

Resurrection, to go and teach all nations to be baptized into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Forthwith, therefore, the Apostles (whose very name means *sent*) went forth on their mission. By the authority of a prophecy in the 109th Psalm, they received into their number Matthias, in the room of Judas, making up the number of twelve, and then they received the promised power of the Holy Ghost for miracles and eloquence. First of all they bore witness to the faith in Jesus Christ throughout Judea, and, having founded Churches, they next went forth into the world and published the same doctrine of the same faith to all the nations. They then in like manner founded Churches in every city, from which Churches the other Churches in their order derived the tradition of the faith, and the seeds of doctrine, and are even now, day by day, deriving them, that they may become Churches. Indeed, it is by this only that they will be reckoned Apostolic, as being the offspring of Apostolic Churches. Every sort of thing must be classed according to its origin. Therefore all the Churches, though they are so many and so great, are yet but the one Primitive Church of the Apostles, from which they all spring. In this way they are all primitive, and all Apostolic, while the interchange of peace, the title of brotherhood, and the free exchange of hospitality (which rights no other reason regulates than the one tradition of the same mystery) prove all to be united in one union.

“From this then we commence our demurrer. If the Lord Jesus Christ sent His Apostles to preach, none others are to be received as preachers besides those whom Christ appointed. For none knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son has revealed Him; and the Son is not seen to have revealed Him to any save to the Apostles whom He sent to preach, that doctrine of course which He had revealed to them. But what it was which they preached [about one hundred years ago], that is to say what it was which Christ revealed to them, I will here maintain ought not to be otherwise proved than by those same Churches which the Apostles themselves founded, themselves by preaching with their own voice, and afterwards by writing epistles to them. If this is so, it is equally certain that all doctrine which agrees with those Apostolic Churches, the parents and original sources of the faith, must be reckoned for truth, as without doubt containing that which the Church received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, Christ from God. On the other hand, all doctrine must be pre-judged as a lie which savours of somewhat contrary to the truth of the Churches and of the Apostles, and of Christ, and of God. It remains for us to

show whether this doctrine of ours may be reckoned as Apostolic tradition, and whether other and different doctrines do not from this very fact come from a lie. We are in full communion with Apostolic Churches, because we have no doctrine different from theirs. This is the witness to our truth.”

He then argues that it is impossible that all have erred because there is one and the same tradition, and error is manifold, and not one, and it is impossible to suppose that all Churches without exception would err with the same error. This argument is of course very strong from the standpoint of Tertullian, in whose time there was but little intercourse between the various parts of the world. He sums up his argument thus:

“Well then, suppose if you will, that they have all erred; that the Apostle was deceived in giving his testimony; that the Holy Spirit had no regard for any Church, so as to guide them into truth — though He was sent by Christ for this very purpose, was sought from the Father for this very purpose, that He should teach the Truth. Suppose, I say, that He the Steward of God, the Vicar of Christ, neglected His duty and permitted the Churches to understand in a different sense, and to believe in a different sense what He was preaching by means of the Apostles, yet is it in any way likely that so many and such important Churches should have erred with one and the same faith? No accident occurs to many persons in precisely the same manner. Error of doctrine in the Churches must needs have ended in difference of results. But that which is found to be one and the same in many hands, is not the result of error, but of tradition. Can any one then dare say that those were in error who handed on the tradition?”

Having thus established the truth of the Churches, he turns round to the dissenters from the Church, and points out that the very fact of the lateness of their origin, and of their lack of authority, marks them as erroneous.

“Let them show me from what authority they start! If they preach a different God, why do they use the things and the Scriptures and the names of that God against Whom they preach? If it be the same God, then why do they preach Him differently? Well then, let them prove themselves to be new Apostles, let them say that Christ has come down a second time, that He has taught a second time, a second time has been crucified. For thus has the Apostle described it; for thus was He wont to make Apostles, by giving them power to perform the same miracles that He did Himself. I wish then that the mighty deeds of these new Apostles were brought forward: unless I acknow-