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in the matter; that is, the pure, direct, simple Gospel. Christ and all pertaining to His person and work must not be less prominently, or less simply, or less constantly preached. Paul said, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." What then? "Preach the *word*, be instant in season, out of season." But with what modifications? Of course the question must be answered with regard to evangelical men, who essentially preach the truth. Of all the rest the answer would be *legion*. But of the preaching of evangelical men: my impression has always been, in England, that, taking the *mass* of such men together, and not forgetting the *many great exceptions*, the preaching has too much of a *perfunctory* aspect. There is too little evidence of a *decided*, studious effort of *mind* in the preparation. The intelligence of the congregations (not speaking now of the peasantry) is undervalued. Not enough effort is made by an animated and cultivated delivery to create and hold attention. It is too much taken for granted that the hearer believes the great matters, and has only need to be guided in the application of truth to himself, and aroused to diligence. I do not think it would improve the usefulness of preaching to inculcate on preachers *generally* the need of going out in their discourses into matters which Rationalists bring up, *except by teaching the opposing truth, without reference* to the controversy. Leading minds should do this, but rather in occasional *courses* of sermons or lectures, than as an usual or common thing. I believe a more thorough teaching of the *foundations*, instead of taking the knowledge and belief of them for granted, is much needed.

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## ART. VI.—THE RULE OF FAITH.

### PART V. SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION.

IT has been seen that, as regards the question of interpretation, no hermeneutical tradition either exists, or is necessary, to enable us to ascertain the meaning of Scripture. But there is another kind of tradition, to which indeed the name is more usually assigned, and which the Church of Rome asserts to be of equal authority with Scripture—*viz.*, *additions* to the written Word, supposed to have come down from the Apostles by an independent channel. The traditions of the Church, the Council of Trent affirms, whether relating to faith or practice, are to be received with the same reverence as Holy Scripture itself.<sup>1</sup> There is an unwritten,<sup>2</sup> as well as a written, Word of

<sup>1</sup> "Pari pietatis affectu et reverentia." Sess. IV.

<sup>2</sup> Not that it *never* was committed to writing, for it is supposed to be found in the Fathers, &c., but that it was not committed to writing, like Scripture, by the first inspired author. "Vocatur doctrina non scripta, non ea quæ nusquam scripta est, sed quæ non scripta est a primo auctore, exemplo sit Baptismus parvulorum."—Bellarm. "De V. D." L. iv. c. 2.

God ; and the former was intended to run parallel with the latter, both conjointly forming the Church's Rule of Faith. As in the former section the perspicuity, so in the present, the sufficiency of Holy Scripture is the question in debate. The Reformed Churches admit no such co-ordinate source of faith, practice, or discipline. Ecclesiastical practices which have been handed down from antiquity, and are not repugnant to Scripture, they do not undervalue ; the three Creeds they accept as venerable monuments of the faith of the early Church ; but none of these can claim to be the Word of God in the sense in which Scripture is. "It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies," of the kind just mentioned, should "be in all places one or utterly like ; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners" (Art. XXXIV.) ; which they could not be if, *e.g.*, they stood on the same footing as the two sacraments ordained by Christ and prescribed in Scripture : the decisions of Councils in things necessary to salvation "have neither strength nor authority unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture" (Art. XXI.) : the Creeds themselves are to be received because "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture" (Art. VIII.). "No Word of God," says one of the latest Protestant Confessions, "at the present day exists, or can certainly be ascertained, concerning doctrines or precepts necessary to salvation, which is not written, or based on the Scriptures, but has (as is alleged) been committed, by unwritten tradition, to the custody of the Church."<sup>1</sup> In short, "Holy Scripture 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 Faith" (Art. VI.). Very different is the decision of the Tridentine Fathers ; and the statement of the principal theologian of their Church :—"The controversy between us, and heretics" (Protestants) "consists in this :—that we assert that all necessary doctrine concerning faith and morals is not expressly contained in Scripture, and consequently besides the written Word there is needed an unwritten one ; whereas they teach that in the Scriptures all such necessary doctrine is contained, and consequently there is no need of an unwritten Word."<sup>2</sup>

The first question that naturally occurs is, Where is this unwritten Word of God to be found ? When we speak of the Bible, we mean a certain collection of writings, well-known and defined ; the unwritten Word, it should seem, if it is to be of any

<sup>1</sup> "Decl. Thorun. de Regula Fidei."

<sup>2</sup> Bellarm. "De V. D.," L. iv. c. 3.

value, ought to be capable of a similar identification. And the answer to be given is precisely the same as in the case of hermeneutical tradition—viz., that whether this unwritten Word ever existed or not, it cannot now be ascertained with any certainty. Certain tests, or notes, are given by Bellarmin, whereby we are to judge whether a tradition is entitled to the dignity of a portion of the unwritten Word; as regards a traditional *doctrine*, not found in Scripture (*e.g.*, purgatory, or the immaculate conception), whether it has been accepted by the Church universal; as regards traditional *practices* (*e.g.*, infant baptism, the forty days Lenten fast, the use of holy oil at baptism), whether they can plead a similar universal acceptance, or can be traced up to Apostolic times, or in the unanimous opinion of the Doctors of the Church can be so traced, or are practised by a Church which can prove a succession of Bishops up to an Apostle; which last prerogative belongs to the Church of Rome alone.<sup>1</sup>

The skill of the controversialist is here seen in classing things together under the idea of an "unwritten Word," which are not of a common nature. The Word of God properly means something to be believed, a revelation of doctrine; and this is what Protestants mean when they affirm that nothing of the kind is to be found outside Scripture. Rites and ceremonies, which can only plead ecclesiastical tradition, may or may not be agreeable to Scripture, may or may not be probably Apostolical, but they are not "Articles of Faith," or, in any sense, "necessary to salvation;" which is the proper idea of the contents of an "unwritten Word of God." Would Bellarmin himself have contended that the Lenten fast, the use of the holy oil, or even the practice of *infant* baptism as distinguished from adult, are things necessary to salvation? The Church may have adopted, with a substantial unanimity, a practice such as infant baptism, without ever intending to class it otherwise than as under things in themselves indifferent; or pretending that it is part of an Apostolical tradition not contained in Scripture. Hooker long ago maintained, with signal success, against the Puritans, that it is not necessary to adduce express warranty of Scripture for every practice or modification of an Apostolic practice, which the Church, or a Church, may, on what seems to it good grounds, choose to introduce into its practical system.<sup>2</sup> What is more to the point, a Church may retain such traditional rites as it does retain, *e.g.*, infant baptism, on a ground altogether different from a supposed esoteric tradition—viz., on the ground that though it may not be commanded, or

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<sup>1</sup> "De V. D.," L. iv. c. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Eccl. Pol.," Bks. II. and III.

indeed mentioned in Scripture, it is yet "agreeable to the institution of Christ," or the general spirit of the Gospel dispensation. Traditions, therefore, in the sense of traditional rites or ceremonies (Art. XXXIV.), should be put out of view altogether in this question: from their very nature they do not need the foundation on which they are made to rest, and therefore to assign that foundation to them is an arbitrary hypothesis: they rest, where not unscriptural, on their own reasonable ground—viz., the inherent power of the Church to adapt her polity or ritual to changing circumstances, provided always that such regulations are in harmony with the spirit of the genuine Apostolic tradition as it is preserved in Scripture. She possesses no such liberty in respect to what may properly be called doctrines.

It may not be, however, superfluous to remark that, as a matter of fact, no points of ritual or polity, except those which we *retain in common with the Church of Rome*, can make any pretence to evidence, even historical, of Apostolic appointment. And it is obvious that the opinion of the Doctors of the Church cannot supply the missing links of history; much less a succession of Bishops, even though the Church of Rome alone should be blessed with it.

Confining our attention then to such tradition as may be termed the Word of God, that is, necessary to be believed unto salvation, we do not hesitate to affirm that whether or not the Apostles taught more or otherwise than what is recorded in the Canonical Scriptures, no Church or individual is now in a position to adduce a syllable thereof with certainty. Bellarmin makes a threefold division of such traditions into those of which Christ Himself was the author, those which the Apostles delivered, and those which the Church has made such;<sup>1</sup> nothing under any of the divisions can be produced which can establish its claim to be received as a gift to the Church, supplementary to what is conveyed in Holy Scripture. Can we suppose that if an unwritten Word of God were intended to be a co-ordinate authority with the written, the evidence for its existence would be left in such a state? The third division expresses the real state of the case: the Romish Church makes its doctrinal traditions Apostolical, just as it claims the power to *make* a book Canonical: historical evidence is a superfluity when infallible authority can affix its stamp.

The point at issue should be clearly understood. The nature of the vehicle of transmission is immaterial, provided we have the same certainty in either case. The inspired oral teaching of the Apostles stood exactly on the same footing as their inspired

<sup>1</sup> "De V. D.," L. iv. c. 2.

written teaching: we pay no superstitious reverence to a book *as such*, that is, as distinguished from instruction conveyed orally. Let the tradition of the latter be authenticated as Scripture is, and we are ready to assign to it the same authority. It is not because they are unwritten, but because they cannot certainly be proved to be Apostolical, that traditions affecting faith and morals not found in Scripture or deduced therefrom, are to be rejected. The sufficiency of Scripture is to be inferred from the fact, not that the words were traced with a pen, but that it is really the only Apostolical tradition which can with certainty be pronounced such. St. Paul tells the Corinthians that what he had received of the Lord he had delivered to them (1 Cor. xi. 23); he exhorts the Thessalonians to hold the traditions which they had been taught, whether by word or epistle (2 Thess. ii, 15), and Timothy to hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard (2 Tim. i. 13); either these have irretrievably perished, or (as is the fact) they have passed, in another form, into the written Word, so that the Bible comprehends both the written and the unwritten Word of God, and we need not look further. In short, no Apostolical teaching is extant, except that which is embalmed in the New Testament; and if any such were to be disinterred, it would be equivalent to the discovery of a new Canonical book.

The first Christian Church was, no doubt, founded by the oral teaching of the Apostles, and continued for some time dependent on that oral teaching; never, however, wholly without a written Word, for it had the Old Testament, and the Apostles were always careful to connect their teaching, as far as might be, with the Jewish Scriptures (Acts xvii. 2, 3; xviii. 28; xxviii. 23); but still, certainly, without New Testament Scriptures. And if it had been provided that a succession of Apostles, of men inspired as St. Paul or St. John were, should continue to the close of this dispensation, the Church could have been perpetuated, and preserved from error, as it was during the Apostles' lifetime, by oral teaching. This, however, was not the appointed plan. The men were to drop off, in the course of nature, and in succession; and an Apostolate of the written Word was to take their place, the men surviving in their writings. This work commenced in due time, and continued through a series of years; one Apostolical writing proving itself on and by another, until the Canon was complete. These writings may be obscure, or defective; but whatever their quality, it is certain that we have nothing else to rely upon as genuine Apostolical tradition. Let us imagine what would be our condition if, without a living Apostolate, we had nothing but a tradition of oral teaching to depend upon, no authentic written record of what Christ and the Apostles delivered. We need not go far to form an

accurate prediction. The Jews held fast to their written Word, but as soon as ever they attempted to complete it by traditions, it was to make it void (Mark vii. 9). Certain Christian Churches retain, and profess to honour, the written Word, but they have admitted the principle of tradition as a co-ordinate authority; and the practical aspect of their Christianity is not such as to recommend the principle. Every alleged tradition, then, must be judged by its consonancy with what we *know* to be Apostolical tradition, while we are not certain that anything else is; and be accepted or rejected, accordingly.

Pressed by these difficulties, the modern Romish controversialist modifies, by spiritualizing it, the idea of tradition. "What," asks Möhler, "is tradition? It is that sentiment which belongs to the Church, and propagates itself by means of the teaching of the Church; it is the living Word in the hearts of the faithful. To this sentiment the interpretation of Scripture in the decision of doubtful questions is entrusted; or in other words, the Church is the judge of controversies. In an external historical form" (where this is to be found Möhler does not attempt to explain, and in fact, with the exception of the three Creeds nothing resembling it can be produced), "*i.e.*, reduced to writing, this inner sentiment becomes the standard and rule of faith. In every political community a certain national character or spirit distinguishes it from other communities, and expresses itself in its public and domestic life, in its laws and customs, in its art and literature. This is the guardian genius of the community, and as long as it flourishes in spiritual vigour, it preserves the continuity of the national life; either absorbing into itself, or expelling foreign elements, should they make their appearance. When it becomes feeble, internecine factions, and party spirit, split up the body politic, and the latter tends to its dissolution. How much more must this be the case with the Church, which is the body of Christ, His perpetual incarnation, possessing a more refined and delicate organization than any earthly society. Here, to allow private opinions or private interpretations of Scripture to prevail against the common sentiment would be suicide; it is only to the whole body that the promises of the exalted Head belong, and to it alone therefore it appertains to decide." Thus far Möhler.<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that this is a conception of tradition very different from that of Bellarmin; and, in fact, there is a great deal in it which the Protestant is not at all concerned to deny. For what is this "common sentiment" of the Church of which the gifted author speaks, but the spiritual illumination which is the fruit of the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, and which so far are

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<sup>1</sup> "Symbolik," Aufl. 5, pp. 360-5.

Protestants from disparaging, that as we have seen (Part II.), they make it a necessary constituent in the argument for Canonicity?<sup>1</sup> And it is true that this gift belongs to the whole body, and to individuals as supposed to be members of the body. Moreover, it is certainly in its essence "unwritten" tradition, for its primary seat is the heart (2 Cor. iii. 3), from which it may never emerge in spoken or written forms. But is it an absolutely *independent* sentiment? No, for if it is the work of the Holy Spirit it is so through the external instrument specially thereunto appointed—that is, the written Word of God. Through this, as an instrument mediately or immediately applied, the Holy Spirit calls the inner sentiment of the Church into being; dissociated from the written Word such alleged sentiment, as experience amply proves, is apt to become fanatical or worse: it was not produced, nor can it be perpetuated, in its proper purity, apart from the written Apostolic tradition. But what is thus dependent upon another thing can never stand alone; it may, and it does, possess a *relative* independence, but the ultimate test of its genuineness must lie out of itself—viz., in the inner sentiment of those writings respecting which we stand in no doubt that they came from God. But it is worth while to dwell a little longer on this point.

The oral teaching of the Apostles preceded their written, and the Church existed before the New Testament Scriptures. Strictly and formally, therefore, the Church cannot be said to be founded on the Scriptures as a book, but on the doctrine which the Scriptures contain. And what was the order at first is, by providential appointment, the order now; oral teaching precedes the written Word. Children receive the first lessons of Christianity from their parents, catechumens from their instructors, congregations from their pastors; certainly the heathen do so from their missionaries. "The Bible alone the religion of Protestants" is a saying which, most true in its proper acceptation, may be misunderstood; as, for example, if it be supposed to mean that scattering broadcast, translations of the Scriptures<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tradition, therefore, is an improper term to apply to it; being a gift of grace it is incapable of being handed down from one generation to another, as a book, a doctrine, or a practice can.

<sup>2</sup> This is the particle of truth in Archdeacon Grant's Bampton Lectures on Christian Missions. His (imaginary?) opponent, who is supposed to prescribe "letterpress printing, or type" as the great instrument of evangelization, certainly needed to be reminded that to the Church, as a living body, this office, is in the first instance, committed. Holy Scripture, in truth, always presupposes a Church as in existence; which Church has come into being by oral teaching. Scripture follows, not to found the Church, but to promote its growth in faith and practice, and to eliminate error as it arises. Scripture was a divine gift to the Apostolic Church, already gathered out of heathenism by the living ministry. Scripture is the property and the jewel of the Church, not of the world. And this

is the appointed means of converting the heathen. And thus, no doubt, there may exist, for a time, a pure Christian faith amongst those who have never seen the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> But not only has this oral teaching, if it is pure, been derived from the Scriptures, but it is the bounden duty of the Church along with it, to place the inspired volume in the hands of the young within her pale, or of her heathen converts; and to do so as soon as possible, in view of the too probable contingency of the enemy's sowing tares. Nay, a considerable part of the oral teaching itself must consist of simple exposition of the sacred text. But as soon as this duty is fulfilled, there commences that healthy interaction between the Church and the Scriptures, which was intended by their divine Author; the Church teaching, the Scriptures proving; the Church speaking no doubt with authority (in the proper sense of the word), but ever appealing to the Scriptures in confirmation of what she advances; and then it becomes impossible to distinguish how much of the common Christian sentiment has proceeded from the oral teaching, and how much from Scripture; still less to maintain that the former could have been what it is, if it is pure, without the latter. The case, then, supposed, as it must be if the argument is to be valid, of an inner tradition or sentiment, quite independent of Scripture and ruling its interpretation, can never arise except in a Church which withholds the Scriptures from the laity, and in so doing disparages Apostolical tradition itself. Where the Scriptures are freely read and habitually expounded, the spiritual perception of the Church is constantly recruited and corrected from them; so that the inner and the written tradition become inextricably intermingled. This is the intended order of things; still it may, in fact, be otherwise. The prevailing sentiment of the (visible) Church and that of the written Word may, as Church history too often proves, come into collision; they did so when on the strength of a very prevalent ecclesiastical sentiment, the Church in the person of Dr. Eck, Luther's antagonist, pleaded for the sale of indulgences, or in the persons of inquisitors demanded that they whose only crime was that they could not believe certain doctrines should be sent to the stake. In such a case, which are we to follow? There can be no doubt as to the answer. The voice of God in His written Word must control and correct the voice of God in the Church (real work

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process is still the normal one. All this may be admitted without supposing that there is any special virtue in the Church, considered in its "corporate"—*i.e.*, its externally organized capacity, to promote the cause of missions.

<sup>2</sup> "Irenæus cont. Hær," L. III. c. 4. But, after all, Irenæus may mean no more with respect to the barbarous people of whom he speaks, than St. Paul does with respect to the Corinthians (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3).

of the Holy Spirit as that may be); for while the former was delivered, as we have seen (Part III.) under a special divine superintendence, guarding it from error, the latter enjoys no such prerogative, and is liable to admixtures of human infirmity. But how does the Church of Rome cut the knot? As it can only be cut by that Church. If the Church and Scripture seem to differ, so much the worse for Scripture; the former is infallible, the latter only a book which every reader who fancies he understands it may make what he pleases of; it is the former therefore that must prevail!<sup>1</sup>

From the foregoing observations it will be seen that the question: Could a man, left entirely to himself, construct from Scripture a true system of Christian doctrine? is a speculative one. Without affirming that he could not, we may certainly say that he is not ordinarily put to the trial. The Church perpetuates herself by the living ministry, and no one of her members comes to Scripture without a predisposition of doctrine already formed in his mind. This may seem to interfere with freedom of thought, and to be unphilosophical, but it is the appointment of Providence which no one born within the pale of the Church can evade. He comes to Scripture expecting to find therein what in substance he has been taught. And let us ask, if one of Aristotle's pupils after hearing the lectures of his master, or of those commissioned by his master to teach, commenced the study of one of Aristotle's treatises, could he approach it otherwise than with a mind prepossessed, and not a *tabula rasa*?

But, it may be urged, have we not in the Creeds, a Rule of Faith, and one in some measure at least independent of Scripture? Christendom, as a whole, accepts the three Ecumenical Creeds; and, moreover, each Church has its own symbol, which to it seems practically its Rule of Faith; the Romish Church, the Decrees of Trent, and its Catechism; the Anglican, its Thirty-nine Articles; the Lutheran, the Confession of Augsburg; the Swiss Churches, the Helvetic Confessions. If these are not, respectively, Rules of Faith, what are they? The question is not unimportant.

The reply, then, is, Although these formularies may for certain purposes, and under certain aspects, be considered Rules of Faith, none of them is *the* Rule of Faith; and in fact they are Rules in quite a different sense from what Scripture is. And our Church in Art. VIII. is careful to guard against any misunderstanding on this point. The three Creeds, especially the earliest of them, come to us with the greatest claims to our attention, as deliberate professions of the faith of the Church of the early centuries on certain fundamental doctrines; professions put forth after much

<sup>1</sup> Möhler, §§ 39, 40.

controversy, and under circumstances which lend peculiar weight to them. But in their present form they are not of Apostolical origin. Their contents, or the truths expressed in them, we of course believe to be Apostolical, otherwise we should not receive them: but the mode of expression, the *statement* of the truths, was the work of uninspired men. They form, therefore, an Apostolical tradition only in the sense of being human attempts to state, explain, or defend, the great doctrines respecting the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, which, in an unsystematic form, are expressed or implied in Scripture. The fable which makes the Apostles' Creed the joint production of the Twelve, has been long since exploded: the various forms under which, though in substance the same, it was used in different localities, sufficiently proves that the Apostles left no such summary behind them; or only such bare elements as *e.g.* 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. This does not in the least derogate from its just authority as the oldest traditional relic of what the first Christians believed on certain points, or from its value as a basis of Christian instruction, or as a baptismal profession of faith. But it does invalidate its claim to supersede, or to be co-ordinate with, Scripture, as the Rule of Faith; for like all other alleged traditional relics we cannot, in its present form, trace it directly to the Apostles. How much more does this apply to the two subsequent Creeds; one of which is the production of a Council which "may err, even in things pertaining to God" (Art. XXI.), and the other is probably a work of the fifth century. But, besides this, a moment's inspection of the Creeds proves that they are insufficient to be the Rule of Faith. The Apostles' Creed, though the Trinitarian hypothesis lies at the base of it, is so meagre in its statements on that subject, that Socinians have always professed themselves willing to subscribe to it. It omits, too, all mention of the sacraments and their nature, and all allusion to the doctrine of justification by faith; points important enough to have caused a separation, apparently permanent, between large sections of the Western Church. The later Creeds, though explicit against Arianism and Sabellianism, do not fully supply these defects. On the whole, these venerable formularies cannot be considered as a complete Rule of Faith; and we may add, they were never intended to be so, they were not drawn up for that purpose. They were special protests against special heresies. They expressed, not what the Church *was* to believe, but what she *did* believe on the doctrines assailed; they are not *norma credendi*, but *norma crediti*. And as such, they can only make good their claims by proving their correspondence with Holy Scripture (Art. VIII.). Nor is there anything essentially permanent in the *form* in which they enunciate these doctrines; the permanency belongs to the doctrines themselves. That is to say, though we may admire the

precision of language which the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds exhibit, and think that it could hardly be improved upon, yet the Church is not tied to these or any other uninspired formulary; and even if the Creeds had perished, though the loss would have been great, the Church, taught from above and possessing the written Word, would be able, should the necessity again arise, to frame new formularies, suitable to express her faith and to expel error.

Yet the Creeds and other symbols of particular Churches, are in a certain sense *a* Rule of Faith; they are so to the members of the Christian Society which has adopted these symbols, and made them tests of admission: the proper light to regard them in is, as terms of communion. That is to say, they lay down the condition on which an applicant is to be admitted as a member of the Society. In framing such conditions, the Society does not arrogate to itself infallibility, it merely states what it does believe as such a Society, and reminds the applicant that if he becomes a member thereof he must be supposed to share its convictions. If he does not share them, he is under no compulsion to join the Society; and if he ceases to share them, he is under no compulsion to continue a member. Our Church proposes the Apostles' Creed to candidates for baptism as sufficient to stamp a distinctive character on their profession of faith; if the candidate agrees with this, *her* interpretation of Scripture, and declares his assent, he is admitted, otherwise not. Such terms of communion are obviously quite a different thing from the Rule of Faith. And what the Apostles', or the two other Creeds, are to the Church at large, each Church's particular symbol is to itself; with this difference, that such symbol affects rather the teachers than the mere members of the Society in question. Our Thirty-nine Articles are terms of communion for the ministry of our Church; we do not propose them to candidates for baptism. Such subscription is intended, and is necessary, to provide some guarantee that our public teachers accept the peculiar ecclesiastical position which we occupy in reference to other Churches. For this position is one of opposition, not merely to the ancient heresies of the early centuries, but to various errors (as we believe them to be) of the Church of Rome; and to leave it open to public teachers to teach as they please on other points, provided they adhere to the doctrine of the three Creeds, would be to ignore an essential feature of our particular Church, and to reduce it, so far, to a nebulous haze without outline or form. The points of difference between us and Rome constitute the really essential portions of our dogmatical formulary; essential, that is, not to our claim to be a Christian Church, but to the justifying of our position as regards the Romish communion of which we once formed a part.

Hence the attempts that have been made from time to time, in some reformed Churches, to substitute, *e.g.*, the Apostles' Creed as the *norma docendi* for their distinctive confession, cannot be commended; if successful, they would be tantamount to ecclesiastical suicide: nor for the reasons before given, can this Creed be made the Rule of Faith instead of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, teachers who have subscribed our symbol, cannot claim a right to fall back on Scripture alone on the ground that we make Scripture the sole Rule of Faith; for the statements of the symbol are, in fact, our Church's interpretation of Scripture: in her view these statements *are* Scripture or Scriptural; she claims to have examined Scripture and to have settled the question what it teaches; and she justly may call upon her ministers either to adopt her interpretations, or to retire from their office.

The *nature* of the sufficiency of Scripture may be described in few words. It contains no catechism, no articulated formulary of doctrine, standing out in relief; but the essential doctrines are so interwoven in its texture, that they can no more be separated from it than the miraculous element can from the Gospels. It is the Holy Spirit addressing those in whom He dwells as one friend would another, or as a father would his children come to years of discretion; not as a schoolmaster or lawgiver (Gal. iv. 1, 7). "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." And as regards matters of polity and ritual, precedents are given, principles are stated, but no positive prescriptions or minute details—a ceremonial law forms no part of Apostolic Christianity. But whether as regards doctrine or discipline, the Church has ever found in the Sacred Volume all that she needs to fulfil her mission in the world, and to conduct herself to eternal glory; all that she needs to refute heresy, or to separate from herself those accretions of error which from time to time may be expected to gather round her system in this imperfect state.

E. A. LITTON.

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<sup>1</sup> The well-known theory of Grundtvig, in Denmark. It had been previously defended in a work by Professor Delbrück, of Bonn, and drew forth three valuable letters in reply by Sack, Nitzsch, and Lücke. Bonn, 1827.