

decline at once many supplicants for aid, whose claims they fully recognized and would, under other circumstances, gladly have entertained, but who would only have been deluded with false hopes if they had been placed on the list to be considered in competition with so large a number of other cases, the statistics of which were stronger than their own. Great, therefore, as is the good which, through the blessing of God, the Society has been and is being enabled to effect, the work is ever growing upon its hands, and requires that the pecuniary support which it receives should not only be maintained but be largely and permanently increased.

PHILIP VERNON SMITH.

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## ART. V.—THE RULE OF FAITH.

### PART IV, INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

AS an inference from Canonicity and Inspiration, as already explained, the Protestant theologians are accustomed to predicate of Holy Scripture certain qualities, or attributes, which bear upon its fitness for the position they assign to it in the Church; such as Truth, Holiness, Sufficiency, Perspicuity, &c.<sup>1</sup> If Scripture is the Word of God it must be true and holy, and if no apostolic tradition is extant but the Canon, it must be supposed sufficient for its purpose. Of these properties Perspicuity and Sufficiency are of dogmatical import, and constitute points of controversy between the Protestant and the Romish churches. With the former, the subject of the present section, the Interpretation of Scripture, is intimately connected; the latter will come before us in the following one.

In fact, a principal argument with writers of the Romish communion against the fitness of Scripture to be the Rule of Faith is derived from its alleged obscurity; of which they produce as evidence the variety of interpretations of which it seems to be capable; both the Church and heretics appealing to it in support of their views, and in orthodox Christianity different sects, and even churches, drawing different conclusions from the same book. As to individuals, can two Christians be found who are absolutely in agreement as to the meaning of Scripture?

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<sup>1</sup> "Affectiones primariæ sunt quæ S. Scripturæ formaliter spectatæ conveniunt, ut sunt *divina auctoritas, infallibilis veritas, omnimoda perfectio seu sufficientia, luculenta perspicuitas, seipsam interpretandi facultas.*"—Quenstedt, p. 1. c. iv. Thes. 8.

It is plain (says Bellarmin) that Scripture is not "judex controversiarum," because it admits of various senses, nor can Scripture itself declare which is the true one. Besides, in every well-ordered State, the law and the judge are distinct. The law prescribes what is to be done, and the judge interprets the law and decides accordingly. The question is about the interpretation of Scripture; but it cannot interpret itself.<sup>1</sup>

And after him Möhler :—

It is one thing to say that the Holy Scripture is the *source* of doctrine, and another to say that it is the judge in the determination of what is doctrine. It can no more be the latter than a code of laws is identical with the bench of judges; judgment is given according to the code, but the code does not judge itself.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, Scripture needs a standing hermeneutical tribunal, invested with authority to declare its meaning as particular cases arise, without which it would be of little value; such a tribunal is actually supplied in and through the Church; whether by that term we are to understand the collective episcopate, or general councils, or the Pope, or the Pope and councils combined.<sup>3</sup>

As might be supposed, the Protestant confessions maintain an opposite view, for how can Scripture be the Rule of Faith if its meaning is not apparent, at least on all essential points? The following statement of a Polish confession expresses the sentiment of all Protestant churches :—

In which Scriptures there is so much of what is plain and perspicuous, that in them everything may be found that relates to faith and morals, or is necessary to salvation.<sup>4</sup>

Our own formulary therefore declares that :—

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an Article of faith (Art. VI.).

<sup>1</sup> "De Verb. Dei," L. iii. c. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Symbolik," 405. It is to be noted that this argument, so common with Roman Catholic writers, is intimately connected with the general view which the Church of Rome takes of Christianity—viz., that the Gospel is a "new law," and Christ a lawgiver in the same sense in which Moses was, "Si quis dixerit Christum datum fuisse ut redemptorem, cui fidant homines, non ut Legislatorem cui obediant, anathema sit." Con. Trid. Sess. VI. can. 21. "Sacramenta novae legis," *Ibid.*, Sess. VII. passim.

<sup>3</sup> "Dicimus judicem veri sensus Scripturæ et omnium controversiarum esse ecclesiam, id est, Pontificem cum concilio, in quo omnes Catholici conveniunt."—Bellarm. "De V. D.," L. iii. c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Decl. Thorn," ii. 1.

It is true that *who* is to read the Scripture and prove thereby, is not here specified; this is left to the common sense of those who accept the Article;<sup>1</sup> but the words plainly imply that *some one* can discover in the Scriptures statements plain enough to establish all the essential articles of faith: and this is all that is necessary for our present purpose. No doubt this "some one" may be affirmed to be the Pope, or a Council; but until it is proved that these, or either of them, possess by divine right a power to see in Scripture what an ordinary Christian cannot see, we must hesitate to admit the claim (see Art. XXI. "On the Authority of General Councils").

It is hardly to be supposed that a collection of books which professes to contain a divine revelation would be purposely written so as not to be understood. To demand reverence towards writings of this character would be to set up a kind of fetish-worship, and must be accounted wholly unworthy of Him from whom we believe them to have proceeded. The Scriptures, too (to speak at present only of the New Testament), were addressed not to schools of philosophers, nor even to the ministerial order exclusively, but to whole churches, containing men of every degree of ability and culture. That they would be understood by these, must have been the expectation of the writers; and that they *were* understood by them is evident from the fact that these books were, from the first, publicly read in Christian assemblies, which, if they were virtually in an "unknown tongue," the Apostle Paul, at least, would hardly have sanctioned (1 Cor. xiv.). The care shown in the formation of the Canon proves how *valuable* in the eye of the Church these writings were; but of what value could they have been if they were unintelligible? Now is it true that we, as compared with the early Christians, labour under some disadvantages for the understanding of these writings: the language which was a living one to them is to us no longer so; allusions familiar to them, present difficulties now; we possess not the advantage of living Apostles to explain their own statements; and other sources of obscurity exist: but, by the Providence of God, sufficient knowledge of the languages and of the history, private and public, of the times, has been handed down to put us, for all practical purposes, in the position of the first readers. And as the Scriptures, by the confession of

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<sup>1</sup> "Not a word is said (in Articles VI., XX.) in favour of Scripture having no rule or method to fix interpretation by" (Why should such "a rule or method" be supposed necessary in the case of Scripture more than in that of any other book?); "nor of the private judgment of the individual being the ultimate standard of interpretation;" (Why should this point have needed guarding, when after all it must be an individual, or a company of individuals, that reads the book, and proves therefrom?) Tract 90, v. 1.

all Christians, are intended for every age of the Church, and to discharge the same office in every age which they did at the first, it is impossible to suppose, without disparagement of the precious gift, that, if difficulties remain, they can obscure the general meaning or affect the essentials of faith.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, whatever the obscurity of Scripture may be, the question remains whether the sources to which we are referred for its removal are themselves plainer. If it is the Creeds, their controversial clauses are, many of them, not very clear in meaning, and, at any rate, might be made the subject of prolonged debate; if a catena of the Fathers, say of the first four centuries, it is doubtful whether, amidst conflicting statements, any consentient interpretation could be extracted from their works. In truth, of all species of tradition the hermeneutical is the least capable of being reduced to form.<sup>2</sup> But, even if such did exist, it must be expressed in human language, the meaning of which itself would become subject of controversy; the interpreters would need to be interpreted themselves, and so on *ad infinitum*. The truth is, it is not because of the obscurity of Scripture that so much controversy has arisen respecting its meaning, but because of the latent feeling in all branches of the Church that it is, or ought to be, considered the supreme Rule of Faith, and the consequent desire of all parties to make it appear that they have it on their side; and if any other book, or formulary, were to occupy this position in its stead, there would be just as much dispute respecting *its* meaning. The controversy evidently would be endless, unless it could be referred, at last, to the decision of a living infallible judge; which is, in fact, the conclusion to which the Romanist is ultimately driven.

It is not, indeed, affirmed that Scripture contains no obscure passages—passages in which the allusion is not apparent, or the expression ambiguous, or the construction difficult, or the reasoning not at first sight conclusive, or which may be prophetic and await light to be thrown upon them by future

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<sup>1</sup> An important distinction is to be drawn between obscurity of the *subject-matter* and obscurity of the *expression*—e.g., “The word became flesh”—here the language is plain enough, but the fact is most mysterious. We see “through a glass darkly” as regards many revealed facts, such as the Incarnation or the Holy Trinity: but the question between Romanists and Protestants is not whether the *things* are obscure, but whether the *language* in which they are expressed is sufficiently perspicuous.

<sup>2</sup> As is confessed by Möhler, “We could hardly, with the exception of a very few classical passages, discover in them (the Fathers) any general agreement of interpretation, beyond the fact that they all teach the same doctrine of faith and morals.” “Symbolik,” p. 390. In truth, the prescription of the Council of Trent, “Ut nemo contra unanimum consensum Patrum ipsam scripturam sacram interpretari audeat” (Sess IV.), or any similar one, is incapable of fulfilment.

events; but this is only what occurs also in heathen authors of whose general meaning we entertain no doubt. Scripture contains in itself a germinant principle, and what may be obscure or not acted upon in one age of the Church may in another come to full recognition. The teaching of St. Paul on the topics of original sin or predestination can hardly be said to have received its due attention before the appearance of that great luminary of the Western Church, Augustine; nor the teaching of the same Apostle on justification previously to the Reformation. It was not until much later that Christian men perceived that the principles enunciated in the Pauline epistles are inconsistent with the institution of slavery, and efforts were made to remove the scandal. But these admissions are compatible with the conviction that on all the essential points of faith, morals, and discipline, Scripture is sufficiently perspicuous, it being presupposed that the reader brings with him a willingness to receive what it seems plainly to teach<sup>1</sup>. And it may well be that some difficulties have been suffered to remain, in order to stimulate curiosity and a more diligent study of the sacred volume.<sup>2</sup>

The Protestant rule of interpretation is thus enunciated in the Helvetic Confession:—

Scripture (as the Apostle Peter says) is not of private interpretation, consequently we do not approve of any and every interpretation, much less of that which the Romish Church imposes, but only of that which is sought out of Scripture itself (due regard being had to the original languages, &c.), and which agrees with the Rule of Faith and charity. The interpretations of the Fathers and the definitions of councils we do not undervalue, but neither do we assign to them unlimited authority. In matters of faith we admit but of one judge, God Himself speaking through the Scriptures, and, as regards human opinions, the weight which we attach to them depends upon their being those of spiritually enlightened men.<sup>3</sup>

Here we have stated the great Protestant Canon, SCRIPTURE

<sup>1</sup> "These epistles" (St. Paul's) "were certainly addressed to the whole Church, and were meant to be understood by men of average intelligence who applied their attention properly. Their predestinarian meaning in parts is, on the whole, clear and decided, and the reason why their meaning is thought by many to be so very obscure and difficult to get at, is that they will not acknowledge this predestinarian meaning to be the true one. These interpreters create difficulties for themselves by rejecting the natural meaning of passages, and then lay the difficulty on the passages." Mozley on "Predestination," Note viii. The remark is applicable to many parts of Scripture besides those relating to predestination.

<sup>2</sup> "Magnifice et salubriter ita Spiritus S. Scripturas modificavit ut locis apertioribus fami occurreret, obscurioribus autem fastidia detergeret."—Aug. "De Doct. Christian" L. ii. c. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Conf. Helv." i. c. 1.

IS ITS OWN AUTHENTIC INTERPRETER;<sup>1</sup> on which, as against Rome, all the reformed Confessions are in agreement. This rule rests on a twofold foundation, the doctrine of inspiration and the structure of the volume. Each book of Scripture, being the Word of God in a sense in which no other writing is, requires for an authentic interpretation of it an interpreter similarly gifted with the writer, and none such is, or can be, found save within the compass of the Canon itself. To interpret the writings of St. Paul, so that the interpretation shall be free from error, can only be the work of another Canonical writer; uninspired expositions may be valuable or interesting, but they can never be put on a level with the writing expounded. It might have been, however, that no inspired comment on another inspired writing had been furnished; that the Bible had consisted of one book, the production of one author, in which case, no doubt, the Protestant Canon would have been difficult of application. But here the *structure of the volume* comes to our aid. For, in fact, Scripture is not one book, the production of one mind (as regards its human authorship), but a collection of books by different authors, of various gifts and diversified religious experience, only connected together by the supernatural tie of inspiration. Hence what is wanting in one may be supplied by another, what is obscure in one may receive light from another; and this is actually the case. The Levitical ritual is a system of dumb elements until we study it in conjunction with the epistle to the Hebrews; the fourth Gospel could not have been dispensed with if we were to have a full portraiture of the Word become flesh; on the question of justification by faith St. Paul needs to be read with St. James, and both with St. John. Now the writing of each of these authors is really an interpretation of his coadjutor in the same field; not exactly an exposition—*i.e.*, we cannot say that one writer *comments* on another—but yet really an interpretation in this sense, that the full meaning of the New Testament on any point cannot be gathered without a comparison of all the writers. And by this comparison it may be satisfactorily ascertained. If it is not St. John or St. James *commenting* on St. Paul, it is the Holy Spirit Himself supplementing, through the individuality of St. John or St. James what he had conveyed through the individuality of St. Paul; which latter, because it *was* conveyed through an individual, without obliterating his peculiarities of character and training, could not, without a needless miracle, present *all* the sides or aspects of divine truth,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> More explicitly enunciated in another part of the same Confession, "Hujus (scripturæ) interpretatio ex se ipsa sola petenda est, ut ipsa interpres sit sui, caritatis fidei que moderante regulâ." II. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The *πολυπικίλος σοφία* of God. Ephes. iii. 10.

but needed the completion which it actually received from other inspired sources. Thus, the books of the New Testament (to confine our attention to these) mutually interpret, and are interpreted by, each other; the structure of the volume points to its design and its use; and relieves us from the necessity of seeking in other quarters than within itself instruction on the essentials of faith and practice.

The fundamental system of Christian doctrine thus elicited from a comparison of Scripture with Scripture, and of one book with another, is what writers on dogmatic theology call "the analogy of faith;"<sup>1</sup> in accordance with which single passages are to be explained. It is obvious that this must be gathered from Scripture itself, otherwise it would be tradition under another name. It is not, however, a mere stringing of texts together on certain subjects, but the doctrine which lies at the foundation of the various passages which relate to a subject; substantially the same amidst the variety of form under which it is presented. That such a substantial identity may and must exist is an inference from the Unity of the primary author of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit: if the human authors, however otherwise differing from each other, derived inspiration from one divine source, no real contradiction, none, at least, affecting essential points, can be supposed possible. Whether the reader discovers this Unity or not depends rather upon his moral and spiritual than upon his literary qualifications. Scripture is understood by the light which itself imparts; but as the sun's rays shine in vain to the blind, so if the organ of spiritual vision be not in a sound state, it may well be that the meaning of Scripture shall be missed, or at least the analogy of faith not perceived. This is only what finds its counterpart in human authors. The Platonic philosophy, for example, as a system, is at unity with itself; it is understood to lie at the foundation of the various treatises of Plato; statements or expressions in his writings which at first sight may seem to present difficulties, are equitably interpreted by a reference to his philosophy *as a whole*; and some have not hesitated to say that no one can fully understand, still less be a successful commentator on these writings, whose intellectual and moral endowments are not in sympathy with those of the philosopher.<sup>2</sup>

But Romish controversialists adduce not merely varieties of interpretation but essential ambiguity connected with the language of Scripture, which latter may be literal or figurative,

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<sup>1</sup> "Analogiam fidei, id est, vocem Spiritus S. in perspicuis locis sonantem." J. Gerh. Loc. ii. c. 6. The expression is derived from Rom. xii. 6, where, however, it bears an altogether different meaning.

<sup>2</sup> "Every man is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian."—Coleridge.

and figurative in many senses.<sup>1</sup> This gave rise to the hermeneutical canon, on the other side, that each passage of Scripture admits, in the first instance, *of but one sense, and that the grammatical.*<sup>2</sup> and, indeed, it is plain that if *any* sense may be imposed on a passage, this would be tantamount to its having no definite sense; and thus Scripture would become useless as a Rule of Faith. There is no more reason why a passage in the writings of Apostles should not have one plain grammatical sense than a passage in the letters of Cicero or Pliny. The Romish writers, in fact, confound the meaning of a passage with the nature of the language employed, which, no doubt, may be figurative, or analogical, without thereby introducing a double sense. The instance adduced by Bellarmin, "My sheep hear My voice" (John x. 27), is in point. There is but *one meaning* to these words, but the term "sheep" is figurative, and is to be explained from other passages. Or they make typical applications, or accommodations (intended as such by the Holy Spirit), double senses. Thus, the passage, "Moses made a serpent of brass and put it on a pole" (Numb. xxi. 8), is by our Lord Himself applied typically (John iii. 14); the passage "A voice was heard in Ramah, Rachel weeping for her children" (Jer. xxxi. 15), is accommodated to the slaughter of the innocents by Herod (Matt. iii. 17, 18): but there is no ambiguity in the *words*, as in the famous oracle, *Aio te, Abacide, Romanos vincere posse*. The grammatical interpretation gives us the sense of each passage taken by itself; the dogmatical, or that which is founded on the Analogy of faith, compares and connects passages, and from the whole elicits a conclusion.

There is no ground, then, for believing that Scripture either has, or was intended to have, associated with itself an infallible judge, external to the reader, to interpret its meaning; whether the Pope, or Councils, or the consent of antiquity (even if this could be produced). If such had been intended, we may be sure that we should have been left in no doubt to what body, or individual, the authority was committed. But may not such a judge exist in *the reader's own mind?* Properly understood,

<sup>1</sup> "Est scripturæ proprium, quia Deum habet auctorem, ut sæpenumero duos contineat sensus, literalem sive historicum, et spirituales sive mysticum." Bellarm. "De V. D.," L. iii. c. 3. The "sensus literalis" is again divided into "simplex" and "figuratus;" the "spiritualis" into "allegoricus," "tropologicus," and "anagogicus" (*ibid.*): which are explained in the following distich:—

"Littera gesta docet; quod credas allegoria;  
Moralis quid agas; quod speres Anagogia."

<sup>2</sup> "Unius dicti biblici simplicis sensus literalis, isque formalis, unus est quem Spiritus S. verbis θεοπνεύστοις immediate exprimere intendit."—Hollaz de S.S., Quæst. xix.

this, no doubt, is nothing but the truth. It must be the reader himself, in the last resort, who is to judge what the sense of Scripture is; and this whether he expects to extract it from the inspired text itself, or betakes himself to some infallible interpreter; for, even in the latter case, he must have previously convinced himself, by the exercise of his own judgment, that the interpreter *is* infallible. To *himself* every reader must, either directly or indirectly, be the judge. But then he is bound to exercise this office under certain checks; such as due regard to the "Analogy of Faith," the practically consentient opinion of the Church (of which he is but a single member), a humble and teachable disposition, and prayer for enlightening grace. He is responsible to God for the exercise of his private judgment. And this responsibility on the part of the individual is the only check which divine Providence has thought fit to commit to the Church, as a safeguard against arbitrary or heretical interpretation; a net of fine meshes, no doubt, which any one can break through if he be so minded, but, fine or coarse, the only one that is given to restrain eccentricity. Standing tribunals, an infallible chair, would not be in harmony with a religion which aims at producing *free* conviction; and prefers an agreement gradually reached by conference, by study, by prayer, to one prematurely snatched by the subjugation of individual judgment to an external authority—that is, in fact, by the subjugation of one "subjectivity" to another.<sup>1</sup> And thus, on the basis of the 'Analogy of Faith' [one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Ephes. iv. 6)]; without the retention of which a church would be no church but a casual assemblage; by preaching, by versions, by conferences, by commentaries, by treatises of all sorts, by private Christian intercourse, the meaning of Scripture is approximated to, if never finally exhausted, in the way and by the methods intended by its divine Author; methods not legally stringent, or authoritatively decisive, as might be suitable to the dispensation of the Law, but living, plastic, spiritual, as becomes a dispensation of grace and truth (John i. 14), the manhood, not the infancy, of revealed religion (Gal. iv. 1-15).

On the basis of the "Analogy of Faith"—but what if the reader claims to make himself the judge of this also, to decide whether there is such a thing, and what it ought to be? He has a perfect right to do so, as long as he places himself *outside the Church*—that is, in the position of a philosophical inquirer. But Scripture is the property and the jewel of the *Church*, not of philosophers; and the Church cannot be conceived of as always debating

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<sup>1</sup> "Let as many as be perfect be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."—Phil. iii. 15.

whether or not she reposes on the "foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ being the chief corner-stone" (Ephes. ii. 20), or whether or not she has the Holy Spirit dwelling in her; she may be in error in believing so, but she cannot formally *place herself* in the position of a doubter on such points. And hence may be inferred the proper province of *reason* in the interpretation of Scripture.

In fact, the duty and the right of the Christian's judging for himself (under the checks before mentioned) what the sense of Scripture is, are sometimes so understood as if it were the province of reason to sit in judgment on the *contents* of revelation and to receive or reject them accordingly as the inner moral (not the spiritual) consciousness dictates. The letter of Scripture may seem persistently to declare a mysterious fact; but its statements are to be understood with a reservation of the supreme rights of reason. Dogmatic theology, an exposition of the common faith of the Church, whether that of the Catholic or of a particular church or family of churches, obviously can have no place in such a system as this. But this principle of interpretation, which may be called the Socinian one, and which is the opposite pole to the Romish, seems to rest on a confusion between reason in the abstract, and reason as it exists in fallen man. Reason in the abstract, as the faculty which distinguishes man from the brutes, cannot of course be dispensed with in the study of Scripture; on its exercise depends the acquisition of the original languages, the investigation of the grammatical sense, the comparing Scripture with Scripture—in short, the employment of the various means which are ordinarily necessary to the work of exposition. But reason, as it exists in us, and especially in reference to spiritual things, is a different matter. The very idea of a Revelation seems to imply the weakness and insufficiency of *our* reason in matters of religion: and the first lesson we are taught in Scripture itself is that this reason of ours is in a state of comparative darkness, so that the things of God are foolishness to it (1 Cor. ii. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 4-5); nay, that it is affected with a positive predisposition against the light of divine truth, as if inability to see the sun arose not merely from disease or accident but from the wilful closing of the eyes (Matt. xiii. 15). It does not seem as if a reason so impaired can claim to make itself the supreme judge as regards the *contents* of a revelation, however it may be competent to decide on its *evidences*.<sup>1</sup> All that reason can fairly demand is that the revelation should contain nothing contradictory to it, not that nothing should be above it. A plain contradiction can find no lodgment in our minds, neither can that which is unintelligible—*i. e.*, words

<sup>1</sup> Butler, "Analogy," p. ii. c. 3.

without meaning. But the influence of the will upon the understanding is too well known, and intellectual is too closely connected with moral obliquity, to render it safe to extend this to what is simply above reason, especially when the reason in question is *our* reason. The healing art of the physician is not rejected because we cannot understand either the occult virtue of drugs, or the precise mode in which they act upon the organs of the body: we accept the boon, and acquiesce in our ignorance. A revelation from God *must* contain mysteries, and one to fallen man may be expected to contain some mysteries unpalatable to the natural pride of the heart; it will be our wisdom not to allow this feature of the Bible to predispose us against its plain literal meaning, still less to induce us to reject the remedies for our spiritual malady which can be found nowhere else.

But, it may be said, Of what use is this discussion when practically it is but a few learned men who can use the Bible as it came from the pen of inspiration? If a man knows neither Hebrew nor Greek, can he be said to have the Bible at all? What he reads is but a translation, and liable, of course, to all the inaccuracies connected with translation from a dead language; even if the original was intended to be, and is, plain enough, can this be said of a translation by human hands? Before we lay down canons of interpretation, we must be sure that we have the book to interpret. To this objection, not uncommon with Romish writers,<sup>1</sup> the unlearned Christian (that is, the vast majority of Christians) has a twofold answer. He may appeal to the fact that the Spirit of God accompanies the exposition of the commonly-accredited versions with the same quickening and sanctifying influences which He exerted at the first through the medium of the original text. The bread of life is plainly furnished in and through them; and this is an argument which, to the recipient thereof, nothing can controvert. "Solvitur ambulando," he may reply to those who would persuade him that he has no Bible to interpret. But his confidence may also be justified on another ground, which appeals to the common reason—viz., the substantial agreement of these versions, notwithstanding that they exist in different languages and are used by churches not always in communion with each other. For example, we believe that the Douay version contains inaccuracies, but no English Protestant who compares it with his own can be otherwise than pleased with their substantial agreement, and with the thought that it has furnished spiritual nutriment to multitudes in the Communion which will not accept his own. He proceeds to compare his own with the

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<sup>1</sup> See "Charity maintained by Catholics," c. ii. By Knott the Jesuit, Chillingworth's antagonist. See Chillingworth's Works.

Protestant versions of Germany and France, and again perceives that they correspond almost exactly. If he be a member of the Church of England, he may note the fact that the authorized version is accepted by all the Protestant dissident bodies at home, and by other Protestant Churches of English parentage abroad; which, differing on many points, agree in this, that this version is a faithful representation of the original. If it were not so, could it have been thus accepted by Christian societies too often not favourably disposed to each other? The inference which he draws is that he does possess the Bible substantially, and is by no means disqualified by the fact that he is reading a version for the duty of Biblical study, or precluded from the expectation of ascertaining, on all essential points, the meaning of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, it must be remembered that these versions are but versions, and cannot be allowed to usurp the place of the original text. To attempt to stamp any one or more of them with ecclesiastical authority as superseding that text,<sup>2</sup> would be to place unwarrantable fetters on the science of Exegesis, and to shut the door to improvement of the versions themselves.

E. A. LITTON.

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#### ART. VI.—THE ART OF READING.

**R**EALLY good reading, in the strict sense of the words, is an uncommon accomplishment, rarer perhaps than those who have not studied the art are apt to imagine; and yet, for the clergy, its importance can hardly be overrated. For them, indeed, it is more than a mere accomplishment; it is a qualification on which too much labour, thought, and study, cannot be spent, provided they be rightly directed. Those who consider the subject must see that such is the case; they must be aware, that in every mixed congregation, attention and fervour of devotion are likely to be either promoted or hindered by the manner in which Divine Service is conducted. And when we

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<sup>1</sup> It is a remarkable fact that in two great nations at least, Germany and England, the translation of the Bible has formed an epoch in the formation of the language. This is eminently the case with Luther's version and our own authorized one. Such is the power of the original text to mould the vernacular tongues.

<sup>2</sup> "Statuit (synodus) ut hæc ipsa vetus et vulgata editio, quæ longo tot sæculorum usu in ipsa Ecclesia probata est, in publicis lectionibus, disputationibus, prædicationibus, et expositionibus, pro authentica habeatur; et ut nemo illam rejicere quovis prætextu audeat vel præsumat."—Con. Trid. Sess. IV.