

our Fathers preserved in silence, which keeps about equally inquisitive and worthless idlers? The reason why some things were delivered *unwritten* is, lest the knowledge of the dogmas might, by too great a familiarity, come into contempt amongst the bulk of the people."

Christ never wrote (unless on the ground) nor did he command his Apostles to write anything. Nay there are certain things St. John was commanded *not to write*. The Apostles preached and taught as they were ordered by Christ, before they ever wrote. Only some of the Apostles wrote, and they did so, as necessity required, to supply the want of their presence and their preaching. They never wrote to hand down the entire doctrines of faith, nor did they instruct all people on all subjects. They wrote to meet the exigencies of each case as it presented itself, and their letters sent to various parts were not collected together for a very long time after their death.

"Whatsoever is not read therein (Holy Scripture) nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed, &c."

Here is *hocus pocus* and loggerdemain which Connt. Cagliostro himself could not unriddle. Let us follow the Protestant absurdity step by step.

- 1 Holy Scripture contains every thing necessary to salvation.
- 2 No man is to be required to believe what is not read therein.
- 3 No man is to be required to believe what cannot be proved thereby.

The first is a very dubious proposition, as we have already shown. It is a simple assertion by a fallible Church.

The second is vague and unsatisfactory, because it does not inform us, *who is to be the Judge* of what is read, or not read in Scripture.

One Protestant sect reads one doctrine there, another a totally different one. Who is to decide between them? On this important point the Article is silent. The Church of England does not, cannot, pretend that she is competent to determine whether a dogma be contained in Scripture or not. Hence, in this article she supposes the existence of some authority, of some judge outside herself, to decide this essential point. But who, or what is this authority? She does not condescend to inform us, and we must therefore, grope for her meaning. Scripture itself cannot tell whether a doctrine is to be found in it or not; for it is not a living speaking authority, but a dead letter. The only ultimate tribunal to which an appeal can be made is, the Bible Reader himself, and his pride of understanding is appealed to, in somewhat of the following fashion:

"Behold the word of God; (says the Church of England, referring to the corrupted English translation) whatsoever you read there, you must believe. But you must not be forced to believe by me or any one else, whatsoever you do not read there." I don't read anything there about the Trinity, says one; I cannot read anything there about the divine institution of Episcopacy says another; I read no warrant in Scripture for infant Baptism, says a third; I can read nothing about the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to any other day, says a fourth; I do not find the doctrine of original sin there, says a fifth; I see no proof there that a layman, or a woman can be the Head of a Church says a sixth; I can find nothing about the necessity of good works, or the eternity of hell, says a seventh, and so on, *ad infinitum*. until the cycle of Bible readers has disproved every tenet of the Church of England from Scripture alone. And what answer can she make? What authority can she claim? What light or assistance does she render to every doubting reader, to every blind wanderer? None whatsoever. Her poor dupe of a Protestant soul is as wise at the end as the beginning. He can't read the Bible with her spectacles. He can't find any proofs of her tenets. He dissents, and protests against her, and if she presumes to whisper the *Thirty Nine Articles*, he replies that the Bible and not the *Thirty Nine Articles*, is his religion, that the Articles themselves tell him he cannot be required to believe any thing which is *not read in the Bible*, and that he *cannot read* any thing of the doctrines of the Church of England there.

"No man is to be required to believe what cannot be proved by the Bible."

All our former reasoning applies here with equal force. There is no indication of a Judge, of an authority to determine what *can*, or what *cannot be proved* by the Bible. It is indeed hinted obscurely that a right of deciding exists somewhere, as some body or some individual is prohibited and restrained in the power of exacting belief.

This great Protestant blunder is made still more ridiculous in the XX Article where it is said: "The Church hath authority in controversies of faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written." In other words the Church has authority, and has not authority. She has authority in controversies of faith.— But if, in the opinion of any individual she "ordains any thing contrary to God's word written" she acts unlawfully, and she may be disobeyed. Thus the Church is to control the individual and the individual is to resist the Church; each part is to rule the whole, and each member the aggregate of this precious Church. Let her dare to say for a moment that she never *does*, and never *can*, "ordain anything contrary to God's word written" and she claims the character of Infallibility which she denies to be a mark of Christ's Church, and for asserting which she so furiously bellowed against the Catholic Church

"Thus all disputes for ever must depend,
For no *dumb rule* can controversies end.

We cannot resist the temptation of closing this article by another specimen of the bungling absurdities and contradictions of this English Church.

In her 8th Homily, Against Perils of Idolatry she declares "That laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees, of men, women and children, of *whole* Christendom, have been at once drowned in abominable and damnable Idolatry, and that for the space of eight hundred years and more" (A modest declaration truly for a Church that accuses us of the doctrine of Exclusive Salvation.) But in her 16th Homily *Of the gifts of the Holy Ghost* she presents us a totally different doctrine, viz: That the Holy Ghost the spirit of Truth has been, and will be always present with the Church, governing and directing it to the world's end: so that it never has wanted, nor never will want, while the world endures "pure and sound doctrine. &c."

How are we to reconcile this conflicting evidence? Or what credit can be given to a Church which thus blows hot and cold in the same breath? The poor Protestant dupe, "tossed about by every wind of doctrine," who attempts to steer by her false Lights, must necessarily encounter the rocks of infidelity or the quicksands of error. The only comfort he can get in his distress will be something like the precious assurance of one of the English "Episcopal Bishops" (Bishop Watson) who in a charge to his clergy in the year 1783, alluding to the Christian doctrines, thus speaks:

"I think it *safer* to tell you *where they are contained* than *what they are*. They are contained in the Bible, and if in reading that book your sentiments concerning the doctrines of Christianity should be different from those of your neighbours, or from those of the Church, be persuaded on your part, that Infallibility appertains as little to you, as it does to the Church!"

There!—There's your *wandering Light*, Englishmen, Gentlemen, and Christians! If you go astray with that before your eyes, may the Lord enlighten your "Protestant ignorance."

You want to be saved, says this Thimble-rigging Church to a gaping neophyte of *English Christianity*. You, replies Hodge.

Well then, you must believe in the doctrines of Christ.
Aye, aye, but which be they?
Now then stupid; that's none of my business to tell. Here's one of King Jamie's Bibles, and you'll find them all there.

* We hope the Bishop includes *Catholic* neighbours. If so, the Church of England may have been wrong in condemning our interpretation of Scripture, as Infallibility so little appertains to her.