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

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

By A Catholic Clergyman.

Annapolis: Printed by Frederick Green.

M. DCC. LXXXIV.
AN ADDRESS TO THE ROMAN CATHOLICS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

SAINT 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.
† ibid. ver. 30.
‡ Vinc. Lir. comm. cap. 22.
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 Worchester 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 it was 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 referring 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 tranquility 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 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 ingenious 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

*Catholici noverint & cum ecclesiâ doctores recipere, non cum doctoribus ecclesie fidem defere debere. Vetus. lat. comm. c. 99.
† Mat. v. ver. 13.
* Mat. v. ver. 14.
a time when they were generally neglected; if the reformation 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 adherence to the doctrines of the church, as might make you ready always to give an answer to every man, that offers 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 t.

But is not this recommendation a mere delusion? Can a conscientious 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 of

* 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 man 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 functions 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-
fore he can fairly examine into the proofs of the exis-
tence 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 ever 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
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 lettered with other
obstacles to free inquiry. They cannot seek religious in-
formation in the writings of protestants, without incurring
the severest censures of their church (Ch. Letter, p. 4):
By the Bull 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, severall laws and heavy penalties were enact-
ed, and, if I am well informed, still subsist, against the
introduction, the printing and vending of books in fa-

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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 perni-
cious 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 sober sex, with all the ceremony of invective, with
the aggravations of misrepresentation, and powers of ri-
dicule; weapons too common in controversies of every
kind. Without examining how far this zeal was prud-
dent and justifiable in the present instance, let me ob-
serve, that the proscription of books of evil tendency is
warranted by the example of St. Paul's disciples at Ephe-

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s, acting in the presence of, and probably by the in-
fructions 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 verfe,
grew the word of God, and was strengthened. What good
parent, what conscientious instructor feels not the an-
guish of religion, when they find, that promiscuous read-
ing 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 rejected as an encroachment on national
independence; and, in particular, the clause referred to


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, Tipton 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 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 unsullied 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 wrongly 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. 3.
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 Bel- larmin, of none being saved out of the church, must be un- 
understood of them, who belong not to it either in fact or 

* Bellarm. de Eccl. mil. i. 3. c. 3. 
† The state and behaviour of English catholics.—London, 1730. (p. 155—6.) 

view 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, 

* View of deistical writers, vol. I. let. 10.
visited more extensively, more generally, or more uninter-
ruptedly, than by many members of our own commu-
nion, though the Chaplain thinks our minds are con-
trasted by the narrowness of a system (Let. ibid.) Let him
recall to his remembrance the many receptacles he has
seen erected in catholic countries for indigence, and hu-
man 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 else-
where; but in many places, by religious men; and in
others, by communities of women, often of the first no-
bility, dedicating their whole lives to this loathsome ex-
ercise 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 innumerable employment of training
youth in the first rudiments of science; and others en-
countering incredible hardships, and, as it were, burying
themselves alive, to bring savages to a social life, and af-
fewards to form them to chivalrie virtue. To what so-
ciety 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 sordidness of the piratical
laws 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 hu-
mane 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 Villanov-
us, of Marseille's good bishop, and so many others, who

devoted themselves to the public relief, during dreadful
visitations of the plague, when nature is sickened, and each gale
was death? The Chaplain's reflection 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 unca-
feingly 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 re-
straining salvation to those of your own communion,
But you will excuse me for dwelling longer on it, con-
ceiving 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 assecd 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 (Leff. 6. ch. 4.) has expressly
established it, that salvation may be obtained without ac-
tual baptism; thus then it appears, that we not only may,
but are obliged to believe, that out of our communion salva-
tion 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
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, Dejinn refu}ed by itself: “It is fallacious, 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 facts 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, 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 the 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 merit 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. “Hereby, says Reuter, in a Christian, or baptized person, is a wilful and obstinate error of the understanding opposite to some verity of faith. So that three things are requisite to constitute hereby. 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 baptized Christian; otherwise his sin against faith is called infidelity, not hereby. After which our author thus goes on. “The obstinacy requisite to hereby is a deliberate and determined resolution to differ 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.

If

Bergier, Dejinn refu}ed par lui meme—r. par. let. 4.
† Instruff. pastorale fur l’heresie—pag. 67. edit. in 4to.
‡ Reuter theol. moral. p. 4. trac. 1. quid 3.
If the doctrine imputed to us could be found anywhere, 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 flated; 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 excluded from the sin of infidelity, though justly punishable 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 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 pernicious animosity maintain their opinion, though false 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, Tertullian, &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 obstructed 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 unjustly reject it." (Let. ibid.) Therefore we must likewise pronounce condemnation upon those, who reject it through ignorance and culpable 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

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* Si qui tamen eorum sectissent, quod in se est, Dominus eis secundum suam misericordiam providet, mittendo eis praeda ignorantiam, dicat Petrum Cornelio, Comm. in cap. 10. epist. ad Rom. lect. 3. 
† Non dum hereticum dico, nisi manifestatæ doctrinae catholicae sed, eumque infirmitatem Dei baptism. Donat. lib. 4. c. 16.

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* Qui sententiam sibi, quamvis falsam atque perveram, nulla pertinacibus animosity defendunt, praedominat quod non auten praegumptionis sine peperit, sed in se datas; ut omnes, qui perhanc lapides extenuantur, aut perhanc, aut sub grauis, corrigi parant, aut invenirent, qui non iudicium perhanc hereticos reponerent. Aug. epist. 43. ad Gloriam & Eleuther.
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 certaincases, 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 upon 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.

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, the 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 I mean

* Chilling. Religion of Protestants, &c. ch. 7. p. 305.
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 perfection, 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 control 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. (Let. 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 it 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 proofs? Then certainly it becomes agreeable to the dictates of reason, and the founddest 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 her 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 soldier-like (Let. ibid.) profession of faith, and that of St. Augufin 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 catholicks of the city of Worcester, that "if a man's belief be not rational, "if he submit to human authority without weighing or under-

* Let, p. 11, 12.

* Aug. l. x. cont. Julian. c. 5.
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 23rd, 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."
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 affords 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 truths—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 against 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 lets rap in exacty with the beauties of reason, can acknowledge this: "show 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, Boffuet, 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, Ufher 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
The Chaplain observes (p. 28), that this text is wrongly translated, and that the Greek word ἄδέης manifestly imports death, and not bell. The alteration is not very material in itself, and might well pass unnoticed, were it not for the sake of shewings, 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 fagacious Greek critics, whether bell 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 to hadē, lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw Abrahām afar off. If I did not deem this scripture passage sufficient to prove that the word ἄδέης 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 contradistinction to himself. Among the moderns, the Chaplain will not dispute the palm of Hebrew, and Greek literature, with Dr. Lowe, now bishop of London, or with his learned commentator, professor Michaelis of Gottingen. Let him read the bishop's elegant work, de sacris Posi Hebreworum, praefat. 7; and the professor in his annotations on that prelection, and he will find them both decided in their opinion, that the Greek word ἄδέης, as well as

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 propofed 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 assayer 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 miserable.*

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 affersion flood in 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 promise 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 intimdicated in the promises of Christ, that his church shall never hold out...

* Mumford, Quest. of Quest. sect. 15.
out erroneous opinions, as terms of communion, I am yet to learn the signification of plain words. " For, says an excellent author, it 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 conclusion will appear undeniable, if we consider the two following truths: 1. That faith is essential to the constitution of the church; and 2. Thy, that hereby destroys faith. For it plainly follows hence, that if the whole church fall into hereby, she is without faith; and is 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 the 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 the mystery of iniquity, mentioned in the Chaplain's letter (p. 11.) the denying of salvation to all out of her own communion, and the horrible hereby of perfection; will not the gates of hell then prevail against her? will not the promises of Christ be vain and deceitful?

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." (Lett. p. 21-29.)

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, Matt. xvii. 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 inflammatory 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 Christ...
Christ will abide, if a new society arise adhering to the same suppos’d fundamental tenets; she may adopt many errors indeed, and yet induce 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 antient 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 subservient of all revealed religion.

Will the Chaplains 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 expostulation. 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. 31.) If this be true, and necessarily true in virtue of the promises of Christ, then even in the most deplorable state of superstition and ignorance (Lett. p. 31), in every preceding and subsequent state; even in that of the reformation, “the christian church retain—

“ed sufficient light to conduct each upright and pious believer to all points of his duty, upon which his salvation depended.” Need I point out the consequences ensuing to the first reformers from this doctrine; and consequent upon those, who became their disciples? Need I tell you, that having separated themselves from the great body of christians throughout the world, they broke the link of unity, and left a society, in which sufficient light remained to conduct each upright and pious believer 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 extending to that, which he embraces in its stead?

Before I conclude upon this text, you will allow me to state the Chaplains objection to the catholic explanation 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 wickedness cannot prevail against the church, as it is brought to prove, that error and hereby cannot; for vice is as formidable an enemy to religion, as error; and the christian system 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 nece-
sarily attended with unalterable fidelity 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 ca-
non of scripture; yet he did not prevent the first from
committing adultery and murder; nor the second, from
going after Ashtaroth, 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 indi-
vidual 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


... to be the overflowing of a heart filled with concern for
his future church."

These promises the Chaplain has stated comprehensively 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 forever, 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.

* 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 ministers, 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 to subsist in and to be with every wind of doctrine; or at height, to be modelled upon their own fallible interpretation of scripture. For where, says he, did the divine author of our religion impose 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 addrested 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 in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and beliald 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 baptize all nations. Were the apostles, to whom these words were immediately addrested, 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 economy of the church, in which Christ gave some apostles, and some pro-

† Shortest way, &c. sect. 2.

Mat. xxviii. ver. 20, 21.
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 they shall be guided into ALL TRUTH!

But is not Christ with his church by his protection, by his grace, &c. Can be 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
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 unbiased reader to the idea and belief of an infallible church. Now then let us suppose, that the contradictions of the texts, I have quoted, were found in holy writ. As for instance, supposing 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 unbiased 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 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 backhanded 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 conclude 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.

Having

* Shortest way to end disputes, chap. 7. sect. 2.
Having premised so much, now let us analyze the catholic faith, and see if we reason as badly, as the Chaplain affirms.

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-baptizing persons baptized by heretics; such is the Nicene creed, and particularly the word, confessional, 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 moft 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 era 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 surprized me. But that the Chaplain should likewise insinuate upon it, is really matter of astonishment. For he must know, that in the doctrine 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 1582; 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

* The true Church of Christ, p. a. ch. 3. sect. 5. Shortest way, &c. part a. sect. 2.
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 dispute the church's infallibility by his interpretation of certain passages of scripture, and by discovering fallacies and incon sistencies 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. 20ly, She suppressed for a time certain tenets, which ought to have been taught at all times, or not taught at all. 30ly, She requires a belief of things which are not contained in scripture, as is acknowledged even by some of our own divines.

How does he prove the first of these charges? By affirming (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 least 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, O 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, among 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 Cassius, a catholic priest, the contemporary of Justin and Irenæus.

I need

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. 1. 2. c. 48.
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 as 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 hereby 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 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 as other points are so interwoven with the system and economy 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 be
the Father. Previous to which decision, the faithful 
contented themselves with acknowledging his divine na-
ture; but that the belief of it included consubstantiality,
was not yet sufficiently proposed to them, and therefor- 
earnestly, to decide against the necessity of circumcision,
to which decree all were now obliged to submit under pain of 
hereby. 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 re-
fers to, were delivered as essential, that is, I suppose, es-
fentially to be believed, whenever they came to be suf-

ciently proposed, as revealed by God; but they were not 
esentially 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 prophets 
dising and seducing many, Mat. xxiv. v. 11. call upon her 
to examine the faith committed to her keeping and 

served in holy scripture and the chain of tradition. In 
these perilous moments the unfolds the doctrines, and 
presents them to christians as preservatives from the delu-
sions of novelty, the refinements of false philosophy, and 
the misinterpretations of private and presumptuous judg-

ment. 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 Father. Previous to which decision, the faithful 
contented themselves with acknowledging his divine na-
ture; 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 ad-
mitted, clearly prove, that neither his, nor the faith of 
other one, who admits all the books of scripture, is the 
same with that of the first christians; nor 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 for-
mery were not so believed, there is no longer an unity of 
faith. (Let. p. 34.) Now the apostles at different pe-
riods of their lives sent epistles and instructions to the 
different churches, which they then, and we now re-
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 under-
stand 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 up-
wards 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 gos-
pel, or revelation, had not the same faith with those, who 

* Acts xv. v. 1.
† See Chap. Lett. p. 34.
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, 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 discourse on the prophets, 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 apostacy of papal Rome, as it did his predecessor Juxut, whose reverence the illustrious Buffet 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, 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, whatsoever their divine master had commanded them, Mat. xxviii. v. 20, 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 ostrud 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. 15.); and instances are given in the doctrines of transubstantiation and purgatory, auricular confession, and the power of loosing and binding, or abjuration. 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 defactive 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 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 faith 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 affuring 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 Manicheans, Marcionists, Cerdonists, &c.? I mention St. Matthew's gospel, as coming first to my mind; but the argument is applicable.
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 its, 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. Chrysofom, 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 epistles, 2 Thess. ii. v. 14. alias 15. observes, that it is plain, that the apostles did not deliver all things 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 surprized when I read the first passage cited by the Chaplain; it appeared to opposite to the principles, which St. Chrysofom 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 Chrysofom'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 Chrysofom on Matthew, hom. 49. is quoted, is not taken from that father. It is extracted from a work of

* See this acknowledged by Dr. Cofm, bishop of Durham, in his Scholastic History of the Canon of Scripture, ch. i. § 8. edit. London, 1673.

* Chryl, hom. 3. in 4. Thess. 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 affects, that it is only then necessary to discover by scripture alone, which is the true church of Christ, when hereby hath all outward observances in common with her. But if the outward observances are not the same, if the church and hereby 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? (Lett. 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 Chrysostom so erroneously will not be compensated by the other passage, for which he likewise is cited; and which indeed I find to be noticed by Bellarmine, as genuine; but he observes that Chrysostom is not discoursing of doctrines obstructly delivered, or contested amongst different sects of christians; but of such, as being clearly and unambiguously taught in holy writ, are nevertheless disbelieved 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 Chrysostom says, that they ought to be disdained, 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 afferts for truth; I answer first, that this direction is very different from that of Chrysostom 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. *

* Opus imperfectum in Mattheum. The author adopts the Manichean, the Montanist, and Arian herefies. In the first homily, he says, that *marriage is a sin*; in the 3d, that *second marriage is only an honourable fornication*; in the 49th, he calls the catholic doctrine of the divinity of Christ, the Homousian, or consubstantial herefey.

* 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 dwelling this address to too great a bulk.

† Quod facient catholicii homines, & matris ecclesiae filii? quomodo modo in scripturis sanctis veritatem a fallaciis differentem?
In the next place, I observe that the rule of investigation laid down as from St. Chrysofom 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 affirms 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, 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 affirms for truth; but to investigate all things in the scriptures; after this, I will not say, that he himself undervalues the difficulty with fine feign subtlety like a modern scholman*; 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 sugget, 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

* See page 58, of this address, and Mumford's Quotation of Questions, point first and second.
† Chaplain's note, p. 9.
His lordship is pleased to add, that whatever things are necessary to be believed, are easy to be understood. (P. 19, 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 decent 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 unreproved 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, whatsoever 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 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 ecclesiaries to exhibit a like title to the divine commiission of teaching and administering the sacraments †.

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 affirms (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

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* See Bergier, Dejime refuta, &c. let. 4.
sive upon the corporeal 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, Paschafius 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 painsful investigation mentioned in his seventh page. Thus then Bellarmine in the book cited by him. "This author (Paschafius Radbertus) was the first, who wrote seriously and copiously of the reality of the body and blood of the Lord in the eucharist: 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 Paschafius was the first to establish a new doctrine; and is not Bellarmine's real meaning, that Paschafius was the first to defend an established doctrine against a recent opposer of it?

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

* His author primus fuit, qui serio & copiosè fcripsit de veritate corporis & sanguinis Domini in eucharistia contra Bertramum presbyterum, qui sui ex primis, qui eam ad dubium recturam. Bell. de Script. Eccl. ad an. 820, de Paschafio Radberto.

Otherwise. This monk, says he, meaning Paschafius, informs us himself, that his doctrine was not found openly or settled*. Let us now see, how he gives us this information; and let his letter to Frudegarius (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 Paschafius 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, and not to believe, what truth itself attests, and what every whare, 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 Paschafius's letter to Frudegarius. But, continues he, Paschafius in this very letter, speaking of the corporeal presence, says, you question me upon a subject, about which many are doubtful.

(P. 34.)

* Letter, p. 33.
† Quamvis ex hoc quidam de ignorantia errant, nemo tamen eadem in aperto, qui hoc sta esse contradicit, quod totus orbis credit & confessit. "Pasch. Radb. epist. ad Frudeg. Bibi, P. P. tom. 9, par. 1, pag. 246.
‡ Videat, qui contra hoc venire voluerit, quid sicut contra sermonem Domini, & contra continuum Christi ecclesiam. Neeris ergo fecus ei oreare cum omnibus, & non credere quod veritates iisdem testatur, & ubique omnes universum verum esse jacentur. Ibid.
(P. 34,) Does Pachiaus 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. Auguin's works a passage, that perplexed him; and that he applied to Pachiaus, 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 Pachiaus himself, that several were doubtful of the real presence in the eucharist. Is it possible, that Pachiaus 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 Pachiaus, 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. Auguin. He applies to Pachiaus to explain the difficulty, relying on his knowledge and orthodoxy; he does not conclude from the passage of Auguin, 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 affection, that Pachiaus

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 Pachiaus'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, hift. 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 Pachiaus, which is thought, with much probability, to be a letter from Rabanus to Egil, abbot of Prum; and

* Dicit te antes credidisse; sed profiteris, quod in libro de doctrina christiana Beati Augustini legitis, quod typica sit locutio; quod si fratur locutio est, eft schema potius, quam veritas nefcio, inquis, qualiter illud iumere debeam. Ep. ad Prud. vid.

† Note, p. 39.
and it is not unlikely, that the passage quoted by the
Chaplain (p. 37); is taken from this writing.

But what is the purport of the letter? Is it to dispute
the real presence, and transubstantiation? If not clearly;
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 Paschalus,
was, to censure some modes of speech used by him, in
explaining the eucharist. For he had said, that the bod
of our Lord, which the faithful receive in communio
is the same body, that was born of the Virgin Mary.
This expression appeared to Ratramus particularly obno
uous, though it was undoubtedlyauthored by former
usage. It was therefore rejected by him, and thought
improper, as not conveying an idea of the different manus
in which Christ's body and blood exist in their nat
ural state, and that, which they have in the sacrament.
In the former, they are present and visible; in the latter,
they exist in a manner supernatural and mysterious.

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

* 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 op
pose Paschalus, is a fact no where proved, though confi
dently asserted by the Chaplain. The French author of
the Perpetuity of the faith, &c. says expressly, that Ratra
mus does not so much as mention Paschalus's name; he
objects indeed to the expression used by him, but at the
same time, he plainly afferts in many passages the catholi
doctrine; and Boileau, the celebrated Sorbonist, has
proved, that Bellarmine and others were mistaken in
talking, he was an adversary to it, as well as in saying
that Paschalus wrote against him his treatise of the reality
of Christ's body and blood, &c. For the occasion of Pascha
lus's writing was, to instruct the Saxons then lately
converted to Christianity.

I will not swell this address with copying from Ratra
mus 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 signi
ficancy," or efficacy "of the sacred mystery; not ind
deed 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 spi
rit; and because they are quite another thing thro'e in
visible power, than what they visibly appear." This,
I think, is abundantly sufficient to shew, that the disa
reement between Paschalus and Ratramus consisted not

* Ratram, op. cit. Pasch. 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 coformation, 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 Baro-
nus, an historian so fervently attached to the doctrines
of the catholic church, should rile him the brightest lum-
nary of Germany. (Ch. let. p. 32.)

We have heard Prædus, in the last paragraph but
one, deliver no less clearly the doctrine of the real presence
and transubstantiation; and if they assert it so evidently,
whom the Chaplain has selected out of all anti-
quity, as most favourable to his cause, I need not have
recourse to other authors, their contemporaries, 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 Paschatus represent the do-
ctrine 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 proofs, that at the
period indicated by the Chaplain, the doctrine of the carnal
presence was regarded merely as matter of opinion, and so con-
tinued for 200 years?* I flatter myself on the contrary,

that I have alleged from Paschatus and Rabanus con-
vincing 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 transsubstan-
tiation 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 100 years after the time of
the apostles, St. John having lived to the year 101 of
the Christian era, 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 fer-
pulous attention, with which he flatters himself. How-
ever Stephen was the first to make use of the term tran-
substantiation; I admit without hesitation, that it is not to
be met with in any more ancient author; but as our dis-
pute is not about words, but things, the Chaplain can
derive no more advantage from this fact, than an Arian,
or Neillian can from the terms confubstantial or substanti-
bis 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 be-
came adopted by the council of Lateran into ecclesiastical
language; all which is perfectly agreeable to ancient
practice, as attested by Vincent of Lerins: ** The can-
tholic church, says he, moved therunto by the inno-
lations of heretics, has always attended to this point
in the decrees of her councils; that is, to transmit to
posterity with the approbation of written authority,
what the before received by tradition alone; compre-
hending
"hending much matter in few words; and for the better understanding, oftentimes expressing an ancient doctrine by a new word of determinate significance." "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. Colini'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 herefey, 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 unspoken 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. "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 condemned 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. Adelmannus, who had been brought up with him under the discipline of Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, and became himself bishop of Briexen, wrote Berengarius a letter expressed with much tenderness and charity, wherein he tells his friend, that a "report was spread of his being fevered 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*

* Vinc. Lit. Comm. c. 32.
† See the decrees of this council published by the learned *Mabillon*.
‡ 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 unspakeable, incomprehensible, and miraculous operation of almighty power into the substance of our Lord's body. This is the faith, which that church, 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."

Guitmundus, archbishop of Aversa, another contemporary 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 submitted 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 dogmatize. They assign its origin, increase and full establishment to the period between the publication of Paedalius's writings, and the era of Berengarius above mentioned. This period they represent as the reign of darkness and absurdity; the Chaplain, 

* Contra orbem fentire capiit—contra catholicam veritatem; & contra omnem ecclesiarum opinionem scriptum potest conditi. Lanfr. c. 1. apud auct. Perp. de la foi. ibid. | * Neque enim eis ualla civitatus, 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 woeeful 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 men 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 lightest departure from the received tenets occasioned disputes and contentions; 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 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 phænomenon. 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 these christians, as the Nestorians, Eutychians, &c. were separated from the church of Rome, near four hundred years before Paschalis wrote on the eucharist. Within a few years after his writing his letter to Frudegarius, 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 lightest 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 been
been so long separated from the communion both of
the Roman pontiff, and the patriarch of Constan-
tinople.

Obstinacy, or ignorance alone can deny, that our doc-
trine 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 commen-
ment of this general persuasion can be assigned with the
smallest claim 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 tran-
substantiation were the established doctrines of the church,
and not merely matters of opinion, long before the era
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 Constan-
tinople, and even before the Nestorian and Eutychian heres-
ies, the latter of which was condemned in the council
of Chalcedon, an. 451 and the former in that of Ephes-
sus, 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 era, than that of chris-
tianity itself?

It imports then little to the present subject, whether in
the interval between Paschafius and Berengarius, a gloom
of dark and universal ignorance overspread the face of
the christian world; and whether the bishops were un-
able to write their names*; for enough has been said,
though much more remains unsaid, to prove to every dis-
passionate 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 mat-
ter; for the period so outrageously abused was not so fa-
tal 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. Who-
ever 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 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 ex-
traordinary 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 improve-
m* Chaplain's letter, p. 32.
ment did, as is attested by 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 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 ancient church. How capable this is of demonstration, you may judge from what you have already heard. Was it unknown to the ancient 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 does 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

* Histoire Litteraire de Fr. t. 6.
† Ut evidenter cogas transubstantiationem admittere. Scot. aqua Bell. l. 3. de Euch. c. 25.
"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 ancient church, as that the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist was.

We are now prepared to examine his negative arguments. The first is, that the ancient church formerly adored Christ in the Eucharist, as we now do; Catholics would, in arguing against Arians, have inferred 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 ancient 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 ancient 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 inferred on by the ancient 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, swallowed 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 withheld, if the Catholics had indeed believed Christ's real presence in the Eucharist; therefore, since it was withheld, 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

† Gauden. Brix. Serm. 2.
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 *, Chyroxtom t, 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 Chyroxtom, 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 unfulfilled 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, &c. Lord, I am not worthy, that thou shouldest 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 ungodly 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 rested upon christians the accusation of idolatry in adoring a bit of bread, in presenting their God in gold and silver chariots, &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 the

* De Spir. fan. lib. 3. 23.
† Chyrox hom. 60. ad Pop. Antioch.—and, de Sacerd. lib. 6.
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. 2. 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 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 Cabalstitius 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 Apostle. 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 *

* Since writing the above, I have found, in the Annapolis library, Binius's Greek and Latin edition of the Acts of the 3d 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 attributed to Christ only an apparent or phantastical body. See Concil. Gener. Vol. V. act. 3. 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 practised 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 we give us his flesh to eat? John vi. was the Jewish question; and many hearing it, said, this saying is hard, and who can bear 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; but the church despised their mæcckeries, 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 rings 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 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 fay now, oh! “that I could fee him in his own shape! or his cloaths! “or any thing about him! Believe me, you fee him; “you touch him; you eat him. You would be con- “tented to fee his cloaths; and he lets you not only fee “him, but also touch him, and eat him, and receive “him within you.* From this genuine quotation you may fee, 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 figu- 

ative (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 sense, whom he calls blasphemer, a damned soul, liars, bread-eaters, wine-guzzlers; * &c. nor by the severity of Dr. Cofan, 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. Hieron, 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 seelam, mendaces homines, panivoro, vini-bibones. Luth. in Pavnim Conv.
† Conc. Trid. tell. 25.
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 Aelian among 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 them."* * *

* Neither Jerome or Gregory reject these books. The former says, they are not in the Hebrew canon (formed by Edras, before they were written), nor universally received. But he himself held them to be of divine inspiration. Con. in c. xxiii. Hie—c. vii. & ix. Excl.—c. viii. Danie. 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 opposition, as I suspect, on a writing entitled Synopis; and bearing his name, that work is rejected by all the critics as falsely imputed to him.

† Aug. de Hrectibus—Hec. 53.
‡ Cyril. Hier. Cat. Mil. 89. n. 9. edit. Bead. 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; otherwiue it wvere easy to produce the most unequivocal evidence of their perfect agreement with those just cited. The objection from the venerable bishop, that 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 preferred 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 Catholics 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 Ulter'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 abridgment of Theodore's Penitential, which lies now before me. I do not hereby mean to impeach Ulter'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 reconciliation..."
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. Cofin, in spite of all his animosity, acknowledge the possibility of tran/substantiation? 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 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 forgivenes; whereas 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 uniform system or body, which has since been the ground-work 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 sacred order but only do not exercise a ministerial and dependent jurisdiction over repentant sinners (which is what we teach) but likewise that they impart no abolution, that they have no power of loosening or binding; in a word, that no grace is administer'd through the instrumentality of their ministry, and consequentely 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 abolution 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 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 abolution is only declaratory, in Lombard's sense, as Tourneley * 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 surprized at this 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. Auguftin: "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. Auguftin'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 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 fame 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

* De Pcen. quaef. 2. art. 5.
‡ Aug. I. de Verâ Rel. c. 7.
* Aug. cont. epif. Fundam. c. 4.
the decree of a general council, if any exist, in the first place be opposed to the rashness of a few; and if no such decree 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 safely 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 to human authority, and thereby lay on us a yoke heavier than that, with which you reproach the church of Rome; for when the 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 doctrines 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

* Vinc. Lit. Com. c. 38.

* 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 the proposer 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 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 rebaptism 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 the 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 I 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 work he has written) would doubtless have been counted amongst the group of those who believe both that he is, and that his existence; 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 fill 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.

* Cyp. ep. 76. ad Magnum.
† Aug. ep. 93 (olim 42) 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’s creed; and might say, that they embraced no new religion, but only discarded some doctrines, which had been engraven 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, infinuating 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 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, whichever 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, infinuates 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 left 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 align 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 aposthical 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...
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 fallacious 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 epistles.

But where shall we find the obscurity of the scripture? We shall find it in almost every book of holy writ; we 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 constant 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 Thess. ii. ver. 15.
+ Chrys. hom. 5. de Lazar.
authority, 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 under-stands 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 eunice to him their meaning to be figurative, he cannot forget, that Luther and Dr. Calvin, a bishop of the church of England, pronounce anathemas against the maintainers of a figurative sense. After this, will he so confidently repeat his interrogations, 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. 39) intimating 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 re-baptizatio; but that the

former, by refusing to submit to the church, refrain 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 those 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
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 blest 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 bet 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 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

* Chrysf. ad Theod. Isap. Exh. 2.
leafed 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 Deuteronomy 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.

THE END.