

date of the Epistle to the Galatians, even many of the Epistles of St. Paul himself, as another Gospel than that which he preached to the Galatians,—a conclusion which even Presbyterians must shrink from with horror. But if many things were added to the Testament, containing doctrines not found in the parts written prior to the Epistle in question, every one must see that St. Paul could have meant only what we have alleged that is, if any one hold anything contrary to the Christian traditions which you have received from us, let him be accursed.—The Gospel preached to the Galatians must have been, to a great extent, if not exclusively a traditional one. Consequently, the meaning of St. Paul must have been, if any hold any doctrine contrary to that which has been given to you, whether in writing or orally, it matters not whether in the one mode or the other, let him be accursed. So far, then, from asserting that there must be no traditions, this text, so far as it goes, presupposes and teaches to the contrary.

The Church has always cherished this maxim of the great Apostle, written far more efficaciously in the convictions and practices of Christians than it can be on paper. If any one comes forward preaching any doctrine unknown before him, or irreconcilable with the dogmas already received, the language of Catholics has been from the first, Let him be anathema. On this ground any doctrine which is new, is rejected as false; for if new, it cannot be a doctrine of the Apostles, but must be the offspring of the human intellect or fancy. There is no need of discussion, no need of a long course of reading. Is the doctrine contrary to what has been taught? Then it is false. If, *per impossible*, an angel from heaven were to preach it, still it is false and to be rejected; for we know that the doctrines taught by the Apostles are from God, and so confirmed by miracles that it would be absurd not to receive them.—We know also, that God protects his church against even hell, whose gates shall never prevail against her. We know this latter point from innumerable proofs, among which we reckon as not the least this very text of St. Paul, which commands us, if even an angel should come preaching any novelty contrary to the doctrine preached in the Church, not to listen to him.

But what will become of Presbyterianism, if tried by this test—the touchstone furnished by the great Apostle, the Doctor of Nations? What, in fact, is it itself, but a naked, undisguised, and undisguisable novelty? What is it, but a doctrine undeniably contrary to that of the Apostles, and which has been received in the church through every age? That it was a novelty at the time when John Calvin and John Knox broached it, is so evident, that Presbyterians themselves cannot seriously undertake to deny it. They themselves tell us that they left the Catholic church in consequence of its *old errors, old superstitions, old corruptions, old traditions* of men. Calvin and Knox gave themselves out as the preachers of *new* and *pure* doctrines the propagators of a *new* light, and the authors of a *new* era for the religious world. What was this, but setting aside the ancient doctrine, and substituting a modern one? But the Apostle solemnly declares, that, if even an angel comes preaching a doctrine different from what has been preached before, he is to be accursed. Alas for Presbyterianism! even if it had been preached by an angel from heaven, we are commanded by the very text which Presbyterians adduce, and are ambitious of engraving on their escutcheon, to hold it accursed; how much rather, then, since it was preached by no angel, but by such men as John Calvin and John Knox, certainly no angels,—unless of darkness! This text of St. Paul, then, instead of militating against Catholic traditions, is evidently a direct and irrevocable condemnation of Presbyterianism itself, indeed of all modern sects, among which Presbyterians, we admit, are entitled to the first rank. Decidedly, they should not quote this text. The Philistines flattered themselves that they had achieved a glorious victory, when they took captive the Ark of Israel, and carried it in triumph to their own country; but when they beheld their God Dagon mutilated and their cities depopulated by the Divine Justice, they were even more eager to restore it, than they had been to possess it.—Presbyterians, perhaps, will be as eager, hereafter, to restore

this text to its rightful owners, as the Philistines were the Ark.

The second text the Confession quotes against Catholic traditions is, "Be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. This is a singular text to prove that Scripture is sufficient, and that Catholic traditions are traditions of men, and to be discarded.

"Sharp optics has he, I ween,
Who sees what's not to be seen."

So sharp logicians are our Presbyterian divines, who find proofs where proofs there are none. St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians not to believe the Millenites of their time; therefore the Scriptures alone are the sole rule of faith and practice, therefore Catholic traditions are traditions of men and to be discarded! There is no refusing such reasoning, but seriously, if Presbyterians adduce this text as evidencing an instance of false tradition, how happens it they fail to perceive, that, in their haste to pluck out their neighbour's eyes, they must effectually pluck out their own? St. Paul refers to tradition not only by word, but also by letter. If Presbyterians say, Therefore there have been false traditions, and therefore all traditions are to be discarded; we retort, Therefore there have been false Scriptures and therefore all Scripture is to be discarded.

If the subject were not so serious, one could not help being amused with the zeal of Presbyterians against the traditions of men when their own Confession and Constitution show us with what admirable docility and tameness they submit to doctrines and practices which have and can have no origin but in the pride of innovators; when we are able to point out the very year of the birth of the founder of Presbyterianism, fifteen hundred years after our Saviour, the year in which he separated himself from the Church, the exact date of the Calvinistic inoculation of John Knox, the year and the month of the various enterprises of Calvinism in the several parts of Europe, and, in fact, of the origin of all their religious practices. Here we have unquestionably an example of traditions of men held as the pure word of God by Presbyterians themselves, although the year and day can be pointed out when they sprang from the head of Calvin and Calvinistic leaders. How, then, can they have it a hardihood, nay, how can they be so suicidal as to speak against traditions of men? What can be more supremely ridiculous than to discard as human tradition the celebration of Easter, the solemn commemoration of the death of Christ by a season of penance and fasting, when the death and resurrection of Christ are both mentioned in the New Testament, when the Old Testament abounds with festivals divinely instituted in commemoration of great events, and these two yearly commemorations are found to have been observed in the Church from the earliest ages,—and to admit as Scriptural a mode of ecclesiastical government by congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies, of which there was no example at the time of Calvin's birth, and of which there never had been an example in the world? What more undeniably a human tradition than the name, office, functions, and mode of election and ordination, of a Presbyterian *ruling elders*? Surely, Presbyterians are the last people in the world to speak disrespectfully of human traditions, as we shall show, even more conclusively, when we reach the various questions which will come up under their Constitution and Plan of Government. Deprive them of human traditions, and they would be in the sad plight of the man of Mount Ephraim, who ran after the Danites with his piteous wail, and when asked why he cried, answered, "Ye have taken away my gods which I have made me, and the priest, and all that I have, and do you say, What aileth thee?" Judges xviii. 24.

After all, it is only in theory and by way of boasting, that Presbyterians assert the sufficiency of the Scriptures alone, as the sole rule of faith and practice. They really hold the Bible alone to be quite inadequate to the formation of a system of religious doctrine, and are, in this remarkable among all modern sects; or else why the volume before us? If the Scriptures be sufficient, if they are the sole rule of faith and practice, why the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Smaller