

1784

## An Address to the Roman Catholics of the United States of America

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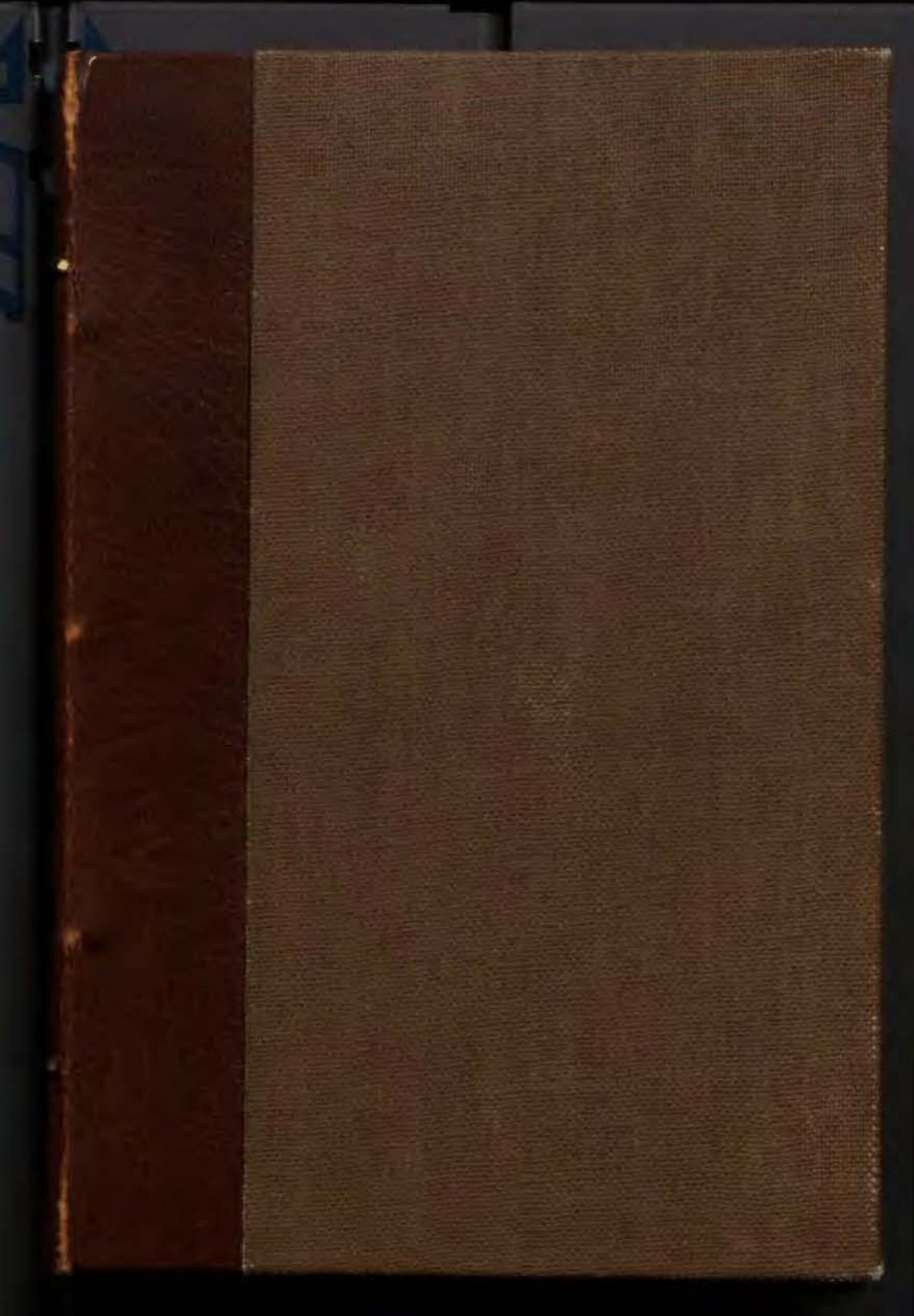
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GEORGETOWN  
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AN  
ADDRESS  
TO THE  
ROMAN CATHOLICS  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

**S**AINT Paul recommends to the antients of the church of Ephesus, in his last and earnest address to them, *to take heed to themselves, and to the whole flock, over which the Holy Ghost has placed them overseers, to feed the church of God\**. This duty is at all times incumbent on those, who, by their station and profession, are called to the service of religion; and more especially at periods of unusual danger and temptation to the flocks committed to their charge: whether the temptation arise from outward violence, a growing corruption of manners, or *from men arising from your own selves, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them†*. For in the church of God, “the error of the teacher is a temptation to the people, and their danger is greater, where his knowledge is more extensive ‡.” The antient and venerable author, who makes this observation, having instanced the truth of it in

\* Acts xx. ver. 28.

† Vinc. Lir. comm. cap. 22.

‡ Ibid. ver. 30.

in the departure from the catholic faith of several persons eminent for their knowledge and writings, concludes with an important instruction, and recommends it to be impressed upon the minds of catholics, *that they may know, that with the church, they receive their teachers, but must not with these abandon the faith of the church* \*.

You will not now be at a loss to account for the occasion of the present address. A letter to the Roman catholics of the city of Worcester in England has been published here by one of their late chaplains; and had all the copies of it been transmitted to those, for whom *professedly* it is intended, I should not dedicate to animadversions on it the few moments of leisure left me from other employments incident to my charge and profession; especially with the scanty materials of which I am possessed; for I am destitute of many sources of information, and unable to refer to authorities, which I presume to have been collected on the other side with great industry. By the Chaplain's own account, he has long meditated a separation from us; and, during that time, he had opportunities of resorting to the repositories of science so common and convenient in Europe.

But the letter not only being printed here, but circulating widely through the country, a regard to your information, and the tranquillity of your consciences requires some notice to be taken of it. For the ministers of religion should always remember, that it is their duty as well to enlighten the understanding, as improve the morals of mankind. *You are the salt of the earth* †, said Christ

\* Catholici noverint se cum ecclesiâ doctores recipere, non cum doctoribus ecclesiæ fidem deserere debere. *Vinc. Liv. comm. c. 23.*

† Mat. v. ver. 13.

Christ to his apostles, to preserve men from the corruptions of vice and immorality: and, *you are the light of the world* \*, to instruct and inform it.

Our duty being so clearly delineated by the divine author of our religion, if we have been deficient in the discharge of either part of it, if we have flattered your passions, or withheld knowledge from your minds, we have certainly deviated from the obligations of our state, and the positive injunctions of our church. For though you have often heard it reproachfully said, that it was both her maxim and practice to keep her votaries in ignorance, no imputation can be more groundless: and for a full confutation of it, we refer our candid adversaries to the ordinances of our councils, the directions of our ecclesiastical superiors, and the whole discipline of our church, even in ages the most inauspicious to the cultivation of letters. In those ages indeed, the manners of the times had great influence, as they always will, on the manners of the clergy: but every informed and ingenuous mind, instead of being prejudiced by the vague imputations on monkish and clerical ignorance, will remember with gratitude, that they owe to this body of men the preservation of antient literature; that in times of general anarchy and violence, they alone gave such cultivation to letters, as the unimproved state of science admitted; and that in the cloisters of cathedral churches, and of monasteries, they opened schools of public instruction, and, to men of studious minds, asylums from the turbulence of war and rapine. The inference from these facts is obvious: for if the ministers of religion, agreeably to the discipline of the church, cultivated and taught letters at  
a time

\* Mat. v. ver. 14.

a time when they were generally neglected; if the resurrection of sound literature was owing, as it certainly was, to the most dignified of our clergy; who can impute ignorance to us, as resulting from the genius of our religion?

I forbear to add other numerous proofs of the falsity of this charge: and I can with confidence appeal to yourselves, whether your religious instructors have not, to the extent of their abilities, and suitably to your respective situations in life, endeavoured to suggest such grounds for your adhesion to the doctrines of the church, as might make you ready always to *give an answer to every man, that asketh you a reason of that hope that is in you*\*. We tell you indeed, that you must submit to the church; but we add with the apostle, that *your obedience must be reasonable*. Now can obedience be reasonable, "can any man give a reason of that hope that is in him, without a due examination of the grounds or motives that induce him to it? No surely; and therefore nothing ought to hinder you from examining thoroughly the grounds of your religion. Nay, we exhort you to examine them over and over again, till you have a full conviction of conscience, that it is not education, but the prevailing force of truth, that determines you in the choice of it †."

But is not this recommendation a mere delusion? Can a consistent Roman catholic be a candid inquirer in matters of religion? Why not? *Because*, says the Chaplain (p 8.), *he cannot set out with that indifference to the truth or falsity of a tenet, which forms the leading feature of rational investigation*. Did the Chaplain weigh all the consequences

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\* 1 Pet. iii. ver. 15.

† England's conversion and reformation compared, Sect. 1.

of the doctrine here advanced? Must we then suspend all the duties of natural religion and moral obligation? Must a son divest himself of filial love and respect, that he may investigate rationally, and judge impartially, of the obligations resulting from the tender relations of parent and child? Must we neglect to train the tender minds of youth in the habits of virtue, and to guard them from vice, by the prospect of future rewards and punishments, lest they should be inclined to judge hereafter too partially of those great sanctions of natural and revealed religion? What an argument is here suggested to the impugners of all religion, to the enemies of christianity? Suggested, did I say, or borrowed from them? For the learned Dr. Leland, to whose writings the cause of revelation is so much indebted, has informed us, that it has been long ago made use of by them; and his answer to it, more especially as he was a protestant, will save me the trouble of making any observations on this extraordinary assertion. "Another argument," says he, "with which he" (the author of *christianity not founded in argument*) "makes a mighty parade, is to this purpose, that no religion can be rational, that is not founded on a free and impartial examination: and such an examination supposes a perfect neutrality to the principles, which are examined, and even a temporal disbelief of them, which is what the Gospel condemns. But this proceeds upon a wrong account of the nature of free examination and inquiry. It is not necessary to a just inquiry into doctrines or facts, that a man should be absolutely indifferent to them, before he begins that inquiry; much less, that he should actually disbelieve them: as if he must necessarily commence atheist, be-

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“fore he can fairly examine into the proofs of the existence of God. It is sufficient to a candid examination, that a man apply himself to it with a mind open to conviction, and a disposition to embrace truth, on which side soever it shall appear, and to receive the evidence that shall arise in the course of the trial. And if the inquiry relateth to principles, in which we have been instructed; then supposing those principles to be in themselves rational and well founded, it may well happen, that in inquiring into the grounds of them, a fair examination may be carried on without seeing cause to disbelieve or doubt of them through the whole course of the inquiry; which in that case will end in a fuller conviction of them than before\*.”

But Roman catholics, it seems, are fettered with other obstacles to free inquiry. They cannot seek religious information in the writings of protestants, without incurring the severest censures of their church (Ch. Letter, p. 4.): By the *Bulla Coenæ* excommunication is denounced against all persons reading books written by heretics containing heresy, or treating about religion. (Note *ibid.*)

It is indeed true, that the Bull referred to contains the prohibition, as mentioned by the Chaplain; and it is not less true, that in England, that protestant country of free inquiry, severe laws and heavy penalties were enacted, and, if I am well informed, still subsist, against the introduction, the printing and vending of books in favour of the catholic religion. I know, that within these last twenty years, these laws have been executed with severity. Such, on both sides, were the precautions suggested by a jealous zeal to preserve uninformed minds from

\* View of deistical writers, vol. I. let. 10.

from the artificial colourings of real or supposed error. The heads of the respective churches considered it as their duty to guard their flocks from the poison of pernicious doctrines; and did not deem it essential to fair and full investigation, that their adversaries objections should be stated to the unlearned, to unexperienced youth, or to the softer sex, with all the acrimony of invective, with the aggravations of misrepresentation, and powers of ridicule; weapons too common in controversies of every kind. Without examining how far this zeal was prudent and justifiable in the present instance, let me observe, that the proscription of books of evil tendency is warranted by the example of St. Paul's disciples at Ephesus, acting in the presence of, and probably by the instructions of their master. *Many of them, says holy writ, that had followed curious arts, brought their books together, and burnt them before all\**. And what inference follows? So mightily, continues the inspired writer in the next verse, *grew the word of God, and was strengthened*. What good parent, what conscientious instructor feels not the anguish of religion, when they find, that promiscuous reading has caused the rank weed of infidelity to grow in that soil, the tender minds of their children and pupils, where they had sown and cultivated the seeds of virtue?

But, be the prohibition of the Bull reasonable or not, I will be bold to say, it was no prejudice to free inquiry. First, because that Bull not only was never received into, but was expressly rejected from almost every catholic state. In them it had no force; the very alleging of its authority was resented as an encroachment on national independence; and, in particular, the clause referred to

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\* Acts xix. ver. 19.



by the Chaplain was generally disregarded. For this I will appeal to his own candour. Throughout his extensive acquaintance with catholics, has he not known them to read protestant authors without hesitation or reproof? Did he not expect, that his letter would freely circulate amongst them? To what purpose did he address it to the Roman catholics of the city of Worcester, if he knew, that with the terrors of excommunication hanging over them, they dare not read it? In the course of his theological studies, was he himself ever denied access to the writings of our adversaries? Were not the works of Luther, Calvin and Beza, of Hooker, Tillotson and Stillingfleet, and all the other champions of the protestant cause, open to his inspection? In public and private disputations, were not the best arguments from these authors fairly and forcibly stated, in opposition to the most sacred tenets of the catholic belief? Was not even literary vanity gratified, by placing objections in the strongest light, and wresting the palm of disputation out of the hands of all concurrents? Knowing this, I must confess, that I cannot reconcile with candour the following words; *I knew that to seek religious information in the writings of protestants, was to incur the severest censures of the church I belonged to.* (Letter, p. 14.)

May I not then say with confidence, that rational investigation is as open to catholics, as to any other set of men on the face of the earth? No; we are told there still remains behind a powerful check to this investigation. This article of our belief, that "the Roman church is the mother and mistress of all churches, and that out of HER COMMUNION no salvation can be obtained," for which the Chaplain cites the famous creed of pope Pius

Pius IV. (p. 7), makes too great an impression of terror on the mind, to suffer an unrestrained exertion of its faculties. Such is the imputation; and it being extremely odious and offensive, and tending to disturb the peace and harmony subsisting in these United States between religionists of all professions; you will allow me to enter fully into it, and render, if I can, your vindication complete.

I begin with observing, that to be in the communion of the catholic church, and to be a member of the catholic church, are two very distinct things. They are in the communion of the church, who are united in the profession of her faith, and participation of her sacraments, through the ministry, and government of her lawful pastors\*. But the members of the catholic church are all those, who with a sincere heart seek true religion, and are in an unfeigned disposition to embrace the truth, whenever they find it. Now it never was our doctrine, that salvation can be obtained only by the former; and this would have manifestly appeared, if the Chaplain, instead of citing pope Pius's creed from his memory, or some unfair copy, had taken the pains to examine a faithful transcript of it. These are the words of the obnoxious creed, and not those wrongfully quoted by him, which are not to be found in it. After enumerating the several articles of our belief, it goes on thus: *This true catholic faith, without which no one can be saved, I do at this present firmly profess and sincerely hold, &c.* Here is nothing of the necessity of communion with our church for salvation; nothing, that is not professed in the public liturgy of the protestant episcopal church; and nothing, I presume, but what is taught in every christian society

\* Bellarm. de Eccl. milit. l. 3. c. 2.

society on earth, viz. that catholic faith is necessary to salvation. The distinction between being a member of the catholic church, and of the communion of the church, is no modern distinction, but a doctrine uniformly taught by ancient as well as later divines. *What is said*, says Bellarmine, *of none being saved out of the church, must be understood of them, who belong not to it either in fact or desire* \*. I shall soon have occasion to produce other authors establishing this same point: "We are accused of great uncharitableness in allowing salvation to none, but catholics. But this also is a mistaken notion. We say, I believe, no more, than do all other christian societies. Religion certainly is an affair of very serious consideration. When therefore a man either neglects to inform himself; or, when informed, neglects to follow the conviction of his mind; such a one, we say, is not in the way of salvation. After mature inquiries, if I am convinced, that the religion of England is the only true one, am I not obliged to become a protestant? In similar circumstances, must not you likewise declare yourself a catholic? Our meaning is, that no one can be saved out of the true church; and, as we consider the evidence of the truth of our religion to be great, that he, who will not embrace truth, when he sees it, deserves not to be happy. God however is the searcher of hearts. He only can read those internal dispositions, on which rectitude of conduct alone depends †." Let any one compare this explanation of our doctrine with the doctrine of protestant divines;

\* Bellarm. de Eccl. mil. l. 3. c. 3.

† The state and behaviour of English catholics.—London, 1789. (p. 155—6.)

divines; and discover in the former, if he can, any plainer traces of the savage monster intolerance, than in the latter. Dr. Leland is now before me, and after transcribing from him, I shall spare myself the trouble of collecting the many other similar passages, which I remember to have read in protestant divines. "It seems to be obvious," says he, to the common sense and reason of mankind, "that if God hath given a revelation, or discovery of his will concerning doctrines or laws of importance to our duty and happiness, and hath caused them to be promulgated with such evidence, as he knoweth to be sufficient to convince reasonable and well disposed minds, that will carefully attend to it, he hath an undoubted right to require those, to whom this revelation is published, to receive and to obey it; and if through the influence of corrupt affections and lusts, those, to whom this revelation is made known, refuse to receive it, he can justly punish them for their culpable neglect, obstinacy and disobedience \*."

Where then is the uncharitableness peculiar to catholics? Where is the odious tenet, that dries up the springs of philanthropy, and chills by early infusions of bigotry the warm feelings of benevolence? (Letter, p. 13.) I am ready to do justice to the humanity of protestants; I acknowledge with pleasure and admiration their many charitable institutions, their acts of public and private beneficence. I likewise, as well as the Chaplain, have the happiness to live in habits of intimacy and friendship with many valuable protestants (Let. p. 9.); but with all my attachment to their persons, and respect for their virtues, I have never seen or heard of the works of christian mercy being exercised  
View of deistical writers, vol. I. let. 10.

cised more extensively, more generally, or more uninterruptedly, than by many members of our own communion, though the Chaplain thinks our minds are *contracted by the narrowness of a system* (Let. *ibid.*) Let him recal to his remembrance the many receptacles he has seen erected in catholic countries for indigence and human distress in every shape; the tenderness and attention with which the unfortunate victims of penury and disease are there served, not by mercenary domestics, as elsewhere; but in many places, by religious men; and in others, by communities of women, often of the first nobility, dedicating their whole lives to this loathsome exercise of humanity without expectation of any reward on this side the grave. Let him remember, how many men of genius he has known to devote themselves with a like disinterestedness to the irksome employment of training youth in the first rudiments of science; and others encountering incredible hardships, and, as it were, burying themselves alive, to bring savages to a social life, and afterwards to form them to christian virtue. To what society of christians does that body of men belong, who bind themselves by the sacred obligation of a vow, even to part with their own liberty, if necessary, by offering it up instead of, and for the redemption of their fellow-christians groaning under the slavery of the piratical states of Barbary? How often has the Chaplain seen the bread of consolation and the words of eternal life carried into the gloomy mansions of the imprisoned, before the humane Howard had awakened the sensibility of England to this important object? Need I mention the heroic charity of a Charles Borromeo, of a Thomas of Villanova, of Marseilles' good bishop, and so many others, who

devoted themselves to the public relief, during dreadful visitations of the plague, *when nature sickened, and each gale was death?* The Chaplain's recollection will enable him to add greatly to these instances of *expanded benevolence*; and I would fain ask, if the virtues, from which they spring, are not formed in the bosom of the catholic church. Can a religion, which invariably and unceasingly gives them birth and cultivation, be unfriendly to humanity? Can so bad a tree bear such excellent fruit?

You may perhaps think, that enough has been said to free you from the imputation of uncharitableness in restraining salvation to those of your own communion, But you will excuse me for dwelling longer on it, conceiving it, as I do, of the utmost importance to charity and mutual forbearance, to render our doctrine on this head as perspicuous, as I am able.

First then, it has been always and uniformly asserted by our divines, that baptism, actual baptism is essentially requisite to initiate us into the communion of the church; this notwithstanding, their doctrine is not less uniform, and the council of Trent (sess. 6. ch. 4.) has expressly established it, that salvation may be obtained without actual baptism; thus then it appears, that we not only *may*, but *are obliged* to believe, that *out of our communion* salvation may be obtained.

Secondly, with the same unanimity our divines define hereby to be, not merely a mistaken opinion in a matter of faith; but an obstinate adherence to that opinion; not barely an error of judgment; but an error arising from a perverse affection of the will. Hence they infer, that he is no heretic, who, though he hold false opinions in matters of faith, yet remains in an habitual disposition

to renounce those opinions, whenever he discovers them to be contrary to the doctrines of Jesus Christ.

These principles of our theology are so different from the common misrepresentations of them, and even from the statement of them by the late Chaplain of Worcester, that some, I doubt, will suspect them to be those palliatives, he mentions, to disguise the severity of an unpopular tenet, to which, he says, our late ingenious apologists in England have had recourse (p. 10.) But you shall see, that they were always our principles, not only in England, but throughout the christian world; and I will be bold to say, that so far from being contradicted in every public catechism, and profession of faith, as is suggested in the same page of the Chaplain's letter, they are not impeached in any one; so far from our teaching the impossibility of salvation out of the communion of our church, as much as we teach transubstantiation (Let. p. 10), no divine, worthy to be called such, teaches it at all.

I will set out with the French divines, and place him first, whose reputation, I presume, is highest. Thus then does the illustrious Bergier express himself, in his admirable work, entitled, *Deism refuted by itself*. "It is false, that we say to any one, that he will be damned; to do so, would be contrary to our general doctrine relating to the different sects out of the bosom of the church. First, with respect to heretics" (the author here means those, who, though not heretics in the rigorous sense of the word; go under that general denomination), "who are baptised and believe in Jesus Christ, we are persuaded, that all of them, who with sincerity remain in their error; who through inculpable ignorance

rance believe themselves to be in the way of salvation; who would be ready to embrace the Roman catholic church, if God were pleased to make known to them, that she alone is the true church, we are persuaded, that these candid and upright persons, from the disposition of their hearts, are children of the catholic church. Such is the opinion of all divines since St. Augustin\*."

The bishop of Puy, whose learning and merits are so much known and felt in the Gallican church, writes thus. "To define a heretic accurately, it is not enough to say, that he made choice of his doctrine, but it must be added that he is obstinate in his choice †."

The language of German divines is the same, or stronger, if possible. "Heresy, says Reuter, in a christian, or baptised person, is a wilful and obstinate error of the understanding opposite to some verity of faith.—So that three things are requisite to constitute heresy. 1st. In the understanding, an erroneous opinion against faith. 2dly. in the will, liberty and obstinacy." The third condition is, that the erring person be a baptised christian; otherwise his sin against faith is called infidelity, not heresy. After which our author thus goes on. "The obstinacy requisite to heresy is a deliberate and determined resolution to dissent from a truth revealed, and sufficiently proposed by the church, or some other general rule of faith ‡," The same doctrine is delivered by all the other German divines, to whom I now can have recourse, and they cite to the same purpose Suarez, &c.

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\* Bergier, *Deisme refuté par lui même*—t. par. let. 4.  
 † *Instruct. pastorale sur l'herésie*—pag. 67. edit. in 4to.  
 ‡ Reuter theol. moral. p. 2. trac. 1. quæst. 3.

If the doctrine imputed to us could be found any where, it would probably be in Spain and Italy: But you have just heard Suarez, the first of Spanish theologians, quoted to disprove it; and with respect to Italy, Bellarmine's opinion has been stated; to which I shall add that of St. Thomas of Aquin, whose great authority and sanctity of life have procured him the title of the angel of the school. He teaches then, "that even they, to whom the gospel was never announced, will be excused from the sin of infidelity, though justly punished for others, they may commit, or for that, in which they were born. But if any of them conduct themselves in the best manner they are able" (by conforming, I presume, to the laws of nature and directions of right reason) "God will provide for them in his mercy\*."

You will observe, that in the passage quoted from Bergier, he says that the doctrine delivered by him *has been the opinion of all divines since St. Augustin*. This holy father, who usually expresses himself with great force and severity against real heretics, requires nevertheless the same conditions of obstinacy and perverseness, as the divines above mentioned. "I call him only a heretic," says he, who, when the doctrine of catholic faith is manifested to him, prefers resistance †". Again: "They are not to be ranked with heretics, who without *per- tinacious animosity* maintain their opinion, though false  
" and

\* Si qui tamen eorum fecissent, quod in se est, Dominus eis secundum suam misericordiam provioisset, mittendo eis prædicatorem fidei, sicut Petrum Cornelio. *Comm.* in cap. 10. epist. ad Rom. lect. 3.

† Nondum hæreticum dico, nisi manifestatâ doctrinâ catholicæ fidei, resistere maluerit. De bapt. contr. Donat. lib. 4. c. 16.

"and mischievous, especially if they did not broach it themselves with forward presumption; but received it from their mistaken and seduced parents, and if they seek truth with earnest solicitude, and a readiness to retract, when they discover it\*."

To these decisive authorities of St. Augustin might be added others, as well from him, as from Jerom, Tertulian, &c. but surely enough has been said to convince you, that we have no need to shelter our doctrines under the covering of modern glosses, and that the language of English and other divines of our church has in this respect been perfectly uniform.

Yet in spite of this uniformity, we must still have obtruded upon us the doctrine of confining salvation to those only of our own communion; for, without it, the boasted infallibility of a living authority, that is, of our church, is no more. (Let. p. 12.) Why so? Because "whoever admits this authority as an undoubted article of christian religion, must necessarily pronounce condemnation upon those, who wilfully reject it." (Let. *ibid.*) Therefore we must likewise pronounce condemnation upon those, who reject it through *ignorance and inculpable error*. Is this inference logical? And yet must it not follow from the premises to make any thing of the Chaplain's argument?

When I come to consider, how a man of genius and extensive knowledge, as he surely is, could bring himself to

\* Qui sententiam suam, quævis falsam atque perversam, nulla pertinaci animositate deservunt, præsertim quæ non audaciæ præsumptionis suæ pepererunt, sed à se ictis atque in errore lapsis parentibus acceperunt, quarunt autem causâ sollicitudine veritatem, corrigi parati cum invenerint, neququam sunt inter hæreticos deputandi. Aug. epist. 43. ad Glorium & Eleusium.

to think, that we hold the doctrine imputed to us, I am at a loss to account for it. He received his education in a school, and from men, who have been charged, unjustly indeed, both by protestants and some catholics, with giving too great latitude to the doctrine of invincible, or inculpable ignorance. He heard from them, that in certain cases, this ignorance extended even to, and excused from the guilt of violating the law of nature\*. Can he then imagine, that we deem it insufficient to exempt from criminality the disbelief of positive facts, such as the divine revelation of certain articles of religion?

For all this, he still labours to fix on us this obnoxious tenet, with a perseverance, which carries with it an air of animosity. He says, that our controvertists make use of the argument cited in his 10th page; protestants allow salvation to catholics; catholics allow it not to protestants; therefore the religion of catholics is the safest. Hence he infers, that we deny salvation to all, but those of our own communion.

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\* I will set down two propositions, which the Chaplain will remember to have been generally taught in the schools of theology, which we both frequented. 1. *Possibilis est ignorantia invincibilis juris naturæ, quoad conclusiones remotiores a primis principiis.* 2. *ignorantia invincibilis juris naturæ excusat a peccato.* I will take this occasion to thank my former friend for the justice he has done (p. 15. note) to the body of men, to which in our happier days we both belonged; and whom the world will regret, when the want of their services will recal the memory of them, and the voice of envy, of obloquy, of misrepresentation will be heard no more. I am sorry, he mixed one word with their commendations, which cannot be admitted; and that he should ascribe ironically to the tender mercy and justice of the church those oppressions and acts of violence, in which she had no part, and which were only imputable to the unworthy condescension, and, I fear, sinister views of an artful and temporising pontiff.

If his inference were conclusive, I should have cause to bring a similar charge of cruelty and uncharitableness against protestants. For their great champion, Chillingworth, answering the very objection stated by the Chaplain, expressly teaches, that catholics allow, that ignorance and repentance may excuse a protestant from damnation, tho' dying in his error; "and this, continues he, is all the charity, which by your own (his opponents) confession also, the most favourable protestants allow to papists\*." To this I shall add, that both Chillingworth and the Chaplain appear to misapprehend the argument of our controvertists; which is this. You protestants allow our church to be a true church; that it retains all the fundamental articles of religion, without teaching any damnable error; your universities have declared, on a solemn consultation, that a person, not pretending to the plea of invincible ignorance, may safely leave the protestant church, and become a member of ours, because it is a safe way to salvation. The Chaplain knows, that many of the most eminent protestant writers have asserted, that all the essentials of true religion are to be found in our communion; and surely the possibility of obtaining salvation is one of these essentials; he knows, that on a great occasion this was the determination of the protestant university of Helmstadt. But on the other hand, catholic divines always teach, that the true church of Christ being only one, inculpable error alone can justify a protestant for continuing out of her communion; and therefore that it is safest to become a catholic. Such is the argument employed by some of our controvertists. I do not undertake to make it good, but

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\* Chilling. Religion of Protestants, &c. ch. 7. p. 306.

I mean only to prove, by stating it fairly, that the Chaplain is not warranted to draw from it that odious consequence, with which we are unjustly charged.

If then we do not hold the doctrine of exclusive salvation, can the horrible tenet of persecution, which, he says, is the consequence of it\*, be imputed to us? I do not indeed see their necessary connexion; but I know, that protestants and catholics equally deviate from the spirit of their religion, when fanaticism and fiery zeal would usurp that controul over mens minds, to which conviction and fair argument have an exclusive right.

You now see, that neither the prohibition of reading heretical books, nor our doctrine concerning the possibility of salvation are any hindrances to free enquiry in matters of religion. If for so many years they withheld the Chaplain from making it, he was withheld by unnecessary fears, and a phantom of his own imagination. Another cause too concurred, as he tells us, to hold him in ignorance. *I am not ashamed, says he, to confess, that it was the claim to infallibility, which prevented me so long from examining the tenets of the Roman church.* (Lect. p. 22.) Here indeed, if he means the claim of infallibility, as it rests upon proofs of every kind, I do not wonder at its preventing him from examining minutely all the difficulties to which some of our tenets singly may be liable. For if things beyond our comprehension are proposed to our belief, the immediate consideration should be; by whom are they proposed? When the authority, which proposes them, claims to be infallible, reason suggests this farther enquiry; on what grounds is this claim established? Is it found to be established on solid and convincing

\* Lect. p. 11, 12.

vincing proofs? Then certainly it becomes agreeable to the dictates of reason, and the soundest principles of morality, to assent to the doctrines so proposed, tho' we may not fully comprehend them, nor be able to give a satisfactory answer to every difficulty that human ingenuity may allege against them. This is the mode of reasoning used by all defenders of revealed religion; they first apply themselves to prove the divine revelation of scripture; having done this, they then infer, that its mysteries and unsearchable doctrines must be received, as coming from an unerring authority. And so far the Chaplain will surely agree with me.

I cannot therefore see, why he speaks so contemptuously of Bellarmine's creed, (p. 17.) that *he believed, what the church believed; and that the church believed, what he believed.* For what do these words import more or less, than that he conformed his faith to that of the church; that to her decisions he submitted his judgment and belief so entirely, that the propositions recited from him were, in the language of logicians, convertible. And is not this the duty of every person, who believes the church to be infallible, as that great cardinal certainly did, after examining, if ever man did, all that was written against her infallibility. Where lies the difference between this *collier-like* (Lect. *ibid.*) profession of faith, and that of St. Augustin conforming his religion to that of the fathers his predecessors, *I believe, says he, what they believe; I hold, what they hold; I preach what they preach*.\*

The Chaplain goes on to tell the catholics of the city of Worcester, that "if a man's belief be not rational, if he submit to *human authority* without weighing or  
" under-

\* Aug. l. 1. cont. Julian. c. 5.

“ understanding the doctrines, which it inculcates, this belief is not faith. It is credulity, it is weakness \*.” Who doubts it? But if he submit to *divine* authority, though he do not fully comprehend the doctrines delivered, is this weakness and credulity? or is it the rational obedience of faith? From his own account of the promises of Christ (p. 28), his church can never fail in teaching the *fundamental and necessary* articles of religion, and the *great and essential tenets expressed in the apostles creed*. Is it then weakness and credulity, or rather true wisdom, to believe with entire submission these *fundamental articles, and essential tenets*? For the Chaplain has told us, that they are proposed by an authority, which the promises of Christ, so far at least, guard from error and delusion. And yet amongst these tenets, there are some beyond the reach of human comprehension. The Trinity, the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, his being conceived of the Holy Ghost, his crucifixion and death, his descending into hell, are, I presume, those doctrines of christianity, which the Chaplain deems fundamental; for they are all contained in the apostles creed. He is certainly unable to *weigh or understand* them. Nevertheless he acts rationally in admitting and believing them, because he conceives them to be revealed by an infallible guide. Can it then be folly and credulity in you to believe for a similar reason these and all other articles of your religion?

The vainest therefore of all controversies, and the most ineffectual for the discovery of truth, is, to dispute on the metaphysical nature of the doctrines of christianity. For instance, to prove the Trinity, should we set about the

\* Let. p. 17.

reading lectures on the divine persons and essence, on the eternal and necessary generation of the Word, &c.? This indeed would be folly, and we should speak a language unintelligible to our hearers and ourselves. In this and all similar cases, the only rational method is, to shew that the contested doctrine is proposed to our belief by an infallible authority. This undoubtedly would be the Chaplain's method in asserting against Arians, Socinians, and modern sectaries, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the eternity of future punishments; and such likewise is the method, by which we endeavour to establish the tenets, which he calls the *discriminating doctrines* of our church.

Apply these principles to all his reasonings in his 23d, 24th, and 25th pages, and see what they will come to. Set him in competition with a Deist, an Arian, a Socinian; and how will he extricate himself from his own arguments, when urged to subvert the infallibility of scripture, or the christian doctrines of original sin, of the Trinity, the Incarnation and redemption of mankind? *Religion and reason can never be at variance*, will they say with the Chaplain, *because the most rational religion must always be the best.* (P. 25.) *The language of reason was never yet rejected with impunity—she will be heard—she must be respected,* &c. (ibid.) *Do then some controverted texts of scripture make the Trinity and Incarnation of the Son of God as evident to reason, as it is plain to the most ordinary capacity, that three divine persons really distinct cannot be one and the same God? or that the eternal and immortal God cannot become a mortal and suffering man, which is a stumbling-block to the Jews; and to the Greeks, foolishness\*.*

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\* 1 Cor. i. ver. 23.



Will the Chaplain reply to the deist, and tell him, that the infallibility of scripture warrants his belief of these seemingly absurd tenets? He will be answered, that he begs the question; and in his own language, that *reason assures him (the deist) with greater evidence, than the infallibility of scripture is proved, that the Almighty requires not our belief of doctrines, which stand in direct contradiction to the only means, he has allowed us of arriving at truth,—our senses and understanding.*

Nor will the deist stop here; he will add, that the pretended infallibility of scripture must prevent the Chaplain from examining the tenets of the christian church. Sheltered under the garb of so gorgeous a prerogative, impressed upon the yielding mind of youth by men of sense and virtue; backed moreover by the splendour of supposed miracles and the horrors of damnation, opinions the most absurd and contradictory must frequently dazzle and overawe the understanding. *Amidst the fascinating glare of so mighty a privilege, the eye of reason becomes dim and inactive.* (P. 23.) Can the Chaplain or any other person tell us, why a Bolingbroke, or a Hume had not as good a right to use this argument against the general doctrines of christianity, as the Chaplain had to urge it against the discriminating doctrines of the catholic church?

Such are the difficulties, in which men involve themselves by extending the exercise of reason to matters beyond its competency. Let this excellent gift of our provident and bountiful Creator be employed, as has been said before, in examining the grounds for believing the scriptures to be infallible; but let it go no farther, when that infallibility is fully evinced. In the same manner, let your reason investigate with the utmost attention, and sincere desire of discovering truth, the motives for and a-

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gainst the church's infallibility; but if your inquiries terminate in a full conviction, of her having received this great prerogative from Jesus Christ, *the author and finisher of our faith*, submit with respect and docility to her decisions. The Chaplain himself, when less rapt in extacy with the beauties of reason, can acknowledge this: *Shew me, says he, the proofs of this infallibility, and if I do not admit them with every faculty of my soul, you have my leave to brand me with the pride of Lucifer.* (P. 23.)

You will not expect me to enter fully into this subject, and point out either to you or the Chaplain, the proofs which he requires. Neither my leisure, or inclination now allow me to undertake, what has been done by much abler hands. The Chaplain, and you too, I hope, know where to look for these proofs. Let him peruse the controversial works of Bellarmine, Bossuet, Nicole and Bergier, Mumford's Question of Questions, Manning's and Hawarden's writings on this subject; let him contrast them with Albertinus and Claude; with Chillingworth, Usher and bishop Hurd. There is no answering for the impressions, which the minds of different men may receive from perusing the same authors. I can only say, for my own part, that as far as my reading on this subject has extended, I have generally found, on one side, candour in stating the opposite doctrine, fairness in quotations, clearness and fullness in the answers, and consistency in maintaining and defending controverted points. On the other hand, I have often met with gross misrepresentation, unfair quotations, partial answers, and inconsistency of character in the controvertist; impugning and defending sometimes on the principles of a protestant, sometimes on those of a Socinian or deist, sometimes pretending

ing to model his religion on the belief of the four first ages of christianity; and at other times finding corruptions immediately after, if not coeval with the apostolical times.

On this subject therefore, whatever disadvantage it may be to our cause, I shall confine myself solely to the defensive, and endeavour to satisfy you, that the Chaplain has given no sufficient reason to shake the stability of your faith with respect to the infallibility of the church.

He observes, that the few scriptural texts, "which seem to countenance infallibility, appeared no longer conclusive, than he refused to examine them." (P. 27.) Why he ever refused to examine them, he is yet to explain; especially as the duty of his profession, and the particular course of his studies called for a more attentive and fuller examination of them, than the generality of christians are obliged to. Surely he does not mean to insinuate, that he was ever discouraged from, or deprived of the means of making the inquiry. Nor do I know why he mentions only a few texts, as countenancing the doctrine of infallibility, since the writers above named allege so many both of the Old and New Testament. The author of the *Catholic Scripturist*, whom the Chaplain might have found an adversary worthy of his Chillingworth and Usher, enumerates thirty texts to prove this point, besides others, to which he refers. Let us however hear the Chaplain's animadversions on the few, he has thought proper to consider.

Amongst other proofs of her infallibility, the catholic church alleges these words of Christ to St. Peter, Mat. xvi. ver. 18 *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

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The Chaplain observes (p. 28), that this text is wrongly translated, and that the Greek word *hades* MANIFESTLY imports death, and not hell. The alteration is not very material in itself, and might well pass unnoticed, were it not for the sake of shewing, how unsafe it is to trust to private interpretation of scripture, in opposition to the general sense and understanding of the church in all its ages. The Chaplain has taken up this interpretation from Befa, who, I believe, first suggested it. But I would fain ask these sagacious Greek critics, whether *hell* is not meant by that place, out of which the rich man (Luke xvi.) lifted up his eyes, and seeing Lazarus, wished he might be allowed to cool with water his tongue; for *I am tormented, said he, in this flame* \*. Was not hell that *place of torments*, which he wished his brethren might be warned to avoid, ver. 28? Now what says the Greek text in this place? *And in hell, en tō hadē, lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off.* If I did not deem this scripture passage sufficient to prove that the word *hades* does not manifestly import death, I could add many others equally conclusive; and could support them with the authority of some of the best Greek authors, as well as of Calvin, and even of Befa in contradiction to himself. Among the moderns, the Chaplain will not dispute the palm of Hebrew, and Greek literature, with Dr. Lowth, now bishop of London, or with his learned commentator, professor Michaelis of Gottingen. Let him read the bishop's elegant work, *de sacrâ Poesi Hebræorum, prælect. 7*; and the professor in his annotations on that prælection, and he will find them both decided in their opinion, that the Greek word *hades*, as well

as

\* Luke xvi. ver. 24.

as its correspondent Hebrew one, denotes not *death*, but the subterraneous receptacle of departed souls, which is pointedly expressive of the popular idea of hell.

But let us admit the Chaplain's interpretation; let Christ's words import in their obvious sense, that the church shall never *fail*, not that she shall never *err*. Does he not know, that the church fails principally by erring? How did she fail in the countries over-run with Arianism? Was it not by error in faith? and so in all countries corrupted by heresy. Thus likewise would the whole visible church have failed, had she proposed any error to be believed, as an article of faith. "For to do this, is to  
 " propose a lie, as upheld by divine authority; which is  
 " to fall no less foully, than he should fall, who should  
 " teach God to be an assumer and confirmer of lies.  
 " For whatsoever point any church held, as a point of  
 " their faith, they held it as a divine verity, affirmed  
 " and revealed by God. Therefore, if in any age, the  
 " visible church held any error for a point of faith, it  
 " did fail most miserably.\*"

The Chaplain's charge of unfaithful translation of scripture being thus removed, let us examine the meaning, he gives to the promises of Christ. The *obvious* one, he says is only this; "that neither the subtlety of infernal spirits, nor the passions of men, nor the violence of both shall ever succeed in overturning *his religion*, to which he has been pleased to annex perpetuity. *However feeble and disordered* his church may be at times, the powers of death shall never overcome her. She shall then only cease to exist, when time shall be no more." (P. 28.) If ever confident assertion stood in the

\* Mumford, Quest. of Quest. sect. 15.

the place of solid argument, here surely is an instance of it. What? Does Christ's promise to his church *obviously* convey the meaning imported in the Chaplain's exposition, particularly in the first member of the second sentence of it, when there is not a single word to justify that meaning? The promise is unlimited and unconditional; what right therefore has he to limit it? or if he have, why has not any one of us an equal right to limit Christ's promises *to teach his disciples all truth*, which the Chaplain says (p. 27.) he undoubtedly did? Why may we not say, that he taught them truth so far, as to prevent their falling into any *fundamental* error, sufficient to overturn the great principles of religion? Why may we not say, that his spirit was so far with the evangelists, as to direct them in teaching the *essential* doctrines of christianity, but not in guarding them against errors of less consequence? And why may we not thus give a mortal stab to the authority of scripture itself, by limiting its infallibility to those things only, which it may please each man's private judgment to deem *fundamental*?

"The text, continues the Chaplain, does not even *insinuate*, that the christian church should never teach any articles, besides such as are fundamental and necessary; or that some overbearing society of christians should not hold out many erroneous opinions as terms of communion to the rest of the faithful." If, by overbearing society of christians, the author mean not the church of Christ, he is certainly right; for to no such society was a divine promise ever made of its not falling into erroneous opinions; but if he mean, as he must to say any thing to the purpose, that it is not *even insinuated* in the promises of Christ, that his church shall never *hold out*

out erroneous opinions, as terms of communion, I am yet to learn the signification of plain words. "For, says an excellent author, if words retain their usual signification, we cannot charge the church of Christ with error, even against any one single article of faith, but we must draw this impious consequence from it, that he was either ignorant of the event of his promise, or unfaithful to it; and that after having in so solemn a manner engaged his sacred word to St. Peter, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church, he has nevertheless delivered her up to the power of Satan to be destroyed by him."

"This consequence will appear undeniable, if we consider the two following truths. 1st. *That faith is essential to the constitution of the church*; and 2dly, *that heresy destroys faith*. For it plainly follows hence, that if the whole church fall into heresy, she is without faith; and is no more the church, she was before, than a man can continue to be a man without a soul\*." If the church of Christ hold out erroneous opinions as terms of communion, does she not, by public authority, establish falsehood instead of truth, and the lies of Satan for the genuine word of God? How shall we be assured, that these errors are not destructive of the fundamental articles of christianity? Suppose, for instance, she require an idolatrous worship, or teach those *mysteries of iniquity*, mentioned in the Chaplain's letter (p. 11.) *the denying of salvation to all out of her own communion*, and the horrible heresy of persecution; will not the gates of hell then prevail against her? will not the promises of Christ be vain and deceitful?

But

\* Manning, *Shortest way to end disputes about religion*, chap. 1.

But it seems, the promises were not made to the church; not against her, but "against the *great and essential tenets* expressed in the apostles creed, and adopted through every age by the most numerous body of christians, *the gates of death or of hell will never prevail— They will ever retain sufficient light to conduct each upright and pious believer to all points of his duty, upon which his salvation depends.*" (Lét. p. 28-29.) So before, in giving us the *obvious* meaning of this disputed text, the Chaplain had found out, that the gates of hell were never to succeed in *overturning*, not the church, but the *religion* of Christ. (P. 28.) Are then the *great and essential tenets of the apostles creed*, and the *church* one and the same thing? Is the *christian religion*, that is, the christian system of belief and practice, the same thing, as the *society of christians* professing that system? When we are directed, Mat. xviii. v. 16 *to tell the church* of our offending brethren, are we to go and tell their offences to the *great and essential tenets* of christianity, or to the *christian religion*? It is not difficult to discover the advantage, or rather the fatal consequences to christianity, which an able but irreligious controvertist might hope to derive from this alteration. He might lay down, as the only fundamental articles of christian belief, some few, which offer no violence to his understanding or passions; and such, as having for this very reason been little contested, were generally admitted by sectaries of all denominations. He might then contend, that the promises of Christ refer only to the upholding of these articles; and that *the gates of hell shall never prevail* to their extinction. The religious societies professing to believe them may all perish in their turns; but the promises of

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Christ

Christ will abide, if a new society arise adhering to the same supposed *fundamental* tenets; she may adopt many errors indeed, and superinduce them on the foundation of faith. But for all this, the promises of Christ would not be made void; these promises not being intended in favour of any religious society or church, however the letter of them may sound, but only of the fundamental articles of religion. It will then be immaterial, whether we unite with catholics, protestants, or any ancient or modern sectaries, provided they admit the few doctrines, which each of us may lay down as fundamental of christianity; and we may call this being *catholic christians*; though the sincere friends of christianity, both catholic and protestant, have deemed such principles latitudinarianism in religion, and indeed subversive of all revealed religion.

Will the Chaplain say, that he did not intend to put the charge upon his readers, and that the expressions, I have noticed, fell inadvertently from his pen? Will he acknowledge, that without prejudice to his cause, the word *church* may be substituted, agreeably to the scriptural text, where he has placed, *great and essential articles*? Be it so; and let not his candour be impeached. But let us now see, what will come of his exposition. *Against the CHURCH the gates of hell will never prevail—but SHE will ever retain sufficient light to conduct EACH upright and pious believer to ALL points of his duty, upon which his salvation depends.* (P. 29.) If this be true, and necessarily true in virtue of the promises of Christ, then even in the most *deplorable era of superstition and ignorance* (Let. p. 31), in every preceding and subsequent era; even in that of the reformation, “the christian church retain-

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“ ed sufficient light to conduct each upright and pious  
“ believer to *all points* of his duty, upon which his salva-  
“ tion depended.” Need I point out the consequences  
ensuing to the first reformers from this doctrine; and  
consequently to those, who became their disciples? Need  
I tell you, that having separated themselves from the  
great body of christians throughout the world, they broke  
asunder the link of unity, and left a society, in which  
*sufficient light remained to conduct EACH upright and pious be-  
liever to ALL points of his duty?* And since this society is  
the same now, it then was, or rather more pure, for,  
(the Chaplain says, *the Roman church is daily undergoing a  
silent reformation*, p. 12), it still retains that light, and  
consequently still has the promises of Christ pledged for  
its continuance. But what assurance has he, or any one,  
who leaves this society, of the promises of Christ extend-  
ing to that, which he embraces in its stead?

Before I conclude upon this text, you will allow me  
to state the Chaplain's objection to the catholic explana-  
tion of it, and to give you the answer, as I find it ready  
made to my hands. The objection is, that the text  
might be as well alleged to prove, that sin and wicked-  
ness cannot prevail against the church, as it is brought  
to prove, that error and heresy cannot; for *vice is as for-  
midable an enemy to religion, as error*; and *the christian sys-  
tem is as perfectly calculated to make us good men, as orthodox  
believers.* (P. 28.) “So far” the Chaplain “is in the  
“ right; that in virtue of this and many other promises  
“ of the word of God, sin and wickedness shall never so  
“ generally prevail, but that the church of Christ shall  
“ be always *holy* both in her doctrine, and in the lives of  
“ many both pastors and people living up to her doctrine.

“ But

“ But then there is this difference between the case of  
 “ damnable error in doctrine, and that of sin and wick-  
 “ edness in practice, that the former, if established by  
 “ the whole body of church guides, would of course in-  
 “ volve also the whole body of God’s people, who are  
 “ commanded to hear their church guides, and do what  
 “ they teach them; whereas in the latter case, if pastors  
 “ are guilty of any wicked practices contrary to their  
 “ doctrine, the faithful are taught to do, what they say,  
 “ and not what they do. Mat. xxiii. ver. 2, 3\*.”

To shew farther, that infallibility in faith is not neces-  
 sarily attended with unsparring sanctity of manners, let it  
 be observed, that tho’ in time of the Old Testament, God  
 was present with his infallible spirit to David and Solo-  
 mon, when they wrote their books received into the can-  
 non of scripture; yet he did not prevent the first from  
 committing adultery and murder; nor the second, from  
 going after *Astartoth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after  
 Michom, the abomination of the Ammonites,* 1 Kings xi. ver.  
 15. Neither did Christ render his apostles and evange-  
 lists impeccable, though he conferred on them the privi-  
 lege of infallibility. When the Chaplain has discovered  
 in the decrees of infinite wisdom the true reason of this  
 conduct, he will at the same time be able to give a satis-  
 factory answer to his own objection, and tell us, why it  
 may not please Divine Providence to ordain the preserva-  
 tion of the church from error, and yet suffer the indivi-  
 dual members of it to be liable to sin and immorality.

I now proceed to the promises of Christ made at his  
 last supper, in that discourse, which “ is, as it were,  
 “ his last will and testament; every word whereof seems

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\* Letter to a friend concerning infallibility. London, 1743.

“ to be the overflowing of a heart filled with concern for  
 “ his future church\*.” These promises the Chaplain  
 has stated compendiously enough. “ The divine author  
 “ of the christian religion promised, says he, to teach  
 “ his disciples all truth, John xiv. 15, 16. And he  
 “ undoubtedly did so. But where did he so far insure  
 “ the faith of their successors, as to secure them from  
 “ building *wood, hay, and stubble* upon the foundation of  
 “ the gospel?” (p. 27.) He promised to be *with his dis-  
 “ ciples to the end of the world,* Mat. xix. (should be xxviii.)  
 “ ver. 20. And who denies it? He is with his church  
 “ by his protection, by his grace, by the lights, he com-  
 “ municates to her, by the strength, which he exerts in  
 “ supporting her against violence and temptation.” (ibid.)

Such, according to the Chaplain, is the explanation  
 of these passages from St. John. His reasons for so ex-  
 plaining them shall be presently examined. I will first  
 set the texts down more fully, as they stand in the gospel.  
 Our Saviour’s words spoken to his apostles, and recorded  
 by St. John in his 14th chapter, are these: *I will ask my  
 Father, and he will send you another Comforter to abide with  
 you FOR EVER,* John xiv. ver. 16. And soon after he  
 informs them, who this Comforter is to be, and to what  
 end his Father will send him. *The Comforter, says Christ,  
 whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all  
 things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I  
 have said unto you* (ibid ver. 16.) This promise is again  
 repeated in the 16th chapter, which is a continuation of  
 the same discourse. *I have yet many things to say unto you;  
 but you cannot hear them now; however when the spirit of  
 truth is come, he will lead you into all truth.*

In

\* Shortest way, &c.

In these texts, we see the means clearly and distinctly set down, by which the church is to be for ever protected, viz. the perpetual assistance of the divine Spirit, teaching and leading the apostles and their successors, that is, the body of pastors, into *all truth* necessary and relating to the service of God, and salvation of man.

The Chaplain denies not the sufficiency of the means; he even acknowledges, that the Spirit of God *undoubtedly led the disciples into all truth*; but to them he limits the extent of the promises; the faith of their successors is left to be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine\*; or at best, to be modelled upon their own fallible interpretation of scripture. For where, says he, did the divine author of our religion insure the faith of their successors? (P. 27.) I answer, in the plain, unambiguous words, as I have cited them from John xiv. ver. 16; for they expressly say, that the Comforter, or Holy Ghost shall abide with the apostles for ever; which “ though addressed to them, “ as the whole sermon at our Saviour’s last supper was, “ yet like many other truths contained in it, could not “ regard their persons alone; for they were not to live “ for ever; but comprehended likewise all those, who “ were to succeed them in after ages. And that this “ was the intent of our Saviour’s promise appears clearly “ from his last words before his ascension recorded by “ St. Matthew †.”

These words of St. Matthew are in part cited by the Chaplain, as you have seen; but they deserve to be set down at large. *All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them*

\* Ephes. iv. ver. 14.

† Shortest way, &c. sect. 2.

*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whichsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you ALWAYS (in the Greek, all days) even unto THE END OF THE WORLD\*.* Here surely Christ promises to be perpetually, even to the world’s end, with them, who were to teach and baptise all nations. Were the apostles, to whom these words were immediately addressed, to perform that function for ever? He orders them, and consequently their successors in the ministry of the word, to teach *all things*, whichsoever he had commanded. Does not this evidently imply, that they were themselves to be assisted by the Spirit of God, to discover what those things are? Or did he impose upon them an obligation, without affording the means of compliance? If they were to be assisted in discovering and teaching *all things* delivered by Christ; if they were ordered to *teach*, and he was to be present with them in the ministry of teaching, *even to the world’s end*; does not this import a correspondent obligation in the hearers to receive and embrace the doctrines so delivered? Will any one say, that before he embraces them, he must be assured, that the doctrines, which he hears, are the things commanded by Jesus Christ? Will he say, that he must be satisfied, they are agreeable to the written word of God? I will answer him, that by this proceeding he would render the commission of teaching, entrusted by Jesus Christ to his apostles and their successors, vain and nugatory; he would transfer the ministry from them, and render it the duty of every person to be his own teacher; he would destroy the divine œconomy of the church, in which Christ gave *some apostles, and some prophets,*

\* Mat. xxviii. ver. 20, 21.

phets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ—Eph. iv. ver. 11, 12. The rational inquiry remaining, after a conviction of the divinity of the christian religion, is; are they, who deliver these doctrines, the lawful successors of the apostles? Can they trace to them their line of succession? If they can, we must account of them as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God\*, from whom we may learn certainly the truth of the gospel. For though each pastor be not so in his private capacity, yet as far as he teaches us in concert with the rest, I mean, in as much as he delivers the faith of the church, in that respect he is infallible.

The Chaplain in his comments upon the famous passage of Mat. xvi. 18. insinuated, that though the gates of hell should never prevail against the church to the suppression of the points of faith deemed by him fundamental, yet false opinions might be superinduced, and so far error might prevail. He here again would establish the same doctrine; and though compelled by the evident authority of scripture to confess, that Christ communicated infallibility to his disciples, he thinks this no security, that their successors will not build on the foundation of the gospel, *wood, hay and stubble*. If by these words, the Chaplain understand corrupt doctrines in faith and manners, it is plain from the very expressions of Christ that he is mistaken. For *all truth* in matters of faith and salvation, into which the spirit was to lead them, is exclusive of *all error* in the same line. In a word, either the promises of the assisting spirit of truth are confined to the

\* 1 Cor. iv. ver. 7.

immediate disciples of Christ, or not. If they are, then we have no assurance of the church's continuing even in the profession of fundamental points; if not, then upon what authority are the promises to be restrained to the church's being guided into *some* truth, when they expressly declare, that she shall be guided into *ALL TRUTH*?

But is not Christ with his church by his protection, by his grace, &c. ? Can he not be with her without rendering her infallible? Is he not with every just man, &c. (Let. p. 27.) Yes surely; he affords protection and grace; he might not have rendered her infallible; but when he informs us, that he will direct his church by the *spirit of truth*, consequently a spirit opposite to that of error; when in Mat. xxviii. he promises to the pastors of his church such a kind of presence, assistance, and guidance, as shall qualify them effectually to *teach all those things*, which he himself taught, and this for all times; shall we esteem him to be no otherwise with them, than with particular righteous men? Where has he ever promised these that singular and uninterrupted assistance of the spirit of truth? To private persons the Holy Ghost is given as the spirit of sanctification; but to the church as the spirit of truth, as well as sanctification, guiding her into all truth, and directly excluding all error from her.

I hope it will now appear to you, that the proofs of the church's infallibility from St. John, and Mat. xxviii. are not invalidated by the Chaplain's objections. I have adduced no arguments to confirm you in your belief of this capital doctrine; but meeting the Chaplain on his own ground, have only endeavoured to defend it from his objections, whom we are grieved to have for an adversary. I forbear to allege other numerous testimonies



of scripture, the concurrent authority of holy fathers, and the whole conduct of church government from the very days of the apostles, which necessarily supposes this, as an unquestionable article of christian faith. " I know very well, that no text of holy scripture is so clear, but persons of much wit may find interpretations to perplex it, or set it in a false light; but the question is not, whether the texts, I have produced, may with some pain and study be interpreted otherwise, than the Roman catholic church has always understood them; but whether in their natural, obvious and literal sense, they do not lead an unbiassed reader to the idea and belief of an infallible church. Now then let us suppose, that the contradictories of the texts, I have quoted, were found in holy writ. As for instance, suppose our Saviour had said to St. Peter, *I will not build my church upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall prevail against it.* Suppose he had said to his apostles, *I will not be with you to the end of the world. I will not send the Holy Ghost to abide with you for ever. He shall not teach you all things, nor lead you into all truth.* Would not all men of sound sense have concluded from such texts, that there is no such thing as an infallible church on earth? They certainly would, because the natural and obvious meaning of them is so plain, that it is impossible not to draw that consequence from them. Now if one part of two contradictories cannot but force a man of an unbiassed judgment to conclude against the doctrine of infallibility, the other part is surely of equal force to oblige him to conclude in favour of it. So that it is nothing to the purpose, whether protestants can, or cannot strain the texts, I

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" have produced, from their natural and obvious meaning; but it is much to the purpose to consider, whether they can bring any evidence from scripture to disprove the infallibility of the church of equal strength and clearness to the texts, I have brought to prove it\*.

The Chaplain's argument against infallibility next to be considered is that, which he truly calls a *hackneyed* one; After reading this answer, you may likewise judge, whether it be a *conclusive* one.

In the author of *the Case stated between the Church of Rome and the Church of England*, the argument is thus laid down. " You (Roman catholics) believe the scriptures, because the church bids you, and you believe the church, because the scriptures bid you." And he triumphantly adds, *that this is the old circle, out of which we can never conjure ourselves.*

Let us now first examine the principles of logic, and find out, what is understood by a vicious circle. We shall find it to be that kind of argument by which two propositions reciprocally prove each other; and neither of them is proved by any other medium; as if a man were to attempt to prove that a stone fell, because it was heavy; and that it was heavy, because it fell, without being able to assign any other reason either of its falling, or its gravity. But if its gravity were demonstrable from other considerations, then from that property its falling might justly be inferred; and if its having fallen should, for instance, be attested by credible eye-witnesses, its gravity might be deduced from its falling; the cause in this instance inferring the effect; and the effect proving the existence of the cause.

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\* Shortest way to end disputes, chap. 1. sect. 2.

Having premised so much, now let us analyse the catholic faith, and see if we reason as badly, as the Chaplain asserts.

The catholic reasoner has only to open his eyes, and he will discover, that his church is in the practice of determining controversies of faith by the concurrent authority of the episcopal body. But this view alone does not give him any undoubted assurance of the infallibility of her determinations. He is led therefore next to consider, when the church first exercised this authority. Did she assume it in ages of darkness and ignorance? Did she usurp it with a high hand, contrary to the usage of the first ages? What information will the christian collect in the course of this inquiry? He will find living monuments of this prerogative being always exercised, even from the days of the apostles and throughout every succeeding age. I say, *living* monuments; for they are now subsisting; and still afford as evident proof of the exercise of the authority, as if the facts had passed in our own time, and within our own memory; or as full proof, as we have of the courts of judicature of this state having heretofore decided the legal controversies of the citizens thereof. For instance, the abrogating of circumcision, and other observances of the Jewish law, is a still subsisting monument of the power of deciding being claimed and exercised by the church. Such likewise is the custom of not re-baptising persons baptised by heretics; such is the Nicene creed, and particularly the word, *consubstantial*, making part of it. These monuments, to omit innumerable others, owe their existence to the exercise of the definitive authority of the church in matters of faith. The inquiring christian will farther discover a  
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most conspicuous monument of it in the canon of holy scripture. Many books therein received were some time doubted of; others were contended for; which are now rejected. The church interposed her authority, and the canon of scripture became established. On these facts, palpable, manifest, and of public notoriety, the christian will reason thus. The church, even from the apostles time, has always exercised the authority of deciding controverted points; her interposition would be of no avail, if her authority were not to be considered as definitive and infallible. The primitive christians so considered it. Whoever refused submission, was cast from the church, and reputed as a heathen and publican. On these grounds will the christian be induced to believe her infallibility; happy, that his belief arise not from a series of abstruse reasoning, but is built upon public, notorious facts, within the reach of the most common understanding. The church has always, from the first æra of christianity, exercised the right of judging in matters of faith, and requiring obedience to her decisions; the monuments attesting it are certain and visible. The exercise of such a right, without infallibility, would be vain and nugatory; therefore she is infallible. After thus discovering her infallibility upon the evidence of notorious facts, it is a subject of much comfort to the sincere christian, as well as a confirmation of his faith, to find the same truth attested by the words of scripture; and having before believed it for the evidence just mentioned, he now likewise believes it for the authority of scripture, at the same time, that he believes scripture for the authority of the church. Where now is the circle of false reasoning? Is not infallibility first demonstrated from other considerations,

tions, before it is demonstrated from scripture? And is not this alone, in the principles of sound logic, sufficient to destroy the magic of this famous circle, and the argument built upon it? But indeed this argument is many ways vulnerable, and you may find it otherwise destroyed in the authors referred to in the note\*.

One word more concerning this hackneyed argument, and we will be done with it. Let it be taken for granted, that our process of reasoning runs round a circle; a deist, an infidel, a disbeliever of scripture might with propriety object to it. But how can the Chaplain do so, or any person professing his belief of scripture infallibility? For admitting this infallibility, he admits one of the propositions, which reciprocally prove each other; and therefore in arguing against him, we may logically infer the church's infallibility from texts of scripture; it being a common principle with us both, that scripture is divinely inspired; and no one is bound to prove a principle admitted by his adversary.

The Chaplain produces against the Church's infallibility another argument, which he might likewise have called a hackneyed one; for it has been urged with great perseverance by our adversaries. He says, that *all Roman catholics are bound to admit an infallible authority; yet few of them agree, where or in whom it resides.* (P. 26. note.) When I have met with this argument in the writings of opponents little acquainted with our principles, of whom there are many, it has not surprised me. But that the Chaplain should likewise insist upon it, is really matter of astonishment. For he must know, that in the doctrine

\* The true Church of Christ, p. 2. ch. 3. sect. 3. Shortest way, &c. part 2. sect. 2.

trine which we teach, as belonging to faith in this point, and as an article of communion, there is no variation; and with all his reading and recollection, I will venture to assert, that he cannot cite one catholic divine, who denies infallibility to reside in the body of bishops united and agreeing with their head, the bishop of Rome. So that, when the Chaplain says, that *some schoolmen have taught the infallibility of the pope—some place it in a general council; others in the pope and council received by the whole church* (note *ibid.*), he is under a great mistake; for the last is not a mere opinion of schoolmen, but the constant belief of all catholics; a belief, in which there is no variation. Some divines indeed hold the pope, as Christ's vicar on earth, to be infallible, even without a council; but with this opinion faith has no concern, every one being at liberty to adopt or reject it, as the reasons for or against may affect him.

The Chaplain adds in the same place, that since the council of Trent, many things have been *unanimously taught* respecting the pope's authority, which are, I own, new to me, and which, I confidently aver, he cannot make good. Nay, so far are they from being taught unanimously since the council of Trent, that they are not taught at all, for instance, in France; and are expressly contradicted by the maxims and solemn determinations of the Gallican clergy in the year 1782; to which maxims and determinations the theological schools there have constantly conformed.

Nor is it only in France, that many of the doctrines are rejected, which, he says, are taught *unanimously* amongst us; but they are exploded in every catholic country in the world. The body of bishops every where claim a divine

divine right, in virtue of their ordination, to interpret the decrees of councils, and the ordinances of the popes. The Chaplain having discarded his former religion, appears likewise to have erased from his memory the theological principles of our schools.

He concludes his note with a curious piece of reasoning. *A christian, he says, may mistake the words of a pope (the meaning of the words, I presume), as easily as he can mistake the words of scripture.* So undoubtedly he may; and for this very reason a living authority is necessary to explain uncertainties, to remove ambiguities. But perhaps he means to carry his argument into the very heart of our principles, and deny, that even a living authority can speak a language clear enough to determine doubts and convict obstinacy. But few will be persuaded, that the powers of living language are so limited; as well might he attempt to persuade us, that when parties litigate on the interpretation of the law, the judges cannot deliver sentence in terms clear enough to determine the controversy.

You have hitherto seen the Chaplain endeavour to disprove the church's inallibility by his interpretation of certain passages of scripture, and by discovering fallacies and inconsistencies in our doctrines on this subject. Not content with thus attacking this capital tenet of our religion, he sets about to prove that the church may err, because in fact she has erred. To shew it, he alleges first, that she formerly taught doctrines as of faith, which she now rejects as contrary to faith. 2dly, She suppressed for a time certain tenets, which ought to have been taught at all times, or not taught at all. 3dly, She requires a belief of things, which are not contained in scripture,

scripture, as is acknowledged even by some of our own divines.

How does he prove the first of these charges? By asserting (p. 29, 30.) that *the doctrine of the millennium, now rejected by the church, was maintained as an article of the catholic faith by almost every father, who lived immediately after the times of the apostles.* In opposition to this very positive assertion, I will take upon me to say, that not one of the primitive fathers held the opinion here mentioned as an article of catholic faith and communion. At the very time of its prevalence (for it was indeed adopted by Irenæus, Justin the Martyr, &c.) it was combated by others not less zealously attached to the church's communion, as is acknowledged even by Justin himself, who speaking of the millennium says: "I have already confessed to you, ô Trypho, that I and many others of the same mind with me, do think it will come to pass; but I have also signified that many, *who are of pure and pious christian sentiments, do not think so\*.*" Do these words indicate, that the millenarian doctrine *was maintained, as an article of the catholic faith by almost every primitive father, as is asserted by the Chaplain?* Do they not clearly prove, that even its ablest advocates, amongst whom Justin surely was, did not consider it as such, but as an opinion open to discussion and contradiction? And accordingly Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History cites passages of a work written against this doctrine in the very beginning of the third century by Caius, a catholic priest †, the cotemporary of Justin and Irenæus.

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\* Just. Mart. Dial. cum Trypho. p. 306. edit. Colon. 1687.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 22.

I need take no notice of what the Chaplain adds \*, that it was the decided opinion of almost all the primitive fathers, that the souls of good men did not enjoy the beatific vision previous to the general resurrection; for since he does not say, that this opinion ever became an article of catholic faith, as it certainly never did, I may be allowed to suspend any investigation of this subject, which has been ably and solidly discussed by Bellarmine long ago †.

The Chaplain argues secondly, that the church has erred, because she regards some articles at present, as articles of faith, which for many ages were debated as matters of opinion ‡. This we freely admit; and, I hope, without any prejudice to the claim of infallibility; though the Chaplain thinks, that a very forcible argument arises from this fact; for these doctrines having been delivered by Jesus Christ and his apostles, either as essential, or not; if the first, she forfeited her claim to infallibility by omitting to teach them for many ages; and if the second, she equally forfeits it by imposing as necessary to be believed, what neither Christ or his apostles did so teach.

Before I proceed to a direct answer, it may be proper to premise, that the distinction of *essentials*, and *not essentials*; *fundamentals* and *not fundamentals* in faith, to which the Chaplain so often recurs, is not admitted by us in his sense, and that of other protestant authors. We hold all revealed doctrines, when sufficiently proposed to our understanding, to be *essential* in this respect, that under pain of disobedience and heresy, we are bound to believe and submit our understanding to them; and the reason is, because we conceive of all doctrines so proposed, that they

\* Note, *ibid.*

† Bell. de Sanct. Beatitud. l. I.

‡ P. 33.

they are revealed by God, who neither can err, or lead into error. Now whether the doctrine be in its own nature, or in our estimation of great importance, or not, it equally claims our assent, if divine authority is pledged for the truth of it. In another sense indeed, some points of faith are more essential and fundamental, than others; for without our knowledge, or indeed without any revelation of some of them, christianity might subsist; whereas other points are so interwoven with the system and œconomy of it, that the explicit profession and belief of them is implied in the very idea of a christian. But, as I before said, they both rest upon the same authority, that is, the word of God; and demand an equally firm assent, when sufficiently proposed to our understanding. Why are we obliged to believe every fact and circumstance contained in the Old and New Testament, as soon as we come to the knowledge of it? Is it, because nothing therein is related, which does not affect the very vitals of christianity? or is it not rather, because divine authority is pledged for the entire truth of scripture?

This leads to a plain answer to the objection. All doctrines taught by Christ and his apostles were delivered as *necessary* to be believed, whenever the faithful should receive sufficient evidence of their divine revelation. But till they had that evidence, the belief was not obligatory; and christians were at liberty to discuss the doctrines with all freedom, provided they did so in an habitual disposition to submit to the authority established by Jesus Christ, whenever it should interfere in determining the uncertainty. So, before the holding of the first council at Jerusalem, some true christians maintained circumcision to

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be necessary\*. And when the apostles and ancients came together to consider of this matter, there was much disputing, (v. 6, 7.) But after the decision of the council, it pleased the apostles and the ancients with the whole church to issue their letter or decree against the necessity of circumcision, to which decree all were now obliged to submit under pain of heresy. Here I would fain ask, if there were no true catholicity of belief before this council; and whether this decision destroyed the unity of Christ's church. For after the decision, all true christians believed as an article of faith, what they before conceived to be matter of opinion †.

The Chaplain's formidable dilemma (p. 33, 34.) turns out therefore a very harmless one; the doctrines, he refers to, were delivered as *essential*, that is, I suppose, essentially to be believed, whenever they came to be sufficiently proposed, as revealed by God, but they were not essentially to be believed, till they were so proposed. And the church, ever guided by the Spirit of God, sees when the dangers threatening her children from *false prophecies arising and seducing many*, Mat. xxiv. v. 11. call upon her to examine the faith committed to her keeping and preserved in holy scripture and the chain of tradition. In these perilous moments she unfolds the doctrines, and presents them to christians as preservatives from the delusions of novelty, the refinements of false philosophy, and the misinterpretations of private and presumptuous judgment. Thus when Arius and his followers endeavoured to establish principles subversive of the divinity of the Son of God, to check the growth of this error, the church defined clearly and explicitly his consubstantiality with the

\* Acts xv. v. 1.

† See Chap. Lett. p. 34.

the Father. Previous to which decision, the faithful contented themselves with acknowledging his divine nature; but that the belief of it included consubstantiality, was not yet sufficiently proposed to them, and therefore could not be an object of their faith.

The principles indeed of the Chaplain would, if admitted, clearly prove, that neither his, nor the faith of any one, who admits all the books of scripture, is the same with that of the first christians; nay more, that the faith of these last was continually changing, as long as the apostles were alive. For he lays it down, that if any points are believed, as essential, to day, which formerly were not so believed, there is no longer an unity of faith. (Lett. p. 34.) Now the apostles at distant periods of their lives sent epistles and instructions to the different churches, which they then, and we now receive as of divine inspiration. But did they not from these writings collect information, which they had not before? and did they not believe the information given, as infallibly true? For instance, when St. Paul wrote his second epistle to the Thessalonians, did they not understand from it, contrary to what they had before conceived, that the last general judgment was not immediately to happen? If so, then was their faith, according to the Chaplain, no longer the same it had been. Moreover, some of Christ's flock died before any, and many more before all the apostles; St. John, it is known, lived upwards of sixty years after his master's death, and wrote his revelation, and his gospel a very little while before his own. It follows then again, that the christians, who died without having either seen, or heard of his gospel, or revelation, had not the same faith with those, who after-

afterwards saw and believed them. These consequences may be extended much farther; and, by adhering to the principles of the Chaplain, it may be shewn, that for many ages christians either did not believe *essential* doctrines; or that it is not *essential* now to admit many books of scripture, which nevertheless he who should reject, would not be deemed a christian. For it is notorious that long after the apostles time, several scriptural books were of uncertain authority, the authors of them not being ascertained; as for instance, the revelation, the epistle to the Hebrews, the second of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, those of S. Jude and St. James. During all this time therefore, it was not *essential* to believe these writings to be divinely inspired; but will the Chaplain say, that it is not now *essential* to believe it? What would one of his controversial heroes, Dr. Hurd, say, if we were to deny the authority of St. John's revelation? For though I have not had an opportunity to see his *discourses on the prophecies*, yet I conclude from the occasion of his preaching them, that the revelation has furnished him his arguments, such as they are, to prove the *apostasy of papal Rome*, as it did his predecessor Jurieu, whose *reveries* the illustrious Bossuet exposed as completely, as, I doubt not, all those of the lecturers of the Warburton foundation\* will one day be.

To revert to our subject: Was all unity of faith destroyed in the church, when the above mentioned books of scripture were received into the canon? For it is certain that some things were then required to be believed,

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\* Dr. Warburton, late bishop of Gloucester, founded an annual course of lectures to prove the *apostasy of papal Rome*. Dr. Hurd's *discourses* were the first on this occasion.

which before were not required. After St. John published his gospel, wherein are contained many things not related by the other evangelists, did not these things become objects of faith, which before had not been so? As long as the apostles lived, and preached, and wrote to the churches, *teaching them to observe all things, whichsoever their divine master had commanded them*, Mat. xxviii. v. 21. did not *new* matter continually arise to exercise the faith of their disciples? If then it be any objection to a *living authority*, that the number of necessary tenets must increase, as *decisions multiply* (Ch. Let. p. 34), the objection is as strong against the authority of the apostles, which the Chaplain admits (p. 27), as against that of a church equally endowed with infallibility in deciding on faith and morals.

The Chaplain's reasonings from page 30, to page 34, properly belong to the division, we are now considering; but being desirous to place all his objections to particular tenets of our church in one point of view, I shall arrange them under the last division. On this I shall enter, after noticing that the Chaplain in the conclusion of his argument indulges himself in some declamation, which however carries no weight with it, as long as the church's claim to infallibility is not invalidated by other arguments, than those we have seen. For, supposing that claim well supported, his forebodings can never come to pass; and our faith has nothing to fear from the additions of any future pope Pius. And here, by the bye, it must be remarked, that though an intimation is thrown out (p. 34), that Pius the 4th, in his famous creed, imposed new doctrines; yet every article of that creed was long before him a point of our belief. This is known to every person

person conversant in the history of religion, and is candidly acknowledged by Dr. Bramhall, the protestant archbishop of Armagh, in his reply to the bishop of Chalcedon: "For, says he, those very points, which Pius the 4th comprehended in a new symbol or creed, were obtruded upon us before by his predecessors, as necessary articles of the Roman faith, and required as necessary articles of their communion."

To prove, that the church has fallen into error, it is urged in the third place, as was noticed above, that she requires a belief of tenets, which even some of our own celebrated divines acknowledge either not to be found at all in the scriptures, or at least delivered in them with great obscurity (p. 13.); and instances are given in the doctrines of transubstantiation and purgatory, auricular confession, and the power of loosening and binding, or absolution. These shall now be distinctly considered, as far as is necessary to vindicate them from the Chaplain's objections. For I propose proceeding here, as before, concerning infallibility; that is, I shall not pretend to allege other proofs of these contested doctrines, than such as may arise from the purely defensive system, I have adopted; and, God be praised, the grounds of our faith are so solid, that I trust the cause of truth and religion will not be injured, even in my hands, by this mode of repelling the attacks made against them.

But first, supposing it true, as the divines mentioned by the Chaplain are alleged to have said, that the tenets above cited are not to be found in scripture, does it follow, that they were not revealed by Jesus Christ? With what right does the Chaplain assume as a principle, that God communicated nothing more to his church, than is contained

contained in his written word? He knows, that we have always asserted, that the *whole* word of God, unwritten, as well as written, is the christian's rule of faith. It was incumbent then on him, before he discarded this rule, to prove either, that no more was revealed, than is written; or that revealed doctrines derive their claim to our belief, not from God's infallible testimony, but from their being reduced to writing. He has not attempted this; and I will venture to say, he would have attempted it in vain, even with the assistance of his Chillingworth. Happy indeed it is for mankind, that no efforts to this purpose can succeed; for if the catholic rule of faith could be proved unsafe, what security have we for the authenticity, the genuineness, the incorruptibility of scripture itself? How do we know, but by the tradition, that is, by the living doctrine of the catholic church, which are the true and genuine gospels? Can the Chaplain, with all his ingenuity, devise, for instance, any other solid motive, besides this already mentioned, for admitting the gospel of St. Matthew into the canonical writings? This gospel, according to the general opinion, was written in the vulgar Hebrew, or Syriack. The original text has been lost so long, that no traces of it remain; who translated it into Greek, is quite uncertain. Now, where is the *written* word of God assuring us of the correspondence of this translation with the original? Where shall we find, but in the tradition, that is, in the public invariable doctrine of the catholic church, any sufficient reason for admitting the faithfulness of the translator? Why shall we not reject it, as some early heretics did, the Manichæans, Marcionists, Cerdonists, &c.? I mention St. Matthew's gospel, as coming first to my mind; but the argument is



applicable to other parts of scripture, and to some with much greater force. The testimony therefore of the catholic church, certified in the tradition of all ages, is the ground, upon which we and others admit the divine authority of holy writ\*. I do not suppose, that the Chaplain, after rejecting the church's infallibility, will place it, for the discrimination of true and false gospels, in an inward light administered to each sincere inquirer. I should be indeed greatly mistaken in him, if he entertain any such fanatical notions; his own Chillingworth would rise up against him. But if the testimony and tradition of the catholic church is to be necessarily admitted for receiving the scripture itself, which, according to him, is the *sole standard*, the *only rule* of protestant belief (p. 37), why is her testimony to be rejected, when offered in evidence of other points of faith? Why not as well admit it in favour of transubstantiation and purgatory, as of the lawfulness of infant baptism, of the validity of baptism administered by heretics, of the obligation of abstaining on Sundays from servile works, &c.? Scripture authority for these and other points admitted by protestants there is certainly none; and they, who have attempted to offer any, have only betrayed the weakness and nakedness of their cause. Wherefore St. Chrysostom, as I find him repeatedly quoted by authors, whose accuracy I cannot doubt, commenting on these words of St. Paul, *Stand and hold the traditions, you have been taught, whether by word, or by our epistle*, 2 Thess. ii. v. 14. alias 15. observes, that "it is plain, that the apostles did not deliver all things  
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\* See this acknowledged by Dr. Cosin, bishop of Durham, in his *Scholaſtic History of the Canon of Scripture*, ch. 1. §. 8. edit. London, 1673.

" in writing, but many things without it; and these ought to be believed, as much as those; let us then give credit to the tradition of the church\*." I have in preference cited this holy father in support of the catholic doctrine, not because numerous testimonies of others are wanting, both more antient, and, if possible, more full and express; but because the Chaplain in a note (p. 9.) insists much upon two remarkable passages, which, he says, are taken from the works of this eminent doctor.

I will not deny, that I was surpris'd when I read the first passage cited by the Chaplain; it appeared so opposite to the principles, which St. Chrysostom had laid down in several parts of his works. It was a mortifying circumstance, that I could not conveniently have recourse to that holy doctor's writings, nor minutely examine the passage objected, together with its context. I procured a friend to examine the edition of Chrysostom's works, belonging to the public library at Annapolis; he has carefully and repeatedly read the 49th homily on St. Matthew; and not one syllable of the Chaplain's citation is to be found in it. After receiving this notice, I was for some time doubtful, whether it might not be owing to a difference in the editions. I could not persuade myself, that he, who so solemnly calls heaven to witness for the impartiality and integrity of his inquiry, would publicly expose himself to a well-grounded imputation of unpardonable negligence, in a matter of such serious concern. But I have now the fullest evidence, that the passage, for which Chrysostom on Matthew, hom. 49. is quoted, is not taken from that father. It is extracted from a work  
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\* Chryf. hom. 3. in 4 Theff. 2.

of no credit, supposed to be written in the 6th century, entitled, *The unfinished work on Matthew* \*. But had it even been fairly quoted from him, the Chaplain would not have had so much cause for triumph, as he imagines. For the passage, he adduces, carries with it equal condemnation of the protestant and catholic rule of faith. It asserts, that it is only then necessary to discover by *scripture alone*, which is the true church of Christ, when *heresy has all outward observances in common with her*. But if the outward observances are not the same, if the church and heresy do not agree in offering the same unbloody sacrifice; in administering the same sacraments; in the apostolical and uninterrupted succession of their clergy; in their liturgy, their hierarchy, the whole frame of their ecclesiastical government, &c. then it may be evinced by various means, other than scripture, which is the true church of Christ. But will this be admitted by the Chaplain, who adopts the holy scripture for the sole standard of his belief? Will it be admitted by the protestant churches in general, which know no other rule? (Let. p. 37.) See then how unsuccessfully this authority turns out for the Chaplain. In the first place, it lays him under the reproach of a want of impartial diligence; and 2dly, if it militate against us, it is equally adverse to that religion, of which he now professes himself a member.

The disrepute of alleging the authority of Chrysoftom so erroneously will not be compensated by the other passage,

\* *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum*. The author adopts the Manichean, the Montanist, and Arian heresies. In the first homily, he says, that *marriage is a sin*. In the 32d, that *second marriage is only an honourable fornication*; in the 49th, he calls the catholic doctrine of the divinity of Christ, the homousian, or consubstantiation heresy.

page, for which he likewise is cited; and which indeed I find to be noticed by Bellarmine, as genuine; but he observes that Chrysoftom is not discoursing of doctrines obscurely delivered, or contested amongst different sects of christians; but of such, as being clearly and unambiguously taught in holy writ, are nevertheless disrelished or denied by worldly minded men; who contend, contrary to the evident declaration of scripture, that riches are more helpful, than hurtful to salvation; and of such Chrysoftom says, that they ought to be disregarded, and all these things be estimated by the rule of scripture.

But if the Chaplain insist, that the direction here given is general to all men, who are advised to investigate all matters of faith in the scripture, without paying any regard to *what this or that man asserts for truth*; I answer first, that this direction is very different from that of Chrysoftom above cited, in his commentary on the 2d to the Thessalonians; and of the learned Vincent of Lerins, whom the Chaplain quotes with singular complacency (p. 35.)\*. This venerable writer having observed, that all religious innovators accumulate texts upon texts to give credit to their different systems, enquires, *what catholics, what the children of the church must do?* How can they in scripture discern truth from falsehood? *They will take care*, he continues, *so to proceed—as to interpret holy writ agreeably to the traditions of the universal church, and the rules of catholic doctrine* †.

IN

\* In this author, the Chaplain may find the clearest condemnation of his new religious principles. I refer him to the 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39 chapters, which I wish I could translate without swelling this address to too great a bulk.

† *Quid facient catholici homines, & matris ecclesie filii? quoniam modo in scripturis sanctis veritatem à falsitate discernent?*  
Hoc

In the next place, I observe that the rule of investigation laid down as from St. Chrysostom is insufficient and inapplicable. Insufficient, because by scripture alone it is impossible to determine many points necessary to be believed and practised, and so received even by protestants themselves\*.

The rule is moreover inapplicable to much the greatest part of mankind; and I am really ashamed to enter seriously on the proof of it, since it must be evident to every considerate man in the world. For if scripture, as interpreted by private judgment †, is the only rule, which all are to follow, neglecting what this or that man asserts for truth; if all are to investigate all disputed things in the scriptures, it plainly follows, that the laborious husbandman, the illiterate mechanic, the poor ignorant slave are to acquire the knowledge in languages, and the critical discernment necessary to compare translation with translation, text with text. For without this comparison and many other precautions, they never can form a reasonable judgment of the sense of scripture; nor can they be sure of that book being scripture, which is put into their hands, as such. If to relate this prodigious opinion be not enough to refute it, all argument, even demonstration itself will be of no avail.

The Chaplain seems to be aware of its glaring absurdity; and therefore in a note (p. 17, 18.) he says, that they, who are unqualified to enter upon such inquiries,

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Hoc scilicet facere curabunt, quod in principio commonitorii istius sanctos viros nobis tradidisse scripsimus; ut divinum canonem secundum universalis ecclesie traditiones, & juxta catholicæ dogmatis regulas interpretentur. *Vinc. Liv. Com. c. 38*

\* See page 58, of this address, and Mumford's Question of Questions, point first and second.

† Chaplain's note, p. 9.

as he made, must rely principally upon the authority of their teachers; and he quotes the bishop of Chester as recommending the same. Thus then after citing with so much complacency a pretended passage of St. Chrysostom; after bidding defiance to our divines to explain away the Saint's doctrine, requiring all of us to neglect what this or that man, even himself or the bishop of Chester asserts for truth; but to investigate all things in the scriptures; after this, I will not say, that he himself unravels the difficulty with fine spun subtlety like a modern schoolman\*; but, like an Alexander, he cuts the knot at once, and refers us to the authority of our teachers.

While the Chaplain's letter is before me, I feel other impressions too strongly upon my mind to indulge in the satisfaction, which it might otherwise suggest, to observe, that after decrying the dead weight of authority (p. 13), after exalting private judgment, as the sole interpreter of scripture (p. 9), he is obliged to confess, that the generality of mankind must be guided in religious matters principally by the authority of their teachers; for he will hardly deny, that the generality of mankind are neither by education, or abilities, or leisure, qualified to enter upon the inquiries necessary to judge for themselves. Did Jesus Christ then leave a rule of faith so inadequate, as not to be capable of application to much the largest portion of mankind? Do the protestant churches in general know NO OTHER rule (letter p. 37), than one so miserably defective † and if defective now, what must it have been, before the discovery of the art of printing, when the knowledge of letters was so rare, comparatively with the present times; and it was morally impossible to multiply manuscripts sufficient

\* Note, p. 9.

cient to supply every individual with the means, even if he had the ability to study scripture?

But who are the *teachers*, to whose *authority* the generality of mankind are referred? Are they any, however introduced to the exercise of that public function? This indeed may be a doctrine well enough suited to latitudinarians in religion, or the scoffers at all religion; but surely not very agreeable to the principles of a christian. Must the teachers then, whose authority is to be so respected, be the regular, and authorised ministry of the country? What if that country should be Turkey, and the ministers, the deluded disciples of Mahomet? What if it should be a country blessed like this with unlimited toleration, and giving equal countenance to the professors and teachers of every denomination of christians? In this case, the unlettered, that is, the far greater part of the community are directed indeed by the Chaplain and the bishop of Chester to follow their teachers; but by what criterion they are to chuse their teachers, does not appear. If by their doctrine, if by scripture, all the labour recoils back again upon the uninformed multitude without *education, abilities, or leisure* to go through with it. On one hand, they are constrained to adopt Seneca's rule.\*; and on the other, they cannot possibly comply with it; they would fain follow the instructions of a faithful teacher; but how to distinguish him from a seduced or seducing one, they know not. I disdain taking notice of the insinuations so scandalously false, thrown out by the bishop of Chester, as if we discountenanced free inquiry. From what was said in the beginning of this address, you may judge how undeserved they are.

His

\* Omnia delibera cum amico; sed prius delibera de amico.

His lordship is pleased to add, that *whatever things are necessary to be believed, are easy to be understood.* (P. 18, note.) Are not all doctrines laid down in scripture, and particularly those contained in the apostles creed, *necessary to be believed?* So at least the Chaplain teaches. (P. 35.) In these is delivered the tenet of three divine persons, that of the Incarnation of the son of God, and of his descent into hell. Are these things easy to be understood? However they may appear to the bishop, they have been generally accounted mysteries incomprehensible to human understanding.

We likewise direct all to rely, in matters of faith, on their teachers, while they exercise their functions, uncontradicted and unproved by the body of pastors, or their superiors in the hierarchy. But then their mission is established on a fact of public notoriety, the investigation of which requires no laborious discussion. They can trace an uninterrupted succession of their ministry to the apostles, and consequently to Christ himself. As Christ sent his apostles to *teach all nations, baptising and teaching them to observe all things, whichsoever he had commanded;* so did they send other pastors to discharge the same functions, as themselves. They could not preach at all times, and in all places; they therefore appointed disciples to found other churches, as they themselves had founded, and to exercise therein the same ministry. The pastors, thus associated to the apostles, successively admitted others; and this apostolical body, that is, the body of the envoys of Jesus Christ has never ceased. When new members are incorporated into it, they receive from him the same commission of teaching, and administering the sacraments; the church of Christ cannot exist without the

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preaching

preaching of the gospel; and preaching, according to St. Paul, is not to be exercised without a mission; *how will they preach, if they be not sent?* Rom. x. v. 15. so that the church and this apostolical body must always subsist together, and can never be separated.

From these truths founded on a plain matter of fact, an argument is deduced equally clear and convincing. It is as certain, that the apostles appointed other pastors to succeed them, as it is, that they founded churches. The actual pastors then of these churches descending in a lawful and unbroken line of succession from them, are certainly sent by the apostles, and by Christ himself, since those churches have always subsisted, and still subsist. Thus our faith is as assured and well grounded, in believing the public doctrines delivered by these teachers, as it could have been in receiving the preaching of the apostles themselves.

No books, no erudition is here necessary. The illiterate, as well as learned christian can easily be certified of the fact, on which the reasoning is founded. The prerogative of tracing to the apostles an ordinary and regular succession of pastors is so peculiar a prerogative of the catholic church, that no other society can dispute it with her, or appropriate it to themselves\*. To this succession the primitive fathers constantly appeal, as demonstrative evidence of the true church, and challenge sectaries to exhibit a like title to the divine commission of teaching and administering the sacraments †.

After

\* See Bergier, *Deijme refute*, &c. let. 4.

† See *Irenaeus* contr. Hæc. l. 3. c. 3. *Tertul.* l. de præc. c. 32. *Opt. Milcv.* l. 2. cont. Parm. *August.* in pl. contra par. Donati, & lib. contra ep. Fund. cap. 4.

After having thus shewn both from the nature of the thing, and the Chaplain's own acknowledgment, that scripture alone is not a general and sufficient rule of faith, I might well contend, that *transubstantiation*, *purgatory*, *auricular confession*, and the *power of absolving*, are to be received as christian doctrines, on the authority of the church, though no mention were made of them in scripture. But for your entire satisfaction, I will now consider particularly all, that has been advanced on the other side respecting these articles of our faith.

To begin with *transubstantiation*, the Chaplain asserts (p. 32), that *the doctrine conveyed by that word was no article of faith prior to the council of Lateran in 1215*; and for proof of it he refers to Scotus, as cited by Bellarmine, l. 3. de *Euch.* c. 23. When I read this passage of the Chaplain's letter, I thought it remarkable in him to allege Scotus's testimony to prove a point of ecclesiastical history; the subtleties of the school were much better suited to that author's speculative genius, than a critical examination of historical facts. And it was becoming the Chaplain's candour to have acknowledged it, when he saw evident proofs of Scotus's inaccuracy in the place cited out of Bellarmine; who observes, that Scotus could never have seen the decrees of the councils held at Rome against Berengarius, the first in the year 1060, and the second 1079, in which the doctrine of transubstantiation was asserted; and Berengarius, who had impugned it, retracted his error\*.

The Chaplain continues, that towards the beginning of the 9th century, *Paschasius Radbertus published his treatise*

\* See Berengarius's retractations and his profession of faith in Bellarmine, l. 3. de *Euch.* c. 21.

rise upon the corporal presence of Christ in the Eucharist; and, as Bellarmine tells us, was the first, who wrote seriously and copiously concerning it. (Ibid.) For this, he cites Bellarmine de *Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*. Does not every person, who reads this passage, understand it to import, that according to Bellarmine, Paschasius Radbertus was the first who wrote seriously and copiously concerning the corporeal presence of Christ in the eucharist? Now let us hear Bellarmine himself; and then let every one judge, whether the Chaplain has carried into his researches after truth all that impartiality and painful investigation mentioned in his seventh page. Thus then Bellarmine in the book cited by him. "This author (Paschasius Radbertus) was the first, who wrote seriously and copiously of the reality of the body and blood of the Lord in the eucharist against Bertram the priest, who was one of the first, that called it in question\*." Is it the same thing to be the first to write fully on the real presence; and the first to write fully on that subject against Bertram, who impugned it? Does not the former sense suggested by the Chaplain imply, that Paschasius was the first to establish a new doctrine? and is not Bellarmine's real meaning, that Paschasius was the first to defend an established doctrine against a recent opposer of it?

But let us proceed; and we shall find Paschasius himself clearly shewing, that his view and design was, not to set forth a new doctrine; but to expound that, which was common in the church; though the Chaplain says otherwise.

\* Hic auctor primus fuit, qui serid & copiosè scripsit de veritate corporis & sanguinis Domini in eucharistiâ contra Bertramum presbyterum, qui fuit ex primis, qui eam in dubium revocarunt. Bell. de Scrip. Eccl. ad an. 820, de Paschasio Radberto.

otherwise. This monk, says he, meaning Paschasius, informs us himself, that his doctrine was by no means universal or settled\*. Let us now see, how he gives us this information; and let his letter to Frudegardus (for to that the Chaplain refers) determine the point. In this very letter then, he says, that "though some through ignorance err in this point, yet not one openly contradicts, what the whole world believes and professes †." Here you will observe, that Paschasius says, that not one was found openly to contradict his doctrine on the eucharist; and that it was believed and professed by the whole world. Is this to inform us, that his doctrine was by no means universal or settled? But let us hear him farther. "If any man," says he in the same place, "should oppose this truth, rather than believe it, let him take care what he is doing against the Lord himself, and the whole church of Christ. For it is a horrible crime to join in prayer with all, and not to believe, what truth itself attests, and what every where, all universally confess to be true ‡." From these passages it is evident, that the Chaplain could not make a more unfortunate reference to prove, what he intended, than to Paschasius's letter to Frudegard. But, continues he, Paschasius in this very letter, speaking of the corporal presence, says, you question me upon a subject, about which many are doubtful.

(P. 34.)

\* Letter, p. 32.

† Quamvis ex hoc quidam de ignorantia errent, nemo tamen est adhuc in aperto, qui hoc ita esse contradicat, quod totus orbis credit & confitetur. Pasch. Radb. epist. ad Frudeg. Bibl. P. P. tom. 9. par. 1. pag. 246.

‡ Videat, qui contra hoc venire voluerit, quid agat contra ipsum Dominum; & contra omnem Christi ecclesiam. Nefarium ergo scelus est orare cum omnibus, & non credere; quod veritas ipsa testatur, & ubique omnes universaliter verum esse fatentur. Ibid.



(P. 34.) Does Paschasius indeed say so? It would strangely contradict, what he has already told us. Let us therefore return to the letter, and hear him himself. It appears from its contents, that Frudegard was a young monk, who had read in one of St. Augustin's works a passage, that perplexed him; and that he applied to Paschasius, as his master, to explain the difficulty\*. I will venture to assert, that the passage in the note is all the Chaplain's foundation for saying, as if they were the words of Paschasius himself, that *many were doubtful* of the real presence in the eucharist. Is it possible, that Paschasius should acknowledge this in the very letter, wherein he informs his scholar, that the *whole church* professes the doctrine, he delivers? That not even *one person* was found openly to contradict it? The young man himself acknowledges, that he had always believed the real presence, which shews, that it was at that time the common doctrine of the church, in which young persons were educated; he informs Paschasius, that a perplexity had arisen in his mind, not from hearing any public instruction of the pastors of the church contrary to the real presence; but from some expressions of St. Augustin. He applies to Paschasius to explain the difficulty, relying on his knowledge and orthodoxy; he does not conclude from the passage of Augustin, that it inclined him to change his faith, but expresses an uncertainty, as to its meaning. *I know not, how I am to understand it.* How then will the Chaplain make good his assertion, that Paschasius

\* Dicis te antea credidisse; sed profiteris, quod in libro de doctrina christiana Beati Augustini legisti, quod typica sit locutio: quod si si urata locutio est, est schema potius, quam veritas; nescio, inquis, qualiter illud sumere debeam. *Ep. ad Frude. ibid.*

chasius in his letter to Frudegard acknowledges, that *many doubted of the corporal presence* of Christ in the eucharist?

He next alleges Rabanus Maurus as one, who about the year 847 wrote expressly against the novelty of this doctrine, in a letter to Heribaldus bishop of Auxerre\*. I apprehend, that here again the Chaplain has followed an unfaithful guide; whom I suspect to be the French huguenot Aubertin, or Albertinus. For the Chaplain cites his work on the eucharist, as one of those, which operated in him a conviction of his former errors †; and I observe a great affinity between the mistakes already noticed in the Chaplain's citations, and those, which were detected in Aubertin by the author of *La perpetuité de la foi*. Now, tho' I will not say positively, that Rabanus has no such words in his letter to Heribaldus, (for I really neither have, or can any where hear of its being to be found in America) yet it may, I think, be inferred from Fleury's Ecclesiastical History, that Rabanus did not write his letter to Heribaldus expressly against the novelty of Paschasius's doctrine, as the Chaplain says (p. 32); and I much question whether he so much as mentions it in that letter. For, according to Fleury, *hist. Eccles. book 49, an. 859*, the express purpose of Rabanus's writing to Heribaldus was, to answer him on many penitential cases, concerning which the latter had consulted him, Rabanus being then archbishop of Mentz.

But as I wish to inform your faith, at the same time that I am endeavouring to confirm it, I will add from Fleury, that there is extant an anonymous writing against Paschasius, which is thought, with much probability, to be a letter from Rabanus to Egil, abbot of Prum; and

\* Let. p. 32.

† Note, p. 29.

and it is not unlikely, that the passage quoted by the Chaplain (p. 32), is taken from this writing.

But what is the purport of the letter? Is it to dispute the real presence, and transubstantiation? No certainly; for the author of it clearly professes these doctrines, and begins his letter with these words. "All the faithful must believe and confess, that the body and blood of our Lord is true flesh and true blood; whoever denies it, shews himself an infidel." And a little after; "I add, that as Jesus Christ is the true lamb of God, who is mystically offered every day for the life of the world; so by consecration and the power of the Holy Ghost, the bread becomes his true flesh, and the wine his true blood, which is so certain, that no christian must doubt it \*."

The purport then of this writing against Paschasius, was, to censure some modes of speech used by him in explaining the eucharist. For he had said, that the body of our Lord, which the faithful receive in communion, is the same body, that was born of the Virgin Mary. This expression appeared to Rabanus particularly obnoxious, though it was undoubtedly authorised by former usage. It was therefore rejected by him, and thought improper, as not conveying an idea of the different manner, in which Christ's body and blood exist in their natural state, and that, which they have in the sacrament. In the former, they are palpable and sensible; in the latter, they exist in a manner supernatural and mysterious.

Paschasius maintained the propriety of his language in treating on this subject, in which dispute many others took part. Ratramus, or Bertram wrote by order of Charles

\* Fleury, *ibid.*

Charles the Bald; a treatise on the body and blood of our Lord; but that he was employed expressly by that prince to oppose Paschasius, is a fact no where proved, though confidently asserted by the Chaplain. The French author of the *Perpetuity of the faith*, &c. says expressly, that Ratramus does not so much as mention Paschasius's name; he objects indeed to the expression used by him, but at the same time, he plainly asserts in many passages the catholic doctrine; and Boileau, the celebrated Sorbonist, has proved, that Bellarmine and others were mistaken in thinking, he was an adversary to it, as well as in saying that Paschasius wrote against him his treatise of the reality of Christ's body and blood, &c. For the occasion of Paschasius's writing was, to instruct the Saxons then lately converted to christianity.

I will not swell this address with copying from Ratramus many passages to prove his belief of the real presence and transubstantiation. Amongst others, this is one. "The bread, which is offered, is, at consecration, changed into the body of Christ; as likewise the wine, expressed from the grape, is made blood by the signification," or efficacy "of the sacred mystery; not indeed visibly, but by the invisible operation of the Holy Ghost. Whence they are called the body and blood of Christ, because they are received not for that, which they outwardly appear, but for that, which they are made by the intimate action of the divine spirit; and because they are quite another thing thro' invisible power, than what they visibly appear \*". This, I think, is abundantly sufficient to shew, that the disagreement between Paschasius and Ratramus consisted not

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\* Ratram. ap. auct. *Parp. de la foi.*



in a difference of opinion respecting the real presence and transubstantiation.

*We see,* continues the Chaplain, *that the doctrine of the carnal presence was no sooner openly maintained, than some of the most celebrated doctors of the time arose to combat it without incurring any suspicion of heresy from their opponents. (P. 33.)* We have, I think, seen directly the contrary. We have heard Rabanus say, that by consecration, and the power of the Holy Ghost, the bread becomes the true flesh, and the wine the true blood of Christ, which is so CERTAIN, that NO CHRISTIAN must doubt it. And indeed it would be a most extraordinary thing, that Rabanus should write expressly against the doctrine of the real presence; and yet that Baronius, an historian so fervently attached to the doctrines of the catholic church, should style him the brightest luminary of Germany. (Ch. let. p. 32.)

We have heard Ratramus, in the last paragraph but one, deliver no less clearly the doctrine of the real presence and transubstantiation; and if even they assert it so evidently, whom the Chaplain has selected out of all antiquity, as most favourable to his cause, I need not have recourse to other authors, their cotemporaries, to prove, that a suspicion of heresy would have been incurred by those, who should have openly combated the above-said tenets.

Finally, we have heard Paschasius represent the doctrine of the real presence as that of the universal church, and publicly affirm, that it had not so much as one open adversary. Where then is the convincing proof, that at the period indicated by the Chaplain, the doctrine of the carnal presence was regarded merely as matter of opinion, and so continued for 200 years\*. I flatter myself on the contrary, that

\* Let. p. 33.

that I have alleged from Paschasius and Rabanus convincing proofs of the doctrine of the carnal presence being at that time the established sense of the church; and other proofs more decisive will be added hereafter.

The Chaplain says, (p. 31), that the term *transubstantiation* was unknown, till an obscure bishop invented it eleven hundred years after the time of the apostles. The bishop here meant is Stephen of Autun, who lived about the year 950, that is 850, not 1100 years after the time of the apostles, St. John having lived to the year 101 of the christian æra, according to the common opinion. I mention this, not for the sake of any advantage I mean to make of the Chaplain's mistake, but merely to shew, that he did not bestow on his investigation all that scrupulous attention, with which he flatters himself. However Stephen was the first to make use of the term *transubstantiation*; I admit without hesitation, that it is not to be met with in any more antient author; but as our dispute is not about words, but things, the Chaplain can derive no more advantage from this fact, than an Arian, or Nestorian can from the terms *consubstantial* or *theotokos*, being never used before the first council of Nice, and that of Ephesus. The term *transubstantiation* was found to convey a precise idea of catholic doctrine, and so became adopted by the council of Lateran into ecclesiastical language; all which is perfectly agreeable to antient practice, as attested by Vincent of Lerins: "The catholic church, says he, moved thereunto by the innovations of heretics, has always attended to this point in the decrees of her councils; that is, to transmit to posterity with the attestation of written authority, what she before received by tradition alone; comprehending

“ hending much matter in few words; and for the better understanding, oftentimes expressing an *antient doctrine* by a *new word* of determinate signification \*.”

You have already seen, how much the Chaplain was mistaken in saying, that the doctrine conveyed by the word, *transubstantiation*, was no article of faith before the year 1215. But considering, that his assertions coincide with the prevailing prejudices in this country, I find myself obliged to sacrifice my desire of shortening this address to the necessity of fully manifesting an error adopted from Aubertin, or Dr. Cofin’s *History of Transubstantiation*; for I cannot persuade myself, that he gave so much credit to Scotus, as to take it up on his authority.

In a council held at Rouen in Normandy, on occasion of Berengarius’s heresy, an. 1063, the fathers of the council thus express their belief. “ With our hearts we believe, and with our tongues we confess, that the bread on the Lord’s table is only bread before consecration; but that the nature and substance of bread is, at the very time of consecration, by the unspeakable power of God, *changed into the nature and substance of that flesh, which was born of the Virgin Mary*—and that the wine, which is mixed with water in the cup, is *truly and essentially changed into the blood, which mercifully flowed for the world’s redemption from the side of our blessed Saviour, when wounded by the soldiers lance †.*”

In the Roman council, an. 1079, Berengarius retracted his error and professed the catholic faith in these words.

\* Vinc. Lir. Comm. c. 32.

† See the decrees of this council published by the learned *Mabilion*.

words. “ I Berengarius with my heart believe, and with my tongue profess, that the bread and wine, which are placed on the altar, are, by the mystical prayer and words of our redeemer, *substantially changed into the true, proper, and life-giving flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ* \*.”

Six years after Berengarius’s death, viz. 1094, a numerous council was held at Placentia of many bishops of Italy, France, Germany, &c. wherein it was again defined, “ that bread and wine, when consecrated on the altar, are not only figuratively, but *truly and essentially changed into the body and blood of our Lord †.*” Eight or nine other councils were held during the same century, mostly in Italy and France, and all of them equally condemn Berengarius’s opinion; so true it is, that the doctrine of transubstantiation was universally received as an article of faith, long before the year 1215.

When Berengarius first published his erroneous opinion of the real presence, and transubstantiation, between the year 1038, and 1050; it was instantly rejected universally, and concluded to be repugnant to faith. Adelmanus, who had been brought up with him under the discipline of Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, and became himself bishop of Brixen, wrote Berengarius a letter expressed with much tenderness and charity, wherein he tells his friend, that a “ report was spread of his being severed from the unity of the church by holding a doctrine contrary to the catholic faith, concerning the body and blood of the Lord, which is immolated every day on the altar.” See the passage at length in the

*Perpetuité*

\* Ap. Bell. lib. 3. de Euch. c. 21.

† Labbe, C. C. tom. 10. apud auct. *True Ch. of Christ*.

*Perpetuité de la foi*, 1st section. This letter was written, before any council had been held against Berengarius; and yet Adelmannus tells him, that his doctrine was deemed to be contrary to catholic faith and unity; a manifest proof of the real presence and transubstantiation being regarded as tenets of the church antecedently to Berengarius's error.

Lanfrank, who afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury, was present at the council held at Rome against Berengarius an. 1059, and wrote a treatise *on the reality of the body of Christ* in the eucharist. In the very beginning of it, he says that Berengarius first "began to entertain " an opinion against the whole world;" and afterwards, that he "composed a writing against the catholic verity, " and against the sentiment of *all* the churches \*." And in his 18th chapter he thus states the catholic doctrine. "We believe, that the earthly substances of bread and " wine, being consecrated on the altar by divine institution, and the ministry of priests, are *changed by the unspeakable, incomprehensible, and miraculous operation of almighty power into the substance of our Lord's body.*— This " is the faith, which the church, that being spread " through the world, is called catholic, has held in all " ages, and continues still to hold †." The same thing is repeated in many other places of his work; in his 22d chapter, he calls upon Berengarius to "question the " Latins, to interrogate the Greeks, the Armenians, " and generally all the christians of every country; and " they will all with one voice profess this faith †."

Guit-

\* Contra orbem sentire cœpisti—contra catholicam veritatem; & contra omnium ecclesiarum opinionem scriptum postea condidisti. Lanfr. c. 1. apud auct. *Perp. de la foi.*

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

Guitmundus, archbishop of Aversa, another cotemporary author, and who was probably present at the council of Rome an. 1059, reproaches the followers of Berengarius with holding a doctrine, "that was not received " so much as in one borough, or even one village \*."

In fine Berengarius himself was so much convinced of the universal belief being contrary to his new tenet, that he pretended, according to Lanfrank, "that the church " had perished through the ignorance of those, who understood not her mysteries, and that she subsisted only " in himself and his followers †."

With this, and much more similar evidence before me of the sense of the church concerning transubstantiation, at the rise of Berengarius's heresy about the year 1038, I may without rashness conclude, that the Chaplain was equally mistaken in saying that it only became an article of our faith in the year 1215; and in asserting, as we have before seen, that the doctrine of Christ's *carnal presence* in the eucharist was regarded merely as matter of opinion till the council of Rome under pope Nicholas in the year 1059, or 1060.

The testimonies, I have alleged, are so full and decisive, that the most learned protestant writers have admitted, reluctantly indeed, but still they have admitted, that the catholic doctrine had full possession of mens minds, when Berengarius first began to dogmatise. They assign its origin, increase and full establishment to the period between the publication of Paschasius's writings, and the æra of Berengarius above mentioned. This period they represent as the reign of darkness and absurdity; the Chaplain,

\* Neque enim eis ulla civitatula, vel etiam una villula concessit. Ibid.

† Ibid.

Chaplain, without adopting their common opinion of the early prevalence of our tenets, has however caught the infection, and with wonderful sensibility laments the woe-ful degradation of reason, and the superstition and ignorance of the age. According to most of these authors, it was during this lamentable state of religion, virtue and learning, that our doctrine crept into mens minds; that it operated a total change in their faith; that parents, who had heard another lesson all their life-time, trained their offspring to the belief of the real presence, and transubstantiation; that the pastors of the churches did the same with their parishioners; that the faithful, instead of believing, as before, that they received Christ in the eucharist figuratively, or spiritually, now changed their creed, and admitted the tenet of the real presence so universally, that Berengarius could not in the whole world find so much as *one pitiful town, or a single village* to give countenance to his doctrine. What completes the wonder, is, that all this happened without any commotion or opposition. No council was called to withstand the growing evil; not one bishop throughout Christendom raised his voice against it. At all other times, the least innovation, the slightest departure from the received tenets occasioned disputes and contests; every heresy, however obscure, or speculative, was combated at its first appearance; but this doctrine of the real presence, which involved in its nature a point of daily practice, as well as of faith; which proposed to christians, as an object of inward and outward adoration, that, which in their former estimation it was idolatrous to adore; this doctrine gently insinuated itself without noise or disturbance into the minds of all christians during that long  
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sleep, into which ignorance had lulled them; it operated this wonderful revolution so silently, that no historian either perceived it in himself or others, to transmit us an account of it. Can men, who will believe this, find any mystery in religion, even transubstantiation itself, too hard for their digestion?

But we are not yet come to all the wonders of this most extraordinary phenomenon. The doctrine now held by the catholic church was, at the rise of Berengarius's error, and so continues to this day, the doctrine of all the eastern and southern christian churches, the Greek, the Armenian, the Coptick, the Abyssinian; &c. so truly did Lanfrank, as above cited, refer to them as witnesses of the universal belief. Many of those christians, as the Nestorians, Eutychians, &c. were separated from the church of Rome, near four hundred years before Paschasius wrote on the eucharist. Within a few years after his writing his letter to Frudegardus, the Greek schism was in a great degree begun by Photius, and rent asunder the eastern and western churches, and bred between them, especially in the former, an animosity, which they will with difficulty conceive, who are unacquainted with the ardent spirits of the Greeks. It is therefore incredible, I had almost said, impossible, considering the nature of the human mind, that in this state of resentment, the oriental churches should not only adopt the innovations of the Latins, but adopt them without reproach or opposition, of which not the slightest testimony is come down to us; and that these pretended innovations should be received and incorporated into their religion not only by the abettors of Photius's schism, but likewise by the Nestorians, Eutychians, &c. who had  
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been so long separated from the communion both of the Roman pontiff, and the patriarch of Constantinople.

Obstinacy, or ignorance alone can deny, that our doctrine concerning the eucharist agrees with that of all the churches, I have mentioned. No point of history can be supported with fuller evidence, than this now is, that the real presence and transubstantiation are the invariable tenets of the eastern christians; and no other commencement of this general persuasion can be assigned with the smallest shew of probability, than the commencement of the christian religion itself.

From all that has been said, our inference is clear and conclusive. The doctrine of the real presence and transubstantiation were the established doctrines of the church, and not merely matters of opinion, long before the æras assigned by the Chaplain, that is, before the years 1060, and 1215. They were universally taught previously to the Greek schism, which may be said to have begun an. 857, by Photius's intrusion into the see of Constantinople, and even before the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, the latter of which was condemned in the council of Chalcedon, an. 454; and the former in that of Ephesus, an. 434. But if they were the general doctrines throughout the western and eastern churches at so early a period, what foundation can there be for assigning their commencement to any other æra, than that of christianity itself?

It imports then little to the present subject, whether in the interval between Paschasius and Berengarius, a gloom of dark and universal ignorance overspread the face of the christian world; and whether the bishops were unable

ble to write their names\*; for enough has been said, though much more remains unsaid, to prove to every dispassionate man, that the obnoxious tenets did not steal upon mens minds during this fatal interval. If it were at all material to refute the exaggerated imputations of supineness and ignorance, it would be no difficult matter; for the period so outrageously abused was not so fatal to the cultivation of letters, as is represented; and if through the tyranny of turbulent barons, and violence of contending factions, some few prelates, incapable of writing their names, perhaps not six in all Christendom, were imposed upon different churches, there were many others, pious and well informed, who kept constant watch over the flocks committed to their charge. Whoever will read the acts of the council of Rheims, held within this period, viz. an. 992, will be satisfied, that the bishops, who composed it, were perfectly acquainted with ecclesiastical discipline and sacred antiquity; and animated with a becoming zeal for the preservation of sound morals among the clergy. Baronius and Sigonius had their eyes principally turned on Italy, their own country, and especially on Rome, when they wrote so unfavourably of the age; and there indeed contending factions imposed some pontiffs on the chair of St. Peter, who disgraced their station by the corruption of their manners. But France, England and Germany, and even some parts of Italy were blessed with bishops of extraordinary virtue and knowledge, and with princes, who encouraged learning and endowed academies of science, in which if the true taste of literature did not yet flourish, at least the study of religion and zeal for improvement

\* Chaplain's letter, p. 31.

ment did, as is attested of the schools erected at Paris, Arras, Cambrai, Liege, &c.\*

The Chaplain (p. 19, 20), cites some catholic divines, who acknowledge that the doctrine of transubstantiation is not to be found in scripture. It has been already observed, that nothing conclusive can be inferred from this, even supposing these divines in the right, and that they are fairly cited. But what if their meaning be only this, that in scripture there is no express declaration of the bread and wine being changed into the body and blood of Christ? Might they not say this, and still believe, that the doctrine of the real presence was so expressed in holy writ, as necessarily to infer the change, which we call *transubstantiation*? For I will venture to say, though I have never looked into some of these divines, that there is not one of them, who does not teach, that the words, *This is my body*, import Christ's real, corporal, and substantial presence in the eucharist. Accordingly, Scotus says only, that there is no text of scripture so *explicit*, as *evidently to compel* our assent to transubstantiation †.

Melchior Cano's elegant work I have heretofore read with great pleasure; and I wish that the Chaplain had transcribed the whole passage referred to, that we might fairly judge of his meaning; for I own, that I grievously suspect Cano of saying, that transubstantiation is certainly implied as a necessary consequence of scripture doctrine, if not expressly delivered in it; and that the words of the institution of the sacrament of the *eucharist* would not be true, if they did not import a change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

Alphonfus

\* Histoire Litteraire de Fr. t. 6

† Ut evidenter cogat transubstantiationem admittere. Scot. apud Bell. l. 3. de Euch. c. 23.

Alphonfus de Castro is very *orthodox*, and has the character of being a divine of some credit; but as to his being a *mighty name* in scholastic theology, I never before heard it; and I am sure, no divine can be entitled to that character, who gravely says, that in *old authors there is seldom any mention made of the transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ*; for so the Chaplain cites him. (P. 20) How little conversant with old authors he must be, who gravely advances such a proposition, will plainly appear from Bellarmine, Du Perron, Tournely, &c. I shall presently have occasion to recite some passages from old authors; but shall do it with a sparing hand, not forgetting that the purport of this address is not to establish, but to vindicate our doctrine from the attack made against it.

After exhausting his authorities against transubstantiation, the Chaplain begs leave to mention *two negative arguments, which seem to prove to a demonstration, that it was unknown to the antient church* \*. How capable this is of demonstration, you may judge from what you have already heard. Was it unknown to the antient church, when Cyril bishop of Jerusalem wrote thus about the year 350? "Jesus Christ in Cana of Galilee, by his will  
" only, changed water into wine, which has some affinity with blood; and can we not believe him, that he  
" changes the wine into his own blood? Let your soul rejoice  
" at it, as a thing most certain, that the bread, which appears to our eyes, is not bread, though our taste do judge it  
" to be so, but that it is the body of Christ; and that the  
" wine, which appears to our eyes, is not wine, though  
" our

\* P. 24, note.

“our sense of taste take it for wine, but that it is the blood of Jesus Christ \*.”

Was transubstantiation unknown, when in the same century, Gaudentius bishop of Brescia thus expressed himself: “The Creator, and Lord of beings, who produces bread from the earth, from bread makes his own body, because he can do it, and has promised it; and he, that out of water made wine, out of wine makes his own blood †.” It is, I hope, needless to add to these, the testimonies of almost every christian father; and I think the Chaplain might contend with equal appearance of truth, that the doctrine of the necessity of baptism was unknown to the antient church, as that the catholic doctrine of the eucharist was.

We are now prepared to examine his *negative arguments*. The first is, that if the antient church formerly adored Christ in the eucharist, as we now do, catholics would, in arguing against Arians, have insisted on that adoration as a proof of Christ's divinity. (P. 24.) Such is his first demonstration; but does it not equally prove, that the antient church never adored Christ at all, in or out of the eucharist? For pray, would it not have been equally conclusive against Arians, and in favour of Christ's divinity, to have alleged the antient custom of adoring him out of the sacrament, for instance, as he is seated in Heaven on the right hand of his Father? Why therefore was this argument not insisted on by the antient fathers? for a very obvious reason; because the Arians, at the very time that they fell into heresy to avoid the pretended contradictions in the doctrine of the trinity, swallow-

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\* Cyril. Hier. Catech. Myst. 4.  
† Gauden. Brix. Serm. 2.

ed other real ones; and, as ecclesiastical historians observe, made no difficulty to acknowledge that Christ was a divine person, *true God of true God* \*, *eternal, the same God with the Father, and possessing the same divine pre-eminence or dignity* †; and therefore an object of divine worship. In a word, they seemingly admitted every thing, but the term *consubstantial*. Adoration they did not refuse: and the catholics instead of having cause to reproach them with neglecting it, charged them on the contrary with introducing a plurality of Gods by paying divine honours to him, to whom, consistently with their principles, they could not be due ‡.

Before I proceed to the Chaplain's second argument, amounting likewise to *demonstration*, I must beg leave to detain your attention a little while longer on the first. This is his reasoning: The catholics, in their dispute with the Arians, did not object, against the latter, the supreme adoration paid to Christ in the blessed eucharist; therefore no such adoration was paid him; but that adoration would not have been with-held, if the catholics had indeed believed Christ's real presence in the eucharist; therefore, since it was with-held, they did not believe in it. You have already heard a very satisfactory reason, why catholics did not object against the Arians, as the Chaplain thinks they would; to that then I shall say no more; but begging leave for once to quit my defensive plan, I shall build one argument in favour of our doctrine upon the foundation laid by the Chaplain. According to him, adoration of Christ in the eucharist imports

\* Socrates Hist. Eccl. l. 2. c. 20.

† Ibid. c. 19. *propè finem*.

‡ Soc. Hist. Eccl. l. 1. c. 23. edit. Val.

imports a belief of his real presence; but primitive christians adored Christ in the eucharist; they therefore believed his real presence. The second, or *minor* proposition, which is the only disputable one, can be proved by the clearest evidence of primitive christians themselves. I shall omit relating passages to this point out of Ambrose, the holy bishop of Milan \*, Chrysostom †, Gregory Nazianzen, &c. that I may come immediately to an authority still more authentic, the public liturgy of the church of Constantinople, which commonly goes under the name of Chrysostom, and was probably composed, and certainly used by him. In this liturgy, not only the external acts of adoration, expressed by incense, bending and prostrating the body, &c. are enjoined, but likewise internal adoration is clearly signified by the prayers addressed to Jesus Christ in the sacrament. “ Lord  
 “ Jesus, is the priest enjoined to say, look down from  
 “ thy holy habitation, and from the throne of thy glory,  
 “ come to sanctify us, thou who art seated in Heaven  
 “ with thy Father, and who art here present with us in  
 “ an invisible manner. Deign with thy powerful hand  
 “ to grant us thy pure and un sullied body; and through  
 “ us to all the people.” Then adds the liturgy, “ the  
 “ priest and the deacon must make their adoration.” And to shew, that this adoration refers to the body of Christ upon the altar, we need only note the farther directions of the liturgy. The priest taking up the consecrated bread, and bending his head before the altar, prays in this manner: “ I confess, that thou art Christ, the son  
 “ of the living God, who came into the world to save  
 “ sinners,

\* De Spir. san. lib. 3. 12.

† Chryf. hom. 60. ad Pop. Antioch.—and, de Sacerd. lib. 6.

“ sinners, &c. Lord, I am not worthy, that thou shouldst  
 “ enter into my house defiled with sin; but as thou didst  
 “ vouchsafe to enter the house of Simon the Leper; so  
 “ likewise vouchsafe to enter my soul full of ungovern-  
 “ able passions, as a manger, or a house of filth and  
 “ death, covered all over with the leprosy of sin.” Thus is proved the adoration of Christ in the eucharist, not only by the testimony of the fathers, but by a law of ecclesiastical discipline, connected with daily and inviolable practice; and making part of the worship rendered to Jesus Christ agreeably to the public liturgy; and consequently, the primitive belief of the real presence is fully established.

The Chaplain's second negative argument, or demonstration against the catholic doctrine of the eucharist is, *that heathen writers would have retorted upon christians the accusation of idolatry in adoring a bit of bread, in reserving their God in gold and silver chalices, &c.* (P. 24, note.) Violent indeed must be his prejudices against the religion he has renounced, if such arguments appear demonstrations to him. For how little do we know of the disputations between christians and heathens? Some fragments of Celsus and Porphyry, and of the writings of Julian the apostate, together with the little, that can be collected from the early apologies for christianity, are almost all, that is come down to us on this subject. The heathens may have objected, as the Chaplain supposes they would; so may they have found, in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, in his nativity, in his crucifixion, an apparent apology for their fables concerning their own divinities. They may have grounded, on the christian doctrine of redemption, the same arguments, as

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the Socinians now do; and they may, from the example it afforded them, have attempted to justify their own human sacrifices. Above all, they may have availed themselves of the tenet of the Trinity, to uphold, or, at least, explain away the absurdities of a plurality of gods. But, have we any authority for saying they did so? No; and except a single expression of the scoffer Lucian, which seems to glance at the Trinity; and a passage of Tertullian and Athanasius, implying, that some Jews and pagans reproached christians with admitting more gods than one; antiquity does not furnish us with any proof of these arguments being used by heathen writers. What wonder then, if they never made the objection proposed by the Chaplain, especially as of all the mysteries of our religion, the celebration of the eucharist was that, in which, during the reign of persecution and idolatry, the greatest privacy was observed.

The truth is, the heathens despised the christians too much to inform themselves minutely of their tenets. They knew little of them, but what appeared outwardly; their aversion of idolatry, and their profession of following the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Here their inquiries stopped; and Tertullian in his Apology, ch. x. upbraids them with neglecting in this point alone to seek information.

To these negative arguments, the Chaplain begs leave to add, "that the fathers of the 2d council of Nice expressly confirm the opinion, that Christ's body in heaven is not flesh and blood; how therefore can bread and wine be changed into his body, if they become flesh and blood?" (P. 24, note.) For this most extraordinary passage, he quotes Labbe's collection of the councils, tom. 6. p. 541. This collection I know not

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where to find in America; but I aver, that no such doctrine was delivered or entertained by the fathers of that council; and will therefore, without fear of being convicted of rashness, undertake to say, that the Chaplain cannot support, what he has here advanced. Neither Cabassutius in his summary of the councils, nor Fleury, nor Natalis Alexander, who recite the decrees and canons of this council with much exactness, say one syllable of such a doctrine being taught in it. As in many other instances, so likewise in this, the Chaplain has suffered himself to be misled by authors, whom, I hope, he will deservedly mistrust for the time to come. Their unfaithfulness is eminently conspicuous in the present instance. In the fifth session of the council, some passages were read of a fabulous book, entitled, *The Travels of the Apostles*. Amongst other fables, it was there related, that John the evangelist had said, that Christ had no true body; that when the Jews thought they crucified him, he exhibited only the appearance of a body, but was in reality without any corporeal figure. But so far was the council from confirming this doctrine, that they rejected it with horror. This is the account given by *Fleury, Hist. Eccles. Tom. 9. b. 44. an. 787*. It would be curious indeed, if the authors, whom the Chaplain has followed, should have mistaken this fabulous writing for the acts of the council\*.

Nothing,

\* Since writing the above, I have found, in the Annapolis library, Binius's Greek and Latin edition of the Acts of the 2d council of Nice; I have carefully examined these acts, but can meet with nothing similar to the opinion attributed to the council by the Chaplain, but the contrary doctrine repeatedly established, and the error rejected with horror, which ascribed to Christ only an apparent or phantastical body. See *Concil. Gener. Vol. V. act. 5. p. 703, 4, 5, 6*.

Nothing, I think, now remains unnoticed of all, he has said against our doctrine of the eucharist, excepting the collection of supposed absurdities and contradictions, with which in the same page (24), he charges transubstantiation. In this, he uses a mode of reasoning not very liberal, and yet not unpractised by many other writers against us. The objected absurdities and contradictions, whether real or imaginary, result more immediately from Christ's real presence in the eucharist, than from transubstantiation; but to impute them to that doctrine, would not be quite so inoffensive. Some regards are due to protestant Lutheran brethren, and the doctrine of the protestant episcopal church, who admit the real presence, in their catechisms at least, and according to their earliest and most eminent writers. But as to the catholic tenets, too much cannot be said to render them an object of ridicule and detestation. *If transubstantiation be admitted, says the Chaplain (p. 24), the true God may be shut up in boxes, or devoured corporally by vermin.* Would to God, it were possible, in answering such objections (which indeed I never should have suspected the Chaplain capable of drawing from the foulest dregs of controversy) to keep up your respect for this great mystery of our religion, and adorable pledge of divine goodness towards mankind! *How can he give us his flesh to eat? John vi. was the Jewish question; and many hearing it, said, this saying is hard, and who can hear it?*

So likewise the Marcionites, and other enemies of the Incarnation, contended, that to be inclosed in a womb, and to be laid in a manger, was unworthy of the Divine Majesty. The Pagans and Jews ridiculed the credulity of christians in believing in a man crucified between two thieves;

thieves; but the church despised their mockeries, being taught by the great apostle, that the mystery of the cross was indeed *a stumbling block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to those who are called—the power of God, and the wisdom of God\**. The divinity of Christ could not be injured by his mortal sufferings; and from them, great glory came to him, and utility to men. The same answer we may give to our opponents, when they compel us to take notice of objections so unworthy of the greatness and sanctity of the subject under consideration. But if this will not satisfy them, I would beg leave to ask them, whether they do not believe, that the infant Jesus was confined in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and wrapped in swaddling clothes? Do they not believe, that he was, like other children, liable to be hurt, for instance, by the application of fire, or the stings of insects? If then he could suffer these things in his own natural body, and be liable to be hurt by them; why may he not render himself subject, in appearance, to the same accidents, when he is under the covering of bread and wine, and incapable of being hurt thereby?

I have already taken some notice of the objection, so often repeated †, and so often refuted, of transubstantiation contradicting *our senses, and our understanding*. Ought we to trust our senses, more than God himself? When Joshua, who took the angel for a man, asked him, *art thou for us, or for our adversaries*, and was told, he was not a man, but *a captain of the heavenly host, he fell on his face, and worshipped, and said, what says my Lord unto his servant?* Joshua v. ver. 14; that is he believed him, rather than his *senses*; for to all his senses he appeared a man; but

\* 1 Cor. i.

† Ch. Let. p. 24.

but revelation informed him, that what he saw, was an angel. In like manner, if God has revealed to us, that under the appearances of bread and wine is contained the body and blood of Christ; are we not to believe him, rather than those appearances? The evidence for the revelation may be tried by all the rules of criticism; but when the mind is once convinced of its existence, it must then submit, notwithstanding all seeming contradiction, or opposition of our senses. "Let us always believe God," says St. Chrysostom, speaking of the eucharist, "and not contradict him, *though that, which he says, seems to contradict our thoughts and our eyes. For his words cannot deceive us; but our sense may be easily deceived.* Since therefore he says, *this is my body*, let us be fully persuaded of it. How many say now, oh! that I could see him in his own shape! or his cloaths! or any thing about him! Believe me, you see him; you touch him; you eat him. You would be content to see his cloaths; and he lets you not only see him, but also touch him, and eat him, and receive him within you \*." From this genuine quotation you may see, what St. Chrysostom, that *enlightened doctor of antiquity*, thought both of the argument drawn from a supposed contradiction of our *senses and understanding*, and of the real presence and transubstantiation.

As the Chaplain has added to his reasoning against our belief none of those *innumerable arguments*, which evince the meaning of Christ's words, *this is my body*, to be *figurative* (p. 25), I likewise shall gladly wave the controversy; only remarking, that he is neither terrified by the anathemas of Luther against the defenders of a figurative

\* Chryf. hom. 82. (al. 83.) in Matt.

rative sense, whom he calls *blasphemers, a damned sect, liars, bread-eaters, wine-guzzlers* \*, &c. nor by the severity of Dr. Cosin, bishop of Durham, in the beginning of his *History of Transubstantiation*, where speaking of the words of the institution of the sacrament, he says; *if any one make a bare figure of them, we cannot and ought not either excuse or suffer him in our churches.*

Another of our tenets, which the Chaplain has selected as unsupported by scripture and antiquity, particularly in the Greek church, is, the belief of purgatory. But before he proceeded to impugn, he ought to have stated it; which not having done, the deficiency shall now be supplied. All therefore, which the church requires to be believed on this subject, is contained in the decree of the council of Trent, which defines, that there is a *purgatory, or middle state, and that the souls therein detained are relieved by the suffrages of the faithful, especially by the agreeable sacrifice of the altar* †. Concerning the nature, or extent of their sufferings, whether by fire or otherwise, the place of punishment, its duration, &c. we are not confined to any particular opinion. Now is it true, that this doctrine has no foundation in scripture and antiquity? The books of Macabees, which so decidedly establish it, must not be admitted of sufficient authority, because *they were not acknowledged for canonical scriptures by St. Hierom, Rufinus, Epiphanius, Athanasius, Gregory, and many other antient and eminent fathers.* (Ch. Let. p. 21.) If it be a sufficient reason for rejecting the books of Macabees, that some early fathers doubted of their canonical authority,

\* Blasphemos in Deum, damnatam sectam, mendaces homines, panivoros, vini-bibones. *Luth. in parva Conf.*

† Conc. Trid. sess. 25.

authority, though afterwards, on a full investigation, they were received by the whole church, I wish to know; how protestants came generally to admit the authority of the epistle to the Hebrews, the 2d of Peter and of James, the revelation of John and others; for of all these, as well as of the books of Macabees, doubts were some time entertained, and the fathers held different opinions concerning them. But I expect no satisfactory account of this matter; and am well convinced, that the prevailing reason, which moved the compilers of the English Bible to reject the one, and receive the other, was, the support, which, they observed, the catholic doctrine of purgatory would derive from the book of Macabees\*. But, though it were destitute of this, there are not wanting other passages of scripture to confirm the same, as the Chaplain may find in our divines, though he so positively says the contrary, and particularly in the *Catholic Scripturist*, with whom he ought not to be unacquainted.

As to the doctrine of antiquity concerning purgatory, and particularly of the Greek church, we shall meet with little difficulty. No article of the christian belief has stronger evidence from the testimony of the early fathers; they prove incontestably the practice of praying for the dead; they assert, that by the prayers of the faithful

\* Neither Jerome or Gregory reject these books. The former says, they are not in the Hebrew canon (formed by Esdras, before they were written), nor universally received. But he himself held them to be of divine inspiration. *Com. in c. xxiii. Isaie—in c. vii. & ix. Eccl.—in c. viii. Daniel.* And Gregory, who was posterior to the council of Carthage, which declared their canonical authority, can only mean, that they had not been so received by all the churches. As to Athanasius, if the Chaplain ground his assertion, as I suspect, on a writing entitled *Synopsis*, and bearing his name, that work is rejected by all the critics, as falsely imputed to him.

ful in this life, comfort and relief is obtained for those, who are departed out of it; which is establishing as much of the doctrine of purgatory, as we are obliged to believe. St. Epiphanius, a bishop of the eastern church, ranks Acrius amongst the founders of heretics, for teaching, that prayers and alms are unavailing to the dead\*; and Augustin confirms the same, adding, that his heresy was condemned by the universal church †, Greeks therefore as well as others. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, another Greek father, expounding the liturgy in a catechistical discourse, says, “we remember those, who are deceased, first the patriarchs, apostles and martyrs, that God would receive our supplications through their prayers and intercession. Then we pray for our fathers and bishops, and in general all amongst us, who are departed out of this life, believing, that this will be the greatest relief to their souls, for whom it is made, whilst the holy and tremendous victim lies present ‡.” If this address should chance to be seen by any one, who has access to the works of this holy father, I would intreat him to read the continuation of this passage, and see the perfect agreement of our doctrine with that of the Greek church in St. Cyril’s time. The enlightened Greek doctor St. Chrysostom is equally decisive. “It is not in vain, says he, that in the divine mysteries we remember the dead, appearing in their behalf, praying the lamb, who takes away the sins of the world, that comfort may thence be derived to them—Let us pray for them, who have slept in Christ; let us not fail to succour

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\* Epiph. Hær. 75, alias 76.

† Aug. de Hæresibus—Hær. 53.

‡ Cyril. Hier. Catec. Myit. 19. n. 9. edit. Bened. alias cat. 5.

“ the departed ; for the common expiation of the world “ is offered \*.” Here is surely evidence enough to prove the antiquity of our doctrine, and its entire conformity with that of the Greek church. I quote no Latin fathers, as the Chaplain appears to lay particular stress on the Greek ; otherwise it were easy to produce the most unequivocal evidence of their perfect agreement with those just cited. The objection from the venerable bishop Fisher, that *to this very day purgatory is not believed by the Greeks, &c.* is either a mistake in him ; or, what I am much more inclined to believe, he meant only to say, that the Greeks do not believe in a purgatory of fire, contrary to a common, though not a dogmatical opinion of the western church.

The Chaplain proceeds (p. 30), to tell us, that our present doctrine of the *divine* institution and necessity of confession was not always a settled point in our church. What if it were not ? what harm would ensue, if for some ages this matter remained without minute investigation, and the faithful contented themselves with humble and penitential confession of their sins, not enquiring, whether the practice was derived from *divine* or *apostolical* institution ? Must we, for this reason, refuse to believe the church, when upon full enquiry and examination of the tradition preserved in all the churches, she defines, that confession is an obligation imposed on us by *divine* authority ? This would lead us back again into the question of infallibility. But let us hear the Chaplain’s reasons. *The learned Alcuin, says he, during the ninth century tells us expressly, that some said it was sufficient to confess our sins to God alone.* Were the persons here mentioned ca-  
tholics

\* Chryl. in i. ad Cor. hom. 41—alias 51.

tholics or not ? Does it appear, that their opinion had any effect on the public practice, so that it might alarm the vigilance of the pastors of the church ? Does he speak generally of all sins ? Does he not refer to situations and cases of necessity, in which confession cannot be made but to God alone ? Till these, and several other things relating to this passage are stated more fully, it is impossible to determine Alcuin’s meaning. The same must be observed of the passage from the manuscript penitential of Theodore, the genuineness of which I much doubt ; for I understand that Wilkins, the collector and editor of the British Councils, long since Usher’s time, has not published it ; and surely he would not have omitted so valuable a discovery ; and moreover because I find no mention of this passage in a comprehensive abridgement of Theodore’s Penitential, which lies now before me. I do not hereby mean to impeach Usher’s integrity, or, in general, his judgment ; but for the reasons just stated I conclude there were good grounds to question the authority of a manuscript, which does not appear to have had any of a similar tenor to support its credit. After all, to what do these authorities amount, supposing them both genuine and conveying the sense intended by the Chaplain ? Only to this, that at the time, the church was not known by Theodore and Alcuin to have made any authentic declaration of the *divine* institution and necessity of confession. The practice of it we may fairly conclude to have been general from this circumstance, if all other proof were wanting, which certainly is not the case ; that it was doubted, whether forgiveness could be obtained without it ; and in such a situation, what prudent and virtuous christian, anxious to obtain reconcili-  
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ation with his maker, would neglect the use of a mean, perhaps necessary to procure it?

These observations are equally applicable to the authority of Gratian, whether he was of the opinion attributed to him by the Chaplain and Maldonatus; or whether he only held, that the precept of confession was not obligatory immediately after the commission of sin, as I find his words understood by other divines. A general remark will not be improper in this place; that our faith is formed on the public doctrine of the church, and not on the opinions of private theologians. It is indeed requiring too much of us, to account for all the singularities, which any of them may have committed to writing. Does the Chaplain think, we cannot produce from protestant authors many concessions, many acknowledgments of the agreement of our tenets with the sense of antiquity, with the practice of the first ages, with the universal belief of early christians? Does not Dr. Cosin, in spite of all his animosity, acknowledge the possibility of transubstantiation? Does he not confess, that the water was changed into wine at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee? Do not the translators of Dupin's history, and other protestants bear witness to the antient practice of praying for the dead? Have not the invocation of saints, the honouring of their remains, the celibacy of our clergy been vindicated by protestant writers of eminence from the misrepresentations and objections of our opponents? Yet would the Chaplain think it worth his while to advert to these authorities, were they brought forth against him?

This however is his method against us. When he comes to object (p. 20), to the power of *loosening* and *binding* committed by Christ to his apostles and their successors

cessors in the ministry, he tells us, that the famous Lombard, the *Aristotle*, the *Newton* of scholastic divines, and some others, maintained that power to be only *declaratory* of forgiveness; whereas *since the council of Trent, it is become an article of our faith, that the priest has power to forgive sins.* (P. 20.)

Peter Lombard, who lived in the 12th century, was indeed a man of acknowledged and methodical genius, and had the merit of reducing the scattered opinions of divines into a regular system or body, which has since been the groundwork of scholastic theology. But if the Chaplain, by calling him its *Newton* and *Aristotle*, mean to convey an idea, that all his opinions are held sacred, he is greatly mistaken; for many of them are controverted, many universally rejected. The opinion, for which he is here cited, is very different from that, which might be supposed by the Chaplain's imperfect representation of it. For the natural inference from his representation is, that the sacerdotal order not only do not exercise a ministerial and dependent jurisdiction over repentant sinners (which is what we teach) but likewise that they impart no absolution, that they have no power of loosening or binding; in a word, that no grace is administered through the instrumentality of their ministry, and consequently that there is no such thing as the sacrament of penance. Now all this is expressly contrary to Lombard. He holds the divine institution of this sacrament; he teaches, that the ministry of absolution truly confers grace; that it has an inward effect on the soul; and though only declaratory with regard to the remission of the guilt of sin, is efficaciously and actively so with respect to the remission of the temporal punishment annexed to it. The council

council of Trent censured indeed the doctrine of the reformers in such terms, as appear to the generality of divines to import the falsehood of Lombard's opinion; but others do not think so; and the Chaplain might have remained in the bosom of our church, and still believed, that the power of absolution is only *declaratory*, in Lombard's sense, as Tournely\* would have informed him.

I have now finished my observations on the argumentative part of the Chaplain's letter, with abilities far inferior indeed; but, I trust, with a superiority of cause, which has enabled me to leave nothing unanswered, that could carry trouble into your minds, or shake the firmness of your faith. Before he concludes his letter, he has thought proper to make a profession of his new belief, and shews a particular anxiety to vindicate to himself the appellation of a catholic. I am not surpris'd at his anxiety; it is an appellation characteristic of the true church. "My name is Christian," says Pacianus, "my surname is Catholic. That denominates me, this distinguishes me †." And St. Augustin; "we must hold the christian religion, and the communion of that church, which is *catholic*; and which is called *catholic*, not only by her own children, but by all her enemies ‡." But will the Chaplain now find this characteristic in his new religion, any more, than the sectaries of St. Augustin's times found it in theirs? This holy doctor having mentioned various reasons, which prevailed on him to remain in the communion of the church, proceeds thus. "I am held in this church by the succession

\* De Pœn. quæst. 2. art. 2.

† Ep. 1. ad bym. ron. Nov.

‡ Aug. l. de Verâ Rel. c. 7.

"of priests coming down even to the present episcopacy from St. Peter, to whom Christ after his resurrection committed the feeding of his flock. Finally, I am held to it by the very name of *catholic*, of which this church alone has, not without reason, so kept possession, that, though all heretics desire to be called catholics; yet if a stranger ask them, where catholics meet, none of them will presume to point out his own church, or his house\*."

The Chaplain claims right to the title of catholic, because he "believes and professes every point of christian faith, which at *all times*, and in *all places* has constituted the creed of all orthodox believers." (P. 35.) For such, we are told, is Vincent of Lerins's description of a catholic. In the preceding, as well as subsequent part of his work, Vincent has explained the characteristics of catholicity so clearly, that it was impossible for the Chaplain to mistake them; and it was perhaps becoming his candour to have stated that author's meaning, when he was alleging his authority to the Roman catholics of Worcester. "It is necessary, says he, to follow the universality, antiquity and agreement of the catholic and apostolical church; and if a part revolt against the whole; if innovation rise up against antiquity; if the dissent of one or a few mistaken men disturb the agreement of all, or of a great majority of catholics, let the integrity of the whole be preferred to the infection of a part. In this same universality, let greater regard be had to venerable antiquity, than profane novelty; in antiquity itself," (that is, with regard to doctrines, for which antiquity is alleged) "let

\* Aug. cont. epif. Fundam. c. 4.

“ the decrees of a general council, if any exist, in the first place be opposed to the rashness of a few; and if no such decrees exist, let catholics follow, what is next in authority, *the agreeing opinions of many and eminent fathers*; which things being faithfully, soberly and anxiously observed, we shall *easily* with God’s help discover the pernicious errors of rising heretics\*.” Will the Chaplain’s catholicity stand the test of these rules? Will the authority of the learned Vincent of Lerins justify the religion, which he has adopted?

He next alleges, that the apostles creed is the standard of catholicity; but it must be subscribed, he says, *in its full extent*. Does he mean by these words, that every article of the creed is to be received, without addition, in the terms in which it is written? Or that it is to be received with such extension and explanation, as may comprehend other points not clearly expressed, but only implied therein? If this last be his meaning, who shall determine what is implied? By what authority shall the Arian or Macedonian be bound to acknowledge, that the divinity of Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost is taught in the creed? Will he, who receives the creed in the Arian or Macedonian sense, be a catholic? If it be the standard of catholicity, it surely cannot be enough to admit its words; but the sense conveyed by those words must be the object of catholic faith. I admit the creed, will each of these say, which whoever admits *in its full extent*, according to you, *must be a member of the catholic church*. (P. 35.) Shew me that I do not so admit it; shew me, that by requiring my assent to your explanation and extension of it, you do not require a submission

\* Vinc. Lir. Com. c. 38.

to human authority, and thereby lay on us a yoke heavier than that, with which you reproach the church of Rome; for when she requires obedience, she does so in virtue of her claim to infallibility; but you have no such pretension. Thus will the Arian, Macedonian, and other sectaries argue; and I cannot see, how the Chaplain will get over their objection consistently with the principles laid down in his letter; and therefore the creed, as subject to *extension* and *explanation*, cannot be with him the standard of catholicity.

But if the Chaplain mean, that the creed contains the universal catholic faith; that the profession of it alone, without understanding any thing more to be implied, than is literally expressed, constitutes us members of the catholic church; then are they not heretics, who condemn marriage, and introduce a distinction of meats; whom nevertheless the apostle describes as *giving heed to the doctrine of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, and having their conscience seared\**; nor they, who deny an eternity of punishment, or assert, that all the reprobated spirits in hell shall at length be saved; for none of these things are touched on in the creed. Where shall we find in it these necessary points, the profession of our obligation to love God, and to keep holy the Lord’s day? For necessary those points certainly are, the omission or transgression of which is a damnable sin. Where does the creed speak of the necessity of baptism, or of the lawfulness of it, when administered by heretics? Did not the catholic church always assert the first, as an essential doctrine, and establish the other against the Donatists? Where finally, to omit many other articles, which not

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\* 1 Tim. 4.



even the Chaplain would deny as belonging to catholic faith, does the creed propose to our belief, the receiving of the books of the old and new testament, as of divine revelation? It may therefore be concluded, and I think upon evident principles, and in direct opposition to the Chaplain, that a person may subscribe the apostles creed, even *in its full extent*, without being a member of the catholic church. I only make this exception, that by declaring his assent to these words, *I believe the holy catholic church*, he means not to acknowledge her unerring authority; for if he does, that acknowledgment imports the belief of every article, which she proposes as revealed by God\*.

Another material objection to the Chaplain's doctrine is, that it admits into the communion of the church almost all those who in every age of christianity have been deemed heretics, and the corrupters of faith. The great council of Nice, which the first protestants pretended to respect as replenished with a truly catholic spirit, in their eighth

\* The Chaplain in a note (p. 35), obviates the meaning here insinuated, and attempts to shew an opposition between the exposition of this article of the creed in the catechism of the council of Trent, and that of many of our religious instructors. But they must be ignorant instructors indeed, who know not that by *believing in God*, we profess to believe both that he is, and that his word is intallible, as being founded in the divine perfections of infinite wisdom and truth; whereas by believing the catholic church, we make profession of acknowledging her existence; and that God communicates to us through her those truths, which we must receive, not as the words of man; but as they truly are, the words of God. Just so the Chaplain admits the scriptural doctrines delivered by the apostles and evangelists; nevertheless he does not fail *in making a sufficient difference between God and his creatures*; but he knows that divine omnipotence can render mortal men infallible in communicating revealed doctrines to others; and which must ultimately be believed for the authority of God alone.

eighth canon, speak of the Novatians as being out of the catholic church. Their errors consisted, 1st, in denying the power of the church to forgive sins, particularly that of apostasy from faith; 2dly, in requiring the rebaptisation of those, who had been baptised by heretics; 3dly in condemning second marriages. I doubt whether the Chaplain will find any of these errors reprobated in the apostles creed. St. Cyprian expressly teaches\*, that the Novatians made use of no other creed, than that of the catholics; which undoubtedly was that of the apostles; and yet they were deemed heretics, and out of the communion of the church.

The Donatists in like manner, because they rejected baptism administered by heretics, were denied communion with the catholic church; but the creed they did not deny. "You are with us," says St. Augustin, "in baptism, *in the creed*, in the other sacraments of God; "but in the spirit of unity, and in the bond of peace; "finally, *in the catholic church* you are not with us †." I infer then again, that it was not the intention of the apostles to conclude in their creed the *universal christian catholic faith*.

You are now prepared to form a true estimate of the Chaplain's *universal belief*, as expressed in the place ‡, we have been considering. As I before said, almost every sect, that ever deformed the face of christianity, might be taken into it. Sabellians and Arians; Nestorians and Eutychians; Socinians and many Deists; and the disciples of that modern author (his name is celebrated in the literary

\* Cyp. ep. 76. ad Magnum.

† Aug. ep. 93 (olim 48) ad Vincentium.

‡ P. 36.

literary world) who has lately discovered, that the doctrine of a pre-existent nature in Christ, that is, of his having existed before his Incarnation, is a corruption of christianity; all these however discordant in their principles, would subscribe the apostles creed; and might say, that they embraced no new religion, but only discarded some doctrines, which had been engrafted upon the old one. Thus in a short time, under pretence of reducing our faith to the primitive simplicity of the creed, every tenet would be successively rejected, which curbs our passions, or subjects our understanding. "If once this impious licentiousness be admitted," says the excellent Vincent of Lerins, "I dread to say, how great will be the danger of destroying and extirpating religion. For if any one part of the catholic doctrine be rejected, another and another will share the same fate; and at length it will become a practice, and deemed lawful to discard others; thus the tenets of religion being rejected one by one, what will finally ensue, but the rejection of the whole together \*."

The Chaplain proceeds to tell the Roman catholics of Worcester, that his religion is that of the Bible; but that their religion is the doctrine of the council of Trent; insinuating thus an opposition between the two. But do not catholics, as well as he himself, recur to scripture, as the foundation of their religion? Does not the council of Trent profess the most profound veneration for, and implicit belief of every part of scripture? Does it not, in all its decrees and definitions of faith, assert the tenets of the church on the authority of scripture? If then both the council and Chaplain be solicitous to form their faith

\* Vinc. Lir. comm. c. 31.

on scripture, which is most likely to discover the true meaning thereof? If the Chaplain deem it his duty to rely most on his own private interpretation, the catholics of Worcester think it wiser, and more consistent with humility and obedience to follow that church, which Jesus Christ has promised to lead into all truth; and to hear those instructors, whom he has appointed to teach all things, whichsoever he has commanded.

I rely solely, says the Chaplain, upon the authority of God's word (p. 38); and do we not likewise rely solely upon the same authority? No, insinuates the Chaplain; you catholics think it necessary to recur to unwritten tradition. And, pray, what is the tradition, to which we recur, but the word of God delivered down to us by the testimony of the fathers, and in the public doctrine of the catholic church? Does not the Chaplain himself receive the written word of God from the same testimony and tradition? Why is it less to be depended on in witnessing the unwritten word of God, than in delivering down, and separating the true and genuine books of scripture from those, which are false or corrupted? He demands with St Cyprian, whence we have our tradition? We answer, from the apostles, from their successors, from the attestation of christians spread throughout the world; and St. Augustin proves our right to assign this origin; because, says he, "what the universal church holds and was not instituted in a council, but was always maintained, is most reasonably concluded to be derived from apostolical institution \*." But St. Cyprian requires, that it be commanded in the gospel, or contained in the epistles or acts of the apostles. (P. 38.) What wonder, that St. Cyprian, while

\* Aug. de Bapt. contra Donat. l. 4. c. 6.

while he was engaged, as he then was, in the error of the Donatists, should speak their language; and like all other opposers of the authority of the church, should call for scripture proofs, which can never be effectual, because they can always be explained away by human ingenuity? Wherefore St. Augustin in his 5th book, 23d ch. on baptism, against the Donatists, particularly refutes the writing now objected out of Cyprian; and it is wonderful indeed, if the Chaplain did not discover this in the very place, from which I presume he copied his objection. He sometimes cites Vincent of Lerins. Will he then allow one, who still retains the most sincere good will for him, to recommend to his reading the eleventh chapter of Vincent's excellent work? Will he notice, what Vincent there says of those, who endeavour to support their false opinions by quotations from Cyprian's works, written while he was engaged in the defence of error?

The Chaplain adds, that we deem the scriptures deficient and obscure; but he asks, *where is the deficiency? Where is the obscurity?* (Ibid.) Deficient they certainly are not, if it be meant, that they do not answer the views and designs of divine providence in causing them to be written; but in this sense they are deficient, that they do not contain all necessary points of belief and practice; which, I think has been sufficiently proved; and is declared by St. Paul in the words before cited; *brethren, stand and hold fast the traditions, you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle\**.

But where shall we find *the obscurity of the scripture?* We shall find it in almost every book of holy writ; we shall

\* 2 Theff. ii. ver. 15.

shall find it, where St. Peter tells us, it is to be found, in Paul's epistles, *in which are some things hard to be understood, and which, as well as all other scriptures, the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction\**. But St. Chrysostom assures us, that *scripture expounds itself, and does not suffer the reader to err.* (P. 38.) The Chaplain is conversant in history; and undoubtedly a person of observation. Can he then seriously believe or imagine it to be Chrysostom's meaning, that the scripture expounds itself in all points to every reader, so that he cannot err? Is every one able to make that conference and comparison of the different passages of scripture, which lead to its true interpretation? Can any thing more be intended by that great doctor, than that scripture directs every reader to such a rule of exposition, as secures him from error? But is his private interpretation this infallible rule? Or is it that of the church, manifested in her public doctrine by the ministers of her appointment? Hear St. Chrysostom himself; "Take the book in your hand; read a passage throughout; keep present to your mind, what you understand; but return frequently to the reading of those things, which are obscure and difficult; and if by repeated reading you cannot find out their meaning, go to a teacher, go to one wiser than yourself †." To the authority of Chrysostom might be added, I believe, that of every father of the church; and most of them have delivered their opinions of the insufficiency and obscurity of scripture, not in fragments of a sentence, but treating professedly and fully on this very subject. To these allow me to add an authority,

\* 2 Pet. iii. ver. 16.

† Chryf. hom. 3. de Lazaro.

thority, which with many of our protestant brethren will weigh more, than that of all the fathers. Thus then Luther in his preface to the psalms; "It is a most audacious presumption in any one to say, that he understands every part even of one book of scripture \*." Let the Chaplain recollect all the disputes and variations even amongst protestants themselves concerning the meaning of these words spoken by Christ at his last supper, *This is my body*. If innumerable arguments evince to him their meaning to be figurative, he cannot forget, that Luther and Dr. Cosin, a bishop of the church of England, pronounce anathemas against the maintainers of a figurative sense. After this, will he so confidently repeat his interrogation, *where is the deficiency, where is the obscurity of scripture?*

He is content, he says, to acquiesce in that authority, to which alone St. Austin, and St. Chrysostom refer us, (p. 38) insinuating hereby, that scripture is that sole authority. How he came to mention St. Augustin on this occasion, I am at a loss to conceive. This holy father has made a clear profession of receiving scripture itself, only because it came recommended to him by the church. "I would not, says he, believe the gospel, if the authority of the catholic church did not move me thereunto †." In his controversies with the Manicheans and Donatists, he repeatedly appeals to the authority and practice of the catholic church; he tells the latter, that neither they, nor the catholics have any clear scripture for their different opinions concerning rebaptisation; but that the

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\* Scio esse impudentissimæ temeritatis eum, qui audeat profiteri unum scripturæ librum à se in omnibus partibus intellectum. *Luth. præf. in Psal.* ap. Bell. de R. P. l. 3. c. 21.

† Ego verò evangelio non crederem, nisi me ecclesiæ catholice commoveret auctoritas. *Aug. cont. Epif. Fundam.* c. 5.

former, by refusing to submit to the church, resist not man, but our Saviour himself, who in the gospel bears testimony to the church \*. The pretended authority from St. Chrysostom is no more his, than mine; it is a reference to the same exploded passage, as was cited in the Chaplain's note (p. 9), of which enough has been said.

I have now gone through a task, painful in every point of view, in which I could consider it. To write for the public eye, on any occasion whatever, is neither agreeable to my feelings, my leisure, or opportunities; that it is likewise disproportioned to my abilities, my readers, I doubt, will soon discover. But if reduced to the necessity of publishing, I would wish that my duty led me to any species of composition, rather than that of religious controversy. Mankind have conceived such a contempt for it, that an author cannot entertain a hope of enjoying those gratifications, which in treating other subjects may support his spirits and enliven his imagination. Much less could I have a prospect of these incitements in the prosecution of my present undertaking. I could not forget in the beginning, progress, and conclusion of it, that the habits of thinking, the prejudices, perhaps even the passions of many of my readers would be set against all the arguments, I could offer; and that the weaknesses, the errors, the absurdities of the writer would be imputed to the errors and absurdity of his religion. But of all considerations the most painful was, that I had to combat him, with whom I had been connected in an intercourse of friendship and mutual good offices; and in connection with whom I hoped to have consummated my

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course

\* Aug. lib. 1. cont. Cresc. c. 33.—& de Unit. Eccl. c. 22.

course of our common ministry in the service of virtue and religion. But when I found these expectations disappointed; when I found that he not only had abandoned our faith and communion, but had imputed to us doctrines foreign to our belief, and having a natural tendency to embitter against us the minds of our fellow-citizens, I felt an anguish too keen for description; and perhaps the Chaplain will experience a similar sentiment, when he comes coolly to reflect on this instance of his conduct. It did not become the friend of toleration to misinform, and to sow in minds so misinformed the seeds of religious animosity.

Under all these distressful feelings, one consideration alone relieved me in writing; and that was, the hope of vindicating your religion to your own selves at least, and preserving the steadfastness of your faith. But even this prospect should not have induced me to engage in the controversy, if I could fear that it would disturb the harmony now subsisting amongst all christians in this country, so blessed with civil and religious liberty; which if we have the wisdom and temper to preserve, America may come to exhibit a proof to the world, that general and equal toleration, by giving a free circulation to fair argument, is the most effectual method to bring all denominations of christians to an unity of faith.

The motives, which led the Chaplain to the step he has taken, are known best to God and himself. For the vindication of his conduct, he appeals to the dictates of conscience with a seriousness and solemnity, which must add greatly to his guilt, if he be not sincere. He is anxious to impress on his readers a firm conviction, that neither views of preferment or sensuality had any influence

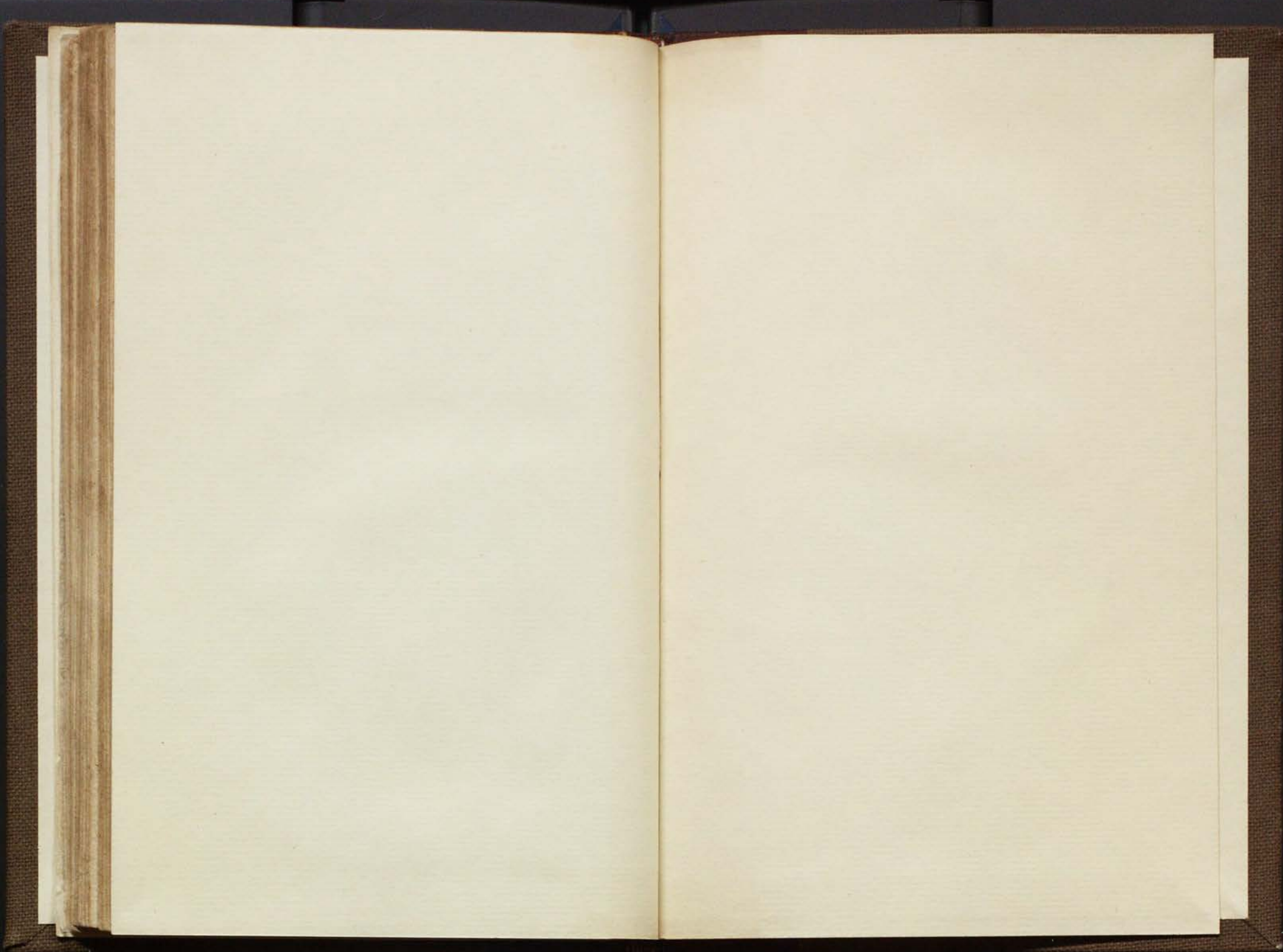
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once on his determination. He appears to be jealous, that suspicions will arise unfavourable to the purity of his intentions. He shall have no cause to impute to me the spreading of these suspicions. But I must entreat him with an earnestness suggested by the most perfect good will and zealous regard for his welfare, to consider the sanctity of the solemn and deliberate engagement, which at an age of perfect maturity he contracted with Almighty God. I pray him to read the two exhortations of that *enlightened doctor* St. Chrysostom to his friend Theodorus, who, like the Chaplain, had renounced his former state, in which by a vow of celibacy he had consecrated himself to Almighty God. "You allege," says the saint to his friend, "that marriage is lawful; this I readily acknowledge; but it is not now in your power to embrace that state; for it is certain, that one, who by a solemn engagement has given himself to God, as his heavenly spouse, if he violate this contract, commits adultery, though he should a thousand times call it marriage. Nay he is guilty of a crime so much the more enormous, as the majesty of God surpasses man. Had you been free, no one could charge you with desertion; but since you are contracted to so great a king, you are not at your own disposal\*." See here, how far St. Chrysostom was from considering the law of celibacy as a *cruel usurpation of the unalienable rights of nature, as unwarrantable in its principle, inadequate in its object, and dreadful in its consequences*. He considered a vow of celibacy as an engagement, or contract entered into with Almighty God; independent therefore of the discipline of any society as to its binding power, and not to be released

\* Chryf. ad Theod. laps. Exh. 2.

leased but by God's relinquishing his right to exact a rigorous compliance with the obligation of it. He thought, that the sanctity of religion was interested in the performance of so sacred an engagement, according to Deuteron. xxiii. ver. 21. *When thou hast vowed a vow to the Lord our God, thou shalt not slack to pay it, because our Lord thy God will require it.—That, which is once gone out of thy lips, thou shalt observe, and shalt do, as thou hast promised to our Lord thy God, and hast spoken with thy proper will and thy own mouth.*

T H E E N D.



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