

prehension is capable of reception. It is not necessary to suppose that Revelation is contrary to any known law. Revelation is miraculous to man simply because it transcends in its information the knowledge which man has or can have obtained, unassisted by special communication from the Infinite Truth.

(2.) Is Revelation morally necessary? Cannot the wants of man in his relation to God be supplied from his knowledge of nature and by the guidance of his reason?

Facts testify the insufficiency of Reason. History and conscience justify Revelation. Man is morally impure, and the attempts which he has made to provide himself with Revelation to supplement the teaching of Nature have proved him incapable of self-elevation. It has been attempted to show that man is so capable by selection of favorable passages of heathen authors who exhibit therein a high moral conception, but were these views entirely independent of direct Revelation? Set over against these isolated cullings the uncertainty, confession and instability of all ancient systems of philosophy, their inadequacy to preserve the very men who proclaimed them from deep moral degradation, the general prevalence of gross superstition and moral helplessness in the heathen world, and the confessions of the greatest minds of antiquity, such as Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Seneca, Epictetus, M. Aurelius, that their teaching was no stem to the tide of corruption, and that they could arrive at no definite conclusions on the most important questions of man's destiny. "No man," says Bishop Butler, "can think the light of Nature sufficient who considers the state of religion in the heathen world before Revelation, and its present state in those places which have borrowed no light from it." Admitting then the existence of God, a Revelation is not only possible, but antecedently probable. The testimony of all mankind is to the insufficiency of natural light and the darkness of the world calls for Divine help.

"If God is good," says Conder, "Revelation is probable." It is inconceivable that the parent mind, if loving men as His offspring and desiring their welfare, should withhold from them that knowledge which must be the noblest, the most desirable, and the most useful, the knowledge of Himself.

### "AUTHORITATIVE INTERPRETATION" AND THE "RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT" IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND: OR, HOW THE BIBLE IS "THE SOLE RULE OF FAITH."

By REV. JOHN CARRY, D. D.

(Concluded.)

(3.) Nor even when the true meaning of the contents of Scripture is reached, is it left to every man to decide which beliefs are necessary for eternal salvation, and which are not; which are to be required, and which are not. The Church decided these, too, and has embodied the necessary things in her Creeds, which she requires the belief and profession of before she admits any to her Sacraments, which she declares to be "necessary to salvation."

(4.) And after she had done all this, and so circumscribed the teacher's range of action, the Canons of 1571, representing the mind of the Church, though not legally binding, directed

preachers to "see first of all that they never teach in their sermons anything to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, and what the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops have collected out of the same." "A golden rule," as the famous Grotius truly called it.

(5.) So that it is only outside all these fixed results, or in addition to them, the preacher's individual judgment has play. After all that he is bound to from the outset, he has comparatively small power of oppressing the consciences of his people, for a man must be ingeniously perverse who shall be able to "persuade" himself that he has discovered something in Scripture, over and above the faith settled by the Church, which is necessary to salvation.

(6.) Another clear proof lies on the surface of the Church's words, that she never contemplated the "sufficiency" of Scripture to apply to every reader; for otherwise the idea of authority to "teach the people committed to a Priest's or Bishop's charge with all diligence to keep and observe the doctrine and sacraments and discipline of Christ," would be unmeaning; and much more the promise to "banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word," since every inculcated person might maintain his own soundness, as having an equal right to determine what was agreeable to God's Word or alien from it. But in truth whatever fine-sounding words are said about the Bible as the "sole" rule of faith, no Christians act upon it. The English Church has certainly another rule beside the Bible, and even the *Montreal Gazette* says that "all her members are bound by the Articles;" Presbyterians have their Confession of Faith; Methodists have Wesley's Notes and Sermons, though all these together fall far short of the despised "Catholic Consent." And indeed in spite of this echoing and taking catchword, "the Bible, the sole rule of Faith," all sober, modest, common-sense people feel the unreality of it. For such processes as "concluding and proving" the saving mysteries of the Faith from Holy Scripture, no small share of learning and logical ability is indispensable, to say nothing of far higher qualifications, and honest people feel it, and very generally defer to their trained and appointed teachers, as people in every department of rational life defer to experts—lawyers, doctors, engineers, soldiers, statesmen, or mechanics. And that simple Christians, under the guidance of the Church, ministered in a hundred ways from their infancy, discover satisfactorily the greatest mysteries of religion in their Bibles, is only a proof of the great happiness of that guidance, but no proof at all of what they might be able individually to accomplish if sent "first" to the Bible, and precluded from those numerous helps which God has graciously ordained in His Church, but which boastful men think scorn to acknowledge with gratitude.

(9.) In conclusion, it is no small comfort and strength to feel assured that the Faith was "once for all delivered to the saints" before a word of the New Testament was written; that it was preached in many lands and by all the Apostles, while not more than half their number committed to writing a portion of their teaching, and that in most cases with exceeding brevity; that the Faith has been kept by the Holy Church throughout all the world in things necessary, and that it is doubly assured to us in the Sacred Scriptures, the precious deposit of the Church. And when it is said, as in Art. VIII, "that the three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture," it is not meant that there are not other sufficient grounds for receiving them, but that this is a sure one, and one to which the chaotic sectaries of that day were the most likely to defer, and therefore it is prudently alone put forward. The sum of the Church's doctrine about the use of Scripture is—

It contains sufficiently all things necessary to salvation.

These points are not left to individual decision.

They are not said to be discoverable by every man.

The Church has authority in settling them. The clergy are not in their teaching to transgress these limits.

The people committed to their charge are to observe them.

Thus is tyranny of conscience in a Romish or Protestant direction effectually guarded against, and the ancient necessary and saving faith of the Catholic Church kept undiminished and secure. We may well pray that God would grant us thankfulness for such safeguards, and grace to stand fast in the exceptional liberty wherewith Christ and His Church have made us free!

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### The Churchman's Life of Wesley (S. P. C. K.)

To the Editor of the Church Guardian.

SIR,—Early last spring our English Church papers, as I think CHURCH GUARDIAN also, informed us that exception had been taken to some passages in Rev. F. E. Warren's Note to the Office for the Holy Communion in the Commentary on the Prayer Book put forth by the S. P. C. K. The formal objection was laid before the Episcopal referees and the objectionable passages were ordered to be expunged. In reading, even to-day, the "Life of Wesley," published by the same Society, I wonder greatly whether the said book has been sufficiently examined before the Society undertook its publication. Some passages in it seem, to my untrained mind, to make but little for the Church's teaching on the ministry and the solemn office for ordination. Of course if ordination be a "corrupt following of the Apostles" as some understand our Art. XXV. to teach them, nothing too little can be made or said of it. But if ordination with Apostolic Succession be a Scriptural principle of the Church, then no one can be too jealous of the statements which are put forth, as it were with the Church imprimatur, concerning it. The passages to which I think exception might be taken are the following:

P. 253—"In other words, Unity is not at present valued; while no slur can be allowed to be cast on the ministerial claims of the present race of preachers."

P. 254—"If the disposition for Unity shall exist, the other obstacles will appear small, and readily to be moved away. The submission to the Anglican form of ordination will then, as a difficulty, block the path no longer. When He, Who needed no baptism from the hand of any man, desired to comply with an ancient rule, saying "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," He spoke along the centuries to all who deem but lightly of forms and ceremonies, and to all who are ruled by that feeling which by some is called pride, and by others self-respect."

Again, the author seems to teach that the Methodist ministers who trace a succession from Dr. Coke have what is known as the Apostolical Succession; and hence in the same way teaches that Wesley both had a right to ordain, and that he did exercise that right in the case of Dr. Coke.

P. 251—"Little value is therefore set by them on the succession which, as we have seen, many of the ministers can trace, through the American channel, from Dr. Coke, and mediately from Wesley himself."

I will not say much on what seems to me to be falsely assumed and stated in the above passages, but it does seem to me even little short of *sin* to compare unordained ministers of the Methodist denomination, as regards ordination in the Church of England, with our Blessed Lord in receiving Baptism at the hands of St. John the Baptist.

Would the "Episcopal referees" order the suppression of these passages?

Yours truly,

JOHN LOCKWARD.

St. Martin's, N. B., Nov. 15th, 1883.