

of faith and life, so that it requires to be authoritatively explained or supplemented; or by showing it to be *false*, and so not worthy of credit as such a rule. The *traditionalists* have attacked it as incomplete and needing to be supplemented by the traditions and theological systems and the authority of the Church; while the *rationalistic critics* have attempted to prove it false, and therefore without authority and worthy only of rejection. So persistent have been the attacks and so large the claims of these opponents of the Protestant doctrine, and so much noise have they made and so much dust raised, that multitudes in the Church, who have given the matter only superficial attention, seem to have come to entertain the opinion that the enemies have turned the old position, and that it must therefore be abandoned, or, rather, has already been abandoned. It is proposed to consider in two papers the twofold claim of traditionalism and rationalism, that they have discredited the Protestant doctrine of the authority of the Scriptures. If they have succeeded in establishing their contentions, we ought to know it, in order that we may adjust our theory and our life to the facts: if they have not succeeded, then assuredly we ought to know it in order that in the work of conquering the world for Christ we may have the courage of our convictions and faith in a "thus saith the Lord" to sustain us. The present paper will be confined to

#### THE CLAIMS OF TRADITIONALISM.

There has been a twofold tendency to exalt tradition above Scripture in the teachings of the Church: first, in the traditional theology of all churches; and, secondly, in the Romish doctrine of an infallible church.

#### I. PROTESTANT TRADITIONALISM.

Protestant traditionalism has been vastly less injurious than Romish, for the reason that it has never been organized into a positive and powerful element in the creeds of the churches. It is, so to speak, unintentional, often unconscious, and always contrary to the very genius of Protestantism.

Protestantism looks up with respect and admiration to its great leaders. "John Calvin or John Wesley taught so and so; therefore I believe it." This unconsciously becomes its working theory. It often goes to Calvin or Wesley for the grounds of its faith, instead of going directly to the Word of God. It is liable to study a theological system to the exclusion of the Bible. In so doing it is in danger of adding a great deal of human philosophy to the Gospel and theology of the Scriptures. When you ask your High Church Anglican, "What do you believe on such a point?" his answer is, "The Church [of England] has always taught thus and thus." To the same question the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist answer in like manner: "Our Church has always taught thus and thus." A tendency is thereby