

THE CLAIMS  
OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH:

A LETTER  
TO THE PARISHIONERS OF SAINT PAUL'S,  
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA.

BY EDMUND MATURIN, M. A.,  
(FORMERLY CURATE OF THE PARISH.)



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## A LETTER, &c.

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MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

You are all aware of the circumstance of my recent conversion to the faith of the Catholic Church, and I have no doubt that the intelligence has been received with much surprise among you, from your knowledge of my former views and principles as a Minister of the Gospel of Christ. Many of you will probably think that, in taking that step, I have been under the influence of some extraordinary delusion; and it will perhaps occur to you, that it can only be accounted for by supposing, either that I have been carried away by some sudden conviction of mind or excitement of feeling, or else, that I have been guilty of a long continued course of hypocrisy and dissimulation, while officiating in the ministry of the Church of England. I trust I shall be able to satisfy you that this explanation is incorrect; and though it is not my object to vindicate myself so much as to defend the cause of truth, yet I feel that I cannot avoid some personal allusions to my own experience, and that, in justice to yourselves, as well as to me, I am bound to give you some account of my own mental trials, and of the long and painful course of discipline by which I have been led to embrace the communion of the Holy Catholic Church of Christ.

All Christians have their own peculiar trials—the

nature of which depends very much on the mental constitution of individuals, or their external circumstances in life. Some of them relate chiefly to speculative difficulties in religion, while those of most persons consist more in the ordinary temptations of the world. Mine have been to a great extent of the former description and especially with reference to the great controversy connected with the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. And yet, all my connexions and associations of kindred and education were essentially Protestant. I was born of Protestant parents, instructed in Protestant principles, educated at a Protestant University, ordained in a Protestant Church, and settled in Protestant Parishes, in co-operation with Protestant Clergymen and Protestant congregations. My ancestors were Protestant Huguenots, expelled from France on account of their profession of the Protestant religion, and all my forefathers, in each successive generation, were Protestant ministers. Under these circumstances, you will perceive at once, that my Protestant prejudices might be reasonably presumed to be deeply rooted in my nature, and that it must require a very strong and overwhelming amount of evidence, applied by the Spirit of God to my heart, to enable me to see my way clearly through all the mists of darkness and error with which I was surrounded, to the light of God's everlasting truth, and to submit myself entirely to its heavenly guidance. And accordingly, I had completed my collegiate studies in the University of Dublin, before my mind was troubled with any doubts as to the true position of the Church of England, or the real character of the Protestant Reformation. In the year 1840, I succeeded in obtaining the highest Theological prize in the University, the Regius Professor's First Premium in Divinity, and the course of my studies on that occasion

gradually prepared my mind for the more full and impartial investigation of the claims of the Catholic Church. The progress of conviction since that time has been very slow and gradual, but at the same time, sure and certain. I believe it was the study of Ecclesiastical History which first contributed to give a new direction to my thoughts, and materially tended to modify my former views on the subject of religion. I confess that, till then, my acquaintance with the general facts of Church History had been very slight and superficial, and I was particularly careful to derive all my information on the subject from the statements of Protestant Divines, as I had no confidence in the representations of Catholic historians. I was soon brought to the conviction, that, whatever might be the errors of the Church of Rome, she was not so corrupt, even on Protestant principles, as she was generally represented to be, and that, though she appeared to have made, in some way, many unscriptural additions to the Primitive Faith, yet she still maintained the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, though apparently distorted and obscured by their mixture with human Traditions. However, having been led to form this favorable opinion of the whole system, I was not quite satisfied with this conclusion—I felt the immense importance of the subject, when I considered that the Church of Rome claims to be the only true Church of Christ, while Protestants themselves admitted that she still held the essential doctrines of the Gospel as the foundation of all her teaching. I thought it my duty, therefore, to pursue the inquiry further, and to examine attentively the whole controversy with all possible impartiality. I now wished to know what the Catholic Church really was, not from the accounts of her enemies, but according to her own representation of it—and I therefore procured and studied the principal

standard works which contain the authorized formularies of the Church, both with reference to Christian doctrine and public worship. Of these, the most important, which engaged my attention, consisted of the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, together with the Roman Missal. These were my constant companions—a great part of them both was committed to memory—and though I could not fully approve of all their statements, yet I felt that my mind was now, in a great measure, divested of all its former prejudices—and from them I derived a clear and comprehensive view of the Catholic system in all its proportions—which seemed more beautiful, when seen reflected from the light of Christian antiquity, to which my studies had previously been directed. Yet, though I could not help admiring its beauty and consistency, still I was not prepared fully to submit my understanding and reason to its claims—it seemed to me like some magnificent structure erected without a sure foundation—and though I could not easily account for its existence, I was not yet convinced of its divine origin as a whole—and therefore I thought it my duty still to remain in the profession of the Protestant religion, till it should please God to give me clearer light on the subject. Such were the general impressions of my mind nearly eighteen years ago, in the early part of the year 1841. But my peace was broken—my soul was restless—my mind was unhappy. I was visited with sickness, and I dreaded the thoughts of dying in a state of doubt and uncertainty. It pleased God to restore me to health—but my former difficulties still remained. I could find little comfort in the Protestant worship, and I earnestly longed for a more settled faith and a more perfect assurance in the way of salvation. I was in possession of a copy of the first edition of the Rhemish Testa

ment of 1582, with all the original Notes of that celebrated version; and I well recollect that those Notes alternately perplexed and exasperated me, though they still failed in bringing full conviction to my mind. But my former opinions were now completely shaken, and though I certainly had great difficulty in arriving at any satisfactory conclusion, yet I felt a deep interest in all that related to the Catholic Church, and I found it impossible to divert my mind from dwelling on the subject. I resolved to proceed with the inquiry, until my views should be fully matured, though as yet I had no serious intention of joining the Church of Rome. I was anxious to become more fully acquainted with the practical working of the system, and to have an opportunity of witnessing the performance of its public service. Accordingly, at last I ventured to act upon this desire, and, with a feeling of devout curiosity, I attended High Mass for the first time on the 12th December, 1841, in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Marlborough street, Dublin. This event constituted a new era in my religious history. I was deeply impressed with the solemnity of the service, the splendor of the ceremonies, and the devotion of the worshippers. Yet still I continued in the same uncomfortable state, month after month—reading, praying, doubting and believing—without being able to come to any final determination. I feared lest, after all, my renunciation of Protestantism might be only a delusive work of the imagination and fancy, instead of the full conviction of the mind and heart. Accordingly I still hesitated before taking so decisive a step. I set apart the whole season of Lent, 1842, for a special examination of the subject, with fasting and prayer. It was at this time that I first directed my attention to the study of Cardinal Wiseman's excellent "Lectures on the prin-

cial Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church." I read them with great interest—my mind was still further disturbed—the reasoning appeared to be perfectly conclusive, and the whole train of argument seemed to be quite unanswerable. Still, however, I felt a strong aversion to the full adoption of certain views and practices. I could not reconcile them with my own interpretation of Scripture—I could not find any clear evidence of their existence in the Primitive Church, and thus my attention was engaged with the consideration of *each particular point*, in successive order, instead of the *one great fundamental principle* on which the whole system depends, and with which all the articles of the Catholic Faith are inseparably connected. Yet I can clearly remember, that even at this time, I had almost arrived at the general conclusion, which ought to have been quite sufficient to settle the question. It was simply this—that *the whole work of the Reformation was an act of Schism*; and therefore, that it was the duty of Protestants to *return* to the unity of the Church from which they were *separated* by the events of that unhappy period. I felt, too, that the defence of the Reformation must rest entirely on the proof of the supposed *errors and corruptions* of the Church of Rome—and that this proof could only be established by means of *two principles*, which, however familiar to Protestants, had never been admitted by the Christian Church—one of these being the *complete sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures* in all things relating to faith and morals, and the other being the *right of private judgment* to interpret Scripture according to the opinion of each individual. So far I had proceeded in my inquiry at this time; illustrating in my own case the difference that exists between the successive mental processes of *argument—impression—conviction*, and *per-*



*suasion.* I was "almost, but not altogether persuaded" to be a Catholic, satisfied that there was something wrong about Protestantism, but not quite sure that everything was right about Catholicism—while the claims of the Greek and other Oriental Churches seemed to present a further difficulty in the way of my final decision. I remember, about that time, meeting in Dublin with an Eastern ecclesiastic of the Greek Church, Athanasius, Archbishop of Tripoli, in the Patriarchate of Antioch, and I recollect that, in the course of conversation with him, while dwelling on the respective claims of the Greek and Latin Churches, we both fully agreed in the conclusion, that whatever right the Bishop of Rome might have to an Universal Supremacy by virtue of the promise of our Lord to the Apostle Peter, the same right must equally belong to his own Metropolitan, the Patriarch of Antioch, since it is admitted that St. Peter was Bishop of Antioch before he was Bishop of Rome. It did not occur to me, however, to consider the Greek Church as involved in schism, as I was not aware that she had ever formally acknowledged the Supremacy of the Pope before the period of the disruption in the 9th Century, and therefore I could only regard the two Churches as separated from each other by the want of Christian communion, without determining which of them was guilty of the act of separation. Still, however, I felt that there was a strong opposition between the Primitive Church of Christ, and the modern Church of Rome; and though the proofs of this opposition were almost entirely of a *negative* character, still they seemed to me sufficient, not perhaps to justify the Reformers, but to justify myself in continuing a member of the Reformed Church of England, without making myself responsible for the events of the Reformation itself. I felt the truth of the common remark, that

it frequently pleases God to make use of evil men for accomplishing His own purposes, and that, whatever might have been the character and motives of the various individuals employed as instruments for effecting that work, their designs were wisely overruled in promoting a revival of true religion in the world. Besides, I thought that the case of the Church of England was quite different from that of the Reformed Churches on the Continent, inasmuch as it seemed to be the act of an independent National Church, rejecting a foreign usurpation, and retaining the Apostolical succession in her Bishops and Clergy, conducted, not by the revolutionary proceedings of any private individuals, but with the consent of the highest Ecclesiastical authorities; and thus it appeared to me that, with all her defects and irregularities, she had transmitted to us the ancient Catholic faith in sufficient conformity with the laws of the Catholic Church. I need scarcely remark, that I now feel these grounds to be entirely contrary to the truth, as they are certainly gross perversions of all the facts of history. And yet I was quite aware of the difficulty, that if the Reformed *doctrines* were *true in England*, they must also be *true in Germany*, France and Switzerland, (so far as they agreed,) and that the English Reformation could not be properly defended without the recognition of the Protestant Churches on the Continent, as the question evidently related not to the *mode of conducting* the Reformation, but to the *truth of the doctrines* established by it. It was, however, chiefly by these evasions that I endeavored to get rid of my own individual responsibility by throwing it upon the Church to which I belonged—and in this way I tried to satisfy myself with remaining a Protestant. I was *perplexed*—but not fully *convinced*—I was quite satisfied with the general truth of the

great principles of Catholic unity—while I still practically rejected them, by admitting doubts as to the truth of particular statements of doctrine held by the Catholic Church. I must confess, however, that after all, I cannot now give any satisfactory explanation of the reasons why I did not then become a Catholic, except the want of a more full conviction of the divine origin of the Church. It is, indeed, one of the greatest mysteries in the dispensations of Providence in my past life, and one which I cannot fully comprehend to this moment. It may, indeed, have been intended, in some way, for the benefit of others, as well as for the trial of my own faith—the difficulties of my own present situation may have been thus designed as the temporal punishment of my sins in delaying so long to obey the voice of God—and though He has led me, in His love and mercy, to the enjoyment of the blessed vision of peace, in His own time and way, yet I cannot but feel that He has appointed this discipline for me, that His grace might shine more brightly in my heart and life, preparing me for all the temptations of my future pilgrimage on earth, and teaching me to remember that “I must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Certainly I felt a strong desire to have all my doubts removed, and to embrace the Catholic faith, if I could do so consistently with my own views of Christian truth, and still I feel that during all my years of separation from the Church, *my heart was essentially Catholic*, while *my mind was accidentally Protestant*—my fervent wishes were in favor of a sure and certain resting place for my weary soul—while I was long prevented from gaining it on account of the peculiar difficulties of my own position. One reason of my reluctance to take the final step was probably my want of a personal acquaintance with Catholics. During all the period referred to, I lived alone in college, I opened

my mind to no one, and I had no aid from human sympathy. There was only one Catholic Priest with whom I was acquainted—he resided in a remote part of the country, in my own native parish, and with him I carried on a correspondence for some time, in the form of an amicable discussion of some of the principal points of controversy. I did not disclose to him my own doubts, but appeared as the advocate of the Protestant side, though in a moderate tone of argument. And here I may mention a circumstance connected with this correspondence, which confirms what I have said as to my own tendencies, even as a controversialist. Several years afterwards, I received a letter from this clergyman, in which he stated his own conviction, together with that of his Bishop, that I would ultimately become a Catholic. And yet that conviction was founded entirely on the *general tone* of the letters which had passed between us, and in which, though arguing *against* the Catholic view, it appears that I gave unconscious evidences of the existence of a Catholic spirit within me. But to proceed with my former narrative. I went on, in the same way, for several months, frequently joining in the services of the Catholic Church, till the end of July, 1842, when I thought I had taken a final farewell of the Roman Church. I felt, indeed, that it was high time to be decided, and accordingly I tacitly decided on remaining where I was. I now yielded to the solicitations of my friends, and determined on receiving Holy Orders in the Church of England. I was, accordingly, ordained Deacon and Priest. I was successively settled in three country Parishes in Ireland, and afterwards among yourselves, as your own Curate, in the Parish of St. Paul's. During all this time, my mind was never entirely free from its former difficulties, though they were seldom of such a nature as to occasion much

serious embarrassment. Still, however, not being fully convinced of the necessity of an infallible guide in religion, I thought that, on the whole, the Church of England was capable of a satisfactory defence, though I could not close my eyes to the great practical evils which existed within her communion, and which appeared to me rather as defects in the external operation of her system, than as fundamental errors the very principles and constitution of the Church. Thus I continued from year to year, with a moderate preference for the English Church, while at the same time I endeavored to preserve the practical consistency of her distinctive principles with the feelings of universal Christian sympathy with reference to all other denominations. I did not express my doubts to any one, because I knew that it would be of no use to myself, as no satisfactory answer could be given to them, and it would be of no use to others, as it would only tend to produce suspicions, to destroy confidence, and to injure my own usefulness. It may be asked, indeed, why did I come to my present decision at this particular time, and not sooner or later? To this I can only reply, that the choice of time is not within my own power, as it depends entirely on circumstances over which I have no control. The Eternal Spirit of God works in the heart of man, just when, where, and as He pleases, according to His own sovereign will, and I feel that it would be the deepest sin in me to resist the influence of the Holy Ghost, just because it may not suit my own time or convenience. The voice of Jesus calls me to follow Him, and I must obey without delay or condition. Faith is the gift of God; and it is not merely the result of intellectual conviction in the mind, but of Spiritual illumination in the heart. And, without entering into any metaphysical speculations on the subject, it must be admit-

ted that there is a peculiar crisis in the mind as well as in the body, which it is beyond the laws of human science fully to explain. I can only say, that Providential circumstances brought this subject before me again with peculiar vividness, within the last few months. I felt strongly impressed with a deep conviction that it was my solemn duty to re-consider the whole controversy with Rome, with all humility and sincerity, and fervent prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and at the same time, with a fixed determination to embrace and to profess that system of religion which should appear, under Divine teaching, to be founded on God's eternal truth.

I had for some time previously, in the course of my studies, been engaged in the historical investigation of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, by endeavoring to trace the origin and progress of each particular dogma, so far as it could be ascertained, in the works of the ancient Fathers of the Church, with the view of settling the real amount of evidence which might justly be claimed for it in primitive antiquity. I was resolved, as far as possible, to take nothing on trust, to reject all second-hand quotations as given by modern writers, and to verify all such references by a personal examination of the original authorities, and though I knew it to be a vast and laborious undertaking, yet I felt that the labor would be amply compensated by a clear and accurate view of the successive developemnts of Christian doctrine, in the various ages of the Church. I need hardly say that this must be a very tedious and uncertain method of arriving at a knowledge of the true doctrines of Christianity, and it is not likely to lead to any very satisfactory results in the end. For it must be remembered that the greatest part of the writings of the first Christians

have been *entirely lost* to us, while at the same time it must not be forgotten that there was *no controversy* in those times on those doctrines which have now unhappily divided the Church in these latter days, and therefore the *silence* of those writers with regard to any particular doctrine or practice, cannot be admitted as a proof that such doctrine or practice was *unknown* to the Church at that time, nor is it possible to make out a chronological table of the progress of Roman doctrine from such imperfect notice, unless we are sure that we now have all the writings of all the primitive Fathers, and that every one of them gives a complete view of the whole Catholic system recognized by the Church, in his own time. This mode of proof would indeed be highly unreasonable and absurd; such omissions prove nothing satisfactory: at the most, the evidence is entirely *negative*—while, on the other hand, the *positive* evidence of every such writer, or the incidental allusion to any one point of Christian doctrine, is of the utmost value, as establishing the *existence* of such a doctrine in the Church of his own age. I do not deny that the historical evidence as to the general reception of the Roman Catholic system in the ancient Church, is perfectly satisfactory, though there may be sometimes a difficulty in tracing up each particular point of faith or practice, by direct testimony, to the times of the Apostles. This, however, is sufficiently accounted for by the circumstances just referred to, and besides, it must be remembered that we Catholics receive them all, *not* because we are satisfied by personal inquiry, of the Apostolic origin of each one of them, (for this is only *historical* or *human* authority,) but because they are all proposed to our faith by the Church of God, and rest upon the same foundation of *Divine* authority. And therefore it has always appeared to me that the Angli-

can Divines, while professing their submission to the ancient Church, are only following an *imaginary* standard, and acting inconsistently with their own principles, as they practically adopt the Protestant *principle* in the investigation of truth, the only difference being, that the *one* apply it to *Scripture*, and the *other* to *Tradition*, but in *each* case interpreted by *private judgment*. They hold, indeed, in a general sense, with the Catholic Church, that Scripture and Tradition, together, form the true rule of faith—but the question is, Who is to *apply* this rule? Surely there is a strange confusion of ideas between a *rule* and a *guide*—for the one is practically useless without the other. Is each one, then, to expound and apply this rule for himself? Then, indeed, he must labor in vain. For if the Apostolical Traditions are to be found in the writings of the Fathers, it must be the work of a life-time to analyse and arrange these voluminous materials, so as to produce a complete and harmonious system of doctrine—and after all, the result is just as much an open question at the end as at the beginning. The tendency of this School is to create a want which it cannot supply. It shows the need of an Infallible Church—but it cannot show where this Church is now to be found on earth. But it will be said that the appeal is made to the Primitive Church. This, however, is much the same as the appeal to the Bible, which can lead to no practical conclusion. For the documents of the Primitive Church will not decide the controversy, which is involved in the same difficulties as before, and therefore this process is still but “the Ideal of a Christian Church,” which has no existence but on paper—it is an appeal from the existing Catholic Church to the “Church of the Fathers”; it is an appeal from a *present, living, speaking* Church, to a *past, dead, and silent* Church, which cannot settle the dispute ;



it is simply an appeal from the *Judge* to the *Law*, when the real question is about the true *interpretation* of the Law, of which the Judge himself is the only authorised expositor ; it is an appeal which has been made by every heresy, in order to evade the definite sentence of the Church by taking refuge under the shelter of the *past* or the *future*, which is of no more practical use than the fanatical appeal to the judgment seat of Christ. The Fathers are dead, and cannot return from heaven to decide our controversies ; but the Church lives for ever, and the only *representative* of the Primitive—or Nicene—or Mediæval Church, is to be found in the Catholic Church of the present day.

And here I may advert to a most erroneous mode of reasoning which is frequently adopted by Protestants, in order to prove the novelty of various Catholic doctrines. It is the confusion between the period of the *first introduction* of any doctrine, and the date of its *formal definition* by the Church. Thus it is found that certain articles of faith were defined by the Pope, or by a General Council approved by the Pope, at some particular period of history, and it is argued from thence that such articles of faith were never held in the Church before that time. Now every one, who has the slightest knowledge of Church history, is fully aware of the fallacy of such a theory. It is well known, that no doctrine was ever publicly defined by the Church, until it had been first publicly denied by heretics—as it was quite unnecessary to promulge a formal explanation of a doctrine which was firmly believed by all Christians—and on this principle we always find that the *later* Creeds were invariably more full and explicit than the *earlier* ones. *not because the Church believed more than formerly, but because heretics believed less*, in rejecting some articles

of the Catholic faith, which had never been denied before. In this sense it is perfectly true, that new doctrines were defined by the Church, and new expressions were introduced into the definitions of General Councils in opposition to new heresies, just as new remedies are constantly employed to meet new diseases in the human system, though the general laws of health remain essentially the same. Thus the First Council of Nice (A. D. 325) defined the Divinity of our Lord, in opposition to the Arian heresy, and adopted a new term to express this doctrine, though it had been always held in the Church before that time. The Second Council of Nice (A. D. 787) defined the proper honor due to holy Images, in opposition to the Iconoclasts, who had introduced a new interpretation of the divine law against Idolatry. In like manner the Fourth Lateran Council (A. D. 1215) defined the doctrine of the Eucharist, by adopting a new term in explanation of the Real Presence, against the heresies of the age, without any change in the doctrine held by the Church from the beginning; the same Council also enforced the practice of Auricular Confession by a new regulation as to its periodical observance—though it would be just as absurd to conclude that the practice itself was new, as the practice of receiving the Holy Communion, which is enforced by the same Canon. On the same principle, the Council of Florence (A. D. 1439) defined the Pope's Supremacy, Seven Sacraments, Purgatory, Canon of Scripture, and other doctrines—with reference to the controversies of the times, and especially with a view to the union with the Greek Church. Would any one infer from this, in opposition to all historical evidence, that these doctrines were unknown to the Church before the date of that Council? And yet the same explanation

applies to all the other definitions of the Church, and especially to the Decrees of the Council of Trent, in opposition to the doctrines of the Protestant Reformers, while the Church has ever since condemned every heresy as it arose—thus zealously guarding the integrity of the Catholic faith against every innovation and perversion of Christian truth.

As to the testimony of the Fathers, it would be easy to select passages from their writings, apparently inconsistent with the Catholic view of any doctrine, before it was clearly defined by the Church, but we must take such passages *as a whole*, and in connexion with the particular circumstances of the writers, not by considering what these passages *may* possibly mean, *in the abstract*—but what they *must* necessarily mean, when *interpreted by facts* in the history of the Church. It has been said, that the best interpretation of *prophecy* is the *history* of its fulfilment—and the same remark is equally applicable to the *doctrines* of Christianity. It is by appealing to the doctrine of the Catholic Church in every age, that we have *theories* superseded by *facts*, and *conjectures* by *certainties*. Thus, for instance, with reference to the Supremacy of the Pope, it formerly appeared to me, that the most striking passages in the early writers *might* be explained with reference to the Apostolical origin of the Roman Church, or the dignity of the Imperial City; but I found such an hypothesis quite inconsistent with facts, and consequently I was obliged to abandon it. And yet the same hypothesis is continually applied by Protestants to explain the statements of the Fathers, even to the end of the Sixth Century. Thus the well known saying of Pope Gregory the Great, in opposition to the title of “Universal Bishop,” was much relied upon at the period of the Reformation in England, and it is still frequently quoted.

to prove that the holy Father was quite ignorant of the idea of his own spiritual Supremacy over the whole Church, though such an interpretation is directly contrary to *his own acts and claims*, as the successor of St. Peter. And I may here state, that I was myself received into the Catholic Church, not according to the usual profession of faith, but according to the Pontifical form, which has been preserved by this same Pope Gregory the Great, as used by the African Bishops, at the reception of Donatists into the Church, and which relates exclusively to this one point of submission to the Apostolic See, and communion with the Roman Pontiff, as the test of union with the Catholic Church. My own profession is therefore more than 1000 years older than the Creed of Pope Pius IV., which is generally adopted on such occasions, but both are essentially the same, as the latter contains only a more complete explanation of Catholic principles and doctrines, which are virtually included, by anticipation, in the former. The truth is, that the Supremacy of the Pope, as well as all other Roman doctrines, stand before us in a prominent view, as striking *facts* in the theological system of the ancient Church—and it is impossible to account for this general adoption of such a system on any other principle than that of its Divine and Apostolical origin. And thus, the whole subject forms an appropriate illustration of the celebrated rule of St. Vincentius, with reference to the great test of Catholic doctrine, as what has been held “in all places, at all times, and by all persons.” Surely the application of this rule is at once *decisive* in favor of the *Roman* Church, and *fatal* to the claims of *all others*—and on this principle it is clearly impossible to suppose that the Protestant system of doctrine can be true, when we find it *rejected by all other Churches in the world*, both in the East and in the West,

in ancient and modern times. It is evident, then, that no conclusive argument can be drawn *against* any part of the Catholic system, from the *want* of direct testimony to it in *primitive* writers—while there is no evidence to the contrary, it may have always been held by the Church, though not expressly stated by any of those whose works have come down to us, and this defect is occasionally supplied by the express *historical* statements of *later* writers on the subject; but it is easy to account for the *loss of primitive records*, though it is not easy to account for the *loss of a Church's faith*—even without taking into consideration its divine authority—and it must be admitted that, as far as the evidence goes, it is decidedly in favor of the Catholic system, and in opposition to the Protestant; and that, in fact, the modern system of Protestantism stands directly opposed to historical Christianity in every age of the Church.

Such were the conclusions to which I was brought from a general view of the *facts* of the case—but now, my mind was directed, more especially, to the examination of the great *principles* of Catholic Unity and Church authority, in connexion with the principles of the English Reformation. Feeling the questions involved in this inquiry to be of the most vital importance, I was determined not to relinquish it, until I had arrived at a final decision. It was the subject of my constant study. Night and day, my thoughts flowed mainly in the same channel,—my mind was completely absorbed in it, and although I sought and found a temporary relief in the active duties of the ministry, still the same questions perpetually recurred to me, and demanded from me a decided answer. I felt that God would give me no peace till I was fully prepared to embrace the whole system of his revealed truth. His Spirit had long been striving

with my heart, but I feared that I had been endeavoring to silence His voice within me, and to provoke him to leave me to myself, and thus I only plunged myself deeper in distress and perplexity. My heart was sad and depressed, and every thing around me wore a dark and gloomy aspect. I tried to persuade myself that it was only a temptation of Satan—I wished to satisfy my mind with my former excuses—but I could not. I felt happy when I resolved to yield to conviction, but whenever I began to resist and to doubt, all my former difficulties returned again.

I had long endeavored to obtain an exact view of the real doctrines of the English Reformers as stated in their own writings—and for this purpose, I carefully examined Crammer's celebrated "Answer to Gardiner," (in the original Edition of 1551,) and I was much struck with the inconclusive reasoning, perverted quotations, and abusive language, employed by that unhappy man in the refutation of his opponent. A similar unfavorable impression, though not so strong, was produced by the perusal of Ridley's brief "Treatise against Transubstantiation," in which the argument chiefly consists in *detached passages* from the Fathers, (mostly spurious or doubtful,) produced in opposition to the *clear and express* statements of the *same* writers in *other* passages, as well as the *general consent* of other ancient writers, and the *established doctrine* of the Universal Church. The same remarks apply to the writings of Jewel and the other Reformers, who labor to establish *theories* instead of *facts*, and to found upon *their own interpretations* of some ambiguous expressions in the Fathers, a system of religious *doctrine*, and a sketch of Church *history*, which *never existed* but in their own imagination. But why talk of the Protestant Divines of this period, and the effect of their

works on public opinion, when it is notorious that such a cause had so little to do with the progress of the English Reformation, which was accomplished, not by the spiritual weapons of theological discussion, but by the strong arm of the civil power? There is no doubt, indeed, that a great improvement took place in the general tone of Protestant controversy in the following age, as exhibited in the works of Ussher, Laud, Chillingworth, Taylor, Barrow, Stillingfleet, and others, who certainly endeavored to meet the Catholic arguments in a more fair and candid spirit of discussion. But to pass on to more recent publications on the other side. I studied again, and with increased benefit, the work from which I had derived so much information many years before, Cardinal Wiseman's Lectures, and found them more and more instructive and conclusive. I was greatly assisted by Dr. Ives' personal narrative of the "Trials of a Mind in its progress to Catholicism,"—in which I was deeply interested, from the close resemblance between the Author's experience and my own. Nor must I omit, after all their years of service, Bossuet's "History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches," nor Milner's well known "End of Religious Controversy." And I must also express my obligations to the able report of the "Hammersmith Discussion"—together with Manning's "Shortest Way to end Disputes about religion," and Dr. Newman's celebrated "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," and his "Sermons addressed to Mixed Congregations."—These works, together with the Holy Scriptures and the Christian Fathers, formed the principal subjects of my studies and meditations during that eventful period, and through them, under the blessing of God, I was led to the conviction, that it is my duty to renounce all connexion with Protestantism, and to transfer my allegiance to the Catholic

Church. For this purpose, I resolved to proceed to England, and to announce my intention to His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, as head of the Catholic Church in the mother country, and this plan, after much deliberation, I have at length been permitted to accomplish, through the mercy of God.

It may be said, indeed, that in all this process of inquiry, I was acting on the very principle of private judgment, which I hold to be so dangerous to the interests of true religion. And yet, surely I was fully justified, on Protestant principles, in the exercise of such a right, though it might lead me to a different conclusion from other Protestants. Still, however, it must be observed, that there is a wide difference between the exercise of *personal responsibility* and *private judgment*, though they are often confounded together. Catholics strongly hold the one, while they utterly deny the other. The former relates to the duty of every individual, by which he is bound to examine the grounds of his faith, and the evidences of religion, with the sincere desire of joining that Church which he believes in his conscience, to have the strongest claims to divine authority, with a deep sense of his accountability to God for his decision, while the latter means the right of every one to form his religious opinions from his own interpretation of the meaning of Holy Scripture, (which he supposes to contain all the doctrines of Christianity), without submitting his opinions to the authority of the Church.

It may be thought, however, very strange and inconsistent, that I should seriously think of such a step, while still engaged in the service of the English Church, and supposed to hold and teach her Evangelical doctrines in all their scriptural purity. Now, I certainly did not think myself justified in holding or teaching "all Roman doc-



trine," or any part of it, while occupying my former position, though I might feel strongly inclined to it as a matter of private opinion, but not as an article of faith till I was fully prepared to adopt the whole system. It is certainly true, that I felt a strong sympathy with Christians of every denomination, and earnestly desired to promote the fulfilment of the prayer of our Divine Redeemer, "that they all may be one." And this sympathy was especially directed towards the most ancient branch of the Church of Christ, though I feared that union with her was quite impossible, on account of her supposed corruptions. In the mean time, therefore, I thought it sufficient to profess and teach those doctrines and practices which were equally professed both by Catholics and by Protestants, and to avoid all further controversy on the subject. But I must observe that this whole objection is chiefly founded on a total misapprehension of the real character of the doctrines of the Catholic Church. It is, indeed, one great advantage which Protestants have in submitting to the Catholic Faith, that they bring with them the whole system of *positive* doctrine which they held before, so that they are not required to give up any article of their former belief, but to receive, in addition to it, the articles of the Catholic Creed, together with the Catholic principles which form the foundation of faith. For it is necessary to remind you, that the Protestant religion is entirely a *combination of negatives*; it does not properly consist in *believing*, but in *disbelieving*; it receives, perhaps, *some* particular articles of the faith which it has borrowed from the Catholic Church, and it rejects the *rest*, which it chooses to call *additions*, but which Catholics regard as integral parts of the Christian Faith. It is evident, then, that *Catholics believe all that Protestants believe*, but they believe a great deal *more*, and on a totally different *prin-*

ciple, the one resting on a *divine revelation* made to the Church, and secured by the *infallible guidance* of the Holy Spirit, while the other rests on the *private opinion* of each individual as to the meaning of the words of a *printed book*. But, still, the point to which I now refer is the *Evangelical* character of Catholic doctrine, which is so often misrepresented by Protestants; and yet I can bear witness from my own experience to the peculiarly Evangelical tone of doctrine which I have generally observed in all the sermons which I have heard from Catholic pulpits, indeed much more truly Evangelical than many of those which are frequently heard from Protestant pulpits; and it has frequently occurred to me, while listening to such sermons, that these are the very doctrines of grace which we loved to hear from the faithful preachers of the Gospel in the Church of England. But the difference is, that in the Catholic teaching, they form a *part* of a harmonious system, in connexion with all the *other means* and instruments which God has mercifully appointed for our salvation, while in the Protestant teaching, they are held in an isolated and mutilated form, and consequently *one* class of the means of grace is entirely dwelt upon, to the exclusion or denial of *another* class, which is equally of divine appointment. Now, I thank God that I still hold all the doctrines (not indeed *negatively* but *positively*) which I held and taught while I was a Protestant Minister in the Church of England, but I hold them now in all their fair proportions and full developments, as a part of that glorious system of Sacramental grace, which God has been pleased to deposit with His Church for the salvation of mankind. And after all, it must be observed that the proper test of orthodoxy or heresy does not consist so much in *particular doctrines* as in *general principles*. The great question is between the *principle* of Church

*authority* and the *principle of private judgment*; in other words, between the principle of faith and the principle of infidelity,—between divine revelation and human opinion,—between humble, implicit submission to the Word of God, and proud, wilful contempt of it,—the one, the source of all truth, the other, the source of all error. In fact, all the other controversies may be easily reduced to this one fundamental principle. It is a mere accident, and the result of particular circumstances, whether a person holding his own private opinion will hold the true doctrine on any given subject or not, but any one who fully holds the Church's divine right of teaching all truth is in possession of a principle which will preserve him secure from all error on every subject.

But I must now proceed to speak more directly of the *grounds and evidences* of the Catholic Faith, as distinguished from that of all Protestant denominations. We are required to be “ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear, having a good conscience,” and in this spirit I desire to enter upon the explanation of my reasons for joining the Catholic Church. It is true that the *motives* which induce different individuals to join the Church are infinitely various, as acting on different minds under different circumstances, but they all meet at last in the common centre of Catholic unity and Divine infallibility. I do not propose to enter upon a full discussion of this question, but merely to state some general considerations applicable more immediately to my own case. I have already, indeed, anticipated this subject, in some measure, in the preceding part of my narrative, but it requires to be explained in a more distinct and argumentative form. For, if the Protestant Reformers of the 16th Century were

guilty of the double sin of *schism* and *heresy*, first, in *separating from the communion*, and then in *renouncing the doctrine* of the One True Church of Christ, it follows as a necessary consequence, that we are partakers of their sin while we *refuse to return* to the unity of the Catholic Church and the Catholic Faith. Now, there are two points of view on which this subject may be considered, the one *historical*, and the other *theological*. In the one case, we appeal to the *facts and events* connected with the history of the Reformation, and in the other case, to the fundamental *principles and doctrines* of the Christian Religion.

Among all the schisms which have divided the Church since the days of the Apostles, there are *two* which have been particularly remarkable for their extent and their duration—the *Greek* schism, and the *Protestant* schism. Their effects continue, and are deeply felt, to the present day. Numerically speaking, it is stated on good authority, that at this moment the Catholic Church includes about two-thirds of the whole number of professing Christians in the world. Of the remaining one-third, about two-thirds belong to the Greek and Russian Churches, while the other one-third, or one-ninth of the whole, consists of Protestants of every class and name. Again, there are at present about 1,100 Christian Bishops in the world, of whom nearly 800 belong to the Catholic Church, 200 to the Greek Church, and more than 100 to the Anglican Church in all its branches. One thousand years ago, the whole Christian Church was visibly united under one Chief Pastor, the successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome—the Eastern Church having, till then, agreed with the Western in holding the same views on the two great points of difference since that time, the Supremacy of the Pope, and the Procession of the Holy Ghost.

Then came the separation of the Greek Church from the Latin, the former attempting to establish a new centre of unity, by human authority, in the city of Constantinople, while the latter adhered to the divinely appointed Rock of the Church. A little more than 300 years ago, another great schism took place in the Latin Church, commencing, like the former, with the rejection of the authority of the Holy See—but at the same time holding other principles tending to the subversion of all religion. This was the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Here, then, we come to the common, but unanswerable question, addressed to Protestants, with reference to the existence of their religious system before the time of Luther. It was not in the *visible Church*, for it was universally rejected by it; it was not in the *invisible Church*—for there was no such Church in existence; and it was not in the *Bible*—for the Church never found it there during all that time, and without immediate inspiration, it was impossible for any individual to lay claim to such a discovery. It is, then, an incontrovertible fact, that up to the year 1517, there was no such thing as Protestantism in the world—for fifteen hundred years together such a system was unknown in the Church—and yet there was no new revelation of Christianity made at that time, nor did the Reformers themselves profess to act by such an authority.

Let us, then, take a general view of the origin and progress of the Reformation in Germany. We must briefly refer to the circumstances connected with Luther's famous quarrel with Pope Leo X., when he boasted of having "stood alone" against the Universal Church, in his arrogant presumption. We need not stop to show how it was originally a mere *personal* dispute, in which the pride of the Augustinian monk was deeply wounded,

and notwithstanding his solemn profession of obedience to the decision of the Church, he rebelled against that decision when it condemned his views, and then endeavored to justify his conduct by applying to the Church his own interpretations of Prophecy, while he proclaimed the Pope to be the Antichrist of Scripture, and the Church of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse. And it may be remarked that the same view of Antichrist was afterwards generally adopted by all the Reformed Churches in Europe, inserted in their public Formularies, and alleged as the ground of their separation from Rome, and therefore those Protestants, who find a difficulty in preferring Luther's opinion to the interpretation of all the Fathers, or in reconciling it with the fulfilment of Prophecy, are acting inconsistently with the principle of the Reformation, and have evidently mistaken their position in the Church. This announcement was made by Luther in the memorable year of 1520. Having been excommunicated from the Church "nothing remained for him," says Mosheim, "but to attempt to found a new Church opposed to that of Rome, and to establish a system of doctrine consonant to the Holy Scriptures." And yet it is remarkable that during the ten years that elapsed from this time, he seemed quite unable to define how far his own system of doctrine differed from that of Rome, or whether there were any real difference at all, and even fourteen years afterwards, with strange inconsistency, he still maintained that the Church of Rome was the true Church of Christ. In the year 1529, the name of "Protestants" was first given to those German States who protested against the Decree of the Diet of Spires, in favor of the ancient worship, and some explanation of their views was now expected from the Protestants. Accordingly, in the Confession of Augsburg, presented to the Emperor Charles V., in

1530, they stated that "they differed in no article of faith from the Catholic Church, nor from the Church of Rome," but only desired the correction of certain abuses in matters of discipline. Among other particulars, they clearly asserted their belief in the doctrine of the Real Presence, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, which, they declared, "was celebrated among them with the greatest reverence." But another ten years passed away, and the Confession of Augsburg (which had previously received an important change in 1531), was completely altered as to the doctrine of the Eucharist, and the theory of Consubstantiation defined to be the Lutheran view, while the Adoration of the Host seems to have been still admitted in the worship of the German Protestants. But I need not dwell on the painful differences between Luther and the other Reformers, involving, in their opinion, the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, in which they found it impossible to agree. And were these men invested with a divine commission to reform the doctrines of the Church of Christ? What are we to think of new Creeds and new Confessions, continually published, all differing from each other, and all professing to contain the true doctrines of the Gospel? Can the Spirit of God be the Author of such confusion and varieties of contending sects, all distinguished by these two leading characteristics—their intolerant opposition to each other—and their bitter hostility to the Catholic Church?

It is quite evident, indeed, that the first Reformers did not clearly understand either their own principles, or the legitimate consequences to which they must lead. They were engaged in a mighty revolution, and they did not stop to reflect on its ultimate effects upon the world. They certainly acted on the right of private judgment *for themselves*, but they had no idea of extending the

same right to *others*, much less of *perpetuating* the principle, or allowing its practical application in *future* ages. Their successors, however, did not think proper to stop at the precise point where they had stopped. Having *rejected* the authority of the *infallible* Church, they had no intention of *submitting* to a *fallible* one. Having laid hold of the principle, they were determined to carry it out consistently, and accordingly we find that there is not a single doctrine of Christianity which has not been denied, one after another, by the most distinguished theologians of the Lutheran Church, the Rationalistic Divines of Germany, the fatherland of the Protestant Reformation. It was truly said in the old adage, that "*Luther* only uncovered the *roof*, while *Calvin* levelled the *walls*, but *Socinus* destroyed the *foundation*" of the Catholic Church, and all acted consistently on the same *principle*, however differing in *doctrine*. It cannot be denied that the Protestantism of the 19th Century is quite a different thing from the Protestantism of the 16th Century; a *second Reformation* has *tacitly* taken place in all the Reformed Churches, and especially during the last Century. And this is now publicly demanded by a numerous party in the Established Church of England, to be effected, as on former occasions, by authority of Parliament. Protestantism appears to be in a *transition* state at present. It cannot stop where it is. It is contrary to its nature. Ever restless and unsettled, it must advance in its progress, either to Infidelity or to Catholicism. It is evident that no security can be given for the permanent continuance of any one Christian doctrine, on Protestant principles. It contains within itself the elements of its own dissolution, and it is only by violating its own fundamental principle of private judgment, and restraining it within arbitrary limits, that



it can maintain its existence in the world as a system of Christian truth. This, indeed, was the simple and conclusive argument of Bossuet, that "Protestants have frequently *changed* their doctrines, therefore their religion *cannot be true*." It was this which convinced the intellectual mind of Gibbon, the historian, and induced him to profess the Catholic Faith, and yet afterwards, when his proud reason led him to reject its mysteries, he rejected *Christianity* along with *Catholicism*, and rapidly passed through *Protestantism* to *Infidelity*, thus illustrating the close connexion that exists between the two systems. Surely, then, this cannot be the work of God! A Church which is continually changing her doctrines, cannot be the true Church of Christ, while the Catholic Church has proved her divine origin by the uninterrupted *unity* of doctrine, and the perfect *consistency* of all its parts with each other, which she has constantly maintained at every period of her existence. She can *never, never, alter* or reconsider any one point of Christian doctrine that she has authoritatively defined for the last 1800 years. Like her Divine Author, she is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Let us now look at the Established Church of England, as founded, or reformed, under Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Queen Elizabeth. There can be no difficulty in proving that each of those Sovereigns was merely influenced by a *personal* motive in promoting the progress of the Reformation. What had the Church to do with these measures? Nothing whatever. Was she ever consulted about them? No, never. Was her consent required in introducing a new religion? Certainly not. Who, then, were the authors of these changes? The English monarchs, with the assistance of a servile Parliament. It is surely unnecessary to detail the well

known history of this deplorable schism, how it commenced with a *private quarrel* between King Henry VIII. and Pope Clement VII., which ended with a total rupture with the Apostolic See, in consequence of the Pope's refusal to sanction the King's divorce from his lawful wife, in order to form an adulterous connexion—and how the King immediately proclaimed the *independence* of the national Church, and *transferred to himself* the Papal prerogatives, as Supreme Head of the Church of England and Ireland, by the substitution of the *national Empire* for the *Universal Church*, while at the same time he retained every other article of the Catholic creed, without even the miserable excuse of any alleged corruption of doctrine in the Catholic Church. The Act of submission of the Clergy, (25 Hen. VIII., c. 19) which continues in force to this day, established the subjugation of the Church to the king, while the suppression of the monasteries, and the confiscation of Church property, afforded a rich recompence to those avaricious courtiers who took part in those sacrilegious measures. The English nation, though with some reservation, was at last intimidated into a passive acquiescence with the will of the tyrant, though many of its members, including those illustrious martyrs, Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More, preferred to lay down their lives in defence of Catholic unity.

But further changes were reserved for the times of his son and successor, Edward VI., or rather the Council that managed the affairs of the kingdom during his minority. This reign, indeed, is generally regarded as the real commencement of the Protestant Reformation in England. It was stated by King Charles I. that “no man who understands the English Reformation, will derive it from Henry VIII. It was his son who began, and Queen Elizabeth who perfected it.” This statement may be true with regard

to *doctrines*, but certainly not with regard to *principles*. The Book of Common Prayer was first produced in 1549, and afterwards, with important alterations, in 1552, while in the following year the Forty-two Articles were published with additional variations of doctrine, *none of these formularies having received the sanction of the Church in Convocation*, while rigorous measures were adopted with the Bishops and Clergy who refused to acknowledge the validity of these changes. The celebration of the Catholic services was strictly prohibited, the sacred mysteries of religion derided, and the usurpation of the Crown completed by the appointment of the Royal Visitors and other Lay Commissioners, who entirely superseded all Episcopal authority throughout the kingdom.

After the death of Edward, the Catholic Religion was restored for a short time during the reign of Mary, and thus we come to that memorable period when the Reformed Church of England was legally established on its present foundation, by Queen Elizabeth, in the year 1559. This was effected by the enactment of those two famous Statutes, the Act of Supremacy, and the Act of Uniformity. In the mean time, the Convocation was prohibited by the Queen from enacting any Canons that might be unfavorable to those measures, under pain of *premunire*. Notwithstanding all the efforts that were made to procure the return of a Parliament favorable to the Queen's interests, these Ecclesiastical Laws were with difficulty carried through the two Houses. The bill for the Liturgy was passed by a majority of *six* in the House of Commons, and *three* in the House of Lords, (the latter majority being obtained by the imprisonment of two Catholic Bishops, and the creation of five new Protestant Peers,) having gone through all the stages in both houses within the short space of 10 days.

Every Bishop in the upper house voted against it. The Clergy, assembled in solemn convocation, together with the two Universities, protested against the change of Religion by an Act of Parliament. It was carried, however, and forced upon the nation, after an ineffectual resistance on the part of the Church, every Catholic Bishop having been deprived of his See, with the exception of one, who had always conformed with every change. And by whom were those changes made? By the Queen and Parliament, that is, *by the State in opposition to the Church*, by the Laity in rebellion against the Clergy. As yet, however, no Protestant test of *doctrine* was required, and many of the Catholic Clergy adopted the use of the new Liturgy, which contained in itself nothing directly contrary to their faith. This defect, however, was supplied four years afterwards, when the Catholic members had been expelled from both Houses of Convocation by the operation of the preceding Acts of Parliament, and *having secured a Protestant assembly*, the Thirty-nine Articles were "agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, and the whole Clergy" (of the Province of Canterbury only.) This was the first occasion on which the Convocation acted in favor of the doctrines of the Reformation, and this was only done after the exclusion of Catholics from that Ecclesiastical body. And thus the work of the Reformation was completed in England. But what was the motive that led to all this? The Queen had entirely conformed to the Church of Rome during the reign of Mary, as well as at the beginning of her own reign. At her Coronation, by a Catholic Bishop, according to the Roman Pontifical, she took the usual oath to maintain the rights of the Church, and though the Crown of England devolved upon her by the will of Henry VIII., yet the Parliament had declared her illegiti-

mate, and the Pope had decided against the validity of her mother's marriage—Catholic England could not have acknowledged her title to the Crown without her submission to the authority of the Church—England must become Protestant, the Queen must usurp the spiritual supremacy which her father had established, and thus it appears that *the real motive of the English Reformation was to establish the throne of Queen Elizabeth on a sure foundation.* Then came the long train of Penal Laws, the object of which was (and too successfully it was effected), the extermination of the Catholic Religion out of England, the penalties of high treason being attached to every Catholic Priest (being a native of the British dominions,) remaining in the country, as well as to every one reconciled to the Catholic Church, in consequence of which upwards of 120 Priests suffered death for their *religion*, under the name of *treason*, in the latter part of this reign. It may be fairly said that the whole work of the Reformation was a mere *political* movement on the part of the *State*, an *avaricious* movement on the part of the *nobility*, while it may be regarded as a *religious* movement on the part of a considerable number of *misguided men*, who endeavored to subvert the ancient religion of the country by the introduction of a new system of doctrine derived from the continental reformers, but the truth is, that *the Church herself, as a spiritual body, had nothing to do with it.* And thus England is separated, for the last 300 years, from the communion of the Catholic Church, and all simply as one of the government measures of the day, with a view to further the selfish objects of human policy. Where is the hand of God in all this? What right has such an establishment to be properly called *the Church of England*? What possible claim can she have to the religious

obedience of the people of England? How else is she to be regarded but as part and parcel of the State?—the creation of man, and not of God, founded and governed by the authority of the Queen and Parliament, and not of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit.

But all this, it may be said, relates only to the *legal establishment* of the Church of England, and does not affect her claims to be considered the representative of the *true Church* of Christ in these dominions. On what ground, then, in a *religious* point of view, can she maintain her claim to this title? We have seen that the old Church of England protested against the usurpation of her rights, by her new and powerful rival. Which of the two Churches is to be regarded as the *true Church* of Christ in that country? Here we enter upon the *Theological* view of the subject, which is the most important part of our inquiry, and demands our most serious attention.

There is evidently an irreconcilable difference between the two Churches. And further, there was clearly a *separation* of the Church of *England* from the Church of *Rome*; and this *separation* must be an act of *schism*, unless it can be proved that that separation was *lawful*. It is surely unnecessary to dwell upon the historical fiction of the Independence of the Ancient British Churches on the See of Rome—the best refutation of which is the fact of its modern invention. It was never heard of till after the Reformation, and there is not the slightest foundation for it in the genuine records of Ecclesiastical history. It is evident that the only way in which the separation can be justified, is by proving that the Catholic Church had fallen into dangerous *corruptions of doctrine*, which required her system to be thoroughly *purified* by the work of the Reformation. But it was well remarked

by St. Irenæus, nearly 1700 years ago, that "no advantage can be gained by a Reformation, sufficient to compensate for the evils of Schism," and the remark is strikingly exemplified in the history of the Church in modern times. It is, indeed, fully admitted that there was much need of a Reformation in the Church of Rome, for there was great corruption in the *lives* of her Clergy and people—and for several Centuries there had been an earnest demand, within the Church herself, for a total *Reformation of morals* "in the head and members." This was, indeed, one of the great objects for which the Council of Trent was assembled, and this was successfully accomplished by that great Assembly of the Church, by the enactment of the "Decrees of Reformation," and by the strict enforcement of Ecclesiastical discipline. But surely *this* is a very different thing from the Reformation of Christian *doctrine*, which can only be done by *denying* the *Infallibility* of the Church and reversing her former decisions on the *articles of faith*. But how is the charge of corruption of doctrine to be *proved* against the Church? It may be done in two ways, either by showing, from the *records of the Church*, that she has departed from the Primitive Faith, or by comparing her doctrines with the *Word of God*, and showing the difference between them. But in the former way it is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory result. We have *no record* of the fact, *no proof* that any change has ever taken place—and in the absence of direct proof, there is surely a strong *presumption* that the whole system of doctrine held by the Church now *has always* been held from the beginning of Christianity. We go back to the earliest ages—we examine the writings of the Fathers, and the Decrees of Councils—and we find manifest traces of the *same general system*, as far as the evidence extends. The *burden of proof*

clearly lies on the *other side*; for the Catholic Church was already *in possession* of her title, and can justly claim a *prescriptive right* from immemorial usage, and it must require very strong and convincing evidence to *disprove* the validity of her title, and to dislodge her from a position of which she is already in occupation. It is therefore, from the very nature of the case, an unreasonable demand in Protestants to call upon us for a positive proof of any one article of the Catholic faith; and, however clear and conclusive these proofs may be, we are surely at perfect liberty to object altogether to this mode of argument, as it is evident that, according to all the rules of sound reasoning, the burden lies upon them to *disprove* the truth of those doctrines which have been firmly believed by the whole Christian Church for 1500 years before Protestantism had any existence in the world. We are continually asked to demonstrate the Infallibility of the Church—the Supremacy of the Pope—the doctrine of Transubstantiation, &c., as if they were all open questions, now for the first time to be settled by an appeal to the Protestant tribunal of private judgment. Now it is sufficient for us to reply, that the Church is already in *actual possession* of these doctrines for 1500 years—they have been settled and received since the days of the Apostles, and it cannot be lawful for us to re-consider the decisions of the Primitive Church—unless we are prepared to prove that our Lord and his Apostles were fallible men, or that the whole Church from the beginning has corrupted the Christian faith by the introduction of human traditions. This is the true state of the question. The whole contest is certainly a *Protestant aggression* on the rights of the Catholic Church, and unless it can be proved that these *rights* are founded on *usurpation*, their *validity* cannot be denied. It is indeed, the



easiest thing in the world to raise ingenious cavils and plausible objections against every doctrine of religion—but their force cannot for a moment be admitted against the authority of divine revelation, and it is utterly impossible to overthrow the foundations of Catholicism without overthrowing the foundations of Christianity at the same time. It is surely a legitimate demand, to require the opponents of the Church's claims to point out *at what time* and under what circumstances she corrupted the Christian Faith, and *introduced new doctrines* into her system. It will not do to substitute *general assertions* and *vague conjectures* for *direct evidence* and *clear proofs*. It is admitted that the Church of Rome, *in the First Century*, was in possession of the pure doctrines of the Gospel. It must be proved, then, that the Church *of the Second Century* was essentially *different* in doctrine from that of the First Century, or that *of the Third Century* from that of the Second Century, and so on, for each succeeding century, as compared with the preceding, down to the present age, otherwise it must inevitably follow that the Church of each Century is the legitimate representative and successor of the Church of the *preceding* Century, and consequently, that *the Church of Rome in the Nineteenth Century is essentially the same in doctrine with the Church of Rome in the First Century*, in the very days of the Apostles, and thus she can justly establish her claim to Apostolic succession of doctrine as well as Apostolic succession of Bishops. It is a common thing among Protestants to speak of the *Apostacy* of the Church of Rome, as if it were a *notorious fact* in Ecclesiastical history, instead of a mere *controversial invention*, totally unsupported by facts, and contrary to all evidence. Some learned men have, indeed, attempted to *fix* the commencement of this corruption to

the time of the First General Council of Nice, when she defined the great doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord *on the ground of tradition*, against the Arian heresy. It was long a popular view that the Papal period in the history of the Church began with Pope Boniface III. in the commencement of the seventh century, and in connexion with the Universal Supremacy—other writers have dated the beginning of the reign of Antichrist from the time of Pope Gregory II. in the Eighth Century, in connexion with the Iconoclastic controversy—while others, unwilling to admit so early a date as that of Nice, in connexion, too, with such a doctrine, and yet unable to find any intermediate period of sufficient importance, have brought down the time to the last General Council of Trent, when the Church defined the whole Catholic system against all the heresies of the age; and thus, between the two extremes, extending over a period of more than 1200 years, from the 4th to the 16th century, the proof entirely fails, and the disagreement between the witnesses tends fully to establish the innocence of the Catholic Church. It is asserted, indeed, that the *Primitive Church* was really *Protestant* in doctrine, that Roman Catholic errors were afterwards *gradually introduced*, and that the design of the Reformation was to *restore* the Church to her *original* purity, according to the standard of the Bible. But surely we have a right to expect some *proof* of all this, whereas the evidence is entirely on the other side, and we may fairly defy any Protestant to *prove* that there ever was a period since the beginning of Christianity, in which *any one doctrine* of the Roman Church was *not* held by the whole Church of Christ on earth. It is said, indeed, that these doctrines are *not contained in the Bible*, and further, that they are *contrary to the Bible*, but the *former* of these objections is founded on the principle, that all the doctrines of

Christianity are contained in the Bible, which is *assuming* the whole subject of controversy, and the *latter* of them is founded on the *private interpretation* of the Bible, which cannot be admitted in opposition to the judgment of the Church. We must, however, consider these objections more particularly, as this is certainly the most popular and the most plausible way of stating the question and of defending the Reformation. It may be said, that although there may be strong presumptive evidence that the Church of Rome has never changed her doctrines from the beginning, still the question is not as to the *time*, but as to the *fact*. It is commonly said with Ussher, that "we do not hold that Rome was built in a day," and that her present system is the accumulation of errors and corruptions which were gradually introduced into the Church, in addition to the Primitive Faith, sanctioned by the authority of Popes and Councils, and received by professing Christians during the "dark ages," when all the world was in a state of universal ignorance. I need not stop to show that all this is a *mere fiction*, invented to account for a supposed difficulty, and that it derives no support whatever from historical evidence. But it may be replied, that we have nothing to do with history—our business is with the Bible—and the strongest proofs of the corruptions of the Catholic Church consist in the manifest *opposition* between *its doctrines* and *those of the Bible*. In the language of Chillingworth, which is echoed from every Protestant pulpit and platform, "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants," and by this test alone every point in religious controversy is to be tried and determined. Now, it is evident that there are two important principles involved in this appeal—the one, that the Bible is the *only rule of faith*; and the other, that every one has a right

to interpret the Bible *according to his own sense*. These are, undoubtedly, the fundamental principles of the Reformation, and though the one does not necessarily include the other, yet it is certain that both are generally claimed by all who call themselves Protestants. It is the great vital principle contained in the 6th Article of the Church of England, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This is a point, indeed, which Protestants seem to consider almost *self-evident*, which is *taken for granted* in every argument, and which it is thought impossible to deny. But after all, it is a most important question to consider—On what authority is this opinion held, and how can it be proved to be true? It may be done in two ways, *positively* or *negatively*—either by *internal* or *external* evidence—that is, either by an *express declaration of Scripture* itself (granting its Divine Inspiration and Canonical authority) or by *disproving the existence* of any *other* rule of faith. But where does Scripture assert its own sufficiency as a complete record of divine revelation? Is there a single passage in the Bible, which declares that the *whole* revealed truth of God is contained in His written Word alone? We answer, without hesitation, *there is not one*. It is usual, indeed, to refer to some remarkable declarations of Scripture which relate to this subject, and especially to those three important passages, John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11, and 2 Tim. iii. 15–17. But it requires only a little attention to perceive that these passages do not establish the point. The first is our Lord's address to the Jews—"Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think that ye have eternal life, and they

are they which testify of me." Now what does this passage prove? Simply, that the Scriptures *testify of Christ*. Surely this is not the same with saying that they contain *all that God has revealed to man*. But again, What are the Scriptures of which our Saviour speaks? Not certainly the *New Testament*, which was not written at the time—but the *Old Testament*, which was then in the hands of the Jews. If, then, this passage proves anything conclusive on this point, it evidently *proves too much*, and therefore *proves nothing*; for if it proves that the *Old Testament* was a *sufficient* rule of faith, then the *New Testament* must be quite *unnecessary*, which will surely not be admitted by any Christian. For according to this mode of reasoning, it is argued that *because* the unbelieving *Jews* were required to search their *own* Scriptures for the proof of *one* specific truth relating to the Messiah, whom they rejected—*therefore* the same principle is to be applied and extended to *other* Scriptures which were *not then in existence*, and that each individual *Christian* is obliged to search those other Scriptures, in order to find out, *not one, but every truth* in them, as the sole and infallible rule of faith. Surely such an inference cannot be fairly drawn from our Saviour's words by any unprejudiced mind. Suppose a pious book were recommended to us on this ground, that "it testifies of Christ," would any one seriously think that such a recommendation implied that it contained every doctrine of Christianity on every subject? And yet such is precisely our Saviour's recommendation of the *Old Testament*. But it is said that those Scriptures contain eternal life. This, however, is only the opinion of the *Jews*, on which our Lord pronounces no decision—and even if He did, the words can only be understood, consistently with his own explana-

tion, in this sense, that the study of the *written* word formed an excellent preparation for receiving the *unwritten* Word, or divine instructions of Christ, who was the great subject of all the writings of Moses and the Prophets. And the other passages referred to are precisely of a similar character. In the passage in the Acts, we have simply a historical illustration of our Saviour's rule, with regard to the study of the Old Testament, as preparing the Jewish mind for the reception of Christianity. We are told that the Berean Jews "searched the Scriptures daily," in order to compare the predictions of the Prophets with the statement of the Apostle with reference to the sufferings of Christ, and being thus convinced of the truth of the facts of the Gospel history, "many of them believed" the testimony of St. Paul, and embraced all the other doctrines taught by him, not because they were written in the Scriptures, but because they were delivered to them on the authority of a teacher sent from God. And it is exactly on the same principle that Catholics still act in reasoning with Protestants, when they appeal to the New Testament, and exhort them to "search the Scriptures," which testify of the divine institution of the Church of Christ, and then to submit their minds to the teaching of that Church in every article of faith proposed to them on divine authority. And once more, the Apostle Paul reminds his beloved Timothy, that "from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Here again, there is certainly no proof, that, because young Timothy, in point of *fact*, was instructed in the *Old Testament*, and thus prepared to receive the doctrines of the Gospel which were *afterwards* to be revealed, therefore the general *principle* is established, that every Christian is required by his

own personal examination, to find *all the articles* of the Christian Faith in the *New Testament*, which was *afterwards to be written*. For even supposing that the statement may include, prospectively, the Scriptures of the New Testament, does the Apostle assert the principle of their *complete sufficiency for salvation*? Does he not say, as the Catholic Church teaches, that they are *profitable* and useful, not that they are *exclusively sufficient* for all saving purposes? Indeed he clearly asserts the *insufficiency* of Scripture in the very context of this passage, in which he refers to his own *oral teaching* as the foundation of faith, and as distinctly *supplemental* to the teaching of Scripture, which Timothy had learned in his youth.

Such is the evidence of these three passages, every one of which, in its immediate context, overturns the Protestant rule, because it refers to the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles, as the true ground of Christian Faith, quite distinct from, and in addition to the testimony of Scripture. And yet these are by far the strongest texts which seem, in any degree, to favor the Protestant view. But surely, they are applied far beyond their legitimate interpretation, when employed to establish this principle, and especially when we take into consideration that there are *other texts* in which such an interpretation is clearly *disclaimed*, and *another rule of faith laid down in Scripture itself*, for it is evident that Holy Scripture bears testimony to its own *insufficiency* as a *complete* revelation of the will of God, however sufficient and perfect it may be with reference to all the purposes for which it was given. Thus the Apostle Paul exhorts the Thessalonian Christians (2 Thes. ii. 15.) "Brethren, stand fast, and hold the *traditions* which ye have been taught, whether by *word*, or our *Epistle*." It is perfectly clear

that the Apostle here refers to *doctrines*, or articles of faith delivered to his converts, *partly by oral teaching* and *partly by written Epistle*, and it is manifestly *assuming* the question to assert, with Protestants, that the whole doctrine of the Apostles was *afterwards* committed to writing in their Epistles, and that their *unwritten* traditions are all *included* in their *written* letters which have come down to us. This is to take for granted what can never be proved, and what is contrary to their own statements, as well as to the whole tradition of the Church from the beginning. Thus, again, the same Apostle commends the Corinthians for their attention to the same rule of faith, (1 Cor. xi. 2.) "I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances (*traditions*) as I delivered them to you." And so he writes to Timothy, (1 Tim. vi. 20.) "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust," &c. The Apostle does not refer to the doctrines of Christianity as contained in any *written documents*, but as delivered by his own *immediate instruction*, not to each individual member of the Church, nor to the entire congregation, but to one individual, who was appointed to preside over it, as responsible for the souls committed to his charge. And thus he addresses him again, (2 Tim. i., 13, 14, "Hold fast the form of sound words *which thou hast heard of me*, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep *by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us*." Here is the very principle of Catholic unity, the *divine authority of the Church*, teaching under the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost, according to the original standard of Christian doctrine, through the constant succession of Bishops and Pastors. For we observe that shortly after he had laid down this principle, he *extends* it to *future* ages, when he says, (2 Tim. ii., 2,)



"The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to *teach others also*." We have no reference here to his own Epistles, or to any other part of the New Testament, as forming the foundation of doctrine. It is the oral *teaching of the Church*, not by any private inspiration, but by the perpetual presence of the Holy Spirit, which is every where declared to be the true test of Apostolical doctrine, and thus we are exhorted to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once *delivered* to the Saints," not in the *writings* of the New Testament, which was not completed at that time, but in the infallible *teaching* of the Apostles, as preserved in the constant tradition of the Catholic Church. Thus we see that the independent existence of *Apostolical Tradition*, as a rule of faith, is clearly *recognised, even in Holy Scripture* itself, and consequently that the idea of the Bible being the *only* rule of faith, was altogether unknown to the primitive Church. Protestants often argue as if the Catholic Church founded her doctrines on some *particular texts* of Scripture, which *they* think are capable of a *different interpretation*, whereas the truth is, that the Catholic *doctrine* was in existence long before those *texts* were written, and therefore the *texts* are to be explained by the *doctrine*, and not the *doctrine* by the *texts*. Thus, for instance, with respect to the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, it is commonly supposed that the Catholic view is founded entirely on the literal interpretation of the sacred words of institution—"This is my body—this is my blood." But this is certainly a very imperfect statement of the question; for surely there was *some* doctrine on the subject held by the first Christians before the date of St. Matthew's Gospel, when the history of the institution was first committed to writing. It is clear then,

that the Primitive doctrine of the Eucharist was not derived from the New Testament, but from an independent source of revelation—the oral instructions of our Divine Redeemer. The question is, then, What was this primitive doctrine? and on this point we have the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, confirmed by historical evidence, and proved by divine authority, that the doctrine of the Primitive Church was the same as the doctrine of the Catholic Church in the present day, and therefore the only true interpretation of the words of institution is that which agrees with the doctrine of the Church as held from the beginning.

The Catholic Faith is derived, not directly from the *writings* of the Apostles, but from their *teaching*, delivered and preserved by the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost, and therefore, when Catholics appeal to Scripture, it is not so much for the *proof* as for the *confirmation* of doctrine *already proved* by Divine Tradition. For the Bible is not the book in which these doctrines were *originally revealed* and delivered to the Church, but it is a collection of inspired documents, containing a series of authentic records illustrating the external progress of Christianity in the world, and including frequent allusions to the internal doctrines of our holy religion. This is not a mere *opinion*, but a plain *fact*, which it is impossible to deny. And the whole system of Christianity would have been *precisely the same* at the present day, *if the New Testament had never been written at all*. This is, indeed, exactly the case supposed by St. Irenæus in the latter part of the 2nd century, in opposition to the heresies of his time, and we find the modern Catholic line of argument fully adopted by him, and a few years afterwards by Tertullian, in which they both appeal to the constant *Tradition of the Church*, and the unbroken *succession of*

*Bishops* from the Apostles, in refutation of the doctrines of heretics, who always appealed to *their own interpretation of Scripture*, in opposition to the *doctrine of the Catholic Church*. It is often said, indeed, that oral tradition is a very uncertain ground of faith, as being so liable to corruption and misapprehension, and that, even if afterwards committed to writing, still the faith of Christians does not rest on the Fathers and Councils of the Church, but on the infallible Word of God. All this is perfectly true, and the objection is founded on a total mistake as to the Catholic doctrine on the subject. In fact, we fully admit that oral tradition is *not a ground of faith at all to us*, but only the *medium* through which the doctrines of the Apostles were *originally delivered* to the Church, and *subsequently recorded* by the Fathers and Councils. These are not the *sources*, but the *channels* of Apostolical doctrine—the source itself is *divine revelation*, and we rely upon the promises of *infallible guidance* by which the Church is effectually preserved from all error, and therefore we receive *all the doctrines* taught by her, whether written or unwritten, as of divine authority, in *whatever* way they may have been *first* communicated to the Church, or in *whatever* depository of truth they may *now* be contained. It is the office of the Church to preserve and to teach them with *infallible certainty*, and for this office she is fully qualified by the *divine presence* of the Holy Ghost, and therefore we believe these doctrines, *not* because the Fathers, or Councils, or Popes in their human capacity, teach them as *credible witnesses to a fact*, but because *God teaches them* by His own voice speaking to us in His Church. The *ground* of our faith is not *human testimony*, but *divine authority*. It is, then, a plain matter of fact, that our blessed Lord laid the foundation of His Church on earth by the preach-

ing of the Apostles, in accordance with His own command—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,"—"teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*" We find from the Acts of the Apostles, that they proceeded to fulfil their commission, and thus the *unwritten Word* was certainly the *first rule of faith* to the primitive Christians, and when the *written Word* was afterwards added to it, it cannot surely be maintained that the *authority of the former* was *superseded* or *merged into the latter*—and *both together* continued to exist in perfect harmony with each other, the former including the latter, but the latter not including the former. It must be remembered that our blessed Saviour gave no directions to his Apostles about writing a book at all, and therefore it is not to be expected that a complete collection of the doctrines of Christianity was to be found in any book, written by the Apostles themselves. But let us briefly analyse the contents of the New Testament. That Sacred Book consists of four parts—the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation. Now, in which of these parts might we expect to find a full account of Christian doctrine and practice? Not in the Gospels or memoirs of our Saviour's life and death, for our blessed Lord did not reveal the whole system of Christianity to his Apostles during his personal ministry on earth, but reserved it for the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost entered upon His office as the Divine Teacher of the Church; and besides, we know that the Gospels contain but a small portion of our Saviour's instructions, as we are informed by St. John. Nor is such an account to be found in the Acts of the Apostles, which consist chiefly of historical fragments, without professing to contain any new statement of doctrine. And surely we cannot

look for it in the Book of Revelation, which consists almost entirely of a prophetic vision of future events in the history of the Church. There remain only the Epistles, chiefly written by St. Paul, and what place do they hold among the inspired records of Christianity? We find, indeed, that the Apostles wrote several Epistles to different Churches and individuals, as occasion required—some of these Epistles have been *lost*, while others have been *preserved*,—and in them we find various *incidental allusions* to the principal doctrines of the Gospel, as well as other directions, some of a local and personal nature, others of a general and permanent character—but surely the very circumstances of the case preclude the expectation of a direct and formal statement of the *whole system of Christian truth*, as these letters were not written for the purpose of *teaching* the doctrines of religion for the *first* time, but with the view of affording instruction and edification on various points of faith and practice to those who *already believed them*. There is not the slightest intimation that these inspired writings profess to treat of *every* article of the Christian Faith, that they contain a *complete* Body of Divinity, or that any doctrine is to be *rejected* merely *because* it is *not* to be found in them. They evidently *presuppose* a full acquaintance with the doctrines of Christianity on the part of the persons to whom they are addressed, and without a previous knowledge of these doctrines, the Bible is really like *a text without a context*—having nothing to explain or elucidate its meaning. It is generally assumed, without any proof whatever, that all the doctrines of Christianity were afterwards committed to writing by the Apostles. This, however, is a mere gratuitous hypothesis—and like all such speculations, ought to be fairly tested on philosophical principles. One of

the most important of these tests is, that the proposed hypothesis must solve all the phenomena, and account for all the facts of the case. Apply this rule to the Protestant theory, and what is the result? What are the facts to be accounted for? There are various doctrines and practices, not to be found in Scripture, which have been received by the Church from its earliest ages as Apostolical Traditions—the Apostles themselves, in their written Epistles, confirm this explanation by their allusions to the unwritten Traditions which they delivered to the Churches—the Fathers of the Church unanimously attest the existence of these Traditions and their divine authority. What has become of the Traditions of the Apostles? Were all the Fathers mistaken? Was the whole Church deceived? How can we account for the origin of these Traditions, and their universal reception in the Church? These are difficulties which are utterly inexplicable on the Protestant hypothesis, but which are solved at once on the principles of the Catholic Church.

The truth is that Scripture itself is properly included under the name of Divine or Apostolical Tradition, which comprehends all that has been delivered to us by the Church from the Apostles, whether in the form of written documents, or of the general doctrines of Christianity; but we shall search in vain through all the records of Christian antiquity for any proof that the early Christians regarded the Bible as the only rule of faith, or that such a principle was ever held by the Church of Christ for 1500 years after the days of the Apostles. It is quite true that many of the Fathers speak in the highest terms (as Catholics do now) of the value, and even the perfection, of the Holy Scriptures; but it must be remembered that such general expressions are

merely of a relative nature, as asserting the infinite excellency of the inspired writings above all books of human composition, and cannot be understood as excluding any other source of divine revelation, or as affirming the complete sufficiency of the written Word for the guidance of the Church, much less of individual Christians. And that such was the real meaning of these statements, is evident from the fact, that those very Fathers who most highly commend the Sacred Scriptures are frequently those who most strongly assert the necessity of Tradition as a divine rule of faith, not only for the right interpretation of Scripture, but as a distinct source of doctrine and practice, thus showing that while they held (as the Church always holds) that nothing is to be believed that is *contrary* to Scripture, they did not hold (as Protestants now hold) that nothing is to be believed, that is *not contained* in Scripture, as they expressly declared that the Traditions of the Apostles are to be received as of equal authority with their Writings. Such was the general language of the Christian Church in every age—and it was not till the sixteenth century that a new principle was announced as the foundation of faith, when it was declared that “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.” And it is certainly an unquestionable historical fact, that the first Christian Churches were founded and organized by the Apostles, in complete possession of all the doctrines of Christianity, *before a single line of the New Testament was ever committed to writing*—nothing is more clear than this, that *the Church, and not the Bible*, was the *rule of faith* to these Christians—no *addition* was made to their faith by the *completion* of the Canon of Scripture—it was certainly not true, *before* the New Testament was written, (and yet this is the period to which all the texts alleged

in proof of it refer) that all saving truth is contained in Scripture, for then Christianity would have been useless—it was not true, even on Protestant principles, while the New Testament was *in progress*, or before all its books were written, for these contained only a *part* of the Christian Revelation, and it remains to be shown, *at what period* this proposition did *become* true, or how it could be *true at one time*, if it were *not true at another time*. Besides, it is impossible to deny that, after all, the Canon of Scripture can only be settled by *infallible authority*, for if it rests on private opinion, or on any human authority, we cannot be sure that we have the authentic, infallible Word of God. And yet this was certainly not done by the Apostles, nor for a considerable time after the death of all the Apostles. Where, then, did we get the Bible, and on what authority do we receive it? We got it *from the Catholic Church*, which has delivered to us the Holy Scriptures, together with the Divine traditions of the Apostles—yet Protestants *accept* *ne* (in a mutilated form) while they *reject the other*, though *both* resting on the *same authority* of the Church. It is well known that the several parts of Scripture were not collected into one volume in early times, and therefore we find that various books were received by some of the Churches and rejected by others, before the Catholic Church had pronounced any decision on their respective claims; but it does not appear that the Canon of Scripture was fixed and defined by the Church till the close of the fourth century, and afterwards finally confirmed by the Decree of Pope Gelasius and the Council of Rome, in the end of the fifth century. This is *all the authority that Protestants now have* for the Inspiration of the New Testament, and thus they *tacitly* admit the Infallibility of the Church, at a period when,



according to their own admission, all the elements of Roman doctrine were generally prevalent in the Christian world. It is quite plain, then, both in principle and in fact, that *the Bible is founded on the Church, and not the Church on the Bible*—the Bible derives all its authority from the sanction of the Church, without which it is of no authority whatever as a standard of religious doctrine. The faith of Protestants is *professedly* founded on the Inspiration of Scripture, but this does not determine *what books* are to be regarded as the component parts of Scripture—and yet the Canon of Scripture is certainly founded on the Infallibility of the Church, which is therefore the ultimate ground of all faith. For if we receive the Canon of Scripture on the authority or testimony of the Church of England, and if the Church of England receives it again on the authority or testimony of the ancient Church, or of ancient Ecclesiastical writers, then it follows, that the Canon of Scripture rests, on Protestant principles, merely on a *human, historical, and consequently, fallible* authority or testimony, and therefore there can be no certainty as to the Inspiration of the *book itself*, much less of the *private interpretation* of that book, which forms the ground of Protestant doctrine, so that Protestants *reject the foundation*, while they *retain* only a part of the *superstructure*, held together by such loose materials, that the entire building is in constant danger of falling to the ground. The great St. Augustine has left us an enumeration of the books of Scripture, which includes the same catalogue as that now received by the Catholic Church, and he elsewhere emphatically declares—"I would not believe the Gospel, unless the authority of the Church had persuaded me"—thus asserting this one principle, as the foundation of all faith. And it follows that *we have just the same autho-*

*ity for receiving the Council of Trent, as for receiving the Canon of Scripture*—the interval of time makes no material difference, for *both* events took place *long after* the death of the *inspired* Apostles, and both rest entirely on the divine authority of the Church—indeed the argument is much stronger in the *former* case than in the *latter*, as applied to the *Protestant* Canon—for it is an important fact, that the Protestant Canon does not agree, in all its parts, with the Sacred Books enumerated by any one ancient Council or Father of the Christian Church—it is composed of a fusion of materials, derived from Jewish and various Christian sources, finally settled by the authority of Luther, (though at first he rejected the Epistle of St. James, and probably also the Apocalypse) while the Catholic or Tridentine Canon is precisely the same with that previously defined in the General Council of Florence in 1439, and contains the same books which had been adopted by the Third Council of Carthage in 397, which were afterwards generally received by the Universal Church for nearly 1200 years before the adoption of the Canon of Luther. Indeed the Canon of Scripture was not settled by the Church of England till the year 1563, when the list of Canonical Books was first inserted in the 6th Article. It is evident that, till this period, there was no distinction made between these books and those now called Apocryphal, and accordingly we find that the latter are frequently quoted in the Homilies as inspired Scripture, and one of its books expressly described as “the infallible and undeceivable Word of God”—and yet the 35th Article approves of these Homilies as containing a “godly and wholesome doctrine,” while the 6th Article condemns the doctrine taught by them on this subject. These books, then, were considered as Canonical by the

Protestant Church of England during the reign of Edward VI., and the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but have since been placed on a different list, and this difference accounts for the circumstance of their appointment as Lessons to be read in Churches on several occasions, in the Book of Common Prayer. All these appointments were made within the period here referred to—the last selection of Apocryphal Lessons having been introduced into the Prayer Book in the year 1559, before the publication of the Thirty-nine Articles, and the final settlement of the Protestant Canon of Scripture.

Thus we find that the rule of faith laid down by our Lord Himself, the practice of the Apostles, the structure of the New Testament, the assertions of Scripture itself, and the constant teaching of the Church—all internal and external evidence—tend to overthrow the principle, that the Bible is the sole foundation of all Christian doctrine. And we may observe that, in point of fact, there is no Protestant Church or sect whatever, which has consistently applied this principle, and founded its system of doctrine on Scripture alone. The Church of England, indeed, adopts the principle in *theory*, but is unwilling to apply it in *practice*. Take, for instance, the case of *Infant Baptism*. Where is there any command or example of this nature to be found in the New Testament? It is vain to insist upon the analogy between Circumcision and Baptism, with those who totally deny its existence—it is vain to insist upon the necessity of Regeneration, with those who deny the instrumentality of Baptism for this purpose—it is vain to insist upon the probability of Infants being included in the households baptized by the Apostles, when we have no direct proof of the fact—and it is vain to insist upon the universal practice of the Church, when the appeal is made to Scrip-

ture alone. The truth is, that, on this principle, the Baptists have clearly the best of the argument, while all Protestant Pedobaptists are evidently inconsistent with their own rule. In the Rubric at the end of the Baptismal Office in the Prayer Book, it is declared that "it is certain by God's Word, that children which are baptised, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." This is, indeed, an extraordinary statement, with reference to the authority on which it is founded. Of course it is perfectly true, in the Catholic sense of "God's Word" as including Apostolical Tradition, but if this expression be used in the Protestant sense, as referring to Holy Scripture, it is evident that there is no real foundation for it, as there is no allusion whatever to such a doctrine in the Bible.—So it is, again, with the observance of the *first day of the week*, instead of the Jewish Sabbath. What authority have we for the change, in the New Testament? None whatever. We read, indeed, of the Christians meeting together on that day, and of a certain collection appointed to be made on that day, and we read that St. John "was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." But what have these allusions to do with the observance of the Sabbath? It is said, however, that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week. This is certainly the *fact*—but we want to know by *what authority* this change was made, and on this point, as well as the fact itself, Scripture is entirely silent. No satisfactory reason can be given, on Protestant principles, why the seventh day is not still to be kept holy, according to the Commandment of God, or why any other day should be observed in its place, if the Jewish Sabbath has been abolished by the Gospel of Christ. Whatever, then, may be the authority for the change, one thing is certain, that *there is*

*no foundation for it in the Bible.*—We may further take the case of *Episcopacy*, as an example of the same kind. It may be said, that this can be clearly proved from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and it must be admitted that there are some traces of it to be found in those Epistles. But, however clear this may be to English Churchmen, it is not so to Presbyterians and other Dissenters, all of whom think they can find their own system described there. The truth is, that whatever intimations of these practices there may be in the New Testament, to those who have *already* learned them from *other* sources, they are not really founded on *Scripture* at all, but on the divine authority of the Apostolical *Traditions*, on which ground they are received by the Catholic Church. It is impossible, indeed, on Protestant principles, to settle many important questions which are not clearly decided in Scripture, especially those relating to the temporary or permanent obligation of various practices. For instance, why do Protestants reject the practice of *Extreme Unction*, enjoined by St. James? (ch 5, v 14.) (It was indeed authorised by Parliament in the 1st Book of Edward VI., but repealed in the 2nd Book.) Or that of *washing one another's feet*, enjoined by our Lord himself? (John xiii. 14.)—or the *prohibition of the use of blood*, decreed by the Apostles, (Acts xv. 29.)—or of *water*, forbidden by St. Paul, (1 Tim. v. 23.)—or the *unlawfulness of an oath*, forbidden by our Lord and St. James, (Matt. v. 34, James v. 12.)—or the *community of goods*, practised by the first Christians, (Acts ii. 44.)—or the *salutation with a kiss* of charity, enjoined by the Apostles, (Rom. xvi. 16, 1 Peter v. 14.)—or the *gift of miraculous powers*, as possessed by the Primitive Church? (Mark xvi. 17, 1 Cor. xii. 10.) And again, why do Protestants generally *retain Baptism*

and the *Eucharist*, and some of them, *Confirmation*? Are these Sacraments *necessary to salvation*, or not? Why do they not administer the *Eucharist* as well as *Baptism* to *Infants*, as the Greek Church still does? How can they prove that *Baptism* is only to be administered *once*, and the *Eucharist* *frequently*, to the same persons? Why do they still preserve the Order of *Ministers* in their congregations? and why do they build *Churches* at all for public worship? There is no *Scriptural* authority for *observing* some of these things, and *neglecting others*. The Bible makes no such distinction between them, and thus, Protestants, by their very inconsistency, tacitly admit the necessity of some *other rule* than that of *Scripture alone*, while, instead of *following the Bible*, they really make *the Bible follow themselves*, by accommodating it to their own preconceived opinions. We are frequently recommended, indeed, to study the Bible alone, with an unprejudiced mind, without any previous system of doctrine, in order to know the whole will of God. But it may be safely asserted, that this is a rule which is never adopted by Protestants, all of whom have received the first elements of religious knowledge from the teaching of parents, or the lessons of a Catechism, or some other human system, so that the mind is *already* occupied with some form of doctrine, to which the Bible is afterwards submitted. Indeed, we may venture to say that this rule is quite impracticable, except, perhaps, in some extraordinary cases, in which persons have never had the opportunity of any religious instruction whatever, and certainly it is not desirable in such cases, for many obvious reasons. But the truth is, that before we can derive our religion from the Bible alone, on Protestant principles, there are many important and difficult questions first to be settled. We must be sure

that it contains the pure Word of God—that we have the genuine text in all its integrity, nothing added, altered, or omitted, notwithstanding all the various readings of different MSS. and Versions—that every part of every book is divinely inspired—that the English Translation is perfectly correct (though it was made in the very infancy of Biblical criticism, and not from the present standard texts of the Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament,)—and further, that we are fully competent to arrive at the true interpretation of the Sacred Volume by our own reason and common sense, or by immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God. All this, and much more, is necessary for every individual who is resolved to act on the principle of private judgment in forming his religious Creed from the Bible. And, after all, supposing him to be quite capable of assuming this responsibility, where is the exercise of faith in all this mental process? Faith is believing God, and “without faith it is impossible to please God.” What, then, is the *object* of faith? Not, surely, the mere *text or letter* of Scripture, which is only the *external* form of expression, but the true *doctrine or meaning* of Scripture, which is involved in the text. But how can any one be *sure* that he has ascertained the *true* meaning of Scripture, unless every private Christian is *personally infallible*; and how is it possible to reconcile the *certainty of faith* with the right of *private judgment*? There may, indeed, be human *opinion and conjecture and probability*, but there cannot be *divine faith* in such a principle, according to which human reason is the only judge of divine revelation, and the final court of appeal from the decisions of the Church in every subject of controversy. Divine truth is recognised, only as it appears to the mind of each individual, not as it exists in the mind of God. And yet it is evident that every argument in favor of

*private judgment* is capable of an infinitely *stronger* application in favor of *Church authority* in the interpretation of Scripture, for if a *single* individual be supposed capable of undertaking this task successfully, by virtue of his superior learning and piety, how much more confidence is justly due to the result of the *collective* wisdom of a learned and pious body of men, when applied to the same subject, even without considering the promises of Divine guidance by the teaching of the Holy Ghost! And, with these promises, are we not fully justified in placing the most unlimited confidence in the teaching of the Church? Which, then, is the *safest* course? Which has the *least difficulties*? to trust the guidance of an *infallible Teacher*, or of our own *fallible opinion* in matters of religion? And, even supposing there may be any possibility of doubt as to the Infallibility of the Church, we ask, What advantage is gained by rejecting the assistance of the Church of God, and assuming that each individual is wiser than the whole body? None, surely, but the liberty of erring, and the danger of falling into some fatal heresy. And such have always been the lamentable consequences of private opinion, applied to the Word of God. It cannot be otherwise, from the very constitution of the human mind. There never can be "one faith" in the Church, without an absolute submission to divine authority. The inevitable tendency of Protestant principles, both in theory and practice, must always be to Socinianism and Infidelity, and it is utterly impossible, on these principles, to refute any heresy whatever. For surely *one* man's opinion, in the abstract, is quite as good as *another's*, and where there is a *difference* of opinion as to the meaning of Scripture, how is it possible to, *decide* the question between them without the appointment of an Infallible Judge? With-



out this, every doctrine of the Bible is an open question, there is no real difference between truth and error, all religion is a mere matter of opinion, and consequently a mere matter of indifference, which must lead to universal scepticism. It is strange, indeed, that Protestants should allow themselves to be deceived with such palpable sophistry as that which is involved in the appeal to Scripture, for it is *not* Scripture itself, but the *interpretation* of Scripture which forms the ground of this appeal, and how can any human *fallible interpretation* of Scripture be regarded as an *article of faith*? Still, it is said, that *some* doctrines of Scripture are *necessary* to salvation, and *others* are *not*. But what right have we to reject *any part* of God's revealed truth, and to draw our own distinctions on the subject? And, after all, granting this principle, the question is, who is to apply it, and to distinguish between things *essential* and *non-essential*? Let any number of Protestants try the experiment of drawing up a list of such doctrines, and it will be seen at once, how widely they differ from each other, while they stake their eternal salvation on such a principle. One man reads the Bible, and sees there the doctrine of the *Trinity*, while another *cannot see it*—one man sees the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* there, but another *cannot see it*—one man sees *Seven Sacraments* there, another *sees only Two*, while another *sees none at all*. Is then the imperfect vision of each individual the only standard in matters of faith? Can it be really believed, that the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity depends, in any degree, on the genuineness of the Codex Montfortianus (in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin) the only important one containing the celebrated Greek text; 1 John v. 7, 8? Or that the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ depends on the high magnifying powers of the microscope applied to the Codex Alexandrinus (in the British Museum) in order to determine the

original reading of 1 Tim. iii. 16, in that ancient MS., and which it is now impossible to ascertain? And how can any Protestant make an *act of faith* in divine revelation, when each one maintains his own interpretation of Scripture to be the only true one, though directly contrary to all others? Surely there must be something essentially wrong in such a principle which can lead men into such different conclusions on the fundamental doctrines of religion, and which has always been the fruitful source of a 1 heresies in every age of the Church.

From all these considerations, then, we must come to the conclusion, that there is no real foundation for the opinion, that the Bible is the only source of revelation, or the only rule of faith to Christians. We find that the passages of Scripture alleged in proof of it are totally insufficient to establish the principle, while the *existence* of a definite system of Christian doctrine, distinct from Scripture, in every successive period, is a *fact* which is utterly irreconcilable with it, and consequently it must be regarded merely as a human tradition, unsupported by Scripture, and contrary to all historical evidence. The rule of faith prescribed by our blessed Redeemer was the authoritative teaching of a perpetual succession of Pastors in his Church; and it is evident that this rule has never since been altered or modified by any subsequent rule, that it was not intended to be of a local or temporary nature, to continue in force till the publication of the New Testament, but of universal and permanent obligation, "till the end of the world." And yet this rule, appointed by the Divine Head of the Church, is virtually rejected by Protestants, and another rule, which is never mentioned by Him, is substituted in its place. For it is perfectly clear, that the New Testament was not the *cause* but the *effect* of Christianity, which had been previously established by the preaching of the Apostles; and though our

*knowledge* of the *facts* of sacred history may be derived from these written documents, yet our *faith* in the *doctrines* contained in them must be founded on the same divine authority on which we receive the New Testament as an inspired book—the authority of the Church of Christ acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

What, then, is the true *foundation of faith*, according to the Catholic Church? It is THE WORD OF GOD, containing the *whole* revelation of His will, whether committed to *writing* by the Apostles, or delivered by their *teaching* to the Universal Church. All that God has revealed is the proper object of faith, without reference to the *mode* of communication, but to the divine *authority* on which it is founded. Whether it be *written* or *unwritten*, whether it be uttered by a voice from Heaven, or under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or by a direct vision or revelation from above, or by the message of an Angel, or in any other possible way,—*if God has spoken*, it is quite enough. It is usual, however, for the sake of perspicuity, to consider the *whole* Word of God as consisting of *two* parts—the one *written*, and the other *unwritten*, that is to say—SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION. It is a common mistake among Protestants, to suppose that Tradition relates to something of *human* origin, whereas nothing is received by Catholics, as an article of faith, but what is *revealed* by God, and proposed by the Church to all her members. Much confusion, indeed, has arisen from the various senses in which the word is employed. Sometimes it is used with reference to *doctrines*, and sometimes to *ceremonies*. Sometimes it relates to the *source* from whence the doctrine is derived and sometimes only to the *channel* through which it is transmitted. Traditions are generally divided by Theologians into three classes—Divine, Apostolical, and Ecclesiastical—the two former relating to *doctrines*, and the

latter to *ceremonies* only. *Divine* Traditions are those taught by our Lord himself—*Apostolical* Traditions are those taught by His Apostles. But as *both* classes, though originally delivered in a separate form, were committed to the Church by the Apostles, they are both usually included under the name of Apostolical. We find this distinction recognized by the Council of Trent, in its remarkable "Decree on the Canonical Scriptures," (Fourth Session) in which the whole Rule of Faith is clearly defined in the following language:—"This Sacred, Ecumenical, and General Council of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit, and presided over by the three Legates of the Apostolic See, having this object perpetually in view, that, errors being removed, the real purity of the Gospel may be preserved in the Church; which, promised aforetime by the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first proclaimed *with His own mouth*, and then commanded to be preached *by his Apostles* to every creature, as the source of all saving truth and moral instruction—knowing also, that this truth and instruction are contained in the *written books*, and in the *unwritten traditions*, which, having been received *from the mouth of Christ* Himself by the Apostles, or *from the Apostles themselves* under the dictation of the Holy Spirit have been handed down and transmitted to us—following the example of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with equal sentiments of piety and reverence, all the books, both of the *Old and New Testament* since one God was the Author of them both, and also the *Traditions* themselves, relating both to faith and to morals, inasmuch as they have been orally delivered by Christ, or dictated by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in continual succession in the Catholic Church." This is the public declaration of the Church in her last General Council. But, although the *two kinds* of Traditional doctrine are thus technically

distinguished, we find them included under the *same* term in the Creed of Pope Pius IV. "I most firmly admit and embrace the *Apostolical* and Ecclesiastical Traditions, and other observances and constitutions of the Roman Church." Such, then, is the meaning of Tradition, as an *equal and independent source of divine revelation* with Scripture, *both together* making up the *complete* rule of faith, and both interpreted by the voice of the Catholic Church. We do not mean that they are independent of each other as to their *origin*, but simply that they have come down to us in a distinct and *separate form*. In this sense, then, we hold that *Tradition* is just as much a *part* of the Word of God as *Scripture* itself, both coming from the Apostles by divine inspiration. And this is certainly the sense in which the expression, "the Word of God," is employed in Scripture itself. It occurs upwards of forty times in the New Testament, and it is a remarkable fact, that in not a single passage in which it is used can it be proved, that it ever exclusively means the *Written Word*, or Holy Scripture alone; sometimes, indeed, it means the Incarnate Word Himself, but more generally the *unwritten Word* or *Gospel preached* by the Apostles, and delivered to the Church by oral *Tradition*.

It has been said that Scripture, must be the only rule of faith, simply because there is no other rule in existence; but this objection is founded on some misconception as to the nature of divine Tradition, which relates solely to the doctrines taught by Christ and his Apostles, which, though not written by them, have been always preserved in the Church with the same care as that bestowed on the preservation of the writings of the Apostles, and both resting on the same authority. There is, indeed, an erroneous impression, that the name of Tradition is of a very vague and indefinite

nature, and that it may be applied to all sorts of doctrines which the Church may choose to establish, under so comprehensive a description. But this is totally incorrect. The Church utterly disclaims all power of introducing any new articles of faith, or of making any additions to the ancient Creeds, beyond her legitimate office of defining all controversies of faith, and deciding between the opposing claims of existing doctrines. She professes to hold nothing but what was always held, in principle at least, if not in actual development, by the Church from the beginning, and therefore the whole system of Traditional doctrine, interpreted by the Church is equally clear and definite with that of Scripture itself, interpreted by the same authority. Still, however, it may be said, that our blessed Lord condemns the Traditions of the Jews, as opposed to the Word of God. But what does this prove? Simply that there are *false* Traditions as well as *true* ones,—that *some* Traditions are contrary to the Word of God, and that those of the Pharisees, particularly referred to, were of this description; but surely there is no general principle here laid down on this subject, applicable to Christian as well as Jewish Traditions, and it is evident that this language conveys no indiscriminate censure of *all* Traditions, even those taught by Himself and his Apostles, for the same argument would equally prove that *all interpretations* of Scripture must be false, merely because our Lord condemns *one* erroneous interpretation of one of the Ten Commandments, as contrary to the Divine Law. And thus the Catholic believes all that God has revealed to His Church by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, while the Protestant believes all that appears to his own judgment to be contained in Scripture. Catholics hold that Scripture and Tradition are both equally divine, and that both equally need an infallible interpreter, whereas

the vital principle of Protestantism is the rejection of Tradition as a rule of faith, and the substitution of private interpretation of Scripture. It is therefore declared in the Roman Creed, "I admit Holy Scripture *according to that sense* which Holy Mother Church has held and does hold, to whom it belongs to *judge* of the *true sense* and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and I will never receive nor interpret it but according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." It may be said, indeed, that there are *spurious* Traditions as well as *genuine*, and that some doctrines have come down to us under the name of Tradition, which are erroneous and corrupt. This is certainly the case, and yet surely this forms no valid argument against *Tradition* as a source of doctrine, any more than against *Scripture* itself, for we know that there were *Apocryphal* Writings published under the name of Scripture, and how were they to be distinguished? By the *infallible authority* of the Church, and by the *same* authority the same distinction has been made between *true and false Traditions*, and thus the whole body of Christian doctrine has been perpetually preserved in its original integrity.

Here, then, we come to the great question of *Church authority*, and the *principle* on which it rests. But, before we proceed, we must briefly refer to the assertion so frequently made,—that in appealing to the New Testament for evidence on this subject, we are guilty of the sophism of reasoning in a vicious circle, by attempting to prove the Infallibility of the Church from the Inspiration of Scripture, and the Inspiration of Scripture from the Infallibility of the Church. This is the popular Protestant objection; and it is utterly unfounded in fact; besides, if it were true, such a mode of argument cannot consistently form any ground of objection, as the Inspiration of Scripture, at least of the New Testament, is pro-

fessedly admitted, on whatever grounds, by Protestants as well as by Catholics. Our proofs, then, even on this supposition, are derived from a source which is common to us both, and equally recognised as a divine standard of faith. The truth is, however, that in order to establish the great principle of Church authority, we do not refer to the Bible as an *inspired* book at all, but simply as an *historical* record of facts, it is not necessary to assume the Inspiration of Scripture, but only the divine origin of Christianity, and the divine authority of Christ Himself, as principles held by all professing Christians, and quite independent of any theory whatever with reference to the Church or the Bible. We hold that our blessed Lord was the Divine Founder of a new religion on earth—this is an incontrovertible fact in the history of the world; we believe that all his promises were infallibly true. This is fully admitted by all who call themselves Christians. We advance a step further, and we maintain that He gave certain powers to His Apostles, which guaranteed the perpetual existence of an Infallible Church—that some of these promises were afterwards recorded in the Gospels, although they would have been equally valid, if they had been contained in any other authentic document, or if they had never been written at all; and having thus established the divine authority of the Church from the promises of Christ, we are enabled to prove the Inspiration of the Canon of Scripture on the ground of the Church's authority, by which it has been fixed and defined. There is, therefore, no real foundation for the objection, that the Infallibility of the Church is merely founded on the private interpretation of certain passages of Scripture—as the truth is, that it is founded on the promises of Jesus Christ, as they were always understood by Christians as well as proved by the absolute necessity of such a gift, for the exercise of divine



faith, and for the preservation of truth and unity in the Church.

This great question is for ever settled in the words of the memorable promise of our Lord to the Apostle Peter, (Matt. xvi. 18.), "Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Without entering further upon the doctrine of the Primacy of Peter or the Supremacy of the Pope, as involved in this passage, we may observe that we have here the great charter of the Church's *perpetuity* and *infallibility*, granted by her Divine Founder to all future generations. The Church of Christ is a *divine* Society—divine in its origin and preservation—divine in its authority and constitution, and no power on earth has any right to interfere with the divine character of this spiritual society. It is not a *human institution*, but a *divine creation*. Our Lord Jesus Christ has founded a visible Church on earth, to continue for ever, with the full exercise of all the spiritual powers which He conferred upon it. We must insist upon it, as an incontrovertible fact in the history of the New Testament, that our blessed Lord has not merely founded a *religion*, but a *Church*, on earth, and that He has not only revealed certain *doctrines* to be believed, but has also established an external *society* of Pastors and Teachers, whom all the faithful are bound to hear and obey. And therefore, we must not allow ourselves to be perplexed with the various definitions which have been given of the Church by Protestant writers, or with the idea, that the true Church of Christ is an invisible body, consisting of all the elect people of God. Whatever degree of truth there may be in this view, we must observe that this is not the real question at issue. It is simply this—Has Jesus Christ appointed a visible body of living men, with perpetual authority to teach and to govern the Universal

Church in every age of the world?—and on this point the evidence of Scripture is perfectly clear and decisive. To this Church He gave an unlimited commission to preach His Gospel among all the nations of the earth, and promised His perpetual presence, when He pronounced these solemn words, (Matt. xxviii. 20,) “Lo ! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.” This promise is certainly in full operation at the present moment—it has been so, and shall be so, at every period of the Church’s past and future history, from the day of Pentecost till the Second Advent of Christ from Heaven. The promise is *absolute* and *unconditional*,—it was not given to the Apostles in connexion with their *writings*, as inspired authors, but to the Apostles and their successors for ever, in connexion with their office as a *teaching Church* in every age till the end of time ; and thus it secures the Universal Church from the possibility of error, by the Divine Presence of her Invisible Head. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Christ shall not pass away.” And how is the Church to be thus continually preserved from all error ? By the *infallible guidance* of God the Holy Ghost, according to the promises of Christ, (John xiv. 16, 26. xvi. 13.) “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth—He shall teach you all things,—He will guide you into all truth,” &c. Accordingly, this promise was fulfilled by the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Church on the day of Pentecost. It has been fulfilled ever since, and it is fulfilled at this very hour. Here, then, we ask the simple question—Is the Church of Christ *fallible* or *infallible* ? Is her authority *human* or *divine* ? It may be said, the Church’s authority was divine and infallible *at first*, but it is not so *now*—The Holy Ghost was in the Church in the *early ages*, but He is not so *now*—and thus, accord-

ing to this distinction, on which the whole Protestant system rests, we have now *no infallible guide* in religion, and consequently every one is left to his own *opinion* in the interpretation of the Bible. If the infallibility of the Catholic Church be denied, then it must follow either that every particular or national Church is infallible, or else that there is no such thing as certain truth in religion to be found on earth. No one, surely, will maintain the former, that a *part* of the visible Church has stronger claims than the *whole*, and it is evident that the very foundations of Christianity will be undermined by the latter alternative. If there be no divine and infallible authority in the Church, then there can be no such thing as the sin of schism, for what right has any *fallible body* of men to impose their own religious opinions on *others*, under pain of excommunication, and to denounce them as schismatics for refusing to consent to them? It cannot be justified by the analogy of *human societies*, which have a right to make rules for the regulation of their own members in temporal things; but the rights of *conscience* are too sacred to be interfered with by any other than a *divine* authority. And, indeed, it has been frequently proved, that there is not a single doctrine held by Protestants as distinguished from Catholics, which has not been completely refuted by Protestant themselves, in their controversies with each other. Consider, then, if you will reject the Church's divine authority, what will you have instead of it? Nothing but human opinions, speculations, and conjectures. No certainty, no reality, no truth, no faith.

We are fully justified, indeed, from the very *nature of faith*, in the expectation of an infallible guide in religion, and this expectation is strongly confirmed by the express *promises of Christ*. In fact, it cannot be denied that there must be infallibility *somewhere*, for there can be *no faith*

in God without a divine, and therefore infallible, *object* of faith. If God has revealed to us a religion from heaven, it follows that He has given us an Infallible Judge of Controversies, for we cannot surely be commanded to *believe*, when we do not know *what* to believe. The question is, *where* is this Infallibility to be found? Some say, in the *Bible*, for all that it contains is infallibly true. There is no doubt of it: but of what use is this to us, without an infallible method of deciding what are the real *doctrines* of the Bible? We must remember that, although the *text* of the Bible, is *divine* still the *interpretation* is only *human* and therefore *fallible*—consequently there can be no *certainty* in any of the doctrines of religion, and where there is no *certainty*, there can be no *faith*. Some suppose that the prerogative of Infallibility belonged only to the inspired Apostles, and that it ceased with their death, while others suppose that it virtually continued in the Church for several ages—that it cannot be exactly determined how long it lasted, but, at all events, that it is now no longer in existence, though it is an incontrovertible truth, that miraculous powers, and the other supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost, continued in the Church for several centuries, at least, after the times of the Apostles. It is admitted, then, that there was an *infallible* Church in the *beginning* of Christianity—but where is this Church *now*? when did she *become fallible*? The Holy Ghost was in the Church *at first*—but when did He *leave* her, and “take His everlasting flight” to heaven? At the death of the Apostles? or at any subsequent period? But what authority is there for this statement? and how can it be reconciled with the promise of Christ, that the Holy Ghost would abide with the Church “*for ever*.” Certainly the rule of faith, in ancient times, was the voice of God speaking in his Church, and determining all controversies

of faith with infallible certainty; and the very idea of the Church of Christ was that of a living incorporation of all the offices of God the Holy Ghost, teaching and defining every article of doctrine with divine authority. *Is the Holy Ghost in the Church, now, or not?* If *not*, what has become of the promises of Christ? Is there any thing in them of a temporary nature, limited to particular times and circumstances? What mean the words "for ever"—"always, even to the end of the world"? And has not the Church always understood them in this sense? And how else is it possible to preserve the faith in its primitive integrity, free from all human corruption? But if the Holy Ghost is *still* in the Church on earth, *where* is that Church *now* to be found, to which the promises of Christ belong? *There is only one Church which claims them* in their full sense, professing to be infallibly guided by the Holy Ghost, and this alone might be sufficient to decide the point. She alone has remained *always the same* from the beginning, the genuine representative of the Infallible Church founded on the day of Pentecost. She alone has *never separated* from *any other* Church on earth, while *all other* Churches have *separated from her*, some of which continue to this day, while other sects, in earlier times, such as the Arians and Donatists, (the latter of which bears so striking a resemblance to the modern English Church) though forming numerous and powerful bodies in opposition to the Catholic Church for a length of time, have long since ceased to exist in their collective capacity. But Protestant communities do not, and cannot, claim this infallible guidance—their very existence is founded on the denial of it. And thus Protestantism begins with the rejection of the greatest blessing that ever was given to man, the blessing of an Infallible Church, which is superseded by the exercise of private judgment. It begins, as it

were, with extinguishing the light of the Sun in the heavens, and then bidding us use our eyes in the dark. So completely is this inestimable gift of God rejected, that the Church of England not only expressly denies the Infallibility of General Councils, in her Articles, but deliberately asserts the total failure of the promises of Christ by the universal corruption of the Church for several centuries. We refer especially to the well known passage in the Homilies, which states that "laity and clergy, learned and unlearned—all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children, of *whole Christendom* (an horrible and most dreadful thing to think) have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices most detested of God, and most damnable to man, and that by the space of EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS AND MORE." This period extends from the 8th to the 16th century, during which the very existence, even of an Invisible Church, seems to be entirely denied in this sweeping language, Crammer himself however appears to have reduced this period within 500 years before the Reformation, in order to reconcile it with his views of Prophecy and the interpretation of the Apocalypse. Accordingly, he held that the commencement of the Apostacy in the Church took place after the expiration of the Millennium, in the 11th century, and consequently he dated this event from the time of Pope Nicholas II., and his condemnation of the errors of Berengarius in the doctrine of the Eucharist. He says—"the open Church is now of late years fallen into many errors and corruption, and the holy Church of Christ is secret and unknown, seeing that *Since these 500 years hath been let loose, and Antichrist reigneth.*" But he is not so precise in other statements, when he speaks of "these four or five hundred years"—and again—"since Berengarius's time by Nicholas II., Innocentius III., and others of their sort," &c.

Such is the ground on which the English Church attempts to justify her own schism, as founded on the Apostacy of the Catholic Church ; and on this ground it follows that the word of Christ has not been fulfilled, that the gates of hell have prevailed against His Church, that Christ Himself has forsaken her, and that the Holy Ghost has left her to fall into the most awful errors.

But the Church of England also claims some kind of religious authority, for it is declared in the 20th Article, that " the Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith." We need not enter particularly into the history of this remarkable clause, which is involved in much obscurity ; it was certainly not originally a part of the Article, in the reign of Edward VI., but it was inserted in some copies in the early part of the reign of Elizabeth, and most probably by the Queen's Privy Council, without the sanction of Convocation. There is some difficulty, however, in reconciling this statement with the following part of the Article, which limits this authority by declaring, that " it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another." Indeed it is not very clear with what view these words were introduced into the Article. Certainly the Catholic Church has always maintained the same principle, and with this advantage, that she *cannot* act contrary to Scripture, because she is under the guidance of the same Holy Spirit, by whom " God's word written " was inspired. But, according to Protestant principles, how is the rule laid down in the Article to be applied ? Who is to decide whether the Church's judgment is contrary to Scripture, or not ? Certainly not the *Church herself*—for there is an appeal allowed from the *Church* to the *Bible*, and the the Church surely cannot be judge in her *own cause*. This

statement, then, recognises the existence of a superior authority, which is competent to overrule the decisions of the Church. It must therefore relate to *individual opinion*, to which all controversies are thus ultimately referred, and so, according to this principle, every individual is fully justified in separating from the Church, if her doctrines are not in accordance with *his own views* of the meaning of Scripture. Such is the present anomalous state of things in the Church of England. But what is the *nature* of the authority thus claimed for the national Church? Not a *divine* or *infallible* authority, this is not asserted—she does not profess to be infallible—and if she did, the absurdity of the claim would be manifest at once. It must therefore be a *human* and *fallible* authority, either derived from the constitution of a *religious society*, or from the *Ecclesiastical Supremacy* of the Crown; and whatever spiritual authority the Anglican Church may claim in *theory*, she has certainly not the *power* to exercise it in *practice*. That power is reserved to *Her Majesty in Council*, as the prerogative of the Royal Supremacy established by King Henry VIII., and Queen Elizabeth. This power is not professed to be founded on *divine* authority, but on the *political* connexion between Church and State in England. It cannot, therefore, be held to bind the conscience in matters of faith, and no Christian can be supposed to regard its decisions with any degree of *religious* obedience. And accordingly, when the Anglican Church attempted to force her decisions on the Protestant people of England, they rebelled against her authority, and pleaded the rights of conscience—having herself separated from the Mother Church, and having nothing left to support her but human power, her children refused to obey, and defended their conduct by her own example, and thus the Established Church, which at first included the whole population, now consists of little



more than one-third part of the people of England, as appears by the Report of the last Census of the country. We have seen, then, that the Rule of Faith cannot be the Bible, *interpreted by every one for himself*, for such a rule must only lead to human, fallible, and contrary opinions inconsistent with divine faith. And it certainly was not the rule in early times, nor in the history of the conversion of nations to Christianity in later times. Besides, it is utterly inapplicable to the circumstances of mankind, and especially before the invention of the art of printing and the diffusion of Education; and even in the present day, there are comparatively few who are intellectually or morally capable of applying such a rule. And yet Christianity is a universal religion, intended for every one, and therefore its rule of faith must be clear and obvious, as well as certain and perfect, in order to be suited to the capacity of every one. Further, this rule cannot be the Bible, *interpreted by the Church*, unless that Church be infallible, for otherwise it may lead us into errors, and therefore cannot be an object of faith, even though its decisions may be final and absolute. The Church of England, indeed, is generally understood to maintain this principle, but it is quite inapplicable to practice. She professes to rest upon the interpretation of the *Primitive Church*, and much stress has been laid upon the Canon of 1571, which lays down such a rule for the doctrine of Preachers, and which provides—"that they shall teach nothing to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and what the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops have collected from the same." But this appeal to the Primitive Church is a mere shadow, for we have no direct means of ascertaining what interpretations of Scripture were generally held

in those times, as these are the very matters in controversy at the present day; and if the rule be fairly applied, it must be fatal to the claims of the Anglican Church. Practically, however, this rule must refer, not to the Primitive, but to the Anglican Church herself, as a "particular or National Church," according to the 34th Article, and the question still arises, on what authority are we to receive her interpretations of Scripture? Not on any divine and infallible authority, for she does not assert this, and if not, it must be only on the ground of a *respectful deference*, which has no power to *bind the consciences* of her members. But, in fact, the law has decided that this power belongs to the Queen, and not to the Church, so that all further question as to the spiritual authority of the Church is at an end, and it is finally settled that *the Church of England has no power*, not only to enact Canons in Convocation, but to *decide controversies on matters of faith*. And, indeed, it seems probable that from the beginning of the present Religious Establishment, "the Church" in the 20th Article really meant "the Queen" of England. For, as to "rites and ceremonies," the Church, as a spiritual body, had no such power, this right being expressly reserved by the Act of Uniformity to Queen Elizabeth "with the advice of her Commissioners or Metropolitan," and afterwards exercised by the "Advertisements" of 1564; and as to "controversies of faith," this power also belonged to the High Commission Court, appointed by the Act of Supremacy, from whose decision there was no appeal, but with the reservation of leaving the determination of any future controversies in religion to Parliament, with the consent of convocation. And it is well known that all Ecclesiastical jurisdiction in England was derived entirely from the Sovereign, thus practically illustrating the nature of the Royal Supremacy, as a blasphemous usurpation of the rights of

Christ and of His Vicar on Earth. This was distinctly asserted by the English Sovereigns, and fully admitted by the English Prelates of the Reformed Church. Thus Cranmer says: "A Bishop may make a Priest by the Scripture, *and so may Princes and Governors* also, and that by the authority of God committed to them." The form of the Bishop's Letters Patent, in the time of Edward VI., runs thus: "We name, make, create, constitute and declare N., Bishop of N., to have and to hold to himself the said Bishopric during the time of his natural life, if for so long a time he behave himself well therein, and *we empower him to confer orders, &c., &c., &c., in place of us, in our name, and by our royal authority.*" And, in conformity with these views, the Act (1 Edward VI. c. iii.) declares that "*all authority of jurisdictions, spiritual and temporal, is derived and deduced from the King's Majesty, as Supreme Head of the Church and Realms of England and Ireland, unto the Bishops and Archbishops,*" &c. Such was the Royal Supremacy 300 years ago, and such it is now in the State Church of England. It cannot surely for a moment be supposed that there is any religious faith involved in the exercise of submission to such authority in questions of doctrine, and it follows that the Church of England does not possess any means of deciding between religious truth and error, and therefore cannot be under the influence of the Infallible Teacher which Christ has promised to His Church.

Now it is evident that there must always be a perpetual collision between *private judgment* and *Church authority*, unless the latter be so defined, as in effect to deny its reality; for if this authority be strictly enforced, then, as its origin is only human, it is an *usurpation* of the divine right of liberty of conscience, and therefore it may be *lawfully resisted*, and *separation* from the Church will become a *religious duty*. The old Puritans

saw this clearly, and acted consistently with their principles, when they denied the right of Princes to interfere in religious questions; but the Established Church, in bondage to the State, still continued "teaching with the stammering lips of ambiguous Formularies, and inconsistent precedents, and principles but partially developed," professing to be invested with a divine commission, but in reality deriving all her claims from human authority. And there is a similar opposition between the exercise of *private judgment* and all *confessions of faith*, as tests of doctrine; and every consistent advocate of the former must contend for the abolition of the latter. Like John Fox, the Martyrologist, they will object to subscribe to *any* standard of faith except the Greek Testament, in which Arians and Socinians will fully agree with them. And this very principle was distinctly expressed in a bill proposed to the British Parliament, for this purpose, in the year 1772, prepared by a well known dignitary of the Church of England, which began with asserting "the undoubted right of Protestants to interpret Scripture for themselves," and then complained of the violence done to this principle by requiring subscription to "Articles and Confessions of Faith drawn up by fallible men." In fact, all Formularies of religion must be regarded, on Protestant principles, as articles of *peace*, and not of *faith*, according to the latitudinarian principles of most of the English Divines of the last century. And so it was declared by an eminent Protestant Bishop of the last century, that we could tell *where* the doctrines of Christianity were to be found, but we could not undertake to decide *what* they were. "They are contained," he says, in one of his Charges, "*in the Bible*, and if in the reading of that Book, your sentiments concerning the doctrines of Christianity should be different from those of your neighbours, you must not dissent from those of the Church, be

persuaded on your part that Infallibility appertains as little to you as it does to the Church." So then, the difficulty still remains where it was, and all hope of arriving at the *certainty* of religious truth must be abandoned. The Trinitarian Protestant appeals to the Bible in *proof* of the Divinity of Christ, while the Unitarian appeals to the same authority in *denial* of it—each maintains his own interpretation to be the *true* one—there is no Infallible Judge to decide between them, and *both are equally right*, on their own principles. There is no real alternative, then, between the *principle* of *Infallibility* and the *principle* of *Infidelity*. For if the Holy Spirit be not in the Church at this moment, infallibly guiding her in every doctrine, and if all Christians are not bound to submit their faith to the decision of this Infallible Church, then we are thrown back upon human teaching and human authority, and the consequence of the denial of this principle is the rejection of all divine faith, and the substitution of probable opinion for infallible certainty. But the English Churchman will say, that the Church is the judge of controversy. *What Church?* The Church of *England*? By what *authority*? Is she *Infallible*? No. Then she may be *wrong* in her judgment. She is only a *part* (let this be granted) of the Universal Church, in opposition to the rest of it, and cannot therefore justly claim the promises, which belong to the whole body. On *what*, then, does her authority rest? On her *Apostolic Succession*? But this *alone* is not sufficient, supposing her to be in possession of it; as other Churches, in ancient and modern times, have the same succession, and yet are in a state of Schism. Others will defend her authority as the *Established Church*, or as a *religious Society*, but these are merely human distinctions, and have no real force in religion. The Presbyterians form an *Established Church* in Scotland,

and yet surely we are not bound to join them on this account. But it is said that Dissent from the Established Church is inconsistent with true allegiance to the Sovereign, as the Head of the Church. Talk of a *divided allegiance* indeed! Yes! it *is* divided between *temporal* and *spiritual* authority—just in the same sense as it was divided by our blessed Lord, between “the things that are *Cæsar’s*, and the things that are God’s.”—And yet, in another sense, it is *undivided* too—for we acknowledge an undivided temporal allegiance to the Queen of England, and an undivided spiritual allegiance to the Vicar of Christ. It is needless to dwell on the claims of a religious *society*, as no one will maintain that this alone has any authority over any except its own members, who choose to submit to its rules, while they disclaim any obedience to an exclusively divine right on the part of their Society. And such is the true position of the Church of England, notwithstanding her political privileges in the mother country—she cannot be regarded otherwise than as a *voluntary association*, like any other Protestant sect, and possessing no *spiritual* authority over the consciences of the people. The conclusion then, is—that there must be *one Infallible Church* on earth, or else there is *no certainty* of Divine truth at all.

Which, then, is the *true Church* of Christ? There is no other Church on earth which can come into competition with the claims of the Roman Catholic Church, founded by our Lord upon the Prince of the Apostles, and preserved from every schism and heresy in its original unity, with an uninterrupted succession of Pontiffs from St. Peter down to Pope Pius IX. She alone possesses all the marks of the true Church laid down in the Creed—“I BELIEVE ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH.” She is *one* in principle, in doctrine, in worship, united in one communion with one visible Head

over all the world, and it is surely an obvious truth, that if the Church of Christ be a divine institution, she must be *one*, for there cannot be *two or more* Churches, holding different and opposite doctrines, and all claiming to be the true Church. There is "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," says the Apostle Paul. So says St. Cyprian—"There is one God, and one Christ, and one Church, and one See founded by the voice of the Lord upon Peter." In primitive times, "the multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul," all united together in one holy bond of faith and love—and so they are still in the Catholic Church. Those who have separated from her have never been able to unite among themselves. They cannot fix upon one common name to represent their agreement in doctrine. They do not consist of *one body*, but *many sects*, having no communion with each other. It is, indeed, a favorite theory with some writers, that the Church is *one body* composed of *three parts*, the Greek, the Latin, and the Anglican. But surely these are *three bodies*, and not one. They are all opposed to each other. The Greek and the Anglican agree in one point—in rejecting the Pope's supremacy—in almost every other point they differ. For the Greek agrees with the Latin in holding the doctrines of Transubstantiation, Sacrifice of the Mass, Seven Sacraments, Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, and other doctrines rejected by the Anglican, as defined in the Council of the Greek Church, held at Jerusalem, (or rather Bethlehem,) in the year 1672. Besides, it is a notorious fact, that both those bodies have *separated* from the Latin or Roman Church, to which they formerly belonged, and therefore they cannot be regarded as *independent* Churches, but as *schismatical* communions.

Again,—the Roman Church is *holy*—in the *means* of holiness and in the *fruits* of holiness—in the tendency

of her doctrines and the profession of her members—by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon all her children, through the instrumentality of her divinely appointed Sacraments. We cannot, indeed, always judge of the sanctity of a Church by the lives of its members, but surely the Catholic Church stands immeasurably high in this respect, in comparison with all others. Look at the strict and devout lives of Catholics, as compared with the careless, ungodly lives of Protestants! Look at their exact attention to the duties of religion—their deep love and zeal for the interests of the Church—their reverence and affection for her Priests, her Sanctuaries, and her Altars—their frequent attendance upon her services, and their liberal contributions to her support. Look at the laborious lives and self-denying devotedness of her Ministers. Look at the magnificent Temples and costly decorations of the sacred structures consecrated to God—the perpetual succession of her public devotions of Sacrifice, Prayer, and Praise—the Churches almost constantly open from morning till night for the reception of worshippers—the solemnity and impressiveness of her Ritual—the frequency of her Fasts and Feasts—her inestimable practice of secret confession—the perfect unity and brotherly love of her members—her joyful, living, real communion with the glorified Saints in heaven, and her affectionate sympathy with her less perfect departed members in the intermediate state of purification. Look at all these, and compare them with the opposite characteristics of Protestantism, and then judge which of them has the best right to the name of *holy*. Often, indeed, have I been painfully struck with the contrast; and while observing the coldness, irreverence, and rude familiarity of Protestant worship, I have secretly longed to join in the deep devotion, the profound reve



rence, and the soothing tenderness of Catholic worship, with all its holy associations and heavenly aspirations.

Again—the Roman Church is *Catholic*—Universal—the Church of all times and all lands—the Church of the Apostles and Martyrs, and Fathers, and all the Saints of every age—in possession of a name which is nearly 1500 years older than that of Protestant, not derived from any human sect, which is limited to a particular time or place, but from the comprehensive character given to her by her Divine Founder, in opposition to all human and local Societies. Others call themselves Protestants, and the name includes every variety of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Arians, Socinians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Armenians, &c., &c., all of whom are thus classed together by a common name, which indicates not what they *believe*, but what they do *not believe*. It is clear that the Anglican Church is not the Catholic Church, for she herself never assumes the name in any of her public documents, and her own members disclaim it by calling themselves Protestants—she cannot be said to be Universal, for she is limited to the British dominions—nor can she be said to be a part of the Catholic Church, for she is separate from, and in opposition to, the Roman Catholic Church in all countries, as well as from the Greek and every other Church. She professes, indeed, to maintain some degree of sympathy with the Church of Rome, while she declares (in the 30th Canon) that it was not her purpose “to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in all things which they held and practised.” But, unhappily, this is a sympathy which is utterly inconsistent with the unity of the Catholic Church. How tenaciously did the ancient Fathers of the Church adhere to the glorious name of Catholic, as distinguished from all heretical sects! Their language

was that expressed by a Bishop of the fourth century :—  
 “Christian is my name—Catholic is my surname.” We find  
 the following advice given us by St. Cyril of Jerusalem—  
 “Should you come into a city, do not merely inquire for  
 the House of God, for so heretics call their places of  
 meeting—nor yet ask for the Church—but say, the Ca-  
 tholic Church, for this is the proper name.” But most  
 remarkable on this point, is the testimony of St. Augus-  
 tine—“Among the many considerations that bind me to  
 the Church, is the very name of Catholic, which, not  
 without reason, in the midst of so many heresies, this  
 Church alone has so retained, that although all heretics  
 wish to acquire the name, should a stranger ask where  
 the Catholics assemble, the heretics themselves will not  
 dare to point out any of their own places of meeting.”

And lastly, the Roman Church is *Apostolic*, not merely in  
 holding the *doctrines* of the Apostles—for this is an inter-  
 nal mark, which requires independent proof—nor in  
 preserving the succession of *Bishops* throughout the  
 world, from same source, for this belongs to some other  
 bodies, that are separate from her,—but in her union  
 with the *Apostolic See*, in the succession of her Popes in  
 the chair of St. Peter, according to the sense in which  
 this term was employed by the ancient Fathers of the  
 Catholic Church. And it should be remarked, that this  
 note of “Apostolic” was introduced into the Nicene Creed  
 by the same Council (Second General Council of Con-  
 stantinople, A. D. 381), which decided in one of its Canons,  
 that the Patriarch of that Imperial city should take rank  
 immediately *after the Bishop of Rome*, thus tacitly admit-  
 ting the Primacy of the latter in the Church of God, a  
 distinction which was acknowledged by Fathers and  
 Councils as exclusively belonging, by divine right, to the  
 See of Rome, as the centre of Ecclesiastical unity, and  
 the source of spiritual authority. The Church of Eng-

land professes to receive with peculiar reverence the decrees of the first four General Councils, and yet it is a remarkable fact that every one of these Councils contains a clear and unequivocal testimony to the Supremacy of the Pope in the Universal Church—the more conclusive because it is not expressed in the form of a dogmatic definition, but of an incidental recognition of an established doctrine—it is not enactive of a new principle in the constitution of the Church, but simply declarative of a fact admitted by all Christians—and thus it was afterwards stated by Pope Gelasius, (in the Council of Rome, held in the year 494,) that “the Roman See hath not its pre-eminence over other Churches from any ordinances of Councils, but from the words of Our Lord and Saviour in the Gospel, “Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church,” &c.

Such, then, are the four marks of the true Church, which decisively prove the claims of the Church of Rome to this glorious title. The “Church is Roman because her visible head is Bishop of Rome. She is Catholic because her spiritual dominion extends throughout all nations, even to the extremities of the world.” She is “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.”

But I must not enter further into this subject. I have only endeavored to make some observations on the *general principles* which alone can lead to a right conclusion in finding the true Church of Christ. I have not gone into the consideration of the *particular doctrines* of the Catholic Church, as this would be far too extensive to be treated within the limits of a single Essay. Besides, I wish rather to direct your attention to one short and easy method of deciding all controversies in religion. It is simply this,—THE CHURCH IS DIVINE, *therefore* all she

teaches is true, certain, and infallible. There is *one Church* founded by our blessed Lord, which has continued to the present time, and will continue to the end of the world. To this one Church He has promised the perpetual guidance of the Holy Ghost, by which alone she is secured from all possibility of error. It follows, therefore, that *every doctrine* taught by that Church as an article of faith, must be received on *divine authority*, without the necessity of submitting it first to the exercise of reason and argument. The very principle on which this process rests is that of implicit faith in the Word of God, not in the *Church itself*, as an abstract idea, but in the *voice of God* speaking through the Church by His Holy Spirit. We are not required to examine each *separate* doctrine, as if we were competent to decide on its truth or falsehood, by comparing it with our *own views* of the meaning of Scripture, or by tracing it through the medium of *historical evidence*. All this is mere *human* testimony, and there is surely no principle of *faith* involved in such investigations. Having once arrived at the conclusion that Christ has given us an Infallible Guide in religion, it is surely the highest exercise of reason to submit reason to revelation, to follow this divine guide in every thing, and to believe and adore, instead of arguing and disputing against, the incomprehensible mysteries, which are thus proposed to our acceptance. And I must be allowed to observe, that much of the opposition which exists among Protestants to the Catholic Church arises from total ignorance of the real nature of the Catholic doctrine. It cannot be denied that there are very few Protestants who possess an accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with the doctrines of the Catholic Church, as their information is almost entirely derived from popular traditions which must lead to erroneous conclusions on the most

important of all subjects. I am not aware that I have ever heard a Protestant statement, or read a Protestant book, which did not contain some gross misrepresentation of Catholic doctrine. There is, indeed, an almost invincible repugnance in the minds of most Protestants to the Roman doctrines and ceremonies, which they regard at a distant view with an awful curiosity, and though they may admire the mysterious structure of the system, and wonder at its powerful effects on the minds of men, still they consider it, on the whole, as a gloomy superstition, and think it almost unworthy of their notice, as rational Christians, seriously to inquire into the evidences of its divine origin. Let me earnestly recommend you, then, always to take your views of Catholic doctrine, from the public documents of the Church itself, or from the authorised expositions of Catholics themselves, either in their writings or discourses, and not from the controversial statements of Protestant Divines, which cannot fail to exhibit an imperfect and distorted view of the whole system.

And now, my beloved brethren, I must conclude this Letter. The sacred connexion that has subsisted between us during the last eight years, is now at an end forever. I am grieved to think that I must separate from you. I have loved you well, and I love you still. I am bound to you by the strongest ties of affection and gratitude, and I feel that it is the sorest trial to part with those from whom I have invariably received the greatest kindness and attention, and many of whom I know to be earnest and zealous in the cause of religion, according to their views of its nature. And I, too, have felt strongly attached to that religious system in which I was educated, and which is so closely connected with all my early associations, and with my tender recollections of former times. My heart fondly clings to the memory

of the past, and to the happy years of Christian friendship which I have enjoyed, while engaged in the active duties of the ministry among you, and in my native country. Yes! I feel that the Church of England has the strongest claims upon my veneration and obedience—except the one thing needful—that of divine authority. But I know that mere attachment to any system is quite a different thing from a conviction of its truth, and we must not allow our religious faith to be regulated by our private feelings. I know well, by experience, the difficulty of shaking off the effects of early prejudice and preconceived views on religion. It has taken me nearly half my life to emancipate myself from the bondage of human opinions and Protestant traditions, and to submit myself entirely to divine teaching and Catholic truth. I have long been engaged in the search of truth, and, through divine grace, I have found it at last in “the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of truth.” I am well aware of the deep solemnity and the awful responsibility of the step which I have taken—it has not been adopted without mature deliberation—it is the result of many a long year of anxious thought and earnest prayer—I have counted the cost, and I am prepared to incur it, with the help of God. I have fully looked at the consequences of such a step on the temporal prospects of myself and my family, and I am ready to undertake the risk for the sake of Christ and of his truth. I am deeply sensible that religious convictions are entirely independent of all worldly interests and private affections, and when they are really sincere, no earthly motive can be allowed to interfere with them. I trust that I have not so learned Christ, as to shrink from shame and contempt, and poverty, for his sake. The Cross may be heavy to bear, but the comfort of my Saviour’s love and sympathy is sufficient to support me under it. I

have left all to follow Him, and I enjoy the consolation of the precious promise that "He will never leave me nor forsake me."

But though I have no doubt that you will give me credit for sincerity, you will think me sadly mistaken in my views. I have here attempted, though very feebly and imperfectly, to explain them, and the grounds of them, and the attempt is an appeal to yourselves. If they are true for me, they are equally true for you. It is because I love your souls, that I wish to be instrumental in saving you from the dangerous delusions that abound in the Christian world, and in leading you to consider, with all seriousness and humility, the claims of the true Church of Christ, as the only sure guide to eternal salvation. And I wish it to be distinctly understood, that my object is not to excite religious controversy, but to direct serious enquiry into the true character of the Catholic Church. Oh! it is too sacred a subject to be approached with any other feelings but those of solemn attention and earnest prayer, with a realising sense of the presence of God and of the value of eternity. I think I need hardly say that I cannot possibly have any personal motive for doing so, and nothing but a deep conviction of the truth could ever have induced me to separate from those to whom I am so strongly attached, and for whom I shall ever entertain the warmest sentiments of respect and affection. I have therefore ventured to lay before you, a portion of my own religious history, and to suggest a train of thought which has long taken possession of my own mind, on the most important subject that can engage the attention of any human being. But I am fully persuaded that no success can be expected from any controversy, unless the mind is in a proper disposition to receive the evidence of Divine truth. No one can be a true Catholic without a proper spirit of humility and sub-

mission to Divine authority ; and so long as pride and self-will form a part of corrupt human nature, there can be no difficulty in accounting for the origin and progress of Protestantism in the world. I am quite aware that it is not fashionable to be a Catholic—the profession of it is not generally associated with worldly rank and respectability, in these countries—and perhaps not with that high degree of intellectual cultivation and mental refinement which exist in the Catholic countries of Europe. But this is merely an accidental circumstance, and has no connexion with the truth of the Catholic religion. True Catholics are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. We must go back to the beginning—we must commence our lessons in Christianity with the teaching of the Apostles, and not of the Reformers,—and thus returning to the Primitive faith, we shall soon discover that the Protestant system is merely founded on human tradition, while the Catholic system is founded on divine revelation. There is no safety but in submitting entirely to the teaching of God's Holy Spirit in His Church, and in the complete surrender of human reason to the divine rule of faith which He has appointed for the perpetual preservation of His truth on earth. For my own part, my choice is finally made—it is fixed and sealed for eternity. I am done for ever with all the doubt and uncertainty of Protestant principles. I have embraced the whole system of God's revealed truth with all my heart and soul ; and I am firmly resolved, by the grace of God, to live and to die in the bosom of His Holy Catholic Church.

I remain, my dear Friends,

Your faithful Servant in Jesus Christ,

EDMUND MATUREN.