

ARTICLE III.

Of the going down of Christ into Hell.

As Christ died for us and was buried, so also is it to be believed that he went down into Hell.

THIS was much fuller when the Articles were at first prepared and published in king Edward's reign; for these words were added to it, 'That the body of Christ lay in the grave until his resurrection; but his spirit, which he gave up, was with the spirits which were detained in prison, or in hell, and preached to them, as the place in St. Peter testifieth.' Thus a determined sense was put upon this Article, which is now left more at large, and is conceived in words of a more general signification. In order to the explaining this, it is to be premised, that the article in the Creed, of Christ's *descent into hell*, is mentioned by no writer before Ruffin,* who in the beginning of the fifth century does indeed speak of it: but he tells us, that it was neither in the symbol of the Roman, nor of the Oriental churches; and that he found it in the symbol of his own church at Aquileia. But as there was no other article in that symbol that related to Christ's burial, so the words which he gives us, *descendit ad inferna*, 'he descended to the lower parts,' do very naturally signify *burial*, according to these words of St. Paul, 'he ascended; what is it, but that he also descended first to the lower parts of the earth?' And Ruffin himself understood these words in that sense. Eph. iv. 9.

None of the fathers in the first ages, neither Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens, nor Origen, in the short abstracts that they give us of the Christian faith, mention any thing like this: and in all that great variety of Creeds, that was proposed by the many councils that met in the fourth century, this is not in any one of them, except in that which was agreed to at Arimini, and was pretended, though falsely, to have been made at Sirmium: in that it is set down in a Greek word that does exactly answer Ruffin's *inferna*, *καταθόνα*: and it stood there instead of *buried*. When it was put in the Creed that carries Athanasius's name, though made in the sixth or seventh century, the word was changed to *Αιδης*, or *Hell*: but yet it seems to have been understood to signify Christ's burial, there

* 'Ruffinus, a Presbyter of Aquileia, is famous on account of his Latin translations of Origen, and other Greek writers—his commentaries on several passages of the Holy Scriptures, and his bitter contest with Jerome. He would have obtained a very honourable place among the Latin writers of this century (the 4th), had it not been his misfortune to have had the powerful and foul-mouthed Jerome for his adversary.'—*Mosheim*. Ruffinus first published the Apostles' creed, as the creed of the church of Aquileia.—[Ed.]

A R T. III. being no other word put for it in that Creed. Afterwards it was put into the symbol of the western church: that was done at first in the words in which Ruffin had expressed it, as appears by some ancient copies of Creeds which were published by the great primate Usher.

We are next to consider what the importance of these words in themselves is; for it is plain that the use of them in the Creed is not very ancient nor universal. We have a most unquestionable authority for this, that our Saviour's *soul was in hell*. In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter, in the first sermon that was preached after the wonderful effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost, applies these words of David concerning Ps. xvi. 10. 'God's not leaving his soul in hell, nor suffering his Holy One Acts ii. 27, 31. to see corruption,' to the resurrection of Christ. Now since, in the composition of a man, there is a body and a spirit, and since it is plain that the raising of Christ on the third day was before that his body in the course of nature was corrupted; the other branch seems to relate to his *soul*; though it is not to be denied, but that in the Old Testament *soul* in some places stands for a *dead body*. But if that were the sense of the word, there would be no opposition in the two parts of this period; the one will be only a redundant repetition of the other: therefore it is much more natural to think that this other branch concerning Christ's soul being left in *hell*, must relate to that which we commonly understand by soul. If then his *soul was not to be left in hell*, then from thence it plainly follows that once it was in *hell*, and, by consequence, that Christ's soul descended into *hell*.

Some very modern writers have thought that this is to be understood figuratively of the wrath of God due for sin, which Christ bore in his soul, besides the torments that he suffered in his body: and they think that these are here mentioned by themselves, after the enumeration of the several steps of his bodily sufferings: and this being equal to the torments of *hell*, as it is that which delivers us from them, might in a large way of expression be called a *descending into hell*. But as neither the word *descend*, nor *hell*, are to be found in any other place of scripture in this sense, nor in any of the ancients, among whom the signification of this phrase is more likely to be found than among moderns; so this being put after *buried*, it plainly shews that it belongs to a period subsequent to his burial: there is therefore no regard to be had to this notion.

Others have thought, that by Christ's *descent into hell* is to be understood his continuing in the state of the dead for some time: but there is no ground for this conceit neither, these words being to be found in no author in that signification.

1 Pet. iii. 19. Many of the fathers thought, that Christ's soul went locally into *hell*, and preached to some of the *spirits* there in *prison*; that there he *triumphed over Satan*, and *spoiled him*, and carried some souls with him into glory. But the account

that the scriptures give us of the exaltation of Christ begins it always at his resurrection: nor can it be imagined, that so memorable a transaction as this would have been passed over by the three first evangelists, and least of all by St. John, who coming after the rest, and designing to supply what was wanting in them, and intending particularly to magnify the glory of Christ, could not have passed over so wonderful an instance of it. We have no reason to think, that such a matter would have been only insinuated in general words, and not have been plainly related. The triumph of Christ over principalities and powers is ascribed by St. Paul to his cross, and was the effect and result of his death. The place of St. Peter seems to relate to the preaching to the *Gentile* world, by virtue of that inspiration that was derived from Christ; which was therefore called *his Spirit*; and the *spirits in prison* were the *Gentiles*, who were shut up in idolatry as *in prison*, and so were under the power of the 'prince of the power of the air,' who is called 'the-god of this world;' that is, of the *Gentile* world: it being one of the ends for which Christ was anointed of his Father, 'to open the prisons to them that were bound.' So then, though there is no harm in this opinion, yet it not being founded on any part of the history of the gospel, and it being supported only by passages that may well bear another sense, we may lay it aside, notwithstanding the reverence we bear to those that asserted it; and that the rather, because the first fathers that were next the source say nothing of it.

Another conceit has had a great course among some of the latest fathers and the schoolmen: they have fancied that there was a place to which they have given a peculiar name, *Limbus Patrum*, a sort of a partition in hell, where all the good men of the old dispensation, that had died before Christ, were detained; and they hold that our Saviour went thither, and emptied that place, carrying all the souls that were in it with him to heaven. Of this the scriptures say nothing; not a word either of the patriarchs going thither, or of Christ's delivering them out of it: and though there are not in the Old Testament express declarations and promises made concerning a future state, 'Christ having brought life and immortality to light through his gospel;' yet all the hints given of it shew that they looked for an immediate admission to blessedness after death. So David, 'Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. Thou shalt guide me here by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.' Isaiah says, that 'the righteous when they die enter into peace.' In the New Testament there is not a hint given of this; for though some passages may seem to favour Christ's delivering some souls out of *hell*, yet there is nothing that by any management can be brought to look this way.

There is another sense of which these words [*descended into*

A R T. III.

Col. ii. 14, 15.

Eph. ii. 2.
2 Cor. iv. 4.
Is. lxi. 1.Ps. xvi. 11.
Acts ii. 31.
Ps. lxxiii. 24.
Is. lvii. 2.

A R. T. III. *hell*] are capable: by *hell* may be meant the invisible place to which departed souls are carried after death: for, though the Greek word so rendered does now commonly stand for the place of the damned, and for many ages has been so understood, yet, at the time of writing the New Testament, it was among Greek authors used indifferently for the place of all departed souls, whether good or bad; and by it were meant the invisible regions where those spirits were lodged: so, if these words are taken in this large sense, we have in them a clear and literal account of our Saviour's *soul* descending into *hell*; it imports that he was not only dead in a more common acceptation, as it is usual to say a man is dead, when there appear no signs of life in him; and that he was not as in a deep ecstasy or fit that seemed death, but that he was truly dead; that his soul was neither in his body, nor hovering about it, ascending and descending upon it, as some of the Jews fancied souls did for some time after death; but that his soul was really removed out of his body, and carried to those unseen regions of departed spirits, among whom it continued till his resurrection. That the regions of the blessed were known then to the Jews by the name of *Paradise*, as hell was known by the name of *Gehenna*, is very clear from Christ's last words, 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise;' and 'Into thy hands do I commend my spirit.' This is a plain and full account of a good sense that may be well put on the words; though, after all, it is still to be remembered, that, in the first Creeds that have this article, that of Christ's burial not being mentioned in them, it follows from thence, as well as from Ruffin's own sense of it, that they understood this only of Christ's burial.

Luke xxiii.
43, 46.

See Bishop
Pearson on
the Creed.

ARTICLE IV.

Of the Resurrection of Christ.

Christ did truly rise again from Death, and took again his Body, with Flesh, Bones, and all things appertaining to the Perfection of Man's Nature, wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the Last Day.

THERE are four branches of this Article: the first is concerning the truth of Christ's resurrection. The second concerning the completeness of it: that he took to him again his whole body. The third is concerning his ascension and continuance in heaven. And the fourth is concerning his returning to judge all men at the last day. These things are all so expressly affirmed, and that in so particular a manner, in the New Testament, that if the authority of that book is once well proved, little doubting will remain concerning them.

It is punctually told in it, that the body of Christ was laid in the sepulchre: that a stone was laid to the mouth of it: that it was rolled away, and upon that Christ arose and left the death-clothes behind him: that those who viewed the sepulchre, saw no body there: that in the same body Christ shewed himself to his disciples, so that they all knew him; he talked with them, and they did eat and drink with him, and he made Thomas feel to the print of the nails and spear. It is as plainly told, that the apostles looked on, and saw him ascend up to heaven, and that a cloud received him out of their sight. It is also said very plainly, that he shall come again at the last day, and judge all men both the quick and the dead. So that if the truth of the gospel is once fully proved, it will not be necessary to insist long upon the special proof of these particulars: somewhat will only be necessary to be said in explanation of them.

The gospel was first preached, and soon after put in writing; in which these particulars are not only delivered, but are set forth with many circumstances relating to them. The credit of the whole is put on that issue concerning the truth of Christ's resurrection; so that the overthrowing the truth of that was the overturning the whole gospel, and struck at the credit of it all. This was transacted as well as first published at Jerusalem, where the enemies of it had all possible advantages in their hands; their interest was deeply concerned, as well as their malice was much kindled at it. They had both power and wealth in their hands, as well as credit and authority among the people. The Romans left them at full liberty,

as they did the other nations whom they conquered, to order their own concerns as they pleased. And even the Romans themselves began quickly to hate and persecute the Christians: they became the objects of popular fury, as Tacitus tells us. The Romans looked upon Christ as one that set on the Jews to those tumults that were then so common among them, as Suetonius affirms: which shews both how ignorant they were of the doctrine of Christ, and how much they were prejudiced against it. Yet this gospel did spread itself, and was believed by great multitudes both at Jerusalem and in all Judea; and from thence it was propagated in a very few years to a great many remote countries.

Among all Christians the article of the resurrection and ascension of Christ was always looked on as the capital one upon which all the rest depended. This was attested by a considerable number of men, against whose credit no objection was made; who affirmed, that they all had seen him, and conversed frequently with him after his resurrection; that they saw him ascend up into heaven; and that, according to a promise he had made them, they had received extraordinary powers from him to work miracles in his name, and to speak in divers languages. This last was a most amazing character of a supernatural power lodged with them, and was a thing of such a nature, that it must have been evident to every man whether it was true or false: so that the apostles relating this so positively, and making such frequent appeals to it, that way of proceeding carries a strong and undeniable evidence of truth in it. These wonders were gathered together in a book, and published in the very time in which they were transacted: the 'Acts of the Apostles' were writ two years after St. Paul was carried prisoner to Rome; and St. Luke begins that book with the mention of the gospel that he had formerly writ, as that gospel begins with the mention of some other gospels that were writ before it. Almost all the Epistles speak of the temple of Jerusalem as yet in being; of the Jews as then in peace and prosperity, hating and persecuting the Christians every where: they do also frequently intimate the assurance they had of a great deliverance that was to happen quickly to the Christians, and of terrible judgments that were to be poured out on the Jews; which was soon after that accomplished in the most signal manner of any thing that is recorded in history.

These things do clearly prove that all the writings of the New Testament were both composed and published in the age in which that matter was transacted. The Jews, who from all the places of their dispersion went frequently to Jerusalem, to keep the great festivities of their religion there, had occasion often to examine upon the place the truth of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and of the effusion of the Holy Ghost: yet, even in that infancy of Christianity, in

which it had so little visible strength, no proof was so much as ever pretended in opposition to those great and essential points; which being matters of fact, and related with a great variety of circumstances, had been easily confuted, if there had been any ground for it. The great darkness at the time of Christ's death, the rending the veil of the temple in two, as well as what was more public, the renting of the rocks at his death: his being laid in a new sepulchre, and a watch being set about it; and the watchmen reporting, that while they slept, the body of Christ was carried away: the apostles breaking out all of the sudden into that variety of tongues on Pentecost; the miracles that they wrought, and the proceedings of the sanhedrim with them; were all things so publicly done, that as the discovery of falsehood in any one of these was in the power of the Jews, if any such was, so that alone had most effectually destroyed the credit of this religion, and stopped its progress.

The writings of the New Testament were at that time no secrets, they were in all men's hands, and were copied out freely by every one that desired it. We find within a hundred years after that time, both by the Epistle of the church of Smyrna, by Justin, and Irenæus, not to mention Clemens of Rome, who lived in that time, or Ignatius and Polycarp, who lived very near it, that the authority of these writings was early received and submitted to; that they were much read, and well known; and that they began very soon to be read at the meetings of the Christians for worship, and were esteemed by the several churches as the great trust and *depositum* that was lodged with them. So that though, by the negligence of copiers, some small variations might happen among some of the copies, yet as they do all agree in the main, and most signally in those particulars that are mentioned in this article; so it was not possible for any that should have had the wickedness to set about it, to have corrupted the New Testament by any additions or alterations; it being so early spread into so many hands, and that in so many different places.

When all this matter is laid together, it appears to have as full an evidence to support it, as any matter of fact can possibly have. The narration gave great scope to a variety of inquiries; it raised much disputing, opposition, and persecution; and yet nothing was ever pretended to be proved that could subvert its credit: great multitudes received this doctrine, and died for it in the age in which the matters of fact, upon which its credit was built, were well attested, and in which the truth or falsehood of them might have been easily known; which it is reasonable to believe that all men would carefully examine, before they embraced and assented to that which was likely to draw on them sufferings that would probably end in death. Those who did spread this doctrine,

as well as those who first received it, had no interest beside that of truth to engage them to it. They could expect neither wealth nor greatness from it: they were obliged to travel much, and to labour hard; to wrestle through great difficulties, and to endure many indignities. They saw others die on the account of it, and had reason to look for the like usage themselves.

The doctrine that they preached related either to the facts concerning the person of Christ, or to the rules of life which they delivered. These were all pure, just, and good; they tended to settle the world upon the foundations of truth and sincerity, and that sublime pitch of righteousness, of doing as they would be done by; they tended to make men sober and temperate, chaste and modest, meek and humble, merciful and charitable; so that from thence there was no colour given for suspecting any fraud or design in it. The worship of God in this religion was pure and simple, free from cost or pomp, from theatrical shows, as well as idolatrous rites, and had in it all possible characters becoming the purity of the Supreme Mind. When therefore so much concurs to give credit to a religion, there ought to be evident proofs brought to the contrary, before it can be disbelieved or rejected. So many men forsaking the religion in which they were born and bred, which has always a strong influence even upon the greatest minds; and there being so many particular prejudices both upon Jews and Gentiles, by the opinions in which they had been bred, and the impressions which had gone deep in them, it could be no slight matter that could overcome all that.

The Jews expected a conqueror for their Messiah, who should have raised both the honour of their law and their nation, and so were much possessed against one of a mean appearance; and when they saw that their law was to be superseded, and that the Gentiles were to be brought into equal privileges with themselves, they could not but be deeply prejudiced both against the person and doctrine of Christ.

The philosophers despised divine inspiration, and secret assistances, and had an ill opinion of miracles; and the herd among the Gentiles were so accustomed to pomp and show in their religious performances, that they must have nauseated the Christian simplicity, and the corruption of their morals must have made them uneasy at a religion of so much strictness. All sorts of men lay under very strong prejudices against this religion; nor was there any one article or branch of it, that flattered any of the interests, appetites, passions, or vanities of men, but all was very much to the contrary. They were warned to prepare for trials and crosses, and, in particular, for a severe and fiery trial that was speedily to come upon them.

There was nothing of the way or manner of impostors that

appeared in the methods in which the gospel was propagated. When the apostles saw that some were endeavouring to lessen them and their authority, they took no fawning ways: they neither flattered nor spared those churches that were under their care: they charged them home with their faults, and asserted their own character in a strain that shewed they were afraid of no discoveries. They appealed to the miracles that they had wrought, and to those gifts and divine virtues of which they were not only possessed themselves, but which were by their ministry conferred on others. The 'demonstration of the Spirit,' or inspiration that was in them, appeared in the *power*, that is, in the miracles which accompanied it, and those they wrought openly in the sight of many witnesses. An uncontested miracle is the fullest evidence that can be given of a divine commission.

A miracle is a work that exceeds all the known powers of nature, and that carries in it plain characters of a power superior to any human power. We cannot indeed fix the bounds of the powers of nature; but yet we can plainly apprehend what must be beyond them. For instance, we do not know what secret virtues there may be in plants and minerals; but we do know that bare words can have no natural virtue in them to cure diseases, much less to raise the dead: we know not what force imagination or credulity may have in critical diseases; but we know that a dead man has no imagination: we know also, that blindness, deafness, and an inveterate palsy, cannot be cured by conceit: therefore such miracles as the giving sight to a man born blind, speech to the deaf and dumb, and strength to the paralytic; but most of all, the giving life to the dead, and that not only to persons laid out as dead, but to one that was carried out to be buried, and to another that had been four days dead, and in his grave; all this was done with a bare word, without any sort of external application: this, I say, as it is clearly above the force of imagination, so it is beyond the powers of nature.

These things were not done in the dark, nor in the presence of a few, in whom a particular confidence was put; but in full day-light, and in the sight of great numbers, enemies as well as friends, and some of those enemies were both the most enraged, and the most capable of making all possible exceptions to what was done. Such were the rulers of the synagogues, and the Pharisees in our Saviour's time: and yet they could neither deny the facts, nor pretend that there was any deceit or jugglery in them. We have in this all possible reason to conclude, that both the things were truly done as they are related, and that no just exception was, or could be, made to them.

If it is pretended, that those wonderful things were done by the power of an evil spirit, that does both acknowledge the truth of the relation, and also its being supernatural.

This answer, taken from the power of evil spirits, is sometimes to be made use of, when extraordinary things are well attested, and urged in proof of that which upon other reasons we are assured is false. It is certain, that as we have a great power over vast quantities of gross and heavy matter, which by the motion of a very subtile body, our animal spirits, we can master and manage: so angels, good or bad, may, by virtue of subtile bodies, in which they may dwell, or which upon occasion they may assume, do many things vastly above either our force to do, or our imagination to apprehend how it is done by them. Therefore an action, that exceeds all the known powers of nature, may yet be done by an evil spirit that is in rebellion against its Maker, and that designs to impose upon us by such a mighty performance. But then the measure, by which we must judge of this, is by considering what is the end or design driven at in such a wonderful work: if it is a good one, if it tends to reform the manners of men, and to bring them off from magic, idolatry, and superstition, to the worship of one pure and eternal Mind; and if it tends to reform their actions, as well as their speculations and their worship; to turn them from immorality, falsehood, and malice, to a pure, a sincere, and a mild temper; if it tends to regulate society, as well as to perfect the nature and faculties of every single man; then we may well conclude, that no evil spirit can so far depart from its own nature, as to join its forces, and co-operate in such a design: for then, the kingdom of Satan could not stand, if he were thus divided against himself; according to what our Saviour said, when this was objected against the miracles that he wrought.

Matt. xii.
25, 26.

These are all the general considerations that concur to prove the truth of the history of the gospel, of which the resurrection and ascension of Christ are the two main articles; for they, being well proved, give authority to all the rest. As to the resurrection in particular, it is certain the apostles could not be deceived in that matter: they saw Christ frequently after he rose from the dead; they met him once with a great company of five hundred with them: they heard him talk and argue with them; he opened the scriptures to them with so peculiar an energy, that they felt their hearts set on fire, even when they did not yet perceive that it was he himself: they did not at first either look for his resurrection, nor believe those who reported him risen: they made all due inquiry, and some of them went beyond all reasonable bounds in their doubting: so far were they from an easy and soon-imposed-on credulity. His sufferings and their own fears had so amazed them, that they were contriving how to separate and disperse themselves when he at first appeared to them. Men so full of fear, and so far from all hope, are not apt to be easy in believing. So it must be concluded, that either the account which the apostles gave

the world of Christ's resurrection is true: or they were gross impostors; since it is clear, that the circumstances and numbers, mentioned in that history, shew there could be no deception in it. And it is as little possible to conceive that there could be any imposture in it: for, not to repeat again what has been already said, that they were under no temptations to set about any such deceit, but very much to the contrary; and that there is no reason to think they were either bad enough to enter upon such a design, or capable and skilful enough to manage it; they being many of them illiterate fishermen of Galilee, who had no acquaintance at Jerusalem to furnish them with that which might be necessary for executing such a contrivance: the circumstances of that transaction are to be well examined, and then it will appear that no number of bold and dexterous men, furnished with all advantages whatsoever, could have effected this matter.

Great numbers had been engaged in the procuring our Saviour to be crucified: the whole sãnhedrim, besides multitudes of the people, who upon all occasions are easily drawn in to engage in tumultuary commotions: all these were concerned to examine the event of this matter. He was buried in a new sepulchre lately hewed out of a rock, so that there was no coming at it by any secret ways: a watch was set: and all this at a time in which the full-moon gave a great light all the night long: and Jerusalem being very full of people who were then there in great numbers to keep the passover, that being the second night of so vast a rendezvous, it is reasonable to think that great numbers were walking in the fields, or at least might be so, some later, and some earlier. Now, if an imposture was to be set about, the guard was to be frightened or mastered, which could not be done without giving the alarm, and that must have quickly brought a multitude upon them. Christ's body must have been disposed of: some other tomb was to be looked for to lodge it in: the wounds that were in it would have made it to be soon known if found.

Here a bold attempt was to be undertaken, by a company of poor irresolute men, who must trust one another entirely, otherways they knew all might soon be discovered. One of their number had betrayed Christ a few days before; another had forsworn him, and all had forsaken him; and yet these men are supposed all of the sudden so firm in themselves, and so sure of one another, as to venture on the most daring thing that was ever undertaken by men, when not a circumstance could ever be found out to fix upon them the least suspicion. The priests and the Pharisees must be thought a strange stupid sort of creatures, if they did not examine where the apostles were all that night: besides many other particulars, which might have been a thread to lead them into strict inquiries, unless it was because they believed

A R T.
IV.

the report that the watch had brought them of Christ's rising again. When they had this certain reason to believe it, and yet resolved to oppose it, the only thing they could do was to seem to neglect the matter, and only to decry it in general as an imposture, without going into particulars; which certainly they would not have done, if they themselves had not been but too sure of the truth of it.

When all this is laid together, it is the most unreasonable thing imaginable to think that there was an imposture in this matter, when no colour nor shadow of it ever appeared, and when all the circumstances, and not only probabilities, but even moral possibilities, are so full to the contrary.

The ascension of Christ has not indeed so full a proof: nor is it capable of it, neither does it need it; for the resurrection, well proved, makes that very credible. For this we have only the testimony of the apostles, who did all attest that they saw it, being all together in an open field: when Christ was walking and discoursing with them, and when he was blessing them, he was parted from them: they saw him ascend, till a cloud received him, and took him out of their sight. And then two angels appeared to them, and assured them that 'he should come again in like manner as they had seen him ascend.' Here is a very particular relation, with many circumstances in it, in which it was not possible for the apostles to be mistaken; so that, there being no reason to suspect their credit, this rests upon that authority. But ten days after, it received a much clearer proof; when the Holy Ghost was poured out on them in so visible a manner, and with most remarkable effects. Immediately upon it they spoke with divers tongues, and wrought many miracles, and all in the name of Christ. They did often and solemnly disclaim their doing any of those wonderful things by any power of their own: they owned that all they had or did was derived to them from Jesus of Nazareth, of whose resurrection and ascension they were appointed to be the witnesses.

Christ's coming again to judge the world at the last day is so often affirmed by himself in the gospel, and is so frequently mentioned in the writings of his apostles, that this is a main part of his doctrine; so that his resurrection, ascension, together with the effusion of the Holy Ghost, having in general proved his mission, and his whole doctrine, this is also proved by them. Enough seems to be said in proof of all the parts of this Article; it remains only that somewhat should be added in explanation of them.

As to the resurrection, it is to little purpose to inquire, whether our Saviour's body was kept all the while in a complete organization, that so by this miracle it might be preserved in a natural state, for his soul to re-enter it: or whether by the course of nature the vast number of the inward conveyances that were in the body were stopped;

A R T.
IV.

and if all of a sudden, when the time of the resurrection came, all was again put in a vital state, fit to be animated by his soul. There must have been a miracle either way: so it is to little purpose to inquire into it. The former, though a continued miracle, yet seems to agree more fully to these words, 'Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.' It is to as little purpose to inquire how our Saviour's new body was supplied with blood, since he had lost the greatest part of it on the cross: whether that was again by the power of God brought back into his veins; or whether, as he himself had formerly said, that 'man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,' blood was supplied by miracle: or whether his body, that was then of the nature of a glorified body, though yet on earth, needed the supplies of blood to furnish new spirits for serving the natural functions; he eating and drinking so seldom, that we may well believe it was done rather to satisfy his apostles, than to answer the necessities of nature; these are curiosities that signify so little, if we could certainly resolve them, that it is to no purpose to inquire about them, since we cannot know what to determine in them. This in general is certain, that the same soul returned back to the same body; so that the same man who died, rose again; and that is our faith. We need not trouble ourselves with inquiring how to make out the three days of Christ's being in the grave; days stand, in the common acceptation, for a portion of a day. We know the Jews were very exact to the rest on the sabbath, so the body was without question laid in the grave before the sun-set on Friday; so that was the first day; the sabbath was a complete one; and a good part of the third day, that is, the night, with which the Jews began to count the day, was over before he was raised up.

As for his stay on earth forty days, we cannot pretend to give an account of it; whether his body was passing through a slow and physical purification, to be meet for ascending; or whether he intended to keep a proportion between his gospel and the law of Moses; that as he suffered at the time of their killing the passover, so the effusion of the Holy Ghost was fixed for Pentecost, and that therefore he would stay on earth till that time was near, not to put his apostles upon too long an expectation without his presence; which might be necessary to animate them, till they should be endued with power from on high. As to the manner of his ascension, it is also questioned whether the body of Christ, as it ascended, was so wonderfully changed, as to put on the subtilty and purity of an ethereal body; or whether it retains still the same form in heaven that it had on earth; or if it put on a new one: it is more probable that it did; and that the wonderful glory that appeared in his countenance and whole person at his transfiguration, was a manifestation of

Ps. xvi. 10.

Deut. viii.

3.
Matt. iv. 4.

Acts i. 11.

Acts iii. 12,
16.

ART. IV. that more permanent glory, to which it was to be afterwards exalted. It seems probable from what St. Paul says, ('that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God,' which relates to our glorified bodies, when 'we shall bear the image of the second and the heavenly Adam,') that Christ's body has no more the modifications of flesh and blood in it; and that the glory of the celestial body is of another nature and texture than that of the terrestrial. It is easily imagined how this may be, and yet the body to be numerically the same: for, all matter being uniform, and capable of all sort of motion, and by consequence of being either much grosser or much purer, the same portion of matter that made a thick and heavy body here on earth, may be put into that purity and fineness as to be no longer a fit inhabitant of this earth, or to breathe this air, but to be meet to be transplanted into ethereal regions.

Christ as he went up into heaven, so he had the whole government of this world put into his hands, and the whole ministry of angels put under his command, even in his human nature. So that 'all things are now in subjection to him.' All power and authority is derived from him, and he does whatsoever he pleases both in heaven and earth. 'In him all fulness dwells.' And as, the Mosaical tabernacle being filled with glory, the emanations of it did by the *Urim* and *Thummim* enlighten and direct that people, so, out of that fulness, that dwelt bodily in Christ, there is a constant emanation of his grace and spirit descending on his church. He does also intercede for us at his Father's right hand, where he is preparing a place for us. The meaning of all which is this, that as he is vested with an unconceivably high degree of glory, even as man, so the merit of his death is still fresh and entire; and in the virtue of that, the sins of all that come to God through him, claiming to his death as to their sacrifice, and obeying his gospel, are pardoned, and they are 'sealed by his Spirit until the day of redemption.' In conclusion, when all God's design with this world is accomplished, it shall be set on fire, and all the great parts of which it is composed, as of elements, shall be melted and burnt down; and then when by that fire probably the portions of matter, which was in the bodies of all who have lived upon earth, shall be so far refined and fixed, as to become both incorruptible and immortal, then they shall be made meet for the souls that formerly animated them, to re-enter every one into his own body, which shall be then so moulded as to be a habitation fit to give it everlasting joy or everlasting torment. Then shall Christ appear visibly in some very conspicuous place in the clouds of heaven, where every eye shall see him: he shall appear in his 'own glory,' that is, in his human glorified body: he shall appear in the 'glory of his angels,' having vast numbers of these about him, attending on him:

ART. IV. but, which is above all, he shall appear in 'his Father's glory;' that is, there shall be then a most wonderful manifestation of the eternal Godhead dwelling in him; and then shall he pass a final sentence upon all that ever lived upon earth, according to all that they have done in the body, whether it be good or bad. The righteous shall ascend as he did, and shall meet him in the clouds, and be for ever with him; and the wicked shall sink into a state of darkness and misery, of unspeakable horror of mind, and everlasting pain and torment.

ART. IV.
 Luke ix. 26.
 Rom. xiv. 10—12.
 Matt. xxv. 31—46.
 2 Cor. v. 10.
 1 Thes. iv. 17.
 Dan. xii. 2.
 Matt. xxv. 46.

ARTICLE V.

Of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one Substance, Majesty, and Glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

IN order to the explaining this Article, we must consider, first, the importance of the term *Spirit*, or *Holy Spirit*; secondly, his *procession* from the *Father* and the *Son*; and, thirdly, that he is truly God, of the same *substance* with the *Father* and the *Son*. *Spirit* signifies wind or breath, and in the Old Testament it stands frequently in that sense: the Spirit of God, or wind of God, stands sometimes for a high and strong wind; but more frequently it signifies a secret impression made by God on the mind of a prophet: so that the *Spirit of God* and the *spirit of prophecy* are set in opposition to the vain imaginations, the false pretences, or the diabolical illusions, of those who assumed to themselves the name and the authority of a prophet, without a true mission from God. But when God made representations either in a dream or in an ecstasy to any person, or imprinted a sense of his will on their minds, together with such necessary characters as gave it proof and authority, this was an illapse from God, as a breathing from him on the soul of the prophet.

In the New Testament this word *Holy Ghost* stands most commonly for that wonderful effusion of those miraculous virtues that was poured out at *Pentecost* on the apostles; by which their spirits were not only exalted with extraordinary degrees of zeal and courage, of authority and utterance, but they were furnished with the gifts of tongues and of miracles. And besides that first and great effusion, several Christians received particular talents and inspirations, which are most commonly expressed by the word *Spirit* or *inspiration*. Those inward assistances, by which the frame and temper of men's minds are changed and renewed, are likewise called *the Spirit*, or *the Holy Spirit*, or *Holy Ghost*. So Christ said to Nicodemus, that 'except a man was born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God;' and that his 'heavenly Father would give the Holy Spirit to every one that asked him.' By these it is plain, that extraordinary or miraculous inspirations are not meant, for these are not every Christian's portion; there is no question made of all this.

The main question is, whether by *Spirit*, or *Holy Spirit*, we are to understand one person, that is the fountain of all those gifts and operations; or whether by *one Spirit* is only to be

meant the power of God flowing out and shewing itself in many wonderful operations. The adversaries of the Trinity will have the *Spirit*, or *Holy Spirit*, to signify no person, but only the divine gifts or operations. But in opposition to this it is plain, that in our Saviour's last and long discourse to his disciples, in which he promised to send them his Spirit, he calls him *another Comforter*, to be sent in his stead, or to supply his absence; and the whole tenor of the discourse runs on him as a *person*: 'He shall abide with you: he shall guide you into all truth; and shew you things to come. He shall bring all things into your remembrance: he shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.' In all these places he is so plainly spoken of, not as a quality or operation, but as a person; and that without any key or rule to understand the words otherwise, that this alone may serve to determine the matter now in dispute. Christ's commission to *preach* and *baptize* in the name of *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, does plainly make him a person, since it cannot be said that we are to be called by the name of a virtue or operation. St. Paul does also, in a long discourse upon the diversity of gifts, administrations, and operations, ascribe them all to *one Spirit*, as their author and fountain: of whom he speaks as of a person, distributing these in order to several ends, and in different measures. He speaks of the Spirit's 'searching all things,' of his 'interceding for us,' of our 'grieving the Spirit, by which we are sealed.' This is the language used concerning a person, not a quality. 'All these,' says he, 'worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.' Now it is not to be conceived, how that both our Saviour and his apostles should use the phrase of a person so constantly in speaking of the *Spirit*, and should so critically and in the way of argument pursue that strain, if he is not a person: they not only insist on it, and repeat it frequently, but they draw an argument from it for union and love, and for mutual condescension and sympathy. Upon all these grounds it is evident, that the *Holy Spirit* is in the scripture proposed to us as a person, under whose economy all the various gifts, administrations, and operations, that are in the church, are put.

The second particular relating to this Article is, the *procession* of this *Spirit* from the *Father* and the *Son*. The word *procession*, or, as the schoolmen term it, *spiration*, is only made use of in order to the naming this relation of the *Spirit* to the *Father* and *Son*, in such a manner as may best answer the sense of the word *Spirit*: for it must be confessed that we can frame no explicit idea of this matter: and therefore we must speak of it either strictly in scripture words, or in such words as arise out of them, and that have the same signification with them. It is therefore a vain attempt of the schoolmen to undertake to give a reason why the second person is said to

John xiv.
16, 26.John xvi.
8—13.1 Cor. xii.
4, 8, 9, 11,
13.1 Cor. ii.
10.
Rom. viii.
26.
Eph. iv.
30.John iii. 3,
5, 6.Luke xi.
13.

A R T.
V.

be *generated*, and so is called *Son*, and the third to *proceed*, and so is called *Spirit*. All these subtillies can have no foundation, and signify nothing towards the clearing this matter, which is rather darkened than cleared by a pretended illustration. In a word, as we should never have believed this mystery, if the scripture had not revealed it to us, so we understand nothing concerning it, besides what is contained in the scriptures: and therefore, if in any thing, we must think soberly upon those subjects. The scriptures call the second, *Son*, and the third, *Spirit*; so generation and procession are words that may well be used, but they are words concerning which we can form no distinct conception. We only use them because they belong to the words *Son* and *Spirit*. The *Spirit*, in things that we do understand, is somewhat that proceeds, and the *Son* is a person begotten; we therefore, believing that the Holy Ghost is a *person*, apply the word *procession* to the manner of his emanation from the Father; though at the same time we must acknowledge that we have no distinct thought concerning it. So much in general concerning *procession*. It has been much controverted whether the *Holy Spirit* proceeds from the *Father* only, or from the *Father* and the *Son*.

In the first disputes concerning the divinity of the *Holy Ghost* with the Macedonians, who denied it, there was no other contest but whether he was truly God or not. When that was settled by the council of Constantinople, it was made a part of the Creed; but it was only said that he *proceeded* from the *Father*: and the council of Ephesus soon after that fixed on that Creed, decreeing that no additions should be made to it: yet about the end of the sixth century, in the western church an addition was made to the article, by which the Holy Ghost was affirmed to *proceed from the Son*, as well as from the *Father*. And when the eastern and western churches, in the ninth century, fell into an humour of quarrelling upon the account of jurisdiction, after some time of anger, in which they seem to be searching for matter to reproach one another with, they found out this difference: the Greeks reproached the Latins for thus adding to the faith, and corrupting the ancient symbol, and that contrary to the decree of a general council. The Latins, on the other hand, charged them for detracting from the dignity of the *Son*: and this became the chief point in controversy between them.

Here was certainly a very unhappy dispute; inconsiderable in its original, but fatal in its consequences. We of this church, though we abhor the cruelty of condemning the eastern churches for such a difference, yet do receive the Creed according to the usage of the western churches: and therefore, though we do not pretend to explain what *procession* is, we believe according to the Article, that the *Holy Ghost* *proceeds* both from the *Father* and the *Son*: because in that discourse of our Saviour's that contains the promise of the *Spirit*, and that

A R T.
V.

long description of him as a *person*, Christ not only says, that 'the Father will send the Spirit in his name,' but adds, that 'he will send the Spirit;' and though he says next, 'who proceedeth from the Father,' yet since he sends him, and that he was to supply his room, and to act in his name, this implies a relation, and a sort of subordination in the *Spirit* to the *Son*. This may serve to justify our adhering to the Creeds, as they had been for many ages received in the western church: but we are far from thinking that this proof is so full and explicit, as to justify our separating from any church, or condemning it, that should stick exactly to the first Creeds, and reject this addition.

The third branch of the Article is, that this Holy Ghost or person, thus proceeding, is truly God, of the same substance with the Father and the Son. That he is God, was formerly proved by those passages in which the whole Trinity in all the three persons is affirmed: but besides that, 'the lying to the Holy Ghost' by Ananias and Sapphira, is said to be 'a lying not unto men, but to God:' his being called 'another Comforter; his teaching all things; his guiding into all truth; his telling things to come; his searching all things, even the deep things of God;' his being called 'the Spirit of the Lord,' in opposition to 'the spirit of a man; his making intercession for us; his changing us into the same image with Christ,' are all such plain characters of his being *God*, that those who deny that, are well aware of this, that, if it is once proved that he is a person, it will follow that he must be God; therefore all that was said to prove him a *person* is here to be remembered as a proof that he is truly God. So that though there is not such a variety of proofs for this, as there was for the divinity of the *Son*, yet the proof of it is plain and clear. And from what was said upon the first Article concerning the unity of *God*, it is also certain, that if he is *God*, he must be of *one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son*.

John xiv.
26.
John xv.
26.

Acts v. 34.

John xiv.
16, 26. xvi.
13.
1 Cor. ii.
10, 11.
Rom. viii.
26.
2 Cor. iii.
17, 18.

ARTICLE VI.

Of the Sufficiency of Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

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, or to be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose Authority was never any Doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books.

<i>Genesis</i>	The First Book of <i>Chronicles</i>
<i>Exodus</i>	The Second Book of <i>Chronicles</i>
<i>Leviticus</i>	The First Book of <i>Esdras</i>
<i>Numbers</i>	The Second Book of <i>Esdras</i>
<i>Deuteronomy</i>	The Book of <i>Esther</i>
<i>Joshua</i>	The Book of <i>Job</i>
<i>Judges</i>	The <i>Psalms</i>
<i>Ruth</i>	The <i>Proverbs</i>
The First Book of <i>Samuel</i>	<i>Ecclesiastes</i> or Preacher
The Second Book of <i>Samuel</i>	<i>Cantica</i> or Song of <i>Solomon</i>
The First Book of <i>Kings</i>	Four Prophets the greater
The Second Book of <i>Kings</i>	Twelve Prophets the less.

And the other Books (as Hierom saith) the Church doth read for Example of Life, and Instruction of Manners; but yet it doth not apply them to establish any Doctrine. Such are these following:

The Third Book of <i>Esdras</i>	<i>Baruch</i> the Prophet
The Fourth Book of <i>Esdras</i>	The Song of the Three Children
The Book of <i>Tobias</i>	The History of <i>Susanna</i>
The Book of <i>Judith</i>	Of <i>Bel</i> and the <i>Dragon</i>
The rest of the Book of <i>Esther</i>	The Prayer of <i>Manasses</i>
The Book of <i>Wisdom</i>	The First Book of <i>Maccabees</i>
<i>Jesus</i> the Son of <i>Syrach</i>	The Second Book of <i>Maccabees</i> .

All the Books of the New Testament as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.*

* The following is the new canon of scripture first set forth by the council of Trent, and afterwards confirmed and declared necessary to be received, with other articles of faith, by the bull of Pope Pius IV. A. D. 1564.

† Sacrosancta œcumenica et generalis tridentina synodus, in Spiritu Sancto legitime congregata, presidentibus in ea eisdem tribus apostolicæ sedis legatis, hoc sibi perpetuo ante oculos proponens, ut sublatis erroribus, puritas ipsa evangelii in ecclesia conservetur quod promissum ante prophetas in scripturas sanctis, Dominus noster Jesus Christus Dei Filius, proprio ore primum promulgavit: deinde per suos apos-

In this Article there are two important heads, and to each of them a proper consequence does belong. The first is, that the holy scriptures do contain all things necessary to salvation: the negative consequence that ariseth out of that is, that no article that is not either read in it, or that may not be proved by it, is to be required to be believed as an article of faith, or to be thought necessary to salvation. The second is, the settling the canon of the scripture both of the Old and New Testament; and the consequence that arises out of that is, the rejecting the books commonly called *Apocryphal*, which, though they may be read by the church for example of life, and instruction of manners, yet are no part of the canon, nor is any doctrine to be established by them.*

tolos tanquam fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis, et morum disciplinæ, omni creaturæ prædicari jussit: perspicuensque hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis, et sine scripto traditionibus, quæ ipsius Christi ore ab apostolis acceptæ, aut ab ipsis apostolis, Spiritu sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditæ, ad nos usque pervenerunt; orthodoxorum patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam veteris quam novi Testamenti, cum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor, necnon traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem, tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu sancto dictatas, et continua successione in ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit, et veneratur. Sacrorum vero librorum indicem huic decreto adscribendum censuit; ne cui dubitatio suboriri possit, quinam sint, qui ab ipsa synodo suscipiuntur. Sunt vero infra scripti; Testamenti veteris, quinque Moysi, id est, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri, Deuteronomium: Josue, Judicum, Ruth, quatuor Regum, duo Paralipomenon, Esdræ primus et secundus qui dicitur Nehemias; Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, Psalterium Davidicum centum quinquaginta psalmodum, Parabolæ, Ecclesiastes, Canticum canticorum, Sapientia, Ecclesiasticus, Isaias, Jeremias cum Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel; duodecim prophetæ minores, id est, Osea, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Michæas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggæus, Zacharias, Malachias; duo Machabæorum, primus et secundus. Testamenti novi, quatuor Evangelia, secundum Matthæum, Marcum, Lucam et Joannem, Actus Apostolorum a Luca evangelista conscripti: quatuordecim Epistolæ Pauli apostoli, ad Romanos, duæ ad Corinthios, ad Galatas, ad Ephesios, ad Philippenses, ad Colossenses, duæ ad Thessalonicenses, duæ ad Timotheum, ad Titum, ad Philemonem, ad Hebræos: Petri apostoli duæ, Joannis apostoli tres, Jacobi apostoli una, Judæ apostoli una, et Apocalypsis Joannis apostoli. Si quis autem libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout in ecclesia catholica legi consueverunt, et in veteri vulgata Latina editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, et traditiones prædictas sciens et prudens contempserit; anathema sit.—*Conc. Trid. Sess. iv.*

† Cætera item omnia a sacris canonibus, et œcumenicis conciliis, ac præcipue a sacrosancta Tridentina synodo tradita, definita, et declarata, indubitanter recipio atque profiteor; simulque contraria omnia, atque hæreses, quascumque ab ecclesia damnatas, rejectas, et anathematizatas, ego pariter damno, rejicio et anathematizo. Hanc veram catholicam fidem extra quam nemo salvus esse potest, quam in præsentis sponte profiteor et veraciter teneo, eandem integram et inviolatam usque ad extremum vitæ spiritum constantissime, Deo adjuvante, retinere et confiteri, atque a meis subditis, vel illis quorum cura ad me in munere meo spectabit, teneri, doceri, et prædicari, quantum in me erit, curaturum, ego idem N. spondeo, voveo, ac juro. Sic me Deus adjuvet et hæc sancta Dei Evangelia.—*Bulla Pii IV. sup. form. jur. prof. fid.*—[E. D.]

* The books not admitted into the canon of scripture were called Apocryphal—a word derived from ἀποκρυφον, 'to hide,' because of their not being submitted to public inspection as the inspired books were: or, according to others, from ἀπο κρη κευρατης, because they were not admitted into the ark, the place where the canonical books were deposited.

† Concerning the books that belong to the New Testament, there is no any difference between us and other churches about them. For though some few particular and private persons have both of late and heretofore, either out of their error

After the main foundations of religion in general, in the belief of a God, or more specially of the Christian religion in the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, are laid down; the next point to be settled is, what is *the rule of this faith*, where is it to be found, and with whom is it lodged? The church of Rome and we do both agree, that the scriptures are of divine inspiration: those of that communion acknowledge, that every thing which is contained in scripture is true, and comes from God; but they add to this, that the books of the New Testament

rejected, or out of their curiosity (more than befitted them) debated, the canonical authority of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse, besides some other lesser parts of the gospels; yet can it never be shewed, that any entire church, nor that any national or provincial council, nor that any multitude of men in their confessions or catechisms, or other such public writings, have rejected them, or made any doubt of them at all. Indeed, Luther, and some certain men that lived with him in Germany (no great number nor party of them), were other whiles of that mind, that the Epistle of St. James, &c., might be called into question, whether they were canonical, or no; but afterwards they amended their judgment, and persisted no longer in that error, wherein some others of the Latin church (but never any considerable number or eminent persons there) had been involved before them. And at this day all the churches of Christendom are at one accord for the books of the New Testament. But for the Old Testament they are not so. For herein the canon of the council at Trent hath made the Roman church to differ both from *itself* (considered as it was in former ages) and from all other churches besides, by adding to the old Canon (strictly and properly so taken) six entire books which were never in it before, that is to say, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Judith, the First and the Second of the Maccabees, together with certain other pieces of Baruch, Esther, and Daniel; all which before the time of this new council (where the Pope and his partisans, both in this and in many other divine matters besides, took a most enormous liberty to define what they pleased) were wont to be severed, even among themselves, from the true canonical scriptures. To the body whereof they have now not only annexed them, and made the one to be of equal authority with the other, but they have likewise added this above all, that whosoever shall not receive them, as they do, and believe them to be as good canonical scriptures as the rest (that is, all equally inspired by God, and delivered over to his church for such, ever since they were first written), must undergo the curse of their unhallowed sentence, and be made incapable of eternal salvation. The capacity and assured hope whereof, though (thanks be to God) it never was, nor never will be, in their power to take from us, yet have they laid their most unchristian anathema upon all other churches and persons of the world, and excluded them from all possibility of being saved, unless their new decree in this particular, and the Pope's new creed in this and many other particulars (as unsound and as false as this), be first received and believed for the true articles of our Christian faith. By which their unsufferable and inexcusable determination in that council, they have given the world sufficient cause to reject the council, if there were no other reasons to be brought against it (as many and very many other there be) but this alone—that herein against the common faith, and the catholic canon of the church of God, they have gone about to bind all men's consciences to theirs, and given no more faith or reverence to the true and infallible scriptures of God, than they do to other additional books and writings of men.

‘For the whole current of antiquity runs against them. And the universal church of Christ, as well under the Old as the New Testament, did never so receive those books, which are now by us termed Apocryphal; nor ever acknowledged them to be of the same order, authority, or reverence, with the rest, which both they and we call strictly and properly canonical.

‘In proof whereof we shall here recite the testimony of the church in every age concerning the canon of the Old Testament, and the books that belong thereunto. Where the question will not be, First, Whether those Apocryphal books either have been heretofore, or may still be, read in the church, for the better instruction and

were occasionally written, and not with the design of making them the full rule of faith, but that many things were delivered orally by the apostles, which, if they are faithfully transmitted to us, are to be received by us with the same submission and respect that we pay to their writings: and they also believe, that these traditions are conveyed down infallibly to us, and that to distinguish betwixt true and false doctrines and traditions, there must be an infallible authority lodged by Christ with his church. We, on the contrary, affirm that the scriptures are a complete *rule of faith*.* and

edifying of the people in many good precepts of life: Second, Nor whether they may be joined together in one common volume with the Bible, and comprehended under the general name of Holy Scripture, as that name is largely and improperly taken: Third, Nor whether the moral rules, and profitable histories and examples, therein contained, may be set forth and cited in a sermon or other treatise of religion: Fourth, Nor whether the ancient fathers thought these books (at least many passages in them) worthy of their particular consideration both for the elucidation of divers places in the Old Testament, and for the better enabling of them to get a more perfect understanding of the ecclesiastical story: Fifth, Nor yet, whether, in the very articles of faith, some certain sayings that are found in those books (agreeable herein to the others that are canonical) may not be brought for the more abundant explaining and clearing of them: For all this we grant, and to all these purposes there may be good use made of an apocryphal book. But the question only is, whether all or any of those books be purely, positively, and simply divine scripture, or to all purposes, and in all senses, sacred and canonical, so as that they may be said (or ever were so accounted) to be of the same equal and sovereign authority with the rest, for the establishing and determining of any matter of faith, or controversies in religion, no less than the true and undoubted canonical books of scripture themselves.—*Cosin*.

Bishop Cosin, then, in his unanswerable ‘Scholastical history of the canon of scripture,’ brings forward the testimonies of every age to the sixteenth century in support of ours, and consequently against the new canon of the church of Rome.

The reader may on this important article consult with much advantage Sir H. Lynde, who proves that ‘the entire canon of scriptures which we profess (without the apocryphal additions) is confirmed by pregnant testimonies in all ages, from the first to the sixteenth, and most of them acknowledged by the Romanists themselves.’ And also answers ‘our adversaries’ pretences, from the authorities of fathers, and councils, to prove the Apocryphal books canonical.’ *Via Devia*, sections v. and vi.—[E.D.]

* When the holy scriptures are called the rule of faith, we are to understand, the rule whereby to judge of controversies in matters of faith—the rule whereby that which is according to the faith may be made manifest, and heresy detected. The rule is one thing: that whereby we decide what is, or is not, according to the rule, another. The question of the judge must therefore be ever considered apart from that of the rule itself. ‘Every man,’ observes Chillingworth, ‘is to judge for himself with the judgment of discretion, and to choose either his religion first, and then his church, as we say; or, as you say (addressing the Romanist), his church first, and then his religion.’ To exclude men from exercising their reason would make their faith in the first place irrational, because they could have no reason to believe; and in the second place, ‘altogether uncertain, and its object may as well be a falsehood, as a truth; because if I have no reason why I believe it true, then I have no certainty, but it may be false; for the only certainty I can have that my belief is not false, is because I have rational grounds to evidence it true, which when removed, what certainty can I have that I do not err?’ Besides, when any man embraces the communion of the papal church, he has reason for so doing, or he has not. If he has not, then his belief is ‘irrational, uncertain, and absurd: if he hath, then he believes the Romish church infallible, because his reason judgeth it to be so; and so the church is beholden to the judgment of his private reason for his belief of her infallibility.’ If it be objected by the Romanists, that reason is not a sure guide, we again answer with Whitby:—‘Can you conduct me to a surer guide than reason? Yes, you will answer, to the church. But if my reason,

A R T.
VI.

that the whole Christian religion is contained in them, and no where else; and although we make great use of tradition, especially that which is most ancient and nearest the source, to help us to a clear understanding of the scriptures; yet as to matters of faith we reject all oral tradition, as an incompetent mean of conveying down doctrines to us, and we refuse to receive any doctrine, that is not either expressly contained in scripture, or clearly proved from it.

Ex. xvii. In order to the opening and proving of this, it is to be
14. xxiv. 4. considered, what God's design, in first ordering Moses, and
Deu. xxvii. after him all inspired persons, to put things in writing, could
8. xxxi. 9, be: it could be no other than to free the world from the un-
19, 22, 24 certainties and impostures of *oral tradition*. All mankind
—26. being derived from one common source, it seems it was much
Jos. xxiv. easier in the first ages of the world to preserve the tradition
26. pure, than it could possibly be afterwards: there were only a
Is. viii. 1. few things then to be delivered concerning God; as, that he
xxx. 8. was one spiritual Being, that he had created all things, that
Jer. xxxvi. 2, 28—32. he alone was to be worshipped and served; the rest relating
Hab. ii. 2. to
Luk. i. 3, 4. he alone was to be worshipped and served; the rest relating
John xx. 31.

2 Pet. i. 15, 16. being fallible, may misguide me, why may it not when it conducts me to the church; especially as you yourselves profess to believe the church's infallibility upon prudential motives? The judge then is the same in both churches, and must be kept quite distinct from the rule itself. Hence is evident the folly of Romanists, who, when they would assail our rule of faith, spend all their time in exposing the errors and absurdities into which men's private fancies have carried them: whereas such errors arise from men making something else, their own private spirit or their traditions, to be either a substitute for, or supplement to, the only unerring rule—the written word of God.†

The rule to which all questions of religion must be brought is the *lex scripta*—the written word; 'and if this word,' observes Chillingworth, 'be sufficient to inform us what is the faith, it must of necessity be sufficient to teach us what is heresy; seeing heresy is nothing but a manifest deviation from, and an opposition to, the faith. That which is straight will plainly teach us what is crooked; and one contrary cannot but manifest the other.' But if the scriptures be not the rule, how then shall 'the notes of the church,' which the Romanist is bound to examine before he can join or remain in his own communion, be determined? And if the scriptures be a sufficient rule whereby to try these, why not so for the trying of other questions—why not of all? The scriptures then are not the judge, but only a sufficient rule for those to judge by who believe them to be the word of God.

This distinction is all-important—indeed, the observance of it is indispensable in this controversy. By thus keeping questions, which have no necessary connexion, in their proper place, the champions of the papal system are at once deprived of the use of those weapons, which they have sometimes wielded with so much apparent success against Protestants; while they themselves are involved in inextricable difficulties if compelled to attack the sufficiency and completeness of the scriptures as a rule whereby to determine questions of religion; for how shall the question of the church be determined but by that rule which we adopt—the written word? Thus in the chief of questions are they compelled to have recourse to our rule.

In order to fully understand this point, the reader must study Chillingworth, chap. ii. 'Scripture the only rule whereby to judge of controversies.'—Ed.

† The reader will see this particular point ably handled by Bishop Taylor—'Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures to salvation.'

A R T.
VI.

to the history of the world, and chiefly of the first man that was made in it. There were also great advantages on the side of *oral tradition*; the first men were very long-lived, and they saw their own families spread extremely, so that they had on their side both the authority which long life always has, particularly concerning matters of fact, and the credit that parents have naturally with their own children, to secure tradition. Two persons might have conveyed it down from Adam to Abraham; Methuselah lived above three hundred years while Adam was yet alive, and Sem was almost a hundred when he died, and he lived much above a hundred years in the same time with Abraham, according to the Hebrew. Here is a great period of time filled up by two or three persons: and yet in that time the tradition of those very few things in which religion was then comprehended, was so universally and entirely corrupted, that it was necessary to correct it by immediate revelation to Abraham: God intending to have a peculiar people to himself out of his posterity, commanded him to forsake his kindred and country, that he might not be corrupted with an idolatry, that we have reason to believe was then but beginning among them. We are sure his nephew Laban was an idolater: and the danger of mixing with the rest of mankind was then so great, that God ordered a mark to be made on the bodies of all descended from him, to be the *seal of the covenant*, and the badge and cognizance of his posterity: by that distinction, and by their living in a wandering and unfixed manner, they were preserved for some time from idolatry; God intending afterwards to settle them in an instituted religion. But though the beginnings of it, I mean the promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, was one of the most amazing things that ever happened, and the fittest to be orally conveyed down, the law being very short, and the circumstances in the delivery of it most astonishing; and though there were many rites and several festivities, appointed chiefly for the carrying down the memory of it; though there was also in that dispensation the greatest advantage imaginable for securing this tradition, all the main acts of their religion being to be performed in one place, and by men of one tribe and family; as they were also all the inhabitants of a small tract of ground, of one language, and by their constitutions obliged to maintain a constant commerce among themselves: they having farther a continuance of signal characters of God's miraculous presence among them, such as the operation of the water of jealousy, the plenty of the sixth year to supply them all the sabbatical year, and till the harvest of the following year: together with a succession of prophets that followed one another, either in a constant course, or at least soon after one another; but above all, the presence of God which appeared in the cloud of glory, and in those answers that were given by the *Urim* and

Gen. xii. 1.
Jos. xxiv.
2, 3.Gen. xxxi.
19, 30.

A R T.
VI.

Thummim; all which must be confessed to be advantages on the side of tradition, vastly beyond any that can be pretended to have been in the Christian church; yet notwithstanding all these, God commanded Moses to write all their law, as the Ten Commandments were, by the immediate power or finger of God, writ on tables of stone. When all this is laid together and well considered, it will appear that God by a particular economy intended them to secure revealed religion from the doubtfulness and uncertainties of oral tradition.

It is much more reasonable to believe, that the Christian religion, which was to be spread to many remote regions, among whom there could be little communication, should have been fixed in its first beginnings by putting it in writing, and not left to the looseness of reports and stories. We do plainly see, that though the methods of knowing and communicating truth are now surer and better fixed than they have been in most of the ages which have passed since the beginnings of this religion; yet in every matter of fact such additions are daily made, as it happens to be reported, and every point of doctrine is so variously stated, that if religion had not a more assured bottom than tradition, it could not have that credit paid to it that it ought to have. If we had no greater certainty for religion than report, we could not believe it very firmly, nor venture upon it: so in order to the giving this doctrine such authority as is necessary for attaining the great ends proposed in it, the conveyance of it must be clear and unquestionable; otherwise as it would grow to be much mixed with fable, so it would come to be looked on as all a fable. Since then oral tradition, when it had the utmost advantages possible of its side, failed so much in the conveyance both of natural religion, and of the Mosaical, we see that it cannot be relied on as a certain method of preserving the truths of revealed religion.

In our Saviour's time, tradition was set up on many occasions against him, but he never submitted to it: on the contrary he reproached the Jews with this, that they had made 'the laws of God of no effect by their traditions;' and he told them, that they 'worshipped God in vain, when they taught for doctrines the commandments of men.' In all his disputes with the Pharisees, he appealed to Moses and the prophets; he bade them 'search the scriptures; for in them,' said he, 'ye think ye have eternal life, and they testify of me.' *Ye think* is, by the phraseology of that time, a word that does not refer to any particular *conceit* of theirs; but imports, that as they *thought*, so in them they had *eternal life*. Our Saviour justifies himself and his doctrine often by words of scripture, but never once by tradition. We see plainly, that in our Saviour's time the tradition of the resurrection was so doubtful among the Jews, that the Sadducees, a formed party among them, did openly deny it. The authority of tradition

Matt. xv.
3, 6, 9.

John v. 39.

A R T.
VI.

had likewise imposed two very mischievous errors upon the strictest sect of the Jews that adhered the most firmly to it: the one was, that they understood the prophecies concerning the Messiah sitting on the 'throne of David' literally: they thought that, in imitation of David, he was not only to free his own country from a foreign yoke, but that he was to subdue, as David had done, all the neighbouring nations. This was to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; so their adhering to their traditions proved their ruin in all respects. The other error, to which the authority of tradition led them, was their preferring the rituals of their religion to the moral precepts that it contained: this not only corrupted their own manners, while they thought that an exactness of performing, and a zeal in asserting, not only the ritual precepts that Moses gave their fathers, but those additions to them which they had from tradition, that were accounted hedges about the law: that this, I say, might well excuse or atone for the most heinous violations of the rules of justice and mercy: but this had yet another worse effect upon them, while it possessed them with such prejudices against our Saviour and his apostles, when they came to see that they set no value on those practices that were recommended by tradition, and that they preferred pure and sublime morals even to Mosaical ceremonies themselves, and set the Gentiles at liberty from those observances. So that the ruin of the Jews, their rejecting the Messiah, and their persecuting his followers, arose chiefly from this principle that had got in among them, of believing tradition, and of being guided by it.

The apostles, in all their disputes with the Jews, make their appeals constantly to the scriptures; they set a high character on those of Berea for examining them, and comparing the doctrine that they preached with them. In the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, in which they pursue a thread of argument, with relation to the prejudices that the Jews had taken up against Christianity, they never once argue from tradition, but always from the scriptures; they do not pretend only to disparage modern tradition, and to set up that which was more ancient: they make no such distinction, but hold close to the scriptures. When St. Paul sets out the advantages that Timothy had by a religious education, he mentions this, 'that of a child he had known the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus:' that is, the belief of the Christian religion was a key to give him a right understanding of the Old Testament; and upon this occasion St. Paul adds, 'all scripture (that is, the whole Old Testament) is given by divine inspiration;' or (as others render the words) 'all the divinely inspired scripture 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

Acts xvii.
11.2 Tim. iii.
15, 16, 17.

A R T.
VI.Luke i. 4.
John xx.
31.

2 Pet. i. 15.

works.' The New Testament was writ on the same design with the Old; that, as St. Luke expresses it, 'we might know the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed: These things were written,' saith St. John, 'that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.' When St. Peter knew by a special revelation that he was near his end, he writ his Second Epistle, that they might have that as a mean of keeping 'those things always in remembrance after his death.' Nor do the apostles give us any hints of their having left any thing with the church, to be conveyed down by an oral tradition, which they themselves had not put in writing: they do sometimes refer themselves to such things as they had delivered to particular churches; but by tradition in the apostles' days, and for some ages after, it is very clear, that they meant only the conveyance of the faith, and not any unwritten doctrines: they reckoned the faith was a sacred *depositum* which was committed to them; and that was to be preserved pure among them. But it were very easy to shew in the continued succession of all the first Christian writers, that they still appealed to the scriptures, that they argued from them, that they condemned all doctrines that were not contained in them; and when at any time they brought human authorities to justify their opinions or expressions, they contented themselves with a very few, and those very late, authorities: so that their design in vouching them seems to be rather to clear themselves from the imputation of having innovated any thing in the doctrine, or in the ways of expressing it, than that they thought those authorities were necessary to prove them by. For in that case they must have taken a great deal more pains than they did, to have followed up, and proved, the tradition much higher than they went.

We do also plainly see that such traditions as were not founded on scripture were easily corrupted, and on that account were laid aside by the succeeding ages. Such were the opinion of Christ's reign on earth for a thousand years; the saints not seeing God till the resurrection; the necessity of giving infants the eucharist; the divine inspiration of the seventy interpreters; besides some more important matters, which in respect to those times are not to be too much descanted upon. It is also plain, that the Gnostics, the Valentinians, and other heretics, began very early to set up a pretension to a tradition delivered by the apostles to some particular persons, as a key for understanding the secret meanings that might be in scripture; in opposition to which, both Irenæus, Tertullian, and others, make use of two sorts of arguments: the one is the authority of the scripture itself, by which they confuted their errors; the other is a point of fact, that there was no such tradition. In asserting this, they appeal to those churches which had been founded by the apostles, and in which a suc-

Iren. i. iii.
c. 1, 2, 3,
4, 5.
Tertul. de
Presc. cap.
20, 21, 25,
27, 28.A R T.
VI.

cession of bishops had been continued down. They say, in these we must search for apostolical tradition. This was not said by them as if they had designed to establish tradition, as an authority distinct from, or equal to, the scriptures: but only to shew the falsehood of that pretence of the heretics, and that there was no such tradition for their heresies as they gave out.

When this whole matter is considered in all its parts, such as, 1st, That nothing is to be believed as an article of faith, unless it appears to have been revealed by God. 2dly, That oral tradition appears, both from the nature of man, and the experience of former times, to be an incompetent conveyer of truth. 3dly, That some books were written for the conveyance of those matters, which have been in all ages carefully preserved and esteemed sacred. 4thly, That the writers of the first ages do always argue from, and appeal to, these books: and, 5thly, That what they have said without authority from them has been rejected in succeeding ages; the truth of this branch of our article is fully made out.

If what is contained in the scripture in express words is the object of our faith, then it will follow, that whatsoever may be proved from thence, by a just and lawful consequence, is also to be believed. Men may indeed err in framing these consequences and deductions, they may mistake or stretch them too far: but though there is much sophistry in the world, yet there is also true logic, and a certain thread of reasoning. And the sense of every proposition being the same, whether expressed always in the same or in different words; then whatsoever appears to be clearly the sense of any place of scripture, is an object of faith, though it should be otherwise expressed than as it is in scripture, and every just inference from it must be as true as the proposition itself is: therefore it is a vain cavil to ask express words of scripture for every article. That was the method of all the ancient heretics: Christ and his apostles argued from the words and passages in the Old Testament, to prove such things as agreed with the true sense of them, and so did all the fathers; and therefore so may we do.

The great objection to this is, that the scriptures are dark, that the same place is capable of different senses, the literal and the mystical: and therefore, since we cannot understand the true sense of the scripture, we must not argue from it, but seek for an interpreter of it, on whom we may depend. All sects argue from thence, and fancy that they find their tenets in it: and therefore this can be no sure way of finding out sacred truth, since so many do err that follow it. In answer to this, it is to be considered, that the Old Testament was delivered to the whole nation of the Jews; that Moses was read in the synagogue, in the hearing of the women and children; that whole nation was to take their doctrine and rules from it: all appeals were made to the law and to the prophets among

Deut. vi. 3,
6—9. xi.
18—22.
xxxii. 11—
13.
Jos. viii.
32—35.

A R T.
VI.2 Ki. xxiii.
2, 21, 24.
Ne. viii. 1
—8, 18.
Is. viii. 20.
xxxiv. 16.
Matt. ii. 4
—6.
Luk. iv. 16
—21. vii.
19—23.
xxiv. 25—
27.
Acts xvii.
2, 3. xviii.
28. xxviii.
23

them: and though the prophecies of the Old Testament were in their style and whole contexture dark, and hard to be understood; yet when so great a question as this, Who was the true Messiah? came to be examined, the proofs urged for it were passages in the Old Testament. Now the question was, how these were to be understood? No appeal was here made to tradition, or to church-authority, but only by the enemies of our Saviour. Whereas he and his disciples urge these passages in their true sense, and in the consequences that arose out of them. They did in that appeal to the rational faculties of those to whom they spoke. The Christian religion was at first delivered to poor and simple multitudes, who were both illiterate and weak: the Epistles, which are by much the hardest to be understood of the whole New Testament, were addressed to the whole churches, to all the *faithful or saints*; that is, to all the Christians in those churches. These were afterwards read in all their assemblies. Upon this it may reasonably be asked, were these writings clear in that age, or were they not? If they were not, it is unaccountable why they were addressed to the whole body, and how they came to be received and entertained as they were. It is the end of speech and writing, to make things to be understood; and it is not supposable, that men inspired by the Holy Ghost either could not or would not express themselves so as that they should be clearly understood. It is also to be observed, that the new dispensation is opposed to the old, as light is to darkness, an open face to a veiled, and substance to shadows. Since then the Old Testament was so clear, that David, both in the 19th, and most copiously in the 119th Psalm, sets out very fully the light which the laws of God gave them in that darker state, we have much more reason to conclude, that the new dispensation should be much brighter. If there was no need of a certain expounder of scripture then, there is much less now. Nor is there any provision made in the new for a sure guide; no intimations are given where to find one: from all which we may conclude, that the books of the New Testament were clear in those days, and might well be understood by those to whom they were at first addressed. If they were clear to them, they may be likewise clear to us: for though we have not a full history of that time, or of the phrases and customs, and particular opinions, of that age, yet the vast industry of the succeeding ages, of these two last in particular, has made such discoveries, besides the other collateral advantages which learning and a niceness in reasoning has given us, that we may justly reckon, that though some hints in the Epistles, which relate to the particulars of that time, may be so lost, that we can at best but make conjectures about them; yet, upon the whole matter, we may well understand all that is necessary to salvation in the scripture.

We may indeed fall into mistakes as well as into sins;

A R T.
VI

and into errors of ignorance, as well as into sins of ignorance. God has dealt with our understandings as he hath dealt with our wills: he proposes our duty to us, with strong motives to obedience; he promises us inward assistances, and accepts of our sincere endeavours; and yet this does not hinder many from perishing eternally, and others from falling into great sins, and so running great danger of eternal damnation; and all this is because God has left our wills free, and does not constrain us to be good. He deals with our understandings in the same manner; he has set his will and the knowledge of salvation before us, in writings that are framed in a simple and plain style, in a language that was then common, and is still well understood, that were at first designed for common use; they are soon read, and it must be confessed that a great part of them is very clear: so we have reason to conclude, that if a man reads these carefully and with an honest mind; if he prays to God to direct him, and follows sincerely what he apprehends to be true, and practises diligently those duties that do unquestionably appear to be bound upon him by them, that then he shall find out enough to save his soul; and that such mistakes as lie still upon him, shall either be cleared up to him by some happy providence, or shall be forgiven him by that infinite mercy, to which his sincerity and diligence is well known. That bad men should fall into grievous errors, is no more strange, than that they should commit heinous sins: and the errors of good men, in which they are neither wilful nor insolent, will certainly be forgiven, as well as their sins of infirmity. Therefore all the ill use that is made of the scripture, and all the errors that are pretended to be proved by it, do not weaken its authority or clearness. This does only shew us the danger of studying them with a biassed or corrupted mind, of reading them too carelessly, of being too curious in going farther than as they open matters to us; and in being too implicit in adhering to our education, or in submitting to the dictates of others.

So far I have explained the first branch of this Article. The consequence that arises out of it is so clear, that it needs not be proved: *That therefore nothing ought to be esteemed an article of faith, but what may be found in it, or proved from it.* If this is our rule, our entire and only rule, then such doctrines as are not in it ought to be rejected; and any church that adds to the Christian religion, is erroneous for making such additions, and becomes tyrannical if she imposes them upon all her members, and requires positive declarations, subscriptions, and oaths, concerning them. In so doing she forces such as cannot have communion with her, but by affirming what they believe to be false, to withdraw from that which cannot be had without departing from the truth. So all the additions of the five sacraments—of the invocation of angels and saints; of the worshipping of images, crosses, and

relics; of the corporal presence in the eucharist; of the sacrifice offered in it for the dead as well as for the living; together with the adoration offered to it; with a great many more—are certainly errors, unless they can be proved from scripture; and they are intolerable errors, if as the scripture is express in opposition to them, so they defile the worship of Christians with idolatry: but they become yet most intolerable, if they are imposed upon all that are in that communion, and if creeds or oaths in which they are affirmed are required of all in their communion. Here is the main ground of justifying our forming ourselves into a distinct body from the Roman church, and therefore it is well to be considered.* The farther discussing of this will come properly in, when other particulars come to be examined.

From hence I go to the second branch of this Article, which gives us the canon of the scripture. Here I shall begin with the New Testament; for though in order the Old Testament is before the New, yet the proof of the one being more distinctly made out by the concurring testimonies of other writers, than can possibly be pretended for the other, and the New giving an authority to the Old by asserting it so

* This question of separation is ably unfolded in the following extract:—

If therefore the church of Rome did thrust the Protestants from her communion, for doing nothing but what became them as members of the catholic church, then that must be the schismatical party, and not the Protestants. For, supposing any church (though pretending to be never so catholic) doth restrain her communion within such narrow and unjust bounds, that she declares such excommunicate, who do not approve all such errors in doctrine, and corruptions in practice, which the communion of such a church may be liable to, the cause of that division which follows, falls upon that church which exacts these conditions from the members of her communion. that is, when the errors and corruptions are such as are dangerous to salvation. For in this case, that church hath first divided herself from the catholic church; for, the communion of that lying open and free to all, upon the necessary conditions of Christian communion, whatever church takes upon her to limit and enclose the bounds of the catholic, becomes thereby divided from the communion of the catholic church: and all such who disown such an unjust enclosure, do not so much divide from the communion of that church so enclosing, as return to the communion of the primitive and universal church. The catholic church therefore lies open and free, like a common field to all inhabitants; now if any particular number of these inhabitants should agree together, to enclose part of it, without consent of the rest, and not to admit any others to their right of common, without consenting to it, which of these two parties, those who deny to yield their consent, or such who deny their rights if they will not, are guilty of the violation of the public and common rights of the place? Now, this is plainly the case between the church of Rome and ours; the communion of the catholic church lies open to all such who own the fundamentals of Christian faith, and are willing to join in the profession of them: now to these your church adds many particular doctrines, which have no foundation in scripture, or the consent of the primitive church—these, and many superstitious practices, are enjoined by her as conditions of her communion, so that all those are debarred any right of communion with her, who will not approve of them; by which it appears your church is guilty of the first violation of the union of the catholic; and whatever number of men are deprived of your communion, for not consenting to your usurpations, do not divide themselves from you any farther than you have first separated yourselves from the catholic church. And when your church by this act is already separated from the communion of the catholic church, the disowning of those things wherein your church is become schismatical cannot certainly be any culpable separation. For, whatever is so, must be from a church so far as it is catholic; but in our case it is from a church so far only as it is not catholic, i.e.

expressly, I shall therefore prove first the canon of the New Testament. I will not urge that of the testimony of the Spirit, which many have had recourse to: this is only an argument to him that feels it, if it is one at all; and therefore it proves nothing to another person: besides the utmost that with reason can be made of this is, that a good man feeling the very powerful effects of the Christian religion on his own heart, in the reforming his nature, and the calming his conscience, together with those comforts that arise out of it, is convinced in general of the whole of Christianity, by the happy effects that it has upon his own mind: but it does not from this appear how he should know that such books and such passages in them should come from a divine original, or that he should be able to distinguish what is genuine in them from what is spurious. To come therefore to such arguments as may be well insisted upon and maintained.

The canon of the new Testament, as we now have it, is fully proved from the quotations out of the books of the New Testament by the writers of the first and second centuries; such as Clemens, Ignatius, Justin, Irenæus, and several

so far as it hath divided herself from the belief and communion of the universal church.

For which we must farther consider, that although nothing separates a church properly from the catholic, but what is contrary to the being of it; yet a church may separate herself from the communion of the catholic, by taking upon her to make such things the necessary conditions of her communion, which never were the conditions of communion with the catholic church. As for instance, though we should grant, adoration of the eucharist, invocation of saints, and veneration of images, to be only superstitious practices taken up without sufficient grounds in the church; yet since it appears that the communion of the catholic church was free for many hundred years, without approving or using these things; that church which shall not only publicly use, but enjoin, such things upon pain of excommunication from the church, doth, as much as in her lies, draw the bounds of catholic communion within herself, and so divides herself from the true catholic church. For whatever confines must likewise divide the church; for by that confinement a separation is made between the part confined, and the other, which separation must be made by the party so limiting Christian communion. As it was the case of the Donatists, who were therefore justly charged with schism, because they confined the catholic church within their own bounds: and if any other church doth the same which they did, it must be liable to the same charge which they were. The sum of this discourse is, that the being of the catholic church lies in essentials; that for a particular church to disagree from all other particular churches in some extrinsic and accidental things, is not to separate from the catholic church so as to cease to be a church; but still whatever church makes such extrinsic things the necessary conditions of communion, so as to cast men out of the church who yield not to them, is schismatical in so doing; for it thereby divides itself from the catholic church; and the separation from it is so far from being schism, that being cast out of the church on these terms only returns them to the communion of the catholic church. On which grounds it will appear that yours is the schismatical church, and not ours. For although, before this imposing humour came into particular churches, schism was defined by the fathers, and others, to be a voluntary departure out of the church, yet that cannot in reason be understood of any particular, but the true catholic church; for not only persons but churches may depart from the catholic church; and in such cases, not those who depart from the communion of such churches, but those churches which departed from the catholic, are guilty of the schism.—Stillingfleet.

The reader ought also to consult Chillingworth. chap. v. *'Separation of Protestants from the church of Rome, not guilty of schism.*—[Ed.]

ART
VI.

others. Papias, who conversed with the disciples of the apostles, is cited by Eusebius in confirmation of St. Matthew's Gospel, which he says was writ by him in Hebrew: he is also cited to prove that St. Mark writ his Gospel from St. Peter's preaching; which is also confirmed by Clemens of Alexandria; not to mention later writers. Irenæus says St. Luke writ his Gospel according to St. Paul's preaching; which is supported by some words in St. Paul's Epistles that relate to passages in that Gospel: yet certainly he had likewise other vouchers; those 'who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word;' though the whole might receive its full authority from St. Paul's approbation. St. John writ later than the other three; so the testimonies concerning his Gospel are the fullest and the most particular. Irenæus has laboured the proof of this matter with much care and attention: he lived within a hundred years of St. John, and knew Polycarp that was one of his disciples: after him come Tertullian and Origen, who speak very copiously of the four Gospels; and from them all the ecclesiastical writers have without any doubting or controversy acknowledged and cited them, without the least shadow of any opposition, except what was made by Marcion and the Manichees.

Next to these authorities we appeal to the catalogues of the books of the New Testament, that are given us in the third and fourth centuries by Origen, a man of great industry, and that had examined the state of many churches; by St. Athanasius, by the council of Laodicea and Carthage; and after these we have a constant succession of testimonies, that do deliver these as the canon universally received. All this laid together does fully prove this point; and that the more clearly, when these particulars are considered. 1st, That the books of the New Testament were read in all their churches, and at all their assemblies, so that this was a point in which it was not easy for men to mistake. 2dly, That this was so near the fountain, that the originals themselves of the apostles were no doubt so long preserved. 3dly, That both the Jews, as appears from Justin Martyr, and the Gentiles, as appears by Celsus, knew that these were the books in which the faith of the Christians was contained. 4thly, That some question was made touching some of them, because there was not that clear or general knowledge concerning them, that there was concerning the others; yet upon fuller inquiry all acquiesced in them. No doubt was ever made about thirteen of St. Paul's Epistles; because there were particular churches or persons, to whom the originals of them were directed: but the strain and design of that to the Hebrews being to remove their prejudices, that high one, which they had taken up against St. Paul as an enemy to their nation, was to be kept out of view, that it might not blast the good effects which were intended by it; yet it is cited oftener than once by Clemens of Rome:

Lib. iii.
Hist. c. 39.
c. 25.
Eus. l. ii.
Hist. c. 15.

Lib. iii.
cap. 11.

Tert. l. iv.
cont. Mar.
cap. 1.
Orig. apud
Eus. lib. vi.
cap. 25.

Athan. in
Synops.
S. Script.
Conc.
Laod.
can. 60.
Carth.
can. 47.

Dial. cum
Trypho.

Tertul. de
Presc. cap.
36.

and though the ignorance of many of the Roman church, who thought that some passages in it favoured the severity of the Novatians, that cut off apostates from the hopes of repentance, made them question it, of which mention is made both by Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, who frequently affirm, that the Latin church, or the Roman, did not receive it; yet Athanasius reckons both this and the seven general Epistles among the canonical writings. Cyril of Jerusalem, who had occasion to be well informed about it, says, that he delivers his catalogue from the church, as she had received it from the apostles, the ancient bishops, and the governors of the church; and reckons up in it both the seven general Epistles, and the fourteen of St. Paul. So does Ruffin, and so do the councils of Laodicea and Carthage;* the canons of the former being received into the body of the *Canons*^b of the *Universal Church*. Irenæus, Origen, and Clemens of Alexandria,^c cite the Epistle to the Hebrews frequently. Some question was made of the Epistle of St. James, the Second of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, and St. Jude's Epistle. But both Clemens of Rome,^d Ignatius, and Origen, cite St. James's Epistle; Eusebius^e says it was known to most, and read in most Christian churches: the like is testified by St. Jerome.^f St. Peter's Second Epistle is cited by Origen and Firmilian;^g and Eusebius^h says it was held very useful even by those who held it not canonical; but since the First Epistle was never questioned by any, the Second that carries so many characters of its genuineness, such as St. Peter's name at the head of it, the mention of the transfiguration, and of his being an eye-witness of it, are evident proofs of its being writ by him. The Second and Third Epistles of St. John are cited by Irenæus, Clemens and Dennis of Alexandria, and by Tertullian.ⁱ The Epistle of St. Jude is also cited by Tertullian.* Some of those general Epistles were not addressed to any particular body, or church, that might have preserved the originals of them, but were sent about in the nature of circular letters; so that it is no wonder if they were not received so early, and with such an unanimity, as we find concerning the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and thirteen of St. Paul's Epistles. These, being first fixed upon

ART
VI.

Orig. Ep.
ad African.
Orig. Exh.
ad Martyr.
Euseb. His.
lib. vi. c. 14.
Hieron. Ep.
ad Dardan.
Cyr. Catec.
iv.

^a Apud Hieron.
^b Can. 60. Can. 47.
^c Iren. l. iii. c. 38. Orig. l. iii. et vii. cont. Cels. Dial. con. Marc. et Ep. ad Afric. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. ii.—iv. et vi.
^d Ignat. Ep. ad Eph. Orig. Hom. 13. in Gones.
^e Eus. Hist. l. ii. c. 23. l. iii. c. 25.
^f Hieron. Pref. in Ep. Jac.
^g Orig. cont. Marcion. Firmil. inter Epist. Cyprian. Ep. 75. p. 226. Oxon. 1682.
^h Eus. Hist. l. iii. c. 3.
ⁱ Iren. l. i. c. 13. Clem. Alex. Strom. 2. Tertul. de Carne Chr. c. 24. Eus. Hist. l. vi. c. 25. Tertul. de cultu fœm.
* The reader will find these writers quoted at length in 'Lardner's Credibility,' &c.—[Ed.]

by an unquestioned and undisputed tradition, made that here was a standard once ascertained to judge the better of the rest: so when the matter was strictly examined, so near the fountain that it was very possible and easy to find out the certainty of it, then in the beginning of the fourth century the canon was settled, and universally agreed to. The style and matter of the Revelation, as well as the designation of *Divine* given to the author of it, gave occasion to many questions about it: Clemens of Rome cites it as a prophetic book: * Justin Martyr says it was writ by John, one of Christ's twelve apostles; Irenæus calls it the Revelation of St. John, the disciple of our Lord, writ almost in our own age, in the end of Domitian's reign. Melito writ upon it: Theophilus of Antioch, Hippolytus, Clemens and Dennis of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen, do cite it. And thus the canon of the New Testament seems to be fully made out by the concurrent testimony of the several churches immediately after the apostolical time.

Here it is to be observed, that a great difference is to be made between all this and the oral tradition of a doctrine, in which there is nothing fixed or permanent, so that the whole is only report carried about and handed down. Whereas here is a book, that was only to be copied out and read publicly, and by all persons, between which the difference is so vast, that it is as little possible to imagine how the one should continue pure, as how the other should come to be corrupted. There was never a book of which we have that reason to be assured that it is genuine, that we have here. There happened to be constant disputes among Christians from the second century downward, concerning some of the most important parts of this doctrine; and by both sides these books were appealed to: and though there might be some variations in readings and translations, yet no question was made concerning the canon, or the authenticalness of the books themselves; unless it were by the Manichees, who came indeed to be called Christians, by a very enlarged way of speaking; since it is justly strange how men who said that the Author of the universe, and of the Mosaical dispensation, was an evil God; and who held that there were two supreme Gods, a good and an evil one; how such men, I say, could be called Christians.

* This citation of the book of Revelation by Clemens of Rome is not noticed by Lardner, Paley, or Mr. Horne in his 'Introduction,' &c. Tomline says, 'The earliest author now extant, who mentions this book, is Justin Martyr, who lived about sixty years after it was written, and he ascribes it to St. John.' Mr. Horne, however, following Lardner, mentions Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, who lived before the time of Justin Martyr, as having referred to this book. We have taken some pains to discover Burnet's grounds for his statement respecting Clemens of Rome, and think it probable that the following is the passage from Clemens which he had in view, and which appears to be a reference to Rev. xxii. 12: 'For from him are all things; and thus he speaks to us beforehand: "Behold the Lord cometh, and his reward is before his face, to render to every man according to his work."—[E.D.]

The authority of those books is not derived from any judgment that the church made concerning them; but from this, that it was known that they were writ, either by men who were themselves the apostles of Christ, or by those who were their assistants and companions, at whose order, or under whose direction and approbation, it was known that they were written and published. These books were received and known for such, in the very apostolical age itself; so that many of the apostolical men, such as Ignatius and Polycarp, lived long enough to see the canon generally received and settled. The suffering and depressed state of the first Christians was also such, that as there is no reason to suspect them of imposture, so it is not at all credible that an imposture of this kind could have passed upon all the Christian churches. A man in a corner might have forged the Sibylline oracles, or some other pieces which were not to be generally used; and they might have appeared soon after, and credit might have been given too easily to a book or writing of that kind: but it cannot be imagined, that in an age in which the belief of this doctrine brought men under great troubles, and in which miracles and other extraordinary gifts were long continued in the church, that, I say, either false books could have been so early obtruded on the church as true, or that true books could have been so vitiated as to lose their original purity, while they were so universally read and used; and that so soon; or that the writers of that very age and of the next should have been so generally and so grossly imposed upon, as to have cited spurious writings for true. These are things that could not be believed in the histories or records of any nation: though the value that the Christians set upon these books, and the constant use they made of them, reading a parcel of them every Lord's day, make this much less supposable in the Christian religion, than it could be in any other sort of history or record whatsoever. The early spreading of the Christian religion to so many remote countries and provinces, the many copies of these books that lay in countries so remote, the many translations of them that were quickly made, do all concur to make the impossibility of any such imposture the more sensible. Thus the canon of the New Testament is fixed upon clear and sure grounds.

From thence, without any farther proof, we may be convinced of the canon of the Old Testament. Christ does frequently cite Moses and the prophets; he appeals to them; and though he charged the Jews of that time, chiefly their teachers and rulers, with many disorders and faults, yet he never once so much as insinuated that they had corrupted their law, or other sacred books; which, if true, had been the greatest of all those abuses that they had put upon the people. Our Saviour cited their books according to the translation that was then in credit and common use amongst them. When

ART. VI. one asked him which was the great commandment, he answered, 'How readest thou?' And he proved the chief things relating to himself, his death and resurrection, from the prophecies that had gone before; which ought to have been fulfilled in him: he also cites the Old Testament, by a threefold division of the 'law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms;' according to the three orders of books into which the Jews had divided it. The *Psalms*, which was the first among the holy writings, being set for that whole volume, St. Paul says, that 'to the Jews were committed the oracles of God:' he reckons that among the chief of their privileges, but he never blames them for being unfaithful in this trust; and it is certain that the Jews have not corrupted the chief of those passages that are urged against them to prove Jesus to have been the Christ. So that the Old Testament, at least the translation of the LXX interpreters, which was in common use and in high esteem among the Jews in our Saviour's time, was, as to the main, faithful and uncorrupted. This might be farther urged from what St. Paul says concerning those scriptures which Timothy had learned of a child; these could be no other than the books of the Old Testament. Thus if the writings of the New Testament are acknowledged to be of divine authority, the full testimony, that they give to the books of the Old Testament, does sufficiently prove their authority and genuineness likewise. But to carry this matter yet farther:

Moses wrought such miracles both in Egypt, in passing through the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, that, if these are acknowledged to be true, there can be no question made of his being sent of God, and authorized by him to deliver his will to the Jewish nation. The relation given of those miracles represents them to be such in themselves, and to have been acted so publicly, that it cannot be pretended they were tricks, or that some bold asserters gained a credit to them by affirming them. They were so publicly transacted, that the relations given of them are either downright fables: or they were clear and uncontested characters of a prophet authorized of God. Nor is the relation of them made with any of those arts that are almost necessary to impostors. The Jewish nation is all along represented as froward and disobedient, apt to murmur and rebel. The laws it contains, as to the political part, are calculated to advance both justice and compassion, to awaken industry, and yet to repress avarice. Liberty and authority are duly tempered; the moral part is pure, and suitable to human nature, though with some imperfections and tolerances which were connived at, but yet regulated: and for the religious part, idolatry, magic, and all human sacrifices, were put away by it. When we consider what remains are left us of the idolatry of the Egyptians, and what was afterward among the Greeks and Romans, who were polite and well constituted as to their civil laws and rules, and may be

esteemed the most refined pieces of heathenism, we do find a simplicity and purity, a majesty and gravity, a modesty with a decency, in the Jewish rituals, to which the others can in no sort be compared.

In the books of Moses, no design for himself appears; his posterity were but in the crowd, Levites without any character of distinction; and he spares neither himself nor his brother, when there was occasion to mention their faults, no more than he does the rest of his countrymen. It is to be farther considered, that the laws and policy appointed by Moses settled many rules and rights that must have perpetuated the remembrance of them. The land was to be divided by lot, and every share was to descend in an inheritance; the frequent assemblies at Jerusalem on the three great festivals, the sabbaths, the new moons, the sabbatical year, and the great jubilee, the law of the double tithe, the sacrifices of so many different kinds, the distinctions of meats, the prohibition of eating blood, together with many other particulars, were all founded upon it. Now let it be a little considered, whether the foundation of all this, I mean the five books of Moses, could be a forgery or not. If the Pentateuch was delivered by Moses himself to the Jews, and received by them as the rule both of their religion and policy, then it is not possible to conceive, but that the recital of all that is contained from the book of Exodus to the end of Deuteronomy was known by them to be true; and this establishes the credit of the whole. But if this is not admitted, then let it be considered in what time it can possibly be supposed that this imposture could have appeared. There is a continued series of books of their history, that goes down to the Babylonish captivity; so if there was an imposture of this sort set on foot in that time, all that history must have been made upon it, and an account must have been given of the discovery of those books; otherwise the imposture must have been too weak to have gained credit. Whereas, on the contrary, the whole thread of their history represents these books to have been always amongst them.

The discovery made in the reign of Josias cannot be supposed to be of this sort; since how much disorder soever the long and wicked reign of Manasses might have brought them under, and what havoc soever might have been made of the writings that were held sacred among them, yet it was impossible that a series of forged laws and histories could have been put upon them; of which there was still a continued memory preserved among them; and that they could be brought to believe that a book and a law full of so much history, and of so many various and unusual rites founded upon it, had been held sacred among them for many ages; if it was but a new invention. Therefore this is an extravagant conceit: so that the book, that was then found in the temple, was either the original of the law written by Moses's own hand; for so the

A R T.
VI.Ch. xxvi.
16. to the
end of
Deut.
Deu. xxviii.
from 36. to
the end.

words may be rendered: or it may be understood of some of the last chapters of Deuteronomy, which seem by the tenor of them to have been at first a book by themselves, though afterwards joined to the rest of Deuteronomy; and in the collection that Josias was making, these might be wanting at first; and in these there are such severe threatenings, that it was no wonder if a heart so tender as Josias's was very much affected at the reading them.

Upon the whole matter, there is no period in the whole history of the Jews, to which any suspicion of such an imposture can be fastened before the Babylonish captivity: so it must be laid either upon the times of the captivity, or soon after their return out of it. Now, not to observe that men in such circumstances are seldom capable of things of that nature, can it be imagined that a series of books, that run through many ages, could have been framed so particularly, and yet so exactly, that nothing in any concurrent history could ever be brought to disprove any part of it? That such a thing could pass in so short a time upon a whole nation, while so many men remembered, or might well remember, what they had been before the captivity, if they had not all known that it was true, is a most inconceivable thing. These books were so far from being disputed, though we see their neighbours the Samaritans were inclined enough to contest every thing with them, that all acquiesced in them, and in that second beginning of their being a state, as it is opened in the books of Esdras and Nehemiah, and in Daniel, and the three prophets of the second temple, all the other books were received among them without dispute: and their law was in such high esteem, that about two hundred years after that, the king of Egypt did with much entreaty, and at a vast charge, procure a translation of it to be made in Greek.

The Jewish nation, as they live much within themselves, where it is safe for them to profess their religion, so they have had the divine authority of their books so deeply infused into them from age to age, that now above sixteen hundred years, though it is not possible for them to practise the main parts of their religion, and though they suffer much for professing it, yet they do still adhere to it, and practise as much of it as they can by the law itself, which ties the chief performances of that religion to one determinate place. This is a firmness which has never yet appeared in any other religion besides the Jewish and the Christian: for all the several shapes of heathenism have often changed, and they all went off as soon as the government that supported them fell, and that another came in its place. Whereas these have subsisted long, not only without the support of the civil power, but under many severe persecutions: which is at least a good moral argument to prove, that these religions had another foundation, and a deeper root, than any other religion could ever pretend to. Yet,

A R T.
VI.1 Maccab.
i. 56.

after all, it is not to be denied, but that in the collection that was made of the books of the Old Testament after the captivity, by Ezra and others, or after that burning of many of the books of their law under Antiochus Epiphanes, mentioned in the book of Maccabees, that some disorder might happen; that there might be such regard had to some copies, as not to alter some manifest faults that were in them, but that, instead of that, they might have marked on the margin that which was the true reading; and a superstitious conceit might have afterwards crept in, and continued in after-ages, of a mystery in that matter, upon their first letting these faults continue in the text with the marginal annotation of the correction of them. There might be also other marginal annotations of the modern names of places set against the ancient ones, to guide the reader's judgment; and afterwards the modern name might have been writ instead of the ancient one. These are things that might naturally enough happen; and will serve to resolve many objections against the texts of the Old Testament. All the numbers of persons as well as of years might also have been writ in numerical letters, though afterwards they came all to be set down in words at large: and while they were in letters, as some might have been worn out, and lost in ancient copies, so others were, by the resemblance of some letters, very like to be mistaken: nor could men's memories serve them so well to correct mistakes in numbers as in other matters. This may shew a way to reconcile many seeming differences between the accounts that are variously stated in some of the books of the Bible, and between the Hebrew and the Septuagint. In these matters our church has made no decision; and so divines are left to a just freedom in them.

In general, we may safely rely upon the care and providence of God, and the industry of men, who are naturally apt to preserve things of that kind entire, which are highly valued among them. And therefore we conclude, that the books of the Old Testament are preserved pure down to us, as to all those things for which they were written; that is, in every thing that is either an object of faith, or a rule of life; and as to lesser matters which visibly have no relation to either of these, there is no reason to think that every copier was so divinely guided that no small error might surprise him. In fact, we know that there are many various readings, which might have arisen from the haste and carelessness of copiers, from their guessing wrong that which appeared doubtful or imperfect in the copy, and from a superstitious adhering to some apparent faults, when they found them in copies of a venerable antiquity. But when all those various readings are compared together, it appears that as they are inconsiderable, so they do not concern our faith nor our morals; the setting which right was the main end of revelation. The most important diversity relates to chronology: but the account of time, especially in the first

ages, is of no consequence to our believing right, or to our living well: and therefore, if some errors or mistakes should appear to be among those different readings, these give no just cause to doubt of the whole. And indeed, considering the many ages through which those books have passed, we have much more reason to wonder, that they are brought down to us so entire, and so manifestly genuine in all their main and important parts, than that we should see some prints of the frailty of those who copied and preserved them.

It remains only upon this head to consider what inspiration and an inspired book is, and how far that matter is to be carried. When we talk with one another, a noise is made in the air that strikes with such vibrations on the ears of others, that, by the motion thereby made on the brain of another, we do convey our thoughts to another person: so that the impression made on the brain is that which communicates our thoughts to another. By this we can easily apprehend how God may make such impressions on men's brains, as may convey to them such things as he intends to make known to them.

This is the general notion of inspiration: in which the manner and degree of the impression may make it at the least as certain that the motion comes from God, as a man may be certain that such a thing was told him by such a person, and not by any other. Now there may be different degrees both of the objects that are revealed, and of the manner of the revelation. To some it may be given in charge to deliver rules and laws to men: and because that ought to be expressed in plain words without pomp or ornament, therefore upon such occasions the imagination is not to be much agitated; but the impression must be made so naked, that the understanding may clearly apprehend it; and by consequence that it may be plainly expressed. In others, the design may be only to employ them in order to the awakening men to observe a law already received and owned; that must be done with such pompous visions of judgments coming upon the violation of those laws, as may very much alarm those to whom they are sent: both the representations and the expressions must be fitted to excite men, to terrify, and so to reform them. Now because the imagination, whether when we are transported in our thoughts being awake, or in dreams, is capable of having those scenes acted upon it, and of being so excited by them, as to utter them with pompous figures, and in a due rapidity; this is another way of inspiration that is strictly called *prophecy* in the Old Testament. A great deal of the style used in this must relate to the particulars of the time to which it belongs: many allusions, hints, and forms of speech, must be used, that are lively and proverbial; which cannot be understood, unless we had all those concurrent helps which are lost even in the next age, if not

preserved in books, and so they must be quite lost after many ages are past, when no other memorials are left of the time in which they were transacted. This must needs make the far greater part of all the prophetic writings to be very dark to us; not to insist upon the peculiar genius of the language in which the prophets wrote, and on the common customs of those climates and nations to this day, that are very different from our own.

A third degree of inspiration might be, when there were no discoveries of future events to be made: but good and holy men were to be inwardly excited by God to compose such poems, hymns, and discourses, as should be of great use both to give men clearer and fuller apprehensions of divine things, and also insensibly to charm them with a pleasant and exalted way of treating them. And if the providence of God should so order them in the management of their composures, that it may afterwards appear that predictions were intermixed with them; yet they are not to be called prophets, unless God had revealed to them the mystical intent of such predictions: so that though the Spirit of God prophesied in them, yet they themselves not understanding it, are not to be accounted prophets. Of this last sort are the books of the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, &c.

According to the different order of these inspirations was the Old Testament divided into three volumes. The inspiration of the New Testament is all to be reduced to the first sort, except the Revelation, which is purely and strictly prophetic. The other parts of the New Testament are writ after a softer and clearer illumination, and in a style suitable to it. Now because enthusiasts and impostors may falsely pretend to divine commissions and inspirations, it is necessary (both for the undeceiving of those who may be misled by a hot and ungoverned imagination, and for giving such an authority to men truly inspired, as may distinguish them from false pretenders) that the man thus inspired should have some evident sign or other, either some miraculous action that is visibly beyond the powers of nature, or some particular discovery of somewhat that is to come, which must be so expressed, that the accomplishment of it may shew it to be beyond the conjectures of the most sagacious: by one or both of those a man must prove, and the world must be convinced, that he is sent and directed by God. And if such men deliver their message in writing, we must receive such writings as sacred and inspired.

In these writings some parts are historical, some doctrinal, and some elenchtical or argumentative. As to the historical part, it is certain that whatsoever is delivered to us, as a matter truly transacted, must be indeed so: but it is not necessary, when discourses are reported, that the individual words should be set down just as they were said; it is enough if the

effect of them is reported: nor is it necessary that the order of time should be strictly observed, or that all the conjunctions in such relation should be understood severely according to their grammatical meaning. It is visible that all the sacred writers write in a diversity of style, according to their different tempers, and to the various impressions that were made upon them. In that the inspiration left them to the use of their faculties, and to their previous customs and habits: the design of revelation, as to this part of its subject, is only to give such representations of matters of fact, as may both work upon and guide our belief; but the order of time, and the strict words, having no influence that way, the writers might dispose them, and express them, variously, and yet all be exactly true. For the conjunctive particles do rather import that one passage comes to be related after another, than that it was really transacted after it.

As to the doctrinal parts, that is, the rules of life, which these books set before us, or the propositions that are offered to us in them, we must entirely acquiesce in these, as in the voice of God, who speaks to us by the means of a person, whom he, by his authorizing him in so wonderful a manner, obliges us to hear and believe. But when these writers come to explain or argue, they use many figures that were well known in that age: but because the signification of a figure is to be taken from common use, and not to be carried to the utmost extent that the words themselves will bear, we must therefore inquire, as much as we can, into the manner and phraseology of the time in which such persons lived, which with relation to the New Testament will lead us far: and by this we ought to govern the extent and importance of these figures.

As to their arguings, we are farther to consider, that sometimes they argue upon certain grounds, and at other times they go upon principles, acknowledged and received by those with whom they dealt. It ought never to be made the only way of proving a thing, to found it upon the concessions of those with whom we deal; yet when a thing is once truly proved, it is a just and usual way of confirming it, or at least of silencing those who oppose it, to shew that it follows naturally from those opinions and principles that are received among them. Since therefore the Jews had, at the time of the writing of the New Testament, a peculiar way of expounding many prophecies and passages in the Old Testament, it was a very proper way to convince them, to allege many places according to their key and methods of exposition. Therefore, when divine writers argue upon any point, we are always bound to believe the conclusions that their reasonings end in, as parts of divine revelation: but we are not bound to be able to make out, or even to assent to, all the premises made use of by them in their whole extent; unless it appears

plainly that they affirm the premises as expressly as they do the conclusions proved by them.

And thus far I have laid down such a scheme concerning inspiration and inspired writings, as will afford, to such as apprehend it aright, a solution to most of these difficulties with which we are urged on the account of some passages in the sacred writings. The laying down a scheme that asserts an immediate inspiration which goes to the style, and to every tittle, and that denies any error to have crept *into any of the copies*, as it seems on the one hand to raise the honour of the scriptures very highly, so it lies open, on the other hand, to great difficulties, which seem insuperable in that hypothesis; whereas a middle way, as it settles the divine inspiration of these writings, and their being continued down genuine and unvitiated to us, as to all that, for which we can only suppose that inspiration was given; so it helps us more easily out of all difficulties, by yielding that which serves to answer them, without weakening the authority of the whole.

I come in the last place to examine the negative consequence that arises out of this head, which excludes those books commonly called apocryphal, that are here rejected, from being a part of the canon: and this will be easily made out. The chief reason that presses us Christians to acknowledge the Old Testament is the testimony that Christ and his apostles gave to those books, as they were then received by the Jewish church; to whom 'were committed the oracles of God.' Now it is not so much as pretended, that ever these books were received among the Jews, or were so much as known to them. None of the writers of the New Testament cite or mention them; neither Philo nor Josephus speaks of them. Josephus on the contrary says, they had only twenty-two books that deserved belief, but that those which were written after the time of Artaxerxes were not of equal credit with the rest: and that in that period they had no prophets at all. The Christian church was for some ages an utter stranger to those books. Melito, bishop of Sardis, being desired by Onesimus to give him a perfect catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, took a journey on purpose to the east, to examine this matter at its source: and having, as he says, made an exact inquiry, he sent him the names of them just as we receive the canon; of which Eusebius says, that he has preserved it, because it contained all those books which the church owned. Origen gives us the same catalogue according to the tradition of the Jews, who divided the Old Testament into twenty-two books, according to the letters of their alphabet. Athanasius reckons them up in the same manner to be twenty-two, and he more distinctly says, 'that he delivered those, as they had received them by tradition, and as they were received by the whole church of Christ, because some presumed to mix apocryphal books with the

A R T. VI. divine scriptures: and therefore he was set on it by the orthodox brethren, in order to declare the canonical books delivered as such by tradition, and believed to be of divine inspiration. It is true,' he adds, 'that besides these there were other books which were not put into the canon, but yet were appointed by the fathers to be read by those who first come to be instructed in the way of piety: and then he reckons up most of the apocryphal books.' Here is the first mention we find of them, as indeed it is very probable they were made at Alexandria, by some of those Jews who lived there in great numbers. Both Hilary and Cyril of Jerusalem give us the same catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, and affirm, that they delivered them thus according to the tradition of the ancients. Cyril says, that all other books are to be put in a second order. Gregory Nazianzen reckons up the twenty-two books, and adds that none besides them are genuine. The words that are in the Article are repeated by St. Jerome in several of his prefaces. And that which should determine this whole matter is, that the council of Laodicea by an express canon delivers the catalogue of the canonical books as we do, decreeing that these only should be read in the church. Now the canons of this council were afterwards received into the code of the canons of the universal church; so that here we have the concurring sense of the whole church of God in this matter.

Catech. 4. It is true, the book of the Revelation not being reckoned in it, this may be urged to detract from its authority: but it was already proved, that that book was received much earlier into the canon of the scriptures, so the design of this canon being to establish the authority of those books that were to be read in the church, the darkness of the Apocalypse making it appear reasonable not to read it publicly, that may be the reason why it is not mentioned in it, as well as in some later catalogues.

Can. 95, and 60. Here we have four centuries clear for our canon, in exclusion to all additions. It were easy to carry this much farther down, and to shew that these books were never by any express definition received into the canon till it was done at Trent: and that in all the ages of the church, even after they came to be much esteemed, there were divers writers, and those generally the most learned of their time, who denied them to be a part of the canon. At first many writings were read in the churches, that were in high reputation both for the sake of the authors, and of the contents of them, though they were never looked on as a part of the canon: such were Clemens's Epistle, the books of Hermas, the Acts of the Martyrs, besides several other things which were read in particular churches. And among these the apocryphal books came also to be read, as containing some valuable books of instruction, besides several fragments of the Jewish history,

Can. 47.

which were perhaps too easily believed to be true. These therefore being usually read, they came to be reckoned among canonical scriptures: for this is the reason assigned in the third council of Carthage for calling them canonical, because they had received them from their fathers as books that were to be read in churches: and the word *canonical* was by some in those ages used in a large sense, in opposition to spurious; so that it signified no more than that they were genuine. So much depends upon this Article, that it seemed necessary to dwell fully upon it, and to state it clearly.

A R T. VI.

It remains only to observe the diversity between the Articles now established, and those set forth by king Edward. In the latter there was not a catalogue given of the books of scripture, nor was there any distinction stated between the canonical and the apocryphal books. In those there is likewise a paragraph, or rather a parenthesis, added after the words *proved thereby*, in these words, *Although sometimes it may be admitted by God's faithful people as pious, and conducing unto order and decency*: which are now left out, because the authority of the church as to matters of order and decency, which was only intended to be asserted by this period, is more fully explained and stated in the 35th Article.