

ancient faith from the first. She added nothing of her own, but selected at most the ancient term under which any portion of the ancient faith could best be maintained against the new heresies. New laws the Church might make; the *faith* she could only declare. The mode of keeping Easter she could regulate; the faith she did not regulate, but attested.

On these grounds then is the celebrated rule of Vincentius founded which embodies the principles of the English Church. The Canon of Scripture, he assumes, "is perfect, and most abundantly of itself sufficient for all things." But "since the Scripture being of itself so deep and profound, all men do not understand it in one and the same sense, but divers men, diversely, this man and that man, this way and that way, expound and interpret the sayings thereof, so that to one's thinking, so many men, so many opinions almost may be gathered out of them;" "for the avoiding of error, the Prophets and Apostles must be expounded according to the rule of the Ecclesiastical and Catholic sense."

And then he gives his celebrated rule, not his own, but "derived from many excellent, holy, and learned men:" that "we hold that which hath been believed *everywhere, always, and of all men*; for that is truly and properly *Catholic* (as the very force and nature of the word doth declare) which comprehendeth all things in general after an universal manner, and that shall we do, if we follow *universality, antiquity, consent*. Universality shall we follow thus, if we profess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the whole world acknowledgeth and confesseth. Antiquity shall we follow, if we depart not any whit from those senses which it is plain that our holy elders and fathers generally held. Consent shall we likewise follow, if in this very antiquity itself, we hold the definitions and opinions of all, or at any rate, almost all, the Priests and Doctors together."

These then are common principles of the Ancient Church.

1. What is matter of faith must be capable of being proved out of Holy Scripture; yet that, not according to the private sense of individuals, but according to the uniform teaching of the Church.

2. The faith delivered to the keeping of the Church is one, complete, uniform whole, capable neither of being increased nor lessened; perfectly delivered to the Apostles by our Lord; perfectly delivered by the Apostles to their successors; perfectly transmitted in succession by them to faithful men after them.

3. The Faith was delivered to each Church individually by the Apostle who founded it, and was held and transmitted by it in harmony with the whole. Each needed not to inquire the faith of the rest, but held it as an hereditary treasure committed to it, to be transmitted by it.

4. The present Church must (if need be), in contradiction to heresy, declare the mind of the Ancient Church. Yet what she declares must not be her own mind alone, but according to the teaching of the Fathers.

The Church of England's appeal to Holy Scripture the witness of the Church, the testimony of the Primitive Church, true Catholic (not Roman) tradition, the teaching of the early General Councils, is clear and testified to by numerous Bishops and Divines since the days of the Reformation to the present time.

And thus the Church of England is a true Branch of the Holy Catholic Church.

### "We have an Altar."

The Church of England, in her breadth and liberality, has room for those who use the term Altar as well as for those who call it the Holy Table. In the Eucharistic Feast there are two aspects—the one Godward, the other manward. So it was under the old covenant: and the same principles have descended to the new. No one pleads for a repetition or a completion of the wondrous Sacrifice of our dear Lord and Saviour