

can separate the atoms of truth which may float in the stream from the old wives' fables with which they are hopelessly intermingled. Did Protestants believe that God had constituted the Church a living infallible teacher, they would, at once, submit cheerfully to all its ascertained teachings. Its utterances would come to them with all the weight of divine revelations, and would partake of the nature of Holy Scripture. We would regard its voice as do Romanists as "the proximate and sufficient ground of faith for the people."

In stating the Protestant Rule of Faith, Romanists invariably misrepresent it, and in such a manner, as is peculiarly fitted to conceal one of the weak points of their own. They represent the Protestant Rule to be the Bible as interpreted by every one's private judgment.\* Thoughtless persons, listening to this statement, are apt to imagine that Church interpretation holds the same relation to the Bible and Tradition, in the Romish system, that private interpretation sustains to the Bible, in the Protestant system, and consequently that Romanists escape from all the errors and uncertainties of private interpretation. There could be no greater mistake. Every Church interpretation, in the Romish system, is virtually an *addition to Scripture*, which, as much requires to be understood and interpreted by each member of the Romish Church, as does the Bible by the Protestant. All Romanists admit that Church interpretation is an element in their Rule of Faith, but no intelligent Protestant imagines that his private judgment as to the sense of Scripture is any part of his Rule of Faith. A *rule* is one thing, and the *use* made of it is another. The Bible is the Protestant's Rule of Faith. Private interpretation is the use made of it. A trader may have a measure which is perfectly correct, but the correctness of the *measuring* done, depends on the use which he makes of it.

Let us then enquire whether by the Romish Rule of Faith, a man can attain to that divine faith which "believes all that God has taught, on the authority of God, "without doubting, without hesitating."

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\* *Vide* Smartus' Points of Controv. page 51. Keenan's Catechism, p. 45. Damen, p. 5.