igitur potissimum gradum obstruimus, non admittendos eos ad ullam de scripturis disputationem. Si hæ sunt illæ vires eorum, uti eas habere possint, dispici debet cui competat possessio scripturarum, ne is admittatur ad eam, cui nullo modo competit. Ibid.

(31) Solent dicere, non omnia apostolos scisse, eadem agi-

tati dementia, qua rursus convertunt: omnia quidem apostolos scisse, sed non omnia omnibus tradidisse; in utroque Christum reprehensioni subjicientes, qui aut minus instructos, aut parum simplices apostolos miserit. Quis igitur integræ mentis credere potest, aliquid eos ignorasse, quos magistros Dominus dedit, individuos habens in comitatu, in discipulatu, in convictu; quibus obscura quæque seorsim disserebat, illis dicens datum esse cognoscere arcana, quæ populo intelligere non liceret? Ibid. p. 238. Sed, ut diximus, eadem dementia est, cum contentur quidem, nihil apostolos ignorasse, nec diversa inter se prædicasse; non tamen omnia volunt illos omnibus revelasse: quædam enim palam, et universis; quædam secreto et paucis demandasse—Dominus palam edixit, sine ulla significatione alicujus tecti sacramenti. Ipse præceperat, si quid in tenebris et in abscondito audissent, in luce et intectis prædicarent. Ipse per similitudinem præfiguraverat, ne unam mnam, id est, unum verbum ejus, sine fructu in abdito reservarent. Ipse docebat, lucernam non sub modium abstrudi solere, sed in candelabrum constitui, ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt. Hæc apostoli aut neglexerunt, aut minime intellexerunt, si non adimpleverunt, abscondentes aliquid de lumine, id est, de Dei verbo et Christi sacramento. Ibid. p. 240.

(32) Quod sumus, hoc sunt scripturæ ab initio suo: ex illis sumus, antequam aliter fuit; antequam a vobis interpolarentur. Ibid. p. 246.

(33) An autem de aliqua subjacenti materia facta sint omnia, nusquam adhuc legi. Scriptum esse doceat Hermogenis officina. Si non est scriptum, timeat Væ illud, adjicientibus aut detrahentibus destinatum. Ibid. p. 277.

(34) Consuetudo autem etiam in civilibus rebus pro lege suscipitur, cum deficit lex: nec differt, scriptura an ratione consistat, quando et legem ratio commendat. Porro si ratione lex constat, lex erit omne jam quod ratione constiterit, a quocunque productum. An non putas, omni fideli licere concipere et constituere, dumtaxat quod Deo congruat, quod disciplinæ conducat, quod saluti proficiat, dicente Domino: cur

autem non et a vobis ipsis quod justum est judicatis? et non de iudicio tantum, sed de omni sententia rerum examinandarum—Hanc (sc. rationem divinam) nunc expostula, salvo traditionis respectu, quocunque traditore censetur: nec auctorem respicias, sed auctoritatem, et imprimis consuetudinis ipsius; quæ propterea colenda est, ne non sit rationis interpres: ut si hanc Deus dederit tunc discas, non an observanda sit tibi consuetudo, sed cur major efficitur ratio christianarum observationum, cum illas etiam natura defendit, quæ prima omnium disciplina est. Ibid. p. 122.

(35) Quæris igitur Dei legem? Habes communem istam in publico mundi, in naturalibus tabulis, ad quos et apostolus solet provocare: ut cum in velamine scæminæ: nec natura vos inquit docet? ut cum ad Romanos, natura facere dicens nationes ea quæ sunt legis; et legem naturalem suggerit, et naturam legalem. Ibid. p. 123.

(36) "Nihil innovetur," inquit, "nisi quod traditum est." Unde est ista traditio? Utrumne de dominica et evangelicâ auctoritate descendens, an de apostolorum mandatis atque epistolis veniens? Ea enim facienda esse quæ scripta sunt, Deus testatur, et proponit ad Jesum Nave, dicens: non recedet liber legis hujus ex ore tuo, sed meditareris in eo die ac nocte, ut observes facere omnia quæ scripta sunt in eo. Item Dominus apostolos suos mittens, mandat baptizari gentes et doceri, ut observent omnia quæcunque ille præcepit. Si ergo aut in evangelio præcipitur, aut in apostolorum epistolis aut actibus continetur, ut a quacunque hæresi venientes non baptizentur, sed tantum manus illis imponatur in pœnitentiam; observetur divina hæc et sancta traditio. Cypriani Oper. p. 211. Oxon. 1682.

(37) It is curious to observe, how bishops were in this early period represented as superior to kings, as having the absolute power of forgiving sins, and as being even invested with the character of gods. The passages, which are too numerous to be transcribed, may be found in the 20, 26, 31, 33, and 34 chapters of the second book of the Constitutions; and in the 2. of the sixth.

(38) 'Αλλ' οἱ ἐπίσκοποι θεωρήσαντες τὴν κακουργίαν ἐκείνων καὶ

τὴν τῆς ἀσθενείας κακοτεχνίαν, λευκότερον εἰρήκασιν τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἔγραψαν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν υἱόν· ἵνα τὰ μὲν κτίσματα διὰ τὸ μὴ ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν χωρὶς αἰτίου εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τοῦ γίνεσθαι, λήγῃται ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ· ὁ δὲ υἱὸς μόνος ἰδίου ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας. τοῦτο γὰρ ἴδιον μονογενοῦς καὶ ἀληθινοῦ λόγου τοῦ πατρὸς. καὶ περὶ μὲν τοῦ γεγράφθαι ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας, ἡ πρόφασις αὕτη—καὶ λευκότερον λοιπὸν καὶ συντόμως ἔγραψαν ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ τὸν υἱόν. τὰ γὰρ προειρημένα πάντα ταύτην ἔχει τὴν σημασίαν. Theodoriti Eccles. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 8.

(39) Καὶ ὁ γογγυσμὸς δὲ αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἀγράφοι εἰσιν αἱ λέξεις, ἐλέγχεται παρ' αὐτῶν μάταιος· ἐξ ἀγράφων γὰρ ἀσθεύσαντες, ἀγράφα γὰρ τὰ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, καὶ τὸ ἦν ποτὲ ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, αἰτιῶνται διότι ἐξ ἀγράφων μετ' εὐσθεσίας νοουμένων λέξεων κατεκρίθησαν. αὐτοὶ μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἐκ κοπρίας εὐρόντες, ἐλάλησαν ἀληθῶς ἀπὸ γῆς· οἱ δὲ ἐπίσκοποι, οὐχ' ἑαυτοῖς εὐρόντες τὰς λέξεις, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν πατέρων ἔχοντες τὴν μαρτυρίαν, οὕτως ἔγραψαν. ἐπίσκοποι γὰρ ἦσαν ἀρχαῖοι, πρὸ ἐτῶν ἑγγύς που ἑκατὸν τριάκοντα, τῆς τε μεγάλης Ῥώμης καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας πόλεως, οἱ ἡττάσαντο τοὺς ποίημα λίγοντας τὸν υἱόν, καὶ μὴ ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ. Ibid.

(40) Ἐνθα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ Πάσχα ἀγιοτάτης ἡμέρας γενομένης ζητήσεως, ἔδοξε κοινῇ γνώμῃ καλῶς ἔχειν, ἐπὶ μιᾷς ἡμέρας πάντας τοὺς ἀπανταχοῦ ἐπιτελεῖν. τί γὰρ ἡμῖν κάλλιον, τί δὲ σμερότερον ὑπάρχει δύνησθαι, τοῦ τὴν ἱερτὴν ταύτην, παρ' ἧς τὰς τῆς ἀθανασίας εὐλόγηται ἐλπίδας, μιᾷ τάξει καὶ φανερῶ λόγῳ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀδιαπτῶτως φυλάττισθαι; καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἀνάξιον ἔδοξεν εἶναι, τὴν ἀγιοτάτην ἐκείνην ἱερτὴν τῇ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐπομένους συνηθείᾳ πληροῦν· οἱ τὰς ἑαυτῶν χεῖρας ἀθεμίτῳ πλημμελήματι χεράντες, εἰκότως τὰς ψυχὰς οἱ μικροὶ τυφλάττουσιν. Euseb. de Vita Constant. lib. 3. cap. 18.

(41)—ἄλλως τὲ καὶ περὶ θείων διαλεγόμενος πραγμάτων, καὶ τοῦ παναγίου πνεύματος τὴν διδασκαλίαν ἀνάγραπτον ἔχοντας. ἐναγγελικαὶ γὰρ, φησὶ, βίβλοι, καὶ ἀποστολικαὶ, καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν προφητῶν τὰ θεοπίσματα, σαφῶς ἡμᾶς ἂν χρὴ περὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ φρονεῖν ἐκπαιδεύουσι. Theodoriti lib. 1. cap. 7.

(42) Τούτων οὖν οὕτως ἔχόντων, ἀσμένως δέχουσθαι τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριν καὶ θείαν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐντολὴν· πᾶν γὰρ, εἴ τι δ' ἂν ἐν τοῖς ἀγίοις τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ συνεδρίῳ πράττεται, τοῦτο πρὸς τὴν θείαν βούλησιν ἔχει τὴν ἀναφορὰν. Euseb. de Vita Constant. lib. 3. cap. 20.

(43) The original passage is thus expressed:—καὶ μὴ ὡς αἱ θεῖαι γραφαὶ παρδίδωκαν, τῶν προειρημένων ἕκαστον ἀφ' ἑκάστου· ἢ εἰ τι ἄλλο διδάσκει, ἢ εὐαγγελίζεται, παρ' ὃ παρελάδομεν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. ἡμεῖς γὰρ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐκ τῶν θεῶν γραφῶν παραδομένοις, ὑπὸ τοῦ προφητῶν καὶ ἀπόστολων, ἀληθινῶς τε καὶ ἑμφρόδως καὶ πιστεύομεν καὶ ἀκολουθοῦμεν.

(44) Tertullian, in replying to Hermogenes a heretic, concerning the question, whether all things were in the beginning made of nothing, thus argues: an autem de aliqua subjacenti materia facta sint omnia, nusquam adhuc legi. Scriptum esse doceat Hermogenis officina. Si non est scriptum, timeat vae illud adjicientibus aut detrahentibus destinatum. Adv. Hermog. cap. 22.

Of the two testaments Origen speaks, as of works, in quibus liceat omne verbum, quod ad Deum pertinet; requiri, et discutiri, atque ex ipsis omnem rerum scientiam capi. Si quid autem superfuerit, quod non divina scriptura decernat, nullam aliam debere tertiam scripturam ad auctoritatem scientiæ suscipi; sed igni tradamus quod superest, id est, Deo reservemus. Neque enim in præsenti vita Deus scire nos omnia voluit. In Levit. hom. 5.

Hippolytus, in his homily against the heresy of Noetus, has the following passage: unus Deus est, quem non aliunde, fratres, agnoscimus, quam ex sanctis scripturis. Quemadmodum enim, si quis vellet sapientiam hujus sæculi exercere, non aliter hoc consequi poterit, nisi dogmata philosophorum legat, sic quicumque volumus pietatem in Deum exercere, non aliunde discemus, quam ex scripturis divinis. Quæcunque ergo sanctæ scripturæ prædicant, sciamus; et quæcunque docent, cognoscamus. Hippol. tom 3. Biblioth. Patr. p. 20, 21. edit. Colon.

Athanasius, in his oration against the gentiles, towards the beginning, says, αὐτάρεκτις μὲν γὰρ εἰσὶν αἱ ἁγίαι καὶ θεόπνευσται γραφαί, πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπαγγελίαν.

Ambrose asks, quæ in scripturis sanctis non reperimus, ea quemadmodum usurpare possumus? Offic. lib. 1. cap. 23. And again says, lego quia primus est, lego quia non est se-

cundus: illi, qui secundum aiunt, doceant lectione. In Virgin. Instit. cap. 11.

Hilary says, bene habet, ut iis, quæ sunt scripta, contentus sis. Lib. 3. de Trin. In another place he thus commends the emperor Constantius: in quantum ego nunc beatæ religiosæque voluntatis vere te domine Constanti imperator admiror, fidem tantum secundum ea quæ scripta sunt desiderantem. Lib. 2. ad Constant. Aug.

Basil says, τοῖς γεγραμμένοις πιστεῖτε, τὰ μὴ γεγραμμένα μὴ ζητεῖτε. Homil. 29. adv. calumniantes S. Trinit. Again: φανερά ἐκπτωσις πίστεως καὶ ὑπερηφανίας κατηγορία, ἢ ἀθετεῖν τι τῶν γεγραμμένων, ἢ ἐπιστάγειν τῶν μὴ γεγραμμένων. De Fide. He further teaches: ὅτι δὲ πᾶν ῥῆμα ἢ πρᾶγμα πιστοῦσθαι τῇ μαρτυρίᾳ τῆς θιοπνεύστου γραφῆς εἰς πληροφορίαν μὲν τῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἐντρόπην δὲ τῶν πονηρῶν. In Ethic. reg. 16. And: καὶ μηδὲν τολμᾶν ἀθετεῖν ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσειν. Εἰ γὰρ πᾶν, ὃ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως, ἀμαρτία ἐστίν, ὡς φησὶν ὁ ἀπόστολος, ἡ δὲ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀκοὴ διὰ ῥήματος Θεοῦ, πᾶν τὸ ἐκ τῆς θιοπνεύστου γραφῆς, οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἂν, ἀμαρτία ἐστίν. Ibid. reg. 80. cap. 22.

In the like manner Gregory of Nyssa: καὶν τις ἂν ἀντίποι, μὴ οὐχὶ ἐν τούτῳ μόνῳ τὴν ἀλήθειαν τιθεῖσθαι, ᾧ σφραγὶς ἐπέστι τῆς γραφικῆς μαρτυρίας. Dialog. de Anima et Resurrect. tom. 2. Edit. Græco-Lat. p. 639. And in another treatise: cum id nullo scripturæ testimonio suffultum sit, ut falsum improbamus. De cognit. Dei, cit. ab Euthymio in Panoplia, tit. 8.

Thus also Jerome: ut hæc, quæ scripta sunt, non negamus; ita ea, quæ non sunt scripta, renuimus. Natum Deum esse de virgine credimus, quia legimus: Mariam nupsisse post partum non credimus, quia non legimus. Hieron. adv. Helvid.

Augustine says, in iis quæ aperte in scriptura posita sunt, inveniuntur illa omnia, quæ continent fidem moresque vivendi. De Doctrina Christ. lib. 2. cap. 9. And again, quicquid inde audieritis, hoc vobis bene sapiat: quicquid extra est, respuite, ne erretis in nebula. Lib. de Pastor. cap. 11. And also, omnia quæ præteritis temporibus erga humanum genus majores nostri gesta esse meminerunt, nobisque tradiderunt; omnia

etiam quæ nos videmus, et posteris tradimus, quæ tamen pertinent ad veram religionem quærendam, et tenendam, divina scriptura non tacuit. Epist. 42.

Cyril of Alexandria too remarks : sufficit divina scriptura ad faciendum eos, qui in illa educati sunt, sapientes, et probatissimos, et sufficientissimam habentes intelligentiam. Lib. 7. contra Jul. And again : ὁ γὰρ οὐκ εἰρηκεν ἡ θεία γραφή, τίνα δὴ τρόπον παραδείξομεθα, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀληθῶς ἔχουσι καταλογίζομεθα; Glaphyrorum in Gen. lib. 2.

Lastly, in the writings of Theodoret we find these observations. Εγὼ γὰρ μόνῃ πείθομαι τῇ θείᾳ γραφῇ. Dial. 1. Ἀτρεπτ. Οὐ γὰρ οὕτως εἰμὶ θρασὺς, ὥστε φάναι τὶ σσειγμένον παρὰ τῇ θείᾳ γραφῇ. Dial. 2. Ἀτύχῃ. Περιττὸν καὶ ἀνόητον τὸ τὰ σσειγμένα ζητεῖν. In Exod. quæst. 26. Οὐ δὲ ζῆτεῖν τὰ σσειγμένα, εἰργεῖν δὲ προσήκει τὰ γεγραμμένα. In Gen. quæst. 45.

To these, the archbishop observes, may be added that remarkable sentence delivered by Eusebius Pamphilus, in the name of three hundred and eighteen fathers of the first general council of Nice : τοῖς γεγραμμένοις πίστευε τὰ μὴ γεγραμμένα μὴ ἐνόει, μὴδὲ ζῆτει. Gelas. Cyzicen. Act. Conc. Nicæn. part. 2. cap. 19.

Letter to a Jesuit, art. Tradition.

(45) Nolite ergo nobis auctoritatem objicere Cypriani ad baptismi repetitionem : sed tenete nobiscum exemplum Cypriani ad unitatis conservationem. Nondum enim erat diligenter illa baptismi quæstio pertractata, sed tamen saluberrimam consuetudinem tenebat ecclesia, in ipsis quoque schismaticis et hæreticis corrigere quod pravum est, non iterare quod datum est ; sanare quod vulneratum est, non curare quod sanum est. Quam consuetudinem credo ex apostolica traditione venientem : (sicut multa quæ non inveniuntur in litteris eorum, neque in conciliis posteriorum, et tamen quia per universam custodiuntur ecclesiam, nonnisi ab ipsis tradita et commendata creduntur :) hanc ergo saluberrimam consuetudinem per Agrippinum prædecessorem suum dicit sanctus Cyprianus quasi cœpisse corrigi. Sed, sicut diligentius inquisita veritas docuit, quæ post

magnos dubitationis fluctus ad plenarii concilii confirmationem perducta est, verius creditur per Agrippinum corrumpi cœpisse, non corrigi. Cont. Donat. lib. 2. cap. 12. in August. Oper. tom. 9. Venetiis 1733.

(46) An nescis etiam ecclesiarum hunc esse morem, ut baptismatis postea manus imponantur, et ita invocetur Spiritus Sanctus? Exigis ubi scriptum sit? In actibus apostolorum. Etiam si scripturæ auctoritas non subesset, totius orbis in hanc partem consensus instar præcepti obtineret. Nam et multa alia, quæ per traditionem in ecclesiis observantur, auctoritatem sibi scriptæ legis usurpaverunt : velut in lavacro ter caput mergitare : deinde egressos, lactis et mellis prægustare concordiam, ad infantia significationem redire : dominica et omni pentecoste nec de geniculis adorare, et jejunium solvere : multaque alia scripta non sunt, quæ rationabilis sibi observatio vindicavit. Ex quo animadvertis ecclesiæ nos consuetudinem sequi : licet ante advocationem Spiritus constet aliquem baptizatum. Hieron. Oper. tom. 4. p. 294. Paris. 1706. De sabbatho quod quæris, utrum jejunandum sit : at de eucharistia, an accipienda quotidie, quod romana ecclesia et Hispaniæ observare perhibentur, scripsit quidem et Hippolytus vir disertissimus, et carptim diversi scriptores e variis auctoribus edidere. Sed ego illud breviter te admonendum puto, traditiones ecclesiasticas (præsertim quæ fidei non officiant) ita observandas, ut a majoribus traditæ sunt : nec aliarum consuetudinem aliarum contrario more subverti. Ibid. p. 579. Bellarmin has indeed distinguished traditions merely ecclesiastical from those which he conceives to have been transmitted by the apostles ; but it appears from the note immediately preceding, that the distinction was not known to Augustine, and therefore probably not contemplated by Jerome.

(47) See note (42).

(48) See note (41).

(49) Ita placuit, et condecet, sacrosanctos antistites, et Dei sacerdotes, necnon et levitas, vel qui sacramentis divinis inserviunt, continentes esse in omnibus : quo possint simpliciter,

quod a Deo postulant, impetrare: ut quod apostoli docuerunt, et ipsa servavit antiquitas, nos quoque custodiamus. Summa Concil. et Pontif. per F. B. Carranzam, p. 130. The authority of tradition is even more distinctly stated in the same work, as maintained in a letter of pope Syricius, addressed about thirty years before to a council convened at Tela, or Telepta, in Africa; but the letter and the narrative of the council have been both disproved by Quesnel, and have accordingly been rejected by Dupin. New Hist. of Eccles. Writers by Dupin, vol. 1. p. 273. Dubl. 1723.

(50) Apostolicas autem ecclesiæ traditiones, quibus veneratio culturaque sanctorum docetur, recipimus, et veneramur. Eos autem, ut ministros, amicos, et filios Dei existentes, honoramus—Cum his etiam sanctas imagines reveremur, principio adorantes Dei Verbi propter nos incarnati, Domini nostri, et Servatoris Jesu Christi, qui formam servi assumpsit, imaginem. Quanquam sciamus ipsam imaginem, et typum deitatis, quæ cum carne illius immaculata inconvulsum unita est, minime posse figuram præstare. Invisibilis enim est divina natura, nec depingi, nec figurari se permittit. Deum enim (ut ipse inquit) nemo vidit unquam, sed humanitatis illius imaginem coloribus ducentes adoramus. Veneramur etiam, et adoramus imaginem Deiparæ, et dominæ nostræ, irreprehensibilis, immaculatæ, et inexplicitæ castitatis matris, quæ illum peperit. Quinetiam sanctorum apostolorum, prophetarum, et victorum martyrum, sanctorumque et beatorum, veluti amicorum Dei imagines colimus: non in materiam, aut coloribus honorem constituentes; sed per hoc officium nostrum, quod ipsis a Deo quorum typum imagines gestant, debemus impartientes, cum sciamus juxta Basilii magni sententiam, quod imagini honor exhibitus, ad ipsum prototypum referatur. Carranza. p. 501, 502. His se sic habentibus regiam viam incedentes, et sanctorum nostrorum, et divinorum patrum doctrinæ insistentes, et catholicæ ecclesiæ in qua Sanctus Spiritus inhabitat traditionem observantes, definimus cum omni diligentia et cura venerandas et sanctas imagines ad modum, et formam vene-

randæ et vivificantis crucis, e coloribus, et tessellis, aut alia quavis materia commode paratas dedicandas: et in templis sanctis Dei collocandas, habendasque, tum in sacris vasis et vestibus, tum in parietibus et tabulis, in ædibus privatis, in viis publicis: maxime autem imaginem Domini et Dei, Servatoris nostri Jesu Christi, deinde intemeratæ dominæ nostræ Deiparæ, venerandorum angelorum, et omnium deinde sanctorum virorum. Ibid. p. 517, 518. Si quis traditiones ecclesiæ sive scripto, sive consuetudine valentes, non curaverit, anathema. Ibid. p. 519.

(51) Bishop Marsh has thus given the decree from an attested copy of the original edition of the acts of the council: sacrosancta œcumenica et generalis Tridentina Synodus, in Spiritu Sancto legitime congregata, præsidentibus in ea eisdem tribus Apostolicæ Sedis legatis, hoc sibi perpetuo ante oculos proponens, ut sublatis erroribus puritas ipsa Evangelii in Ecclesia conservetur; quod promissum ante per prophetas in Scripturis sanctis Dominus noster Jesus Christus, Dei filius, proprio ore primum promulgavit, deinde per suos Apostolos, tanquam fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis, et morum disciplinæ, omni creaturæ prædicari jussit; perspiciensque hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis, et sine scripto traditionibus, quæ ab ipsius Christi ore ab Apostolis acceptæ, aut ab ipsis Apostolis Spiritu Sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditæ, ad nos usque pervenerunt; orthodoxorum Patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, cum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor, necnon traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem, tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas et continua successione conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit et veneratur. Comparative View, p. 23, note.

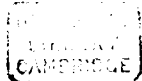
It appears from this decree, that the council of Trent did not, like Bellarmine, hold that the traditions of the church had been committed to writing, but that they were transmitted by a continued succession, and consequently by an oral communication. A tradition of this kind, which is thus main-

tained by the highest authority of the church of Rome, is more favourable to ecclesiastical power, because it is a secret deposit lodged with the clergy, to be produced as occasion might require. But even Bellarmine shrunk from such a pretension, advanced at the close of fifteen centuries.

(52) Sine traditionibus non scriptis evangelium esse purum nomen, id est, esse tantum voces et verba sine sensu. De Verbo Dei, lib. 4. cap. 4.

(53)—μικρὸν οὖν πρὸς τῆς εἰς ἓνα τόπον συνειδήσεως τῶν ἐπισκόπων, οἱ διαλεκτικοὶ πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς προαγῶνας ἐποιοῦντο τῶν λόγων. ἐλκομένων δὲ πολλῶν πρὸς τὸ τοῦ λόγου τερπνόν, εἰς τίς τῶν ὁμο-λογητῶν λαϊκός, ἀκέραιον ἔχων τὸ φρόνημα, ἀντιπίπτει τοῖς δια-λεκτικοῖς, καὶ φησὶ πρὸς αὐτοῖς· ὡς ἄρα ὁ Χριστὸς, καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι, οὐ διαλεκτικὴν ἡμῖν παρέδωκαν τέχνην, οὐδὲ κενὴν ἀπάτην, ἀλλὰ γυμνὴν γνώμην, πίσει καὶ καλοῖς ἔργοις φυλαττομένην· ταῦτα εἰπόντος, οἱ μὲν παρόντες πάντες ἐθαύμασαν καὶ ἀπεδέξαντο. οἱ δὲ διαλεκτικοί, εὐγνωμονέστερον ποιοῦντες ἡσύχασαν, τὸν ἀπλοῦν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκούσαντες. Socratis lib. 1. cap. 8.

FINIS.



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