

been granted, is little more than nominal, and is altogether inadequate to the end proposed. He supposes, but whence he gets the doctrine, I am unable to conjecture, that the office of the Church in this respect is *merely* to declare as a witness what has been the received sense & interpretation of *Scripture*, and so long as her interpretations are consistent with that interpretation of the *Scripture* which has been received from the beginning, *they are not to be rejected*." It will not be denied, but that the office of the church is to discharge all the duties conjoined upon it, and execute all the powers delegated to it by its divine founder. Now let us ask, what was its duty, or what its authority as a teacher of revealed truth, before the *Scriptures* of the New Testament were written? It could not be to witness the received sense and interpretation of what did not exist. Had it then no authority, no duty as a teacher? Is not its commission on record. "Go, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost; *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*?" And is not the gracious promise also on record? The promise of the all powerful aid by which it should be rendered fully competent to execute this glorious mission—the promise of Him whose word shall stand when earth and Heaven shall have passed away. "Behold I am with you all days unto the consummation of the world," or as the Protestant version expresses it, "always, even to the end of the world." When was this commission revoked? When was this promise taken back? If the church had once the divinely delegated right to teach *all that Christ had taught* how, by whom, and when, has this right been abridged? The writer denies all doctrines of faith, not warranted by *Scripture*. Where does he find *Scripture* for its withdrawal or curtailment of a power expressly granted, and which by the very terms of the grant was to be exercised in every part of the world, and continue to be exercised until the world itself should be destroyed?

But according to the writer "the church is a witness to testify to all ages what has been the received sense and interpretation of the *Scriptures* from the beginning."—He assuredly does not mean that she has usurped this office, but he does mean that it has been assigned to her by God.—Here let us pause for a moment and consider what is the necessary result of this her office. She is the witness whom God has commissioned to testify to us what is and always has been the received sense and interpretation of *Scripture*. Are we bound to believe her when she so testifies? Yes or No.—Does God's witness tell the truth or not? Sometimes says the writer she tells the truth and when she does we are to believe her. "So long as her interpretation is consistent with the interpretation which has been received from the beginning we are not to reject it." The inference than is irresistible; but she sometimes testifies falsely, she sometimes testifies an interpretation different from that received from the beginning and when she

does then her testimony is to be rejected. And according to this, the God of all truth introduces a witness to certify to his fallible creatures the meaning of his revealed law, and commands them to believe this witness under the penalty of exclusion from the fold of the faithful notwithstanding a previous knowledge on his part that she will testify falsely!

I judge not for others, but for myself. I dare not attribute to Him, who rules in the highest heavens, and whose attributes of Justice, wisdom, and truth, are but faintly shadowed forth in the highest exercise of them on Earth, a course of proceeding which coming from man would be regarded as little if at all short of subornation of Perjury. The dilemma is unavoidable. If the church be the witness appointed of God, we must believe her thoroughly—give her "full faith and credit." God's witness can not testify untruly. If she be not the witness appointed of God, then she has no authority to testify.

But let us pursue his views a little further. The testimony of the church is "not to be rejected" says the writer, except when it gives an interpretation of scripture different from that which has been received from the beginning. The question then recurs—and a momentous question it is—by whom, when she so departs from the truth, is the falsehood of her testimony to be determined? Has God appointed any other witness, whose evidence may come to correct that of the unfaithful Church? The scripture itself cannot inform us *what sense has been put upon it*. There is then no other witness, to whose testimony God demands our assent. Has he appointed any Judge or Tribunal to pass upon—the credit of this only witness? The *Scripture* informs us that he commanded us to hear the Church, if we would not wish to be held as publicans and sinners. Does it make any exception to this broad command? None whatever. What is written is written; therefore, that oracle speaks no further. The only witness to testify the meaning of what is written, prevaricates, and the only authorized Judge cannot be relied on.—How are we to ascertain what is the true course—or what sense put on the written law in the beginning?

That in its practical results this exception to the veracity of the witness—and limitation of the will of obedience to the Judge—destroys the credit of the one, and the authority of the other, is undeniable. Look at the numerous, almost innumerable, sects around us, who all protest against the Church, because of her false testimony, and yet disagree in what that falsehood consists. The Arians, Unitarians and Socinians, say that she testifies falsely as to the original sense of scripture; nay, that she contradicts its positive and express words in proclaiming the Divinity of our Saviour, and they plant themselves upon the text—"The father is greater than I." But the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, the Church of England, as by law established, and the rest of the Protestant sects generally declare, that her testimony in this respect is true. Most of these insist that she testifies a falsehood in holding

that Christ meant what his words obviously import:—"This is my Body;" and they are confident that when instituting this wonderful Memorial, and giving this last legacy of his undying love, and in addressing those only to whom he had been accustomed to explain fully whatever was darkly or imperfectly or parabolically said to others, he designed to be understood by way of figure or metaphor, although no two of them agree upon the meaning of the Metaphor; while the whole Greek Church, the Armenians, Nestorians, Eutycheans, a large part of the Lutherans, and not a few of the most learned and pious, in the Episcopal and Anglican churches, hold, that in this part of her testimony she is perfectly veracious. Episcopalians and Anglicans do indeed hold that she testifies truly in regard to the necessary orders in the Church, while the Presbyterians hold that what she declares about Episcopal ordination, as distinct from that of Priest, is a foul invention, not known in the beginning, unwarranted by, and repugnant to scripture. The Church of England, the Episcopalians of the United States, and the Presbyterians, receive her testimony as to two of the Sacraments, but reject it as to the others; but the Greeks and the Eastern Christians receive it as to all, and the Quakers reject it as false in toto. Most Protestants admit it as to infant Baptism, and the validity of the rite when administered by aspersion, while the Baptists hold it to be untrue in both these particulars. The Church then is the witness—the divinely commissioned witness—appointed to testify the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as to the meaning of the Word of God, yet each and every one, without danger of offence to Him, who has pledged himself for the veracity of His witness, has a right to say, when she testifies against his interpretation of the scripture—I will not believe her. Is it not the manifest—the undeniable consequence of this qualified belief in the testimony of the Church, that it is received only when it corresponds with private opinion, and thus many things which, in the written word, are hard to be understood (in the language of the apostle) "are wrested by the unlearned and the unwary to their own destruction?" Follow this qualified rule, and is not the result, that which has been stated by a witty and learned English Protestant Bishop. "Orthodoxy means my doxy, and Heterodoxy, means your doxy." The Redeemer of the world has indeed a revelation of doctrine to be believed and of commands to be obeyed in order to Eternal Salvation, but alas! he has left no assured means of ascertaining what that revelation is? He has made a revelation in words, but their meaning is hidden! He has promulgated a Law, but appointed no Tribunal authoritatively to expound and apply it! And therefore every man may do in regard thereof, as was the case when there was no judge in Israel, "whatsoever seemeth good in his own eyes!"

Can this be so? Is it then unreasonable in us to believe that our Lord and Saviour has fully executed his declared purpose &

has built his church upon a rock so that the powers of darkness can not prevail against it! (*Mat. ch. 16 ver. 18.*) Are we to be derided as "servile" because we submit to the teaching of that church which in the plenitude of the Power given Him over all things in heaven and in earth He commissioned to teach all nations whatsoever He had taught, and with which he promised to abide till time should be no more?—(*Mat. ch. 28 ver. 10. 20. 21.*)—of that church which is declared to be "the house of God, the church of the living God, the Pillar and the ground of Truth?" (*1 Epistle to Tim. ch 3rd. ver 15.*) Are we "silly" creatures because we adhere steadfastly and in all things to the church of the living God, holding the sure promise of the protection and abiding presence of the Redeemer, which was founded on the person of the Prince of the apostles called, and therefore called by Christ himself "a Rock," the faith of which even in the days of Paul was spoken of throughout the whole world (*Romans, ch. 1 ver. 8*); in which there is an undisputed regular succession of authorized teachers from the appointment of Peter until the present day; which for fifteen hundred years was acknowledged as the Mother church of Christendom; which embraces within its fold a majority of all who profess the name of Christ, and whose doctrines severally are actually professed by a majority even of those who concur in throwing off her authority?

If we be, something more weighty than confident assertion, invective, flattery, misrepresentation, real or affected pity for our condition, must be brought to shew this our absurdity, servility and folly. It may be that these who are wise in their own conceit—confident in their ability to pronounce what is scripture and also to ascertain what is its true meaning—reckless in charging Idolatry, Blasphemy, Superstition, fond inventions, and idle fables on the Great Church of Christendom: it may be that they are led from the one Fold and the Faith of Christ, by prejudice, by passion, by the fashions of the little world around them, by false clamour, by pecuniary interest, by pride of heart—by many, very many, causes of error of which they are little aware. How this may be in regard to any of them, it is not for men to judge. If they err from honest ignorance and invincible mistake, it is their misfortune and not their crime. And all of us both Catholics and Protestants, may humbly hope that if in sincerity of heart, and that with diligence of effort we seek after the Truth, and with a firm purpose to embrace and follow it out when found, we may be virtually if not actually, in intent at least if not in fact, within that communion to which Christ adds daily such as are to be saved, (*Acts, ch. 2, ver. 47*), and without which there is no way revealed by which Heaven may be reached.

May God bless you with his best gifts here and hereafter!

German silver.—Few persons are aware of the poisonous qualities of this compound. It is very good for gun mountings and various other uses, but never should be used in the form of spoons, or vessels for cooking. It is composed of copper, arsenic, and nickel. It oxidizes very rapidly, in contact with any acid, even slight vegetable ones, and the small particles which are taken into the stomach, imperceptibly act as slow but sure poison. Pure copper spoons would be preferable.—Every one is acquainted with the effects of arsenic; nickel is equally poisonous. *Literary Messenger.*