

quoted, consistently with Scripture, and attested by the practice of all Christian bodies, that the Church has a certain amount of authority, she at the same time lays down as the fundamental principle, in her 6th article, that "Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby, is not to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." The language of our articles and homilies upon this vital point is clear and decisive. The trumpet gives no uncertain sound. Our Church constantly makes her appeals to the Word of God. Even the creeds, the most solemn and weighty statements of our faith, are to be received and believed, not for their antiquity, not because framed and set forth by councils, not because widely accepted, but because they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Writ. Here there is implied the duty and privilege of every man to bring even the most authoritative standard and symbols to the one unerring test. A Church conscious of the Scriptural character of her doctrines can confidently do this. She can take her stand boldly upon the firm rock of divine truth, and challenge the fullest and most searching scrutiny; a doctrine plainly revealed in the Word of God gathers no additional sanction from human testimony. That, says our homily, which is once confirmed by the certainty of His eternal truth, hath no more need of the confirmation of man's doctrine and writings than the bright sun at noontide hath need of the light of a little candle to put away darkness and to increase his light. We freely admit, as we have already said, that the testimony of antiquity as to the outward government and polity of the Church is most important, but this is plainly distinguishable from definitions of doctrine. And the office of the Church as the witness and keeper of Holy Writ is highly important. So was the Jewish Church the appointed guardian of the Old Testament—unto them were committed for safe keeping the oracles of God. And yet while the Jewish Church kept this trust with scrupulous fidelity—it was not therefore the safe interpreter thereof—the Sanhedrim kept vigilant guard over each letter and syllable, but they were, so far as their own opinions prevailed, blind leaders of the blind, and rejected Him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write. They who argue that, because the Church witnesses to the Apostolic origin of the Books of the New Testament, and transmits them unimpaired from age to age, she is to be regarded as an unerring interpreter of the same, are bound by their own principles to acquiesce in the decisions of the Jewish Church respecting the meaning of the Old Testament. One obvious reason why divine revelations for ages to come are Scripture, is to guard against the inevitable mistakes and perversions incident to oral transmission. We assert, then, that the Apostles, the only unerring guides and gover-