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THE CATHOLIC IDEA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WHAT we mean by the "Catholic Idea" we have explained in an article on "The Catholic Idea in Prophecy," in the April number of the REVIEW, and in another on "The Hierarchy in the First Two Centuries" in the number for July. We have proved that the Christianity prefigured and foretold in the Old Testament, and which is Historical Christianity, is a religion representing and embodying the Catholic idea.

Christianity being the true, the revealed, the divine religion, whose origin is coeval with the existence of mankind on the earth from the beginning to the end of time, its ideal form must be in the New Testament, its most precious document, precisely the same as in prophecy and history. It is, however, important and even necessary to give distinct and separate proof that the Catholic idea is in the New Testament. For, there is a numerous Christian sect, professing to have the pure evangelical and apostolic doctrine, immediately from the New Testament, which totally rejects and denies the Catholic Idea as of alien and human origin.

From their own interpretation of the New Testament as their standpoint, they take a view of ecclesiastical history both before and after Christ which harmonizes with their notion of pure and spiritual religion. The hierarchical, ritual and legal elements of pre-Christian religion are cast aside as obsolete, and the predictions of the prophets concerning the Christian Church are allegorized away. The post-apostolic historical Christianity is represented as an alteration and corruption of the genuine ideal presented in the New Testament. They profess to have gone back to this ideal, and to have restored the pure, primitive Christianity of Christ and the Apostles in conformity with it.

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Their conception of Christianity is derived from a false mysticism, an exaggerated spiritualism, which is a counterfeit of the true, genuine mystical theology of contemplative saints in the Catholic Church. The famous book "Theologia Germanica" was Luther's favorite manual of spiritual doctrine. Its author was a Catholic, and the book may be interpreted in an orthodox sense, although its vagueness and obscurity made it easily susceptible of being turned to the service of heresy.

The false mysticism in question separates the spirit from the body of the Christian religion, abjuring the sacramental, sacerdotal, hierarchical, ritual, and properly ecclesiastical constitution of the Catholic Church as a superadded structure of human origin and invention. Its most perfect expression is exhibited in Puritanism. A collection of professing believers, regarding themselves as the elect of God, meet together in a building which is not a church but a meeting-house, for extemporaneous prayer, singing of hymns, reading the Bible and preaching. They have elders appointed by themselves to preside over the meeting. They have, indeed, quite inconsistently, baptism and the "Lord's Supper," but they deny their true sacramental character. They have neither priest, altar sacrifice, liturgy, nor anything symbolic and beautiful in the way of ceremonial worship. They think that this was the way of the primitive, apostolic Christians. The Bible, especially the New Testament, they declare to be their only rule of faith, and they profess to find therein their own peculiar form of religious doctrine and practice.

In point of fact, this idea of religion is not only without any foundation in the Old Testament, but it is not to be found in the New Testament. Those who make the profession of taking the New Testament as their rule of faith do not really take it as a whole for their guide, but only certain misinterpreted parts of it, overlooking and neglecting the rest.

It is for them like a palimpsest, a codex which has been written over by a new composition of their own invention, which allows only isolated passages to appear under their superscription, spots of the original text, surrounded by foreign and incongruous writing. Or, to adopt another simile, it is the sacred text, accompanied by a paraphrase and commentary, which alters and perverts its true and original sense, in conformity with the new and private opinions of the commentators.

No doubt, the New Testament needs a paraphrase and a commentary to make its meaning completely and clearly intelligible to those who are reading it after such a long lapse of time since the period of the evangelists and Apostles. Those who deny that the idea which is expressed in the historical Catholic Christianity

of the post-apostolic age is found in the New Testament, make use chiefly of negative arguments. They affirm that many things contained in tradition are not contained in Scripture.

The New Testament does not contain a systematic theology, a code of ecclesiastical law, a liturgy or a ritual. It is made up of the life of Christ, a partial history of the acts of the apostles, a few epistles of circumstance mostly addressed to particular churches, and one mysterious prophetic writing. In order to know what was the constitution, doctrine, discipline and worship of the apostolic Church, to know what is pre-supposed in the writings of the New Testament, what is alluded to, hinted at, really meant by obscure, ambiguous and partial statements, a supplement is necessary. We say that Protestants read into these sacred pages their own sense. They rejoin, that we read into them the Catholic sense. This is indeed true, in respect to all those parts which are not in and by themselves explicit and self-interpreting. But, we read into them the sense which we derive from a coeval tradition, the sense of the nearest disciples of the inspired writers, the sense of their earliest and most authentic interpreters, explaining and elucidating apostolic text by apostolic tradition, illustrating the words of the apostles by their acts, impressed upon primitive history and the general Catholic consciousness of the first Christian generations. The exposition which the second, third, and fourth centuries present of the Christianity of the New Testament is a paraphrase, but it is not an alteration. It renders the sense of every part of it full, complete and harmonious, without doing violence to any sound principles and rules of exegesis and criticism.

No Protestant interpretation can do this, whether Calvinistic, rationalistic, semi-catholic, or of any intermediate stripe. Our procedure is legitimate, and it perfectly protects the divine authority of the Written Word of God. Whereas, the abandonment of the Catholic rule can only issue in the abandonment of the Sacred Scriptures as a rule of faith, and the swallowing up of all dogmatic Christianity by the quicksand of skepticism.

It is necessary to guard against the supposition that the entire New Testament is obscure and ambiguous until it is interpreted by tradition. All the principal Catholic dogmas, and the principles of the sacramental and ecclesiastical discipline of the Church are contained in the New Testament in a clear and explicit manner, and can be proved by an exegesis of the text.

They are not there in a systematic order, as in a catechism or text-book. Therefore, the ordinary reader requires the aid of some formal harmony of the gospels and exposition of the epistles in order to get a connected and complete view of their contents. They are also confirmed, more fully explicated, and illustrated by a

comparison with tradition, and by geographical, historical and doctrinal commentaries. It is the implicit teaching, the allusions to matters supposed to be well known to the readers, the underlying historical and coeval environment of the writers and readers of the sacred books, which are more or less obscure and ambiguous in the references of the text, until the explanation is furnished by tradition. And in particular it is an exact and minute description of the development and formation of the church out of its inchoate and missionary beginnings into a permanent and regular organization, of the transition from apostolic to episcopal authority, which is wanting, and can only be partially supplied by inference and hypothesis.

Where contemporary testimonies are wanting or scanty, as is particularly the case with the period between A. D. 66 and A. D. 120, we are necessarily obliged to look backward and forward of this period, and to infer from what we know of the two extremes what the middle must have been, in order to fit them at each end and join them together in a logical and historical whole. In this way we fill the gap, we bridge over the chasm. We make a judgment of what the historical development during this half-century must have been, in order to carry on the beginnings of the previous half century. And also, we infer what it really was from what grew out of it in the half-century which followed. We thus get a fair moral certainty in regard to the chief and most substantial parts of Christian doctrine and polity, and the main facts of ecclesiastical growth and historical development, during the half-century which has left so little record of its events, and we have to resort to hypothesis only to fill up the minor details of the grand outline.

A Catholic is not, indeed, obliged to grope among early records and piece together scanty bits of history in order to know what the early Church was like. We know the Catholic Church to be of divine origin, indefectible and infallible. We have her testimony to herself. We know that she has been ever the same, from St. Peter to Leo XIII., from the Council of Jerusalem to the Council of the Vatican. Still, it is interesting to us to follow what traces she has left of her earliest history ; and it is necessary to do so, for the instruction of those who are seeking the truth, and the refutation of the advocates of error.

What we desire to do is to reproduce a correct view of the earliest ages of Christianity, especially that obscure portion which intervenes between the Apostles and the Apostolic Fathers—between St. Paul and St. Ignatius. This is the lurking-place into which all anti-Catholic writers, whether evangelicals or rationalists, have been gradually and irresistibly driven by the testimony of

history. Here the Lightfoots and the Renans, and the various others who attempt to reconstruct an early Christianity according to their own different fancies, find a convenient ground for their ingenious theories about the rise and progress of Catholicism. Each one invests his historical romance, Anglican, Puritan, Unitarian, or in some other form mythical, in all the colors and shades, ranging from semi-Catholicism to the boldest rationalism—fantastic structures of mist and cloud, which present a deceptive appearance of landscape. It is an important task to dispel these illusions, and to dislodge our adversaries from their ambush.

Leaving aside all half-way theories, which retain some imperfect hierarchical and liturgical concepts, we turn our attention to that idea of primitive Christianity which is common to Puritanism and rationalism, and which gives it the form of New England Congregationalism.

We may assert, confidently, that such a concept of religion was utterly unknown and impossible to the Jews and Pagans who were the first Christian converts. It could not have entered into their minds unless the Apostles had made it an essential part of their doctrinal teaching, and thoroughly swept away all previous habits of mind derived from their old religions. In this case, a reversion to these old habits, especially while the first enthusiasm remained, and during the lifetime of the disciples of the Apostles, would have been impossible. The dominant idea and character of the Christianity of the middle of the first century must have prevailed during its later period, and must have continued during the succeeding age. Wherefore, in attempting to draw a picture of this earliest Christianity we must borrow the lineaments of the later but still very early Christianity of the period of St. Clement, St. Polycarp, St. Ignatius, and St. Irenæus, with what help we can get from the scanty and obscure hints and allusions of the sacred writers.

Here, St. John the Apostle comes to our aid. He is the connecting link between the Apostles and their successors. He survived during the pontificates of St. Linus, St. Anacletus, and St. Clement. He "founded and governed all the churches of Asia," as St. Jerome informs us. He ordained Polycarp, and through him was the instructor of Irenæus. St. John gives Apostolic sanction to the whole doctrinal and hierarchical system of the second century.

In the Apocalypse, the image of the Church on earth is thrown up into the sky, and in this beautiful cloud-picture we see reflected the Church of the Catholic ideal, with its vested priests, its altar, sacrifice, incense, and monarchical episcopate. The seven golden candlesticks with their stars, the altar and the Lamb, the robed

High Priest, the twenty-four Ancients, the Angels swinging censers, and all the beautiful imagery, are not in harmony with the Puritan and Quaker ideal, but are entirely Catholic. The epistles to the angels of the seven churches show most clearly the monarchical episcopate established in Asia Minor by St. Paul and St. John, and are in perfect agreement with the epistles of St. Ignatius, which were probably written about fifteen years later.

Renan and other anti-Catholic writers refer the beginnings of hierarchical organization to the end of the first century, and especially to that part of Asia Minor afterwards included in the exarchate of Ephesus, and to the action of the apostle St. John. Rationalists, with their hypotheses of Petrine, Pauline and Johannian Christianity, will not, indeed, hesitate to affirm that all this was a change, an alteration, a human development from the original religion of Christ. But the real and sincere believers in the inspiration of the New Testament must take it as all in one piece, homogeneous throughout. They must take the doctrines, the Church, the precepts and the ordinances of Christ and the Apostles as all one and all divine, and therefore accept all that was established under the apostolic authority of St. John in Asia Minor as the carrying out of the instructions which the Lord gave to the Apostles by word of mouth or the revelations of the Holy Spirit, and of the regulations agreed upon by the common consent of the apostolic college. In the Church of Ephesus we have a model and example by which to determine the polity and doctrine of all the apostolic churches and of the Catholic Church in general during the latter half of the first century. Without leaving Ephesus or going beyond the New Testament, we can show that it is the Catholic Idea which is there exhibited.

The Church of Ephesus was founded by St. Paul, who came there about A. D. 53, and remained three years. On his journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem, he bade a solemn farewell and gave a parting charge to the Ephesian clergy and about the year 62, while a prisoner at Rome, he wrote his beautiful and wonderful Epistle to the Ephesians. This Epistle is throughout an exposition of the Catholic Idea of the Church, under two figures, as the Spouse of Christ and as the Body of Christ.

"Christ also hath loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it in the laver of water in the word of life. That He Himself might present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that it may be holy and without blemish."¹

"[God] hath put all things under His feet and given Him to be

¹ v. 25-7, *Kenrick's Version.*

head over all the Church, which is His body, and the fulness of Him who is all in all." ¹ It is evidently of the visible, organized Church, that St. Paul speaks, for it is only a corporate society which can be called a "body." And this appears more clearly from other passages. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners; but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, the chief corner-stone being Christ Jesus Himself, in whom all the building framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." ²

The unity of the Catholic Church, analogous to the unity of God, of Christ, of the Faith, and the character of this One Catholic Church as the medium of grace, justification and sanctification, are set forth by St. Paul precisely in the same manner as they were afterwards declared by St. Cyprian. "Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit, as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all." ³

"That we may grow in all things in Him, who is the head, Christ; from whom the whole body, fitted together and connected by every joint which supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of each member, maketh the increase of the body to the building of itself in love." ⁴

The hierarchical order in the Church is explicitly and distinctly mentioned as a divine institution. "Ascending on high, He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men And He gave some indeed apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and others pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." ⁵

The whole doctrine of Catholicism is summed up in these passages. The fundamental Catholic Idea of the Christian Church and Religion is contained and expressed in this one image which represents the Church as the Body of Christ. It is the continuation of the Incarnation, it is one grand and universal Sacrament. The Divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God and of Jesus Christ, dwells, in and vivifies a great corporate and organic Society, the Catholic Church. This visible organic Church, over which Christ is the head, is the medium through which he imparts His revelation of truth and His sanctifying grace to individuals and exercises His saving influence upon the world. The sacraments are special channels through which special graces are imparted from the great reservoir of the Church. The priesthood is the guardian of these treasures.

¹ i., 22-3.² ii., 19-21.³ iv., 3-6.⁴ iv., 15, 16.⁵ iv., 8-12.

"Let a man so regard us as ministers of God and stewards of the mysteries of Christ," *i.e.*, the revealed truths, the sacraments, and other Christian ordinances.¹

The hierarchy in the Church was established in order to secure unity, to keep order and discipline, to hand down the sacerdotal gifts conferred on the Apostles, to provide for valid and lawful administration of sacraments, to preserve and promulgate the faith delivered to the holy Apostles and disciples of Christ. From the history of Ephesus we derive some special and important information concerning the law of the priesthood which the Apostles established when they provided for the change from apostolic to episcopal government throughout the great missionary field of their labors.

At Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome and Alexandria, fixed episcopal Sees were established, and the local clergy of presbyters and deacons were organized under their bishops. This is quite sufficient to prove that Christ and the Apostles framed the ecclesiastical polity on the episcopal model. That this was the one universal, unchangeable order is evident, when the truly sacerdotal character of the apostolic ministry is considered. The sacerdotal character could only be transmitted by ordination at the hands of men specially empowered as were the Apostles. Presbyters did not possess this power, and therefore no church could be complete without a higher ministry, through which it could receive the benefit of apostolic succession.

The apostolic commission was a permanent one. The foundation of the Church was apostolic. An apostolic succession was therefore essential. And, from the beginning, this apostolic succession has been regarded as the inheritance, not of the priesthood at large but of a select number of chief priests, to whom the title of bishop has been assigned as their specific official designation. Whatever may have been the temporary and provisional government of local churches under the general supervision of the Apostles, during the twenty-five years of their missionary labors, it is certain that before the beginning of the last third of the first century they established everywhere the episcopal regimen. St. Jerome, who is often cited, *hors de propos*, as a witness against the *jus divinum* of the episcopate, gives clear testimony on this point.

"The well-being of the Church depends on the dignity of the Chief Priest, and unless there exists a certain unparticipated and exalted power there will be as many schisms as there are priests in the Church."²

"If we inquire why in the Church a baptized person does not

¹ 1 Cor., iv., 1.

² *Adv. Lucif.*

receive the Holy Spirit, except through the hands of a bishop, learn that this observance descends from the same authority which teaches that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles."¹

"With us, bishops hold the place of the Apostles."² "All are successors of the Apostles."³

In the narrative of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, in the Acts, it is recorded that before their return to Antioch "they ordained priests (presbyters) for them in every church."³

St. Jerome asserts that during this period and down to very near the close of the following extensive missions of St. Paul, in the neighborhood of A.D. 60, the churches were left under the charge of these presbyters, the Apostles, of course, as the history relates, exercising a general supervision over them. But, on account of dissensions, especially at Corinth, St. Jerome goes on to say, "that it was decreed in the whole world (implying that this was done by an apostolic council) that one chosen from the presbyters should be placed over the others, to whom the whole care of the Church should belong, and the seeds of schisms be thus taken away."⁴

St. Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus between the years 56 and 59, in which he rebukes them for their divisions. If the statement of St. Jerome was anything more than a conjecture and had any foundation in fact, it would appear that it was about this time that St. Paul and the other Apostles took special and active measures for giving the Asiatic churches they had gathered a more regular and permanent constitution.

St. Paul's two Epistles to Timothy prove that he appointed and ordained him bishop of that city, as the local and general tradition testifies, and the similar Epistle to Titus equally shows that episcopal supervision over Crete was assigned to him. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus are an apostolic legacy of advice and instruction, not only to these two bishops, but to all others holding the same office, which the original Apostles, as they were about to disappear from the scene of their labors, were handing over to their successors. Regarded in this light, as admonitory encyclicals addressed to bishops who not only governed particular churches but were also pre-eminent among their brethren and the forerunners of canonically instituted metropolitans, these letters are full of interest and significance. Otherwise they are not intelligible, and therefore rationalistic critics have shown a great desire to get rid of them.

The consecration of Timothy to the episcopate of Ephesus was evidently an event of a momentous character, directed by a special divine revelation, like the mission of Paul and Barnabas from An-

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ad. Evang.*

³ xiv., 22.

⁴ *Comm. Titus.*

tioch. Several other men of apostolic dignity took part with St. Paul in the solemn act. "I admonish thee," he writes to him, "to stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the laying on of my hands."¹ And again: "Neglect not the grace which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with imposition of hands of the priesthood (presbytery)."²

In another place he writes: "This charge I give to thee, child Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before concerning thee, that in them thou mayest war a good warfare."³

It need not surprise us that St. Paul and his assistants in the ordination of Timothy are called a "presbytery," and this is not in the slightest degree a proof that mere presbyters could ever ordain. St. Chrysostom (*in loc.*) says: "He speaks here not of priests, but of bishops, for the priests did not ordain a bishop." The title of presbyter is used by the sacred writers of the New Testament, and by later ecclesiastical writers, as a generic term, including all grades of the ministry above the order of deacons, even popes and apostles. In its specific sense it was the title of priests of the second order. In the same manner, the Latin term, *sacerdos*, and all the modern derivatives of *presbyter*, such as the English word priest, have been habitually and continuously applied to bishops, who are priests *par excellence*.

St. Jerome and St. John Chrysostom say also that the title of bishop is given in the New Testament to presbyters engaged in pastoral duties.

Anti-Catholic writers are continually insisting on the lack of clearly marked distinction between bishops and presbyters in the New Testament as an argument against the divine constitution of the episcopate. The contention is of no force, however, against the positive and conclusive evidence that the Apostles established the priesthood as a bi-partite order, giving the fulness of the sacerdotal character to their true and proper successors, and a limited participation in the same to priests of the second class, *i.e.*, simple presbyters.

It is certain that from the time when local chief pastors were appointed to rule the churches everywhere, their only proper title was bishop.

It appertained to them exclusively so soon as the ecclesiastical nomenclature became fixed and settled, with the single exception of the later *chor-episcopi*, many of whom were presbyters, having a decanal or quasi-episcopal jurisdiction over country parishes.

Allowing that, in the beginning, those presbyters who shared in the pastoral office may have been included with the bishops under

¹ II. Ep., ii., 1-6.

² I. Ep., iv., 14.

³ I Ep., 1, 18.

the same title taken in its general sense, meaning overseer ; this is a circumstance of no importance. At Athens there was a magistrate called the archon, having assistants called archons. There are four grades of generals and three of admirals in the military service, and in the United States Navy there are four grades of officers, viz., captains, commanders, lieutenant-commanders, and captains of marines, all of whom in common parlance are called captains. If the bishop of a church had presbyters who were his assistants in his sacred office, they might have well been called, in a general way and in a lesser sense, bishops, while the technical designations of ranks in the hierarchy were still in the process of becoming fixed by usage. For instance, in St. Paul's epistle to the Philippians, whose bishop was probably Epiphrodatius, he begins as follows: " Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." St. Chrysostom comments upon this passage: " What does this mean? Were there, at that time, many bishops in one city? By no means; but he styled the priests by this name; for, up to that time, they used the name promiscuously, and the bishop was even styled deacon," in the general sense of ministry.¹ Other passages, where bishops and presbyters are mentioned, can be explained in the same way, *i.e.*, that in respect to dignity all who have the priestly character are called presbyters, and in respect to office, all who have some pastoral charge are called bishops. It is not, however, necessary to adopt this explanation; for it is not certain that presbyters were ever called bishops, even in the earliest period of the local clergy. The bishops saluted by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, may have been bishops of neighboring churches. Many of the epistles have the character of encyclicals, intended not merely for the faithful of particular churches but for a wider circle. If there were bishops in the proper sense, either permanently or temporarily within reach of an epistle sent to Philippi, the salutation of Paul and Timothy was primarily addressed to them, and, inclusively, to all presbyters associated with them in their ministry; or, we may understand by the deacons, in a general sense, all ministers inferior to bishops, including presbyters. A precise adherence to technical and formal style is not to be looked for and is not found in the apostolic writings. Nor was it necessary, where all was understood and familiar to the persons addressed; where the spirit of fraternity, charity, and humility placed all Christians, from the prince of the apostles to the humblest of the brethren, upon one common level in the essential relation toward God as His children, toward Jesus Christ as His brethren.

¹ Chrys., *in loc.*

St. Luke relates the history of a most interesting and pathetic scene which was witnessed at Miletus, when St. Paul bade farewell to the clergy of Ephesus and the adjacent region :

“ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the Ancients of the Church.” They came, St. Irenæus testifies,¹ and St. Paul implies (“ all ye, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God ”) from the various churches of Asia. Some were undoubtedly bishops, others presbyters, and perhaps the chief men of the laity accompanied their clergy. The charges of St. Paul are primarily addressed to the bishops, although it is all appropriate to presbyters as well, and most of it to all who were present, without exception. He exhorts the bishops particularly, in these words: “ Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has placed you bishops; to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.”

This passage is a most momentous and emphatic expression of the Catholic doctrine that the episcopate, not to the exclusion, but implying the inclusion, of the subordinate priesthood, is of divine institution, and the foundation on which the Church is built; consequently, a continuation of the apostolate. The language of St. Ignatius and St. Cyprian is the echo of the language of St. Paul.

Among all those bishops, Timothy was pre-eminent. He was the Bishop of Ephesus, the capital of Ionia and the chief city of Proconsular Asia. His see was the chief one, and became, by a natural process of ecclesiastical development, not only a metropolis but an exarchate. St. Timothy governed it until nearly the close of the century, and either to him or to his successor was addressed the Epistle to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, which St. John was inspired to write in the Apocalypse in the name of the Holy Spirit, who had specially designated and placed St. Timothy as the first bishop of that great See.

In St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy are delineated all the powers, the duties, the principles and rules of action, possessed and carried out by one who was a model for all bishops in all succeeding times.

There is the power of ordaining: “ The things which thou hast heard of from me through many witnesses the same commit to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also.”² The specific directions given by the apostle relate only to bishops and deacons. Priests are passed over, according to the comment of St. Chrysostom, because the qualifications of a presbyter are not different from those of a bishop. In the Epistle to Titus the apostle expressly

¹ Adv. Haer., l. iii., 14.

² Acts, xx., 17-38.

³ II., ii., 2.

says: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and establish priests (presbyters) in every city." After mentioning certain moral qualities indispensable in a candidate for the priesthood, he proceeds: "For a bishop should be free from censure, as a steward of God."¹ St. John Chrysostom (*in loc.*), considers that the Apostle was directing Titus principally about the ordination of bishops in the cities of Crete. He was acting with apostolic authority and in a missionary capacity, founding churches, and establishing a local clergy, while he probably took charge in person of the Church in the chief city of the island, "exercising a general superintendence such as metropolitans exercise over their suffragans."²

The Church in Asia Minor was in a much more advanced and well-ordered condition than it was in Crete. Nevertheless, as the occasion would sometimes arise for filling vacant sees, the pre-eminent rank of the Church of Ephesus and of St. Timothy as its bishop, would naturally give him a great influence in appointing new bishops and the office of consecrating them. Besides, the work of evangelizing those regions and founding new churches was still going on. The instructions of St. Paul in respect to the ordination of bishops are therefore properly to be referred to the case of these chief pastors of churches outside of the city of Ephesus.

Those which relate to presbyters, deacons, and all the different classes of the faithful, are more specially applicable to the government of his own diocese. In general terms he admonishes him to be very careful in his ordinations. "Lay hands quickly on no man, nor be partaker of other men's sins." Speaking of deacons, he directs: "Let these also be first proved (*i.e.*, exercised for a while in lesser offices, and diligently examined—Kenrick), and so let them minister, being charged with no crime. For those who minister well, gain for themselves a good degree (promotion to a higher order—Kenrick)."

"Let priests (presbyters) who rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and doctrine. Against a presbyter receive not an accusation, unless with two or three witnesses. Those who sin rebuke before all, that the others also may fear."³

In his first Epistle St. Paul tells Timothy: "These things I write to thee, hoping to come to thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayst know how thou oughtest to act in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, pillar and ground of the truth."⁴ Evidently, St. Paul has confided to Timothy his

¹ i., 5-7.² Kenrick *in loc.*³ I., iii., iv., v.⁴ iii., 15.

own apostolic office, leaving him to replace himself in that supervision and supreme jurisdiction which he had been exercising in person during his missionary career. The presentiment of the approaching end of this career betrays itself. In point of fact, his tarrying had no end, for he never returned, and thus Timothy was left by his master with only the legacy of his example and his instructions to guide him in the exercise of the episcopal office.

In his second Epistle, which may have been the last he ever wrote which has been preserved, this presentiment is more definite. The Apostle, being near his term, breaks out into his triumphant death-song: "For I am now to be sacrificed, and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. As to the rest, a crown of justice is laid up for me, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me on that day."¹

With St. Paul, St. Peter and the other surviving Apostles soon finished their earthly career. Jerusalem, particularly its most sacred portion, the Temple, was destroyed, and from A. D. 70 until A. D. 100, St. John alone of the apostolic college was left as the last link of the chain connecting the apostolate with the episcopate, the first with the second century of Christianity. St. John lived mostly at Ephesus, "founded and ruled all the churches of Asia," as St. Jerome affirms, completed the Canon of Scripture, and wrote his sublime Apocalypse, his beautiful and precious Gospel. The place of St. Paul was therefore filled by St. John, and his work continued. He did not, however, supersede the bishops, for he addresses them in the Apocalypse as having all the charges and responsibilities of the pastoral office. The hierarchy was universally and permanently constituted before St. Peter and his colleagues sprinkled the foundations of the Church with their blood.

During the last forty years of the first century the work of evangelization must have been prosecuted with immense enthusiasm, energy and success. This is the period of historic blank, of which anti-Catholic writers complain so much, because it gives them no record of their fancied transformation of Christianity, a process which they have determined must have germinated during this interval. They will never find in this dark cave the seven sleepers who will awake and tell of a primitive Christianity without hierarchy, changing gradually and imperceptibly into a hierarchical Catholicism. It is proved that the hierarchical organization had been constituted when St. Peter and St. Paul suffered

¹ iv., 6-8.

martyrdom. St John survived to give his sanction and blessing to all the work of the successors of the Apostles during the last half of the last third of the first century. In the second century we find the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman Empire and some outlying regions dotted all over with episcopal sees, and these single churches confederated in provinces, exarchates and patriarchates, under the Supreme Primacy of the Roman Church, although not under the stately forms and systematic laws which grew up during the two succeeding centuries. What is the reasonable conclusion? That there was a regular, normal progress from St. Peter to St. Victor, St. Mark to St. Dionysius, St. Timothy to Polycrates, St. James the Less to St. Cyril, St. John to St. Irenaeus, in the same lines, from the same principles, and proceeding from a divine origin.

That the Catholic Idea of the Church is the one presented in the New Testament is sufficiently proved by the one foregoing line of argument, showing that the Church is a society organized on the hierarchical principle. It is one great Sacrament, *i.e.*, an outward and visible Body, with an indwelling Spirit, containing and imparting grace, as the instrument of the Author and Giver of grace.

It is proper, however, to proceed still further, by proving that the New Testament teaches the Catholic doctrine respecting the special sacraments of the gospel. That baptism is the sacrament of regeneration is a distinctly Catholic doctrine and pre-supposes the Catholic Idea of the Church. It is true that Luther patched this doctrine together with the real presence, into his crazy-quilt; but it is incompatible with the pseudo-evangelical scheme of Christianity.

Those Protestants who really hold it have taken a long step backward toward Catholicism. The evidence from the New Testament that men are spiritually regenerated in the sacrament of baptism is abundant. The Lord said to Nicodemus: "Unless one be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."¹

St. Peter, in his Pentecostal sermon, exhorted his hearers: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."² Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus: "Rise up, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."³

St. Paul writes to the Colossians: "In whom also ye are circumcised, with a circumcision not made with the hand, in the stripping off of the body of the flesh, but with the circumcision of

¹ St. John, iii., 5.² Acts, ii., 38.³ Acts, xxii., 16.

Christ: Buried with him in baptism, in whom also ye are risen again by the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."¹

To Titus: "According to His mercy He saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, . . . that being justified by His grace, we may be heirs according to hope of eternal life."²

The analogy of faith requires that there should be other sacraments signifying and conferring grace. And the other six are mentioned in the New Testament. The Holy Eucharist is not disputed, and Order has been already proved. Confirmation is connected with baptism as one of the first elements of the Christian religion, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Wherefore omitting to speak of our commencement in Christ let us proceed to more perfect things, not laying again a foundation of penance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms (*i.e.*, Jewish ablutions, John's baptism, and Christian baptism as distinguished from these), and of the laying on of hands (when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit, he says, came upon them)³ and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."⁴

The Sacrament of Penance. "Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins ye shall retain they are retained."⁵

Extreme Unction. "Is any man sick among you? Let him call in the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."⁶

Matrimony. "This mystery is great, but I say in Christ and in the Church."⁷

The ministers of Christ in the apostolic order and succession are the "stewards of the mysteries," commissioned not by the people but by God; the guardians and administrators of the sacraments and of the grace contained in them. Through communion with them, their lawful pastors, the faithful are united in one Church, in faith, discipline, and the supernatural life of Christ.

This mediatorial office of the ministers of Christ constitutes their generic character of priesthood, and is the foundation of all its specific attributes. In the more strict and proper sense, the specific essence of priesthood is in a divine commission to offer sacrifice.

Among all the seven sacraments the chief and most excellent is the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, which is also the one Sacrifice of the New Law. In this sacrament, Jesus Christ makes His body and blood really and substantially present under the species

¹ II. ii., 11, 12.

² iii., 5-7.

³ *St. Chrys. in loc.*

⁴ vi., 1, 2.

⁵ St. John, xx., 23.

⁶ Ep. St. James, v., 14.

⁷ Eph., v., 32.

of bread and wine, as a sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, expiation, and impetration, in which all the merits of the Sacrifice of the Cross are offered up to God and applied to men.

In the communion, it is also the spiritual sustenance of Christians, the source of grace and life, the very bread of angels, and the earnest of immortality. The highest act of the Christian priesthood is therefore the consecration of the Holy Eucharist. No man is capable of performing this act without a special communication of the sacerdotal character of Jesus Christ. And herein lies the special necessity of the Sacrament of Order, and of the positive law of Jesus Christ, confiding the power of ordination to the Apostles and their successors. It is also true of all the other sacraments except baptism and matrimony that their validity depends upon the ordination of the minister. No ordination of priests has ever been recognized as valid in the Church except ordination by a bishop, himself empowered by a special consecration received through an unbroken series of bishops from the Apostles and Jesus Christ. Hence the absolute necessity of the apostolic succession in the episcopate, not merely to the well-being and good order of the Church, but to its very being. The Church subsists chiefly in the priesthood, and the priesthood in the bishops, who have received the plenitude of the priesthood, and who are themselves bound together in one under their supreme head, the Bishop of the Catholic Church.

The priesthood is especially correlated to sacrifice, and the Catholic doctrine of the sacrificial nature of the sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist is principally derived from the dogma of the Real Presence. It is superfluous to cite the passages from the New Testament in which this dogma is declared. There is no dogma of faith more clearly and explicitly revealed than this one, in the Written Word of God. And the numerous works of able and learned authors fully treating of the doctrine are so easily accessible that there is no occasion for giving in this article even the briefest epitome of their arguments.

There are, however, some more general considerations in respect to the Catholic doctrine of priesthood and sacrifice in the New Law of the Christian Church which we will briefly present. The foundation of the whole doctrine lies in the dogma of faith, that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, the Mediator of the New Covenant, is a Priest *forever*, after the order of Melchisedech. For this reason, He must, besides fulfilling all the other functions of a Mediator, continually offer a sacrifice like that of Melchisedech, viz., a *Minchah*, the elements of which are Bread and Wine. To this end, He must have human priests who represent His person on the earth. In the epistle to the Hebrews the faithful are

exhorted to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus."¹ Those two titles are connected as correlated terms, expressing the Mission of the Son in His human nature from the Father. St. Peter and his twelve colleagues in the apostleship received a communication of this same mission. Whatever Jesus Christ was by virtue of this mission, they were, in a lesser and subordinate sense, as vicars and representatives of Christ, representing God before the people, and the people before God. That is they were mediators, through whom Christ exercised His mediatorial office. As Mediator He is Prophet, Priest and King; and so they also, must have a delegated prophetic, priestly and ruling office in the Church. Their commission was given to them as perpetual, lasting until the end of the world. And therefore, although certain additional and temporary gifts were granted to the original Apostles and to many other individuals among the primitive clergy and laity, the essential endowments of the priesthood, as well as the essential Christian graces, were made transmissible along the line of apostolic succession. All this is explicitly and abundantly taught, in the New Testament, as Catholic writers, and to a certain extent Protestant writers of the highest reputation, have very fully and unanswerably proved.

There is, therefore, a perpetual priesthood in the Catholic Church, for offering sacrifice, administering sacraments, preaching the word of God, and governing the Christian society.

It is often objected that the terms of sacerdotal and liturgical usage in the Greek language were not adopted by the apostolic writers of the books of the New Testament, to designate offices and ordinances in the Christian Church. Certainly, there is much in the silence, the obscurity, the omissions, and in general the negative characteristics of the New Testament which surprises us; and would not only surprise but bewilder us if we regarded the Bible as the only and the proximate rule of faith. The difference in phraseology between the sacred writings of the New Testament and the writings of St. Cyprian, for instance, is very marked; and we can perceive a gradual change in ecclesiastical style during the two centuries between him and St. Paul.

A prejudice and objection against the Catholic doctrine from this source arises only from a superficial view of the text of the New Testament, and of the earliest Christian writers. It disappears upon a closer examination.

There was a reason why the Lord should cover the mysteries contained in His person and His work with a veil which was only partially and gradually lifted during the earliest period of the

¹ iii., 1.

manifestation of the truth and grace of the Gospel to the world. The clear manifestation of the high-priesthood of Jesus Christ, involving the abrogation of the Aaronic priesthood, was not made in the earliest writings of the New Testament. It appears first with great distinctness in the Epistle to the Hebrews, at a time when Judaism was approaching its last agony and the destruction of Jerusalem was near at hand. Even in this epistle, it is the priesthood of Jesus Christ as anointed to fulfil the work of redemption by the bloody sacrifice of the Cross, the one and only oblation of its kind, once offered, which is alone the topic of a clear and full exposition. The topic of the continual, unbloody sacrifice of the New Law, and the priesthood in the Christian Church, is not treated, but is left covered by the veil which shrouded the Christian mysteries from the profane and the uninitiated. That economy and principle of reserve in communicating religious knowledge which the Lord practised during his personal ministry, was continued by the apostles. The discipline of the secret was observed even down to the time of Tertullian, Origen and St. Cyprian. It was specially enforced in respect to the rites and ceremonies of the Holy Eucharist. Besides all the reasons which persuaded the apostles to establish and observe this discipline in general, there were particular motives for hiding their claims to sacerdotal and pontifical prerogatives under modest and unassuming titles. If St. James had openly proclaimed that the Temple with its hierarchy, its sacrifices, its Paschal and Pentecostal feasts had been set aside in favor of a New Law; that the Cœnaculum was the true temple, where the Lamb of God was mystically offered on a Christian altar by Himself as the real High Priest in Jerusalem of a new Covenant, He could not have remained one day in Jerusalem. If St. Peter and the Apostles had assumed high-sounding titles like those of Jewish and Pagan pontiffs, and bidden open defiance to the chiefs of the national religions, the fury of persecution would have been sooner and more violently enkindled, and only an immediate and irresistible exercise of omnipotence could have prevented the strangling of the infant Church in its cradle.

As the hidden significance and power of Christianity by degrees revealed itself, the imperial monster began to fear it, and a Decius could say that he dreaded the succession of a new Bishop of Rome more than the appearance of a rival claimant to the throne. Christianity came upon the arena in due course of events to contend for the dominion of the world. And when, by degrees, its doctrines and institutions became more publicly known, Christian writers naturally fell into the use of those Greek and Latin terms which were consecrated by long custom to express elements common to all religions.

There are not wanting, however, hints, allusions, and occasional expressions in the sacred writings which are like rifts in the veil which the discipline of the secret hung over the sacred mysteries of the Christian religion, its sacerdotal functions and holy rites of worship. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus Christ is declared to be, not only a Priest, inasmuch as he offered an atoning sacrifice on the cross, but also "a great Priest over the house of God,"¹ *i.e.* the Church. St. Paul calls Christian believers "a chosen race, a royal priesthood,"² and similar language is used in the Apocalypse. The sacerdotal character of Christ's headship over the Church, imparting a share of His fulness of grace to His members, implies a priesthood *par excellence*, in the principal and ruling members of the body of Christ. St. Paul to the Romans speaks of "the grace which is given me of God, that I should be the minister of Christ Jesus among the Gentiles: ministering the gospel of God, that the oblation of the Gentiles may be made acceptable, and sanctified in the Holy Spirit."³ The significance of this passage is diminished and obscured in the Latin, still more in the English version. The Greek word rendered by "minister" is *λειτουργος*, minister of sacred rites, the word rendered by "sanctificans," and "ministering" is *ιερουροῦν*, enacting as a priest that which the Gospel contains: and the word translated by "oblation" is the purely sacrificial term *προσφορά*.

The direct scope and intent of this passage, no doubt, refers to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the fruits of virtue and piety produced among them are described in metaphorical language borrowed from sacrificial rites. Yet the whole phraseology is sacerdotal and allusive to the Christian Sacrifice and sacraments. Catechumens would not understand more than met the ear. But the initiated would understand what was given in baptism, confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. They would think of the continual approach to the altar to assist at the mysteries and receive communion, by which all their prayers and good works were hallowed and made sacrificial offerings to God through Christ.

When the Hebrew Christians were exhorted: "Having, therefore, brethren, confidence to enter into the sanctuary by the blood of Christ, by the new and living sacrifice way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His own flesh, and having a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in the fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with clean water,"⁴ they understood this in accordance with the teaching they had already received.

¹ x., 21.² Eph. I. Ep., ii., 9.³ xv., 15, 16.⁴ x., 19-22.

We know the Roman tradition derived from St. Peter and St. Paul, and by it we can interpret the hidden meaning of St. Paul, which was perfectly intelligible to the faithful of Rome when his Epistle was read to them or perused devoutly in their private copies. We know the tradition of the Church of Jerusalem by the Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril. And we can surely infer that those who read the Epistle to the Hebrews understood by the washing in pure water the sacrament of baptism, and that the way of drawing near to Christ was by the sacrament of the altar.

They must have understood the altar of the Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice to be meant in the words of their inspired teacher: "We have an altar (*θυσιαστήριον*, *i. e.*, sacrificatorium) whereof they who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat"; and that the exhortation: "Through Him, therefore, let us offer always a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips celebrating His name," was most perfectly fulfilled by joining in the hymns and prayers of their liturgical worship.¹

The Liturgy is alluded to in the description of an event which took place at Antioch when Paul and Barnabas were sent forth on their great apostolical mission. The Church of Antioch at this early period presented a most interesting spectacle.

St. Peter had previously taken a special and personal oversight of the blooming and flourishing congregation, in which the glorious name of "Christian" first began to be applied to the disciples of Christ; so that the ancient tradition designated him as its first bishop, and the patriarchal dignity which was acquired by Antioch took its first principal motive from its quality as a See of Peter. At the time described by St. Luke, when he begins his history of the long and extensive missionary career of St. Paul, a considerable group of the higher clergy were gathered together in the principal church of the city. The same historian calls them "prophets and teachers."

They were therefore endowed with the extraordinary charismata which were at that time so frequently and abundantly given to the men who were employed in laying the foundations of Christianity. Among those was the gift of prophecy, supernatural illumination in respect to the doctrines of the faith, in respect to the measures to be undertaken in propagating the faith, and, where necessary, foresight of future events.

They were also specially engaged in preaching the Word, for the instruction of the faithful, of catechumens, and of the hearers from among Jews and heathens, who came to get information about

¹ Heb., xiii., 10, 15.

the new religion. It appears that a continual round of exercises of preaching, prayer, religious observances and devotions, accompanied by frequent and strict fasting, was kept up in the church with unusual zeal and fervor.

"Now there were in the church, which was at Antioch, prophets and teachers, among them Barnabas, and Simon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manahen, who was the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Spirit said to them: 'Set apart for Me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have called them.' And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."¹

Whether this solemn setting apart of Saul and Barnabas was their episcopal consecration, as St. John Chrysostom and many commentators down to Kenrick suppose, or an extraordinary invocation of the Holy Spirit and benediction in His name given by inspiration at the inauguration of the great work of the conversion of the Gentiles, we shall not stop to consider. The special reason we have for citing this passage is found in the phrase "ministering to the Lord."

The Greek word is *leitourgonτων*, which Erasmus translates *sacri-ficantibus*. It is literally translated, *performing liturgical acts*. They were ministering to the Lord, and not merely to the people, performing acts of worship for which they prepared themselves by fasting. The acts of this ministration were a liturgy, *i.e.*, according to the only Christian sense from the beginning until now, a solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist. St. Luke's readers who belonged to the faithful would know by this single word what was done in the church of Antioch, and have a picture before their mind of the sanctuary, the clergy, the rites, and prayers. If we would get their view, we must look back on the scene through the glass of tradition. St. John Chrysostom, in the fifth century, compiled a Liturgy which has been ever since generally used in churches of the Greek Rite. This Liturgy was a recension of the Liturgy of St. Basil of Cæsarea, which was derived from the Liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem. This Liturgy of St. James, also those of St. Peter, St. John and St. Mark, are undoubtedly of apostolic origin, and all agree with each other and with all Catholic liturgies in essentials and in some accidentals, while exhibiting many variations in other minor respects. These liturgies, it is needless to say, explicitly and fully express the doctrines of the real presence and of the sacrificial nature of the Holy Eucharist. From them we know the doctrine and the liturgical practice of the apostolic age.

¹ Acts, xiii., 1-3.

If space permitted, a thorough analysis and exposition of the Epistle of Pope Clement, the First to the Corinthians, written about A.D. 97, would give a complete justification of the thesis of this article. He was a disciple of the Apostles, and lived through the pontificates of the two immediate successors of St. Peter, St. Linus and St. Anacletus, the period which may justly be called the historical blank. The effort to extend this period as far as the year 120 is not well sustained. The most probable date of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius and of his Epistles is the year 107 or thereabouts. From St. Clement and St. Ignatius, survivors of the Apostles and contemporaries with St. John, perfectly familiar therefore with the constitution of the Church and hierarchy during the last thirty years of the first century, we have all the testimony we need to connect the teaching and action of St. Paul with those of St. Polycarp, St. Irenæus and Tertullian. It is impossible to insert a wedge anywhere along the line to break the continuity of the apostolic tradition. The statements of St. Irenæus respecting the apostolic origin and authority of the Catholic episcopate of the second century must be taken as absolutely true and irrefragable.

There is one essential element in the Catholic Idea remaining to be spoken of, viz., the infallible authority of the *Ecclesia Docens*. The doctrine that the teaching of the Church is the proximate rule of faith, having for its object the revealed word of God, both written and unwritten, and its sources in Scripture and Apostolic tradition, is so indissolubly interwoven with the fact and dogma of apostolic succession in the Episcopate that it really does not need, though it is abundantly capable of, separate proof from the New Testament.

The Catholic Idea is that the Church is the one institute of salvation. The individual believer receives his life in and through the Church. The radical principle of this life, of justification and sanctification, is faith. Faith must therefore be received from the Holy Spirit through the Church. The faith is one and is the inmost principle,—the vital force of Catholic unity. This unity being primarily instituted in the unity of the hierarchy, the faith of the body of bishops, under their supreme head, that is of the *Ecclesia Docens*, is the rule of the faith of the body of Christian believers.

That the apostles were the *Ecclesia Docens*, that they were infallible in their doctrinal and moral teaching, and that this teaching was the rule of faith to the Church, is unquestionable. This rule must be in some way permanent. The common Protestant doctrine is well known, that, viz., the apostolic teaching was embodied in the books of the New Testament, which, together with the

books contained in the Jewish Canon of Holy Scripture, became the proximate, permanent and only rule of faith for all Christian believers to the end of time. It is one of the surprising phenomena of history that such a doctrine has found a wide acceptance. It is incredible, on the face of it, that the apostles left such a rule of faith to the Church of future ages. But, supposing that this had been their intention and the will of God, it is plain that they must have given a canon of the Scriptures of both Testaments: *i.e.*, St. John must have done so, or at least have added his own writings to the catalogue of canonical books. Besides, considering what the Bible actually is, and how impossible it would be for all the faithful to take their faith at first hand from the whole miscellaneous collection of inspired writings, it would seem that an inspired compendium of its divine doctrines and precepts must have been published, with a strict command that it should be read by all who could read, and taught orally to all others, as a condition of church-fellowship.

In point of fact there is not the slightest indication either in the New Testament or in the early ecclesiastical writers of any change of the rule of faith from a living, teaching authority to a collection of inspired writings. The commission of teaching given to the Apostles, like the commission of government and administration of sacraments, is given without any limitation of time and place, as perpetual and universal. It is, therefore, a commission to themselves and their successors forever.

The First Epistle of St. John, which was probably addressed about the year 92 to the bishops of Asia Minor as an introduction to his gospel, gives the final apostolic declaration concerning the rule of faith.

“We are of God. He who knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not; in this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”¹ St. John was the only Apostle living at this time. The only authoritative teachers whom he could have meant to associate with himself were the bishops whom he was addressing and other Catholic bishops.

Thirty years before this time, St. Paul addresses St. Timothy, the chief among these same bishops of Asia Minor, as one to whom the apostolic commission of teaching had been imparted. The rule which he is to follow is the apostolic teaching which he received from St. Paul, and which he is to commit to all those whom he ordains to the episcopal office. “O Timothy, keep the deposit Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me. And the things which thou hast heard from me through many

¹ 1 Ep., iv., 6.

witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also."¹

In connection with these and other passages presenting the doctrine of the living teacher as the proximate rule of Catholic faith, and the tradition of the unwritten word as one part of the remote rule, there is a most interesting and important text concerning Holy Scripture as another part of the same rule.

"Continue then in the things which thou hast learned and which are committed to thee, knowing from whom thou hast learned them. And because from infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which can instruct thee to salvation by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture divinely inspired is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in justice."²

This is one of the few passages in the apostolic writings in which the inspiration of Holy Scripture is clearly and explicitly declared. We may infer that St. Paul included New Testament Scriptures with those of the Old Testament as divinely inspired, since St. Peter classes the epistles of St. Paul with the other Scriptures. But for a positive, categorical declaration of this doctrine we depend on tradition and the decision of the Church, as well as for the complete and certain canon of the books of both Testaments. That inspiration ceased, and the divine revelation was finally completed when the last Apostle died, we know only by the teaching of the Church. In this way only we know, therefore, what gifts of the Spirit were personal to the Apostles, and what was the limitation of the apostolic office and commission which they transmitted to their successors. The Apostles alone were founders of the Church, because it could be founded only once. Their institution of sacraments, their constitution of the hierarchy, their promulgation of the faith, their deliverance of revealed and inspired truths orally and in writing, were accomplished once for all as a permanent and unchangeable work. But as they must necessarily have successors in government, administration of sacraments, preaching of the gospel to all mankind, so the duty and the power of preserving, interpreting and teaching the divine dogmas and precepts of the Christian Revelation must have been handed down to these successors. Infallibility is necessarily implied in the existence of this duty and power of the *Ecclesia Docens*, i.e., the Catholic Episcopate.³

It is an essential part of the Catholic idea that the supreme apostolate was given to St. Peter and the supreme episcopate to

¹ II., iii., 14-16.

² I Ep., vi., 20; II, i.; 13, ii., 2.

³ See F. Lyons' *Christianity and Infallibility*, ch. iii. New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 15 E. 16th Street.

his successors in the Roman See, which is, in a supereminent sense, the Holy and Apostolic See of the Catholic Church.

The first time that the Catholic Church is spoken of in the Gospel is on the memorable occasion when the Lord exacted from St. Peter at Cæsarea-Philippi the confession of His divinity.

"Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." And Jesus answered and said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father, who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven."¹ Comment upon this passage is quite unnecessary and seems only to detract from its force. An intelligent child who knows in a general way the history and the claims of the Roman See can perceive that it can possibly have but one meaning. It is quite enough by itself, without citing the other passages of the same import from the New Testament. It sums up the whole Catholic doctrine of the Church.

The Catholic idea in the New Testament has been presented only by marking some salient points and indicating the lines of an argument which is capable of a much fuller and more complete development. Notwithstanding the great ability and excellence, the learning and conclusive reasoning, of many Catholic works proving all the doctrine of the Church from the Scriptures, this rich mine is by no means exhausted. It is possible and most desirable that new and skilful workmen should bring forth the treasures hidden in these divine Scriptures, and by the aid of all the resources of modern scholarship, illustrate in new methods, adapted to modern wants and conditions, the truths of revelation ever ancient and ever new.

The same may be said of early ecclesiastical history. After all the works of research and historical criticism which have thrown light upon this comparatively obscure period, there still remains a great work to be done in this department. I do not say that this work needs to be begun. Already excellent treatises have appeared in Italy, France and Germany, and their number has constantly increased. Some of these have been translated into English. But our English Catholic literature needs to be enriched, and we need especially to have all that the best scholarship can furnish, both from Scripture and ancient authors, bearing on the

¹ St. Matt., xvi., 16-19.

exposition of all the principal Catholic doctrines, collected, arranged and put in convenient shape for general use, in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

Thorough work, not only in the earliest, but also in the later ecclesiastical history, has been already commenced at the Catholic University. In the present article, and the one preceding, which contain the substance of lectures given during the University Public Course, we have, of course, not pretended to treat our topics exhaustively. To do so would require one or more volumes. But we are confident that we have sufficiently proved that Scriptural and Historical Christianity are identical with each other, and each is identical with Catholicism. These three terms are indissolubly united. The effort to break the historical continuity of Catholicism by finding a foothold in the earliest period of Christianity for that system of pseudo-spiritualism which, for want of a better name, we will call Evangelicalism, has proved an utter failure. In like manner, the endeavor to establish the same on the foundation of Holy Scripture as a so-called Bible-Christianity, has turned out to be futile.

There cannot be a dogmatic Christianity without a tradition correlated to the Holy Scripture, and a doctrinal authority in the Church. The old Protestant orthodoxy has ceased to put forth the appearance of a systematic theology, presenting a strong front and array for defence or aggression.

It is true, that it still counts able and scholarly men, who produce works which are full of learning, and not wanting in sound reasoning and valuable instruction in relation to many matters of natural and revealed religion. But, to a great extent, the best of these works are written in defence of facts, principles, truths, and ideas, which are substantially Catholic.

When it comes to a systematic and definite exposition and defence of the proper differential Protestant theory of religion, as opposite to the Catholic idea, we find little except silence, evasion, ignoring of Catholic arguments, and a petty criticism which picks flaws in exegesis or evidence, and tries to hide in all the obscure caves it can find. Indeed, by common consent, the day of the old Protestant orthodoxy is over. Its dogmatism is melting away into sentimentalism. Just as the old Eastern empire was invaded and vanquished by the Saracens, its ecclesiastical domain is melting away before the incursion of rationalism. The Bible, which Chillingworth called "The Religion of Protestants," is being torn in pieces by its former worshippers. Devout believers in the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Bible have really no refuge to flee into but the old Catholic Church, from which they are estranged through the crime of the original schismatics of the

sixteenth century. For three hundred years they have been feeding on the crumbs falling from the table of the children of the household of God. The successors of these destroyers of faith are striving now to drive them out from even the courtyard of the Church into the streets. They are welcome to the banqueting-hall, and to the well-provided table of the children, where the bread of angels is blessed and distributed by the priests of the Lord.

There is no refuge in rationalism. It is not better, but rather worse, than old Protestantism, because it is more logical and consistent. The better the logic, the worse and falser the conclusions, when the premises are bad and false. It is all destructive, and its final end is destruction. It can originate and construct nothing whatever, much less anything better than old, genuine Christianity. Christianity, without the divinity of Christ, is not worth having. Without Christianity, Theism and Natural Religion cannot stand. Believe in God, and you must believe in Christ; believe in Christ, and you must believe in the Church. Reject the Church, and you must reject the true Christ of the Gospel, God and Man, the Redeemer of the World, the Crucified, Risen Lord of Heaven and Earth. Reject the Son, and you must deny the Father, the Creator, the Giver of Immortality. The quicksands of agnosticism, universal skepticism, pessimism, nihilism, will swallow you up. You can be saved from this dismal catastrophe only by inconsistency. A happy inconsistency, indeed, but still an inconsistency. If you would have a religion which is at once rational, historical, and Scriptural, which is the genuine, authentic religion of Christ, you must embrace the Christianity of the Catholic Church, for there is no other which satisfies the demands of reason and of faith.

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