

through the word as really as through the blood of Christ: (Eph. v. 25, 26.) Christ "loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

"Hold the traditions."—I need scarcely explain that there are no other traditions recognized by Paul than the oral or written words of inspired men: what was afterwards written was yet partly oral. He explains himself—"whether by word or our epistle." The canon being not yet complete in that day, he naturally charges it on these Thessalonians, who had enjoyed his personal ministrations, to have his doctrines in remembrance. The quarrel of Protestants is not with the word "tradition," which signifies what has been delivered to the Church, and committed to it as a sacred deposit to be guarded and handed down from one generation to another. All Scripture is a "tradition" in this good sense. It is unauthorised traditions and uncertain, which we decline, such as have too often been substituted for the word of the living God. And the very command to hold fast the Apostolic tradition, oral once, now written, and well authenticated, is what renders imperative the avoiding the mere commandments of men.

Finally,—the prayer of this passage—how much is it in keeping with the doctrine and with the precept foregoing! The matter of the prayer; how much in few words! the manner, how assured, and how assuring! The Apostle insinuates the ample grounds for expecting the blessings prayed for, in his introduction, or description of the source whence he invokes them. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Father." He lingers again on the precious names of the Saviour, in this instance mentioned even before the Father, as if to remind us that he is no less than the Father, and with the Spirit, the fountain of grace, as well as especially, and so most frequently represented, the channel through which it flows:—"our Lord,"—divine Master; "Jesus," Saviour; "Christ," anointed; no vain tautology, since each name is suggestive of grounds of encouragement in prayer. But just as the Master himself teaches his disciples also to comfort themselves with this, "the Father himself loveth you," (John xvi. 27) so does the Apostle add, "and God, even our Father, who hath