

Martyr of Smyrna, Lactantius, and Irenæus of Lyons, the disciple of Polycarp, who learned his Christianity of our Lord's most beloved disciple, Saint John ! We have also the immediate successors of Saint Peter, Cletus, Anacletus and Clement, of whom St. Paul declared that *his name was written in the book of life*.

The separated denominations having no tradition of their own anterior to the 16th century, had recourse as regards many things of importance to the tradition of the Catholic Church. On its authority they accept the canticle of Solomon, and the epistles of Saint James and Saint Jude. Regarding, as they do, the former epistle as an inspired portion of Scripture, it is hard to understand how they can reject its manifest teaching as regards the anointing of the sick,—the sacrament of extreme unction. But this is not the only thing in which they shew their inconsistency. They receive as divine the epistles of Saint Paul, and at the same time deny their teaching. Nothing could be plainer than what they say concerning the marriage-tie. They declare distinctly that it cannot be dissolved ; "*Indissolubile connubium*." In all Protestant States, notwithstanding, marriage is made subject to human laws and is often dissolved on the slightest grounds.

It requires study and reflection to form an opinion as to the intrinsic merits of the sacred Scriptures and their claim to be accepted as divine. Many serious Protestants, nevertheless, without study, and

many that are incapable of study, receive the holy books as the word of God ; and they cannot so receive them on any other authority than that of tradition,—the tradition of the Catholic Church which has handed them down in all their excellence and integrity from generation to generation through so many centuries. This fact alone, considering the trials, difficulties and persecution through which it has been the destiny of the Christian people to pass, cannot but be considered by all reflecting minds, as a proof that the great institution has enjoyed the aid of Heaven,—the fulfilment of our Lord's promise ; "*I am with you all days*." Much, no doubt, is due to the labours of the early fathers ; and we cannot too warmly admire the zeal and ability of Saint Gregory Nazianzen in preserving to mankind the precious deposit of Christian literature in defiance of all the power of the still powerful Roman Empire, that was exerted for its destruction. But, at the same time, it must be acknowledged that so great and so good a work was favoured from on high. We are the more inclined so to think when we consider that the Empire, once so great and far extending, exists no more, and that its apostate Emperor, the most cruel and inveterate enemy of the Christian faith, is now only known, if thought of at all, as the meanest of men and the worst of tyrants, whilst the noble Christians of the time who successfully opposed his tyranny, will ever be held in the most honoured remembrance.

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