

stead He promised the grace of the Holy Spirit. For He, said Jesus, will call to your mind all that I have said to you" (St Chrysostom Hom. in Matth., i, 2) Christ left behind Him no written document for them. He commanded them to spread His doctrine by speaking and preaching. How, said St Paul, could people believe in Jesus unless they should hear about Him? and how could they hear about Him without a preacher? How shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe Him of Whom they have not heard? *And how shall they hear without a preacher?* "Rom., x, 14-15). To found churches and convert unbelievers a mere book would never have sufficed. By their burning words and heavenly miracles, the Apostles scattered the prejudices ingrained in the minds of their hearers. St. Paul praises the Corinthians *because they had held fast to the traditions that he had handed down to them.* "Now I praise you, brethren, that in all things you are mindful of me, and keep my ordinances as I have delivered them to you" (1. Cor., xi, 2). He entreats the Christians of Thessalonica to *hold fast to the traditions they had received, whether by word of mouth or by epistle* (II. Thessal., ii, 15). Writing to Timothy, he says: "Hold the *form of sound words which thou hast heard from me*" (II. Tim., i, 13). Note well also that preaching nowhere began with epistles; they were intended to supplement preaching or encourage certain good works. The Apostles, it is true, commanded their epistles to be read during divine service and to be sent to the Churches, but they never established a Christian community by writing, the only exception being the epistle to the Romans which was addressed by St. Paul to a church not founded by him. The Gospels were not written with a view of giving a complete account of the life of our Saviour, but to serve as a basis for preaching and instruction. "The Gospel concerning Christ," says Weiss, "had little in common with the early life of Jesus" (Weiss, *Leben Jesu*, i, 17). The Gospel was intended to consolidate the faith which had already been preached. *The Church was not founded by Holy Scriptures but by the Living Word.* The Bible, and the Bible only, is a principle both unbiblical and unhistorical, as is evident from the famous disputation between Lessing and Goze. In the days of the Apostles the Scriptures had not been collected so as to form a complete book. Had they wished the Bible to be the rule of faith alter them, how is it they did not see that it be carefully collected and revised by their authority? They transmitted the doctrine of Christ as they had received it by Oral Tradition, as history testifies. St. Clement says:—"The Apostles, sent by God, preached the Gospel to us" (S. Clem. Ep. ad Corinth), and then the same father says: "but they ordained *bishops and deacons*, who were likewise to work in the Holy Spirit" (Clem. Rom. i., 14). Papias, who was a disciple of St. John, says that "the Apostles received their doctrine from the lips of our Lord, and handed it down by word of mouth" (Eusebius H. E. iii., 39-40). St. Irenaeus, writing to his friend Florinus, tells him how St. John made known to him and his other disciples the doctrine and miracles of Christ by words of mouth. The apostolic Fathers quoted the Scriptures mostly from memory, or rather from tradition. St. Justin, a learned philosopher and apologist, says: "The spoken word, preaching, was the ordinary medium in his time for teaching and converting" (S. Just. Apol. i., 67). Ecclesiastical tradition in the early ages was the sole judge of controversies in matters of faith. All heretics quoted this Scriptures in favour of their tenets; the Gnostics, the Savellians, the Arians, the Nestorians, the Pelagians, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, etc. St. Augustine, the greatest genius perhaps Christianity ever had, says: "That the Scriptures are not wanted, except to convince others" (S. Aug. De Doct. Christ i., 39). Apostolic tradition was the means to plant the faith; it alone gives us the key to the true meaning of the Scriptures. The Church admits of none but apostolical traditions, which are absolutely certain, according to the rules I have given in my lecture on that subject. Tertullian challenges heretics to settle points of faith from Scriptures (Tert. De Prescript. C., xv. and xxxvii.). Heretics use the Scriptures to find out a justification of their opinion, not to find out what the Apostles taught and the early Christians believed. The Greek Church, on this point, agrees perfectly with the Latin Church. To be brief, we shall mention in support of this: Clement of Alexandria (1. Tim. vi., 20) "We must hold fast to the Church's teaching," he says, "which has come down in an unbroken line from the Apostles. Only that is to be believed which deflects not in any way from ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition" (In Hiern. xxi., 2). Can anything more precise, more definite, be expected to show that the Bible and the Bible alone is not our rule of faith? The objection of my rev. friend, that St. John in Apocalypse was commanded to write the visions he had and the prophecies he received is not to the point. Prophecies have to be written that their fulfilment may be ascertained, and certainly it would be a crime to alter or modify them in any way; yet after this quotation, and the text of St. Matthew condemning the false traditions of the Pharisees, he cries out, as if he had achieved a victory: "So much for tradition. It is put out of court by Christ Himself" (Matth. xv., 6-9; Eph. iii., 1). The Catholic Church, like her Divine Master, condemns false, uncertain traditions. Does that show that there are no true traditions at all? Some give wrong interpretations

of the Scriptures, is there not also a true one? If my friend knows this, how can he be a lover of truth, in speaking as he did, to prejudice his hearers against the Holy Catholic Church, which he would admire and defend if he were to study attentively and try to get rid of his preconceived ideas. The instruction of Catechumens did not begin by the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, but with an explanation by word of mouth taken from the Apostles' Creed, as may be seen from the writings of the Fathers on Catechumens (Aug. Ep. Fund. C. v.; Damascen. De Imag.). St. Augustine rightly said: "I would not believe the Gospel, unless the authority of the Church move me thereto." The early Christians never believed in the doctrine of private judgment; they, indeed, believed in the Scriptures, but interpreted by tradition as approved by the Church. Whenever the Holy Fathers exhort the faithful to read the Scriptures, it is always with the explanations of the Church and the Fathers from apostolical tradition. In the first centuries only the priests and bishops had a copy of the Scriptures, which they preserved with the greatest care, and used to instruct the people. How could Christians have formed their belief from the reading of the Bible? How could the millions who could not read have saved their souls, if the Bible and the Bible only were our guide to salvation? Let my reverend friend think of this, and try to reconcile it with his favourite fiction of private judgment. How can we know better the teaching of Jesus Christ than by the writings of the converts made by the apostles, the prayer books, hymns and customs of the primitive Christians, who had been trained by the Apostles or their immediate successors? If, in all places, they are found to agree, is it not a proof of apostolical institution? The rule of the commonitorium of St. Vincent of Lerins is a golden one to discriminate true from spurious traditions. "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus traditum est." We are to admit what has always been admitted by all and everywhere from the apostolical times. Hear the great Bishop of Hippo: "That which the entire Church firmly holds, and has not been introduced by any council, but has always been held, is most justly believed to have been handed down from the Apostles" (S. Aug. De Bapt. iv., 24). The various creeds which have been made from time to time are a clear proof that the Holy Scriptures alone are not sufficient, without an authority, for our spiritual guidance. You could never know which are the true Scriptures without tradition. How do you know that this Gospel is of St. Matthew, that one of St. John, this epistle of St. Peter or of St. Paul? Simply by tradition, because it is quoted by the early apostolic Fathers; because, in all places, they were attributed to the authors whose name they bear, because the various copies and translations, when collated, substantially agree; what is all this but tradition? If you want to know the meaning of a difficult text, an obscure passage, what others means can you employ but to study carefully how the primitive Christian doctors explained it, how the bishops assembled together, after a conscientious examination of the apostolical tradition, defined it? That is, without tradition and the authority of the Church, the Scriptures would be simply incomprehensible? How could quarrels about the Bible be settled? How could errors be condemned? Why, those hundreds of jarring, contradictory sects, each holding to its opinion, each pretending to be right, each quoting the Scriptures in its favour, and denouncing as wrong those who differ from it? Is not this lamentable state of things the result of private judgment? In everything else, we consult the most learned doctors and scientists, the most reliable authorities; why are we so unwise and blind in spiritual matters? Let us open our eyes, let us get rid of our prejudices, let us study the writings of the saints and doctors, the definitions of the Church and we shall see all our principal doubts explained and our difficulties will vanish away. The Reverend J. Dickson, being a pastor of souls, should know all this, yet, he says with a boldness, an effrontery which cannot be too strongly stigmatised, "I RELY ACCORD TO EVERY MAN THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT—without that, preaching, and reasoning, and religion would be a farce." The contrary is the truth. "With private judgment preaching is an absurdity and a contradiction, and religion a mockery, a comedy of errors, a farce."

### The Canon of Scriptures, the Vulgate of St. Jerome and the Douay Version.

The Reverend J. Dickson rejects what he calls "The Apocryphal Books of Scriptures." Speaking of them, he says: "We assert that the Apocryphal Books are of no more value in establishing moral truth than Homer's Iliad, the Milesian tales, or Gulliver's travels." We have the word of Reverend Dickson for it. The Apocryphals, as he calls them, have no more value to establish moral truth than Homer's Iliad, the Milesian tales, or Gulliver's travels. We shall see the truth of this sweeping impious assertion; yet he declared to us at the beginning his sole aim was to honour truth, glorify God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Before answering him, let me explain what is meant by the Canon of Scriptures and how it was formed.

#### CANON OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The word Canon signifies Rule. It is the rule to discern the genuine from the doubtful or spurious Scriptures. When