

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

JULY, 1851.

No. III.

by John W. Proudfit

ART. I.—*Lettre de Démission à la Faculté de l'École de Théologie de Genève.* Par Ed. Schérer, Professeur de l'Exégèse, &c. Genève, 1849.

"AN old error often disguises itself under a new name."* There is something so attractive in the sheen of novelty, something so flattering to human pride in the idea of progress, that, "ye shall be as gods *knowing*" is still the gilding of the bait, whether it be addressed to sense or reason. The pithy observation we have quoted above, may be supported by examples from every century of Church history, and from none more copiously than our own. Certain "old errors" which have worn out not a few suits of phraseology in the course of the last eighteen centuries, have of late appeared in new attire complete, cut after the latest fashion; and with the help of rouge and patches, and other rejuvenating appliances, are seeking to palm themselves off as the youngest-born of truth. A searching glance, however, quickly detects through all their finery and affectations the wrinkles of age, and the deep scars of repeated refutations, received at the hands of those who in old time were "valiant for truth."

* Dr. Livingston.

The fact and the nature of Professor Schérer's aberration from the ancient faith of the Church on the subject of inspiration, and his consequent retirement from the Faculty of the New Theological School of Geneva, is already widely familiar to the religious public of this country. His theory is well characterized by M. Merle D'Aubigné as the "*mystico-rationalistic*."* The Spirit *apart from* the word, instead of the Spirit *in and by* the word; an individual, intuitional, subjective revelation and inspiration, (as far as there is any,) instead of a scripture inspired of God, and opened up to believers by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. This may be taken as a brief description of the views of Professor Schérer as distinguished from the general faith of Christians.

It is not a little surprising that Professor Schérer should advance this theory as a novelty. Yet he does so, in terms which can hardly be regarded as either modest or reverential. "The Christian life, the gospel ministry, theology—all will assume a new aspect in consequence of the revolution which I announce, (it is indeed a revolution,) because every thing has been falsified by the dominion of the letter and of authority." "La vie Chrétienne, le ministère évangélique, la théologie—tout changera de face à la suite de la révolution que ce signale (c'est bien une révolution,) parceque tout a été faussé par le règne de la lettre et de l'autorité." Exegesis, dogmatics, morality, evangelization, are each and all to assume new liberty and energy. The Bible is "no longer to be an authority, but a treasure." We are to "exchange the letter of a code for the living products of apostolic individuality," "an authority for a history," "a cabalistic ventriloquism!! for the noble accent of the human voice." "A precious truth which Quakerism has long monopolized," (que le Quæquerisme a longtemps représentait seul) is to be replaced in just estimation. It is not without hesitation that we pen the following prediction: "The Holy Spirit, in consequence of this *emancipation*, (à la suite de cette affranchissement) will resume the place which belongs to him in the life of the Church and of believers." This may be taken as a specimen of the *honour* which is to accrue to the adorable Sanctifier of the Church of God from a system which

* Discours de l'Ouverture à l'Assemblée Gen. de la Soc. Ev. de Genève. 1850.

magnifies him above and aside from his own word. "The theological baggage," (thus Professor Schérer denominates "the literal system") "which now retards the onward march of Christianity," is to be left behind. (But what if the artillery, provisions, and munitions of war should be found to be included in this "baggage," and left behind along with it?) But there is one more "gain" which we must not omit to notice. "The minister of your gospel," says M. Schérer, "must necessarily be a learned man, a thing which seems to me monstrous. The simple believer cannot preach the evangelical doctrine such as you understand it; he cannot labour for the advancement of the kingdom of God as you conceive of it, without the undertaking supposing on his part the determination of the most difficult questions of theology." "Preaching," therefore, "would, in particular, gain much; it would gain every thing by the change proposed." Happy period about to dawn upon the Church! No more need of the long and tiresome process of "reading and doctrine;" "the flesh" need no longer suffer the "weariness" of "much study;" no more danger of "laying hands suddenly" on candidates for the ministry; no objection whatever to a "bishop" being "a novice!" Here, certainly, is *new light*, and enough of it. Few discoverers of "new truth" have ventured to promise so long and brilliant a list of results. "The Bible no longer to be an authority; no farther need of a learned ministry; the Christian army to march on without its baggage; Quakerism to be the germ of a new expansion of Christianity." Such are to be the "suites" of the "affranchissement," the "revolution," the "marche en avant" "signalized" by Professor Schérer!

About three hundred years ago, Castellio advanced substantially the same views at Geneva, with much the same pretensions. "The Spirit," said he, "will eclipse the light of the Scripture as the sun eclipses the light of a candle." But Calvin dryly and good-naturedly observed that "there was nothing in all these so called discoveries that was not known and more than known *a very long while before he was born.*"* The same thing may be said of Professor Schérer. His theory is nothing

more than an "old error," decked off from the *Religions-philosophie* of Schleiermacher, with a "new dress."

Other *new suits* have, if we rightly judge, been furnished from the same extensive warehouse. Mr. Morell's theory is of the same stuff and the same fashion, and we doubt not of the same manufacture. But the latter by plunging into the fog of metaphysics has eluded any other than a psychological discussion, while M. Schérer by betaking himself to the high and open ground of history with a boldness unhappily not justified either by his own strength or the goodness of his cause has laid himself open to speedy and easy refutation.

It is not to be denied that Professor Schérer has distinctly taken the position and put on the armour of infidelity. The arguments which he urges against inspiration are substantially those which have formed the common stock of infidels from Porphyry down to Strauss. They are almost identical with those which Irenæus states and repels from Valentinus and Marcion.* So little addition has the lapse of time and the "progress of science" made to the material of infidelity! So true is it that the doctrine of inspiration is identical with Christianity, and that no man can abandon and attack it without going over to the camp and borrowing the blunted weapons of the avowed enemies of the Christian faith! So evident too, that this doctrine is planted on a rock which the assaults of seventeen centuries have not been able to shake! The missiles which fell harmless at its base in the second century, can hardly be expected to demolish it in the nineteenth!

But let us hear from Professor Schérer himself the annunciation of the change of his opinions and the step to which it determined him.

"A gradual but profound change has taken place in my theological views. This change has induced me to tender to you . . . my resignation of the functions which I have discharged in the school of Theology."

And here we feel constrained to do honour to the manly frankness and honesty of Professor Schérer. He was elected

* Iren. adv. Haer. Lib. II. Cap. 2;—in accusationem convertuntur ipsarum Scripturarum, quasi non recte habeant, neque sint ex autoritate, et quia varie sunt dictæ, et quia non possit ex his inveniri veritas, &c.

a few years ago to the chair of Exegesis in the New Theological School of Geneva. His views of inspiration were, at that time, those which enter into the very texture of that system of theological opinions which throughout Christendom is distinguished by the title of Evangelical, as appears from a work he had not long before published.* But “a change, gradual yet profound,” has meanwhile taken place in his sentiments in relation to this fundamental question. He does not attempt to conceal it from others and palliate it to himself by the use of ambiguous and equivocal phrases. He does not resort to quibbles and pretences of teaching “for substance” the same doctrines which he was pledged to do. He does not convulse the institution by attempts to hold on to his position and emoluments after he has parted from his faith, nor subject it to the ruinous agitation of investigations and processes. He is conscious of a change of opinion. He frankly avows it, and explains its extent. “On peut en effet,” he remarks, “au moins, jusqu’ à un certain point, renfermer en son sein de simples doutes, et qui de nous n’en renferme quelques uns de ce genre,” &c. “We may, indeed, at least to a certain extent, shut up within our own bosom mere doubts, and who of us is not conscious of some such, held in abeyance by a faith of yet superior efficacy? *But we cannot suppress a positive conviction.*” Having come to this, he promptly offers his resignation, which is as promptly, though with every expression of Christian kindness and courtesy, accepted. A proceeding honourable on both sides! Devoutly do we say, *transeat in exemplum!* There are not a few cases, in which a like *démission* would greatly relieve the conscience of the incumbent, and benefit the faith and life of the Church. We are at a loss to conceive a more flagrant violation of truth and uprightness, than for a man who has been set on one of the high places of the Church, to retain it only to pull down and betray to the enemy the very battlements which he was trusted to defend.†

Prompt as was the retirement of Professor Schérer, the history of the affair proves how rapidly the leaven spreads. Well

* *Dogmatique de l’Église Réformée.*”

† Let no man put upon our remarks the interpretatio ad invidiam. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

has he observed towards the close of his letter, "il est de la nature de la conviction d'aspirer au prosélytisme." Even where a man has not the courage and honesty to avow his opinions, he will still have not the less ambition to propagate them. In fact, the mind of the teacher *must* unconsciously and inevitably give its own impression and hue to every theory, every thought, every fact even, which enters into the material of his daily instruction. The stream cannot be purer than the fountain from which it flows. When Professor Schérer's connection with the Seminary had been terminated, it speedily appeared that ten out of twenty-nine students had passed through the same "changement graduel et profond" with their Professor, and were ready with him to renounce the doctrine of an inspired Bible! And of those who remained, their professors say,* "We ought not to conceal from you that we regret to find among some, notions by far too vague on the fundamental character of this conviction;" and they express the apprehension that a special "operation of the Holy Spirit on their hearts can alone root out the last remnants of the tares which have been sown among them."

If we may regard this letter as as a specimen of Professor Schérer's manner of treating religious subjects, we must look upon his retirement from the Seminary rather as matter of congratulation than of sympathy. He manifests a certain *hardiesse* in throwing out his thoughts on the most momentous subjects, which coupled, as we are told it is, with a brilliant and impressive style of lecturing, must render him exceedingly dangerous either as a teacher or a model of students of divinity. Seldom have the opposite poles of theological opinion been traversed with the same celerity. In a letter to a friend in this country in 1849,† M. Merle D'Aubigné pronounces his young associate "all primitive in faith, all modern in science." But scarcely was the ink dry in which the excellent President had written these words, when the announcement of his "changement graduel mais profond" burst on his astonished and afflicted colleagues! "Let no man therefore, glory in men!" Such is

* Rapport sur l'Éc. de Théol. p. 99.

† Published in the *Christian Intelligencer* in March of that year.

the obvious moral of this “fait douloureux.”* Let not the Church be too much elated by the talents and “science” of her teachers! Let her see to it that every institution she founds stands plumb on the Rock of Ages, and after all her vigilance, put her whole trust in Him who amidst all these deplorable manifestations of human instability is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!”

We turn to Professor Schérer himself for an exposition of the successive steps by which he was conducted to “a change” so great and “profound,” that a professor and an author, who had defended the sacred canon and the doctrine of inspiration, now feels himself compelled to renounce the one and to rend in pieces and scatter to the winds the other:—that one who in a work published in 1843 holds up to the world, “le type immuable et parfait de l'Écriture,” “la revelation écrite,” “le moyen de connaissance parfaitement adequat et authentique,” feels called upon in 1849, to denounce the very doctrine of inspiration as “une ventriloquie cabalistique,” “non seulement une erreur théologique, mais aussi et surtout, un fléau pour l'Église!” (“not merely a theological error, but also and above all a scourge to the Church.”) Verily, the bridge that spans such an abyss should, we think, have presented something firmer to the first tread than appears in the following introductory statement:

“The formation of the New Testament, that is to say, the introduction of that idea of inspiration which constitutes the sacred collection and its dignity, appears to me to be one of the elements of that Catholicism which was insensibly developed in the ancient church. Men had recourse to the authority of the Episcopate, and to the magic virtue of the sacraments, because the spirit that animated the first believers had been impaired or withdrawn; the object was to create an authority, to substitute an exterior, literal, tangible rule for the impulse of life and spirit,” &c.†

* Thus it is denominated by Professor La Harpe. *Rapport sur l'École de Théol.*

† La formation du Nouveau Testament, c'est à dire, l'introduction de cette idée d'inspiration, qui constitue le recueil sacré et sa dignité, me paraît être l'un des élémens de ce Catholicisme qui s'est insensiblement développé dans l'ancienne Église. On recourût à l'autorité de l'Épiscopat et à la vertu magique des sacre-

The "idea of inspiration *introduced*" into the early Christian Church!—"one of the elements of catholicism!"—"insensibly developed!" &c. These are remarkable assertions indeed from one, whose pursuits must inevitably have led him to some acquaintance with the writers themselves of the first age of the Christian Church, and with the constant presence and profound power of this "idea" in the Jewish mind before the coming of our Lord. Was there no "idea of inspiration" in the ancient Hebrew Church? What is meant by the expressions, "the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me"—"the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me"—"Hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me"—"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables"—"Go there and read in the roll which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people." M. Schérer does not deny the inspiration of the Old Testament. He waives that question for the present. "The change which has taken place in my views," he says, "bears on the New Testament considered as an authority in matters of religion. As to the Old Testament, I leave it aside for the present, in order to simplify the question by reducing it to its essential terms." But when he asserts the *introduction* of the idea of inspiration among the innovations of Catholicism along with the authority of the Episcopate and the magic virtue of sacraments, he certainly does *deny*, at least by implication, the *transmission* of that idea from the ancient Hebrew Church. To him the idea of inspiration, and its result the formation of the New Testament, and the sentiment which invested it with a sacred "dignity," "appears" to have been a product of Catholicism; one of those material and worldly ideas which its "insensible development evolved in such rapid succession"—"a fiction (une fiction) shedding an equal colour of divinity over the books of the New Testament," and thus creating a "substitute for the life and spirit" which animated the primitive Church. Observe the bewilderment and absurdity into which his search for a historical *appui* for his theory has betrayed him. He does not deny the inspiration of the Old Testament. We are

mens parceque l'esprit qui animait les premiers fideles s'etait alteré ou retiré;—il s'agissait de créer une autorité, de substituer une règle extérieure, littérale, tangible à l'impulsion de vie et d'esprit," &c.

told he admits it. Yet he never hints at the possibility that this "idea" (the dominant and plastic idea of the Hebrew Church and State) passed down from the Old Church into the New, profoundly imbued as the founders of the latter were with the spirit and ideas of the former! But let us look into the New Testament itself. Do we find nothing that *may* have given birth to this "idea" there? What can the Apostles mean by these and the like expressions—"God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit"—"Which things we speak in words which the Holy Ghost speaketh"—"I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you"—"This, then, is the message which we have heard from him and declare unto you"—"This we say unto you by the word of the Lord"—"These things are written that ye might believe, and that believing ye might have life"—"All Scripture is inspired of God"? The idea of inspiration accomplishing the same historical cycle with the other great truths of revelation, first discerned in embryo among the vague and faint foreshadowings, the *κοιναί ἐννοιαί* of the ancient Pagan mind (though as different from and inferior to the true scriptural idea as the moral theory of Paganism from "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," or the tribunal of Rhadamanthus from "the judgment-seat of Christ," or the Elysian fields from the "life and immortality brought to light in the gospel,") and afterwards standing forth in the fulness and brightness of its substantial and perfect form in the "holy men of God" of the Old and New Testament, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and "all" whose "writing" (*πασα γραφή*) was "inspired of God," an "idea" which had actually "formed" the Old Testament, and given it unspeakable "dignity," and kept it intact for centuries before the coming of Christ—has Professor Schérer never met with it before, that he assigns it so late and low an origin as Catholicism? It seems not. For in giving an exposition, ("la plume à la main, afin de rendre tout malentendu impossible,") of the "changement graduel et *profond*," which has converted him from an advocate into an enemy of inspiration, and (we are pained to add) an irreverent scoffer at it, he tells us:

"The introduction of this idea of inspiration, which has given its form and dignity to the sacred collection, seems to

me to be one of the elements of that Catholicism which was insensibly developed in the ancient church," &c.

If Professor Schérer had affirmed that "the idea of democracy" was "introduced" into Greece by the invasion of Xerxes, and "insensibly developed" into free institutions under Persian influence; or that the first outlines of the American Constitution were concocted by George III. and Lord North, he would not have uttered a bolder contradiction to history and common sense, than by advancing the theory that the doctrine of inspiration was the offspring of Catholicism.

Deplorably scanty as are the remains of the early Christian writers, they yet furnish abundant proof that "the idea of inspiration," standing forth prominently as it did in the apostolic teachings, was reflected with the utmost clearness and distinctness, from the mind of the primitive Church, as from a faithful mirror, until the mirror itself was soiled, and the image dimmed and disfigured by the breath of Catholicism.

There is one remnant of the first century, which all parties conspire in applauding as of unquestionable authenticity, and singularly free from interpolations; a purity which it doubtless owes to its lying concealed during the long period in which Catholicism was busiest in fabricating spurious, and corrupting authentic monuments of Christian antiquity. I mean the first epistle of Clemens of Rome to the Corinthians. Eusebius pronounces its writer Παύλου συνεργός καὶ συναθλητής,* and the Epistle itself μεγάλη καὶ θαυμασία ἐπιστολή—ἐνωμολογημένη παρὰ πάντων† Dr. Benson calls it "that golden relic of Clemens, his first Epistle to the Corinthians." Dr. Burton considers it "undoubtedly a genuine work,"‡ and "the only genuine production of any Christian writer of the first century."§ In turning over the pages of that first and purest remnant of early Christian times, we look in vain even for the incipient manifestation of those essential "elements of Catholicism," (to use the words of Professor Schérer,) "l'autorité de l'épiscopat et la vertu magique des sacrements." If diocesan episcopacy had taken its first steps at that time into the Christian Church, there *must* have been traces of them here. The Epistle was written in order to

* Ecc. Hist. III. 4.

† Id. III. 38.

‡ Burton's Lectures on the Ecc. Hist. of the First Three Centuries, p. 258. (London, 1845.)

§ Id. p. 288.

bring back to Christian order and tranquillity the church of Corinth, then, as in apostolic times, lamentably rent asunder by dissension and strife, (ζῆλος, ἔρις, στάσις, ἀκαταστασία, &c. ch. 3.) Had there been at that time a presiding bishop in the Corinthian Church, there must have been some recognition of his presence and authority, some exhortation to respect and obedience to him. In fact this must have formed the leading idea of the Epistle. But there is nothing of the kind. The Epistle is superscribed ἐκ προσώπου τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας γραφεῖσα. It exhorts the Corinthian believers to meekness, humility, order, patience of injuries, and the other Christian graces which make for peace. It admonishes them to be subject to their presbyters, (ὑποτάγητε τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις—ch. 57; μόνον τὸ ποίμνιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰρηνεύετο, μετὰ τῶν καθεσταμένων πρεσβυτέρων. Ch. 54. There is no mention of ἐπισκόπος save in two instances, and then in the plural number and in the apostolic phrase, ἐπισκόποι καὶ διακόνου, plainly used interchangeably with πρεσβυτέροι, and designating what Bishop Onderdonk* calls “the simple presbyter-bishops of the Bible.” No other bishops but these “simple presbyter-bishops of the Bible” were as yet known, as this letter from one of the principal Christian churches to another (turning from beginning to end on points of Christian order) unanswerably proves. If Clement himself had been presiding bishop of Rome, with any such powers as bishops have since claimed, would he have addressed his epistle “from the presence of the church of the Romans?” Would he have said, as he does, (ch. 56) “We therefore pray (for those who have fallen into any sin, that meekness and humility may be granted to them,) *that they may yield not to us, but to the will of God.*” The tone of the whole epistle in fact, is simply that of an humble and unassuming Christian pastor, addressing in the name of his assembled flock, an exhortation to a sister church to harmony and peace. Any attempt to support *papal* pretension to dignity and authority from this epistle, must be simply ridiculous. Nor can Episcopacy make any thing better of it in support of its claims. It is in fact equally matter of wonder and thankfulness that such a document has survived from the almost indiscriminate ruin of early Christian writings, commanding by

* Defence of Episcopacy.

unquestionable proofs of genuineness and purity the respect even of Romanists and Prelatists, yet lending not the slightest countenance to any of their later aggressions on the purity of the Christian faith, or the parity of the Christian ministry.

In fact, the authority of this epistle is direct and conclusive *against* diocesan episcopacy. In the 42d chapter, Clement speaking distinctly and formally of the constitution of the Christian ministry by the Apostles, and inculcating system and subordination in Christian offices, says, "The Apostles preached the gospel through regions and cities and constituted (ordained, καθίστανον) the first-fruits of them as bishops and deacons of those who should believe." Here is an exhibition of the Christian ministry as "constituted" by the Apostles and *then existing*, as the ground-form of an orderly and systematic fulfilment of Christian worship and duties. Now, if there had been another order *between* "bishops and deacons," must it not have been inserted? If there had been a superior order *under any title*, must it not have been mentioned? If the constitution of the ministry in the Corinthian Church had differed from that of other churches (as Haddington has insinuated, Episcopacy not being yet established there on account of the democratic spirit which was rife among them), would not such a difference have been noticed, and the lack of a bishop suggested as the occasion of the "strifes and disorders" so frequent among them? There is nothing of the kind. "The Apostles preached the gospel through regions and cities, and ordained the first-fruits of them as bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe." Here is the Apostolic ministry. Here is the plan of Church order and Christian subordination. It is out of the question that *any* office or grade should be omitted here. He has just been illustrating (ch. 37) the importance and beauty of order from the Roman army, all the officers of which he enumerates, ἑπαρχοί, χιλίαρχοι, ἐκατόνταρχοι, πεντηκόνταρχοι, including even the petty officers and common soldiers under the phrase τὸ καθεξῆς;—and from the Levitical priesthood and Hebrew Church, (ch. 40 end.) specifying each order with the same minuteness, ἀρχιερεῖς, ἱερεῖς, λευῖται, λαῖχοι. "We ought, therefore, (he reasons) "to do all things *in order* (τάξει) as the Lord hath commanded us to fulfil them." "Let each one of

you, brethren, praise God in his own rank or place" (*ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι.*) Surely, then, one important *τάγμα* in the constitution of the Church could not have been passed over in silence. A president in the Church of Corinth at that time *under the title of bishop* is of course impossible, since the ordinary ministers of the Church are designated as "bishops and deacons." But a presiding officer under any name, or with whatever degree of pre-eminence, is just as clearly out of the question, because such a dignitary could not possibly have passed without the remotest allusion through the whole epistle, and especially through this minute enumeration of the offices of the Christian Church and inculcation of the duties growing from them. Had any such thing been to this time recognized or thought of in the Christian Church, some intimation of it must have found its way into this epistle. What! the Corinthian Christians exhorted through a long epistle to subordination to those who were "over them in the Lord" (*ἡγούμενοι, προηγούμενοι, &c.,*) without the most distant allusion to the principal and most august personage entitled to that subordination! Had Clement been fourth Pope and Head of the Universal Church, as the Roman Catholics pretend, would he have joined his whole flock in meekly exhorting the Corinthians to humility, and peace, and mutual concession, and forbearance; to the imitation of Christ who was "of the lowly-minded, and not of those who exalt themselves above his flock," (ch. 16 in init.,) "to yield *not to him but to the will of God.*" An authoritative bull, *commanding* the submission of the mutinous Corinthians and threatening excommunication to the refractory, would have been a much more convenient and *papal* expedient. Had he been fourth (or third as some make him) diocesan Bishop of Rome, as the *Anglo-Catholics* contend, the inscription and *tone* of the epistle are almost equally incongruous with his office and sway, which would hardly have allowed him to begin thus, "the church of God which dwells at Rome to the church of God which dwells at Corinth, called to be holy," &c., without any mention of himself or any salutation to his "Right Reverend" brother of Corinth. Even if the "See" had been at that time vacant, or the incumbent anomalously situated, would such a style and such an omission have been possible? If the Bishop of New Jersey were now to write a

letter with a similar object (the maintenance of Christian and ecclesiastical order), to the church of New York, would he be likely to address it, "the church of God which dwells in New Jersey, to the church of God which dwells in New York?" Would such a letter be written without the slightest allusion to the *status* of the Episcopal office, simply exhorting the good people of New York to live peaceably in the practice of the Christian virtues, and to be "obedient in the Lord to their ministers," their "presbyters," their "bishops and deacons."

The "bishops" of Corinth then, were just such "bishops" as we find in the church of Ephesus some years earlier (Acts xx.) called "elders" by Luke in the narrative, and "bishops" by Paul in his address—"He sent to Ephesus and called the elders (*τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους*) of the Church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them—take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, (*ἐπισκόπους*) &c.—such "bishops" as are spoken of indiscriminately and interchangeably with "elders" in the Apostolic epistles, and of whom Jerome says long after, "apud veteres, iidem episcopi et presbyteri, quia illud nomen dignitatis est, hoc ætatis." He must be blind indeed, who does not see the parity of the Christian ministry down to the date of this epistle. No eye whose vision is "single" will ever detect "a bishop" in any genuine document of the first century. Where was the Bishop of the Church of Rome when Paul addressed his epistle to it? Where the bishop of Corinth, of the several "churches of Galatia," of Ephesus, Philippi, Colossæ, Thessalonica, when the epistles bearing their names were written? They were not yet appointed, says the advocate of prelacy, because the Apostles being yet in the oversight of the churches, their "successors" were not of course, as yet, nominated. To waive all other answers to this flimsy hypothesis, here we have a letter written by the third or fourth bishop (as he is styled) of Rome, to the church of Corinth. Where was the bishop, the apostolic successor in that Church, at that date? The Corinthians, say some of the most staunch and unscrupulous champions of Episcopacy, had not, at that time, received a bishop, in consequence of the democratic spirit which pervaded that city. What! "that most stable and ancient church of the Corinthians," as Clement

styles it, ch. 47, (βεβαιότητι καὶ ἀρχαία Κορινθίων ἐκκλησία), “a Church without a Bishop!”—a headless trunk!—a shepherdless flock!—a mere democratic rabble! Bearing “a name venerable and world-honoured, and worthy of being loved by all men” (τὸ σεμνὸν καὶ περιβόητον καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἀξιαγάπητον ὄνομα ὑμῶν) (ch. 1.) and yet an exception and a scandal to all the well-ordered churches of Christendom!* Capacious indeed, must be that credulity which can swallow such assumptions! Here then is one “element of Catholicism,” “l’ autorité de l’ évêcat,” of which no trace can be found in this the only unquestionably genuine remnant of the first century after the Apostles.

And as for the “*vertu magique des sacrements*,” the very name was as yet unknown. Nor does it appear in Irenæus a century later. The word “sacrament” is applied to Christian rites first by Tertullian, and by him in a vague and indefinite way. But the name and the idea are alike wanting in this “golden relic” of Clement. The blood of Christ was as yet the only expiation for sin: “Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ and perceive how precious to God is his blood which being shed for our salvation,” &c. (ch. 12.) The word of Christ the only rule of the Christian life: “Let us fulfil our warfare in his blameless precepts.” (ch. 37.) Justification only by faith in Christ: “We then, being called by his will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, neither by our wisdom or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart, but by faith.” (ch. 32.) Christ himself, the only priest, patron and helper of the Christian: “Jesus Christ, the high priest of our offerings, the patron and helper of our infirmity”—(no other *priest* or *patron* of the Christian Church is mentioned in the epistle.) Even the credulous simplicity which the writer betrays in some instances, e. g. in illustrating the resurrection by the fabulous *πτεροφύα* of the phoenix (ch. 25) and interpreting the scarlet thread of Rahab as a type of the blood of Christ (ch. 12) has nothing of the Catholic stamp; these are mere errors of fact and interpretation, and do not touch the substance and vitality of Christian truth. The whole troop of Catholic corruptions, penances, priestly absolution,

* A. Burton. p. 450.

fasts, vigils and self-castigations, saint-days, saint-reliques, saint-veneration and saint-intercession, are utterly undiscoverable here. The name of the Virgin-Mother does not occur from the beginning of the epistle to the end. The virtue which he inculcates is all *social*. The merit of the cloister and the desert was a later idea. The duties of husbands and wives, parents and children are largely dwelt upon, but no hint of the superior sanctity of an unmarried life. And as for *clerical* celibacy, we may fairly infer that the good father was himself not unblest in the affections and joys of holy matrimony; that he had used his Christian liberty of “leading about a sister, a wife”—for he says, (ch. 21), “Let us direct *our* wives to that which is good,” and this from Clement, third Bishop of Rome in the Chronicon of Eusebius, and fourth Pope in the Roman Calendar!

But while Catholicism has left no “footprints” in this remain of the primitive age of Christianity, “the idea of inspiration” is clearly manifest in almost every chapter of it, and in almost every conceivable form. The Scriptures are “the oracles of God,” (ch. 19.) The doctrinal teachings, the moral precepts of the epistle are supported and enforced by a simple appeal to them as the final authority of Christians in matters of faith and practice. The pious are “those who earnestly take heed to the words of God,” who “receive in fear and sincerity the oracles of God.” The epistle consists, to a large extent, of quotations both from the Old and New Testaments, which are cited under these and the like formulæ, “Thus saith the Scripture”—“Thus saith the Holy Spirit”—“Thus the ministers of the grace of God have spoken by the Holy Spirit”—“Thus saith the holy Word”—“Christ himself by his Holy Spirit thus admonisheth us.” If we even demand a more specific recognition of the “idea of inspiration,” we have it in two remarkable passages. The Apostles (ch. 42,) are spoken of as πιστωθέντες τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ, μετὰ πληροφορίας Πνεύματος ἁγίου—and Christians are exhorted (ch. 45,) ἐγκυπτέτε εἰς τὰς γραφὰς, τὰς ἀληθεῖς ἐῴσεις πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου. (“Earnestly search into the Scriptures, the true utterances of the Holy Spirit.”)

What is this but “the idea of inspiration” in its most positive and plenary form? What has the most strenuous advocate of “textual inspiration” ever demanded beyond this—that the

Apostles spoke and wrote the Word of God μετὰ πληροφορίας Πνεύματος ἁγίου—that the Holy Scriptures should be regarded and “searched into” as the ἀληθεῖς ἐκσεις Πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου? If the doctrine of inspiration were the result of “insensible development,” into what more complete and distinct form could it ever be developed than that in which it is presented in this earliest uninspired document, now extant, of the Christian Church?

The epistles which bear the names of Barnabas, Polycarp, and Ignatius, if we chose to revert to them for the purpose, furnish abundant proof that the general sentiment of the Church in relation to the Scriptures was the same at the time when they were written. For whatever hands originally wrote these epistles or subsequently mutilated them, they were clearly produced at a period when the general veneration for the Holy Scriptures, and the habit of quoting them on all occasions, compelled Catholicism to consult this sentiment even in her fabrications and corruptions. But we should be sorry to appeal to writings which, so rarely and scantily quoted, (if quoted at all,) by the writers of the first two centuries, present such slender claims on our respect as ancient and genuine documents, in proof of any thing. And to descend to the genuine works of the second century, we find even the weak and credulous Hege-sippus, amidst the λῆροι which disfigure the few fragments which remain of him, alluding to the Scriptures as τὸν ὑγιᾶ καίονα τοῦ σωτηρίου κηρυγματος (“the sound canon of saving gospel doctrine”*) and relating that “in every succession” (of Christian pastors) “and in every city it is so arranged as the law prescribes, and the prophets and the Lord.”† We find the accomplished and philosophic Justin Martyr combating Jew and Pagan alike in the new armour of an inspired and authoritative revelation. This writer has left a noble monument to the historical truth for which we are contending in his *Cohortatio ad Græcos*, where, after exposing with masterly learning and ability, the absurdities and impurities of their mythology, and the contradictions of their wise men, he “turns to the fathers” of the Christian faith, “who,” he says, “far preceded your

* Heg. in Eus. Ecc. Hist. III. 32.

† Id. IV. 22.

teachers in antiquity, and have taught us nothing of their own fancy, nor yet conflicting with one another, nor endeavouring to overthrow each other's systems, but without ambitious controversy and opposing factions, having received the knowledge which is from God, have taught the same to us. For not by nature or by human understanding was it possible for men to know such great and divine truths, but by the free gift then coming down from above on holy men, who had no need of an art of words, nor of strife and debate, but to present themselves pure to the energy of the Divine Spirit, that the divine *plectrum* itself descending from heaven, using good men even as an instrument of a harp or lyre, should reveal to us the knowledge of divine and heavenly things. Wherefore, as with one mind and one tongue they have taught us concerning God and the creation of the world, and the formation of man, and the immortality of the human soul, and the judgment to come after this life, and concerning all things which it is necessary for us to know, continuously and harmoniously with one another, and that too though they have delivered the divine instruction to us in different places and at different times." Here, about the middle of the second century, is an expression of "the idea of inspiration" quite strong and full enough, we should think, to satisfy the staunchest advocate of the doctrine. At least we are ready to declare that it satisfies us.

The same writer, in his Dialogue with Trypho, expresses his unbounded confidence in the truth and harmony of the Scriptures in a form which would stagger, we fear, some of the "Christian philosophers" (so called) of our own age—"I shall never dare either to think or to say this" (i. e. "that the Scriptures are at variance with one another,") but if any scripture be brought forward seeming to be such, and have the appearance of being contrary to another passage, being entirely persuaded that no scripture is opposite to another, I shall rather confess that I do not understand the things which are spoken, and shall strive to persuade those who conceive the Scriptures to conflict with one another, to be of the same mind with me."*

We cannot help contrasting with this the assertion of Profes-

* Dial. cum Tryph. p. 289. Op. Just. Martyris. Coloniae, 1686.

sor Schérer, “Je rencontre dans ces livres une assez grande quantité d’inexactitudes historiques et des contradictions—prédications démentis par les faits.” Which way of viewing the difficulties of Scripture discovers most of the modesty of the true philosopher, we leave for the reader to determine.

’ The simplicity with which Justin appeals to the Scriptures for the arbitration of all doubtful questions, appears the more remarkable when we consider that his previous habits had thoroughly imbued him with the disputatious and sceptical spirit of the ancient philosophy; that he retained the philosophic garb even after his conversion, and considered philosophy to the last μέγιστον κτῆμα καὶ τιμιώτατον Θεῶν.* He relates of himself that he had migrated from sect to sect in quest of truth, trying successively the Stoics, Peripatetics, Pythagoreans and Platonists, but had found no certainty nor mental repose till he was directed by an unknown person to the study of the Scriptures, the authors of which were ἁγίῳ πληρωθέντες πνεύματι—that here he had “found the only solid and profitable philosophy” (ταύτην μόνην εὕρισκον φιλοσοφίαν ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ σύμφορον)† and that “the sweetest tranquillity was attained by those who meditated in them.” (ἀναπαυσίς τε ἡδίστη γίνεται τοῖς ἐκμελετῶσιν αὐτούς.) He elsewhere‡ passionately exhorts the Pagan Greeks to forsake their own impure literature and mythology, to “be instructed by the divine Word, (θείῳ λόγῳ παιδεύθητε) and become partakers of an incomparable wisdom (σοφία ἀπαραμιλλήτῳ κοινωνήσατε.) He tells them that “the Divine Word, ever present with us, has power to tranquillize the tumultuous soul, to expel its fearful passions, to extinguish the fire within.” “It does not,” he adds, “make us poets, philosophers, or orators, but it makes us from mortals immortals, from men gods; it transports us from the earth to regions beyond Olympus. Come then,” he concludes, “be ye instructed. Be ye as I am, for I was as ye are.”

We find Irenæus, in the latter half of the same century, refuting and rebuking the heretics of his time by appealing in the same direct and simple style to the Scriptures, even where he allows that they renounced their authority.§ Yet he still

* Dial. cum Tryph. p. 218.

† Id. p. 225.

‡ Pro Christianis Apolog. Prim.

§ Iren. adv. Hæres. Lib. III. Cap. 2.

holds them to this proof, and refuses to submit to what would now, we suppose, be called a "scientific discussion," doctrines which, being purely matters of revelation, can only be surely and safely decided by the authority of the written Word. In the following remark he lays down what may be regarded as a general canon to that effect. "*Habentes itaque regulam ipsam veritatem, et in apertum positum de Deo testimonium, non debemus per quæstionum declinantes, in alias atque alias absolutiones ejicere firmam et veram de Deo scientiam.*"* Erasmus† even insists that Irenæus ("*solis scripturarum præsiidiis adversus hæreticorum catervam pugnasse*") "combated the whole troop of heretics with no other means of attack and defence but those furnished by the Scriptures." But this opinion must be received with some modification. However, with him, "*sicut ex scripturis discimus*"‡ is sufficient and final demonstration of any thing.

Even the erratic and extravagant Tertullian, though an outrageous interpreter of Scripture, was a firmasserter of its Divine origin and supreme authority in matters of faith. "*Scripturae divinae*"§—"tantam curam instructionis nostrae insumpsit Spiritus Sanctus"||—"adoro Scripturae plenitudinem." He declares that the truth seems to him "written" on the sacred page, "with a ray of the sun itself," (*ipsius Solis radio putem scriptum*)¶ and affirms that the sure way of putting down heretics is to insist that all their questions shall be settled from the Scriptures alone (*de scripturis solis quaestiones suas sistant, et stare non poterunt.*)**

It were a tiresome task to string together quotations. And yet a proof drawn from historical documents, as this must necessarily be, can be accomplished in no other way. The manifold testimonies bearing on this point, which meet our eye on a glance at the very surface of the writings and events of the first four centuries of the Christian Church, may be grouped, for the sake of brevity, as follows:

1. The very fact that the assailants of Christianity directed

* Adv. Hær. II. 47.

† Epis. Op. Iren. præf.

‡ Iren. adv. Hær. II. 47. A powerful testimony for the Scriptures, and the Scriptures only, may be found in Iren. adv. Hær. Lib. III. cap. 1 in init.

§ Adv. Judacos.

|| Adv. Herm.

¶ De resur. carnis.

** Ibid.

their attacks first and mainly against the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures, shows their conviction that herein the general faith of the Church had entrenched itself, and that if they could breach her defences at this point, their victory was accomplished. Christianity has had few enemies more acute and powerful, and none more immitigable in their hostility than Porphyry. And it is remarkable that Eusebius characterizes his whole onset upon it as an "attack on the Divine Scriptures:"—Πορφύριος συγγράμματα καθ' ἡμῶν ἐνστησάμενος καὶ δι' αὐτῶν τὰς θείας γραφὰς διαβάλλειν πεπειραμένος.*

2. This doctrine was the point of divergence between Separatists and the General Church of Christ; the latter insisting that the Canonical Books should be the ultimate bar of appeal in all controversies, (as we have seen above from Irenæus) the former renouncing their authority, wresting their obvious sense, or fabricating numberless apocryphal books wherewith to combat them and countenance their own errors. "Super hæc autem *inenarrabilem multitudinem apocryphorum et perperam scripturarum, quas ipsi finxerunt*, afferunt ad stuporem insensatorum et quæ sunt veritatis non scientium literas."† The very multiplication of the counterfeits proves the existence of a true and general currency and the high value set on it.

3. The immense labour bestowed in settling the sacred canon and in the exposition and interpretation of its contents, proves particularly in the third century, how highly the Church prized, how watchfully she guarded, and how diligently she searched into the sacred treasure deposited with her.

4. Those who denied the inspiration of the Scriptures were considered infidels. Eusebius quotes the language of an earlier writer whom he does not name, (in speaking of the followers of Artemon, who contended that our Saviour was a mere man (Ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον), and who not only wrested but added to and otherwise corrupted the sacred Scriptures in order to *compel* their testimony in favour of their doctrine), as follows, "either *they do not believe that the Divine Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and then they are infidels*; or they think

* Ecc. Hist. VI. 19.

† Iren. adv. Hær. Lib. I. 17. Conf. Eus. Ecc. Hist. Lib. V. 28. (c. p. 40.)

themselves to be wiser than the Holy Spirit, and then what are they other than madmen?"*

5. The Scriptures were regarded as the great instrument of a holy and Christian education of the young, of guarding them against the errors and sensual influences of Paganism, and of forming them to a true intellectual and spiritual greatness and power in the Church of God. The spirit of Paul's remark to Timothy, "thou from a child hast known the Holy Scriptures," &c., entered deeply into the mind of the Church, and was for a long time the dominant maxim of Christian education. The precept of Clement of Rome,† "let your children be trained in the instruction of Christ," when we consider the *usus loquendi* of the early Church in relation to the phrase, παιδεία ἐν Χριστῷ probably refers to this. But more distinctly, Eusebius, speaking of the early life of Origen, and remarking that the incidents which contributed to form so great a man, "even from his earliest infancy, were worthy of commemoration,"‡ states that he was exercised in the Divine Scriptures from his childhood," (ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς ἐξέτι παιδὸς ἐνησχνημένος.) "He was," he says, "in no ordinary degree devoted to the study of these, since his father, besides an extensive course of liberal studies, bestowed an exact and especial care on his instruction in the Scriptures. In fact, before he entered on the study of Greek learning, he obliged him to be exercised in the sacred writings, and required him to *commit to memory and recite portions of them every day*. Nor was this done against the wishes of the boy; on the contrary, he applied himself with the utmost cheerfulness to these studies, so that the easy and superficial study of the sacred words did not content him, but he was still looking for something more, and searching of his own accord into their profounder senses. Insomuch that he perplexed his father, inquiring what it might be the purpose of the divinely inspired Scripture to reveal. The father indeed, seemingly repressed and discouraged this inquisitiveness, and advised him not to

* Ecc. Hist. V. 28.

† Ad. Cor. Prim. cap. 21.

‡ τὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν, ὡς εἰπὶν, σπαργάνων ἀξιολογούμενα μοι εἶναι δοκεῖ. Ecc. Hist. VI. 2. The expression reminds us of the ἐκ βρεφὸς of Paul in speaking of the early education of Timothy. 2 Tim. 3.

attempt what was beyond the capacity of his age, nor seek to penetrate beyond the obvious sense. But in his heart he was overjoyed, and gave thanks to God the author of all blessings, that he had counted him worthy to be the father of such a son. And it is said that he often entered the chamber of his sleeping boy, and uncovering his bosom, kissed it devoutly, as if it were hallowed by the indwelling of the Divine Spirit."

So fine a description of the training of a Christian scholar, and of one early devoted as well by his parents' faith as by his own act to the career of a preacher and a theologian, and so touching a testimony to the veneration and love of both father and son for the inspired word, we could not forbear to give entire. God grant that it may stir up many a Christian parent to a like consecration, and kindle in many a youthful heart a desire to emulate the zeal without falling into the errors (errors, be it observed, into which the desire of *combining* the scriptural doctrines with the uncongenial elements of the ancient systems of philosophy,* misled him,) of the illustrious and immortal Origen!

Ambrose, who was a convert of Origen, and himself a teacher of youth, obliged his pupils to go through an extensive course of liberal studies, (ἐνῆγεν ἐπὶ τὰ ἐγκύκλια γράμματα,) as a discipline preparatory to the study of the holy Scriptures (προπαιδεύματα—εἰς τὴν τῶν θεῶν γραφῶν θεωρίαν τε καὶ παρασκευήν).† Basil exhorts the young men of his time to a profound study of the ancient Greek writers as tending to give them a vigour and elevation of mind, and a perception of moral beauty which would prepare them to appreciate the sublimer mysteries and purer virtue revealed in the Word of God. He cites the example of Moses, who "having disciplined his understanding by all the learning of the Egyptians, so came to the contemplation of Jehovah;"

* That the faith of Origen was crippled and perverted by his philosophy, the keen eye of Porphyry detected more distinctly than his admiring fellow-Christians were at that time competent to do. Having spoken of Origen's profound acquaintance with the Platonic, Pythagorean, and Stoic philosophers, he adds: παρ' ὧν τὸν μεταληπτικὸν τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσι μυστηρίων γνῶς τρέπον ταῖς Ἰουδαϊκαῖς προσηΐς γραφαῖς. "Having learned from them the allegorical method used to explain the Greek mysteries, he applied it to the Jewish Scriptures."—*Porph. in Eus. Ecc. Hist.* VI. 19.

† *Eus. Hist. Ecc.* VI. 18.

(τοῖς Αἰγυπτίων μαθήμασιν ἐγγυμνασάμενος τὴν διάνοιαν, οὕτω προσελθεῖν τῇ θεωρίᾳ τοῦ ὄντος);* and Daniel, who, having learned the wisdom of the Chaldeans, then entered on the study of the Divine teachings," (τὴν Χαλδαίων σοφίαν καταμαθόντα, τότε τῶν θείων ἁψασθαι παιδευμάτων.) Throughout this admirable discourse (evidently addressed, in the first instance, to his own pupils,)† the revelations of the inspired volume are spoken of as the inner temple of wisdom and truth, to which all other learning was but the vestibule. Gregory Nazianzen, in his funeral oration on Basil, in the course of a fine eulogy of classical and various learning, says, that "by the very defects of other systems we learn the excellence of our own, and by their imbecility establish the power of the Word (or doctrine) deposited with us." This sacred use of profane learning he considers a fulfilment of the apostolic expression, "bringing into captivity every thought," (all intellect, as it were, παν νοημα) "to the obedience of Christ."‡ "Chrysostom," says Neander, "was enabled, from his own experience, to speak of the blessed influence of an early and intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures."§ By these his admirable mother Anthusa fortified his mind against "the specious and impious sophisms" of his accomplished Pagan teacher Libanius, as well as the fascinations of pleasure and ambition. In fact, all the eminent lights, the master-minds of the early Church, as far as their early education is known to us, were nurtured to piety and greatness by the Word of God.

6. A careful distinction was maintained between the writings of uninspired Christians, however early and eminent, and the canonical books of the New Testament. The first were often held in great veneration, and in some cases, even read in the churches for edification (e. g. the first Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,) but always distinguished from what were called the γραφαί τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης, αληθεῖς καὶ ἀπλάστοι καὶ ἀνωμολογημέναι, γραφαί.|| We cite this, simply as a historical proof of the general sentiment in the Church that the fountains of her faith and life were to be found in the inspired books, and that the works of her holiest and most enlightened members, however prized

* Basil, ὁ πρὸς τοὺς νέους, ὅπως ἂν ἐξ Ἑλληνικῶν ὠφελοῖντο λόγον. Cap. 3.

† Conf. Ch. 1.

‡ Greg. Naz. Op. Tom. p. 323.

§ Life of St. Chrysostom.

|| Eus. Ecc. Hist. III. 25.

and used for edification, stood in an entirely different relation to her. They were sometimes called *μεγάλαι, θαυμάσιαι, &c.*, but never *θεόπνευσται*. Far as the spirit of laudation was carried in the early ages, and it sometimes (particularly towards and in the fourth century,) reached a ludicrous extravagance, it never rose to such a pitch as to impair this distinction; to obliterate the line which separated the human from the divine.

7. The ancient hymns of the Church, (alas! that so few of them are preserved,) attest the love and longing of holy hearts towards the sacred Word, in a way peculiar to themselves. In a Greek hymn* which Vormbaum pronounces "*vetustissimus Hymnus Ecclesiæ*," we meet with this sentiment thus expressed:

Οἱ νηπίαχοι
Ἀταλοῖς στόμασιν
Ἀτιταλλόμενοι
Θηλῆς λογικῆς
Πνεύματι δροσερῷ
Ἐμπιπλάμενοι, &c.

Here is a plain reference to "*the sincere milk of the word*," (1 Pet. ii. 2,) and to the passionate desires with which the Psalmist "*panted*" and "*longed*" for the commandments of God.

A somewhat later hymn contains the following passage:

Σκεύαξε σαυτὸν ὡς τάχος πρὸς οὐρανὸν
Ψυχὴν πτερώσας τῷ λόγῳ τὴν τιμίαν.†

Which may be freely translated thus:

"The wings that lift the soul to heaven,
By God's inspired Word are given."

What is still more remarkable and conclusive, the themes, the thoughts, the language of these early hymns, the objects of faith, hope, and love, which they present, are scriptural. It was quite otherwise a few centuries later, after Catholicism was ascendant and established.

8. The direct appeal to the Holy Scriptures for the settling

* This hymn must be at least as ancient as the second century, being appended to the *Παίδευσις* of Clemens.—Alex. Vormbaum, *Carm. et Hymn. Ecc. Græc.*

† Id. No. XII.

of all doubtful points, whether of faith or practice, was in full force during the first four centuries. We cite but one example, the *ἐρωτησεῖς* and *ἀποκρισεῖς* of Basil.* The latter are, generally, a simple stringing together of passages of Scripture relating to the point, with a brief explanation of their bearing and connection. The first of them is very remarkable in this point of view. The question is, "Is it lawful or expedient for any one to allow himself either to do or say what he judges good, without the testimony of the divinely inspired Scriptures?" The solution of this question is simply a scriptural one. It is decided in the negative, on the authority of many passages, the last of which is John vi. 38. *I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.*"

9. The study and meditation of the Scriptures was regarded as the great means of personal sanctification. *Μεγίστη δὲ ὁδὸς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ καθήκοντος εὕρεσιν, καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῶν θεοπνεύστων γραφῶν.* "The principal way to the discovery of duty is the meditation of the divinely inspired Scriptures;"† and the same sentiment meets us in many writers and many forms during the first four centuries.

10. They were regarded, along with the preaching of Christ, as the great means of extending the Church, and of saving souls. Eusebius says, that many eminent Christians, in the first age after the Apostles, obeying the precept of Christ, gave their goods to the poor, forsook their own country, and fulfilled the work of evangelists, "being animated by an ardent desire to preach Christ, and *deliver the scripture of the Holy Gospels.*"‡ These, he says, "held the first rank among the successors of the Apostles;" and we cheerfully concede them that precedence.

11. Finally, the very titles and epithets applied to the Scriptures afford a singular, and in itself, unanswerable proof of the light in which they were regarded. The names under which they were constantly cited and referred to, are these and the like—*αἱ θεαῖαι γραφαί, οἱ θεῖοι λόγοι, αἱ ἱεραὶ γραφαί, τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα,*

* Distinguished among his other works of this kind as *ὅροι κατ' ἐπιτόμην*. Bas. Op. Tom. II. p. 581. Paris, 1839.

† Basil, Ep. II. (ad Greg. Naz. ex secessu) Op. Tom. III. p. 102.

‡ Hist. Ecc. III. 37.

ὁ λόγος, τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡ θεόπνευστος γραφή, ἡ γραφή θεϊκὴ, ὁ κατὰ τῆς πίστεως, θεοπνεύστα βιβλία, Scripturæ divinæ, veritas ipsa, &c., &c. These may be looked upon as spontaneous, unstudied and undesigned expressions of the mind and heart of the ancient Church, and they proclaim, in a surprising manner, the depth and unanimity of the sentiment with which she regarded the Scriptures as the Word of God, inspired, infallible and supreme.

We have seen, then, that "the idea of inspiration" was not "insensibly developed," that it beamed in its full lustre on the mind of the infant church, or rather, shone like a *glory* round the sacred volume as the precious deposit was delivered to her, and appears *from the beginning* in every conceivable form and through every manifestation of her faith and life.

But we affirm more than this—not only that this "idea" was not developed along with Catholicism, but that, as the development of Catholicism proceeded, "the idea of inspiration" was enfeebled, confused, and at length for a time overpowered by its corruptions and usurpations.

But what is "Catholicism?" The Church in opposition to the Bible—the human in Christianity in opposition to the divine—the Church viewed as an aggregation of tenets, orders, rites which rest avowedly not on Scripture but tradition. Tradition is the great teacher and oracle of Catholicism. The Bible itself must be interpreted by the tradition of the Church. The tradition of the Church is a legitimate source of orders, rites and usages of all sorts. These, though not commanded by the Scripture are essential. "There cannot be a Church without" them. If it be demanded, "where is the authority of the written Word for such important modifications of Christianity?" It is answered, "we have received them through the tradition of the Church." "They have been borne on the banners of the Church for a thousand years." And this answer is deemed sufficient. Tradition is a kind of continuous revelation. It is a perpetual manifestation of the mind, will and life of Christ in his Church. Tradition is the element in which the Scriptures themselves are preserved and handed down. It is the authorized and the only authorized exponent of their meaning. This is the essence of Catholicism.

We may be thought harsh in calling it the Church and the

human in opposition to the Bible and the divine. But where is the warrant for the assumption of this vast and despotic authority on the past strength of tradition? Has the Head of the Church granted it? Nowhere. On the contrary, he rebuked with peculiar and unsparing sternness both the *additions* and the *interpretations* of tradition in his own time. "Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men"—"full well ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition." It is then of the essence of tradition, even of church tradition (for of such was he now speaking, being held by the Pharisees, who "sat in Moses' seat" and were the high-churchmen and Catholics of that time), to "lay aside," to "reject," and elsewhere to "make of none effect" the word and commandments of God, and therefore it must be regarded, when it assumes authority not only as a strictly human but a hostile element in relation to the scriptural and the divine in Christianity. Moreover, the sacred canon closes with a denunciation of "the plagues which are written in this book" against "any man who shall add unto these things," and exclusion from the book of life" against any man who "shall take away from" them. Catholicism has added to Christianity an order of ministers unknown to the written Word. It has added a multitude of rites, forms and usages alike uncommanded. It has taken away the cup in the Lord's Supper. It has taken away the right and liberty of Christian ministers to marry. It has taken away the most precious of all rights, the right of every individual Christian to read the Word, (Acts xvii. 11,) to decide on questions of truth and duty, to receive and follow the tuition of the Spirit. (1 John ii. 20.) The form of Catholicism has made all these additions and abstractions, and many more. All its forms have made some of them, and are ever tending to increase the number. It seems to be of its very essence to go beyond the Word of God, and to insist far more on its own additions than even on those things which it holds and enjoins in common with the Bible. It is therefore, not only "another gospel" but a hostile system of religion—and not the less so for being within the sphere of nominal Christianity. There cannot be a more direct form of hostility to any government than to enact laws, hold courts, and coin money within its limits by an

authority which it does not recognize. Christ has given no authority to church tradition. Yet in the name and on the strength of it, Catholicism legislates, judges and makes sweeping changes of every sort in the ministry, the worship and even the faith of his Church—and these not as matters of local or temporal expediency but as essentials. “There cannot be a church without” them. Is not this a usurpation within the kingdom of Christ? And is not usurpation hostility in its boldest and most deadly form? Other offenders break the laws, but the usurper attacks the throne and grasps the sceptre. Such is the relation of Catholicism towards the Bible and God who speaks in it. But its opposition is still more positive. Christ *commands* us to search the Scriptures; Catholicism *forbids* it. The Word of God pronounces them “noble” and “blessed” who “read” and “search” the written Word. Catholicism pronounces them “accursed.” The Scripture says “a bishop must be the husband of one wife;” Catholicism says he *must not* marry. *Roman* Catholicism says he must not—*Anglo-Catholicism* says he ought not; at least he had better not.

When, where, and in what form did this strange power first make its appearance in the Christian Church?

To trace the rise and history of “Catholicism” would be a very interesting and important work. We have neither time nor space for it now. We can only notice some of its earlier manifestations, some of its larger and bolder strides.

The eye of Christ and of his inspired Apostles saw the leaven “working” (2 Thess. ii. 7,) in the depths of the Church long before the first visible, or rather appreciable signs of fermentation had reached the surface. When the disciples “disputed among themselves by the way, which should be the greatest,” their omniscient Lord detected the germ which was afterwards to expand into “the authority of the Episcopate,” and eventually into the overshadowing despotism of the Papacy. “And he sat down and called the twelve, and saith unto them, if any man desire to be first the same shall be last of all and servant of all.” And when the same aspiring and self-aggrandizing disposition appeared in James and John shortly after, (Mark x.) “he called the twelve to him, and said unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise

lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them. *But so it shall not be among you.*" This and other plain intimations of their Master's will on this subject, followed by the plenteous effusion of the Spirit of grace and holiness on the day of Pentecost, effectually prevented any farther manifestation of this spirit among the Apostles. But when Peter exhorts "the elders" of the churches of Asia Minor (1 Pet. i. 1, conf. v. 1, &c.) to "feed the flock of God, discharging the office of bishops towards it, (*ἐπισκοποῦντες*)—not as being lords over God's heritage," and enjoins upon them to be "subject one to another," and to "be clothed with humility," such pointed and repeated admonitions strongly imply that there were, among these "elders," some who, like Diotrephes, "loved to have the first place"*—and when Paul, addressing the assembled "presbyter-bishops" of Ephesus, (Acts xx.) warns them, "after my departure, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things," &c., he may be supposed to have included aspirants after clerical power and pre-eminence among other "grievous wolves" and "seducers." And if the absurd figment of "apostolic succession" had been then conceived of,† the words addressed by our Saviour himself to this same Church of Ephesus long after,‡ would disclose the fact that some of these "men" had at that period actually "risen," and sought to impose their apostolic claims upon that Church.

But much more distinct and remarkable are those passages (2 Thess. ii. and 1 Tim. iv.) in which the Apostle speaks of

* John iii. 9. The expression is very significant ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν, qui amat primatum gerere in eis. Vulg. and Erasmus.

† Which we believe it had not; at least there is no trace of it extant at that early period. On the contrary, the Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians, which, whether genuine or spurious, is ancient, makes the Presbyters successors of the Apostles. "Be ye subject also to the Presbytery as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ," (Ep. ad Trall. cap. 2.)—"the Presbyters as the Council (*συνέδριον*) of God and the Band of the Apostles of Christ (*σύνδεσμος ἀποστόλων Χριστοῦ*.) Without these there is no elect Church, no assemblage of the saints, no congregation of the holy." Id. cap. 3. But we would not recommend our Presbyterian brethren to set up any claim to apostolic succession on the ground of these passages. We believe the good father Ignatius to have been quite innocent of this, and a good deal more trash and impiety that passes under his name.

‡ "Thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars."

“an apostasy,” “a departure from the faith,” a “mystery of iniquity already working,” (ὅτι ἐνεργεῖται) the “revelation” and “destruction” of which was to form a part of the Church’s history before the coming of “the day of Christ.” Here, every stroke of the sacred pencil portrays some feature of Catholicism; and history verifies the whole with a fearful minuteness. Its “opposing and exalting itself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped”—its “sitting in the temple of God”—its “coming after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders”—its “strong delusion”—its uncommanded abstinences, “forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving,” all render the identity clear, and the application inevitable. But there was something which then “withheld” and “hindered” that “that Wicked might be revealed in his time,” and would continue to hinder “until it was taken out of the way.” These predictions are commonly applied to Popery. But they evidently refer to a whole, of which Popery is only a part; a germ, of which Popery is only a partial expansion; a principle, of which Popery is only one, though the principal application. They refer to that vast and multiform system of error, usurpation and corruption, of which these are the universal features, (some manifested here, some there, as times and circumstances permit)—“opposing,” (ἀντιτίθεμενος, *setting itself against* the word of God, its plain sense, its general reading, its free circulation,) “and exalting itself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;” magnifying rites, forms, attitudes, vestments even, which are purely of human invention, above “worshipping God in the spirit;” and where it can and dare, introducing angels and saints as objects of worship; “commanding” what God has not commanded, and “forbidding” what God has not forbidden, and thus intruding itself as a legislator into the seat of God, and usurping his prerogative who is the “One Lawgiver” (James iv. 12;) “speaking lies in hypocrisy,” covering falsehood with the sanction of religion;* “working lying wonders” to sustain its pretensions; accompanied by “strong delusion” in those who are subjected to its

* Compare the moral principles of Jesuitism as exposed in the “Lettres Provinciales” of Pascal, or in their own works, and No. 90 of the Oxford Tracts.

influence. All these correspondences between prophecy and history attest the identity of Catholicism with the "Mystery of Iniquity," "the Wicked," "the Man of Sin," "the Son of perdition."

That which "withheld" or "let" (*ὁ κατέχων*, *kept down*) "that he might be revealed in his time," was clearly, we think, the presence of the Apostles, whose inspired wisdom and miraculous power kept down the spirit of aspiration and corruption already "working," and who would not have failed to "visit with the rod," even with the exercise of "the power which the Lord had given them," any such aspirations after "the pre-eminence" (lit. *primacy*), as John actually promises to do in the case of Diotrophes,—“Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds,” &c.

But when this "hindrance" was "taken out of the way" by "the departure" of all the Apostles,* forthwith the "Mystery of Iniquity" began to be "revealed" as Paul (2 Thess. ii. 8,) foretold that it would.

To follow, step by step, what the Apostle calls "the revelation of the mystery of iniquity," and Professor Schérer the "insensible development of Catholicism," would of course be out of the question in such a discussion as this. Let us take a method more consistent with our limits. Having contemplated the Church in her strictly primitive period, where no trace of Catholicism appears, (save in the inspired forewarnings of its approach,) let us again survey her in the fourth century, which may be regarded as the era of the visible and formal manifestation of Catholicism. Immediately we observe a marked change in the general sentiment of the Church towards the Holy Scriptures. Their plenary inspiration and supreme authority was, it is true, still admitted and insisted on. But Episcopacy and Monachism were the two great ideas in which the spirit of Catholicism was manifested in that age. For these no support could be found in the Scriptures; other sanction and authority must therefore be sought. This was found in tradition. Tradition had first entered the Church in the modest guise of a witness to the truth, and an exponent of the meaning of the

* Jerome (quoted by Lardner, VI. 169,) supposes the death of John to have taken place in the year 100. According to Eusebius he was still living at the accession of Trajan, A. D. 98.

written word. "If," says Irenæus,* "a question of secondary importance arise, would it not be proper to resort to the oldest churches, in which the Apostles personally conversed, and obtain from them certain and clear information concerning the matter in dispute?"

Throughout Irenæus, who dwells largely on tradition, it† has no authority whatever save what it derives from the inspired Apostles and from Christ himself, as being an exact and faithful oral transmission of what they had taught, or explanation of what they had written. Its value in this respect, must then have been very considerable, as Irenæus wrote his books "adversus Hæreses" less than a century after the death of the Apostle John, enumerates the "successiones Presbyterorum" which in several churches connected his own with the apostolic age, and was himself acquainted with one at least who had personally conversed with those who had seen and heard the Apostles.‡ This value, however, which depended solely on the nearness of the apostolic age, must of course rapidly diminish, and ere long disappear for ever. The tradition of the spirit and meaning of the American Constitution was esteemed of some value when handed down by those who had personally conversed with Washington and its other founders. But one century has not yet elapsed and what is that tradition worth now? A lever, however, of such wide sweep and tremendous power as *oral tradition* once in the hand of clerical ambition was never to be relinquished, but on the contrary augmented to the utmost extent. We find accordingly that tradition once introduced, never rested nor paused in its aggressions till it had erected for itself a solitary throne and an absolute despotism. As early as the first half of the fourth century, we meet with the παραδοσις, and ἀγραπτοι νόμοι of the Church cited in support

* Si quibus de aliqua modica quæstione disceptatio esset, nonne oporteret in antiquissimas recurrere ecclesias, in quibus Apostoli conversati sunt, et ab eis de præsentī quæstione sumere quod certum et re liquidum est? Adv. Hær. III. 4.

† We speak here of course, of *oral tradition*. "Traditio" is sometimes used by Irenæus to denote the whole system of truth and life *delivered* by Christ and the inspired teachers and writers.

‡ Adv. Hær. Lib. IV. 45. Quemadmodum audiivi a quodam Presbytero qui audiverat ab his qui Apostolos viderant, &c.

of doctrines and rites for which no countenance could be found in Scripture. Many instances of this are at hand. Let us take one from Basil ad Amphilochem de Spiritu Sancto. We must, however, observe that the genuineness of this work is perhaps more than doubtful; Erasmus of the Romanists, and Scultetus of the Protestants, utterly reject it as unworthy of Basil in style and at variance with his doctrinal views in other parts of his works. Be it his or not, however, it avails our purpose as a historical record of the progress of Catholic ideas. "Of the doctrines and precepts held by the Church," says the writer, "some we have received in written records, others have been mysteriously handed down to us (διαδοθέντα ἐν μυστηρίῳ,) by apostolical tradition, both of which have the same validity (τῇ αὐτῇ ἰσχύϊ) in relation to piety. . . . For example, where do we find it written that we must make the sign of the cross upon those who begin to hope in Jesus Christ? What book of Scripture teaches us that we must turn to the east when we pray? Whence do we learn to renounce the devil and his angels in baptism? Are not these things from an unwritten instruction? from a silent and mystical tradition, which our fathers have handed down to us in a submissive and uninquisitive secrecy?"

This remarkable passage was probably foisted into Basil at a later period. It is considerably beyond the age, as an evidence of Catholic progress. But whenever, or by whomsoever written, it shows that tradition had then assumed a totally different character from what it bears in Irenæus and the other writers of the second century. From a *witness* to the written Word, it had now become a *rival*. It had learned to veil itself in impenetrable mysteries, and to give forth its responses as of equal authority with those of Scripture. This "element" once admitted, speedily and rapidly carried forward the work of usurpation and corruption. The foreign element soon became the dominant one. Innumerable notions and usages were brought in, not a few of which may, even now, be traced to Paganism, while others are naturally enough accounted for by a prurient imagination, the pride of invention and the ambition of notoriety. "Things which the Lord commanded not, neither came it into his mind," were made terms of communion and of salvation. Some of these innovations, yielding no support to epis-

copal or papal sway were transient. But whenever a notion or usage tended to consolidate and strengthen ecclesiastical dominion, it was promptly adopted, incorporated among the *θεσμοὶ ἐκκλησιαστικοί* and enforced with all the power of the bishops, who, from the time of Constantine, seem to have acquired a power which overbore even that of civil and judicial officers,* an accession which they held on to amidst the persecutions of the following reigns, as if it were a part of their faith or their sacred function. So that they sometimes present the sad anomaly of being at once persecuted and persecutors. The inventions of one age under Episcopal, and by and by under Papal sanction, became the traditions of the next, and as such sacred and immutable. Catholicism, by exacting an implicit obedience to her own traditions, nullified the authority of heaven; by infusing a general and enthusiastic love and admiration for an ascetic and monastic life, she dissolved the most sacred ties and powerful sympathies of earth. She thus prepared the way for the most powerful despotism and the most abject slavery that the world has ever beheld. As this advanced, the Word of God declined and retired. This did not take place without a struggle. There were not wanting those who held up to the Church the pure idea of gospel truth and virtue, insisting that the Word of God was the sole and all-sufficient standard of faith and rule of life, and reminding the Church that she was "making void the Word of God by her traditions." To this extent at least, Jovinian and Vigilantius must be looked upon as confessors and reformers; and almost all the great preachers of the fourth century, though tainted with the general infection, bore their testimony against some one of the prevailing errors and corruptions. But these warnings were unheeded. "Catholicism" was to be fully "developed." "That Wicked" was to be "revealed," who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped." And as the revelation went on, bringing out its multitudinous round of rites, orders, idol-

* Eusebius, among other augmentations of episcopal dignity and power by Constantine, states this, "that it should no longer be lawful for the governors of provinces to rescind the decrees of bishops—*παντὸς γὰρ εἶναι δικαστοῦ τοὺς ἱερεῖς τοῦ Θεοῦ δοκιμωτέρους*, for the priests of God were more worthy of respect than any judge!" Vit. Const. IV. 27.

atries and superstitions, the Word of God was thrust farther and farther from the vision of the Church, till at length it sank below her horizon, and the night came on. Then Catholicism reared her dusky throne and reigned with unresisted sway, while superstition and ignorance lay crouching and trembling at her feet.

Where, then, was the Bible? Where was the "idea of inspiration?" Buried in tomes of theology, or bandied about in the disputes of the schools. Held indeed theoretically, but held down most effectually by the iron sway and ever watchful jealousy and inexorable tyranny of "Catholicism." Did not her every movement indicate her consciousness that, with an inspired and open Bible before the Church, her reign could not last an hour. In the height of her power, the rustling of a single leaf of the Bible terrified her; nor could she recover her tranquillity till her fears, like those of Herod, had been allayed by some wholesale carnage. Her first act was to overlay the pages of the Scriptures with her traditions; her next, to claim for those traditions a co-ordinate rank and equal authority; her next, to arrogate to herself the sole and infallible interpretation of them; as soon as she could or dared, she forbade the reading of them by the people in their own tongue; she made them as scarce as possible even among the clergy; the libraries of her monasteries scarcely contained a copy of them. Catholicism hunted from the world the very book which she pretended to acknowledge as inspired and from God. It was at last so rare that the price of a Bible was almost a fortune. Even Bishops were found who had never seen a copy of the word of God. If any man held the light of its opened pages into the abyss of her corruptions, excommunication, the prison, and (when her power was absolute,) the stake was the punishment of his temerity. Leo the Isaurian, Clement of Ireland, Berenger, Wickliffe, Huss, Jerome of Prague, and Savonarola, bore the fury of Catholic persecution for no other heresy but that which would inevitably have brought Peter himself* to the stake, if Catholicism had then been in the ascendant, viz. that "we ought to obey God rather than men"—that Christians are "redeemed

* "And the other Apostles," Acts v. 29.

from" (not by) "the tradition received from the fathers with the precious blood of Christ," and that the proper nourishment of the believing soul is "the sincere milk of the word."

It is plain, then, that the historical relation of Catholicism and inspiration is precisely the reverse of that which Professor Schérer has indicated. Christians began with the most profound veneration for the sacred books as the word of God; the most distinct recognition of their authority, and the most frequent citation of them in all their doctrinal and moral teachings. This is "the idea of inspiration" as it was conceived in the fullness and freshness of the Church's primitive life. As we come down from age to age, we find that this "idea" becomes more and more dim in proportion as the other element of tradition and church authority obtrudes itself into prominence; till at length the Scripture is forgotten, and the Church supreme. The "idea of inspiration" and that of "Catholicism" have always been antagonist ideas. As the one has advanced, the other has declined. The conflict of these ideas has made the history of the Church what it is, a verification of the prophecy of our Saviour, "I am come to bring a sword—to cast a fire upon earth." In this conflict, the "idea of Catholicism" has wielded (when they have been within its reach) the material sword and fire. The idea of inspiration has wielded the sword of the Spirit, the fire of the word of God. Each armed with its appropriate weapons, their hostility has been unceasing. So far from the two being amicably developed together as kindred elements, all history shows that they cannot co-exist without mortal strife in the same Church, the same age, the same bosom. The assertion which Professor Schérer makes of the history of this "idea" in the Reformed Churches is not less surprising or less contradictory to history.

"The Reformation of the sixteenth century," he says, "after having begun in the person of Luther with a great freedom and spirituality of views on this subject, was checked in its development, and ended by retaining, among others, this relic of the system against which it rose up." If by the "freedom and spirituality of Luther's views" the writer means (as he evidently does,) his discarding the "idea of inspiration," and the "authority of Scripture," what will become of the assertion when com-

pared with the words of the great Reformer himself on this subject—in his commentaries, his controversial writings, his letters, his table-talk? “If I were a great poet,” said he, “I would write a magnificent poem on the virtue and usefulness of the word of God.” So extreme a *literalist* was he in fact, so stringent an asserter of “textual inspiration,” that to him “*hoc est corpus meum*” was sufficient to overpower all objections from the nature of things to the doctrine of consubstantiation.

“Protestantism remained,” says Professor Schérer, “a system of authority; the only difference in this respect, between it and Catholicism, is that it has substituted one authority for another authority—the Scripture for the Church.”

To this we entirely assent. Protestantism has simply substituted the authority of God for that of man; the authority of “the word of God” which our Lord declares “is truth,” (John xvii.) for the precarious and contradictory decisions of fathers, popes, councils, and traditions—of all that heterogeneous medley in fine, which has been absurdly and impiously called *the Church*. Is this an immaterial difference?

All the great minds which led in the movement of the Reformation were unanimous on this point, notwithstanding the minor differences which divided them, and the deplorable animosity and bitterness with which they were often maintained. We cannot here go into citations. But let any one glance over the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th chapters of the 1st Book of Calvin’s *Institutes*, and he will see how distinctly and indignantly Calvin would disclaim that spurious “freedom and spirituality of views” with which he (in the latter part of this letter) as well as Luther is complimented by Professor Schérer. That “God is the author of the Scriptures”—that they are necessary and sufficient to lead to the true knowledge of God, that “by them God has been pleased to preserve his truth in perpetual remembrance”—that they must, however, be confirmed by the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit—but that this testimony, as well as the whole inward work of illumination and sanctification by the Holy Spirit is carried forward by and through the written Word—that this Word, so far from being “transient and temporary” in its use, “guides the sons of God to the very summit of perfection”—these great thoughts are elaborately and power-

fully defended and illustrated in those immortal chapters of the great Reformer. The 9th chapter particularly, assails the very position taken in this letter of Professor Schérer, and denounces with great severity and contempt the very sentiment which Professor Schérer imputes to the early Protestants. Let me beg the reader to consult this chapter (of three or four pages) entire. I will indulge myself in one or two brief quotations. "There have lately arisen some unstable men, who, haughtily pretending to be taught by the Spirit, deride the simplicity of those who still attend to (what they style) the dead and killing letter. But I would ask them, what spirit that is by whose inspiration they are elevated to such a sublimity? If they answer that it is the Spirit of Christ, how ridiculous is such an assurance! For, that the Apostles of Christ and other believers in the primitive church, were illuminated by no other Spirit, I think, they will concede. But not one of them learned, from his teaching, to condemn the Divine Word; they were rather filled with higher reverence for it, as their writings abundantly testify.—Have they imbibed a different spirit from that which the Lord promised to his disciples? Great as their infatuation is, I do not think them fanatical enough to hazard such avowal. But what kind of spirit did he promise? One truly (John xvi. 13) who should "not speak of himself" but suggest and instil into their minds those things which he had orally delivered. The office of the Spirit, then, which is promised to us, is not to feign new and unheard of revelations, or to coin a new system of doctrine, but to seal to our minds the same doctrine which the gospel delivers. Hence we readily understand that it is incumbent on us diligently to read and attend to the Scripture, if we would receive any advantage or satisfaction from the Spirit of God." Those who contend that the Christian faith and life is to be maintained by revelations of the Spirit apart from the Scripture, he denominates "unhappy men bent on delusion even to their own destruction," "despisers of the Scripture," "proud fanatics," &c. "A very different sobriety," he says, "becomes the children of God; who, while they are sensible that, exclusively of the Spirit of God, they are utterly destitute of the light of truth, yet are not ignorant that the Word is the instru-

ment, (organum), by which the Lord dispenses to believers the illumination of his Spirit."

Look through the sermons, commentaries, confessions, catechisms and controversies, in which the spirit of the Reformation is manifested, and you cannot fail to see a harmony on this point, amidst all their variations in respect to government and worship, which is truly grand and wonderful. The "idea" of the divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Scriptures in fact made the Reformation. It was the force of this principle which projected the new church out of the bosom of the old, and rendered return and reconciliation impossible. Protestantism rested on the Scriptures, appealed to them, studied them, translated, printed and circulated them, and enjoined the reading of them on all believers. Catholicism, on the contrary, suppressed and forbade them, and pronounced the study of them dangerous and impious except as their teachings were interpreted, and of course, controlled by the authority of the Church. It was the intense antagonism of these two ideas, inspiration and Catholicism, which rent Christendom asunder in the 16th century, and has kept it divided into two hostile camps to this day.

So palpably contradictory to history and to the actual condition of the world, is the strange assertion of Professor Schérer, that "this idea of inspiration which has formed the sacred collection and given it its dignity, is one of the elements of that Catholicism which was insensibly developed in the ancient Church"—and that "the Reformation of the 16th century, after having begun with a great freedom and spirituality of views on this subject was repressed (*refoulée*) in its development, and ended by retaining among others, this remnant of the system against which it had risen up." We have seen, on the contrary, that the idea of inspiration was most distinct and efficacious in the Church immediately after she came from the teaching of her Lord and his Apostles—that this idea gradually became confused and inoperative during the long ages of declension which followed—that it broke forth again into brightness and vitality in the revival or Reformation of the 16th century—that the Reformers planted their artillery on this rock, and

that Protestantism, as far as she has remained evangelical and vital, has never shifted her ground nor changed her weapons, but has found in the Word of God an inexhaustible magazine of all sorts of missiles wherewith she has beleaguered and assailed Catholicism so indefatigably and effectually, that that vast system of error and superstition at length totters to its foundations.

And when it falls, (as fall it must,) its overthrow will be the result, as it will be the termination of this unceasing conflict—this “warfare without herald.” It is a sublime and tranquilizing thought that the same page of the inspired word which foretells the revelation of this “mystery of iniquity,” foretells also its doom. “The Lord shall consume it with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy it with the brightness of his coming.” In the unsearchable wisdom of God it was to be “revealed,” but not more certainly “revealed” than “consumed and destroyed.” It has its day in the history of the Church and of the world, and “a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness” has it been; but, blessed be God! it is far spent. And is there not reason to believe that “the Spirit of the Lord” and “the brightness of his coming” which is to “abolish” this “apostasy,” (though the words by no means exclude some visible manifestation of Divine power) are to be understood principally of the truth of his Holy Word, embraced in the full faith of its plenary inspiration, preached, circulated, and diffused in every form, and above all, by that invisible, and therefore irresistible diffusion (even as “salt” and “light”) of a holy and benevolent life in all Christians? Our own country presents a wide and open field for this final struggle. Already the forces on both sides seem to be mustering upon it. We cannot look over its ample surface, and at the hosts of many tongues and races which immigration is pouring into it, without calling to mind the words of the prophet, “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!”—and along with them comes his stirring summons, “Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; . . . thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.” The last conflict will be between the Church of God “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself

being the chief corner-stone," and the church of man, even of "the man of sin," founded on the "traditions," "commandments and ordinances of men." Let all, then, who wish to commit their own destinies and those of their children to the word of God and the Church of God, put on the "armour of light," and come up to a conflict in which they have "the son of perdition" for an enemy, and the Son of God for a friend and ally.

We have thus briefly surveyed the history of the Church, or rather glanced at some of its prominent bearings on this great question of the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Shall we claim a moment's farther attention, (severely as we have already tasked the reader's patience,) to some of the impressions it has left on our mind?

The first is the unanimous and constant testimony of the Church (the living and spiritual Church, we mean of course,) to the doctrine of inspiration, in its strongest and fullest form. We do not now speak of didactic statements, but of all the utterances in which her very heart and mind have spoken out, from the first lisplings of her infancy through the wide and wonderful development of eloquence, learning, philosophy and poetry, which has been impregnated with her life during the last eighteen centuries—all constitute as it were, one profound and grand response to her Lord's declaration, "thy word is truth!"

The second is the close relation which this doctrine and sentiment every where and always bears to the life and power of the Church. When she has exhibited most of the spirit of her Lord in the purity of her faith, the simplicity of her worship, and the pacific energy of her labours for the conversion of the world, it has been in those periods when she has most highly prized, and deeply studied, and singly honoured the sacred volume of his inspired truth. Every memorable renovation of spiritual life which her annals record, has been accomplished in connection with this. When "Ezra the scribe* stood upon a pulpit of wood," and "opened the book in the sight of all the people," and "the Levites read in the book, in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading," and "all the people wept when they heard the

* Neh. viii.

words of the law," and there was a speedy return to the pious usages of their fathers, and thereupon "there was very great gladness," and no subsequent relapse into national idolatry; when, in the amazing victories of primitive Christianity "the word of God" (the preached word constantly compared and corrected by the written,) "grew mightily and prevailed;" when the first and "chief successors of the Apostles travelled from land to land, preaching Christ and delivering the Scriptures of the Divine Gospels;"* when the long oppressed truth broke forth in the splendours of the Reformation, imparting a new impulse to human freedom and energy in every direction; and in every revival of spiritual and vital religion down to our own times, we behold a new manifestation of the Divine energy enshrined in the inspired Word.

And when Haldane, a wayfarer at Geneva, thirty years ago, assembled the youth of her old Theological School, and unable to speak the French language, silently traced on the sacred page the passages which reveal the divinity of Christ and the other vital doctrines of the gospel, and thus by the grace of God was the means of infusing a spiritual life which has since appeared in the establishment of her new and purer school of theology, and in all the wide and various instrumentalities of which she is now the centre, for the diffusion of Christianity, we see one of the most striking and peculiar examples of this truth which the history of the Church affords. It is no matter of wonder therefore, that Geneva holds fast to the faith of an inspired Bible to which she owes not only her ancient reformation from Popery, when like a trumpet at the lips of Calvin and his compeers, it sent forth those soul-stirring notes whose reverberations through Switzerland and Europe have often brought to our mind those glorious lines of Byron:

"Far along
From rock to rock the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder; not from one lone cloud,
For every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud
Back to the joyous Alps which call to her aloud:"

but the silent radiation of whose holy light has effected her recent no less wonderful revival from Rationalism. No wonder

* Eus. Hist. Ecc. III. 37.

she declines the same dose (however disguised) which formerly laid her in that fatal slumber. Justly and nobly has M. Merle D'Aubigné observed on this occasion: "If it were only a question of secondary matters, of shades of difference on the doctrine of inspiration, we would have been happy to make sacrifices to charity without compromising truth. We desire that a certain liberty be maintained in theological instruction. But all liberty has limits which we cannot overpass without touching the essence of things. The question which has been controverted among us was not a question of shades, (*une question de nuances*;) it involved the maintenance or abandonment of one of the most essential principles of evangelical Christianity. We could, therefore, no longer hesitate. The twenty-one members of your general committee have acted in this affair with the most perfect unanimity."* We quote these sentiments thus largely, so worthy of their distinguished and excellent author, and add the expression of our hearty concurrence with the more pleasure, as sundry very intelligible manifestations of sympathy with Professor Schérer have gone forth from certain quarters of our own land, coupled with insinuations that "the theory of inspiration has been drawn pretty tight at Geneva." To us these words, and the action of the committee which they present, seem to bear the impress of that fine maxim which "the pious and learned Rieger"† has remarked should be the motto of the Christian, "a large heart and a narrow conscience." Never was sympathy more misplaced than when extended to aberration from God's holy truth. We doubtless may and ought to feel profound compassion for the wanderer from truth, as well as the offender against law. But sympathy with the crime or the error, or such lenity in dealing with it as to leave the gangrene to spread, is treason against justice and truth, and in the end against charity itself.

Another lesson from the history of the Church is this—men must have some infallible oracle to resort to in dealing with the momentous questions which touch their eternal interests—an infallible Bible, an infallible Church, an infallible Pope, or an

* Disc. d'Ouverture, p. 10, 11.

† Quoted by M. Merle D'Aubigné in the same Discourse.

infallible self. The first is clearly the revelation of the Lord, and as clearly the faith of the primitive Church; the second gradually superseded it; the third followed; the fourth and last is the succedaneum of the subjective philosophy. It professes indeed to hold to a revelation direct to the individual, or rather, to what they would consider the very *umbilicus* of individuality, "the intuitional consciousness." But how determine the source, the genuineness of the revelations or impressions thus made? How distinguish the voice of the Divine Spirit within, amidst the din of our own vain thoughts, and the reverberations from the world without? What is to furnish the criterion? Who to apply it? The Scripture commands us "not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God," and itself furnishes the test whereby we may "know the Spirit of God."* It directs us to bring all teachings,† and all inward impressions to the criterion of the written word. But the disciple of the subjective philosophy has parted with his faith in the written word. To him "the Bible is not the word of God," it "is no longer an authority;" it contains some things which are "very fine," "very rich,"‡ but it also contains "errors," "contradictions," "inaccurate statements," and "prophecies belied by facts"! Who, then, is to distinguish between the true and the false in the written word? "The Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of the believer." But who is to distinguish between the suggestions of "the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error," for "many false prophets are gone out into the world," many whose supposed inspiration was delusion? M. Schérer, it is true, permits us to resort "to the great prophets of all times, to the living teaching of the Church, to the word of God personified in his servants, to the Spirit and to his manifestation;" but in all these there is a mixture of truth with error and delusion. Who, then, is to furnish and apply the criterion? The individual himself. Otherwise all is confusion and uncertainty. The individual sense is thus constituted the "sovereign authority in matters of faith, superior to the Church, superior to the

* 1 John iv. 1.

† Acts xvii. 11; Gal. i. 8, 9.

‡ "Très belle," "très féconde" and the like terms, M. Schérer applies to certain portions of the Apostolic writings which he is pleased to approve.

Scripture," and we might add, superior to the Spirit himself, since it is to sit in judgment on the revelations supposed to proceed from him. The individual is to himself at once Church, Pope, and Bible, and discerner of spirits! And yet there is no error, and almost no crime, which this individual sense, this infallible self, has not confidently classed among the "inspirations" of the holy and omniscient Spirit of God! Here is the latest form of infallibility. Here is "the emancipation," "the revolution" which M. Schérer has abandoned his professional chair to "signalize" to the world. A system which sends the soul trembling under the vast anxieties and uncertainties which accompany the momentous question "what must I do to be saved?" from the "real words of testimony" to a Babel of confused tongues, a many-voiced oracle which has sanctioned by its infallible response almost every form of fanaticism and wickedness which has ever scourged and troubled the world!

Between these four forms of infallibility lies the choice of every human soul!

We turn from this retrospect also with a deeper feeling of the truth that Christ is indeed "with his Church always, even unto the end of the world," else "the smoke ascending out of the bottomless pit"* must long since have quenched her light, and "the flood which the serpent cast out of his mouth after her" must utterly have "carried her away."† Even the "revelation" of Catholicism is a proof of the presence of Christ with his Church, because it is a fulfilment of his inspired word, and a manifestation of his omnipotent and ever wakeful care. The history of the Church is, in a certain sense, a perpetual revelation of the truth and grace of her Redeemer. Not an authoritative revelation however. It is the figment of authority which has made Catholicism, and substituted it for Christianity; which has put the Church herself on an infraction of her charter, an invasion of the rights and royalties of her Lord. This was the germ of her "apostasy," as it is the germ of all apostasy, whether in the Church or the individual soul—putting man for God, and obeying man instead of God. This has made her a Papal Church, a worldly hierarchy, a vast empire made up of aggressions, on the one hand, on the kingdom of God,

* Rev. ix.

† Rev. xii.

and on the other, on the powers of this world; a mass of error, corruption and tyranny, of which the world itself has been, and not without reason, ashamed. Still, this abuse and perversion does not in the least impair the glorious truth itself, that “now unto principalities and powers in the heavenly places,” and of course to contemplative minds on earth who look at her history in its true light, “is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” This renders church history, (not consulted in barren and precarious compends, but in the living products of Christian genius and piety which every age has produced,) “a vast and fruitful knowledge.” There is, we firmly believe, no field in the vast domain of theological learning which will more richly repay the researches of the Christian scholar, or enable him to do more important and timely service to truth. Catholicism, in one or other of her branches, has almost had this field to herself; and the extent to which she has falsified the remains of Christian antiquity by her omissions, interpolations, mistranslations, and garbled indexes even, exceeds all belief of any one who has not carefully looked into the matter. There is no ground on which the ministry, the doctrine, and the worship of our Church stand stronger, or on which Catholicism is more weak and incapable of defence, than that of Christian antiquity.

Even in this movement of the subjective philosophy we joyfully recognize, not the control merely, but the overruling and guiding sway of the Head of the Church. There is a “balance of truth” in the world of mind and opinion, as well as a “balance of power” in the physical forces and political relations of nations. The very aberrations from the faith of the Church are made, in the end, to contribute to the maintenance of this equilibrium. The tendency of the human mind is to extremes, even in the right direction. The speculations which have of late tended to exaggerate the subjective side of Christian truth may be intended, and we trust and believe they are intended, to correct and compensate for a general and popular tendency in an opposite direction. The immense increase of the *material* (so to speak,) of Christianity by the translation, printing and distribution of the Holy Scriptures, which is the great and wonderful fact of our age, seems to have begotten in many minds an expectation that the mere multiplication and distribution of

copies of the inspired volume is to bring about the conversion of the world. Now this is an expectation wholly unwarranted, nay, it is utterly contradictory to prophecy, and subversive of the very nature of Christianity. The written word can never give a saving revelation of God to one human soul, unless the same Spirit who inspired it, impart a capacity for the intuition, belief, and reception of its truths. *Deest aliquid intus.* The letter is powerless without the Spirit. The whole artillery of truth can do nothing without the propulsive power of the Spirit. It is only when we "receive the Spirit which is from God that we can know the things which are freely given unto us of God." If a copy of the Bible were placed in every human abode, in every human hand; if its truths were lodged in every mind, unfolded by the most orthodox and skilful exposition, and pressed to the heart and conscience by the most eloquent appeals, would the conversion of the world be the necessary and sure result? If it were, it would be "by might and by power," and not "by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts." But the conversion of the world is not to be so accomplished. After all this "planting" and "watering," God must "give the increase," or there will be none. The intellectual, religiously educated Saul of Tarsus, with his mind full of religious ideas, familiar doubtless with the facts of Christianity, and having beheld an overpowering manifestation of their truth in the martyrdom of Stephen, was untouched by one holy impression, unvisited by one ray of saving light. "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me" discloses the true era of his conversion, an era through which every soul must pass which "passes from death unto life." Has not the Church been in danger of forgetting this? Amidst her own vastly increased activity, and the multiplied instrumentalities and facilities afforded by the physical and civil progress of society, has she not been tempted to form material ideas of the kingdom of God, and to overlook her absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit? Do we not sometimes hear appeals for money towards Bible distribution, and for men towards the missionary work, urged too much in the calculating and self-relying spirit of the world? Now, while this popular tendency is in full force, a strong counter-current of philosophical speculation sets in, which beyond measure

exalts and exaggerates the subjective. In this system, the Spirit is every thing, the word is nothing. Revelation is wholly intuitional, individual, subjective. There can be no such thing as "a revelation by verbal exposition," a revelation transmitted by written word or living voice. The prophets were wholly mistaken when they said, "thus saith the Lord"; the apostles not less so, when they declared that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The thing is psychologically impossible; for there can be no revelation but that which is made to "the intuitional consciousness," and therefore revelation, and the inspiration which conveys it, are, and of necessity must be, generically the same in every believing soul that they were in the writers of the sacred volume.

These are startling propositions! If they only startle the Church into a more distinct recollection, and a deeper faith in the universal need of the Spirit's influence in order to the saving perception and experience of the truth, their effect will be salutary. These extreme statements will soon be perceived to be in direct conflict with the plain declarations of the Bible, the universal opinion of thinking men in all ages, and the perpetual sentiment and consciousness of the Christian Church, to say nothing of the psychological refutation of which they are capable, and which inevitably awaits them. Meanwhile, amidst all this clamour about "the objective and subjective," "the logical and intuitional," "the mechanical and dynamical," though it may bewilder many, and "seduce some," the very wants and longings of the renewed soul will keep it at the right point. The truth which shines forth in the word is its only steady light, the "sincere milk of the word" its indispensable aliment. The sober and spiritual Christian will find no repose but in the combined and mutually supporting truths of an inspired Bible, and a converting, enlightening, and sanctifying Spirit. No philosophic fog can long conceal from him that precious certainty inscribed in his Redeemer's last prayer, "thy word is truth"—nor that equally precious assurance "left" to his Church for all time, "the Spirit shall come and lead you into all truth." When in the faith and fresh remembrance of both these truths, the disciples shall, as at the beginning, "search the Scriptures

daily," and "continue with one accord in prayer and supplication," then will they again be "clothed with power, the Holy Ghost coming upon them;" then too, will "the word of God grow mighty and prevail." Then shall we behold a re-production of primitive preachers, men at once "mighty in the Scriptures" and "fervent in the Spirit," and therefore "eloquent men," "teaching effectually." Then will the Church go forth to sure and glorious victories, being armed with "the sword of the SPIRIT, which is the WORD OF GOD."

ART. II.—PETER COLLINSON.

"Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall; with notices of their Botanical Cotemporaries, by William Darlington, M. D., LL.D., &c.; with Illustrations. Philadelphia, Lindsay & Blakiston: 1849."

THIS name indicates where those who would profit by the teachings of history may find a happy illustration of the many excellent traits of character which result from a life conformed to principles of Friends. The sect has been much criticised; the number of its adherents is limited in extent; we do not ourselves see things spiritual in the light they do, and we have heretofore expressed our dissent and given our reasons as occasion prompted. But the truth of history must concede to them rare virtues, characterized as they are by self-denial, and eminent success in their efforts to relieve suffering humanity. Indeed they deny themselves the use of some agencies which most Christians think powerful and effectual as means of doing good. They have had the test of time; they have had their trials, neither few nor small; they have been sifted and scanned; and, while differing from almost all the rest of the world in some great leading rules of life and conduct, they have persevered and have been sustained: after the lapse of more than two centuries, the world sees a vast product of good to the whole human family from the labours of these few men. Upon whom else in the wide world, since time began, has the sun of truth shone with a brighter light to carry him to the dark re-