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CATHOLIC BELIEF:
OR,
A SHORT AND SIMPLE EXPOSITION
OF
CATHOLIC DOCTRINE.

BY THE
VERY REV. JOSEPH FAÀ DI BRUNO, D.D.,
Rector-General of the Pious Society of Missions;
Church of SSmo. Salvatore in Onda, Ponte Sisto, Rome,
and St. Peter's Italian Church, Hatton Garden, London, E.C.

AUTHOR'S AMERICAN EDITION,
EDITED BY
Rev. LOUIS A. LAMBERT,
Author of "Notes on Ingersoll," etc., etc.

"Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Apocalypse (Revelation) iii. 20.

"And Nathanael said to him: Can any thing of good come from Nazareth? Philip saith to him: Come and see."—St. John i. 46.

Two Hundred and Eightieth Thousand.

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JOHN CARDINAL McCLOSKEY,
Archbishop of New York.

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INTRODUCTION.

Publishers who seek to promote Catholic literature, and to bring good Catholic books within the reach of the reading public, deserve encouragement and support. The attempt to bring out in good form solid and instructive works, and give the same to the public at cheap, popular prices, may at times prove a profitless—but never, I hope, with Catholics, a thankless—enterprise. With real pleasure, I have learned that our enterprising Catholic publishers, Messrs. Benziger Bros., have undertaken to bring out, with the knowledge and consent of the author, an American edition of the little work, "Catholic Belief," by Very Rev. Joseph Faà di Bruno, D.D. This is an admirable handbook of Christian doctrine; short, clear, simple, and concise, it must meet with favor, and be eagerly devoured by a very numerous class of our non-Catholic fellow-citizens. Yearning after truth, unsettled in their convictions, sincere in their inquiries, and curious to know just what Catholics do believe, they are not prepared to invest heavily in Catholic literature, and have neither leisure nor inclination to pore over large volumes or study elaborate, dogmatical treatises. The author evinces rare ability and tact in setting forth Catholic principles in few words, with winning simplicity and yet scholastic accuracy. He is indeed a true son of the venerable and saintly Vincent Pallotti, full of Catholic love for his fellow men, and burning with holy zeal for souls.

Having spent, as he tells us himself in the preface to his little book, thirty years as a missionary priest in England, "lamenting the estrangement from the Church of so many souls, each of them so dear to Jesus Christ," his
heart goes out to them in tender compassion, he sighs for their return to the true fold, for their conversion to the true faith. This spirit seems to breathe through every page of the book, winning the heart to love and embrace doctrines and practices lucidly explained, logically proven. Giving a "Summary of Catholic Belief," he treats of all the leading dogmas of the Church, yet, as his aim is to remove, "from minds otherwise well disposed, misconceptions of our holy religion, and still deep-rooted prejudices against Catholic faith," he naturally addresses himself more particularly to, and dwells more lengthily on, those doctrines which Protestantism has rejected. Another special, and to our thinking, very important feature of the work, is its entire freedom from that polemical acerbity which often mars controversial writings, and for this reason it would seem to be admirably suited to instruct and edify and lead to the truth those sincere and honest souls whose errors are their misfortune rather than their fault. Hear what our author says of himself on this score:

"According to the rule of charity, I have carefully endeavored to avoid using any expression that might give just cause of offence to any one, without, however, compromising or disguising the truth."

He shows throughout a delicate consideration for those in error, and a just appreciation of the difficulties, intellectual, moral, and social, which converts to the faith must encounter and overcome, and this awakens in him a kindly sympathy and even a brotherly affection for them. The book is, then, just such a one as every good Catholic wants to put in the hands of a Protestant neighbor, confident that Catholic faith will more readily reach the soul and bring conviction to the understanding, when Catholic charity has won the heart and favorably predisposed the will. The author strives indeed for victory, as every earnest lover of truth must, but the reader feels that it is the victory of truth and not merely personal or argumentative triumph he strives for.

Again, in this little book we find another prominent feature rarely found in controversial works. Though
Introduction.

entirely master of the situation as regards the principles, the arguments, and facts at issue, the author does not wholly rely on these. The salvation of souls is the work of God; the grace of God is essential to a true conversion, and hence this little book treats of grace and the means of obtaining it. Prayer is the primary means of grace, and hence a spirit of prayer pervades the whole work, and the second part is specially devoted to this subject.

The work has the Imprimatur of his Eminence, the Cardinal, Archbishop of Westminster, and this is not only a sufficient voucher for its theological accuracy, but stamps it as a standard Catholic work sure to pass current among all English speaking people. This carefully prepared American edition of "Catholic Belief," revised and accommodated to the circumstances and wants of our country, and brought out in the publishers' well-known, superior style, will, I am sure, be heartily welcomed by the American Catholic public. In conclusion, I will only say that as the author had in view but the one desire, the single purpose of bringing his fellow men under the divine, saving influences of the true Church, it is my fullest conviction that no one, whether Catholic or Protestant, can read "Catholic Belief" without being greatly benefited; the Catholic will have a better knowledge and truer love of his holy faith; the Protestant, if not convinced and persuaded to take the final step and enter the one fold under the one Shepherd, will retain no anti-Catholic prejudices, will be more a Christian, wiser and better. With this conviction, we hope and fervently pray that the revised American edition of "Catholic Belief" may be widely circulated among our American people, especially among that numerous and busy class who have neither time nor opportunity to consult more voluminous works.

S. V. Ryan,
Bp. of Buffalo.

Buffalo, Feast of B.V.M. ad Nives, A.D. 1884.
"GRACE be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." (Galat. i. 3)

PREFACE.

DEAR READER,—During thirty years passed as a missionary priest in England, I have found that most of the objections against the faith and practice of the Roman Catholic Church come from misunderstanding the true teaching of our holy religion, that religion, which, to be respected and loved by well-disposed Christian minds, needs only to be known.

A fairer field has of late years been granted to Catholics; their principles have become better known, and many prejudices have happily passed away; yet, alas! some of the more deeply rooted still remain.

Pondering over these things, and lamenting the estrangement from the Church of so many souls, so dear to Jesus Christ; and longing to serve my neighbor, I have ventured to take in hand this little work.

I hope that this short and simple exposition of Catholic doctrine may help many to get rid of some misconceptions and prejudices, and prove a blessing and a comfort to many earnest souls.

As my purpose is to give, though briefly, a summary of Catholic Belief, the reader will understand why these pages include those doctrines in which both Catholics and Protestants happily agree.

In order to be better understood by all, and bearing in mind the fatherly words of St. Augustine of Hippo: "It is better to endure blame at the hands of the critics, than to say anything that the people might not understand," I have often used familiar, rather than scholastic expressions, and in some places I have enlarged upon those points most liable to be misunderstood by Protestants.
All I have here written I believe to be trustworthy; nevertheless, I humbly submit all to the unerring judgment of the Church.

According to the rule of charity, I have carefully endeavored to avoid using any expression that might give just cause of offence to any one, without, however, compromising or disguising the truth.

I have been kindly encouraged and materially aided by several friends, and by one more especially. I am glad of this opportunity to return them my sincere thanks. May they enjoy a large reward from Him in whose name they have assisted me.

The great desire of my heart for you, dear reader, is that you may gain some good from this little labor of love. May it help you on your way to our true home, Heaven. May we there, by the mercy of God, all meet, to be forever "filled with the joy of His countenance."

Farewell.

Ever your humble servant in Jesus Christ,

JOSEPH FAÁ DI BRUNO,

Priest of the "Pious Society of Missions,"

Founded in Rome by the servant of God,

Vincent Pallotti.

St. Patrick's College for Foreign Missions,
Masio (Felizzano). Piedmont. Italy.

Whitsunday, 1884.
IN ALL THINGS MAY GOD BE GLORIFIED.

INTRODUCTION,

ALL men readily admit that, to judge fairly of any case, one should hear both sides.

As the honest mind naturally shrinks from condemning an accused person before hearing what he has to say for himself, so the lover of truth and charity should not hastily condemn, without a hearing, the largest body of Christians in the world, the two hundred and twenty millions of Catholics in communion with the See of Rome.

Most of those who differ from Catholics obtain the information which they possess about the Catholic Church from Protestant sources, thus hearing only one side.

It may be, then, that many will be glad of the opportunity this little work affords, of learning from Catholics themselves what they really believe, and something of what they have to say in defence of their holy religion.

True religion is that bond which unites the finite to the infinite, time to eternity, man to God. The good to be attained by religion is the highest that can be conceived—the complete and perfect enjoyment of God. The means through which it leads men to that good, are the noblest that can be imagined—truth and justice! One, therefore, can not remain indifferent between false and true religion, for true religion alone supplies the proper means to obtain that supreme good.

Some persons, owing to the pressing calls of business, or other cares, may not have the inclination or time to read large works about religion, while a brief statement of Catholic doctrine may be read, or listened to with interest, by all who love the truth and long to find it.
Introduction.

Well, then, dear reader, take and read this short and simple exposition of what Catholics really believe, written by one who feels it his greatest blessing to be a member of the Holy, Catholic, and Roman Church, and who can not help wishing most earnestly that all men possessed the same peace of mind and happiness which he enjoys in her communion.

The first duty of every man who desires to find the truth, is, as Lord Bacon observes, to examine if he has any prejudice lurking in his mind, by which the admission of truth is obstructed; for, as this philosopher goes on to remark, the kingdom of men, which is founded in knowledge, can not be entered in any other manner than as the kingdom of God is entered, namely, by becoming little children.

Let me beg the honest inquirer, then, before reading this little book, to place himself in a state of impartiality, and lay aside that settled feeling of self-confidence which leads him to take it for granted that Roman Catholics must be in the wrong.

May God grant you, dear reader, a spirit of humility, charity, and justice in reading this little book, and an earnest desire to know the truth. Do not omit to pray for this gentle and teachable spirit, feeling encouraged in so doing by those words of St. James (i. 5): “If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him;” and by what is said in Psalm xxiv. 9: “He will guide the meek in judgment; He will teach the meek His ways.”

That this exposition of Catholic faith is faithful and correct may be inferred from the fact that all previous editions had the Imprimatur of His Eminence Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, and that up to this time eighty thousand copies have been sold and no Catholic Bishop or priest has questioned its correctness.

The Scripture quotations found in this book are made from the English Catholic version which was translated
Introduction.

from the Latin Vulgate made by St. Jerome from the older Latin, Hebrew and Greek versions about the year 400. This version of St. Jerome, called the Vulgate, was declared by the Council of Trent (1563) to be authentic. It was revised by Pope Sixtus V. (1585) and by Pope Clement VIII. (1593).

The English New Testament was translated by the English College at Rheims, France, in 1582; and the Old Testament by the English College, Douay, France, in 1609. Both, as revised in the last century by Bishop Challoner and others, have been republished, with notes, from time to time, with the approbation of the Catholic Bishops. This version is commonly called the Douay Bible.
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PART I.

SIMPLE EXPOSITION
OF
CATHOLIC DOCTRINE.

CHAPTER I.
God and His Perfections.

There is but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the supreme, incorporeal, uncreated Being, who exists of Himself, and is infinite in all His attributes and perfections, such as Holiness, Goodness, Power, Wisdom, Justice, Mercy, and Truth.

He always was, He is, and He always will be. He is everywhere present, knowing and seeing all things, even our most secret thoughts. From Him all creatures have and hold existence.

CHAPTER II.
The Most Holy Trinity.

This is a profound mystery, revealed to us by God. The Catholic Church teaches that in one God there are three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; each distinct from the other, each equal in eternity,
The Most Holy Trinity.

power, immensity and all other perfections; because all three Persons have one and the same divine nature or essence.

It would be a contradiction to assert that there are three Gods and one God, or that there are three Persons and one Person; but it is no contradiction to affirm that God is one in essence and three in person. A thing can be one in one respect, and three in another respect. For instance, the human soul is one, yet it is threefold in its powers: in the understanding, the memory, and the will. In like manner, a man is one human being, and threefold in his rational, animal, and vegetable life.

Comparisons, however, are necessarily imperfect upon a subject like the Blessed Trinity. It is a great mystery, surpassing all understanding, to be adoringly believed on earth, and to be comprehended only in heaven.

We can not understand how each of the three Persons can be God, and yet that there is but one God. It should be borne in mind that many things exist also in nature which we can not explain or even comprehend, and which we yet know to be facts. Among these may be noted the nature of the substance of bodies, the cause of gravitation, the attraction of the magnet, and the amazing power and swiftness of the electric current. Human reason can not of itself discover or demonstrate that there are three Persons in God, yet this revealed truth, far from being repugnant to reason, can be shown to agree with it. For God as an intelligent being of infinite perfection must necessarily know Himself, and in Himself know all things. To this end He must form to Himself an inward word or image through which the comprehension of Himself is effected.

When we understand a thing, the interior word or image which our intellect forms within itself in order to comprehend that thing, is not something subsisting in itself, but is accidental and transient, and therefore not a person. But in God, in whom reason tells us there is nothing accidental, this eternal self-comprehension or word is not accidental or transient, but a being identified with the divine nature and at the same time perfectly distinct from
the Father, the intelligent supreme Being who by comprehending Himself generates His word. This word is a distinct subsistence or Person, because, although identical in nature with the Father, yet inasmuch as He is generated by the Father He is perfectly distinct from Him, and constitutes in Himself an individual, distinct, and incommunicable subsistence, which is all that is required to constitute a truly divine Person. This Person is called in Holy Scripture the Word—the Son of God—for by Person an individual, intellectual substance is understood.

Again, God loves Himself in the Son, and is beloved in return by the Son, and in Himself He loves all other things, and this eternal, permanent act of mutual love is not a thing accidental and transient, as an act of love is in us, but a subsistence identified with divine nature, eternal, permanent, singular, incommunicable, perfectly distinct from the Father and the Son, from whom this divine act proceeds, and is therefore a distinct Person, called in Holy Scripture the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, to say that in one God there are three Persons, is no more repugnant to reason than to say that the one God must of necessity be considered under three different respects:—1st, as a God who knows Himself, that is, as a subject; 2d, as a God who is known by Himself, that is, an object of knowledge; and 3d, as a God who loves Himself and is beloved by Himself, as knowing and as known, that is, an object of mutual love. These remarkable self-subsistent eternal differences or relations are what constitute the three really distinct Persons in the one God.

CHAPTER XIII.

Original Sin.

Original sin is distinguished from actual, or personal, sin in this—that actual or personal sin is the sin which we personally with our own free will commit, whilst original sin is that which our human nature com-
Original Sin.

mitted with the will of Adam, in whom all our human nature was included, and with whom our human nature is united as a branch to a root, as a child to a parent, as men who partake with Adam the same nature which we have derived from him, and as members of the same human family of which Adam was the head. The difference between original and personal sin is that the latter is committed with our own personal will, whilst original sin was committed with the will of another, and only morally our own, because it forms with that other (Adam, who is our head) one moral body—humanity.

If our hand strike a fellow-creature unjustly, though the hand have no will of its own, yet it is considered guilty, not indeed as viewed in itself, but inasmuch as it is united to the rest of the body, and to the soul, forming one human being; and thus sharing in the will of the soul with which it is connected.

In the same manner the sin committed inwardly by the human will, by a bad desire, belongs to the whole human being.

Of original sin, in which we are born, we are not personally guilty with our own personal will, but our nature is guilty by the will of Adam our head, with whom we form one moral body through the human nature which we derive from him.

It is a point of Catholic faith that original sin does not consist in what is called concupiscence, which is a propensity to evil of the inferior part of the human soul.

Sin, to be a sin in the strict sense of the word, must be within the sphere of morality, that is, it must depend upon free will; and hence the noted principle in moral philosophy and theology, that there is no sin where there is no will.

Concupiscence, therefore, which is not will, but a blind, involuntary inclination of our lower nature (and therefore an irresponsible tendency to evil), is not of itself sinful unless it be consented to by the will, or rendered strong by bad and unrestricted habit.

Concupiscence is indeed sometimes called sin in Holy Scripture (Romans vii. 7, Galatians v. 24), but it is called
Original Sin.

so, as the holy Council of Trent explains, not in a strict, but in a wide sense, that is, inasmuch as it is a consequence of original sin, and an incentive to actual sin.

This concupiscence, or inclination to evil, still remains in those from whom the guilt and stain of original sin has been entirely washed away by the Sacrament of Baptism. Moreover, strictly speaking, no one is regarded as a sinner merely because he feels tempted to sin. This miserable propensity to evil excites the compassion rather than the anger of God; who said to Noe: "I will no more curse the earth for the sake of man; for the imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth." (Genesis viii. 21.)

The Catholic Church teaches that Adam by his sin not only caused harm to himself, but to the whole human race; that by it he lost the supernatural justice and holiness which he received gratuitously from God, and lost it, not only for himself, but also for all of us; and that he, having stained himself with the sin of disobedience, has transmitted not only death and other bodily pains and infirmities to the whole human race, but also sin, which is the death of the soul.

The teaching of the Council of Trent (Session V.) is confirmed by these words of St. Paul: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.)

The Royal Psalmist (Psalm i. 7) says: "For behold I was conceived in iniquities and in sins did my mother conceive me." (In the Hebrew text it is in the singular, i.e., conceived me in sin.)

Upon this text St. Augustine says: "David was not born in adultery, for he was born from Jesse, a just man, and his wife. Why does he say that he was conceived in iniquity, unless because iniquity is derived from Adam?"

That the early Christians believed in original sin, can be gathered from what St. Augustine said to Pelagius: "I did not invent original sin, which Catholic faith holds from ancient time; but thou, who deniest it, thou,
without doubt, art a new heretic.” (De Nuptiis, lib. xi. c. 12.)

It may be said that this belief is as old as the human race, for traces of this ancient tradition are spread among all nations, insomuch that Voltaire had to confess that “The fall of man is the base of the theology of nearly all ancient people.” (Philosophie de l’Histoire, chapitre xvii.)

Besides the guilt of original sin, which is that habitual state of sinfulness in which we are born (because our human nature is justly considered to have consented in Adam to the rejection of original justice), there is also in man the stain of original sin, entailing in the human soul the privation of that supernatural luster which, had we been born in the state of original justice, we all should have had.*

As neither Adam nor any of his offspring could repair the evil done by his sin, we should have always remained in the state of original sin and degradation in which we were born, and have been forever shut out from the beatific vision of God in heaven, had not God, in His infinite mercy, provided for us a Redeemer.

CHAPTER IV.

The Incarnation of God the Son.

Respecting this great mystery, Catholics believe that the Holy Trinity, out of infinite mercy, decreed to provide for us a Redeemer who could suffer as an individual of the human race, and yet be in Himself, at the same time, so exalted as to be able to give infinite value to His sufferings: because sin, being an offence against the infinite majesty of God, could only be atoned for by an expiation of infinite value.

To accomplish this, God the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, the eternal Word, chose the Blessed Virgin Mary of Nazareth to become His Mother, and on

* About the way in which original sin is transmitted, see Page 290.
receiving her consent, He, by the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit, took human flesh from her, and thus became man, and His holy name is JESUS CHRIST.

In becoming man the eternal Word did not lay aside His divine nature, but, remaining what He was from all eternity, took upon Himself human nature without a human personality, so that, from the first moment of His Incarnation there was in Him, and there ever will be, not one only, but two natures, the divine and the human, united in His divine personality, the Person of God the Son.

The divine nature of Jesus is one and the same as that of the eternal Father and of the Holy Spirit, and His human nature is in all things like ours, sin and tendency to sin excepted. He is equal to the Father as to His Godhead, and less than the Father as to His manhood.

Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died in His human nature on Mount Calvary, and thereby effectually interposed His atonement between His eternal Father and man, and thus made a complete expiation and paid a full ransom to the eternal Justice for the sins of the whole world.

CHAPTER V.

Jesus, our only Mediator of Redemption.

CATHOLICS believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is alone the great center of the Christian religion, the fountain of all grace, virtue, and merit, as in the natural world (if the comparison may be allowed) the sun is the center and enlivening source of light, heat and growth.

This grand truth they believe to be the vital, essential part of Christianity. "For other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid; which is CHRIST JESUS." (1 Corinthians iii. 11.)

They believe that union with JESUS CHRIST is the highest and noblest aim of man, and that only the Holy Catholic Church supplies the means for this union with
Jesus Christ; and they are convinced that the yearning to be in this intimate union with Christ has, by divine attraction, drawn thousands of earnest minds to seek in the Catholic Church this highest happiness to be enjoyed on earth.

They believe that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, because He has redeemed us from the bondage of Satan, with the ransom of His most precious blood; that He alone is our Saviour because He saves us from the stain, the guilt, and the curse of sin; that He is our only Mediator of redemption and salvation, because He alone, by His own merits, has efficiently intervened between God and man, to obtain the full pardon of our sins through the sacrifice of Himself: "There is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a redemption for all." (1 Timothy ii. 5, 6.) "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

They believe that Jesus died on the cross to purchase mercy, grace, and salvation for all men—"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy ii. 4.) And that since Adam’s fall, mercy, grace, and salvation can be obtained by man only through the Passion and death of Jesus Christ.

Believing that Jesus Christ is truly God, they hold that the homage of supreme adoration is due to Him, the God-man, as well as to God the Father, and to God the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

The Holy Bible, the Written Word of God.

That part of divine Revelation which has been committed to writing by persons inspired by the Holy Ghost, is called Holy Scripture, or the Holy Bible, the Book of books.

Holy Scripture is composed not only of all the books
received by Protestants as divinely inspired, but also of some other books which were written after the Jewish list or Canon of Scripture was made, but which nevertheless are held in great veneration by the Jewish synagogue, and by many Protestants themselves.

Such are the books of Tobias, Judith, Esther, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (or the Son of Sirach), Prophecy of Baruch, and the two first books of Machabees. These books, though not registered in the Jewish Canon, were nevertheless held by many Fathers of the early centuries as canonical and forming a part of the deposit of revealed truths entrusted to the Church.

In the schismatic Greek Church, and in other separated Churches of the East, the Canon, or authorized list of the books of Scripture, agrees with that of the Roman Catholic Church. The efforts made by early Protestants to induce the Greek Church to reject that inspired portion of Scripture called by the Catholic Church deutero-canonical, and by Protestants the Apocrypha, only served to call forth repeatedly from the Greeks assembled in council new synodical declarations that those books are inspired.

So long as the Church had not testified with her authority to the divine inspiration of certain books, some of the Fathers may have hesitated about the inspiration of them, and reasonably thought that such books could not be quoted to establish revealed truth, until the Church had first cleared away all doubts, by inserting them in the Canon, and thus established their inspiration and canonical authority.

This the Church did in the celebrated Council of Hippo in Africa, in the year 393, attended by all the Bishops of Africa, at which also the great Doctor and Father of the Church, St. Augustine, was present.*

* Possidius, in the life of St. Augustine, referring to this Council of Hippo, thus writes:—"About the same time Augustine, when yet only a priest, argued (disputavit) about Faith and the Creed in the presence of the Bishops of all Africa gathered in Council, being desired by them so to do." And this he did with such praise and admiration of all that all wished him a Bishop; and Valerius, for fear of losing him from his diocese, asked and obtained that he should be installed Bishop of Hippo in his stead, though he was yet alive. This was done in the year 394."
In Statute XXXVI. of this Council (393) it was decreed: * "That nothing be read in the Church under the name of Divine Scripture, except the Canonical Scriptures," and the Canonical Scriptures are:

Genesis. Ezechiel.
Exodus. Daniel.
Leviticus. Tobias.
Numbers. Judith.
Deuteronomy. Esther.
Josue. Two books of Esdras (Ezra and Nehemias.)
Judges. 
Ruth. Two books of Machabees.
Four Books of Kingdoms. (And of the New Testament.)
Four books of the Gospel.
Two books of Paralipomenon.

The Psalter of David. Thirteen letters of Paul the Apostle.
The Five Books of Solomon. One letter of the same to the Hebrews.
The books of the Twelve (Minor) Prophets. Two of Peter the Apostle.
Isaias. One of John.
Jeremias. One of James.

This list of Canonical books issued by this great Council agrees in substance with the list of divinely inspired books held by Catholics at the present day. This any one can see by comparing the list with that prefixed to the English Catholic Bible, called the Douay Bible, and with that of the old Latin Vulgate, or any other Catholic version of Holy Scripture, and likewise with the Canon of Scripture given by the Ecumenical Councils of Florence and of Trent.

The Council of Hippo in 393, and the third of Carthage in 397, was followed by the sixth Council of Carthage in 419, attended by two hundred and eighteen Bishops, and by two Legates sent by the Roman Pontiff. The list or Canon of Books of Scripture decreed in the 29th Decree of this Council agrees with the list given by the two previous Councils just mentioned, and ends with these words: "Because we have received from the Fathers that these are the books to be read in the Church." †

These words should not be passed unnoticed by those

* See Labbe, Vol. iv.
† See the Works of Leo the Great, Vol. iii., p. 643 or 635; see also Labbe, Vol. iv., p. 450, edition of Florence.
who allow themselves to be led astray by the assertion that "in the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those books of whose authority there was never any doubt in the Church."* Let such persons consider what an assumption it is to suppose that they themselves are, or that their leaders in the sixteenth century were, more competent to judge of the Tradition of the Church of the first four centuries than the Council of Hippo and the third of Carthage, both held in the fourth century, and the sixth Council of Carthage, held in the beginning of the fifth century; and better judges than all the Bishops of Christendom of that age; for the above list of Canonical books sanctioned by these three Councils was thenceforward received by the whole of Christendom.

Before the decision of these three Councils was given some of the Fathers doubted the divine inspiration of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of some other books of the New Testament. Protestants, however, hold them as Canonical. For, respecting these books, they justly say: "This dissent of some of the Fathers moves us not. This dissent of a few, before the Canon of Scripture was finally settled, should not be taken into account, especially after the adoption of these books as divinely inspired by all Christendom in the end of the fourth century. The Bishops of that time were in a better position to judge of the Tradition of the Church about these books."

This observation is just. Protestants, however, should be consistent, and apply the same reasonings to certain books of the Old Testament known by them under the name Apocrypha. Although the inspiration of some of these books was held to be doubtful by a few of the Fathers previous to these two Councils, the same Fathers ceased to have any doubt about it after the decisions of these Councils; so that, whilst some of the Apocrypha have been considered uninspired, as the 3d and 4th books of Esdras, and 3d and 4th of Machabees, some other of these books have been recognized as inspired, and are called by Catholics deuto-canonical. These have, therefore, the very same sanction and authority that all the books of the New

* See Article VI. of the Established Church of England.
Testament have, in addition to the long-standing veneration of the Jewish Church for them.

St. Jerome himself, before the said two Councils of Carthage, seemed to doubt the inspiration of the books of the Old Testament not inserted in the Jewish Canon: yet when the declaration made by those two Councils came to his knowledge, he ceased to doubt with regard to those books which were by them declared inspired, and freely quoted from them to uphold Catholic doctrine.

About the importance, and, indeed, the necessity of a decision of the Catholic Church to establish the inspiration, canonicality, and authenticity of Holy Scripture, the saying of the great Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, is well known: “For my part, I should not believe the Gospel (meaning the written Gospel), were I not moved thereto by the authority of the Catholic Church.”

CHAPTER VII.

Tradition, the Unwritten Word of God.

Besides the written Word of God, Catholics believe also in the unwritten Word, called in Holy Scripture The Word of God spoken (Acts iv. 31). The Word of Faith preached (Romans x. 8). The Gospel heard and preached (Colossians i. 23). The Word of God received, heard, believed (1 Thessalonians ii. 13). The Word of Christ heard (Romans x. 17). Whenever in the New Testament the Word of God revealed by Christ or through His apostles is spoken of before it was committed to writing, it always refers to the unwritten Word of God.

Even after the Word of God was in part committed to writing, some passages evidently refer to the Word of God unwritten; as for instance, where St. Peter says: “But the word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the word which hath been preached unto you.” (1 Ep. i. 25.) Therefore, whenever the Word of God, with-
out any qualification, is mentioned in Holy Scripture, it should not be taken as referring exclusively to the written Word, for it generally refers both to the written and unwritten Word of God.

By Tradition we do not mean a mere report, a hearsay, wanting sufficient evidence to deserve belief; or a local tradition started by men, and therefore merely human, as were those traditions of the Pharisees condemned by our Lord; but we mean a Tradition first coming from God, continually taught, recorded, and in all desirable ways kept alive by a body of trustworthy men successively chosen in a divine or divinely appointed manner, well instructed, and who are as a body protected by God from teaching what is wrong or handing down unfaithfully to others the doctrine committed to them.

St. Paul gives us an idea of how this Tradition should be handed down when he says: "For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received." (1 Corinth. xv. 3.) And again, when writing to Timothy, he says: "The things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also." (2 Timothy ii. 2.)

Holy Scripture and the Tradition just described are both the Word of God: the first written out by persons inspired by God; the other, taught by His own divine lips, or inspired by the Holy Spirit in the mind of one man or body of men, to be continually handed down successively under His divine protection to their legitimate successors; neither therefore of these divine Words can be rejected without the guilt of unbelief.

St. Ephrem says: "Be firmly persuaded of this, not as an opinion, but as a truth, that whatsoever has been transmitted, whether in writing only or by word of mouth, is directed to this end, that we may have life, and may have it more abundantly." (Vol. iii., Serm. lix.)

St. Basil says: "Of the dogmas and teachings preserved in the Church, we have some from the doctrine committed to writing, and some we have received transmitted to us in a secret manner from the Traditions of the Apostles; both these have the same force in forming sound doctrine.
and no one who has the least experience of ecclesiastical laws will gainsay either of these. For should we attempt to reject, as not having great authority, those customs that are unwritten, we should be betrayed into injuring the gospel even in primary matters, or rather in circumscribing the gospel to a mere man.” (Vol. iii., De Spiritu Sancti. cxvii.)

This divine Tradition is not liable to failure either from human fraud or infirmity, because it has the security of divine guardianship, that is to say, because those whose office it is to keep alive this Tradition, are divinely protected from teaching what is false. This appears from that passage of Isaiah, which even Protestants admit refers to the Church, and in which God says: “This is My covenant with them: My Spirit that is in thee, and My words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, from henceforth and forever.” (lxix. 21.) This appears also from those passages of St. John where it is recorded that Christ said: “And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete (or Comforter), that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of Truth. . . But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth.” (xiv. 16, 17 and xvi. 13.)

Hence St. Irenaeus says: “For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; and the Spirit of Truth.” (Against Heresies, vol. iii., c. xxiv.)

The necessity of believing the unwritten living Word of God appears also from the fact that the fundamental virtue of faith, without which no adult is a Christian, is an assent to the Word of God preached by men sent by Him, and charged to preach the truths revealed to them by Him who is infinite knowledge and truth, and who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Hence St. Paul says: “Faith cometh by hearing” (Romans x. 17), and therefore by the Word of God preached by the Apostles, or by their legitimate successors to the persons who hear and believe it. Hence
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the same Apostle also says: "And how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent?" (Romans x. 14, 15.) And to be sent by legitimate, divinely established authority is to be sent by God. (See Acts xiii. 4.)

So long as there are nations to be taught, the command of Christ to His apostles to teach "all nations," indeed, "every creature," will never cease to be in force; and divinely authorized teaching will never cease to be the Word of God. Whether this Word is preached without being committed to inspired writing, as was the case during the twelve years which elapsed between the Ascension of our Lord and the writing of the first Gospel, the Gospel of St. Matthew,—whether preached by the apostles and their successors during the progressive formation of the New Testament up to the year of our Lord 99, when the Gospel of St. John, the last inspired book of the New Testament, was written,—whether preached after the death of St. John (101), that is, in the second, third, and fourth centuries, when only very few possessed all the books of the Old and New Testament, and the inspiration of some of them was uncertain (for the Canon or authorized list of the inspired books of the Old and the New Testament was only finally settled in the Council of Carthage in the year 397),—whether preached after the fourth century for the space of a thousand years, during which time no printed Bible existed, but only Bibles written by hand, which consequently were very voluminous, costly, and rare,—or whether preached after the year 1450, when the art of printing began to come into use, and printed Bibles could be obtained; that Word of Christ, I say, entrusted by Him with His own divine lips, or by inspiration to the apostles, and by the apostles transmitted in a divinely appointed manner to the whole chain of their legitimate successors, IS ALWAYS THE WORD OF GOD, firmly to be believed by every Christian.

Hence St. Paul, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians (ii. 14), could say: "Brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions (that is to say, the entrusted Word of God), which you have learnt, whether by word
(that is, by my preaching) or by our epistle" (that is, by my inspired writings).

When Jesus Christ said to the apostles: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Luke x. 16), He did not limit this duty of hearing the apostles even as Himself to the time when the inspired writings of the New Testament did not exist, but extended it to all times; and the duty of preaching applies not only to the twelve apostles, but also to their legitimate successors, for through their successors alone were the apostles to teach all nations, and their apostolic office was to last until the end of the world. This we see from the following words of Christ to the apostles: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) "Going therefore teach ye all nations... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 19-20.) And no one is exempted from the duty of believing their teaching, for Christ subjoined: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned." (Mark xvi. 16.)

Hence any legitimate Bishop upholding the Tradition of the Church could say what St. John the Evangelist said in his old age, when nearly all the books of the New Testament were written: "We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us. He that is not of God, heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." (1 John iv. 6.)

And St. Irenæus could say, concerning the heretics of his time: "We challenge them to that tradition which is from the apostles, which is preserved in the churches through the succession of the Presbyters." (Against Heresies, book iii. chap. ii.) And Origen said: "We are not... to believe otherwise than as the churches of God have by succession transmitted to us." (Book iii. Commentary on St. Matthew.)

St. Chrysostom gave out as an axiom: "It is a tradition of the Church; seek nothing further." (Commentary on the passage I Thessalonians ii. 14; book xi., Homily 4.)
The Unwritten Word of God.

To suppose that Tradition has lost its authority from having been (in part) committed to writing, would be as unreasonable as to say that the natural law was made void from the moment that the Ten Commandments were laid down in writing on Mount Sinai.

Some may ask: Which of these two divine Words is the more useful to us?

This question may be considered as answered by the Fathers already quoted. I will, therefore, make only one more citation. The holy Bishop of Hierapolis (Papias), the disciple of St. John and friend of St. Polycarp, referring to Tradition, says: "If any one came to me who had accompanied the elders, I questioned him concerning their words, what Andrew and Peter said; for I did not think that what is in the books would aid me as much as what comes from the living and abiding voice." (Eusebius, b. iii., p. 39.)

Like two sacred rivers flowing from paradise, the Bible and divine Tradition contain the Word of God, the precious gems of revealed truth.

Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of equal sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still, of the two, Tradition is to us more clear and safe.

1st, Because Tradition can testify in its own behalf through the many authorized witnesses who carry this Tradition in themselves, whilst Holy Scripture can not make good its authority without referring to Tradition to testify to its inspiration and preservation.

2dly, Because a word may have two or more meanings, and an expression may be true in one of these meanings and not in the others. Again, as an expression may be true, if taken figuratively, and not true if taken literally—true if applied to some particular person, and not true if applied to all—true if taken in its plain sense, and not true if taken in a strained or fanciful sense—true if taken in a sense that does not exclude other things, and not true if taken in an exclusive sense—true if taken to act through the medium of other things, and not true if taken to act without a medium—true if taken to mean a counsel, and
not true if taken as a precept—true if taken permissively, and not true if regarded as the active cause of a thing; the Bible, which is a mere letter needing an interpreter, can not by itself set the mistaken interpreter right.

But TRADITION, being a living word, because carried in the mind and on the lips of divinely appointed living teachers, can say with regard to each of its own expressions, and also as to the expressions in HOLY WRIT itself, in what sense exactly those expressions are true, and in what sense they are not true: and if wrongly interpreted by any one, TRADITION can set that one right, and explain the true meaning; and all this it can do with an authority which, by a privilege granted by Christ, is infallible and, owing to the unfailing, promised assistance of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church, is divine.

The Ark of old, when in the hands of the sacerdotal and Levitical order, and carried or preserved by them in the midst of the chosen people of God, was a source of blessings. But when carried off to another nation, and kept in the hands of unauthorized or self-authorized persons, it was to them a cause of affliction. (1 Kings vi.)

So likewise the HOLY SCRIPTURE, when separated from TRADITION, which is its support and lawful expounder, and thrown into the hands of unauthorized interpreters, instead of being a source of blessing, becomes a cause of endless contention and division, an occasion of doubt, fanaticism, and ceaseless wrangling, as sad experience proves.

TRADITION, without Holy Scripture. Old or New, sufficed for many years, and could still suffice. But HOLY SCRIPTURE has never sufficed by itself; it always stood in need of divine TRADITION: for it is only by this divine Tradition that we learn that the Holy Scripture is an inspired book. It is only Tradition that can give with authority and certainty the right meaning of the Scriptures. Without Tradition the Holy Scriptures may be made to speak in many discordant ways, thus destroying their authority altogether.

To use an illustration: A court composed of an unin-
interrupted succession of judges might, by the help of a living, well-known and well-established Tradition of orally enacted laws, suffice for the guidance and welfare of a people; but no code of written laws could suffice without a court to testify to the genuine meaning of it, to its being still in vigor, and to give with authority the right interpretation of it in all cases of dispute.

St. Irenæus testifies that in his time many nations had salvation written in their own hearts without paper and ink, and were diligently guarding the ancient Tradition. (Book iii., chap. iv.)

After Tradition had been in full and successful operation for many years, God added the written Word, but it was not for the purpose of superseding Tradition, a thing which neither our Lord nor His apostles ever said; but it was rather to strengthen Tradition itself; for in this very written Word He left recorded repeatedly and forcibly, as we have already seen, that Tradition or the successive oral teaching of the body of teachers instituted and empowered by Himself for that purpose, which was to have its full authority and vigor whilst there existed a nation, or even one creature to be taught the Gospel; that is, until the end of the world.

Hence the ancient and successive Fathers of the Church always recognized the necessity of appealing to Tradition, the Unwritten Word of God, in order to confute heresies, to settle controversies about religion, and to establish with authority and certainty what, according to the Revelation of God, we ought to believe and do in order to be saved.

The Fathers of the Church plainly expressed their belief that the Written Word of God by itself, without the help of Tradition, would always leave disputes unsettled, points of belief and morals undetermined, and true religion a problem unsolved.
CHAPTER VIII.

The Interpretation and the Reading of the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God. This I will assume as admitted by Protestants generally. But it is clear that if the Scriptures are wrongly interpreted, they become the word of man. For, as the Protestant Bishop Walton says: "The Word of God does not consist in mere letters, whether written or printed, but in the true sense of it."* This is what St. Jerome had said ages before: "Let us be persuaded that the Gospel consists not in the words, but in the sense. A wrong explanation turns the Word of God into the word of man, and, what is worse, into the word of the devil; for the devil himself could quote the text of Scripture;"† and he did so when he tempted our Lord in the desert, (Matt. iv. 6.)

Protestants should consider well this point, especially those who so confidently and plausibly boast that they stand by the Bible alone, and imagine that to stand by the Bible alone means that they rely not upon human authority, but upon the Word of God.

Certainly nothing can be better than to stand by the Word of God, but whether what they call standing by the Bible alone be to stand by the Word of God, we shall see.

Let us observe, 1st, that the Bible, though divinely inspired, is but a written document, and a written document often so obscure, that St. Augustine, though so great a scholar, and a Doctor of the Church, confessed that there were more things in the Bible he did not understand than things he did understand.

Let us consider, 2dly, that the Bible, because a written

* Prolegomena or Preface of his Polyglot, chap. v.
† In his comments on the Epistle to the Galatians, speaking against the Luciferians.
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document, remains always silent unless interpreted, that is, unless some meaning is affixed to the words, by some one. It is clear that the Bible can not speak and interpret itself,—you must take the book in your hand, open it, read it, compare passages, and attach a certain meaning to those words which fall under your eyes.

Therefore, when a Protestant says, "I stand by the Bible alone," he does not mean that he stands by the Bible uninterpreted, for in such case the Bible is mute. He does not mean that he stands by the Bible as interpreted by the Church, for that would not be the Protestant, but the Catholic principle. Nor does he mean that he stands by the Bible as interpreted by somebody else; as that would be, according to his notion, to give up his right of private interpretation. But he means that he stands by the Bible alone as interpreted by himself, and that the sense in which he himself understands it is the Word of God.

And therefore a person who is guided by this principle says in effect: "The Bible, interpreted by the Fathers, may or may not be the Word of God; the Bible interpreted by the Church may or may not be the Word of God; the Bible interpreted by any one besides myself may or may not be the Word of God; but the Bible interpreted by me, that is indeed the Word of God, my only teacher, my guide, my infallible authority."

To a Catholic who rejoins: "What, my friend, if you were to understand some passage of Scripture in a wrong sense?" the person who still sticks to this principle would have to reply: "That would be a great pity, but still, not acknowledging any other authority than my own private judgment, I have a right to look upon that interpretation of mine as the Word of God."

And if a Catholic were to add: "Is it not reasonable to suppose that the interpretation of the Bible by the whole body of Bishops of the Catholic Church, though disagreeing with your private interpretation, should be the right one, and therefore more likely the Word of God?" the Protestant would be forced to reply: "I do not agree, because that interpretation would not be mine"