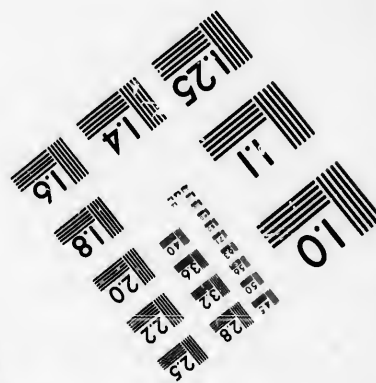
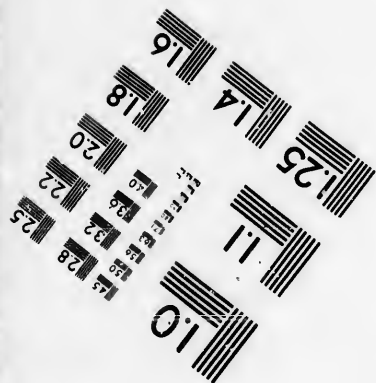
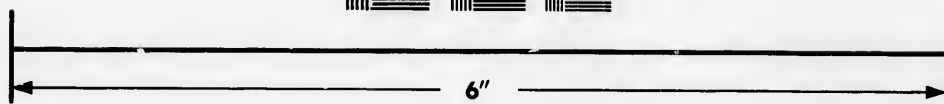
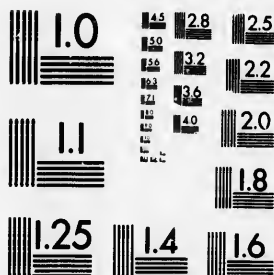


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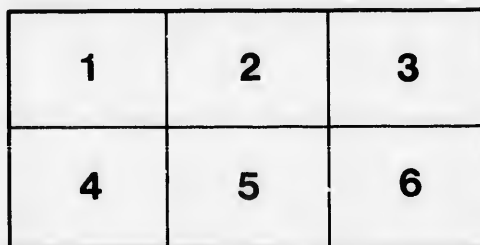
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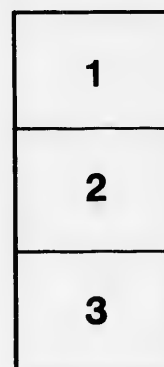
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Scripture and Tradition.

A REPLY TO MR. MATURIN'S LETTER

ON

"The Claims of the Catholic Church."

By J. M. CRAMP, D. D.

284.07

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Scripture and Tradition.

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A REPLY

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TO

MR. MATURIN'S LETTER

ON

"The Claims of the Catholic Church."

ADDRESSED TO "THE PARISHONERS OF St. PAULS,
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA."

By J. M. CRAMP, D. D.

"What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"—JEREMIAH xxiii. 28, 29.

HALIFAX, N. S.,
PRINTED AT THE "CHRISTIAN MESSENGER" OFFICE,

HALIFAX, N. S.,

PRINTED AT THE "CHRISTIAN MESSENGER" OFFICE,

1859.

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SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION.

I should not have thought it necessary to take any public notice of Mr. Maturin's pamphlet, if it had merely announced his abandonment of the Church of England for the Church of Rome. Some will say that there was not a long journey before him; and certainly, from the point to which he had advanced, some time before he openly changed sides, he had not far to go. Nor would the transfer of his allegiance from the Queen (as Head of the Church) to the Pope have occasioned any remonstrance or rebuke, as though he had done what he had no right to do. Our country is free. If any of its inhabitants choose to renounce the opinions they formerly professed, to exchange Protestantism for Romanism, or the contrary, or even to become Mormons or Mahomedans, no one can call in question their liberty, and no *Protestant* would restrain it. However we may regret their choice, and however perilous to their souls, as *we* think, the course they have taken, we cannot interfere with them, except in the way of argument or persuasion; and in all civil matters they are just where they were, so long as they conduct themselves peaceably and obey the laws. Under British rule all good subjects possess and enjoy equal rights. It is not so in Spain nor in Austria—nor in Italy—nor in France.

And how great a blessing is freedom of discussion! If, in any of the above-mentioned countries, a pamphlet should be published in explanation or defence of Protestantism, the author would expose himself to fine and imprisonment, at least—perhaps to peril of life or limb. But here he may write, and teach, and preach, as he pleases, so long as he ab-

stains from sedition or libel. No policemen will seize his book or touch his person. No judge will entertain a charge against him. He is under the guardianship of the law. His liberty is guaranteed. Thanks be to God for the rights of Englishmen !

In becoming a convert to Romanism, however, Mr. Maturin has forsaken not only the communion of the Church of England, but of Protestantism itself. He has abandoned the principles which are common to all Protestant Churches. His reasons for so doing are contained in his pamphlet, and they are entitled to serious and impartial consideration.

He commences by giving a sketch of his religious history. It is an affecting narrative. The perusal of it has led me irresistibly to the conclusion that Mr. Maturin ought never to have become a clergyman of the Church of England. By his own showing his mind was in an unsettled state shortly after the close of his university studies, and in 1840, he was troubled with "doubts as to the true position of the Church of England." He entered on a course of inquiry. The canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, and the Roman Missal, were carefully studied ; they were his "constant companions," and "a great part of them was committed to memory." Thus he obtained "a clear and comprehensive view of the Catholic system in all its proportions," and "could not help admiring its beauty and consistency." Still he was not quite satisfied. His "peace was broken," his "soul was restless," and he found "little comfort in the Protestant worship." Then he read the Rhemish Testament, with all the original notes (no light task !), and his former opinions were "completely shaken." Desirous of becoming "more fully acquainted with the practical working of the system," he attended High Mass, "on the 12th December, 1841, in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Marlborough Street, Dublin," and that event, he says, "constituted a new era" in his religious history. Yet he could not decide. He "continued in the same uncon-

fortable state, month after month—reading, praying, doubting and believing—without being able to come to any final determination.” Having “set apart the whole season of Lent, 1842, for a special examination of the subject, with fasting and prayer,” he read Cardinal Wiseman’s “Lectures on the principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church,” by which his mind was “still further disturbed.” I do not wonder at it; the sophistry of that work, its perversion of some facts and suppression of others, are likely enough to occasion mental disturbance in the case of any one situated as Mr. Maturin then was.

He “went on in the same way for several months, frequently joining in the services of the Catholic Church, till the end of July, 1842.” Then, he says—“I tacitly decided on remaining where I was.” The grounds of that decision are not assigned. It is only stated that he “yielded to the solicitations of friends,” and received ordination in the Church of England. Having ministered successively in three country parishes in Ireland, he came to Halifax, and officiated for eight years as curate of St. Paul’s. But his mind “was not free from its former difficulties.” He had only “a moderate preference for the Church of England.” It appears that during the whole period of his public ministry he was “halting between two opinions,” and that a large portion of his time was spent in studying the Fathers, and controversial writings on the points in dispute between Protestants and Roman Catholics, giving the preference, evidently, to Roman Catholic works, and carefully abstaining from all mention of his doubts to any of his brethren, or asking their advice and aid. At length he made up his mind to quit the Church of England, and without imparting his intention to any of his friends in this country, proceeded to England, in order to be admitted into the Roman Catholic Church by Cardinal Wiseman, which was easily accomplished. Seldom has the Cardinal found a neophyte so well prepared.

When Mr. Maturin was ordained Priest, the Bishop said to him—"Do you think in your heart that you be truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Church of England, to the ministry of Priesthood?" The answer was—"I think it." Again the Bishop asked—"Be you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ; and are you determined with the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing (as required of necessity to eternal salvation) but that you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?" The reply was—"I am so persuaded, and have so determined by God's grace." Mr. Maturin's own account of himself indicates that he must have been very feebly "persuaded" and "determined;" so feebly, that it would have been wiser and safer to continue among the laity. Notwithstanding his doubts and difficulties, however, he discharged the duties of his office, and, while he was busily engaged in investigating the controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics, with a manifest leaning to the Church which he has now joined, was accustomed to expatiate at length, in his public ministrations, and that even to the last, on the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome. Now, I do not charge Mr. Maturin with "hypocrisy and dissimulation,"—a charge which he not unnaturally apprehends will be brought against him; but I cannot refrain from expressing my full conviction that he has been in a wrong position from the beginning. He ought not to have become a Protestant minister. How he satisfied his conscience, I cannot imagine. A strange hallucination seems to have possessed him. Perhaps it has not yet passed away. It may be that God has mercy in store for him, and will "give him repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

Before I proceed to examine the positions assumed by Mr. Maturin, it may be expedient to take some notice of certain historical statements found in his letter.

Mr. Maturin says that "it is admitted that St. Peter was Bishop of Antioch before he was Bishop of Rome." Neither the one nor the other is admitted. Both are fictions. They have no historical foundation to stand on. They were unknown to the earliest Christian writers. So much has been said about Peter's being Bishop of Rome, and about the Popes being his successors, that the fact has at length been taken for granted without further inquiry. But there are critics now at work who are able and willing to render the same service to the ecclesiastical department of history as has been already rendered to the secular. Fables and legends will be cleared away. It is extremely doubtful whether Peter was ever at Rome at all; at any rate, there is no proof of his presence in the city till just before his martyrdom. The allegation that he was seven years Bishop of Antioch, and twenty-five years in the same office at Rome, is totally inconsistent with the chronology of his life. It is now pretty generally agreed that he suffered death in the year 67. If he had been then twenty-five years Bishop of Rome, he must have entered on his office in the year 42; and if, at that time, he had been seven years Bishop of Antioch, his episcopate there must have commenced in the year 35. But there was then no Church at Antioch; the Gospel had not been preached in that city! There is no proof, but rather strong presumption to the contrary, that Peter left Palestine till after the year 50, when the meeting was held of which we have an account in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts. It is probable that he travelled in Asia Minor. A visit of his to Antioch is noticed by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians; the circumstances attending that visit forbid the supposition of a lengthened residence in the city. We find him afterwards at Babylon. But neither in the Scriptures nor in any reliable Christian writer till after the middle of the second century is there any mention of Peter's connection with the Church of Rome. Paul wrote a letter to that Church in the year 58, without the slightest

reference to Peter—a most unlikely thing, if he had been pastor of the Church at the time. Afterwards, when he washed himself at Rome, in the year 62, he wrote four Epistles there (those to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians, and that to Philemon), but still not a word about Peter! Clemens Romanus, Bishop of Rome from A. D. 91, to A. D. 100, whose beautiful letter to the Church at Corinth is in every Christian scholar's hands, is totally silent on the subject, though he refers to Peter in his letter; and so is Justin Martyr, who spent several years in the Imperial city, and suffered martyrdom there, A. D. 165. This is sufficient to settle the question. As to Peter's presidency over the Church at Antioch, I need only say that it was some one's afterthought in the fourth century, being first mentioned by Jerome.

Mr. Maturin says—"It is surely unnecessary to dwell upon the historical fiction of the independence of the ancient British Churches on the See of Rome—the best refutation of which is, the fact of its modern invention." "Historical fiction," indeed! Can it be possible that Mr. Maturin has not read the history of Venerable Bede? or that, having read it, he has so misunderstood the historian as not to gather from his narration that the British Bishops whom Augustine labored in vain to subject to Papal obedience were of necessity independent, as they had been from the beginning? Does he not know that ages passed away before that subjection was fully accomplished? Is he ignorant of the uniform testimony of the Welsh historians and poets? How did old Taliesin (or some one of like spirit) write?—

"Woe be to that Priest yborn,
That will not cleanly weed his corn,
And preach his charge among:
Woe be to that shepherd, I say,
That will not watch his fold alway,
As to his office loth belong,
Woe be to him that doth not keep
From Romish wolves his sheep,
With staff and weapon strong."

In the warmth of his zeal Mr. Maturin ventures on the assertion that "the Church of Rome in the nineteenth century is essentially the same in doctrine with the Church of Rome in the first century." This is an astounding discovery. But we question if even his new friends will endorse the statement. They know better. They know that the ecclesiastical development had not then begun. Rome in the first century had a much shorter creed than Rome will now consent to receive or prescribe. All we have to do is to compare Paul's Epistles to the Romans with the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, and especially the third and fourth chapters of the Epistle with the Council's decisions on justification. The contrariety between the two authorities is so manifest that no further consideration of Mr. Maturin's statement is needful.

"The Protestant Canon," says Mr. Maturin, "does not agree, in all its parts, with the sacred books enumerated by any one ancient Council or Father of the Christian Church." This is boldly put. We shall see what credit is due to the assertion. One authority will suffice. Whoever will read Jerome's *Prologus Galeatus*, as it is sometimes called, and his *Præfatio in Libros Salomonis*, will find that the Canon of Scripture, as held by that learned Father, was precisely the same as the Protestant Canon, and that he explicitly affirms of the Apocryphal books that they are "not canonical." Jerome died A. D., 420.

Speaking of the first four General Councils, Mr. Maturin says that "it is a remarkable fact that every one of these Councils contains a clear and unequivocal testimony to the supremacy of the Pope in the universal church." "Remarkable" enough, it would be, no doubt, if it could be proved that before the close of the fifth century the "supremacy of the Pope" had become an acknowledged fact. Mr. Maturin has presumed too much on the ignorance of the Christian public in making this statement.

The first General Council was held at Nice, A. D., 325.

Its sixth canon is thus expressed :—" Let the ancient customs be maintained with regard to Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis, so that the bishop of Alexandria may exercise authority in those countries, as also is the practice of the Bishop of Rome. In like manner also, in Antioch, and the other eparchies, let the privileges of the Churches be preserved." There is no "supremacy of the Pope" here. *He* presided over Provinces in Italy, as metropolitan; the Bishop of Alexandria held similar authority in Egypt, and the Bishop of Antioch in Syria. These three were equal—Rome had no power over Alexandria or Antioch, nor had either of them over Rome.

The second of these General Councils met at Constantinople A. D. 381. Its third canon enacted that the Bishop of Constantinople should take the post of honor next to the Bishop of Rome, because Constantinople was "new Rome." The Bishop of Rome, as presiding over the Church of the metropolis, had been allowed the first place of honor. That was all. No jurisdiction was conferred by it. When the seat of government was transferred to Constantinople, the Bishop of that city was assigned the place of honor next to his brother of Rome, because Constantinople was "new Rome," evidently pointing to the metropolitanical position of those cities, respectively, as entitling their Bishops to precedence.

The third General Council was held at Ephesus, A. D. 431. Celestine, then Bishop of Rome, was represented by his legates; but so far was his supremacy from being acknowledged, that in the subscriptions to the Council the name of Cyril of Alexandria stands first, not the names of the legates, and that the Fathers, in their "Acclamations," at the close, treated Cyril and Celestine as equals :—"To Celestine, a second Paul; to Cyril, a second Paul; to Celestine agreeing with the Synod (mark that—"agreeing"—not governing, controlling, or confirming), the whole Council gives thanks: one Celestine, one Cyril, one faith of the Synod, one faith of the whole world."

The fourth General Council met at Chalcedon, A. D. 451.

The twenty-eighth canon asserts that as formerly special prerogatives had been conceded to the Bishopric of Old Rome, on account of its being the metropolis, so now, for the same reason, equal honor must be granted to Constantinople. The language is nearly the same as that used in the third canon of the second Council, and the same interpretation must be given to it.

Mr. Maturin's declaration, that the proceedings of the first four General Councils bore testimony to the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome (he was not yet called "Pope") falls to the ground for want of support.

I know that the Roman Bishop had acquired much greater power and influence in the West than he was ever able to attain in the East, and that for various reasons he was looked up to as in some sort the head of Christendom (that is, *Western* Christendom), though the modern notions of supremacy and infallibility were not then developed. The talents and policy of Leo I. mainly contributed to this result. He was not only a sagacious ruler, but an eminent theologian. His "Letter to Flavian" is a masterly production. The Roman See was raised by him to a higher eminence than it had ever before enjoyed, and other Churches regarded it with growing respect. Advantage was taken of this to convert deference into submission; and when advice was asked, or arbitration sought, the letter or the decision was issued as a *decree*, and obedience was demanded. But it was the growth of many years.

Mr. Maturin informs us that he "was received into the Catholic Church, not according to the usual profession of faith, but according to the Pontifical form, which has been preserved by Pope Gregory the Great, as used by the African Bishops, at the reception of Donatists into the Church, and which relates exclusively to this one point of submission to the Apostolic See, and communion with the Roman Pontiff, as the test of union with the Catholic Church." I presume he refers

to the "*Ordo ad reconciliandum Apostatam vel Hæreticum.*" The service on that occasion commences outside the Church door, where the Bishop examines the penitent on the Apostles' Creed, to every article of which separate assent is given. Exorcism follows, the evil spirit who has seduced the heretic being commanded to go out of him, and to trouble him no more. Then, taking the penitent by his right hand, the Bishop introduces him to the Church, and conducts him to the altar, where he takes his own seat, the penitent kneeling at the lowest step. Sundry prayers and exercises follow, at the close of which the reconciled person promises the Bishop, and, through him "holy Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and the most holy Father in Christ, and our Lord, Pope—, and his successors," that he will never, through the persuasions of others, or by any other means, return to the schism from which by the delivering grace of the Redeemer, he has been rescued, but that he will always remain in the unity of the Catholic Faith, and in the communion of the Roman Pontiff, in all things; and he swears by Almighty God, and the Holy Gospels, that he will continue in that union and communion, unchangeably.

There was a cunning contrivance in this arrangement. Had Mr. Maturin subscribed Pope Pius's Creed, it would not have included the dogma of the "Immaculate Conception." That was an open question, in Pope Pius's time. By signing the earlier form, he pledged himself to the acceptance of all doctrines which had been or should be, declared divine by the Roman Pontiffs, comprising Pope Pius's Creed, and something more. He tells us, with great *naivete*, that the novelties of the latter formula were "virtually included, by anticipation," in the earlier one; so that the poor Donatists "virtually" declared their adhesion to the seven sacraments, communion in one kind, and all other theological futurities, of what kind soever, which might be unfolded in the ages then to come; and Mr. Maturin himself has "virtually" received all the additions which may yet be made to the faith by the authority of

succeeding Pontiffs of that Church, which, notwithstanding, as he assures us, "*never, never alters.*"

I do not think it necessary to examine in detail all the positions assumed by Mr. Maturin—it would stretch this pamphlet to an unreadable length. Besides, it is unlikely that this controversy will end here. There will be other opportunities for explaining and vindicating Protestant principles, which will probably be embraced by gentlemen of various denominations. Leaving to them the discussion of other matters, I shall confine myself to Mr. Maturin's *theory of faith and obedience*.

"The Bible, the Bible only," said Chillingworth, "is the religion of Protestants." "Holy Scripture" (I quote the sixth article of the Church of England) "containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." To these I add an extract or two from the Confession of Faith put forth by the English Baptists in the year 1689, and generally esteemed among us as an excellent compendium of Christian principles: "The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known unto all the people of God, who have a right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation into which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope,"—"The infallible rule of interpretation

of Scripture is the Scripture itself. And therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly."—"The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered our faith is finally resolved."

Mr. Maturin propounds a different theory. He maintains that the Rule of Faith is not Scripture only, but Scripture and Tradition; that the Rule is committed to the Church, to be authoritatively interpreted and preserved; that the Spirit has been bestowed on the Church for that purpose, so that absolute freedom from error is ensured; that the decisions of the Church have been made known from time to time, in the decrees of Councils, the publication of Creeds, and the Declarations of Popes; that these decisions are to be received by all Christians, and entire submission rendered to them, the right of private judgment being abjured; that what the Church believes, holds, and practices, now, she is to be understood as having believed, held, and practiced, from the beginning; and that the Church is the Church of Rome, which is the only true Church in the world.

I am not conscious of having misrepresented Mr. Maturin's opinions. The above, I believe, is a fair account of them.

There are many objections to this theory. The first is, its opposition to Scripture. I consider myself fully entitled to take this ground, because Mr. Maturin himself admits that Scripture, conjoined with Tradition, is the Rule of Faith. If, then, his theory, either in itself or in its operation, involves opposition to Scripture, or is irreconcilable with it, it must be rejected.

The book we call the Bible is a collection of tracts, histori-

cal and didactic, written at different times, and in different parts of the world. Its publication occupied a period of nearly 1600 years. It embraces a great variety of subjects, and furnishes specimens of all kinds of style, from the plainest narrative to the most sublime poetry.

The most cursory examination of the volume will suffice to convince any impartial inquirer that it is a book to be read, and that it was written in the expectation that it would be read by all into whose hands it might come. The style and manner of the writers confirm this observation. There is no oracular ambiguity, no pedantic jargon. They evidently wrote for men in general, not for a favored few; nor is there any indication that their writings were to be perused under restraint. They are just such compositions as might be expected from authors who were under divine guidance, and whose productions were to have the widest possible circulation, and to be carefully and reverently studied, in submission to the authority by which they were sent forth. The Apostolic Epistles to the Churches may be particularly referred to;—they were addressed *to the people*, not to the ecclesiastical authorities, and it was of the utmost importance that every member of the respective Churches should be thoroughly acquainted with their contents.

Not only so, but there are numerous passages in which the individual search after truth is enjoined, or the approval of such an exercise recorded. "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life," John v. 39. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so," Acts xvii. 11. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," Romans xv. 4. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," 1 Thess. v. 21. "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in

Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Timothy iii. 15-17. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God," 1 John iv. 1-6. See also our Lord's Letters to the Seven Churches in Asia Minor, in the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation.

And what is the special promise of the new dispensation?—"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—Luke xi. 13. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you,"—John xiv. 16, 17.

The meaning of these words is clear. The promised help was not to be limited to the Apostles, but granted to *all* the followers of Christ, "for ever," that is, as long as the dispensation of the Spirit should last. Hence Christians are thus addressed—"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,"—Rom. viii. 9, 14. Every one who searches the Scriptures with prayer may expect the blessing, and feel assured that in the exercise of his judgment he will be divinely aided. These promises are not to be set aside by the establishment of an earthly tribunal, which indeed would practically render them useless; for why need I search and pray, if there is a judge at hand from whom I am to receive the law, and to whose dictates I must bow? Of such an appointment, and such a judge, I find no mention in Holy Writ.

Mr. Maturin tells us that the Christian's rule is not Scrip-

ture only, but Scripture *and Tradition*; and he observes that even the Apostles referred to Tradition, as forming part of the Rule. "Stand fast, and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our Epistle,"—2 Thess. ii. 15. "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us,"—Ib. iii. 6.

What are the facts of the case? The Apostles went from place to place, preaching the Gospel, founding Churches, and instructing the members how to serve God and edify one another. At first, these oral instructions were all that the Churches, for the most part, received; with the exception of the copies of the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which were possessed by some residents in cities and towns. But the necessity for written, authoritative documents soon became evident. They were supplied. The Gospels were compiled. Epistle after Epistle was composed. They were copied, and transmitted from Church to Church, till at length all might possess the entire collection.

Till then, the Churches would be necessarily dependent on such teaching as they might procure, and were exposed to the uncertainties attendant on that state of affairs. The Churches at Thessalonica and Corinth suffered in consequence, as the Epistles to those Churches show. The inconvenience was partially obviated during the life-time of the Apostles by their frequent itinerancies, and by the labors of those evangelists and others who received the truth from their lips. It was mercifully ordered that before the last of them died the facts and truths of Christianity were committed to writing, for the use of believers in all time to come.

When, therefore, the Christians of those days were bidden to observe the "Traditions," the reference was to the instructions actually received from the Apostles, and the substance of which might be easily remembered. As long as those instructions were remembered, and could be fairly traced up to their

authors, they were binding on those to whom they had been given. But we all know how soon a traditionary testimony is corrupted, mutilated, or enlarged, and how little reliance can be placed on hearsay reports. Hence the desirableness, and in matters of importance the necessity, of writings.

It was obviously impossible, without a constant miracle, to preserve Apostolic teachings in a pure and unmingled state. Provision was at first made by the extraordinary influences of the Spirit, bestowed in those times. But they gradually ceased. Meanwhile, the writings were spread abroad, and before the miraculous passed away, giving place to the ordinary bestowment of the blessing, the words of our Lord and his Apostles were embodied in a book, constituting the divine, complete, and unchangeable Rule.

It was not to be supposed that God would leave his Church, under the new dispensation, worse provided for than under the old. In giving us the New Testament he has dealt with us as he dealt with his ancient people. They had the Old Testament; they wanted nothing more; it was sufficient for all the purposes of that dispensation. We have, in addition, the New Testament. Is it not sufficient? Ought it to be imagined that there would be a perfect Rule under the preparatory economy, and an imperfect one afterwards?

Mr. Maturin endeavors to show that the Scriptures do not claim for themselves that exclusive authority which is claimed for them by Protestants. It is not difficult to dispose of such assertions. The question is settled as regards the Old Testament, by the authority of our Lord, in the passage before cited, John v. 39. Understood as a command, searching the Scriptures is enjoined; understood as an affirmation, it is commended. Let the reader seriously consider the following passages of the New Testament:—"We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wis-

dom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."—"We have the mind of Christ,"—1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. "The Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ,"—Gal. ii. 11, 12. "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit,"—1 Thess. iv. 8. "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour." "Our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction,"—2 Peter iii. 2, 16. "We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error,"—1 John iv. 6. Here, the Apostles claim for their teachings that respect and reverence which we owe to the Word of God. The only inquiry is, where are their teachings to be found? That they are in the New Testament, is admitted on all hands. To the New Testament, then, we are bound to submit. It contains the words of those of whom the Lord said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and him that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me,"—Mat. x. 40.

But are not certain teachings of the Apostles found elsewhere? To this I reply, that those who make the assertion are bound to prove it. The *onus probandi* rests upon them. Whatever words or teachings of the Apostles can be produced, derived from other sources than the New Testament, all Protestants will receive, on sufficient proof. But mere assertion will not be admitted as proof. And no amount of testimony can countervail the authority, already established, of the Apos-

tolie writings. To them, therefore, we yield the same deference which ancient Jews yielded to the Old Testament. And of *them* we say, in perfect harmony with the drift and spirit of their instructions, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar,"—Prov. xxx. 6. In them we have, committed to the security of writing, such of the Traditions, or teachings of the Apostles, as it has pleased the Holy Spirit to preserve, for the use and benefit of his Church. By his gracious direction and influence they wrote as they did, and the Church requires nothing more than is contained in those writings. Had anything more been needed, it would have been given to us in the fixed, written form.

Granting that Apostolic Tradition, if recoverable, would be authoritative, there is another consideration to be taken into account, and it is of no small moment. God's laws must be consistent with each other. His word is "not yea and nay." We have the inspired book. *There* is certainty. It is fixed and unchangeable. Nothing can be true or binding which conflicts with it. If, for instance, it is said to us—"We have a tradition in our Church, handed down to us from Apostolic times, by which we are taught to receive the Lord's Supper in the form of bread only, and to pray to the saints in heaven, and to angels"—we are warranted to reply—"That tradition of yours is a forgery. It contradicts the teachings of Paul, and Peter, and John, as given us in the book. We must abide by the book." And it is a very noticeable thing that they who plead for what they call Apostolic Tradition, adduce the said tradition as the authority for doctrines, ceremonies, and modes of government, which are not only not to be found in the Scriptures, but are inconsistent with the principles inculcated in them, and with the spirit and design of the Gospel dispensation. It was not without reason that the Apostle Paul said: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers"—Phil. iii. 2;—"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"—Col. ii. 8.

But how do we know that we have the book, and neither more nor less than the book? On what authority do we receive it? Are we not indebted to the Church for the Canon? And has not the same Church taught us to receive Tradition?

There is a good deal of mystification on this question. Mr. Maturin tells us that the Council of Carthage, A. D. 397, published a list of the canonical books, which was afterwards received by the universal church; and that the list has been sanctioned by the Council of Trent. We therefore owe the Canon to the Church, and receive it on the authority of the Church.

Not quite so fast. There are two parts of the Canon—the Old and the New Testaments. It is matter of history that the books of the Old Testament, as we have them in the English version, were the only books held sacred by the Jews. The Apocrypha was not received by them. Our Old Testament is the identical collection which was regarded in the time of our Lord as containing “the oracles of God.” The Jews had examined the Apocryphal books, and found them destitute of the marks of divine inspiration. They rejected them, and retained only the books which now constitute our Old Testament. The Saviour used and referred to that book as God’s book. He sanctioned the decision of his countrymen. *Our Old Testament was Jesus Christ’s Bible.* We are not indebted to the Council of Carthage for that part of the Scriptures; nor can we receive its list, because it includes the Apocrypha, which formed no part of the Saviour’s Bible.

The process was the same under Christianity as under the Law. Certain writings were issued, professing to be Apostolic, and therefore divine. They were examined. Some were ascertained to be genuine, and were received. The tokens of spuriousness appeared in others, and they were rejected. It was a careful exercise of sound criticism, conducted on correct principles. The evidence has been re-examined, and the decision revised and re-affirmed. We receive the New

Testament, not on the authority of the Council of Carthage, or of any other Council, but on independent grounds. We are satisfied that the books of which it is composed were written by those whose names they bear, and that they wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Yea more;—as the Canon of the Old Testament, determined by the Jews, received the sanction of the Saviour, so the Canon of the New Testament, ascertained in a similar manner by Christian men, has been abundantly confirmed and honored by the Holy Spirit. It contains the truth by which the Spirit operates on the hearts of sinners in conversion, and sanctifies and sustains believers. It is manifestly God's word, and challenges our most hearty submission.

It is sometimes asked, with an air of triumph, as though a satisfactory answer were altogether out of the question, how we can know that we have the real word of God, seeing there are so many various readings in the Manuscripts, and the texts adopted by critics differ from one another? And how, it may be asked again, do we know that we have the real text of Homer, or Virgil, or Cicero, or other classics? The answer will be the same, in all these cases. It would have been impossible, without the intervention of a constant miracle, to preserve all manuscripts free from corruption, passing through so many hands, and the majority of the copyists being ignorant men. God did not see fit to interpose in that manner on behalf of his word, but allowed it to be subject to the same casualties as other books, with this circumstance, however, in its favor, that the esteem in which it was held operated as a check on carelessness. The result is, that the text of the sacred volume is in a much better state than that of any other ancient book; and that the various readings, though very numerous, because the number of manuscripts of the Scriptures is much greater than of any other work, do not affect a single fact or doctrine, so as to weaken the faith or disturb the peace of any servant of Christ. And it is observable that the boasted security

afforded by the authority of the Church fails altogether here. Take, for instance, the disputed portions of 1 John v. 7, 8 :—“For there are three that bear record [in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth], the spirit, and the water, and the blood ; and these three agree in one.” (The disputed words are included in brackets.) The Latin Vulgate, constituted authentic and authoritative by the Council of Trent, contains that passage as it appears in our English version, with this slight difference, that instead of “agree in one” it has “are one.” But the disputed portion is found in no ancient Greek manuscript whatever, and by the common consent of critics, Protestant and Catholic, is rejected as spurious. The authority of the Council of Trent cannot make it genuine—cannot alter the manuscripts—cannot change the judgment of critics. It may dictate opinions, and compel feigned submission to its dictates, but it cannot alter facts. There they are still, in all their significance. I may add, that the loss of these words does not in the least affect the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, which is found in Mat. xxviii. 19, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, and a host of other passages.

A pretty fiction is founded on Mat. xvi. 18. In that passage our Saviour promises that his Church, however assaulted and imperilled, shall survive all opposition. A blessed promise it is ; it has had what Lord Bacon calls “a springing and germinant accomplishment,” and will continue to have till “all things shall be subdued” to the Redeemer. But this by no means satisfies some men. They find in that text the supremacy of Peter, and not only the perpetuity, but also the *infallibility* of the Church ; and, tacking the latter notion to Scripture—and—tradition theory, they pleasantly enough persuade themselves, first, that the Rule of Faith is Scripture *and* Tradition ; secondly, that the Saviour has appointed an infallible judge and interpreter of the rule ; thirdly, that this prerogative is vested in the Church ; and fourthly, that by “the

Church " is meant the Church of Rome, presided over first by Peter (itself a fiction), and then by Peter's successors. But verily, all this is a myth, a shadowy fable ; for there is not one word about it in God's book. And then further, there are certain questions to be answered before the claim can be allowed. Does the word " Church " mean all the members of the Church ? If so, they are all infallible, according to the above-noted interpretation. But if not, who *are* included ? The Clergy ? or only the Bishops ? In either case, are they separately infallible, or only when they meet together in Council ? How many must meet in order to constitute an infallible body ? Must the Pope be personally present ? In the intervals between Councils, is the infallibility vested in him ? and under what circumstances ? In conjunction with his Cardinals, or separately from them ? And how, in short, under the arrangement, whatever it may be, is a Christian to proceed, who wants an infallible explanation of a text, or an infallible direction relative to his course of conduct ? When these questions have been answered, it will be time enough to discuss the subject more fully. Till then, let every man " Search the Scriptures " for himself, praying for the " light and grace of the Holy Spirit ; " and let him be " fully persuaded in his own mind."

Mr. Maturin remarks that the primitive Christians must have understood Apostolic teaching, and formed their opinions accordingly : these opinions have been preserved by the Church, and they constitute the traditionary, or second portion of the Rule of Faith. I doubt not that the servants of the Saviour in those days understood the announcements of the Apostles, and that there was a common theology in the Church, embracing all essential points. It continues to the present day, not because it has been maintained and inculcated by Church authority, but because God's people have derived it from the uncorrupted source, the written word, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. According to Mr. Maturin, we have first Scripture, and then Tradition to explain Scripture ; do we

not also need, on this theory, an authoritative explanation of the Tradition—and then again, an explanation of the explanation—and so on, *ad infinitum*?

The primitive Christians, Mr. Maturin wishes us to believe, did not regard the Scriptures with the reverence which *we* yield to them, but held the unwritten Traditions in equal honor. The Bible was not the only Rule of Faith, he affirms, in those times. He even ventures to assert that the Protestant doctrine on that subject was unknown for 1500 years. I must content myself with a simple denial of the fact asserted, no proof of it being given; and I presume that my affirmation is entitled to as much credit as Mr. Maturin's. I add to the denial the statement of a singular fact, viz. :—that scanty as are the works of Christian authors during the first three centuries, the whole of the New Testament might be recovered from them, should any marvellous accident deprive us of all printed and manuscript copies of the book. This does not look like want of respect for Scripture.*

* The following interesting anecdote was communicated by the Rev. Walter Buchanan, formerly one of the ministers of Edinburgh, to the Rev. John Campbell, afterwards the celebrated African traveller :—

“I was dining some time ago with a literary party at old Mr. Abercrombie's (father of General Abercrombie who was slain in Egypt, at the head of the British army), and spending the evening together. A gentleman present put a question which puzzled the whole company. It was this—Supposing all the New Testaments in the world had been destroyed at the end of the third century, could their contents have been recovered from the writings of the three first centuries? The question was novel to all and no one even hazarded a guess in answer to the inquiry.

“About two months after this meeting, I received a note from Lord Hailes, inviting me to breakfast with him next morning. He had been of the party. During breakfast he asked me if I recollected the curious question about the possibility of recovering the contents of the New Testament from the writings of the three first centuries? ‘I remember it well, and have thought of it often without being able to form any opinion or conjecture on the subject.’

“‘Well,’ said Lord Hailes, ‘that question quite accorded with the turn

Referring to the "primitive doctrine of the Eucharist"—that is, the meaning attached by the primitive church to the words, "this is my body"—"this is my blood"—Mr. Maturin says that it "was not derived from the New Testament, but from an independent source of revelation—the oral instructions of our Divine Redeemer. The question is, then, What was this primitive doctrine? and on this point we have *the concurrent testimony of all antiquity*, confirmed by historical evidence, and proved by divine authority, that *the doctrine of the primitive Church was the same as the doctrine of the Catholic Church in the present day.*" (The *Italics* are mine). I wish to treat my opponent courteously, and to avoid all unnecessarily harsh language; but really it is difficult to restrain one's self when such a glaring misrepresentation is made. The affirmation that "the doctrine of the primitive Church was the same as the doctrine of the Catholic Church in the present day," with reference to the Eucharist, is a nearer approach to the mendacious than I have yet seen in the productions of any respectable writer. I can hardly imagine that Mr. Maturin believes it. He has been told that it is so, and having delivered himself up, bound and blindfold, to au-

or taste of my antiquarian mind. On returning home, as I knew I had all the writings of those centuries, I began immediately to collect them that I might set to work on the arduous task as soon as possible.' Pointing to a table covered with papers, he said: 'There have I been busy for these two months, searching for chapters, half chapters, and sentences of the New Testament, and have marked down what I have found, and where I have found it; so that any person may examine and see for themselves. I have actually discovered the whole New Testament from those writings, except seven or eleven verses, (I forget which,) which satisfies me that I could discover them also. Now,' said he, 'here was a way in which God concealed, or hid the treasure of his word, that Julian, the apostate Emperor, and other enemies of Christ who wished to extirpate the Gospel from the world, never would have thought of; and though they had, they never would have effected their destruction.'—*Philip's Life of Rev. John Campbell*, p. 215.

thority, and renounced the right of judging for himself, he hazards an assertion which neither he nor any other man can substantiate.

There is another view of the subject, which ought not to be overlooked. I refer to its religious aspect, and the argument founded on it.

By one class of professing Christians the Word of God is held in little honour. They are not taught to search it for themselves, and make use of it for their personal comfort and growth in religion. They are attached to a system under which they are trained to expect everything from their spiritual advisers, and to connect peace and safety with the diligent performance of services prescribed by those advisers, in accordance with the traditions of their Church.

We see in another class the adoption of a different course. They love the Bible, and constantly read it, with prayer for the enlightening, sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. The church to which they belong recognises the Bible only as the rule of faith and practice. Tradition is repudiated. Will-worship is unknown.

The religious services of the first Church are splendid and imposing. The gorgeous vestments of the priests, the exquisitely adapted music, the paintings, the powerful appeals to the senses and the imagination—even the frequent changes of posture—all combine to make a deep impression.

There is nothing of the kind in the other Church. There is simple, earnest prayer—appropriate singing—reading of the Scriptures—preaching of the Gospel.

The one is the religion of priests ; the other, of the people. The first holds with Scripture—and—tradition ; that is, nine-tenths tradition—one-tenth, or a fraction of it, Scripture. The second looks to Scripture only.

Which of these Churches is most like a Church of Christ ? In which of them is the *ideal* of Christianity most clearly and fully exemplified. In which is there the largest amount of

true holiness (I do not mean the holiness of outward observances, but of love to God and love to man) diffused among all the members? Which of the two is most likely to be instrumental in the great work of converting the world to God? And what is the testimony of history in that respect?

In the preceding observations I have endeavored to show that Mr. Maturin's theory is opposed to Scripture. The divine origin and authority of Scripture being admitted on all sides, the concurrent authority of Tradition cannot be granted, if such concession should be proved to involve principles at variance with the word of God, and the regard due to it.

I observe, in the second place, that Mr. Maturin's rule is to be rejected for its *novelty*. Lacking the authority of Scripture, it must of necessity be novel. That fact being established, I care not at how early a period opinions and practices not to be found in Scripture were introduced. If they are not *there*, it is impossible to prove them to be Apostolic and divine, and if they are not Apostolic and divine, the Church has no business with them. The opinions may be deemed plausible, and the ceremonies or practices may be judged becoming, but if they are not to be found in the book they are novelties, and as such they are to be rejected. Nor have I any fear of the consequences that may be supposed to follow upon such a statement. It is imagined by some that by dwelling on the corruptions of the Church we seem to admit that Christ's promises have not been fulfilled. So far from it, that fulfilment appears more clearly than ever. *Predictions* are to be taken into account as well as *promises*. Our Lord himself foretold a state of declension, and the Apostles repeatedly predicted it: See Mat. xxiv. 10-12; Acts xx. 29, 30; 2 Thess. ii. 3-12; 1 Tim. iv. 1-3; 2 Tim. iii. 1-7; 2 Peter ii. 1-3, iii. 1-3. It had begun to work before their departure from the world, and it was to be expected that it would be more rapid and fearful afterwards. The downward tendency has ever since continued to operate, and it is in action still. Meanwhile,

God's Abdiels, "faithful among the faithless," have appeared from age to age—now few, now many—protesting against all intrusions of the human into the divine, and appealing to the sacred volume, "the judge that ends the strife." Sometimes, as Archbishop Leighton says, the Church was in so low a state, that if you would trace her, it must be by her blood, and if you would see her it could only be by the light of the fires in which her martyrs were burnt. But she came forth again in beauty and glory, and is now pursuing her course, blessing the world as she goes, and attesting the faithfulness of her Lord.

They were accustomed in the primitive ages, I am aware, to appeal to the teachings of the Apostles, as exemplified in the Churches which they founded. If a difficulty arose, for instance, in any of the Churches in the Western districts of Asia Minor, they would send to Ephesus for information, because that Church was founded by the Apostle Paul; and the question would be, How were you instructed by him on this or that point? As long as the inquiry related to the bare matter of fact, it was natural and reasonable; but it was manifest that after a few years it would be inappropriate, because the immediate witnesses were then dead. By that time, however, the books of the New Testament might be obtained, and all necessary information procured from them.

It would have been well if they had been contented with the New Testament. But they did not use it as a revelation from God ought to be used. Notwithstanding the reverential regard for it which they professed, they began to deal with Christianity as they had been accustomed to deal with systems of philosophy, and dared profanely to think that it might be developed and fashioned to please human tastes. One wanted a spice of Judaism; another desired the flaunting splendour of heathen pomps and processions; a third plied his ingenuity in inventing forms and usages, to be dignified as "Christian symbolism." What plea or excuse had they for these things? None whatever. Tertullian honestly confesses it. Having

enumerated a number of ceremonies observed in those days, in connection with Christian ordinances, he says:—"If you ask for the Scripture law of these exercises, you will find none: tradition originated them, custom confirms them, faith observes them." (*De Corona*, c. 4.) Tertullian died about the year 220.

The process of invention became every year more vigorously active. It was notorious that there was a gross departure from primitive simplicity and purity. Then they sought to cover it by pleading, not direct divine origin, but presumptive Apostolicity. The existence of any practice in a Church that claimed Apostolic appointment, was deemed proof presumptive that it had always existed there; and universal or general observance stood instead of Scripture texts. Books were published, bearing the names of Apostles or Apostolic men, the compilers hoping by these means to secure readier sale; the patrons of rival modes sought popularity in the same manner; one time for observing Easter was recommended, because it was sanctioned by John,—while another party stoutly contended that their method of computation for the festival was in accordance with the practice of Peter. So low had Christianity sunk in the fourth and fifth centuries, that Augustine maintained that whatever was not commanded in Scripture, instituted by Councils, or confirmed by the custom of the Universal Church, was to be suppressed—thus placing Councils and customs on a level with God's word;—and Vincent of Lerius published his famous *Commonitorium*, in which he argued that what had been received "everywhere, always, and by all," was to be held as true and binding, its heavenly origin being presumed. Augustine died A. D. 430; Vincent of Lerius about A. D. 450.

Yet these fancies do not come up to the rule as propounded by Mr. Maturin, since he ascribes to the Traditions, not a presumed, but a direct divine authority. The Church was drifting that way, but had not yet grounded there. In fact, all

through the period now noticed the most profound regard for Scripture was professed; and none of the writers of the first four centuries would have spoken of it as some Romanist authors have ventured to do in the nineteenth. The novelties of Rome were not then in being.

It may be observed in the next place, that the theory now under discussion is altogether *unsatisfactory* in its operation. It fails to give quietness and certainty. Here and there a poor creature may be found, too idle to use his intellect, yet anxious to still the upbraidings of his conscience, who allows himself to be soothed into repose by this spiritual magnetism, and then congratulates himself on having found a religion which saves him the trouble of thinking; but a reflecting inquirer after truth cannot be so easily satisfied.

He is bidden to hear the Church, and submissively to believe and obey. He is willing to humble himself to any reasonable extent; and he would refrain from reflection, if he could. He cannot. His mind yearns for light and evidence. Can that be wrong? Ought he not to be furnished with such proof as will remove every doubt, and convince him that the claim on his mental subjection is righteous, necessary, and teeming with advantage?

The proof is not supplied. Uncertainty stares him in the face in every direction. On the one hand, he is assured that the Church, the divinely-appointed depositary of Christian truth, is one and unchanged, and that, committed at first to the charge of the Apostle Peter, she has been presided over by his successors, in an unbroken line, till the present day; so that he may be said to receive the truth from Peter's own hands. But history, should he venture to look into its pages, tells a different tale. It shows him the Bishop of Rome, meek as a lamb in the first ages, changed into a roaring lion. It dissolves the vision of unchangeableness by establishing the chronology of dogmas and inventions. It points to the breaches in the pretended Apostolic Succession—theuncanon-

ical appointments of Popes—the inextricable confusion of the times of schism—and coupling the whole with the doctrine of Trent, that the rightness of the Priest's intention is essential to the validity of an ecclesiastical act, lands him in the conclusion which has been thus expressed by Archbishop Whately (no mean authority), viz., that "*there is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up with any approach to certainty his own spiritual pedigree.* * * * For if a Bishop has not been duly consecrated, or had not been, previously, rightly ordained, his ordinations are null; and so are the ministrations of those who are ordained by him; and their ordination of others; (supposing any of the persons ordained by him to attain to the episcopal office) and so on, without end. The poisonous taint of informality, if it once creep in undetected, will spread the infection of nullity to an indefinite and irreparable extent. * * And who can undertake to pronounce that during that long period usually designated as the Dark Ages, no such taint was ever introduced? Irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed, we have even historical proof. Amidst the numerous corruptions of doctrine and of practice, and gross superstitions, that crept in, during those ages, we find recorded descriptions not only of the profound ignorance, and profligacy of life, of many of the clergy, but also the grossest irregularities in respect of discipline and form. We read of Bishops consecrated when mere children;—of men officiating who barely knew their letters;—of prelates expelled, and others put into their places, by violence;—of illiterate and profligate laymen, and habitual drunkards, admitted to holy orders; and in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder, and reckless disregard of the decency which the Apostle enjoins. It is inconceivable that: : one even moderately acquainted with history, can feel a certainty, that, amidst all this confusion and corruption, every requisite form was, in every instance, strictly adhered to, by men, many of

them openly profane and secular, unrestrained by public opinion, through the gross ignorance of the population among which they lived; and that no one, not duly consecrated or ordained, was admitted to sacred offices." *

And with regard to the Council of Trent, to which reference has been made, history unfolds to the inquirer such a scene of base intrigue and trickery, that he involuntarily exclaims—"Can this be the fountain of truth? Is it possible that the decisions of such an assembly can rightfully claim the sanction of heaven?"

That Council enjoined the reception and use of the Latin Vulgate. It was denominated the "authentic" edition of the Scriptures. Our inquirer is acquainted with the Latin language, and he devoutly sits down to the perusal. He notes on the title-page the names of two Popes, Sixtus V. and Clement VIII. Curiosity leads him to acquaint himself with the literary history connected with the publication of those names. He finds that an edition of the Vulgate was issued under the auspices of Sixtus V., in 1590; that the Pope professed to have taken great pains with it, having corrected many of the proof-sheets with his own hand; and that in his Bull, accompanying the publication, he announced and proclaimed its correctness, requiring all persons to receive it, on pain of anathema. Pursuing his investigations, the inquirer discovers that Sixtus's edition swarmed with errors, and that in 1592 Clement VIII. caused another edition to be published, in which those errors were corrected, and *his* Bull declared *that* edition to be the only true and faithful one. Is it wonderful that sore perplexity follows these discoveries? If the infallible Sixtus was right, why did Clement correct him? If Clement was right, what becomes of the infallibility of Sixtus?

According to Mr. Maturin, the successive decisions of Coun-

* Essays on the Kingdom of Christ, pp. 217-219.

cils respecting doctrine, worship, or discipline, did not intimate that the points decided on were then first brought before the Church, but only that they were from time to time defined more clearly, in order that new heresies might be better guarded against. He would have us believe that when the Council of Florence, A. D. 1439, "defined the Pope's supremacy, seven sacraments, purgatory, canon of Scripture, and other doctrines," those doctrines had been in the Church from the beginning, and were then more definitely expressed than they had been before, on account of various opposing opinions that had risen up. He makes the same remark respecting the Council of Nice, A. D. 325, which "defined the divinity of our Lord;" the second Council of Nice, A. D. 787, which "defined the proper honor due to holy images;" and the fourth Council of Lateran, A. D. 1215, which "defined the doctrine of the Eucharist," and "enforced the practice of auricular confession." These being deemed General Councils, their authority is binding; and all they did, if Mr. Maturin is to be credited, was to employ new expressions for the explanation of old truths, "without any change in the doctrine held by the Church from the beginning." And so we are actually told, *in defiance of all history*, that the seven sacraments, purgatory, the adoration of images, to which may be added communion in one kind, as finally enacted by the Council of Trent, have been "held by the Church from the beginning!" These things must be extremely puzzling to the honest searcher after truth.

I pass on to a fourth observation. It is this—that submission to the rule laid down by Mr. Maturin involves a state of intellectual degradation to which no man ought to submit. God himself does not require it of him. It is not the condition on which he has given the Bible to man. True, it is the duty of all men to believe God. True again—there are many facts, states of existence, principles—call them what you will—which cannot be comprehended. It is useless to speculate

upon them. All we know is that *they are*. The natural attributes of God-revealed distinctions in Deity—and other topics, may be reckoned among them. Yet even these are not coldly propounded, in the fewest possible words—in creed-style—to be arranged among articles of belief, and then to be let alone. God does not say, “Believe this—believe that”—and leave us there. He presents to us the great and glorious, yea, the incomprehensible truths relating to himself, his providence, and his grace—not in stiff, repulsive forms—but enrobed in beauty—emblazoned in splendour—interwoven with our dearest interests and our hopes—and thus inviting inquiry and thought, and commanding admiration. He even condescends, sometimes, to reason with his creatures, and to convince them, not by mere assertion, but by irrefragable proof, of the wisdom and righteousness of his ways. Whatever may be understood is set before us, that we may investigate, compare, believe and adore. And though, as I said, some truths and facts elude our grasp, and essences and modes are unknown, there is a wide field open to exploration. What the doctrines of the Bible are—what their individual and relative importance—what their mutual connections—what their practical bearings, can only be ascertained by repeated examination. That examination is at once the duty and the privilege of every christian. It is an exercise productive of the highest enjoyment. How beautifully does the Psalmist write!—“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.”—Psalm 19, 7–11.

Here, the Church of Rome interposes. There are dangers,

she wishes her children to believe, of which they are not aware. They must not venture to exercise their own judgments. The doctrines to be believed and the services to be rendered are exactly defined, and may be met with in her own Manuals. There is little or no occasion to read the Bible; and if they do (having obtained the consent of the priest), they must not venture to interpret, except under certain limitations, and they must bear in mind that the Bible itself contains only part of the truth. The remainder is in the Church's keeping—not to be examined, but received. Ought a Christian freeman to submit to this?

The folly of the proceeding is strikingly seen when the Church commits a scientific blunder. She had given her adhesion, ages ago, to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, according to which the Sun and the other heavenly bodies go round the Earth, which itself remains immovable. Galileo teaches the Copernican, that is, the true doctrine, that the Earth moves round the Sun, and turns daily on its own axis. He is laid hold of by the Inquisition—convicted of believing and teaching the “false doctrine,” that “the Sun is the centre of the world, and that it does not move from east to west, and that the Earth does move, and is not the centre of the world”—and these “errors and heresies” he is compelled to “abjure, curse and detest.” He is further sentenced to confinement in the prison of the “Holy Office,” which issued practically in his continuing under the surveillance of the Inquisition; and for penance he was ordered to recite once a week the seven penitential psalms. Is not this despicable folly? Is it not abominable cruelty? And do we not pity from our hearts the learned Jesuits who published an edition of Sir Isaac Newton's works, and found it necessary to append a note, stating, with reference to the well known decision in favor of the Ptolemaic astronomy, that they submitted the whole to the judgment of the Church? They *knew* that Newton was right. But the Church had made no provision for as-

tronomical discoveries. The Church is one and unchangeable. Scientific truth must yield to exploded theory, because the Church wills it. How is it that men possessing any manliness will bow under such a yoke?

I will briefly observe, in the fifth place, that the Scripture-and-Tradition theory is *impracticable*. It cannot be successfully worked out. How is it to be proved that the Church of Rome is the one, only, Apostolic Church, whose behests all Christians are to obey? Is the Roman Catholic to take this, too, on the Church's own assertion? Is he to be reduced to this pitiable condition, that when asked why he believes that his Church is the only true one, all the answer he has to give is, "The Church herself has told me so?" Or, suppose the case of an inquirer, such as Mr. Maturin represents himself to have been for many years. He is desirous of knowing which is the true Church, and he applies himself to an examination of the evidence. What rights has he, according to Rome? May he analyze, and compare, test quotations, weigh arguments, hold himself in readiness to follow the leadings of truth, whithersoever she may guide him? No such thing. He has nothing to do but to believe. Where, then, was the need of examination? What is that man's submission worth? And is not Rome, in demanding it, putting herself in the place of God, and requiring a surrender which no man or body of men has power to exact?

But Mr. Maturin says that "there is a wide difference between the exercise of *personal responsibility* and *private judgment*, though they are often confounded together," and that "Catholics strongly hold the one, while they utterly deny the other." He then goes on to state that it is "the duty of every individual" to "examine the grounds of his faith and the evidences of religion, with the sincere desire of joining that Church which he believes in his conscience to have the strongest claims to divine authority." So far good. But he adds, that in conducting the examination "private judgment" must

be cast aside : the man must not "form his religious opinions from his own private interpretation of the meaning of Holy Scripture, without submitting his opinions to the authority of the Church." According to my "private interpretation" of this passage, the religious inquirer is in a very singular position. He wants to know whether the Church of Rome is the true Church. How is he to act? He must "examine the grounds of his faith and the evidences of religion," says Mr. Maturin—but he must not judge for himself—he must "submit to the authority of the Church"—*he must believe the Church to be the true Church, and act accordingly, in order to know that she is the true Church!!* Admirable rule! How clear the difference between "personal responsibility" and "private judgment!"

But impracticability appears on the very face of the thing. That inquirer cannot help exercising his judgment. Right or wrong, he must think. His very submission must be an act of his judgment, his own private judgment—unless, indeed, by some mysterious legerdemain, he is able to choose for himself and to decide, without such action; and how that can be, Rome herself will not undertake, I think, to explain.

Pope Pius's Creed contains the following clause:—"I also admit the Scriptures, according to the sense which holy mother Church has held, and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures; nor will I ever take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers."

Here is work for the student of Scripture! He must interpret it "according to the unanimous consent of the fathers." A strange rule this! As William Tyndale said, this is to "measure the mete-yard by the cloth," instead of measuring the cloth by the yard. And, to say nothing of the impossible labor of examining all the fathers, where is this "unanimous consent?" I must quote Tyndale again:—"Every religion, every university, and almost every man, hath a sundry divi-

ity. Now whatsoever opinions every man findeth with his doctor, that is his gospel, and that only is true with him; and that holdeth he all his life long; and every man, to maintain his doctor withal, corrupteth the Scripture, and fashioneth it after his own imagination, as a potter doth his clay. Of what text thou provest hell, will another prove purgatory; another, *limbo patrum*; another, the assumption of our lady. * * * And of what text the gray friar proveth that our lady was without original sin, of the same shall the black friar prove that she was conceived in original sin.* That "unanimous consent" is nowhere to be found. Father contradicts father, and Council stands up against Council. The "unanimous consent" is the "baseless fabric of a vision."

"When men come to consider and inquire what the foundation really is on which they are told to rest their own hopes of eternal life, and to pronounce condemnation on those who differ from them, it cannot be but that doubt and dissatisfaction, and perhaps disgust, and danger of ultimate infidelity, will beset them, in proportion as they are of a serious and reflective turn, and really anxious to attain religious truth. For when referred to the works of the orthodox ancient fathers, they find that a very large portion of these works is lost; or that some fragments, or reports of them by other writers, alone remain: they find again that what *has* come down to us is so vast in amount that a life is not sufficient for the attentive study of even the chief part of it; they find these authors by no means agreed, on all points, with each other, or with themselves; and that learned men again are not agreed in their interpretation of *them*; and still less agreed as to the orthodoxy of each. And the degree of weight due to his judgment on several points; nor even agreed, by some centuries, as to the degree of *antiquity* that is to make the authority of each decisive, or more or less approaching to decisive.

* Tyndale's Doctrinal Treatises, p. 158. Parker Society edition.

"Every thing in short pertaining to this appeal is obscure, —uncertain,—disputable—and actually disputed,—to such a degree, that even those who are not able to read the original authors, may yet be perfectly competent to perceive how unstable a foundation they furnish. They can perceive that the mass of Christians are called on to believe and to do what is essential to Christianity, in implicit reliance on the *reports* of their respective pastors, as to what certain deep theological antiquarians have *reported to them* respecting the *reports* given by certain ancient fathers, of the *reports* current in their times, concerning Apostolical usages and institutions! And yet whoever departs in any degree from these, is to be regarded at best in an intermediate state between Christianity and Heathenism! Surely the tendency of this procedure must be to drive the doubting into confirmed (though perhaps secret) infidelity, and to fill with doubts the most sincerely pious, if they are anxiously desirous of attaining truth, and unhappily have sought it from such instructors." *

It may be objected, that the herculean toil of examining the Fathers is not required of every one, and that the work has been done by competent men, who have thus ascertained the judgment of the Church. We ask, *when*, and by *whom*? *Where* is this judgment of the Church? Where is the authorized commentary on the Scriptures, comprising the explanations declaratory of the "unanimous consent?" Rome has never published it. She never can. If even the attempt were made, we should have still to be satisfied that *all* the works of the Fathers had been read and examined—that the quotations were fairly given—that their meaning was correctly ascertained, and clearly and fully reported—and that we rightly understood the explanation. Difficulties multiply at every step. It is utterly impossible, in the manner prescribed by Rome and those who follow Rome's example, to acquire a

* Archbishop Whately, as above, pp. 169-171.

knowledge of the will of God from his word; and it is equally impossible to obtain a definite and complete understanding of utterances of tradition. The inquirer finds himself at sea, without compass or rudder, and the rocks of infidelity close at hand.

This leads me to a sixth observation. The Scripture-and-Tradition theory has been on its trial for ages, and has signally failed. The infallible Church has had a family of most unruly children. Professing, all of them, to obey their mother's voice, to think as she bids them think, and to do her will in all things, they have proved provokingly rebellious. Thomas Aquinas, the "Angelical Doctor," agreed with Augustine, maintaining, generally, the doctrines now called Calvinistic; Duns Scotus, the "Subtle Doctor," was a semi-Pelagian; Dominicans and Franciscans, the Realists and Nominalists, Jesuits and Jansenists, ranged themselves on opposite sides in various matters of controversy. Even Popes, in spite of their infallibility, have sometimes uttered strange things. Liberius (died A. D. 366) subscribed an Arian creed, and consented to the condemnation of the great Athanasius. Honorius (died A. D. 638) expressed his approbation of Monothelitism, and was condemned by several Councils. John XXIII., besides his enormous crimes, denied the immortality of the soul. Other instances of unsoundness in the faith might be cited. Where now is the boasted unity of the Church?

Once more. What is the natural tendency of the system under consideration? It is to make "the word of God of none effect." The Jews had a similar invention. All things, they said, had not been written. Moses had spoken as well as written, and his sayings were to be kept as well as his recorded injunctions. The "traditions of the elders" were more numerous by far than the Mosaic precepts, and much more burdensome. What was their effect on the Jewish mind? They superseded God's word. Depraved man ever prefers his own work, and presumes to think that he can even

improve divine commands, or supply their deficiencies. Then, if there is any clashing, the human thrusts out the divine. "Ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition."

Christian history presents similar results. The evil began to appear at an early period. We meet with it in the pages of Tertullian, and from his time onward invention was busily at work. Forms, ceremonies, and observances increased and multiplied, all armed with the authority of tradition; some of them tacitly admitted by the Church, others peremptorily enjoined; till the complicated ritual became as unlike the simple service of primitive Christians, as the ponderous, unintelligible volumes of the schoolmen were to the New Testament. And what has been—what is now, the result? Just the same as in the days of our Lord. Enter a Roman Catholic Church; and attend its most sacred exercises. On what are the worshippers intent? To what is the most devout regard given? Wherein consists the service itself? Is it not an affecting fact, that from the use of the holy water at the entrance to the close of the whole, there is nothing (unless an evangelical sermon should happen to be preached—a rare phenomenon—which can claim bible-warrant? All that is done is of human institution; and the most exact compliance with rule, in every minute particular, is essential to validity. The daily life of a Roman Catholic is directed and governed in like manner. He is controlled by the precepts of the Church. She binds him down to strict obedience to the very least of them; but she makes no provision for his spiritual edification by the word of the Lord. It might excite indifference or dislike to her exactions. She has "made the word of God of none effect through her tradition."

And how carefully does she guard that "tradition!" How anxious she is to prevent her children from becoming familiar with Scripture, lest they should learn to undervalue the authority of the Church. "It is manifest from experience,"

says the fourth rule of the "Congregation of the Index," published in 1564, "that if the Holy Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to every one, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it." Dr. Wiseman tells the people that this reading of the Scriptures leads men astray. Archbishop M'Hale talks about "the poison of the Scripture Lessons," and assures Lord John Russell that he will preserve the children under his care from it. The "Catholic Bishops, the Vicars Apostolic and their coadjutors in Britain" issue a "Declaration," in which they affirm that "the unauthorized reading and circulation of the Scriptures, and the interpretation of them by private judgment, are calculated to lead men to *contradictory doctrines on the primary articles of Christian belief*; to inconsistent forms of worship, which cannot all be constituent parts of the uniform and sublime system of Christianity; to *error and fanaticism in religion, and to seditions and the greatest disorders in states and kingdoms*!" This policy is uniformly observed. If Scripture be allowed, tradition will fall; therefore, discountenance Scripture, that tradition may be uppermost. So, after all—it is not Scripture-and-tradition, but tradition *versus* Scripture; and the Church, which assumes authority to announce the divine rule to Christians, while she declares that the rule consists of Scripture and tradition, and that both are to be received "with equal piety and veneration," always contrives, in practice, to disparage the former and to exalt the latter. The perusal of the Bible is fettered by irksome conditions; but there is no restraint on an acquaintance with Church laws and ordinances. The Church "makes the word of God of none effect," and "teaches for doctrines the commandments of men."

I must go further. Mr. Maturin thinks he can identify Protestantism with infidelity. Thus he speaks:—"The inevitable tendency of Protestant principles, both in theory and practice, must always be to Socinianism and infidelity." * *

"There is no real alternative between the *principle of infallibility* and the *principle of infidelity*." There is a recklessness of assertion here which cannot be too severely condemned. If the "inevitable tendency" of Protestantism be to "Socinianism," we should expect to find that Socinians or Unitarians (the terms are interchangeable) constitute a large proportion of the Protestant body. Now, what are the facts of the case? In Great Britain, as is well known, they are an insignificant portion; there are not more than two hundred congregations, most of them exceedingly small. The strength of the Unitarians is in the United States. In that country, the Protestant population amounted, by the last census, taken in 1851, to 13,212,271 persons; of these 137,367 are reported as Unitarians—the proportion being a trifle over *one in a hundred*! So much for "inevitable tendency." The study of statistics would be very beneficial to careless writers.

But Protestantism, according to Mr. Maturin, has also an "inevitable tendency" to infidelity. "I do marvel greatly, dearly beloved in Christ," said good William Tyndale, "that ever any man should repugn or speak against the Scripture to be had in every language, and that of every man. For I thought that no man had been so blind to ask why light should be shewed to them that walk in darkness, where they cannot but stumble, and where to stumble is the danger of eternal damnation; other [or] so spiteful that he would envy any man (I speak not his brother) so necessary a thing; or so Bedlam mad to affirm that good is the natural cause of evil, and darkness to proceed out of light, and that lying should be grounded in truth and verity; and not rather clean contrary, that light destroyeth darkness, and verity reproveth all manner of lying."* So the sturdy old Protestant argued against the Romanists of those times, who would keep the Scriptures from the people, under the pretence that injurious consequen-

* Doctrinal Treatises, as above, p. 7.

ces would follow their general dissemination. We may accept his verdict, although expressed in homely language, and declare that man "Bedlam mad" who teaches that Protestantism, the religion of "the Bible, the Bible only," tends to infidelity. As well might he say that knowledge tends to ignorance, and freedom to slavery, and food to death. The assertion is as audacious as it is absurd, and totally destitute of foundation in fact.

Mr. Maturin has read a great deal, but he is profoundly ignorant on this subject, or he conceals his knowledge, because it controverts his theory. Has he read the history of France previous to the first Revolution? If he has, he must have learned that the infidelity of the French philosophers was the natural growth of Romanism. They confounded it with Christianity—it was all the Christianity they knew, for Rome kept the Bible from them, and they said, "Christianity is a fable." Thousands of the sons of the Church have come to the same conclusion. You may meet with them in all the cities of Europe, and of this Western Hemisphere, especially among the educated classes. They still maintain a nominal connection with the Church, and now and then, to save appearances, enter its temples (not a few, in Southern Europe, wear the robes of the priesthood); but they have long ago rejected its teachings, and they do not hesitate to avow the contempt with which they regard the entire system. They are literally "without God." They have never studied his word: that formed no part of their training. They were taught from their childhood that Christianity was embodied in their Church, and nowhere else. As soon as they began to think they doubted—and then denied—and then despised. Scarcely had some of them reached manhood's prime, when they cast away their bonds, and threw themselves into the arms of infidelity.

I may be told, that unbelief is the fruit of man's depravity, that it is to be met with among all classes and persuasions,

and that it is unfair to ascribe it solely or peculiarly to the influence of Romanism. Unquestionably, sinful man is prone to disbelieve and disobey God; and therefore the Christian is the more bound to present to his wandering brother the claims of religion in such a manner as to attract, not to repel his submission. How otherwise can this be done than by setting before him the truth from God's own book, in its own beautiful, impressive, and sublime language—and illustrating that truth by a meek and benevolent temper, and a holy life? Instead of this, the young Roman Catholic is met from the beginning by the demands of authority. He is required to receive dogmas without explanation—to place his conscience in the priest's keeping—to perform every day numerous ceremonies, with punctilious regularity—to adore the image or the painting—to fast at stated times—to pray to saints and angels—to observe sundry feasts, some of them as religiously as the Lord's day itself—to tell all the secrets of his heart at the Confessional—to believe that at the word of the priest the bread is changed into the body, and the wine into the blood of Christ—that this is done every time mass is celebrated—and that "Christ, whole and entire, is contained, not only under either species, but also under each particle of either species." * These things, with much more, he is assured, constitute Christianity. If perchance he should obtain a Bible, and, finding that they are not there, should seek further information, he is

* "The pastor will also explain to the faithful, that in this Sacrament are contained not only the true body of Christ, and all the constituents of a true body [*velut ossa et nervos*—"as bones and sinews"—the translator has omitted those words]; but also Christ whole and entire—that the word Christ designates the man-God, that is to say, one Person in whom are united the divine and human natures—that the Holy Eucharist, therefore, contains both, and whatever is included in the idea of both, the divinity and humanity whole and entire, the soul, the body and blood of Christ with all their component parts—all which faith teaches us are contained in the Sacrament." * * * "Christ, whole and entire, is con-

told that Christianity consists of two parts, the written and the unwritten; and he is called upon to believe, that though they differ widely from each other, and in some respects are irreconcilably opposed, they flow from the same source, and constitute together one religion—with this peculiarity, that the unwritten must be carefully studied and practised, while to the written, small importance, if any, is attached. Can we wonder that he pronounces the whole “a mockery, a delusion, and a snare,”—and prefers unbelief to faith on such terms? Thus it is that infidels are manufactured by the thousand. There is great truth in the saying of a friend of mine in England, who departed this life not long ago, that “*Infidelity is Popery run to seed.*” This is the true “inevitable tendency.”

Many cases might be produced, illustrating these observations. The following narratives are selected, because I was personally acquainted with the parties.

The late Dr. Cote, of the Grande Ligne Mission, Canada, was a native of Quebec. His ancestors were among the Acadians who were driven from Nova Scotia in 1755. He was educated in the Roman Catholic College, Montreal, and afterwards studied medicine. He practised successfully as a physician for several years, and was so much respected by the inhabitants of the County of L'Acadie, in which he had settled, that he was chosen to represent that County in the Canadian Legislature. Having joined the patriot party, as it was called, he was compromised in the rebellions of 1837 and 1838, and compelled to flee to the United States, where he

tained under either species, so that as under the species of bread, are contained not only the body, but also the blood and Christ entire; so, in like manner, under the species of wine are contained not only the blood, but also the body and Christ entire.” * * * “The pastor will also inform the faithful, that Christ, whole and entire, is contained not only under either species, but also in each particle of either species.”—*Catechism of the Council of Trent. Translated into English by the Rev. J. Donovan, Professor, &c., Royal College, Maynooth, pp. 226, 227. Dublin, 1829.*

remained till the publication of an amnesty enabled him to return to his native country.

All that time he was without religion. Brought up in Catholicism, in its most rigid forms, he became disgusted, even in early youth, with the system. The stress laid on outward observances, the restrictions imposed on intellectual exercises, the want of a genuine spiritual element, the tyranny of the priesthood, repelled him from Romanism; and as he had been taught that Romanism was Christianity, he determined to renounce it. "He deplored the influence of the clergy on his fellow-countrymen," says his biographer, "and could not think that a religion, whose ministers keep their people in ignorance, superstition, and abject misery, had emanated from God. He conceived of religion as a noble system, destined to enlighten and elevate the people; but he found just the reverse in Popery. And as a natural consequence of confounding the religion of the Gospel with that of the Pope, he was led to Infidelity; hoping to find in Deism the light he was seeking, to enable him to worship and serve God aright. Desirous of being enlightened on the subject of religion, he commenced a correspondence with distinguished Deists, and read their works; by which almost fatal step he was more and more confirmed in their pernicious errors."

During his exile he fell into a state of great mental distress. Infidelity gave him no relief, no hope. Attending some religious meetings in the place where he resided, he was much struck with the indications of peace and happiness which appeared among the Christian people who met together there. This led him to adopt a course which was ultimately blessed to his soul. "His mental sufferings now became intolerable, and convinced that his system of philosophy had deceived him, he resolved to read the Bible, of which, alas! he was almost totally ignorant. This he did in order to study our religion at its very fountain, the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Although he read the Bible with great prejudice,

yet he was struck with the divine majesty which is enthroned on its pages, and with the beauty of its instruction. Although it spoke to him with supreme authority, he disputed with it; he reasoned; he compared it with the works of Diests; but this divine word, mightier than any human book, sharper than any two-edged sword, pierced his heart; his soul was astonished at its searching power. he groaned at the sight of himself; violent doubts arose in his heart; he was overwhelmed with anguish and weeping. He experienced one of the most subtle attacks of the natural unbelief of the human heart against the truth; and the Wicked One, who did not remain inactive, tempted him violently to abandon every religious thought." At length his doubts and difficulties were removed. He became a firm believer in the Gospel, and a devoted Christian.

Here was "inevitable tendency"—but not, of the kind pointed out by Mr. Maturin. Dr. Cote's history, while he was a professed Roman Catholic, is the history of many a young man in that country. The "tendency" is everywhere seen.

Dr. Cote, it may be added, joined the Grande Ligne Mission, and labored as a missionary among the French Canadians, with encouraging success, for nine years. He died in 1850, in the forty-second year of his age, enjoying in his last moments the peace and consolations of Christianity.

William Henry Denham was the son of an officer in the East India Company's service, and was left an orphan in his infancy. "He was placed under the vigilant inspection of Father Michael Ellis, of Lartington, in the north of England. He was educated in the principles of the Church of Rome; but even under these circumstances he was conscious of yearnings for immortality. As a child he exhibited a religious disposition, and was struck with the incongruity which existed between his religious instructions and the gaieties he was encouraged to share. He could not reconcile attendance at

mass and vespers on the Sabbath afternoon, with the card-playing and gross worldly amusements which filled up the later hours of the holy day.

"Such thoughts as these the child dared not cherish. To think was sinful. The idea of heresy, and the known antipathy of friends, debarred the free exercise of thought. By degrees the superstitious tales, the frightful judgments which were said to follow heresy, and the conviction that out of the pale of the Church of Rome there was no salvation, overpowered the lurking suspicions of his mind, and, at the age of fifteen, Mr. Denham's scruples were neutralized, and he was prepared to enter without reluctance into every gay scene which the metropolis afforded, whither he was now removed.

"When about the age of eighteen or nineteen, Mr. Denham formed the acquaintance of a person whose mind was deeply tinctured with infidelity. '*As a Romanist,*' says Mr. Denham, when referring some years afterwards to this period of his life, '*I was defenceless.* His bitter sarcasms filled me with the deepest emotion. My total ignorance of Scripture rendered me incapable of reply. Was Christianity, was the Bible upon which it was founded, a delusion? I was emphatically without God, without Christ, without hope in the world! What was I to do? To read the Scriptures, I dared not. To meet his arguments, I could not. In this state of mind I remained, and settled down in infidelity.'"

Dr. Cote was driven by Romanism into infidelity. Mr. Denham found the system incapable of preserving him from it. In both instances the word of God was the means of deliverance. The narrative of Mr. Denham's life proceeds thus:—

"Mr. Denham, nevertheless, maintained his usual attendance on Romish worship. Having no religious principle, he was not prepared to make a stand for his new creed, or rather unbelief. In this state of mind he remained till the year 1830. The manner in which a change of heart was effected he relates in the following manner:—"A friend who was much

interested in my welfare begged me to accompany him to the Chapel of which he was a member, (Rowland Hill's). A stranger preached. His text was Acts ix. 11, "Behold he prayeth!" I was struck with the mode of worship, and the solemnity of the discourse. I felt that *I* had never prayed; but I smiled with inward contempt when I was pointed to a simple reliance upon a Saviour. I felt convinced I was wrong. I felt if his doctrine was in accordance with the Bible, and it was true, I must be lost! Rosary trammels and prescribed confessions had lost their hold upon my mind. I determined to procure a Bible, and to give the book a prayerful and impartial reading. In about four months I had read its contents, nearly. This course God blessed to my conversion.' At this time Mr. Denham was twenty-one years of age."

During the next thirteen years Mr. Denham was engaged, partly in the work of education, and partly in the ministry. He so diligently improved his spare hours that he "acquired a knowledge of Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Latin, and Greek, and was not unacquainted with Rabbinical lore. Theoretical and systematic theology also engaged his attention, and a considerable course of reading had been pursued in philosophy and history, and whatever may be deemed necessary to the general exegesis of the Bible." In 1844 he entered into the missionary service, under the Baptist Missionary Society, and labored, first in Intally, near Calcutta, and afterwards at Serampore, with distinguished success. He was on his return to India, after a visit to England, when illness compelled him to stop at Ceylon, where he died, Oct. 25, 1858. A kind Wesleyan missionary, and the Presbyterian chaplain of the station (Point de Galle) rendered him brotherly attention in his last moments. The missionary says:—"Throughout his affliction he conversed freely on religious subjects, and expressed his firm reliance on the atonement, and his entire resignation to the will of his Heavenly Father. His mind was filled with

joy and peace in believing. When I first visited him, I questioned him on these subjects, and he replied, 'These things are not a question of to-day or to-morrow with me; it has been the great purpose of my life for many years to give my heart wholly to God, and now I have no new resolutions to form. I am *His* in life and death.' " *

Educated in Romanism, Mr. Denham fell into infidelity. The despised Bible was the means of his conversion. But it did not lead him back to Rome.

I have now accomplished the purpose with which I undertook to reply to Mr. Maturin's pamphlet. I have endeavored to show that his theory must be rejected, because it is opposed to Scripture;—because it is a novelty;—because of its unsatisfactory results;—because of its degrading influence;—because of its impracticability;—because it has signally failed;—and because of its tendencies and effects.

Mr. Maturin's production is very defective in point of order and arrangement. This occasions numerous repetitions, and gives an air of confusion to the whole, so that the reader feels much like a man in a fog, who wanders about eccentrically, and not unfrequently finds himself at the very place from which he had started some time before. It may be further observed, that the fallacy called *petitio principii*, or begging the question, is exemplified in every part of the work. Mr. Maturin is continually taking for granted the very thing that is to be proved, and then arguing from it as if it were proved. Thus, in order to prove that Scripture and Tradition united constitute the divine rule of faith and practice, he brings forward the decree of the Council of Trent, and then adds, "This is the public declaration of the Church in her last General Council." But the claims and authority of the so-called Church are the very points at issue, and therefore the decree of the Council of Trent is perfectly valueless. It must

* Baptist Magazine, January 1859, p. 52.

first be proved that the Church of Rome is the true, the only Church, and then that the said Council was a lawful and full assembly of that Church. Mr. Maturin's attempt to evade the charge commonly brought against the Roman Catholic argument, that it is "reasoning in a circle," entirely fails. There the circle is, and he and his friends are whirling round it, any thing he may say to the contrary notwithstanding.

An observation may be made here on the manner in which the word "Church" is constantly employed by Mr. Maturin. He uses it in a sense in which it was never used by New Testament writers, nor for some time after the days of the Apostles. Theoretically, he seems to intend by the word the entire Christian body, as at any one time existing, with power to act in its corporate capacity, by means of General Councils; although a limitation has been introduced in modern times, excluding all but members of the Church of Rome. Practically, the General Council is the Church. But nothing of this kind is to be found in the New Testament. There, we read of "the Churches of the saints," every Christian assembly, constituted in accordance with the Saviour's laws, being a Church. When the word "Church" is used in a general sense, the reference is, not to a corporate body, or great organization, but to the whole family of the redeemed. The duties and privileges assigned to Christian Churches belong to every Christian assembly, constituted as above, and are to be fulfilled and enjoyed accordingly. The laws of the New Testament can only be obeyed by individual societies, each acting under allegiance to Christ, the Head, and guided by the Holy Spirit, in harmony with the word of truth. Of such a Church as Mr. Maturin speaks, I find no trace in the inspired volume; and I am not prepared to believe that a point of so much importance, identified with the interests and actual existence of visible Christianity, was left in an indeterminate state, to be developed in after ages.

On New Testament principles, the Church of Rome was—

the Church of the City of Rome, or the Christian congregations there existing—and nothing more. All beyond was foreign ground, on which other Churches might be stationed, each of them independent of Rome and of one another, and each answering the purposes of the Christian institution, in diffusing the truth and promoting mutual edification. If Peter was Bishop or pastor of that Church, which cannot be proved, his jurisdiction extended only to the individuals composing it, as a particular society, and not to any other place; and his successors could have no other rights and privileges than he himself enjoyed. Whatever special power or prerogative was granted to him by our Lord was altogether personal in its nature, and ceased at his death, if not before. As an Apostle, he had no successor.

When, therefore, we speak of “the Church of Christ on earth,” we mean thereby, if our language be in agreement with the New Testament, all Christians; or we use the word in a general sense, including all Churches, each of them carrying into effect the designs of the Saviour, and thus, taken collectively, being regarded as the *Church Institute* of Christianity. The oneness, or unity of the Church does not consist in its being one visible body, but in the fact of the agreement of all Christians in the fundamental points of faith, and in the uniformity of Christian character, produced by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But, as I have already observed, there is no provision in the New Testament for the action of the whole Christian body, as one Church. No powers are entrusted to such a supposed Church—no privileges given—no duties enjoined. How the separate and independent Churches of Apostolic times were at length developed into what is called the “Catholic Church,” to the loss of their individuality and freedom, it is the province of the ecclesiastical historian to unfold.

I have confined myself, in the preceding observations, to one subject. It was not my intention to follow Mr. Maturin, step

by step, nor to reply to every objection which he has adduced against Protestantism, or against any of its forms. I do not undertake to be the apologist of Luther, nor to defend the leaders of the English Reformation. Whatever opinion may be formed respecting the conduct and policy of Henry VIII. or Elizabeth, the controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics is not in the least affected by it. Nor am I in the slightest degree interested in the discussion, as it regards members of the Church of England; they will manage their own quarrel. My attention has been solely given to certain principles in which Protestants, as such, generally agree.

Much that has been advanced by Mr. Maturin has no bearing on the Denomination to which I have the honor to belong. Those who are aggrieved will know how to defend themselves, if they feel inclined to do so. The position *we* have taken saves us from some of the thrusts to which others are exposed. We do not find diocesan episcopacy in the New Testament—nor infant baptism—nor confirmation—nor priestly absolution; all these, with baptismal regeneration, which, in our opinion, lies at the root of the manifold evils with which Christendom is burdened, we have rejected. We repudiate all Church usages, as binding on Christians, which are not enjoined in the New Testament, or clearly sanctioned by its principles. Whatever can be fairly proved to have been the universal and continued practice of Apostolic Churches, we think ought to be followed now, without deviation; but we cannot go beyond the Apostolic age and the inspired record, for corruption was at work before Christianity was a hundred years old. There is no safety (such is *our* feeling) in taking for patterns the Churches of even the second and third centuries. There was among them such a mingling of weakness, and superstition, and ignorance of the true method of Scripture interpretation and such a disposition to borrow adornments from other systems, that if we conform ourselves to their modes of faith, worship, and government, we shall find that we have un-

consciously admitted principles of very dangerous tendency.*

Our conclusion is, that the Scriptures, and the Scriptures only, are the rule of faith and practice. No one knows whether the Apostles delivered any instructions to the Churches, designed to be of perpetual obligation, which are not embodied in their writings. The presumption is in the negative. We are warranted in the conviction that the Holy Spirit guided them in writing, as he did in speaking, so that the New Testament constitutes a complete and sufficient body of Christian law. Not that exact provision was made for all the *minutiae* of service—such as, when, how often, or in what order, we should pray, sing, or read the Scriptures. That was not required under a spiritual dispensation. There is no book of Leviticus in the New Testament. The outline is drawn, clearly and boldly; the filling up is left to the discretion of the Churches. We have ample directions for the constitution and general government of the Churches, in the precepts, precedents, and principles of the holy book; and we want no additional legislation, no appendix of rules and orders; for where direct commands or examples fail us, the true Apostolical Canons come to our aid. See 1 Cor. x. 31, xiv. 26, 40, xvi. 14; Col. iii. 17.

We cannot, dare not, go beyond the book. If we adopt other laws and rules than those which are contained in the New Testament, we assume a power which has not been committed to us, and which, in the hands of Rome, has forged the chains of spiritual despotism; and we virtually charge the Redeemer with having made insufficient provision for the service of the Church. The Spirit being given to the Apostles to “bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Christ had said unto them,” and to “guide them unto all truth,” that same divine influence led them to commit as much to writing

* See Isaac Taylor's “Ancient Christianity,” an admirable work, which the Tractarians have not attempted to answer.

as would be needful for the wants of the Churches. We find no difficulty in carrying on Church government by this means. But we are convinced, that if we should appeal to Christian antiquity, on the supposition that Apostolic plans and usages had been handed down from the beginning, a principle would be admitted which would lead us straight to Rome. For who can distinguish between the presumed Apostolic custom and the new invention? The only way, therefore, to preserve ourselves from the condemnation pronounced on those who "made the word of God of none effect," is to cleave to the great Protestant declaration—"The Bible, the Bible only."

If it be maintained that "the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies," we reply, first, that we want them not, for the ceremonial of the New Testament, simple as it is, is sufficient for us; secondly, that in reference to worship, the manner, being indifferent, must not be imposed, and therefore no "decree" is needed, the Churches having full liberty to adopt any proposed mode, or not, at their pleasure; and thirdly, that we cannot concede such a right to any Church or Churches, because of the consequences that would follow. We desire no alliance with Rome, nor with any member of her family.

In the conclusion of his letter Mr. Maturin adverts, with great warmth and ardour, to the "marks of the true Church." The Church of Rome is "one—holy—catholic—and apostolic," I cannot trespass on the patience of my readers by lengthened animadversions on these "marks," and will only say, that every sentence Mr. Maturin has penned on this subject is capable of full and satisfactory refutation. Yet on one point a word or two must be offered. Mr. Maturin avers that "the Roman Church is *holy*—in the *means* of holiness and in the *fruits* of holiness—in the tendency of her doctrines and the profession of her members—by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon all her children, through the instrumentality of her divinely appointed sacraments." He cautiously adds, that "we cannot always judge of the sanctity

of a Church by the lives of its members"—a very needful, but remarkable proviso in the present case, although it hardly squares with the divine axiom, "By their fruits ye shall know them." I will charitably suppose that Mr. Maturin is serious, and that he has brought himself to believe that "the Catholic Church stands immeasurably high in this respect, in comparison with all others." But how has he read history?

Perhaps he has not noticed the lamentations of Cardinal Baronius. I will transcribe them for his information. "What was then the face of the holy Roman Church! How filthy, when most vile and powerful prostitutes ruled at Rome! by whose will dioceses were changed, bishops were consecrated, and—which is inexpressibly horrible to be spoken and heard—false popes, their paramours, were thrust into the chair of St. Peter, who, in being numbered as Popes, serve no purpose except to fill up the catalogues of the popes of Rome. For who can say that persons thrust into the popedom without law, by harlots of this sort, were legitimate Popes of Rome?" *

Perhaps he has never read Marsilius of Padua, whose "*Defensor Pacis*," published in the sixteenth century, was a wonderfully bold protest against the corruptions of the times. "In the present corrupt state of the church," says he, "the great majority of the priests and bishops are but little, and if we may speak freely, quite insufficiently experienced in the sacred Scriptures; because they hanker after the benefices, to which ambitious, covetous aspirants, skilled in canonical law attain, by services rendered, by petition, by money, or the aid of the secular power. I call God and the multitude of believers to witness, that I have seen and heard of very many priests and abbots, and some prelates, incapable even of preaching a sermon according to the rules of grammar." He mentions the case of a young man, not yet twenty years of age, and absolutely ignorant of religion, consecrated a bishop, without pass-

* Ad Ann. 912, § 8. Also, Ad Ann. 900, § 1.

ing through the inferior grades of the ministry; and he says that the Popes had often done this, "with a view to secure the favor of the powerful." *

Perhaps the complaints and remonstrances of Nicholas de Clemangis have never met his eye. In his celebrated work, "*De ruina Ecclesiarum*," published in 1401, he draws a melancholy picture of the state of religion at that time. He speaks of the "scandalous bargaining away of benefices" at Rome; of the luxury, pride, and worldly pomp of the Cardinals, and of the ignorance of the priesthood, many of whom "could not even read," and who, instead of making amends for their ignorance by their excellent conduct, spent their time in "feasting and sporting." He describes the mendicant friars as ravening wolves in sheep's clothing, who put on for outward show, severity of life, chastity, humility, holy simplicity, but in secret abandoned themselves to the choicest pleasures, to a "dainty variety of luxurious enjoyment." He says that the proportion of good members to bad in the Church was scarcely "one to a thousand," and that whenever an individual distinguished himself by his pious living, he was a butt of ridicule for the rest, and was "pointed as a proud man, a singular fellow, an insane person, or a hypocrite." †

Perhaps he is ignorant of the lives and characters of Popes Sergius III., John XI., John XII., John XIX., Benedict IX., Urban VI., Boniface IX., John XXIII., and Alexander VI. If so, I would advise him to read their histories—not in Bower's "*Lives of the Popes*"—nor in Llorente's "*Portraits des Papes*," but in the pages of Platina and other Roman Catholic writers.

Perhaps he has been so absorbed of late years in the study of the Fathers and Councils, and controversial writings on the

* Neander's History of the Church, V. 33.

† Neander, as above, pp. 56-59.

Roman Catholic side, that he has not found time to become acquainted with the state of society in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and South America, in which countries the genuine effects of Romanism are much more fully developed than in Protestant lands. If the question is to be raised respecting the comparative effects of the two systems, the evidence will be forthcoming, and it will be of such a kind that "both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle."

I freely admit the obligations under which we are laid to learned men, members of the Roman Catholic Church, for their contributions to literature, especially in the departments of the Classics and Ecclesiastical History. They have performed an immense amount of labor, and earned the gratitude of all Christendom. I honor the Benedictines, for their splendid editions of the Fathers. I admire, in common with all Protestants, Fenelon and Pascal. I know that Cardinals Mezzofanti and Mai, particularly the latter, deserved all the encomiums that have been lavished on them. But I lament that men of such talent and genius should have been miserably shackled by the restraints of the Church, and subjected to the degrading influences inseparably connected with submission to Rome.

I regret, too, the fall of Mr. Maturin. He was at one time deemed a fervent, energetic, evangelical preacher of the Gospel. What has he gained by the change?

He has joined a Church which declares that the "written books" comprised in the Bible, the Apocrypha being included—and the "unwritten traditions,"—are to be received "with equal piety and veneration;"—and asserts, contrary to the evidence of history, that the said traditions have been "preserved in the Catholic Church by continual succession;"—thus poisoning the streams of truth at the very source.

He has joined a Church which will not allow him to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the word of God, but places insuperable obstacles in the way—requires him to

renounce the right of judging for himself, and even "the desire of subjecting truth to demonstration," and demands his unhesitating assent to whatever the Church may teach.

He has joined a Church which denies justification by faith only—inculcates the doctrine of human merit—mutilates one of the ordinances of Christ—teaches that the sacraments confer grace, and that "in them exists the power of the Omnipotent"—and impiously pretends to renew from time to time, in "the sacrifice of the mass," the "one offering" by which the Saviour has "perfected forever them that are sanctified."

He has joined a Church which excludes him from the fellowship of the learned and wise of other religious persuasions, forbidding him to read (unless by special license, which may be at any time revoked) the works of the Reformers of the sixteenth century, British and Foreign, and of the Puritans and Nonconformists of the seventeenth century—and the writings of Lord Bacon, Locke, Milton, Addison, Grotius, Sir Matthew Hale, Mosheim, Selden, Jeremy Taylor, Young (the poet), Macauley, Roscoe, Robertson, and many more—proscribed because they are Protestant.

He has joined a Church which teaches him to forswear all the kindly feelings he once entertained towards other professing Christians, and tells him that as they are out of her pale they cannot be saved. Members of the Greek communion—Protestants of every class and denomination—our Leightons, and Hebers, and Martyns—our Owens, and Baxters, and Howes—our Miltons and Lockes—our Whitefields and Wesleys—our Bunyans and Howards—our Missionaries of every name—are all included in the same condemning sentence. No matter what were their excellencies; their piety might be seraphic, their benevolence Godlike, their faith like the "shining light" that illuminates and gladdens all nature; but having committed the unpardonable sin of refusing to pay homage to the man of the triple crown, the Roman Catholic is bound to believe that they are lost forever.

He has joined a Church which not only pronounces the fearful doom of everlasting destruction upon those who differ from her—teaching the very children to say they go “to hell for all eternity”—but has in every age, when she possessed power or influence, consigned them to the most horrible punishments, torturing and destroying them, by means of her agents, in untold numbers;—in one word, the Church which is the mother of the Inquisition.

Mr. Maturin has joined that Church. Can such a union make him a happier, a holier, or a more useful man?

In conclusion, I beg to ask the attention of those members of the Roman Catholic persuasion who may read these pages.

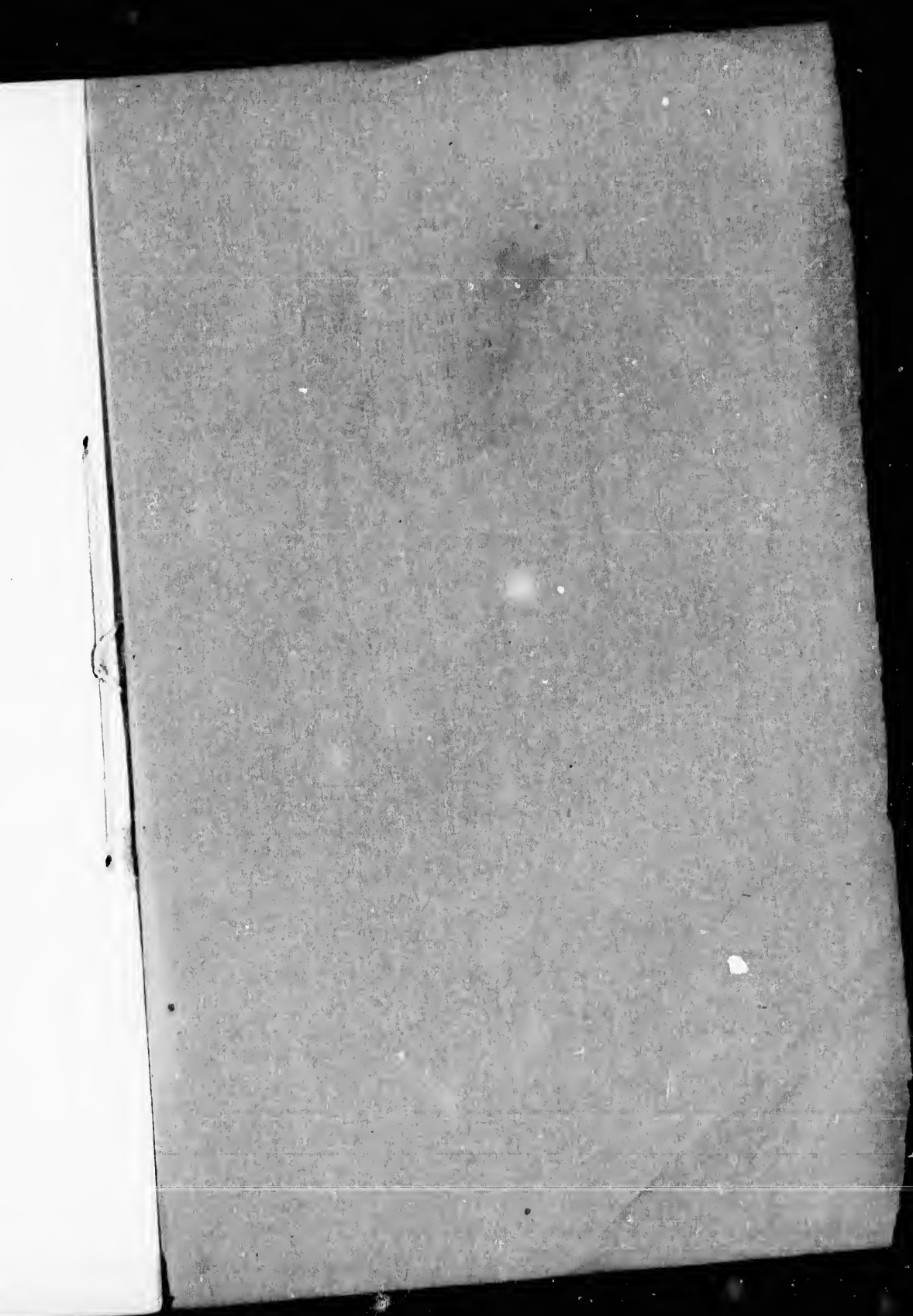
I have written plainly (some may think, severely) on the subject under discussion. It will be admitted, I hope, that in so doing I have conscientiously followed the dictates of duty. Nevertheless, you think that I am in grievous error, as *I* think *you* are. Protestants and Roman Catholics, regarding each other as in a state of spiritual peril, must each naturally desire to effect the rescue of the other. There is no obstacle in this country to such efforts. *You* may endeavor to convert us to *your* views, and *we* are at full liberty to convert you to *ours*. The publication of our sentiments, on either side, contemplates this result, and not merely the explanation or defence of our respective systems. If any of our number should be persuaded by Mr. Maturin's pamphlet, and join your ranks, we shall have no right to be angry with them on that account, however we may regret their defection, and tremble for their souls; much less, would it be defensible to slander them, or to injure them in any way. All that we should be justified in doing, in such cases, would be, to pity the wanderers, pray for them, and employ reasonable and Scriptural means for their restoration. The same observations will apply to *you*, should any Roman Catholics become converts to Protestantism. Persecution, in any form, on account of religion, is as mean and cowardly as it is opposed to Christian teachings.

Yet though our religious differences are of a serious character, nothing of this kind should interfere with the duties of brotherhood, or occasion estrangement, or draw a line of demarcation between us. We live under a constitution which guarantees equal rights to all, and proscribes no man on account of his religious sentiments or practice. Let it be seen that we can differ from one another on points of the greatest moment, and still act together as fellow-subjects and fellow-citizens, and even co-operate for the good of mankind, in a variety of respects. "Wide as the poles asunder" in religious matters, we may find common ground, where you and the various Denominations of Protestants may meet, and work together for the general weal. It is obviously desirable to multiply such points of contact, so far as it can be done without compromise of principle. *That* will be repudiated on all hands.

Allow me to press upon you the importance of personal inquiry into the claims of differing systems, and the grounds on which that rests to which you are professedly attached. Take your own translation of the Scriptures, and read it, unencumbered with notes or comments. Imperfect as is the translation (for it will be remembered that it is only the translation of a translation, being the Vulgate Latin rendered into English), you will not find in it the peculiar doctrines and practices which distinguish the Roman Catholic Church. Now, if your Church required something more than the Bible in order to the completion of her system, it is manifestly proper that you should compare the original revelation with the subsequent additions, or, as your spiritual advisers will tell you, one part of the tradition with the other. Surely, God's messages must be harmonious, and consistent with each other. He cannot teach a truth in the written word, and then contradict or neutralize it in the unwritten tradition. Examine and compare them, without hesitation and without fear, earnestly praying to God to guide you. Do not suffer your

selves to be imposed upon by high-sounding phrases and vast pretensions. Assert your independence. Act as responsible beings—responsible and subject, in matters of religion, only to God. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him,"—James i. 5. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God,"—Rom. xiv. 12.

THE END.



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