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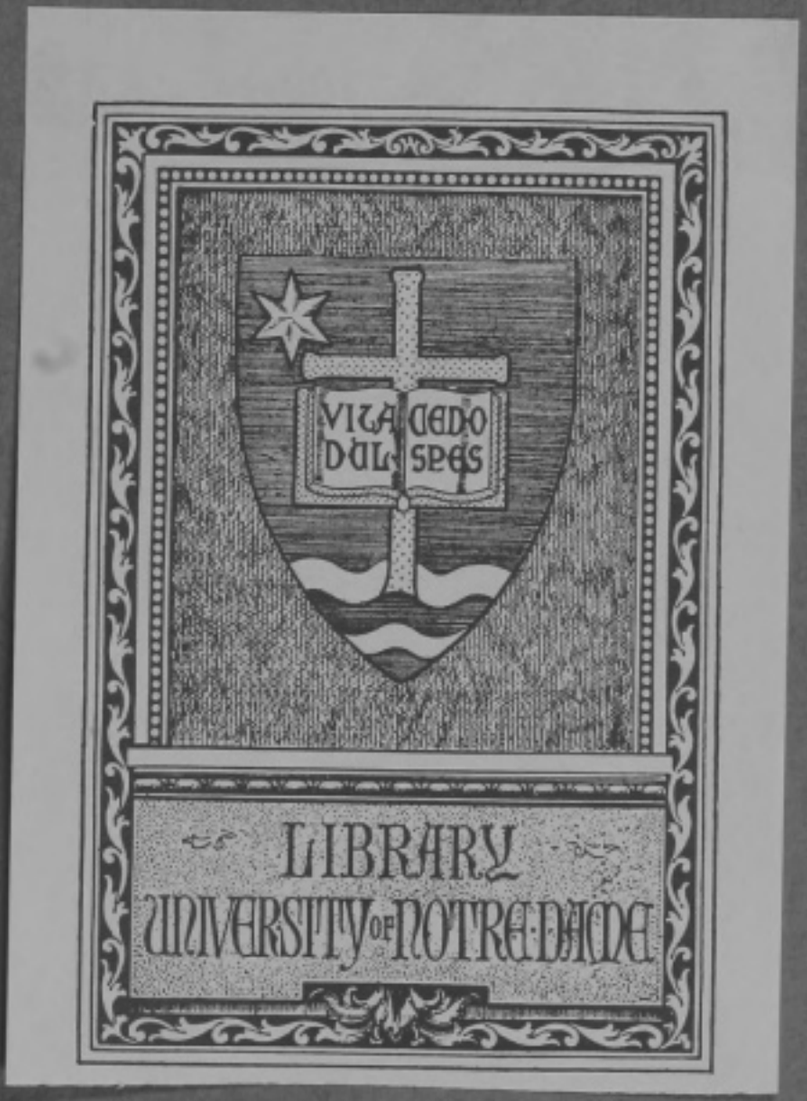

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the Faith, we ought not to deliver any thing, though never ſo ſmall, without the Divine Scriptures, *&c.* neither ſhouldſt thou believe me barely ſaying theſe things to thee; unleſs thou receiveſt the demonſtration of the things, publiſhed, out of the Divine Scriptures. For this is the ſafety, or ſecurity of our Faith, which depends not upon words that we invent, but upon the demonſtration of the Divine Scriptures.

In which we hear our Lord Chriſt *himſelf ſpeaking to us: who is more to be believed than the* Church. For the Church, as S. *Paul* ſpeaks, is ſubject unto Chriſt (*they are the words of* S. Auguſtine (*m*)) and therefore the Church ought not to ſet her ſelf above Chriſt: ſo as to think that they who are condemned by him may be baptized, but they that are condemned by the Church, may not be baptized: when he always judges truly; but Eccleſiaſtical Judges, being Men, are oft-times deceived.

(*m*) *Tom.* VII. *Contra Creſconium Gram. l.* 2. *c.* 21.

From them *therefore, who are fallible, we appeal to* Him, *who is infallible; and hath delivered his ſentence in the Holy Scriptures: or from a Church* particular, *we appeal to the Church* Catholique: *nay, from the* New *Church of* Rome, *to the* Old. *For we are not, as they would make the World believe, affrighted with the Name of the* Church; *whoſe judgment we truly honour, as will appear in this Treatiſe: while they diſhonour it, by confining the Church to themſelves; and then exalting it above the Scriptures of Truth; and making its mere Name ſerve to dazzle the eyes of their own People, and to keep them in profound ignorance: teaching them (n) to oppoſe the Name of a* Catholique Man, *and* the Catholique Church, *as a ſufficient anſwer to all that we moſt reaſonably object againſt them. Thus in their own conceit, it is a kind of* Gorgon's *head, which they fanſie will immediately ſtupify us, when it is oppoſed to us: but, bleſſed be God, we are ſtill in our Wits, and underſtand very well, that this*

(*n*) *Rhem. Annot. in.* XII. Luke 11.

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But, that we may not be left to gueſs at this truth, or *myſtery of Godlineſs*, without any certainty, he ſets down a particular of it: and reduces the whole myſtery of Godlineſs, to theſe Six heads.

I. The principal is this, that *the eternal Son of God, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghoſt of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man; that he might ſuffer for us, and make himſelf an offering for our ſins.* All this I take to be included in theſe words, *God was manifeſted in the fleſh.* Which cannot be meant of God the Father, for it is expreſsly ſaid in other places, that it was *Jeſus Chriſt who came in the fleſh*, 1 Joh. IV. 2. and is here declared to be *God*, that is, the eternal Son of God, the *Word made fleſh*, 1 Joh. 14. Which doth not denote merely his being *made Man*, but likewiſe his *ſuffering* for us: he taking our *fleſh* on purpoſe, for this very end, that therein he might, by his Death, make an atonement for Sin. And ſo the very phraſe *fleſh and blood* ſignifies in Scripture (as it doth commonly in the *Hebrew* Writers) this *weak, frail, mortal, ſuffering* State, wherein we are at preſent: into which our bleſſed Lord put himſelf, when he manifeſted himſelf in our fleſh. So we read expreſsly, II. *Hebr.* 14. where to take part with us, in our *fleſh and blood*, is to make himſelf liable to ſufferings and death. In theſe few words therefore, are contained many principles of Chriſtian truths, *viz.* that Jeſus Chriſt was really God (not God the Father, whoſe being is here ſuppoſed, but God the Son) and that he was incarnate, and really made Man, of the Subſtance of his Mother: being perfect God, and perfect Man: and as really *ſuffered for us in the fleſh*, as S. *Peter* ſpeaks, 1 IV. 1. Which were the

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anathematized *Honorius*, becauſe he *had not adorned that Apoſtolical Church, with the Doctrine of Apoſtolical Tradition.*

In the next Age (which was the VIII*th* after Chriſt) the ſecond Council at *Nice*, which ſet up the worſhip of Images, paſt the ſame condemnation upon him: and making mention of the *ſix* (ſ) foregoing Councils, *they confirm and eſtabliſh all that had been delivered from the beginning*: only they fraudulently add, to bring in their Image worſhip, *whether written or unwritten.* Which made the firſt alteration in the Doctrine of the Church: all the foregoing Councils, having derived their Faith, wholly from the Scriptures. As the following Council at *Frankfort* did, where as the worſhipping of Images was condemned; ſo the Holy Scriptures were highly extolled, in words which ſignified they thought them their only ſafe Directors. The *thirtieth* Chapter of the ſecond Book of the *Capitulare* of *Charles* the Great, abounds with ſuch expreſſions as theſe, *the Scripture is a Treaſure that wants no good, but is redundant in all that Good is.* And in the beginning of the Third Book, he and the Fathers there aſſembled, give an account of their Faith, in a Creed, which they intitule, *A Confeſſion of the Catholique Faith, which we have received from the Holy Fathers, which we hold and believe with a pure heart.* It is that in S. *Hierom*'s Works, inſcribed, *Symboli explanatio ad Damaſum* I. which they thus ſubſcribe, *This is the true integrity of the Catholique tradition of Faith, which we believe and confeſs with a ſincere heart*, &c. *This is the true Faith, this confeſſion we preſerve and hold: which whoſoever keeps whole and undefiled, he ſhall have everlaſting Salvation.*

(ſ) *Act.* VII.

Thus far therefore, they were not got beyond the firſt *Creed*, of which this is the explanation. Nor was *John Damaſcen* himſelf advanced any further; but confined

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fined his belief to what is contained in the Law and the Prophets, Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, οὐδὲν περαιτέρω τούτων ἐπιζητοῦντες (*t*), *ſeeking for nothing beyond theſe.* 'For ſince 'God is good, and envies no body, he concludes that he 'hath revealed there all that is profitable for us, and con- 'cealed only thoſe things we are not able to bear. And 'therefore *let us love*, ſaith he, *theſe things, let us abide* '*in them: not removing the Eternal Boundaries, nor going* '*beyond the Divine Tradition.*

(*t*) *L.* 1. *Orthod. Fid. cap.* 1.

Which they ſeem to have preſerved, without exceeding the ancient limits, in the beginning of the *Ninth* Age. For in a Council at *Mentz* (*u*), care is taken for teaching the People the *Creed*, (which they call *ſignaculum fidei*, the ſeal of Faith) and the *Lords Prayer*; for which end they are required to ſend their Children to School, or to the Monaſteries, or their Pariſh Prieſts, that they might *rightly learn the Catholique Faith and the Lords Prayer.*

(*u*) *An.* 813. *Can.* XLV.

Hitherto therefore the *Catholique* Faith was contained in the common Creed, which had been from the beginning. But towards the latter end of that Age, the Council of (*x*) *Conſtantinople* (which the Roman Church calls the the VIIIth General Council) began to talk of the *Regulæ Patrum*, the Rules of the Fathers (in ſtead of the ancient word *Regula fidei*, the Rule of Faith, which is the Apoſtles Creed) and called them the *Secondary Oracles.* And therefore profeſſed not only to *hold all that the Catholique Church received from the Apoſtles, and the General Councils: but from any Father or great Doctor in the Church.* Which was the ready way to change the Faith of the Church; and to turn particular Mens Opinions, into matter of common belief: though no new Article was as yet put into the ancient Creed.

(*x*) *An.* 869. *Act.* 10. *Can.* I.

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as ἑτέραν ἔκθεσιν *another explication* of the Articles of that Creed, though not different from it.

In the Creed of the Apoſtles that is, there are ſome things contained *implicitely* (as *Thomas Aquinas* you heard ſpeaks) and being *virtually* there, either in the Letter or the ſence, may be drawn from thence by evident conſequence (ſuch as the *Deity of Chriſt, his two Natures,* the *Catholique Church,* which was included in thoſe words *I believe the holy Church,* as this Article is expreſt in the old *Roman* Creed, and the like) and yet ſuch an explication, theſe Fathers confeſſed, could by no Man, no aſſembly of Men, leſs than an *Oecumenical* Council, be lawfully made and impoſed upon the
† *Ib.* p. 163. Church. For which they quote *Aquinas* (whom † they call ὁ ἅγιος Θωμᾶς) that there never was ἀνάπτυξις ἐν τῷ συμβόλῳ an *explication of the Creed, but in an Oecumenical Council, and he ſpeaks of any Creed whatſoever, which was common in the Church.*

And therefore in concluſion they abſolutely deny that the *Latine* Church had added any thing to the Creed. 'For the *Nicene,* and the *Conſtantinopolitan* Creed are 'both one: So that the one being read, the other is un-'derſtood: For though they differ in words, they agree 'in ſenſe and in truth. And the like they affirm of all 'other Creeds: and thereby anſwer the objection that 'they had added a word to the Creed, about the pro-'ceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, from the Father, *and* the 'Son: which is true, they confeſſed, with reſpect to 'the words, but not with reſpect to the ſenſe. For ſtill
* *Ib.* p. 170. 'the Creed remains ἓν καὶ ταυτὸν, εἰ καὶ διαφέρει τοῖς ῥήμασι * *one 'and the ſame; though it differ in the words.* And there-'fore it follows it *was not properly an addition, but one and 'the ſame thing,* ἢ ἡ ταυτότητος ἔκθεσις, *or the expoſition of 'the very ſelf ſame thing.*

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All which I have ſet down thus largely, to ſhow that thus far therefore, all things continued as they had done from the beginning: that is, notwithſtanding the new Opinions there were in the Church; there was no new Creed made, no new Article added to the Creed; nothing, but what had been ſo at the firſt, made neceſſary to Salvation.

Which is the laſt thing I obſerve, that till the concluſion of the Council of *Trent*, that is, till a little more than an hundred years ago; there were no other Creeds, but thoſe which we confeſs and believe in this Church: which are the *Apoſtles Creed* expounded, not inlarged by any new Articles. But then indeed, Pope *Pius* IV. in purſuance of the Councils Order, framed another Confeſſion of Faith, conſiſting of no leſs than XII. new Articles, added to the old: never heard of in any Creed, throughout the whole Church, till this time. And it muſt be called and eſteemed a *New Faith*: and it makes that to be a *New Church*; which falſly calls it ſelf the Ancient *Catholique* Apoſtolique Church of Chriſt. For it is none of theſe, neither *Ancient*, nor *Catholique*, nor *Apoſtolique*: but *New*, *Roman*, *Tridentine* Church; derived I mean from the *Roman* Biſhops at *Trent*.

It will be fit I think to ſet down this *New* Creed; that the Reader may compare it, with thoſe I have ſhown were hitherto the intire Faith of the Catholique Church. It may be found in ſeveral of our Writers; but I wiſh it were in every bodies hand, and therefore take the pains to tranſcribe it, for the benefit of thoſe into whoſe hands this Book ſhall come.

Pope

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as lies in me, that it be held, taught, and preached by my Subjects, or those, whose care belongs to me in my Office.

I the aforesaid N. *Promise, Vow and Swear: So help me God, and these holy Gospels.*

This *Bull* (as they call it) bears date on the Ides of *November*, 1564. and concludes in the usual manner, with threats *of the indignation of God, and of his blessed Apostles S.* Peter *and* Paul, against all that shall infringe or oppose it.

And every Reader, I suppose, discerns that this is not meerly a confession of Faith, but likewise a solemn Oath. And so the Title of it bears, *A Bull concerning a form of an Oath of profession of Faith.* Which *Oath* all Ecclesiastical Persons, whether *Secular*, or *Regular*, as they distinguish them, and all *Military* Orders are bound to take.

And it is as easie to observe, that this is perfectly *New*, both as an *Oath*, and as a *profession of Faith.* Never was there any such *Creed* imposed before, or so much as framed: much less tyed upon Men by an *Oath.* For when these Fathers met at *Trent*, and were to make a profession of Faith, by rehearsing the Creed *which the Roman Church uses* (*a*), (so the words are) they could find none to profess, but the *Nicene Creed*; no larger Creed was in use; no not there, in the *Roman Church*: but these very Men who afterward turned *New Creed-makers*, were forced to be content with that.

(*a*) *Sess.* III.

And therefore this *new Profession*, is most impudently pretended to be the *true Catholique Faith*: being in no sense Catholique, neither as to place, nor time. For it was no where used, till they made it, no not there; nor is now every where believed; and was not at all believed, in any Church, for above 1500 Years; nor now used in that Church it self, when they admit Members into

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we, the *Roman*, the *Greek*, the *Ethiopian*, the *Syrian*, and all other Christians are perfectly agreed.

There are particular Men, and some small companies of them, here and there, who understand some few of these Doctrines otherwise than they ought; but there is no national Church, of any Country, but entertains all these intirely and sincerly, as they have been expounded from the beginning, according to the *Nicene Creed* (which by the way, is the only Creed the *Abassines* have, that Creed called the *Apostles*, being not found among them (*e*)) and thereby are members of Christ's Body, though they do not believe other Doctrines; which are only boldly called *Catholique*, by the Roman Church, but are not truly so: but only *particular* Doctrines of their own Church in which the Catholique Faith and Church is not concerned. As they themselves confess, by admitting persons into the Catholique Church (which I noted before) unto remission of sins, and eternal life, without any other belief, but that which we profess.

(*e*) *Ludolph. Histor. Æthiop. l.3 c.5. num.* 20.

Which makes us think that we might more safely swear, they themselves believe this to be sufficient; than they swear, as they do, that none can be saved without the new Faith, which they have added to the ancient Creed.

I have been the larger in this *second* observation, because it is of great moment for the setling of our minds in peace, about right belief: and this being setled, I may sooner dispatch those that follow.

III.

And the next is, that these therefore, and these alone are the *fundamental Truths*, upon which our Religion, and the very Church it self is built.

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By *fundamental* Truths or Doctrines, we mean such Catholique principles, as are necessarily to be distinctly believed by every Christian: whereby they being built as it were, upon them, become a Church.

Such truths no doubt there are; for the Church being called here the *House of God*, must have a Foundation. Which Foundation is either *Personal* or *Doctrinal*. The *personal* foundation is *Christ*, the chief Corner-stone, and the Apostles and Prophets, as Ministers of his, who laid this foundation. *Ephes.* II. 20. The *Doctrinal* are those grand Truths, taught by them; which make up our Faith in Christ. That *Common Faith*, as it is called *Titus* I. 4. that Faith, which is *alike precious, in all* 2 Pet. 1. 1. the *first principles of the Oracles of God*, Heb. V. 12. (or as it is literally in the Greek, *the Elements of the beginning of the Oracles of God*) *the principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, or *the word of the beginning of Christ*, Hebr. VI. 1. *the form*, or *draught*, the *breviate or summary* (as it may be translated) of *sound words* or *doctrines*, 2 Tim. I. 13. *the Faith once*, or *at once delivered to the Saints*, Jude 3. and particularly *committed to the trust* (1 *Tim.* VI. 20.) of those who were to instruct others, in the *common Salvation*.

And what can those truths be, but those great Doctrines contained in the Creed; which, it appears from what I have said, the Apostles left in all the Churches which they planted? For we find these were in every Church, as *Irenæus* assures us; and these *altogether one*, as *Tertullian* speaks, and *the immovable, unreformable Rule of Faith*: and therefore may thence conclude, they were that παραθήκη which S. *Paul* deposited with *Timothy* 1. VI. 20. that *good*, or that *fair, most excellent thing deposited* with him, or *commended* (as an ancient Writer translates it) to his trust, to be preser-

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ſhould be certainly known, and be without Controverſie and queſtion, what thoſe truths are, which he expects ſhould be received and heartily embraced, in order to our Salvation. For otherwiſe, the moſt of Chriſtian people muſt neceſſarily periſh: who either are not capable of knowing more than theſe great things, or have not the means of knowing more, or not with any certainty: but muſt be content to reſt here. As well they may; for why was the Creed called by the name of the *Symbol* of Faith, but becauſe it was the mark, or ſign, which might ſerve to diſtinguiſh *true Chriſtians*, who embraced it, from *Infidels*, or *misbelievers*, who did not receive it, or were defective in it?

This is the true reaſon of the name of *Symbol* which is as much as *teſſera & ſignaculum, quo inter fideles & perfidos ſecernitur* (f), the token, *mark, or badge, whereby the faithful were known and diſtinguiſht from the perfidious.* And therefore it comprehends briefly all the Fundamental points of Faith: elſe it could not be a diſtinctive *note* or *character*, ſufficient to ſever right Believers from Infidels, Hereticks, and Apoſtates.

(f) *Maximus Taur. de Trad. Symb.*

But ſo it was, that they who owned this Creed, were owned for Chriſtians; they who did not confeſs it, were rejected: for by a Man's anſwer to this, who was examined, he was diſcovered (juſt as a Soldier is by the *Word*) *ſi hoſtis ſit, an ſocius* (as both *Iſidore*, and *Ruffinus* before him ſpeaks) *whether he were an Enemy, or a fellow Souldier of Jeſus Chriſt.* To this *Teſt* alone every one was brought, by this *touch-ſtone* he was tried, whether he were a Chriſtian of the right Stamp, or a falſe adulterate coyn (as the Ancients ſpeak) which is a demonſtration that they lookt upon this as a perfect ſummary of the Catholique Faith: *ſufficient of it ſelf* (as you heard *Athanaſius* (g) ſpeaks) *for the overthrow of all impiety, and for the eſtabliſhment of piety in Chriſt.* Nay, this

(g) *Epiſt. ad Epictetum.*

ſenſe

there might be no ſchiſms among them, whom they had called to the unity of Faith: but they might be perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind and in the ſame judgment.

It is not our fault, then, that there is not this unity and perfect agreement; for we ſtedfaſtly hold that which ſhould thus link us all together: but it is their fault; who have forſaken this Apoſtolical method, by making *another form of Faith*, which inſtead of uniting hath broken Chriſtians all in pieces. For we cannot agree to that, becauſe it doth not contain Catholique truths, which according to *Vincentius* his rule, have been held *every where, always and by all*: but are the Tenents only of a particular Church; which hath no power to lay any other *Foundation* than that which was long ago laid, in the truly *Catholique Church*.

Which *Catholique Church* we believe better than themſelves, who appropriate the name of *Catholiques* to their own party: and thereby reſtrain the Catholique Church, to thoſe of their opinion. This certainly was the Hereſie of the *Donatiſts*: who eſteemed all other Chriſtians to be no better than *Pagans* (*i*): and were reproved, by the true Catholiques, juſt as we now anſwer for our ſelves, in ſuch words as theſe, *Do you call one a Pagan, after the profeſſion of the Faith? Can he be a Pagan who hath believed in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt?* For that is a *ſhort Creed*, which comprehends all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, as S. *Hilary* (*k*) diſcourſes; who not only calls this *forma fidei certa*, the certain form of Faith: but (having mentioned thoſe words, *Go baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*) asks this queſtion, *what is there, that is not contained in that ſame Sacrament, of humane Salvation? or what is there, that remains or is obſcure? All things are full and perfect, as coming from him that is full and perfect.* And thus he concludes

(*i*) *Optatus L. III. edit. Pariſ. 1631.*

(*k*) *L. 2. de Trinitate.*

is visible to every eye: the Church of *Rome* having thought fit not to rest satisfied, with the simplicity of those often mentioned Catholique fundamental Truths, which are without Controversie and unquestionable; but, as if that Faith which the old Christians thought compleat, they take to be defective, have adjoyned as many more *new Articles*, to the old body: and that under the pain of damnation, if we do not believe them.

I have told you what they are, and if you look them over again, you will find that upon those have all the Contests risen between us and them. The necessary fundamental Truths, which constitute the Church (which was built upon no other for many Ages) are on both sides unquestioned: but because we question, or rather deny those which they would impose, which we are certain are no part of the Christian Doctrine, they call us Hereticks. That is, because we will not yield Obedience to their usurpt authority; because we cannot believe their new inventions, to be Catholique, and fundamental Doctrines. Here is the true reason of all the miserable ruptures that are in this part of the World: nay, this is the just grievance and complaint of all Christians (who know any thing of these matters) but themselves alone.

VI.

And their guilt is herein the greater, because the best learned among themselves have confessed these *Additions* to the Creed, to be *doubtful opinions*; *unnecessary* and superfluous Doctrines; *Novelties* unknown to the ancient Church. Concerning every one of which (*three* things) our Authors have given the cleerest evidence.

1. The

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quoted) and *because by this Sacrament we are made partakers of the benefits of Christ's Passion* (u).

(u) *Summæ Par.* III. *Q.* 82. *Artic.* 1. *Respond.*

That *Purgatory* was for a good while *unknown, and but lately known to the whole Church*, is confessed by our Bishop *Fisher* (x): who by the *whole Church*, means only the *Latin* Church; for in the same place he saith, *to this day it is not believed by the* Greeks. The same he saith of *Indulgences*; *which began with Mens fears of Purgatory.*

(x) *Ross. contra Luth. Art.* XVIII.

The same I might observe of the *Seven Sacraments* and the rest of their Articles; but I will only observe the contradiction to which they swear in the very first new Article, wherein they declare that they embrace *Apostolical and Ecclesiastical Traditions:* and yet consent at the same time (by swearing to all that is decreed in the Council of *Trent*) to administer the Holy Communion but in one kind; which for a thousand Years and more (in some places for 1300 Years) was administred in both kinds every where, even in the *Roman* Church, by an undoubted *Apostolical Tradition*, and *Ecclesiastical custom and practice:* which continues in all other Churches to this day.

Which observation evidently convinces them to be guilty of the most fearful sin, in cursing and damning those, who do not receive these *Novel* Doctrines: though they faithfully embrace all the Doctrines of the truly Catholique Faith; and had rather die than deny any part thereof.

But let us be of good comfort; we are safe enough, notwithstanding all these *Anathema's*, which they thunder out against us: For I have proved, that were these Doctrines true, as they are certainly false, which they press upon us; yet we should not be *Hereticks*, if we did not believe them; and so not fall, upon this account, under the sentence of damnation. Because it is only the denial of the great and fundamental Truths, that can make

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contentment is great gain. And indeed we may well be contented, with the Chriſtian Faith and Hope, and think our ſelves happy in ſuch glorious expectations hereafter: nay look upon our ſelves, as exceeding great gainers, whatſoever we loſe here upon this account, if we loſe not the hope of immortal life.

In the Epiſtle to *Titus* alſo, in the very firſt Verſe, he calls it *the truth which is after godlineſs:* which is the very Truth, that is the ſubject of my Diſcourſe; as appears by what follows, when the Apoſtle ſaith it is *a myſtery of godlineſs.* Not a cunning device to get Mony, to advance our worldly Grandeur and Pomp; much leſs a crafty Artifice to excuſe us from living well, or to palliate wickedneſs, and ſhow us a way, how to be ſaved though we live ungodly (which is the great drift of too many Doctrines, wherewith the World is troubled) but a wonderful contrivance of the Wiſdom of Heaven, effectually to root out all Impiety, to plant all manner of Vertue in our Hearts; and to take all kind of excuſe from us, if we do not become truly good.

Whence it is that the Apoſtle deſcribes Chriſtian Women, in this Epiſtle to *Timothy* II. 10. by this Character, that *they profeſs godlineſs. Let them be adorned,* ſaith he, *as becomes women profeſſing godlineſs, with good works.* Not meerly profeſſing the *Truth,* or the *Faith,* but *Godlineſs*; which comprehends all Chriſtian Vertue: though if he had ſaid, profeſſing the Truth, it had been of the ſame import; becauſe *that truth, is godlineſs.*

Hence all the Truths I have mentioned, are called *Fundamental*; not only becauſe the Church is built upon them, but becauſe they are the Foundation of all Chriſtian practice, which ought to be ſuperſtructed upon them. And therefore let us neither be ignorant of this; nor let our knowledge of it be empty and idle, without effect. That is, *Firſt,*

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First, Let us not be ſo fooliſh as to imagine we ſhall obtain Salvation meerly by being of a right Belief; and holding the right Faith. Which is not an unneceſſary caution; for this ſeems to be the very buſineſs of a great many Men in the World, to put Men in hope of life eternal; if they do but quit that, which they call Hereſie, and embrace the Faith they propound unto them: though their hearts and lives remain juſt as they were before, without any real amendment. This is certainly not a *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, but the very *Myſtery of Iniquity*: not the Wiſdom of God, but the Witchcraft of the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil, to lead them ſecurely into deſtruction.

But *we have not thus learned Chriſt*, as the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks elſewhere, (IV. *Epheſ.* 20, 21.) *if ſo be we have heard, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus: that we put off, concerning the former converſation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful luſts; and that we be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs, and holineſs of truth.* Mark here what the *Truth* is, *as it is in Jeſus*, (that we may not be *deceived* by our own, or others *luſts*) that is, in the Chriſtian Religion: it is that which teaches us to abandon all wickedneſs, and not to think of throwing a covering over it to hide it, but to put it off: that which renews us in the very ſpirit of our minds; which makes us new Creatures; and really reſtores the Divine Image in us, in Rightouſneſs and ſincere Holineſs.

Thus we have learned Chriſt, thus we are conſtantly taught, in this Church: And therefore,

Secondly, If the Truth hath not this effect upon us, in vain do we pride our ſelves in the name of *Orthodox believers*. Upon ſuch S. *John* hath paſſed this cenſure, 1 I. 6. *If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we*

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obey unrighteouſneſs; then that very Truth tells us we muſt expect nothing, but the inexpreſſible diſpleaſure of the Almighty, againſt every ſuch refractory oppoſer of the Truth, which he ſhould obey. There is no exception from this Rule; for (as it there follows, *v.* 11.) *there is no reſpect of perſons with God.*

Would to God they would ſeriouſly lay this to heart, who now ſeem to be poſſeſſed with a mighty Zeal for *Truth*, and for a *right Faith*: that they be not ſo deceived by this warm Zeal, as to miſs the *end of Faith, the Salvation of their Souls*; which can by no means be obtained, no not by Faith it ſelf, without an Holy Life.

PART

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PART II.

What it is to be a Pillar and Ground of Truth: *and to whom this Office belongs.*

HAving ſhown with ſome care what the *Truth* is of which S. *Paul* ſpeaks (which was the firſt thing I propounded) the *two* next may be explained together with leſs pains: *viz. what*, and *who* is the *Pillar* and *Ground* of theſe great *Truths*, which are neceſſary to be believed by all, that will be ſaved.

I.

And as for the *firſt* of theſe, they of the Church of *Rome* would have us by a *Pillar and Ground*, to underſtand that which is the very *Foundation of our Faith*: that upon whoſe Credit and Authority all Chriſtian *Truth*, and the certainty of our Religion depends. For taking it for granted that the *Church* is this Pillar, and preſuming alſo that *they only* are the Church; they thence infer that we can be ſure of no Truth, but from them: and that they give authority and certainty, to the very Word of God it ſelf: and likewiſe, whatſoever the *Church, i. e.* they declare to be Truth, is therefore to be received: inſomuch that if they make any new Articles of Faith, we are to give a full aſſent to them; becauſe all Truth depends upon the credit of their Church.

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'*Deacons* and all the reſt in their Office and Duty: for it 'is of great concernment, that they be well informed; 'becauſe this Church, over which thou art ſet, is the 'very *Seat of Truth*, which is not to be found in any o-'ther place, but in ſuch a company of Believers. Who 'ought to uphold and defend it, when thou art dead 'and gone; and therefore had need be well ſetled and 'eſtabliſhed in it: eſpecially in the great myſtery of 'godlineſs, wherein all Chriſtians agree, and about 'which there is no Controverſie. That ſo the Church 'may never let it go, and this Truth may not dye 'and fall to the Ground, when we are laid in our Graves; 'but be delivered to thoſe that come after, as the very 'Oracles of God.

Who now is there ſo blind, as not to be able to ſee, that by *the Church* is meant, not merely the ſupream Governour of the Church, which was *Timothy*; but all that company of Chriſtian people, under their ſeveral Biſhops and Teachers, who belonged to *Epheſus*. All of which S. *Paul* left *Timothy*, when he himſelf went into *Macedonia*, to take care of, and to charge that they *taught no other Doctrine* (as you read, 1. 3.) and in this *Houſe*, or Family he was, when S. *Paul* wrote this Epiſtle to him; not in a *General Council*, for there was none, in three hundred Year after this time. Therefore he doth not ſpeak of the *Church Repreſentative*, as it is called; much leſs of the *Church Virtual*, as they term it; that is, the Pope. For then, mark what ſence the words will make; *I have wrote to thee* (not knowing when I ſhall ſee thee) how to *behave thy ſelf in the Biſhop of* Rome: as if he would have us fancy *Timothy* in the Popes Belly; and himſelf gravely inſtructing him, how to carry himſelf with great circumſpection and diſcretion there.

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and his Succeſſors in the Church of *Rome*; but by other Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and their Succeſſors in other Churches. This is demonſtrated by a learned Man, of the Roman Communion *, by XII. famous inſtances, out of a far greater number. S. *John* for example, not *Peter* or any of his Succeſſors, ſtruck down the *Nicolaitans*, S. *Paul* the *Nazarens* and *Cerinthians*, S. *Luke* the *Ebionites*, as he proves out of good Authors, particularly *Hyginus*: who relates how the Biſhops of other Sees (not the Biſhops of *Rome*) quaſht the *Ptolemaites*, the *Noetians*, and divers other Hereticks: as the Synod of *Antioch* did. *Paulus Samoſatenus* (g) and the firſt General Council of *Conſtantinople* (where *Damaſus* Biſhop of *Rome*, was not preſent, either by himſelf or his Legates) did *Eunomius* and other Hereticks. Which leads to the *ſecond* thing I would have obſerved.

* *Joh. Launoii Epiſt. pars Quinta Antonio Varillao p.* 35. &c.

(g) *Euſeb. L* VII. *Eccleſ. Hiſt. c.* 22.

II. That every eminent *Paſtor* in the Church, who *laboured in the word and Doctrine*, as S. *Paul* ſpeaks in this Epiſtle, V. 17. had theſe very titles anciently beſtowed upon him, of *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*, becauſe the *Biſhops* were the principal Truſtees with whom the Faith was depoſited (as may be obſerved in the words of *Irenæus* before mentioned, and many other ancient Writers, and in S. *Paul*'s words to *Timothy*, when he bids him to keep the *depoſitum* he had committed to him, and *commit the ſame* to other *faithful* or truſty perſons, who ſhould be able to teach it to others, 2 *Tim.* I. 14. II. 2.) and becauſe they were principal Inſtruments in defending the Truth againſt oppoſers; in propagating the Chriſtian Faith to thoſe who were ignorant of it; and in preſerving the reſt of the Church in the belief of the Truth, which they had entertained, by their conſtant inſtructions, and zealous exhortation, to *hold faſt what they had received.*

Nay,

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Shall I call thee the Pillar and Ground of the Church, or a Light in the World, &c. *or the Stay of thy Country, or the Rule of Faith, or Embaſſador of the Truth, or all theſe together, and more than all theſe?*

But that which is moſt worthy to be noted under this head is, that S. *Gregory Nyſſen* (q) expounds this very Text of *Timothy*, and makes *him*, not the Church, *the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* For diſcourſing concerning the Miniſters of the Divine Myſteries, as Pillars of the Houſe of God, he ſaith, ὁ Τιμόθεον καλὸν σύλον, &c. S. *Paul* wrought and faſhioned *Timothy* to *be a goodly Pillar, making him* (as he ſpeaks, *with his own voice*) σύλον καὶ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἀληθείας, *the Pillar and Ground of the Church, and of Truth.* As if he took the ſenſe of theſe words to be this, *But if I tarry long, that thou, who art the Pillar and Ground of Truth, maiſt know how to behave thy ſelf in the Church*, &c. And indeed the Apoſtles are called σύλοι, Pillars in the II. *Gal.* 9. not only S. *Peter*, but *James* and *John* alſo. And here we are taught, as he truly obſerves *that not only* Peter, James *and* John *were Pillars, not only* John *the Baptiſt was a burning Lamp:* ἀλλὰ πάντες οἱ δι' ἑαυτῶν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐρείδοντες, *but all that by themſelves ſupport the Church, all that by their work are ſhining lights, are called both Pillars and Lamps.*

(q) *De vita Moſis. Tom.* I. *p.* 226.

Which names were afterward applied to Chriſtian Biſhops, by the moſt eminent Perſons in the Church; who hereby plainly declared, what they underſtood by theſe words of S. *Paul:* and that they lookt not upon this as a priviledge peculiar to any one Biſhop, or any one Church; but common to all Churches, and eſpecially to the principal Perſons in the Church, who were the Leaders and Guides of the reſt: and ſo more peculiarly intruſted with the preſervation of Divine Truth, and the chief Pillars and Supporters of the Faith. And thus *Origen* (or whoſoever he was that wrote the *Homilies*

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our bleſſed Lord ſpeaks to the Church of *Philadelphia*, III. Revel. 12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a Pillar in the temple of my God.* Which ſignifies partly, that he ſhould be an eminent Inſtrument of upholding the Church, and preſerving many in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, by his conſtancy and firmneſs in it: and partly, that he ſhould be ſo eſtabliſhed himſelf by the grace and power of God, that he ſhould never fall (according to that of S. *Peter*, 1 V. 10. *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you*): and partly, that he ſhould be made in the higheſt ſenſe, a *PILLAR*, that is, an *Apoſtolical* Man, who ſhould be advanced to the moſt eminent imployment in the Church; of teaching and inſtructing, of Governing and Ruling, as a principal Paſtor, in the Temple of God. In one word, be an *Angel of the Church*, (as he ſpeaks in the beginning of this Letter, *v.* 7. and in all the reſt) an illuſtrious Miniſter and Meſſenger of God, to publiſh the glad tidings of Salvation to the World.

Such the Apoſtles were: whom *Theodoret* calls the *Pillars of the Truth*, with peculiar reſpect to their ſufferings. *Behold*, ſaith he, † *Peter* and *John*, τοὺς πύργους τῆς εὐσεβείας, τοὺς στύλους τῆς ἀληθείας, &c. *the Towers*, or Bulwarks *of Godlineſs, the Pillars of Truth, ſupporting the Structure of the Church: being ſcourged by the Jews, but rejoycing and glorying*, (V. Act. 41.) *that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame*, or to be diſgraced, *for his Name.* And ſuch like were theſe victorious Souls, as *Arethas* * expounds our Saviour's words to this Church; *For he that conquers*, ſaith he, the adverſe powers, στύλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα καθίσταται τῆς ἀληθείας, *is conſtituted a Pillar and Ground of the Truth; rejoycing himſelf immutably* (ſo he interprets *in the temple of my God*) *and*

† *Orat. de providentia, Tom.* IV. *p.* 441.

* *Comment. in* III. Rev. 12.

preſent in Spirit with them, to conſent to their Synod, and by their ſubſcription to decree, that concord might be preſerved, among all their fellow Biſhops every where. Nay, the great and firſt general Council of *Nice* it ſelf, (*h*) wrote to the Church of *Alexandria*, and the reſt throughout *Egypt*, *Libya*, and *Pentapolis*, to give them an account of their decrees. And *Conſtantine* alſo certified all abſent Biſhops, who could not come to the Council, of their proceedings: *That there might be one Faith* (as his words are) *and ſincere charity, and a concording Religion, or Piety, preſerved among them all.*

(*h*) *Theodoret. L. 1. Eccleſ. Hiſt. Cap. 8, 9.*

It was upon the ſame ſcore that ſometime they ſent particularly to the Biſhop of *Rome* for his concurrence (as the Council of *Carthage*, (*i*) and others did in the buſineſs of *Pelagius*) not becauſe they imagined their decrees would be of no force without his conſent (that's an ungrounded fancy) but becauſe he was an eminent Biſhop in the Church of Chriſt; by whoſe concurrent teſtimony the Truth would be ſtill more confirmed, and their Churches would have the greater comfort *de communi participatione unius gratiæ, from the common participation of one grace*: by knowing, that is, that they were of the ſame belief.

(*i*) *Auguſt. Epiſt.* XC, XCI, XCV.

The like may be ſaid of the *Martyrs*, who, when they ſuffered in great numbers, gave the more amazing teſtimony to the Truth, which terrified the Devil himſelf, and ſtaggered their very Judges: as S. *Baſil* ſpeaks (*k*) of the XL *Martyrs*, who all together, as if they had had but one Mouth, cryed out, when they were examined, *I am a Chriſtian.* By ſuch reſolution as this our Religion was not only upheld, but mightily increaſed: And the more the number of Chriſtians increaſed, the more was Truth ſpread abroad, till it grew to be the prevailing Religion; and the *Kingdoms of the*

(*k*) *Tom. 1. Hom. XX.*

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must abandon therefore, and not think we can do very considerable service to the Truth, by the bare profession of it: but upon the foundation Christ Jesus, we must seriously indeavour to raise the superstructure of a holy life, whereby we shall adorn, recommend, and effectually promote our Religion.

It must not be denyed indeed, that a multitude professing true Faith in Christ, though their lives be not so regular as they ought to be, are not unserviceable to our Religion: Nay, in some cases, by their steadiness in the Truth, give no small support unto it. Especially, when they likewise continue united together, by partaking constantly of the same Sacraments. Whereby they are joyned to those who are truly good, and remain a part of the Christian society; till their lives be so bad that they are *thrown* out of the Church, as not fit to have Communion with it. And therefore out of such a Church, consisting of those that profess the Faith of Christ intirely, and worship him purely, without any dangerous mixtures, no Man ought to depart; merely because every one therein is not knit to Christ by such hearty love and obedience as that Faith ought to produce. For they that are only in outward Communion with such a Church, are in a good way to something more: and therefore ought not to be rejected, as no Christians. For by external Communion, the inward lively Communion with God our Saviour, is produced, set forward, and promoted: and it is something to own Christ, and acknowledge him for our Lord and Master; and receive constant instructions from his Ministers, whereby we are convinced of our duty. Which though it doth not at present make them good and faithful Servants, yet they may be so in time: and the way to make them so, is not to leave them to themselves, by separating from them; but to admonish, reprove and exhort them

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cays, so fast doth the Church go to ruin. And therefore if we have an hearty love to our own Church, and the saving truth of God, which is there professed and asserted, we must study to uphold it by this means. Not by seeking for a purer Church (which is impossible, as to Faith and Worship, and Manners too, to be found) but by endeavouring to amend one another, by purifying our selves in the first place from all filthiness both of the flesh, and of spirit; and then by admonishing others that do not live as they ought, of the error of their ways, and calling them to Repentance.

Which course I wish all they who have separated from our Communion, would consider whether they ever took? Did they not first forsake us, and then say, before they tried, that we have people incorrigibly wicked among us? This is not the way (to say nothing of what sort of people they have among themselves) of saving us all from perishing: but, as it proceeds commonly from too much pride, and conceitedness, and from great want of Charity; so it produces lamentable effects. For under a pretence of making the Church more holy, it destroys both holiness and the Church: by breaking the unity of it, by disgracing Religion, by turning it into disputes and vain jangling, by endless separations under the notion of greater and more refined purity; till the Church be crumbled into so many little bits and fractions, that little more than the name of a Church remains.

Let us therefore preserve Union among our selves as much as is possible, that we may preserve the Church and Truth. And then there may be the more hope of reclaiming the ungodly: who will receive an admonition or reproof far better from one of their society, who calls them brethren; than from one that separates from them as mere Strangers and Foreigners, with whom they have nothing to do in matters of Religion.

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under the guidance of his Holy Spirit; under the care and tender love of that great and glorious Lord, who is the *Prince of all the kings of the earth*, and hath *all power in heaven*, as well as *earth*, inveſted in him. For the Church is the *houſe and family of God*, nay the *temple of the living God*, (2 *Cor.* VI. 17.) for he hath ſaid, as it there follows, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my people: I will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord God Almighty.*

Theſe things are great indeed, and exceeding glorious. But not content with theſe priviledges, which are as a Royal Diadem, and Crown of Glory, on the Head of the Church; there are thoſe who would adorn her with prouder Titles: and ſet her forth in an adulterous dreſs, and a preſumptuous glory; making her, in a manner, equal to her Head, the Lord Chriſt. For they have ſnatcht one of the incommunicable properties of God, and fixt it, as a Jewel, on the top of the Churches Crown: telling us that ſhe is an infallible Guide, who cannot miſlead us. That is, though ſhe may go aſtray, and play the Harlot, in life and practice, yet ſhe cannot err, nor miſtake in her judgment: So that if we liſten to what ſhe ſays, we ſhall never wander, but always be in the right.

For the proof of this, they firſt ſuppoſe themſelves to be the Church of Chriſt, and they alone: and then they abuſe this place of Holy Scripture, to aſſert this Divine Prerogative to be in his Church; that is, in themſelves. But I have expoſed the bold folly of theſe pretences, by ſhowing, that the Church here ſpoken of is the Church of *Epheſus*; and that *Timothy* was the principal *Pillar and Ground of Truth* in this Church. Which doth not ſignifie, I have ſhown, that either the *Church*, or *Timothy*, were the very Foundation of the Chriſtian Faith, upon

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'cles are every where wrought in it: *These and such 'like things, are therefore to be approved, because they are 'done in the Catholique Church: but it is not therefore ma- 'nifested to be the Catholique Church, because these things 'are done in it.* Our Lord Jesus himself, when he rose 'from the dead, and offered his Body to be toucht as 'well as seen by his Disciples, lest they should think 'there was any fallacy in it, *judged it meet rather to con- 'firm them by the testimonies of the Law, and the Prophets 'and Psalms*; showing how all things were fulfilled, 'which were predicted. And so he commanded his 'Church, saying, *that repentance and remission of sin 'should be preached in his Name, beginning at Hierusalem.* This he testified was written in the Law, the Prophets and Psalms: this we hold commended from his Mouth. *These are the Documents, these the Foundations, these the strong Grounds of our Cause.* We read in the Acts of the Apostles of some Believers, that they sought the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. What Scriptures? but the Canonical Books of the Law and the Prophets: 'to which are added the *Gospels*, the *Apostoli- 'cal Epistles*, the *Acts of Apostles*, and the *Revelation of 'S.* John. Search all these, and bring forth something 'manifest, whereby ye may demonstrate the Church, ei- 'ther to have remained only in *Africa*, or to be to come 'out of *Africa*, &c. This is an illustrious Testimony, he thought the Church it self was to be warranted by the Scriptures, which did not therefore receive their Authority from the Church, but give it all the Authority it hath. And after all, it was not the Authority of the present Church barely that moved him when he was a *Manichee*; but of the Catholique Church from the beginning. *Occham* * thinks he speaks of the Church in the Apostles times alone, which moved him to Believe. And others (as *Gabriel Biel*) confess he speaks of the Authority

* *Fr. White's* Answer to *Fisher's* second Conference, *p.* 24.

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Authority of the Church, *à tempore Christi & Apostolorum*, &c. from the time of Christ and of the Apostles down to his days.

Such Authority cannot but weigh very much, even with those that do not yet believe, if it be seriously pondered: but much more with those, that are already Christians. Whether they be *Novices* and weaklings, who are as yet doubtful in the Faith, though in the Church: the Testimony and Authority of it, ought to confirm and quiet their minds (as it did S. *Austin*'s, it appears by the place before-named) and keep them close to the Christian Society, till they may themselves come better acquainted with the Truth, and more fully understand the Holy Scriptures, which the Church delivers to them, and puts into their hands, as the Word of God. Or whether they be more *grown Christians* (and indeed all sorts of Persons in the Church) who ought to be so far wrought upon even by its Authority, as to be perswaded thereby to read constantly, to consider and ponder seriously, and to practise those plain Lessons faithfully, which the Holy Scripture teaches them; till it work effectually upon their hearts, and purge them so throughly from all bad affections, that they may more perfectly understand the Truth.

Thus much is indisputable; for God hath appointed outward means for the conveying Divine Truth, to our Belief; and this means is ordinarily the Church: to which we ascribe these two great things, in this business. (*p*) *First*, the office of a *Witness*, testifying the Authority of Holy Scripture to us: *Secondly*, of an *Instrument* in Gods Hand, to lead us into the understanding of the Scriptures, and by its Ministry, in preaching and expounding them, to beget a Divine Faith in us.

(*p*) Answer to Charity mistaken, *Sect.* V.

But further than this, we cannot, we must not go. For the last resolution of our Faith is not into the Testimony

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tranſmitted down to us; and now propounds to our Faith: but it is not merely what the Church ſaith, that makes us believe; but what God himſelf ſaith in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and what Jeſus Chriſt ſaith, concerning his riſing from the Dead, and ſending the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles. Which being fulfilled, evidently proved him to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the World: and them to be his Apoſtles, and Miniſters, who declared to Men the true way of Salvation.

So the Church directs and guides us to the Scriptures of Truth; but they reſolve and aſſure our Faith, being the very Word of God. The authority of God's Church is the firſt motive, which leads us to eſteem the Scriptures: but being led thither, we find in the matter of them that which gives us full ſatisfaction, by beſtowing our pains in reading, or hearing, and conſidering the Myſteries contained therein. The Church holds out this light to us; but it is by this light that we ſee what is the mind and will of God. To this the Church points us, and bids us attend to it; for this it diſpoſes and prepares us; it leads us by the hand to this as the only ſure foundation of our Faith; (becauſe herein we find God himſelf ſpeaking to us) and moreover by the Miniſtery of the Church we are aſſiſted in underſtanding the ſence of the Holy Scriptures: but they contain in themſelves that Divine Authority and Truth, whereby we come to a certain Faith. The Church tells us ſuch and ſuch things are true; and we find them to be ſo, by examining the Scriptures. Which the *Beræans ſearched daily, whether thoſe things were ſo,* which the Apoſtles preached: *and therefore many of them believed*; not merely becauſe the Apoſtles told them they ought ſo to do, but becauſe they found what they ſaid, in the Holy Scriptures, XVII. *Act.* 11, 12.

And

And ſo far as any Church ſpeaks according to the truth contained therein, it is to be believed and followed. But if it bring no Divine word for its warrant, if it propound other Doctrines, which are not there, it hath no authority to make ſuch Doctrines, the matter of our Faith: much leſs, to ſet up its own authority above the Scriptures; as they do who ſay, The Scriptures receive their authority from the Church Which is the Doctrine of no leſs Men than *Baronius* and *Bellarmine*, to name no more.

(r) *Ad Annum* 53 *gn.* X, XI.

The former of (*r*) which argues, that becauſe we receive theſe Holy Books, to be writings of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and not forged under their Names, upon the teſtimony of the Church; therefore all the writings of the New Teſtament, received their authority from the Churches tradition; which is *fundamentum Scripturarum*, as he ventures to ſay, the *foundation of the Scriptures*. The other (*s*) is no leſs poſitive, that if we take away the authority of the preſent Church, and the preſent Council, we call in doubt the whole Chriſtian Faith. *For the firmneſs of all ancient Councils, and of all Doctrines, depends upon the authority of the preſent Church.*

(s) *L.* 2. *de Sacrament. C.* 25. Tertium.

This is very preſumptuous talk: for by the Church they mean themſelves; and then by the teſtimony of the Church (that is their own teſtimony) they mean ſuch a Divine witneſs, as aſſures us by its own authority, without any other proof. Which are the great points of difference between us, in this matter. For we aſſert, *firſt*, that the office of leading Men to the Holy Scriptures, and ſo to Faith, belongs to every Church as much as to them: and, *ſecondly*, that no Church can bring People to Faith by its own teſtimony and authority, but by the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures: nor is any Church whatſoever to be heard

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particularly in this, that they have added *new Articles* to the old Creed, to be believed under pain of Damnation; and added a *new Canon* of Scripture to the Old Teſtament, againſt the cleareſt evidence in the Records of the Univerſal Church, that the Books they have newly received, were never acknowledged for Canonical Scripture.

If by the *Church* indeed, they would underſtand, the Church truly Catholique, the whole Body of Chriſt in all times, places and ages; and if by *matters of Faith*, they would underſtand thoſe grand Articles which I have mentioned in the firſt part of this Diſcourſe; and if by being *Infallible*, they would underſtand not an abſolute impoſſibility of erring (which humane nature is not capable of) but not actual error: there are none of us make any queſtion, but the Church is Infallible. That is, the whole Church hath not erred, nor ſhall not err, in the whole Faith, or in any neceſſary part thereof: for ſuch error would cut Men off from Chriſt, the head; and ſo leave him no Church at all; which is impoſſible. It hath been the very ſcope of firſt my Diſcourſe, to ſhow that the Church hath always kept the great fundamental truths of our Religion, and not erred in them; but tranſmitted them down to us, whole and undefiled: till the Church of *Rome*, in the Council of *Trent*, corrupted the Faith, by their errors, which they have mixed with it.

For to a particular Church, ſuch as that of *Rome* is, we cannot allow this priviledge of not erring: becauſe we know they have erred, even in fundamental Truths, and thereby ceaſed to be Churches. Witneſs thoſe glorious Churches, to which Chriſt himſelf ſent his Letters, by S. *John* the Apoſtle.

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These Prerogatives therefore not belonging to any Church: every one must be content with those two Offices before mentioned; which are sufficient. *First*, The Office of a *Witness* testifying the authority of the Holy Scriptures, unto its members: *Secondly*, of Gods *instrument*, by whose Ministry, in opening, expounding, and urging the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Ghost begets a divine Faith in us. And by performing these Offices, it supports, and continues, and propagates the Truth; and so may be called the *Pillar and Ground* thereof.

The meaning of which I shall now distinctly set before the Readers eyes; that I may give a short account of the *fourth* and last thing propounded in the beginning.

IV.

How the Church may appropriate to it self this Title.

1. *First*, Every Church, and every person in it, especially the Bishops and Pastors, are the *Pillar and Ground of Truth, officio*, by Duty and Office: whereby they are obliged to keep, maintain and uphold the Truth. This always was, and always will be incumbent on them; which is sufficient to fill up the sense of such attributes as these: which do not always note *performance* of Duty, but only *obligation* to it. As when our Saviour saith to his Disciples, *Ye are the salt of the Earth*: it doth not signifie that they were necessarily so (for he supposes immediately the *salt might lose its savour*) but that they ought to be so; and if they were not so, would be *good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot*. Matth. V. 13.

2. But *Secondly*, The first Churches of Christ, in the Apostles times, were *actu & effectu*, actually and effectually the *Pillar of Truth*: that is, they faithfully discharg'd

mothy, the *Pillar of Truth*; he admoniſhes him (in the beginning of the next Chapter, IV. 1, 2.) that there would be an *apoſtaſie from the Faith*, as the *Spirit expreſly declared*. For according to what our Saviour predicted, there was ſcarce any Church, but the Enemy ſowed Tares among the Wheat: which very much hindred the growth thereof. So we are informed by *Hegiſippus*, a very ancient Chriſtian Hiſtorian; who † ſaith that as ſoon as the ſacred Quire of Apoſtles were dead, and that Generation was gone, who had heard the inſpired Wiſdom with their own ears, then begun ἡ σύσασις τῆς ἀθέου πλάνης, *a Conſpiracy* or Combination of *impious or atheiſtical error*, by the deceit of falſe teachers; who make a bare-fac't oppoſition to the Truth of the Goſpel.

† *Euſeb. L.* III. *Eccleſ. Hiſt. c.* 32.

And yet for all this, the ſpeech of the Apoſtle is proper enough: For a Church or its Paſtor may be the *Pillar of Truth*, in regard of their duty, as I have often ſaid, though they prove negligent in their Office. Juſt as the *Prieſt* among the *Jews* was called, *the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts*, whoſe *lips ſhould ſo preſerve knowledge*, that the people *ſhould ſeek the Law at his mouth*; becauſe this was the end of his Office, for which he was ordained: though at the ſame time, the Prophet complains, that *they were departed out of the way, and cauſed many to ſtumble at the Law: and had corrupted the Covenant of Levi*, Mal. II. 7, 8. The like we read in other places of the holy Book, that the Prophets were not true to their truſt, but declared the viſions of their own heart, not the Word of the Lord: and lead the people into error and falſhood; feeding them with lies, inſtead of Truth.

5. Further I muſt obſerve, that there is no promiſe made to any particular Church, that it ſhall always be a Pillar of Truth: no not to the Church of *Rome*, which

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great many on his ſide; but they cannot agree, about the *manner* of his definition (whether alone, or in a General Council), nor about the *time* (whether at any time, or only when he reſolves to publiſh Doctrines, as matter of Faith), nor about the *matter* (whether all things, even matters of *fact*, or only matters of *Faith*); and after all, no body can tell, when there is a *true Pope*. So that all their Faith falls to the Ground, and they cannot be certain of any thing they believe; becauſe they cannot be certain of the very Ground and Foundation of their Faith: which is their Church.

Theſe things I have only briefly toucht (which are more largely handled in other Books) that the Readers may be ſenſible how happy they are who are freed from theſe Impoſtures. And that our People may know their duty, in this Church of *England*, whereof by the Grace of God they are Members; I ſhall conclude this Treatiſe with *Six* Conſiderations more: whereby the whole, I hope, will be made more uſeful.

I. *Firſt*, I deſire every one, to conſider, from what I have ſaid, that this Church, in which we are, is certainly as much a *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, as any other: nay, more than many other Churches. For we openly profeſs and recite twice a day in our own Language, that every one may underſtand it, the whole Chriſtian Faith, compriſed in the *Apoſtles* Creed: with the explication of ſome part of this Faith, by the *Nicene* Fathers, once every week or more: and a more diſtinct Explication of the ſame Articles, by *Athanaſius*, once a month. That is, we hold, and aſſert, and maintain, all thoſe things which have always been, and are confeſſed by all Chriſtians: *the True, Ancient, Catholique and Apoſtolique Faith*; and the Holy Scriptures, wherein this Faith is Originally contained. And if

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chiſed and further inſtructed by thoſe whom God hath ſet over them.

We are not Pillars and ſupporters of the Truth, but the betrayers of it; if we take no care about this. Which is one great reaſon why ſome have eaſily forſaken the true Religion here taught and profeſſed, and condemned this Church (an horrid crime, if you ſeriouſly weigh the conſequents of it) by renouncing Communion with it, as no part of the Body of Chriſt. Men may be ſoon perſwaded, by confident talkers, to part with that, which they do not underſtand: eſpecially if they apprehend any danger in keeping it, or hope to gain by letting it go. Why ſhould they hazzard the leaſt hair of their Head, for they know not what? Nay, why ſhould they be at all concerned for it, any more than a Man is for the ſeed that is ſcattered in the High-way, from which he expects no Crop? To that, you know, our bleſſed Lord compared him that *heareth the word of the Kingdom, and underſtandeth it not: for then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was ſown in his heart*, Matth. XIII. 19.

IV. You muſt endeavour therefore to profit by all ſuch inſtructions as theſe: and to grow in the knowledge of the *Holy Scriptures*; where God hath revealed his whole mind and will to you, and plainly publiſhed all thoſe Truths, which belong to the *great myſtery of godlineſs*. You ought, for inſtance, to take heed, how you wantonly and looſely interpret, or apply them, according to your own ſudden or careleſs fancies (that's a great profanation of the Sacred Books) and yet you muſt not, for fear of this, be perſwaded to throw them out of your hands; but rather with the more ſolemn, humble and reverend awe of God, upon your Souls, ponder and weigh what you read therein: eſpecially

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thoſe things which are plain and evident to every underſtanding, that by the help of them, and of thoſe whom God hath ſet over you to guide and direct your minds; you may either inform your underſtanding in what appears to have difficulty in it, or ſatisfie your ſelves that it is not neceſſary you ſhould underſtand it.

For they that would drive you from this hold of the Holy Scriptures, intend to deceive you; and would have you depend on that which is far more uncertain, than the meaning of any place of Scripture can be. There is no firm ground for us to ſtand upon, but only this: which all acknowledge is the very word of God, and delivers that, which hath been ever accounted the ſubſtance of Chriſtian Doctrines; in ſuch words as every one may underſtand them.

And therefore this is, as I have ſaid, the very foundation upon which the Church is built. Which is the *Pillar of Truth*, as it defends the Truth out of the Scriptures, and by the Scriptures, againſt all Hereticks and other oppoſers: and as it eſtabliſhes and ſupports it, in the hearts of Men, by this means, that it may be continued to Poſterity. This muſt be added, for the explication of all that hath been ſaid; that the Church, and every perſon in it, great or ſmall, are *Pillars* not by themſelves, but by the Holy Scriptures. For we know thoſe things that belong to our Salvation (as *Irenæus* (*g*) begins his *Third Book*) by no other perſons, than thoſe by whom the Goſpel came to us: *which then truly they preached, but afterwards, by the will of God deliverd to us in the Scriptures*, fundamentum & Columnam fidei noſtræ futurum, *to be the FOUNDATION and PILLAR of our Faith.* Upon theſe our Faith reſts and relys: ſo that they who take the Scriptures from you, take away the *Foundation and Pillar* of that Truth, which

(*g*) *Adv. Hereſes L.* III. *C.* 1.

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Hold this fast, as the ground of all; and likewise lay up the word of God in your heart, that it may setle there, and take root, and bring forth fruit unto Holiness, that your end may be everlasting Life.

Make the Holy Scriptures your Rule, and trust to them, according to what the Son of *Sirach* saith of its ancient Books, *Eccluſ.* XXXIII. 3. *A Man of underſtanding truſts in the Law; and the Law is faithful to him as an Oracle*, or, *as the asking of Urim.* That is, here he may enquire, and have a certain answer which will not deceive him.

Show your selves such Men of understanding, as to enquire no where else. And if any Church or Person would have you enquire of them only; take that for an undoubted proof, they are not to be trusted. If they would not guide you by the Holy Scriptures, (that is, by Christ, *the way*, as you have seen, who hath shown us, no where else that we know of, what we ought to believe) if they would have you follow their ungrounded Traditions, whereby they would inlarge your *Creed*, beyond the ancient bounds: know that you ought not to follow them, nor be led by them. For such may soon cease to be the pillars and supporters of the Truth; because they leave that whereby they should support it, and place themselves (whom they call the Church) in the stead of it.

An evident sign they are not what they pretend: for the Church it self ought to be demonstrated by the Scriptures. So S. *Auſtin* (*p*) tells the *Donatiſts* in those known words, which are worthy to be preserved in remembrance. *Setting aside all ſuch things as theſe* (which he had said they could likewise alledge) *let them demonſtrate their Church if they can, not in the diſcourſes and rumours of the* Africans, *not in the Councils of their Biſhops, not in the Letters of any diſputers whatſoever, not in*

(*p*) *L. de Unitate Eccleſiæ, cap.* XVI.

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in signs and fallacious wonders (for we are prepared and rendred cautious against these by the word of the Lord) but in the prescript of the Law, in the predictions of the Prophets, in the Songs of the Psalms, in the words of the SHEPHERD *himself,* (i.e. Christ) *in the preachings and labours of the Evangelists; that is in all the Canonical authorities of the holy Books. Let this be done so, as not to gather and relate those things, which are obscurely, or ambiguously, or figuratively spoken there; which every one may interpret, as he pleases, according to his own sense. For such things cannot be rightly understood and expounded; unless those things which are most clearly spoken, be first held by a firm Faith.*

This is the very sense of the Church of *England*; which teaches all her members, first *to hold by a firm Faith* those things which are clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures; and by them to *understand and expound* those things that are more obscurely delivered: believing nothing to be necessary *which is not read therein*, nor *may be proved thereby*: nor receiving the Doctrines and Decrees of any Church, *unless it may be declared that they be taken from thence.* For *hæc sunt causæ nostræ documenta, hæc fundamenta, hæc firmamenta* (as he there speaks, you heard before) *These are the proofs of our Cause, these are its foundations, these are its supports.* And therefore, as he also speaks in another Chapter of the same Book (*q*), which he begins thus. *Let us not hear such speeches as these, These things say I, Those things sayest thou: but let us hear, These things saith the* LORD. *These are certainly Books of the Lord, to whose authority we both consent, we both believe, we both obey. There let us seek the Church, there let us discuss our Cause.* And let us not so much as think of looking after any other Articles of Faith, but those which were from the beginning,

(q) *Cap.* III. *de Unitate Ecclesiæ.*

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Remember the advice of S. *Paul* to this Church of *Ephesus*, *Ephes.* IV. 14. 15. where you may find the true way to continue firm and stedfast, and not to be tossed about, as Children, with every blast of Doctrine, *&c.* and that is ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ, by *speaking*, or rather following *the Truth in love:* or (according to the *Hebrew* Dialect) *being fixed and established*, in the love of God and of one another. For the *Hebrew* word *Aman* (to which ἀληθεύω answers) signifies not only to *speak Truth*, but likewise, to be *firm and constant*, *fixed and established:* which if we be, we shall have a settled, unmoveable confidence of God's Love and Favour towards us. For he that heartily loves God and his Neighbour, will never be startled, much less shaken, by their bold *Anathemas*, though all the World should tell him, he shall be damned, if he do not believe this or that proposition which they say is absolutely necessary to his Salvation: because there is something within him that gives them the lye, and assures him there is no truth in them, who say that God hates and will reject him, who believes all the ancient Faith, which *works by Love.* God himself testifies the contrary, by making the Truth efficacious in his heart, to purge him from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit: and by changing him into his own likeness, in Holiness, Love, and Goodness. And the more thoroughly any Man is renewed in the spirit of his mind; the more perfectly will he be assured, that they pronounce a false judgment upon him: and consequently be the more heartily resolved against that Religion, which makes men so liberal in pouring out Curses upon all them that do not embrace its novel opinions.

Which brings me to the last thing I would have considered, that,

V. I. We

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