

that he said to them: Go, write for all nations what I command you to believe and practice, and let them always have in their hands and under their eyes, the most exact detail of their faith drawn out by your pen. We behold the apostles and the disciples, after having received the Holy Spirit, traversing the whole of Judea, announcing to their countrymen the kingdom of God: every thing is done by exhortations, by instructions and by prayers. If they had intended to give to the world, and to leave after them a complete code of revealed laws, it would seem natural that they should have drawn out this code, before their separation. Let us observe them therefore at the moment, when, dividing the world among them to accelerate its conquest, they are on the point of leaving Jerusalem and Judea, and of proceeding, each his way, to their particular destination. They separate, and carry with them no writing, no body of doctrine drawn up by common agreement. They all, however, carry the same gospel, but in their minds and hearts; they traverse cities, provinces, kingdoms, and do not present themselves to the nations with the sacred books in their hands; they preach from their inspired mouths the evangelical doctrine, but never produce it in writing. To see them and follow them, they seem not even to think of any means of instructing men by the eyes.—They are totally occupied with preaching and not with writing: with engraving the word, not upon the lips, but on the souls of men. Many years had already passed, and no work had as yet appeared from their pen.\* You will remark that out of twelve apostles, two only have left us a gospel, and even St. John at a very advanced age, at Ephesus, under the Emperor Nero, in the year 58. If you examine the occasions which induced them to write, you will find that particular and local circumstances have given birth to these writings, as well as to all those that compose the New Testament. We owe the gospel of St. Mark to the fervour and eagerness of the Christians at Rome. Eusebius tells upon the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, that “the hearers of St. Peter besought Mark, his disciples, to put in writing the doctrine of the Saviour. He did so; and Peter, inspired from above, examined this work, approved of it, confirmed it with his authority, and ordered that it should be read in the Churches.” St. Luke commences by informing us of the motive that induced him to write. Ignorant and rude men, hurried on by a blind and culpable zeal had attempted of their own heads to relate the words & the actions of our Saviour: their writings were spreading among the christians under the false titles of the gospels according to Peter, Thomas, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthias, the twelve apostles, &c. It was of consequence that these miserable rhapsodies, should be put down. St. Paul exhorted his disciples to publish an exact narrative, and Luke executed it under

\*We must except the gospel of St. Matthew: for we learn from St. Chrysostom that eight years after the ascension of our Saviour, at the time when he was going to preach to the Gentiles, St. Matthew, at the solicitation of the Jews, sketched out, in their language, a History of Jesus Christ and his revelation.

the eye of his master, in Achaia and Bœotia, according to St. Jerome, in the year 58, the second of Nero. As for St. John, it was to refute the heresies at Corinth and the Ebionites that, taking his lofty flight beyond the bounds of time, he shews as Jesus Christ in the bosom of the divinity, the Son of God, God himself, and then re-descends with him upon earth, to relate to us his incarnation, his life and ministry among men.

The epistles, for the most part, are either answers to consultations, or instructions to churches specially mentioned, or even to individuals. Called forth by local circumstances, but always dictated by the holy spirit, they appear successively at different epochs, at distant periods of time: adapted to the circumstances of the place, of the persons and sometimes of the moment, they treat upon particular and relative subjects, although at the same time they contain advice, lessons and precepts that are applicable to christians in general. But this does not authorize us to announce or suppose in the sacred writer, much less in the college of the apostles, a settled resolution, a premeditated design of drawing out for us a complete body of doctrine. It is true that all these writings were received with a singular avidity by the faithful to whom they were addressed; true also that they were communicated one after another with a holy eagerness, and that, from the day on which they were first known to the moment I am addressing you, they have been read in all religious assemblies, in all the Churches of the world, and that this will be done perpetually to the end of time. It is true, that in them the doctrine of the apostles was recognised, their word tasted, their preaching discovered, and that though absent, they were still considered as heard. It is true that the first christians must have admired the agreement and resemblance of what they read with what they had heard. Yet nevertheless they could not but remark that all that they had heard was not there; they could not therefore, in receiving these works as the sacred deposit of the divine word, regard them as the sole and only deposit of this word. In fact, did the apostles ever signify, that for belief and practice, we must confine ourselves to what they were writing? Did they ever signify, that they had entrusted to writing all that they had preached, by word of mouth, or even all that was necessary for salvation? There is not an expression of the kind in the whole of the New Testament. It comes from your reformers, who have drawn it from their brain or borrowed it from the ancient heresies, but not from the Holy Scripture, whatever protestation they all may perpetually be making that they teach nothing but what is there. Let them shew you then this principle, since they admit and wish you to admit it; let them shew it you in the sacred volume. But how should they do it, when the contrary principle is found therein contained in so many words. For you have seen St. Paul frequently referring to the instructions he had given by word of mouth; you have heard him

positively distinguishing between his verbal & epistolary instructions; and prescribing that both the one and the other must be equally observed. Up to the time of your forefathers in 1562, this order had been observed in England as well as upon the Continent, until the day when the Reformation shewed its head. At this epoch, so fatal to your country and my own, the precept of St. Paul was solemnly transgressed for the first time, and for the first time it was said: In what pertains to salvation, there is nothing but what is written. But the first christians who passed many years without the Scriptures, who received them successively one after another, and waited for the Gospel of St. John till the year 96: but those barbarous and yet most religious people who had not even then any Scripture when St. Irenæus wrote of them towards the end of the second age, they would not have known either what they ought to believe, or what they ought to practice; they would have been without resource for salvation—they who laboured for it to an extent and with an energy of faith to which we shall never attain! The Reformation must here maintain at least that the means which they then possessed of knowing the law, and which sufficed for them, became absolutely useless as soon as heaven chose to add a second, and that the word reduced to legible characters stripped the word that was not so, of the merit and value it had hitherto enjoyed in the Christian world. I have been proving to you, Sir, that this notion is no ways in accordance with the conduct and doctrine of the apostles; you shall now see that it accords no better with the conduct & doctrine of their successors, & that antiquity was never acquainted with any such opinion.

2ndly, I will suppose that the reformed Church has to pronounce upon a question of faith. How is it to set about approving or condemning the doctrine submitted to its decision? It knows nothing but the Scripture: all that relates to salvation is to be found there; nothing can be required that is not read there in full, or that cannot be drawn from it by a sound and lawful inference. It would not and could not therefore have any thing but the Scriptures to consult. But this was not the way of proceeding that antiquity followed. It examined not only the Scriptures, but also what was believed and taught by the Churches, above all by the apostolic Churches, and what the most celebrated Fathers had signified in their works; its examination was directed both to the holy Scripture and the doctrine of Tradition, to the written and unwritten word of God. We will, if you please, produce an example, the most illustrious to be found, and which will dispense with our accumulating here a multitude of facts. The great council of Nice had to pronounce upon Arius, who was pretending to justify his doctrine by Scripture. We learn from the historians of the time, in what manner it proceeded in its examination: “The bishops—opposed to the false subtilties of the Arians the great truths of scripture, and the ancient belief of the Church, from the apostles till then.—After having a long time, maturely and fully con-