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Third Conversation

Familiar Conversations On Romanism

The Word Of God And The Church

N*. Well, James, you expect M., as it was arranged.

James. Yes, sir; he will be here, no doubt, directly. Pray sit down, sir.

N*. Thank you. How are you getting on?

James. I find my spirit happy and at peace. I enjoy the word now with Mary and the children. I feel I am very weak, but I am conscious that my peace rests on Christ's perfect work, and as to the certainty of it, on God's own word; while I enjoy it within in my own soul. It makes me wonderfully happy, for I see it all flowing from God's blessed love. I know He loves me, unworthy as I am, but then, I have no difficulty in believing it because of Christ. I hope I may be able to glorify Him through His grace.

N*. The Lord be praised, James; and this is but the earnest of a more perfect enjoyment still of what now we know in part and see through a glass darkly. Our present Christian joys have the stamp of eternity on them.

James. Yes, sir; poor as our feelings are, we know that what makes us happy now will make us still more happy for ever. We shall know then better what gives us our joy now. But He who has brought me to peace is the one who loves me, and whom I hope to see in glory.

N*. And did your mind get clear the last time as to purgatory?

James. It could not but be clear when once one knows Christ's precious blood cleanses from all sin. I had no thought that they had such strange notions that so deny Christ's work. It is dreadful. I did not understand all about the Fathers, but what sets the soul clear is the knowledge of Christ and His grace. I was thinking since, sir (though there is nothing about purgatory in it), how the beautiful parable of the prodigal son sets all thoughts of it aside—how that parable would prevent one who really knew the grace of it from ever thinking of such a thing. However could the Father, when the poor prodigal had all his rags off and the best robe on, that is, Christ Himself, put him in purgatory after? It is like putting Christ Himself there. And then I see plainly that once I leave this world I have not the flesh at all, so that I do not know what is to be purged away. Here, where I have it, I can be exercised and sifted and tried, and for my good, because the flesh is still here in me.

N*. You are quite right, James. It is a complete confusion between penal suffering and purifying. If it be really purifying, it is a cruel thing to get it shortened by indulgences. If it be penal, it is contrary to all the testimony of the gospel.

James. What are indulgences?

N*. They are decrees of the pope, by which, in virtue of the merits of Christ and the saints, he delivers souls in purgatory from a part or all of the punishment they have to go through.

Mrs. J. Dear, who would have thought of such things? Why, it is not Christianity at all, sir.

N*. Surely it is not. I dare say we shall get upon this subject before we have done. It was the immediate

occasion of the Reformation. They sold them in the most shameful or shameless way to get money to build St. Peter's, the magnificent cathedral at Rome.

As to the Fathers, James, you have no need to think of them. They are no authority for anything, and indeed contradict each other continually like other men: only there was more superstition and ignorance in them than in most cultivated persons now, with real piety in some; as to others, it is very doubtful if they had any. I have referred to them because it was necessary to meet what was alleged. And now that their doubts and contradictions are shewn, we may dismiss them without passion and without fear. They have indeed been altered, and passages cast out by the Roman Catholics, but not so as much to affect such a mass of writings. But Rome has what is called an index expurgatory, by which some books are prohibited, and others are directed to be printed without such a passage, or changing it, or the like, when any passage militates against the doctrines of the Roman system. And this has been done.

James. Dear, what a crafty system!

N*. It is a system little known. They have published a kind of imitation of the Psalms, one hundred and fifty of them in number, just like the Psalms, and with a general resemblance, but have put the Virgin Mary instead of the Lord.

Mrs. J. What wickedness! It is all planned so. I am glad, James, you knew what it was before you got drawn in.

James. So am I, I am sure; it is a mercy to be kept from it in any way, but more still when it is by knowing the grace of God, which makes me see not only that there are wrong things, but that the foundation of their whole

system is wrong. They do not build on grace and redemption, but on man and works. That I see plainly. But here is M. Good day, Bill, sit down.

N*. Good day, M. We have waited to go on with the subject proposed till you came. We are to speak of the word of God and of the church. We can still take Milner, who, in a brief way, will say all that is to be said.

M. Yes, we must seek the right rule of faith, and that is the written and unwritten word, the church being the interpreter and judge. We must have a living judge of controversy, or there is no end to disputes.

N*. The thing to be ultimately judged is not doctrines, my good friend, but souls. And the difference is most serious. I am not going to avoid the other question, that is, the means of discovering the truth; but while you profess to have the true church where alone salvation is, you have people in crowds who are lost, and none who know whether they are saved after all. But when you speak of judging what is the truth, your principle is wholly false. God does not judge of truth; He reveals it. Man is not to judge of truth, but, if God has revealed, he is bound on his peril to receive it. Men will be judged according to the truth they have before them. They that have sinned without law shall perish without law, and they that have sinned under law shall be judged by the law. If they have rejected Christ, they are still more guilty. The Holy Ghost was to convict the world of sin, because they had not believed in Him, and if they did not, they would die in their sins. If they do believe from the heart, they are saved, at least if God’s declaration is to be believed.

M. “Saved?” you mean hope to be saved.

N*. I do not, they are not yet out of trial and temptation, but they are reconciled to God, have peace with Him. As scripture speaks:—He has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to His own purpose and grace; 2 Tim. 1:9. So Titus 3:5; but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. They have eternal life.

M. That is, they hope to have it.

N*. Not at all. Of course, in all its fulness and glory they have not got it yet. But the scripture says, “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son hath not life.” Again, John the baptist says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” What proves the Roman Catholic system to be so utterly false is that it teaches men as if the grace of God had not brought salvation at all. Men are just where they were if there was no Christ; they have to make their peace with God, whereas Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. According to Romanism they have to gain eternal life, as the law required, “Do this, and thou shalt live.” Christianity says he that hath the Son hath life.

M. And must not a man work to get life?

N*. Surely not. How can he work if he has not got it? He believes on Christ as a poor sinner, and has life in Him; and then works to serve God and glorify Him, and grow on in the life he has got. “He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and

shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life," says Christ. Nothing is more false than supposing that no good works can be done unless we are to gain life by them; I should say none can be done till we have life. Do angels do good works?

M. Yes, of course they do.

N*. Do they do it to gain heaven?

M. Well, no, they are in heaven.

N*. What do they do it for, then?

M. Why, they are blessed things, they do nothing else.

N*. Well, M., we can hardly say we do nothing else, but as to the motive it shews that there is another way of doing right besides gaining life and heaven by it.

Besides, all real duties and right affections flow from the relationships we are already in. I mean this. If you were my servant it would be your duty to act and feel as such. James' children's duties and their right feelings flow from their being his children, and living in the consciousness that they are so. They have not, cannot have, such towards you and me, because they areaiot our children. So with a wife and every relation of life. Now, we must be really children of God before the duties of children can apply to us, and before we can have the affections suited to that place. We are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and our duties and right affections flow from this—can have no existence till we are in that relation. We have never to work to get into any true living relationship, for the duties cannot exist till we are in it; indeed, it is not possible in the nature of things. The Christian has duties, and has to cultivate holy affections, but it is because he is a child of God, and

knows it. For he can have neither the feeling nor the conscience of his duty as a child till he knows he is such. We have difficulties and temptations to overcome, and God does encourage us by the reward of glory, the crown of life; but He never tells us to gain life by our works: the law, if indeed this can be said, does. But we are all condemned on that ground, because we have not kept it. The gift of God is eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. What are good works, M.?

M. Well, I suppose, works done purely out of love to God and our neighbour.

N*. Then you never can do any according to your system, because you do them to gain eternal life, to merit heaven for yourself.

M. But you would look for something above human nature.

N*. Surely I should; I look for grace—grace and life from Jesus Christ working within. He has saved by His death. The Roman Catholic system is (not theoretically perhaps, but practically) the deadly heresy of Pelagianism.

James. What is that, sir?

N*. Believing that there is strength in man to do good and merit life by his works. And though they talk of grace, it is practically man's own efforts; there may be sacramental grace referred to, but no personal practical dependence on grace. The Roman Catholic system hides it under hard words, and distinguishes between grace of condignity, that is, what a man sufficiently deserves—merit in which the works deserve a reward for their own worth; and grace of congruity, what fits a man to

receive, though he be not worthy in the way of merit; but, in point of fact, a man merits eternal life by his own doings and efforts, which in principle and substance and verity is Pelagianism. Christ delivered the Old Testament saints, they say, out of limbo, and set us to keep the new law.

James. Well, I am sure I never had merit, or fitness, or anything, unless as a poor sinner is fit for grace, because he is one and wants it.

N*. But tell me, M. You believe that life is given, and pardon too, in baptism, do you not?

M*. Surely I do.

N*. Very well, according to Rome we are born of God in it, and have remission of sin, original and all actual sins, if we have committed any. It cleanses from sin, makes us Christians and children of God. We are born of water and of the Spirit, and what a child has contracted by generation is cleansed by regeneration.1 And it never can be repeated.

M. Never.2

N*. Then they have received life?

M. Of course, they are regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost.

N*. Do you think any other sacrament confers life?

M. None.

N*. So again Rome teaches, We may lose grace but not faith, and it is true faith, though it be not living faith (Council of Trent, 6, 28, 54, cap. 15, 46). The character imprinted by baptism can never be lost.

Note, then, if divine life be lost, it never can be had again. And if life be not lost when man dies in mortal sin, a man may go to hell and yet have faith, as born of God—only no grace.

M. But life is lost by mortal sin, but there is the sacrament of penance to restore grace.

N*. I know you hold that. But a man is not born again by the sacrament of penance; so that if he has lost life, he is ruined for ever, for he cannot be baptized again; or he must have the life still, though he have lost grace—a very strange notion if it be the life of Christ; but quite consistent with going to hell in mortal sin though having faith. But this is what is taught in the Council of Trent.3 But the matter really stands thus: The doctrine of catechisms and every Roman authority tell us that mortal sin, as the word indeed implies, is the death of the soul, deprives the soul of life or sanctifying grace which is the life of the soul. I take the words of one of many catechisms, “Why is it called mortal? Because it kills the soul, by depriving it of its true life which is sanctifying grace, and because it brings everlasting death and damnation on the soul.” Another, “By destroying the life of the soul, which is the grace of God.” Another, “that which killeth the soul in a spiritual manner, because it deprives us of the grace of God, which is the spiritual life of the soul.” The two first are American, sanctioned each by a different prelate of New York, the last Irish, drawn up by the Most Rev. Dr. Reilly. Now we are taught by the Council of Trent itself, That they are cleansed by regeneration from what they contracted by generation, referring to John 3. They are born again of water and the Spirit. They are frequently called ‘born again’ (renati). And in the Catechism of the

Council of Trent it is insisted that baptism cannot be repeated: “that this accords with the nature of the thing, and with reason is understood from the very idea of baptism which is a certain spiritual regeneration. As then, by virtue of the laws of the nature, we are generated and born but once, and as St. Augustine observes, there is no returning to the womb; so, in like manner, there is but one spiritual generation, nor is baptism ever at any time to be repeated.”4 Here though I might quote many authorities to the same effect, we have the highest assuring us that a man cannot be born twice, and hence he cannot be baptized twice. But then, if his soul is killed by mortal sin, deprived of life, what is to be done? He cannot be born again. It is all very well to talk of forgiveness by the sacrament of penance, only with increased trouble, and purgatory to boot; but where is life to be had? It is lost by mortal sin. No one pretends that it is given by the sacrament of penance. Its being given in baptism is declared in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, as we have seen, to be the reason why that sacrament cannot be repeated. No man can be born again, twice. It is a fatal objection to the whole sacramental system of popery, fatal upon a fundamental point. Falsehood is always inconsistent and breaks down somewhere. Forgiveness may be talked of, justification regained, but the soul is killed, deprived of life, and cannot be born again. It is a curious part of the same system that baptism puts away all sins and all penalties, freely and absolutely, from a child who has none; penance leaves a large and awful part, though forgiving them, on those who have. People who have no sins are cleared people; those who have, are not, though reconciled to God. All this to a soul taught of God shews the folly of human inventions. Ah, M., to a soul that feels

its need and looks to Christ, such darkness on vital points will never do.

But I return to the point we were upon. God reveals truth, and man is bound to receive it at his peril. He does not judge, nor is there any one to judge, what is truth. God has judged what is truth, since He has revealed it Himself; nobody can judge about it after that. Men will be judged by it. “The word I have spoken to you, the same shall judge you in the last day,” John 12:48.

M. But have I not to ascertain the truth?

N*. You are responsible for receiving God’s truth that He has revealed. When anything professes to be a revelation, I must of course first know that it is of God. For that I have a promise: Christ says, He that will do His will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself.

M. Well, we must ascertain, or know, whether it is a revelation of God, and for this we must have an infallible judge in order to know as a matter of faith whether it be so.

N*. It is a mere blasphemy to say so. God has given a revelation, and called upon me to believe. Is it necessary after this for some one to authorize me to believe? Then God’s calling on me for faith by a revelation has no force: because, according to you, when God has spoken and claimed my faith, another must judge about it.

M. But supposing I do not receive it? How can you help a man’s being a Socinian or an infidel?

N*. You cannot help it. Rome cannot help it—cannot give faith in the heart by authority; but the man will be lost

because he has made God a liar. But your notion excuses the Socinian and the infidel, because, according to you, though God has revealed the truth, they are not bound to believe without the church. The whole question lies there. Has a revelation which God has made to us authority over me—a claim upon my belief—without any judgment of man? Your system says it has not. We must have, you say, a tribunal to judge about it, that is, to judge whether God's revelation has a claim on my soul. This is an outrage upon God. If you, M., came to me, and I say, "Your word I cannot receive till James authenticates it," it is quite clear I do not believe what you say because you have said it. Now, if I cannot believe God's revelation because He has said what is in it, and for no other reason, I do not believe God at all.

James. That is clear, Bill; God's word must have authority over us by itself or it has none at all.

M. But we must know that it is God's word.

N*. It is a sad thing you should call it in question, when you know it is so; but we will pursue the point. I never knew a Romanist who did not on this point take the ground of the infidel: indeed he has no other. For, if the word has direct authority over my conscience, all his argument about the church falls to the ground.

M. We'll take what Dr. Milner says: That the rule of faith or means of discovering Christ's religion must be secure and universal; and it is evident that He has left some rule by which those persons who seek it may with certainty find it.5 These, as Dr. Milner says, are fundamental maxims. Letter 5.

N*. All Dr. Milner's book depends on them, I know, and indeed he admits it; but I stop you at once here by

saying that, as his book does all depend on this, all is totally false. What do you mean by establishing a religion on earth, and then having a rule of faith or means of discovering it? If Christ has established a religion, there is nothing to discover. And, further, a rule of faith and a means of discovery are totally different things, and the confusion of these two is the source of all the sophistry of the book. How did Christ establish a religion on earth?

M. Why, by His own teaching, and the teaching of the apostles.

N*. Quite right. And who judged of their doctrine so that men might discover the true religion? Who was the living judge?

M. Why there could be none: they must believe Christ and the apostles.

N*. Then all Dr. Milner's and your theory about a living judge is false. There were what we may call ecclesiastical authorities then. The scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, and they were all against God's testimony by Christ. But men were bound to receive what Christ said (and the same of the apostles), because they said it. Now that is always true.

M. Yes, but they were alive to say it.

N*. They were; but has what they said lost its authority now they are dead? So far from this, that the Bereans searched the scriptures to know if Paul's preaching was according to them, and they are commended for it, and therefore many of them believed. The scriptures were an authority to judge of an apostle's teaching whether it were of God, that is, when he first came, to know if what

he said were really of God. And when the rich man is described as praying that Lazarus might be sent to his brothers to warn them, the Lord answers, They have Moses and the prophets (that is, their writings), let them hear them; for “if they believe not their writings, how shall they believe my words? “We have no need to say what the authority of Christ’s words is for all of us; but, as an instrument of authority, the Lord puts writings before words. But the truth is, the condition of Christians—and it is with those professedly so we have to do—was exactly the same as now. The apostles sent the writings we have to different Christians to whom they had been particularly blessed, or published them for general use. Were Christians not to receive these writings as having authority?

M. Of course they were.

N*. And so are we. Now supposing at the first, the Jews had waited for the church to sanction the Lord, or the Jews or Gentiles to sanction the apostles, to discover the true religion, what would have happened?

M. Why, there was no church.

N*. Quite so; where Christ taught and the apostles preached, there was none, and there never would have been. That is, faith in the word goes before the church, not faith in the church before the word. Without faith in the word there never would have been any church at all; and, in point of fact, the religious authorities (when Christ was there) did everything they could to hinder people believing in Christ. And people believed in spite of them. So it has really been as to Rome. But further: when the apostles wrote epistles to the churches or general epistles, were the churches to wait for them to

be sanctioned by others, by some church authority, in order to receive, believe, and obey them?

M. Of course not. If the apostles wrote, they were bound to believe and obey.

N*. And so are we. Was there any reference to any church authority in order to their receiving them?

M. No; they were bound to receive them. How could there be church authority about the apostles when the Lord sent them, and they were the highest authority in it?

N*. All right; and so are we bound to receive what they have written for the same reason. But there is another point. Were they addressed to a clergy who were to receive and interpret them, or to all the faithful? That is a material point for us to settle.

M. It is; and I cannot say exactly. I have not the Bible just at my fingers' ends.

N*. You could not be where you are if you had, M. I would affectionately urge you to read it and see for yourself what these blessed servants of our Lord and Master, the Son of God, have said, and His own blessed words too. There cannot but be a blessing with it if done humbly trusting in God's grace. I remember a case in Ireland where a Testament had been torn up and the leaves thrown to the winds. A poor man, who found one of the leaves and picked it up, could read, and saw, "And Jesus said," "And Jesus answered and said," "And Jesus said," and so on. He said to himself, What! has the blessed Lord said so many things, and I did not know them? Struck by these simple but solemn words, "Jesus said," he went off to the neighbouring town and bought

a Testament, was converted, believed what Jesus said, and was happy in a known Saviour.

But you may say, How did he know it was true that Jesus said these things? Well, God guides the humble simple soul. Jesus had said it, and His word had power over his soul by grace. But, as I have related to you one history, I will tell you another.

I was in a cabin in Ireland where I was known, and began speaking to the brother-in-law of the man of the house about the scripture; his niece, a young woman, who was present, said, “But ‘they tell me, sir, this is a bad book—that the devil wrote it.” She was very ignorant, and could not read. I said, “That is a shocking blasphemy. (I know they excuse themselves when any intelligent person is there by saying, It is only because of the false translation; however, so it passed.) But I will not reason with you, but read you a bit, and you shall tell me yourself if the devil wrote it.”

I read to her what are called the Beatitudes: “And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness* sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against

you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

I then said, "Well, what do you think? Did the devil write that?" "No, sir," she said, "the devil never wrote that; that came from nothing but the mouth of God." The word of God had laid hold of her; she lived and died most happy, dying three years after of a fever in a hospital. That is, the word of God proves its own truth and power to the soul.

But to return to our point. I will help you. None are addressed to what can be called in the modern term "clergy" at all save three: two to Timothy and one to Titus. These three were addressed to those specially engaged in the service of Christ. The rest are addressed to all the Christians either of a locality or in general, the elders among them in Peter being noticed in their place among the rest, and the bishops and deacons along with all the rest in Paul's to the Philippians.

Thus that to the Romans, "To all that be in Rome beloved of God, saints called." Here you could not tell from the Epistle if there were such a thing as elders or bishops, i Corinthians: "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints called, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." I suppose that all saints, and there were many ignorant ones, ought to have received and obeyed the apostle's teaching. Here too we have not a hint about any elders. The receiving the apostle's orders was a test of the spirituality of their state, "If any be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are

the commandments of the Lord." And so John says, "He that is of God heareth us." In 2 Corinthians it was to all the saints which were in all Achaia, the province in Greece where Corinth was. The Epistle to the Galatians is addressed to the churches of Galatia. Here the whole body of saints is addressed too.

I need not notice every Epistle, because it is only to repeat the same thing; they are addressed to all the faithful. I may notice an expression in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, which shews it in a distinct manner. Paul says at the end of it, "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read by all the holy brethren." Colossians and Laodicea were to exchange Epistles, and they were to be read in the churches. Peter's Epistles were addressed to all the dispersed residing in various provinces. In John's we get if possible a stronger evidence. He distinguishes the Christians, while addressing all in general, into classes of fathers, young men, and little children, and writes more special words to these last, pressing on them their competency in virtue of having the Holy Ghost to understand everything, and says, though warning and teaching them with all affection, they had not need of any one to do so. And in his second Epistle he writes to a lady and desires her to judge those who came teaching and preaching by the doctrine they brought.

Thus we have ample evidence that the scriptures were addressed not to the teaching body (with the exception of three Epistles of Paul, which, however, are full of instruction to all, because he tells Timothy and Titus how all ought to act), but by the teaching body to the mass of the faithful. If Rome has reduced the faithful to a state of ignorance which makes them incapable of it,

the guilt is on her shoulders. It is a proof that she cannot enlighten them. The only thing to do is for them to go back to the scriptures which she has practically deprived them of.

M. But they are written in Greek or Hebrew. What can the unlearned do? How can they now use this rule, or means of discovering Christ's religion?

N*. This is another fallacy. The means of discovering Christ's religion (and we are speaking now of places where the profession of Christianity is established), and a rule of faith, are not at all the same thing. A minister preaches, a mother teaches her child, a schoolmaster in a school, a friend— in a word, the means of communicating truth, or leading a person to discover it, are various. The scriptures may be the direct and blessed means in many cases, but any Christian, and in particular parents and ministers, may be and are the regular instruments in God's hands of communicating the truth contained in the word to souls, but none of these are the rule of faith.

Dr. Milner admits that this is so, as regards the heathen, that is, that his principle does not hold good; but then, as he says, there is a special grace accorded. I admit the special grace—there is never any good or blessing without it: but I understand very well what Dr. Milner is about too. It is quite evident that in the case of heathens the church has no authority, for they as heathens do not own it; they must in any case become Christians first. Thus we find that in this case the word of God has power and authority without the church. Men discover the true religion without the authority of the church.

This is a grand difficulty for Dr. Milner; because after all, when Christianity has really to be discovered (as in the case of a heathen), it is discovered by the power of the word through grace, without the church at all. That is, in a word, that, in the only real case where the true religion is discovered, it is discovered without the authority of the church. Now for communicating the knowledge of Christ's religion where it is professed, there are similar means, as I have said, ministers, parents, and the like. And do you mean to say that special grace is for heathens to receive the word, but that there is none needed, and none given for professing Christians? It is needed for every man. But, remark further, this way of discovering Christ's religion is not a rule of faith. A minister, a priest, as you call him, is not a rule of faith; a friend or a mother is surely not a rule of faith. Yet they are the means in an ordinary way of the discovering, or more properly of the reception of, Christ's religion. Now the confusion of these things is the source of all the fallacy; because the means of discovering need not be infallible—need not be, in the sense here stated, secure nor universal; in point of fact, unless when scripture is the means, it never is; on the contrary, it is adapted to the state and capacity of the person evangelized or taught.

A rule of faith must be secure, but as it is not the means of communicating Christ's religion (though it may be such a means), it is not as a rule required to be adapted to such universal communication. It subsists in the form in which it was originally given to be referred to. Now these two things we have without the authority of the church at all: apostles, ministers, parents, and others, communicating Christ's religion according to the

language or capacity of hearers and learners; and we have the scriptures the fixed and unchanged rule to which all teaching is to be referred. And note this well: if the truth contained in scripture be not received, if a man remain an infidel, or become a confirmed heretic, the authority of the church is of no use. For such do not acknowledge it. She must in result leave them where they are, unless she burn them (as Rome indeed has done by hundreds and thousands) or banish and imprison them. But that is only copying the heathen who did the same thing.

I admit then the ministry to communicate the truth, and even a parent or any other. I admit the need of grace; but I say that you will be lost and condemned, if when God has spoken you do not bow to it, if there were no church at all. In point of fact, there was and could be none when first the word of God was announced, and men were bound to receive it at their peril. “If our gospel be hid,” says the apostle, “it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the hght of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”: so the Lord— “he that believeth not is condemned already.” Indeed, as I have said, those who stood in the place of authority then opposed the word. All who have to receive the religion of Christ as a new truth necessarily receive it without the authority of the church. They are Jews, infidels, or heathens, and acknowledge no such authority. If I turn to Christians by profession, they have not to discover the truth of Christianity, for they believe it; what is needed is that they should understand the truth, and that it should have power over their hearts and lives, and grace

gives this, not the church. And, moreover, the Epistles and Gospels were addressed to the body of Christians in general by those who were gifted of God, as Paul, Peter, and the rest employed by God to write them. And those who received them were bound to receive and believe them, and to understand them and be taught by them. That there is progress in spiritual understanding is readily admitted.

Thus the whole theory of Romanism is a false one. Their analogy of a living judge, which they all make so much of, is none at all. A judge decides a cause by the law, not whether the law is authentic or not. He could not say, I receive the law on the authority of any one, judges or others. He receives the law because it is the law, because the legislator has so prescribed. So the Christian; he receives the revelation of God, because it is His revelation, and for no other reason. A spiritual Christian may be more enlightened in applying the word of God to any given case (a small part of the use of scripture) as a judge may; but neither of them gives authority, but only application, to that whose authority is employed. The church was providentially charged with taking care of the scriptures when they were written; just as anyone may take charge of my father's will, but he gives no authority to it. Its being my father's will gives it its authority. The scriptures were committed to the whole church of God.

The only difference as to the Romanist body is, that they have been unfaithful to the trust as regards the Old Testament, having pretended to authenticate as scripture what confessedly is not scripture at all. Her own famous doctor who translated the Old Testament for her, and whose translation she receives as the

authentic scriptures though but a translation, declares that the church did not receive the books called apocryphal. Rome is unfaithful in this as in all else. God has not permitted her to be so as to the New Testament; but where she could be unfaithful, she has been so. And you will please remember, moreover, that your rule is as much Greek and Hebrew (in your case I must add Latin) as ours. The written word is the same for both: only that you have only a translation, and your unwritten one is Latin. What you have in any one's mother tongue is mere teaching, as ours may be, not a rule of faith, not secure, for we have seen there are different lists of mortal sins, and even as to the written word you have a confessedly false list of books. You have added what the fathers even say is not to be taken for a rule of faith.

M. But what are we to receive as a rule, if it is not the written and unwritten word, and the church as interpreter?

N*. The written word of God is the only rule. It has divine authority. The other two parts I reject altogether, that is, tradition and the church.

M. But the church was never to fail, nor the gates of hell prevail against her. What do you make of that?

N*. I make nothing of it; I believe it, and bless God for it with all my heart. In spite of all the waywardness and wickedness of man, Christ maintains what He builds, and will maintain it till He receives it into glory. And it is maintained. Rome papal, as Rome heathen, has done her best to extinguish and put out this light; but she has failed and must fail. She seemed to succeed, and may apparently in large measure succeed again, for it is announced in scripture that there shall be perilous days

in the last time, a form of godliness denying the power; but as God had reserved seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal, when even the prophetic eye of Elijah could not see one but himself, so God has in the darkest times (times confessed by your own popish writers to be times of shame and darkness)6 preserved a witness to Himself that no strength or subtlety of Satan, with all the power of Rome at his back, could ever suppress or extirpate. I recognize not the church of Rome, or any other particular professing body, but the whole church to be the dwelling-place of God by the Holy Ghost, until Christ comes and takes the saints to Himself, and that what is called Christendom stands in a particular relationship to God by its profession, and that it will be judged as His house. But the scripture has warned us that evil would come in, and perilous times come, with the form of piety (2 Tim. 3); and the apostle Paul charges the man of God to cling to the scriptures when the professing church should have all gone wrong.

He tells us (Acts 20:29) that grievous wolves would come in, that of the church itself perverse men would arise; but he never hints at apostles, their successors, or the clergy, as a resource, but, on the contrary, commends them to God and the word of His grace as able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified. That is, he warns us that the outward professing church would go all wrong, so that the true servant of God would have to fly to the scriptures. The mystery of iniquity was already working; and, note, the apostle’s words exclude all idea of his having a successor. He knows that after his departure all will go wrong. How so, if another like himself would

succeed him? So Peter sees the hour of his departure near, and takes care that they should have the truths he taught always in remembrance, and so writes his epistle; 2 Pet. 1:12-15. Thus the apostles foresaw the danger and difficulty; Paul prophesies that all would go on badly, and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse; and, instead of referring to the church as securing the truth, he states that it will go all wrong, so that at last there will be an apostasy, or falling away (2 Thess. 2); and both he and Peter refer to the scriptures as the means of being guarded in the truth.

The evil is come and has ripened, and we do refer, as the apostle told us, to the scriptures. You tell me divisions have arisen. I admit it, and admit the evil of it. But divisions have arisen with scriptures and clergy and all; the clergy have not hindered it more than the scriptures —they have been its authors. Rome is one of the divisions—a large one no doubt, but the worst of all—so that she hardly merits to be reckoned as a part of the Catholic church at all since the Council of Trent. But admitting that she be, she is just one part, and the worst part by far. Numbers make nothing when the question of the church is concerned. Christ speaks of a little flock (Luke 12:32) to whom He gives the kingdom, so that there being millions would rather prove it was not that flock. And when Rome had it all her own way in many countries (for she never had it everywhere, far from it, nor in the greatest part of Christendom), she could not help sects.

She slaughtered and killed thousands and thousands to put them down; she burned and hanged, and used every atrocity imaginable, to put down whatever did not bow to her, but by her conduct proved herself not to be the

church of God, but the seat of Satan, and thus made natural conscience revolt on one hand, while on the other the plants of God's planting throve in spite of her, and Europe was overrun by the hunted witnesses of Christ, while Rome disgraced herself below even natural conscience by breaking openly and solemnly plighted faith, and teaching men that they ought to do so, and not keep faith with heretics, and acted on it, hypocritically pretending to deliver them to the secular arm, and pursuing with relentless cruelty all who held the truth. She invented tortures and established the Inquisition to destroy all that had divine life. I have said she seemed to have reduced all to silence, when, after a secret working of the truth (particularly in the Netherlands, Germany, Bohemia, and Moravia), her security in wickedness led her to such a course of conduct as made all blaze out again more violently than ever; and now, taking all professing Christendom in, she is a minority in population, and maintains her former place only in her persistence and growth in errors.

M. But she is the true Catholic church.

N*. Who says so?

M. Everyone admits it.

N*. Far from it; the majority of professing Christendom condemn her as a dreadful departure from the true standing of the church of Christ. Many count her wholly apostate.

James. But, Bill, you used to say that your church was the universal church, and the oldest; and that all the millions of Christians, except just England that Henry VIII turned away to get rid of his wife he did not like, belonged to it.

M. And so they do.

N*. We will speak of Henry VIII in a minute. But as to the pretended Catholic church, all their assertions are unfounded. I admit that numbers prove nothing, but they impose on the imagination, and hence only I notice this. The majority of professing Christians do not belong to Rome. There are something under one hundred millions of Protestants, and I suppose sixty millions of Greeks, besides Armenians and Jacobites, in the East, whose numbers are not exactly known, but of which there must be a few millions, so that in rough round numbers there are, giving the largest margin, some hundred and thirty millions connected with Rome, and some hundred and seventy millions separate from it. Hence there is no pretension of catholicity. As to antiquity, it is beyond all controversy that Eastern Christendom is more ancient than Rome. Strange to say, the church was not founded at Rome by an apostle, though Paul was in prison there, not in his free apostolic labour—this he never was. But we know from the Epistle to the Romans that there were a number of Christians there before he arrived. We are a little anticipating what comes under the head of proofs of the true church. But facts dispel many illusions, so that we may reason more freely when the imagination is undeceived.

James. Well, I am glad to hear all this. I know numbers don’t prove truth, of course. We must have, we all admit, a divine foundation for our faith; but it acts on one’s feelings to think one is going against all Christians in the world, and I see it is nothing of the sort, and I know from scripture that Christianity did not begin at Rome.

N*. If we were to go by numbers, I suppose we should be Buddhists. They constitute, I believe, by far the most numerous religion in the world. The Mahometans count by many millions—I do not know how many, but I dare say some sixty millions. They own God, and Christ to be a prophet and judge of quick and dead, but not as Son of God. They are spreading rapidly in Africa through having the schools in their hands, and the prohibition for any Mahometan to make a slave of another. The Brahminical religion counts some hundred millions of votaries, other heathens perhaps over two hundred millions. I attach no importance to exactitude in numbers, my object being only to dispel the idea of the Catholic or universal character of Rome—to disabuse the imagination. But that it may not seem a loose boast, in rough round numbers I count them thus:—

Romanists. | Protestants.

France | 33,000,000 | Great Britain | 26,000,000

Austria | 30,000,000 | Germany, including Prussia | 22,000,000 Italy | 21,000,000 Spain | 17,000,000 | Austria | 4,000,000 Germany out of Austria | 8,000,0007 | France | 2,000,000 Holland | 2,500,000 Holland | 1,000,000 | Switzerland | 2,000,000 Belgium | 3,500,000 | Sweden | 4,000,000 Poland | 4,000,000 | Denmark | 2,000,000 Switzerland | 1,000,000 | Russia | 3,000,000 United States | 2,500,000 | United States | 26,000,000 Great Britain | 4,000,000 South America | 8,000,000 _____ 133,000,000 | _____ 93,500,000 Besides this, there is Canada, the West Indies, and a scattered population, which cannot very much affect the balance either way. The main numbers are pretty nearly exact; were there five millions wrong in either, it would not

affect the question we are considering. Then between Turkey, the Austrian possessions, Russia, and the East, the Greeks must number some sixty millions, besides smaller, but ancient, bodies. So that Christendom not connected with Rome numbers some hundred and sixty, or hundred and seventy, millions; Rome, some hundred and thirty. That is a strange way of being Catholic. Catholic means, you know, James, universal.

That the Greek churches in Asia are more ancient than Rome, as James has said, scripture itself proves. Rome was the last founded of which we have any original history, and Greeks, Nestorians, and Jacobites were all separate from Rome, the earliest in the fifth, the latest in the ninth, century, and have their succession too.

But having got rid of this delusion, let us turn to the rule of faith. We need not consider the first false rule, private inspiration, for, save a few Quakers, no one alleges such a rule. Only we must, on the other hand, be very careful to guard against Romanist infidelity as to the action of the Holy Ghost. They practically deny the aid and succour of the Holy Ghost given to every humble believer. They ridicule it (as I know by experience) to throw men helplessly on their clergy. Now this is the worst kind of Pelagianism, the denial of the assistance of grace. The faithful Christian is assisted of God to understand the scriptures as he is to walk as a Christian.

The help and teaching of the Holy Ghost, and the written word, are not two rules of faith.8 The scriptures are the one sure rule, and the Holy Ghost He who works in the believer to enable him to use that rule, and not merely as a rule but as the food and edification of his soul. And in this the contents of scripture are adapted to the

progress the soul makes in divine things and its state in every respect. It is applied by the Holy Ghost to the conscience and heart of the humble Christian who owns his need of the grace of God, and looks for it according to his need. The person who denies this is an heretical denier of the grace and goodness of God. Mark this, because Dr. Milner, who I suppose from his book is an unbeliever as to this, carefully leaves it all out. If men go on presumptuously, without depending on the grace of God, they will err as to scripture, and as to everything else, whether they call themselves Catholic or Protestant. Do you deny, M., the need a Christian has of the grace of God, and the goodness and faithfulness of God in giving it, and the gracious operations of the Spirit of God in the Christian's heart, as it is said, "The meek shall he guide in judgment, and the meek shall he teach his way"; or, as the Lord said, speaking of His people, "They shall be all taught of God"?

M. No, of course I do not; no good Catholic does; but that can only be in the true church.

N*. In one sense I quite agree with that. It is only in the true church, though we may not yet be agreed what the true church is. But this same gracious operation must take place to bring a person into the true church when he is outside it, and to help him when he is in it.

M. Well, I do not deny that.

N*. I am glad of it. Only this is all overlooked by Dr. Milner. He does not dream of any help from God. But not only does he leave out the gracious actings of the Holy Ghost in believers, but he leaves out all ministry. He will talk of tradition, and of the authority of the church, meaning however the clergy; but the ministry of those

called of God in the church to teach and edify he overlooks altogether, or even of parents, who in their place have a ministry, and are called upon to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

People are not called upon to discover a religion. They are not called upon to take up a Bible, printed by the king's printer, as Dr. Milner says (Letter 9). That may happen, and has often, very often been blessed, but it is not the regularly appointed way of learning the truth. If even (as may be the case in the neglected masses of mankind, be they high or low, rich or poor) that is the case, they have not to judge of the book; they may judge right or judge wrong, but, if that is all, nothing is done. If the word of God is to profit them, it must judge them, and have its place in their hearts and consciences. We are superior to the thing we judge. As long as we are in spirit superior to God's word, it is not God's word at all really to us. We must be subject to it, receive it as it is in truth the word of God, to have life and edification by it.

As the truth of God is in the word, or rather as it is the truth, of course the Holy Ghost can use the scriptures to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and, blessed be God, thousands of souls have thus found life and peace; but that is not our subject, but what is the sure rule of faith when we do profess Christ to be our Lord. There is a ministry of the word and parental responsibility in the church of God. God alone can give efficacy to either by His grace, but men are not left to discover a religion. Christianity is the activity of God to communicate the knowledge of the truth, and grace which saves and gives eternal life, the knowledge of Christ. This is carried out by the ministry of the word and parental care, but that is not a rule of faith, but an

appointed means of grace. This the Roman Catholic professes to believe as well as Protestants. None pretends a parent, or even a priest, is infallible. The question is—supposing men who profess Christianity teach differently, what is the rule by which a sincere person may know with certainty what the truth in that matter is? We say the rule of faith is the written word of God. You say the Bible and tradition taken together, or the word of God, written and unwritten, and that, besides the rule itself, Christ has provided in His holy church a living, speaking, judge to watch over it, and explain it in all matters of controversy. That is, that, in fact, the word, written or unwritten, is no rule for him at all; he must submit to what is told him by the living judge. If the judge pronounces and decides the matter, that is the rule for him who has to submit to it; he cannot refer from the judge to the law.

I need not take notice of Dr. Milner's objection (Letter 8, 1), that if Christ had meant to make the scriptures the rule, He would have written that book. It is irreverent, pretending to say what Christ ought to have done; but, besides, it contradicts his own theory, because he admits the written word, with unwritten tradition to complete it, to be the rule; and, if this be so, Christ has given for a rule what He did not write. The traditions as to the motives for writing the Gospels are too vague and too late in the history of the church to require any notice; and, as Dr. Milner adds, no doubt the evangelists were moved by the Holy Ghost, which is what we believe: I have no controversy with him on this head. His only attempt is to shew that they are insufficient; what has he to add? This point will come in after, when the same subject is spoken of in treating of the true rule.

I have only to notice the objection of differences of opinion among the reformers who acknowledge scripture. This is merely to catch people's minds. No rule can hinder differences so long as the human mind works. The doctrine of the Greeks differs from the doctrines of Rome, of Nestorians from both, of Jacobites from all, of Protestants from the system they have abandoned. This only proves that the church has failed in hindering divisions and maintaining unity. We have four great bodies, of which the latest formed has been for nearly a thousand years separate from Rome, and older than she, besides Anglicanism and the other Protestants. The divisions existed before Protestants were there. Rome is only one of these divided parts, not the oldest, not so numerous as all the rest taken together. With these divisions, the question is, what is the rule to judge which is the right one? Not the authority of one giving itself as the rule. That is what Rome does. Who can trust that? The scriptures were before all these divisions and questions, are given by inspired writers, are God's revelation of what was from the beginning, as God instituted it.

Divisions prove the infirmity of human nature: only that it is much more excusable in Protestants just coming out of the dark obscurity and superstition men were immersed in during the middle ages, than in Greece and Rome whose common starting-point was pure Christianity. And men must not suppose differences do not exist among Romanists. The Dominicans resisted with all their force the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary (now made by the present pope a matter of faith); so that there was the most important body of Romanists (till the Jesuits arose), the inventors

and directors of the Inquisition, judges thus of heretical pravity, unsound on what is now declared to be an article of faith. The Augustinians believe in predestination; the Roman Catholic priests deny it. Nay, so far did these disputes go, that the Dominicans in the seventeenth century charged the Jesuits with maintaining the idolatry of the Chinese in their missions in China. For years the inquiry was pursued before the pope, and the practices sanctioned by the Jesuits at last condemned by Pope Clement XI in 1704.9 The decree was mitigated in 1715. Now the allowance of heathen idolatry in Christians was a much graver difference than the details on which Protestants differ, while agreeing in fundamental truth.

Again, on the point of authority, which you consider so important, the gravest differences exist. The famous four articles by which the Gallican church defended its liberties were condemned as earnestly as possible by the Papal advocates. In these the synod of French bishops declares that the decrees of the Council of Constance, which maintained the authority of general councils as superior to that of the pope, are approved and ratified by the Gallican church; and that the decisions of the pope are not infallible in points of faith unless they be accompanied by the consent of the church.

Now here is an all-important difference on the subject of authority and infallibility. Our question will bring us back to this. I only notice here that differences are not confined to Protestants. It is a noticeable circumstance that it was the same man Bossuet, that wrote a crafty book on the variations of Protestants, who led the way in this important variation among Romanists, and defended it against the attacks of Ultra-montanes as they are

called, that is, the extreme defenders of the pope's claims. Ultramontane principles prevail now, but to this day Gallican principles, which deny the pope's infallibility, hold their ground in France and Germany.10 Disputes and discussions belong to the infirmity of human nature. Where there is freedom for it, it appears more openly, and so it has amongst Protestants. In Rome, though violent, it is more connected with intrigues, and less exposed to view.

Another point insisted on by Dr. Milner, which has nothing to do with the rule of faith, but which I may do well to take up as it is noticed, is this, that sovereign princes have acted more in the Reformation than theologians. The truth is that sovereign princes, long oppressed in the rights and authority which God confers on the magistrate, profited by the public movement, brought about by the faith of individuals though long prepared by the working of God's Spirit, to throw off the unjust authority of the pope. This was according to God's will, who gives to the sovereign his authority, and brought about by His providence. With this the rule of faith has surely nothing to do. It was the righteous resumption by the civil magistrate of an authority to which the pope had no title. Whether they abused this is nothing to the purpose. Civil statutes had been passed constantly against the absorption of lands into the hands of monks and others—mortmain as it was called. They evaded them by the introduction of uses (that is, when it was forbidden to a monastery to hold lands, they were given to a layman to hold it to their use, to the peril of their souls if they did not); and then when this was condemned by the Statute of Uses, they evaded that by what are called trusts.

All this was roughly swept away in England at the Reformation—the land partly given to courtiers, partly employed for education. But what all this has to do with the rule of faith it would be hard to tell. Superstition had given the lands to monks, and, when fresh light broke up the superstition, they were taken away again; and the monasteries, which had become a plague to every country by luxury and wickedness, were suppressed. As to Henry VIII, he threw off the pope's authority, and he was right. Why should a prelate at Rome govern England? As to his being a Protestant, he was anything but that. He had six articles drawn up, amongst which was the doctrine of transubstantiation, the key-stone of Romanism, and persecuted bitterly those who did not submit, all who held the Protestant faith, as the pope had done before him.

James. I do not see what all this has to do with the authority of the scriptures.

N*. It has none. It is merely advanced by Romanists to excite prejudice against Protestantism.

M. And do you not charge the popes and others with wickedness?

N*. Well, as yet we have not spoken of it. But this has a just place when we speak of popes and the mass of prelates, because Romanists pretend to find the church, and infallibility, and authority over other men's faith and consciences, in these wicked men; whereas no Protestant dreams of taking Henry VIII or the Protector Somerset as an authority. They will be judged in the great day like others, and their acts judged like other men's now.

James. That does make all the difference in the world, M. Save as I may mourn over others' evil, what is it to me what Henry VIII or any such person was? He has nothing to do with my faith. We are talking of scripture, and that is what you must speak of.

N*. As to fanaticism, I answer again, that it is one of the infirmities of our poor nature, but it has been in all ages, papal or Protestant. The wicked fanaticism of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, in the palmiest days of popery, was worse than any fanaticism that ever arose out of Protestantism, and lasted longer. But what has this to do with the rule of faith? The Protestant princes put down Munzer by force of arms because he armed himself against them. The popes nearly suppressed the Brethren of the Free Spirit by punishment and burning them. All this proves nothing but the sadness of man's history.

There is another assertion which, by a seeming analogy, is more plausible. That there are judges for the law, and a common or unwritten law in England; and so for the divine law, both of these too (Letter 10). The first point for which this unwritten law is shewn to be needed is that I cannot receive laws till I own the authority of the legislature. This shews the danger of analogies. There is but one lawgiver, and I may add one judge. God Himself is the Legislator and Judge too; but now let us speak of legislature. Is not God Himself the lawgiver, the authority?

M. Of course He is.

N*. Well, that question then is settled. There is indeed another important point which you seem to forget—natural conscience, the knowledge of good and evil.

Now I do not deny that this may be sadly darkened and corrupted. Still there is a conscience, and, Christianity having brought in light, natural conscience is enlightened and has a means of judging, though it may not even be aware of how it has acquired it. Thus, if money be given practically to allow sin, or for forgiveness of sin, or to commute for humbling penances and a tax on particular crimes as to how much should be paid; if the clergy was forbidden to marry, and then money was taken by their superiors for allowing them to live with a woman not their wife, the common law of natural conscience overrules the pretended authority of the church, and tears all sophistry to pieces by its just horror.

James. But surely the Romanists have never done or allowed this.

N*. Indeed they have; it is just as much a matter of history as that Rome exists.

James. Why, M., what do you say to that?

M. It is only relaxing the temporal punishment due to sin.

N*. It is (Letter 43) an actual remission by God Himself of part of the temporal punishment due; and, further, does it not take out of purgatory or shorten the stay there?

M. Yes, that is, the temporal punishment due to sin.

N*. Is it not by virtue of the surplus of merits of Christ and the saints?

M. Yes.

N*. Does Dr. Milner deny that indulgences were sold?

M. No, he does not.

N*. He does not; he says (Letter 42), “avarice has done everything bad”; but yet a further question: who sold them, and by what authority were they sold? Was it not the church’s, or, if you please, the pope’s?

M. Well, I suppose it must have been.

N*. To be sure it must and was, and they were farmed out to the Fuggers, who were famous bankers, to whom the sale was given for so much by the Archbishop of Mentz who was charged with it, and committed to the Dominican order. So that the Roman Catholics’ accusation against Luther is that it was his jealousy, as an Augustine monk, against the Dominican order about this, which made him break with the pope.

James. Well, M., this is dreadful. This never could be the true church, the church that the Lord Jesus established, nor have His authority. I understand What Mr.—— means by conscience now, for all the reasoning in the world could not persuade me that that comes from God, or that those are from God who do it. And I see you cannot deny that what you call the church did it.

N*. He could not, because it is a notorious piece of history. It was the immediate cause of the Reformation. Luther protested against it because it destroyed all morality, and in point of fact, they did forgive all sins (that is, the punishment of them, which was what people cared about) past and future, so that in one case a person bought the indulgence and then waylaid the priest and took all the money he had collected.

M. But people must be in a state of grace to profit by it.

N*. A queer state of grace a man must be expected to be in when those that expect it are selling him remission of chastisement for sin on the part of God; besides, the sacraments may have settled all the state of grace for him.

No, no, that is what I say; natural conscience breaks through all this sophistry. At the time of the Reformation the corruptest thing in the world was the Roman system. Do you deny what is perfectly notorious, that the corruption of clergy, monks, and all, had arisen to such an inconceivable pitch in the fifteenth century that the natural conscience rose up in clamour against it, and helped to bring on the Reformation?

M. Well, I do not know the details of history, but I know the church is holy and always was. It is one of the marks of the true church.

N*. Well, I will give you some details as far as one can venture. We shall touch on this mark. But I agree with you, it is a mark of the true church, and you shall judge whether the Roman body can be the true church, though the point we are on now is to shew that the common law of even natural conscience, claims its rights against such horrors. The practice of concubinage among priests with those to whom they were not married was so universal that it was forbidden by the Council of Paris in 1429, which says their example had corrupted all the laity. But in vain; in the middle of the same century it was decreed at Breslau that they should pay ten florins if they did, and indeed the people of the parish very often would have it so to prevent more universal corruption. The truth is, it was universal, and so among monks, and even unnatural crimes. The witnesses to

these are all of the Roman body, and a layman complains what was a sin for laymen was none for the clergy, and what was a sin for the clergy was none for the laity; for if a clergyman had a wife of his own it was a sin, if a layman had it was not; but if a clergyman had a hundred and sixty or a hundred and seventy, none of which was a wife, it was no sin, but if a layman had it was. And the ablest and most respectable Romanist doctor of his day who sought reformation, Gerson, declares if a monk lives in uncleanness he does not violate his vow provided he does not marry, only he is guilty of sin. One remedy, he says, is to do it as little as possible and do a great many good works, and take care it should be in secret, not on festivals or in holy places, and with unmarried persons. In truth, the shameless lives of the clergy, or, as Adolphus bishop of Merseburg, expresses it, “the licentious unmarried life of the clergy was before the eyes of all.”

I have only cited these general testimonies; to go farther would be to enter into a sea of enormities horrible to go through. No doubt many a godly man cried out against it, and a reform in head and members was the universal outcry of natural conscience from laymen. And the councils of Constance and Basel tried to do something towards reforming the excessive licentiousness and wickedness of the monasteries. But as soon as Constance had started a pope, having deposed three, who were all reigning together, the chief one as guilty of everything that was horrible, there was an end of reformation; and the council at Basel was broken up by the then pope under pretext of transferring it elsewhere; so that there were two councils at a time, one at Basel without a pope, and another at Florence with a pope;

and the Council of Basel passed decrees against priests living with women without being married, and added that the bishops were not to hinder the severity of the decrees being enforced: a pretty plain proof of what took place. The result was that the excessive wickedness of the clergy brought about the Reformation, the immediate occasion being the sale of indulgences for sin. God came in with an ancient truth in His grace, but the occasion of it, and what made men ready to receive it, was the revolt of the common law of conscience against the outrageous wickedness of the so-called church.

James. Well, M., what can you say to this? It is very shocking. Can you deny it?

N*. He cannot deny it. It is a matter of public notoriety, known to all acquainted with history, and proved by the outcry of Christendom, and the public acts of synods to repress it, because it was grown so scandalous. The Reformation has partially moralised the Roman clergy where it has come; but only partially, and where it is not present the fatal obligation of celibacy is a source still of endless corruption. Now conscience revolts against this, the true common law of man if you please to talk of common law, which the church is not, because it is confessedly a positive institution. Our Legislator there is God Himself, and there is a certain common law for man, namely, the knowledge of good and evil.

M. Yes; but you have no judge who is to decide on the matter when there is a difference.

N*. Have I not? In the first place conscience, as far as it goes, decides at a man’s peril what is right and what is wrong. And note here, though man may get light from

God’s revelation, yet as to a judge God is and will be the final judge, and the conscience must and is bound so to regard Him. Conscience is answerable to God directly, and no man can come between the conscience and God so as to destroy the right of God. “Who art thou,” says the apostle, “that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.” To come in between God and the conscience is not to touch man’s rights, but God’s.

James. That is true, M. If my master bids me to do something in his own matters, and you tell me to do something else, you meddle with his right to command me as much and more than with me. Conscience makes us subject to God, and not dare to disobey Him. We do want help and light for it, but it always looks to God as the authority that is over it, and it cannot, dare not, look away from Him to another, because this sets aside God. It would no longer be subject to Him.

M. All very true, no doubt; but if God has set any one to judge, as the king does the judges, you must abide by their decision.

N*. That is all well to decide about property or crimes, and to keep peace among men. But that is absolutely impossible as to conscience, because God has a judgment to come in which He will pronounce originally and finally as to guilt; in which He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the secrets of the heart. Therefore the apostle warns to judge nothing before the time till God does that, God having reserved this to Himself. There can be no judgment which can come between the conscience and God’s final judgment. It remains, in spite of men, in all

its force and authority, and a man must answer to it, and no other authority can come in between, so as to relieve him from obedience to that judgment. So that in the proper sense of judge I admit no judge but God, who executes it in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Judgment applies to the final state of souls, and not to causes between man and man, or offences against the State. Offences against the State the State judges. Our offences are against God, and God judges.

M. Yes; but the State appoints judges, and God has appointed the church.

N*. Hence the Queen cannot judge at all; she may shew mercy, but that is not the question now. But she is not allowed to judge at all. Is that true as regards God?

M. Of course not.

N*. He judges then Himself, and He only; save, as we know, He exercises this judgment by Christ, does He not?

M. Of course, every one owns that.

N*. The whole case then has to be settled by Him who knows it all, He being the judge, and having the whole cause originally and finally before Him?

M. It has.

N*. Priests and pope and all.

M. Yes, priests and pope and all.

N*. Then all your comparison about a judge is simply all false. God Himself judges, and that is the only true judgment; and I am bound to look to that, and not to allow any other to come between me and my conscience. For God judges according to a permanent, abiding,

direct authority He has over me every moment, so that I dare not look away from Him. If I do I am sinning. For note that, James, it is not only particular cases to be settled, about which God judges, but every instant of our lives, so that we cannot look at anything but Him without neglecting Him and His claims.

James. I see it plain enough; I feel it too. I know I may fail, and shall, save as kept by His grace, but I know I am bound to take His will every moment. It ought to be my joy to obey Him. It was the blessed Saviour's own joy; but at any rate I am bound to do it, and must give, and ought to give, an account of myself to God. And tell me, M., can the priest, or the pope, if you please, answer for me in that day?

M. No, of course they cannot.

N*. Then I would not give much for their answering for me now.

M. But is it not said, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven? "And, "Do you not judge them that are within?" and "to whomsoever ye forgive anything, I forgive it."

N*. It is.

M. Then there must be a judge.

N*. But unless you speak of what the apostle's authority established as binding, which no Christian denies, you are now speaking of discipline, not of a rule of faith. Now I own fully scripture speaks of discipline; 1 Cor. 5:13; 2 Cor. 2:10. When a person was put out, his sins were bound upon him, and when he was forgiven and re-admitted, his sins were loosed. And this is the distinct

unequivocal force of a passage you are fond of quoting: “If he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” The subject is a wrong done to a person: he remonstrates; if he recovers his brother, well; if not, he takes two or three more, so that if the person remains obdurate, these are witnesses of all; and then he tells the whole assembly, and if the wrong-doer will not hear the assembly, the injured person may hold him as a person having no claim to be owned as belonging to it; but what has this to do with a rule of faith? And note, just as it was in the Corinthians, the whole assembly was to be listened to, and that to cleanse themselves; 1 Cor. 5.

James. Well, M., you used to quote this passage as if it was a direction for everybody to listen to the church’s teaching, and it has nothing whatever to say to that. It is when some matter of wrong is told to the assembly as the last means of winning a person back from wronging his neighbour, and he will not hearken to the whole assembly, he may then be treated as a heathen that does not belong to it. And I see it is said that, wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ’s name, He is in the midst of them, so that it applies to Christians assembled together.

M. But is it not said, “Go and teach all nations, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world”?

N*. Let me remark to you that you are quoting scripture, and you tell me I cannot receive it without the church, nor understand it either.

M. Yes; but the church has sanctioned it.

N*. What church?

M. Why, the Holy Roman Catholic church.

N*. But I do not own it to be the church, nor do I admit that the church can sanction God's word; it savours to me of blasphemy. You tell me I must have the church first, and we have not got that yet, and therefore you cannot quote it to me. You tell me I must leave it to the church to give authority to the scripture. And now you are quoting scripture to prove the church. That will not do.

James. No, surely, M.; you cannot bring it to prove the church till you have the church to prove it, according to your system. So you ought to prove the church some other way, for according to you the scripture cannot have authority till you have it from the church, and we have not got the church yet for your faith; though I do not contest the Bible.

N*. Quite right, James. You have got no ground yet, and we will therefore surely answer as to it seriously. But when we are inquiring into the rule of faith, this is important, because the Roman Catholic has no real ground for his faith. If the scripture is to prove the authority of the church, the church cannot prove the authority of scripture. If the church is to prove the authority of scripture, we cannot use scripture till we have the church first, as the scripture has none without it.

James. That is clear, M. How does your Dr. Milner get out of that?

M. Why, he says he believes the Catholic church, and everything that she teaches, upon the motives of credibility (namely, her unity, sanctity, etc.), which

accompany her. And she brings me the book and tells me it is inspired.

N*. On whose judgment then have you believed the church?—who has judged of these motives of credibility?

M. Well, on my own, of course. I must judge if it is the church.

N*. Clearly, but then you avow that your whole faith depends on private judgment, and not on a divine foundation at all. And, remark, Dr. Milner felt the force of this, and refers to the objection made to him, and seeks to clear it up. Now, in doing this, he is forced to rest the church's authority on motives of credibility—motives for whom? Man. That is, it is mere human probability. The house cannot be stronger than its foundation. If I have only probability for the church, what the church teaches can only probably have authority. That is, it is no divine authority or divine faith at all. It would be a blasphemy to say, "Probably God says the truth." The Protestant's faith is founded on God's word as such; and motives of credibility can go no farther than private judgment, nay, may vary with each individual in their force. Thus sanctity is alleged to be a proof of the true church.

I read history, and I find that what a Romanist calls the church and infallible is stamped throughout, after history as contrasted with scripture begins, with the most horrible depravity and unholiness of anything on record. Where is the motive of credibility for me? When it rests on motives of credibility, it must rest on private judgment. There is no divine faith at all. Dr. John H. Newman admits there is only a degree of probability,

though an immensely strong one. But that is not divine faith. The Romanist has confessedly none.

Dr. Milner says, you receive as a king's messenger one clothed like one, and you assure yourself he is one, and then accept the letter from the king that he brings, which tells you to mind all he (the messenger) says. But if he was a clever rogue, he might deceive you, and then use the letter to prove you ought to mind him, and get authority over you in everything, and you have only your own judgment to trust to in receiving him. Thus you have nothing but your own judgment to trust to, upon your own shewing, for what you believe.

But let us see a little farther what Dr. Milner's argument is worth. He believes the church and all that she teaches because of unity, sanctity, etc. Why all that she teaches? There may be unity and sanctity, and yet not present infallibility. This argument will not hold water. Dr. Milner jumps into infallibility before he has even got the scriptures to tell him the church is infallible, a point we will speak of. Then, suppose I deny the unity (and, remember, all the oldest churches reject the Roman Catholic church as erroneous, and the pope's authority, and of course do not admit their infallibility, and so, we have seen, do the majority rather of Christians), and the sanctity—both of which, in fact, I do entirely deny—all your supposition falls to the ground. If you have to prove them, in the end divine authority rests upon the judgment I form of unity and sanctity, before I have got any revelation at all. How do I know there ought to be but one church? And as there are many, how am I to know which is the right one?— and must I know all history in order to say which has been holy, or which has the right succession, if any, before I can have any right

faith? You have no divine foundation for your faith at all, nor the church to give it me. And, supposing I am asked to receive all the church teaches now, why may not I judge of the sanctity and unity at the beginning of her history and believe her to be infallible then, and hear what she says? Ah, you tell me I must not judge by that, but only by what is now. Now this looks suspicious. Why may not I see what the apostles and inspired men taught —what the church, if you please, taught then? Was it not one and holy then?

M. Of course it was.

N*. Was it not more united and holy than now?

M. Well, I suppose it was, for here at least there is not much to boast in that way.

N*. Why may I not then hear it at that time? Then I should listen to Paul and John and Peter and the rest. But you do not seem to like that; you will only allow me to hear people who are not inspired. And where am I to find any inspired teaching, or even the church's teaching now?

M. You must listen to her pastors.

N*. Are they inspired?

M. No.

N*. Then I have no divine faith in what they say.

M. But they will not mislead you; the priest is seen after by the bishop, and he by them above him.

N*. How can I tell? Is that divine faith? At any rate I do not hear the church, for aught I can tell, in hearing him. We will return to this, for it is a large subject. But on our main point at present, Dr. Milner on his own shewing,

though he has been very astute, has no ground to stand upon. And, after all, I am to listen to this church now in those who confessedly are not inspired, and am not allowed to listen to it when apostles and others were inspired. And what does Dr. Milner therefore do? He puts the word of God first, unwritten as well as written, as the rule; and the church as the judge. When pressed (for it is only in a note) he says the church must come first, and be proved by its unity, sanctity, etc., etc., and then come to the word, but this, in fact, he did not dare to do. He had not the unity; he had not the sanctity. He tries to confirm the church's authority by these marks when he has got the true rule as he says, but, according to his own shewing, he could not get it till he had got the church. But he could not put the church forward, first because he has to prove it had such authority, which could not be proved at all; and next, that the Roman system was that church. It could not be proved that the church had the authority, because, if the church has to be proved first, how am I to know she is infallible?—how can I tell what marks she is to be known by? She cannot adduce scripture to prove it in any way, for what propounds and explains it—that is, the church—we have not got yet. And supposing I admit the church to exist, as I do, for there it is before my eyes; why is it infallible? It tells me so; but is it right in telling me so? I see worldliness, ambition, horrible corruption, disputes, difference of doctrine. Take, for instance, the Dominicans and Franciscans on the immaculate conception. The former, the greatest and most important body for many centuries in their church (and which managed the Inquisition), denied what is now held necessary to be believed as of the faith itself.11 M. But

then the pope and the bishops have decided now, and they had not then.

N*. But how do I know the pope and the bishops have the right to decide? Who has made them infallible? I know some pretend the pope is so, and some pretend a general council is, and some say there must be both. But this is a new infallible body. And is it not a strange thing that the church, which you say was to keep people safe in the truth, should have left a vast body, and the most famous doctors, and those who were to decide upon heresy, in error for centuries, and only then settle the truth? How am I to receive all it teaches, or anything, with a divine faith? Hence in fact Dr. Milner puts the word of God first to prove the church before he has proved it to be the word of God, and declaring we cannot tell whether it is. This rule even then rests on no divine faith in his system, because, according to that, I get to the church, and cannot tell if the scriptures, by which its authority is alleged to be taught, are divine. He is cleverly resting on my protestant good faith to hide the weakness of his own cause.

Mark another thing. He puts the proof of the credibility of Christianity in a protestant mouth—in Dr. Carey's. How comes that? He makes him quote the scriptures as a warrant for the doctrines and miracles of the Lord Jesus. Now he is quite right in doing that, because faith in Christianity cannot be founded on the church; because he who has to learn to believe in Christianity of course does not yet own the church. But here, however cunning, he has given all his position up. I can believe without the church. I have discovered the true religion. And if I have believed in Christianity and the word, I have what I want substantially, and, above all, I

recognize the divine authority of the scriptures. You plead, or make the Protestant plead—for as a Roman Catholic you can have no such faith—the words and works of the blessed Jesus. You do well; but where did you get them in order to prove what Christianity is? Have you any account but the scriptures of the words and works of Jesus? Not the smallest iota. Anything that ever pretended to be so is too bad for anyone to allege it as of any authority. You must come to the scriptures to know what Christ said or did. A priest may repeat it from them, or I may, but nothing (with all the boastings of the clergy) has the smallest authority but what is found there.

But then the word has divine authority over my soul; the moment I have Jesus' words, and the apostles' words, I have the certainty of divine truth. You have nothing at all but this to prove what Christianity is, and its credibility; and, if I take this and so believe in Christianity, I have already the words of Christ and His apostles, and neither would nor dare but hear them. Do not tell me I cannot understand or believe them. That is the Christianity I have to understand and believe. Now, I do not wish to offend you, M., God forbid, but if I were to take what you call the Catholic church, as it is, or as it was at the time the Reformation took place, or long before, I see, without at all pretending that Protestants are what they ought to be, the greatest scene of wickedness that ever was known on the face of God's earth. And I should say, if that is what I am to believe as Christianity, God keep me from it. It is a wickedness that revolts an honest moral man, and that in priests, bishops, and popes more than in others. That there is no disputing about before the Reformation.

M. Well, all admit there have been wicked popes and clergy, but that is not the church.

N*. But is it not what you want me to hear? Are they not the people who you say are to secure my having the truth? And as you plead sanctity as a proof of infallible authority, I must at once say, Well it is certainly not to be had here.

M. Well, but that does not change the faith of the church.

N*. Aye, but we are talking about the infallibility of the church, on which my faith is to be divinely founded. And if sanctity, or even unity, is to be a proof of it, it was lost altogether, for the popes were the wickedest of men, and there were two, and even three, at a time denouncing one another as the falsest and wickedest of men; and at last it was so scandalous, that the three who then pretended to be pope were all deposed. Where was sanctity and unity then? Where infallibility? And note, to have it, it must never cease.

M. Well, but it was in the known doctrines of the church.

N*. But I thought we must have a speaking tribunal. And if you found yourself on documents, where are they?

M. Well, there is the Council of Trent and the Catechism of Pope Pius IV.

N*. That was a century later, and if I go to these documents, why may not I go to what Paul and Peter and John wrote? I get it first hand, and I suppose the apostles were as sure as the Council of Trent.

M. Yes, of course; but you may interpret them wrong; and then, if you go to that, they are in Greek; you must come to the pastors of the church.

N*. Well, but I may interpret the decrees of Trent and the Catechism wrong. They are much more obscure than the most of the New Testament. And as to this being in Greek, the decrees and the Catechism are in Latin, and you are not going to tell me that the poor Romanists read them to know their faith; and if I go to the pastor, I am with a fallible man, and can have no divine faith. No, with the word of God I have a divine foundation for my faith, whereas you have none at all. Hence, M., though you have no right to quote the scriptures to me, because you say we cannot tell they are the word of God, and you have not yet proved what and where the true church is; yet, as I do believe they are the word of God, I shall make no objection to your quoting them, so that we will return to the point we left, only it was very important to shew that you Romanists have no divine ground for your faith at all. Your principle is that we cannot tell if the scriptures be the word of God. Hence I cannot have a divine faith in the revelation given. I cannot tell if it is a revelation. If it is, it has divine authority, and I must listen to it. As to the church, you have not proved anything about it yet. But I shall listen to all you say from the word, because, though you have no right to use it, I do not want to cavil, and I own it to be God's word. We were speaking of "Go and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the end of the world."

M. Well, is not that a plain proof that the church is secure from error, and that, as the apostles could not live for ever, we must obey their successors?

N*. Who are their successors?

M. Why, all the bishops, and especially the pope, as the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles.

N*. I see nothing about successors. But must I know the succession of bishops of a see before I know what saves my soul? This is a serious question, because there have been three popes at a time. But let us see now if you think God was always with them. For instance, when Pope Julius was the most ardent warrior of his day, or when his predecessor, Pope Alexander VI, carried on a life of dissoluteness without example, seeking to establish his illegitimate children in dukedoms and principalities, to say nothing worse of him (for worse is said, and counted true), and at last was poisoned by what he had prepared to poison a rich cardinal to get his money—was the Lord (may He forgive one for naming such a thing!) with these as with the apostles?

M. Yes, but there are wicked men everywhere.

N*. No doubt. That is not our question; but is the Lord with them as He was with the apostles? That is the question.

James. Why, M., you cannot say that. It would be awful.

N*. Well, when there were two popes for thirty years, and then three for some years more, the two holding their ground against the third, named to put them down, and then this third, probably poisoned by the person who was his successor, and after various fighting in open war, the Emperor succeeded in having a general council, and putting down all three (the last as too infamous to be tolerated)—was the Lord with all these? or with which of them?

M. No, of course not; but He was with the church.

N*. That I believe. But then, in that case, these were not the church. And, remember, your doctrine is that the promise to the apostles was with their successors. And this schism is of the more importance, because it is alleged that the Lord may be with an office when not with the person. But here there were two successors condemning each other, and part of Europe siding with one, and part with the other, and a third condemning both, so that the Lord could not be with them, and neither could secure the truth for us. The truth is, the papacy and all connected with it was such a horrible scene of wickedness, that men got tired of it and put down these popes—and we may well say God, in His mercy, too—and brought about the Reformation. For the Reformation, long cried for by all Christendom, took place about a century after this in another way than was expected; the popes, to whom reformation was left by the council, taking good care not to reform themselves, though not so scandalous as those I have referred to.

M. Well, but there were good popes too.

N*. In the beginning of the history of Christianity there were blessed men in the See of Rome, martyrs among them: only they were not popes of Christendom. Far from it. Yet already in the fifth century the city of Rome was filled with blood and massacres through the conflicts between two contending popes, Symmachus and Laurentius, and at last they had to go to an heretical Arian king to decide the matter. This is the Roman Catholic account (Baronius, vol. 8, p. 619). The dispute too lasted a long time. But, further, when the so-called bishops went to war, as princes at the head of their troops, as happened constantly in the middle ages, particularly in Germany, was the Lord with them as the

successors of the apostles? And when they allowed sin for ten florins, as we have seen, was the Lord with them?

James. Well, M., what can you say to this? But is this all certain, sir?

N*. I have stated nothing but what is matter of well-known and authentic history, for which authentic proofs remain, and mainly in councils of the Roman Catholic church. Nor indeed is it possible to go into all the wickedness and horrors that went on.

M. Well, I suppose it cannot be denied that they were dark and evil times; even Catholics admit that. But they were the habits of the age, and the clergy were not wholly exempt.

N*. They do admit it. St. Bernard, as you call him, said Antichrist was at Rome in the eleventh century. But were the successors of the apostles, with whom you allege the Lord was, to follow the habits of the age? Besides, forbidding to marry and then living in sin was the case of the clergy only, and not otherwise the habits of the age, save as the corruption of the clergy corrupted everything around them.

James. But I thought, M., you called the church holy; and what is all this? It is dreadful: how could you think I could take such persons for successors of the apostles?

N*. But again, are all the Greek patriarchs, prelates and clergy who reject the authority of the pope—are they successors of the apostles too?

M. But they are in schism.

N*. Well, but then successors of the apostles are in schism. Is not that a queer thing, and how is the Lord

with them so that they can secure my faith? And then there are some sixty millions of professing Christians in schism with them, well nigh half the number of those subject to the pope. And then, note, they are the successors of the apostles, most of them in older churches than that of Rome. How can I be secure in thinking they can guide me according to the promise we are speaking of, “Lo, I am with you always,” when they condemn utterly the pretensions of the one you think, I suppose, infallible?

M. But they hold the same doctrines.

JV*. So your Dr. Milner states; but it is not true, and, begging his pardon, he must have known it was not true. They do not hold the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, nor purgatory—the last exercising more influence in the papal body than any other doctrine. I might add the priests marry; only that is practice, not doctrine. Again, when pope Liberius turned Arian to please the Emperor Constantius, and denied the divinity of the Lord Jesus, was the Lord with him as a successor of the apostles? Athanasius, who stood up for the truth of the blessed Lord’s divinity was banished, and died in banishment excommunicated. And even before, in Constantine’s time, when all the prelates, fathers, as they are called, of the Council of Tyre joined in accepting this denial of the truth, and the Arians were recalled, could they pretend the Lord was with them?—or the 800 bishops who at Ariminium denied the divinity of the Lord? There were but 318 in the Council of Nice which affirmed it, only the Emperor’s authority maintained it. Had I trusted the clergy for the truth in Constantius’ days, I must have turned Arian. If I lived in Russia or Turkey now, I must, if I listen to the clergy,

hold the pretensions of Rome to be all wrong. If I live at Rome, I must hold the successors of the apostles in the East to be all wrong. Is that all the security you can give me? When I take the scriptures, I have the certainty of having the truth, because I get what you own to be the apostles' own teaching. But to our point. Is God with all those of whom we have been speaking in their errors, when the pope for example was an Arian, or when there were two?

M. No, of course He was not with them in that. But you see God has preserved the church through it all in spite of all this, and you must hear the church.

N*. We have not got the true church yet. However, you hold, then, that God has preserved the true church not by, but in spite of, these successors of the apostles. That I fully believe, and bless His abundant grace for. He has not permitted the gates of hell to prevail against it. But if anything could have frustrated God's promise and have destroyed the church, the conduct of the hierarchy would have done so.

M. But He was very often with them too. There were holy godly men, who sacrificed their lives for the truth.

N*. Undoubtedly there were, at any rate in the earlier part of the history, though we might not always agree in judging of the particular cases. But there were some more enlightened, others less. And I am well assured that God was with them in the measure in which they followed the apostles and their doctrine, and so He will now with those who do, and that to the end of the age. He was fully with the apostles, and will be with all those who serve Him like them according to the measure given unto them. But this does not make the popes and

prelates who are not all like them any security for the truth.

I believe then fully in the promise given, and that the Lord was with the apostles and will be with all those who so serve Him. And you are forced to admit that with the mass of your successors of the apostles the Lord is not. And your Dr. Milner looks at it, when it suits him, in the same way, for he couples with the passage we are speaking of, another from Mark, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” I add, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Now, in this work I do not doubt that the Lord is with those who serve Him; but then your successors of the apostles are not that in their office. They rule over the flock where people are all professing Christians. Christ is speaking in Matthew of making disciples of the heathen. In Mark too He is speaking of the conversion to Christianity of those who were strangers to it. He is not speaking of the care of the church, nor of successors in that at all.

And mark here the importance of a distinction I was making with James before you came. Dr. Milner says the unwritten word was the means of propagating the doctrines. Now I admit that fully, and it may be, and is still; but that does not make the preacher a rule of faith. A means of propagating is not a rule of faith. This fallacy runs all through the book.

M. But Christ promised the Comforter should abide for ever, and that He would teach the apostles all things and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said to them.

N*. Both these statements I believe with all my heart, as Christ's own words. But, allow me to say, if He taught the apostles all things and brought all things to their remembrance, two things are clear: first, that all was taught them then, and all brought to remembrance then, and that of Christ's teaching nothing more is to be learnt than what they thus received. On this point Tertullian largely insists; and, better still, the apostle John. He tells us that, if we abide in what was from the beginning, we shall abide in the Father and in the Son; next, that it was to them only He then spoke, for He says, "to bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you." This can apply only to the apostles, and we have to inquire, How do we get what was thus taught them, whether directly by the Holy Ghost or by His bringing to remembrance Christ's words?

M. That is true; but the Comforter was to abide for ever.

N*. So I am fully persuaded He does, but not to teach new truths, for all were taught to the apostles. He may, morally speaking, lead us to think of what Christ says, but cannot properly do what He did to the apostles. And the passage is an unfortunate one, for Judas (not Iscariot) asks the Lord how He would manifest Himself to them and not to the world, and the Lord tells him, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will make our abode with him." So that the way the Comforter abides with the apostles and their successors, if you please, is with those who love Him and keep His word. Thus it is the Lord Himself carries on the succession, not by offices. Now, I admit, in the fullest way, that there are gifts, "pastors and teachers," by which the Lord edifies His people

individually and collectively. But these, all admit, are not rules of faith. They are a means of blessing, not a rule of faith.

So that, if we examine the passage, we find that all was taught to the apostles, and that the true presence of the Spirit is with those who love Christ and keep His word. There is no promise whatever to official successors. There is one to the apostles, the end of the age being unrevealed; but there is not one word of official successors as objects of the promise. To allege it is only a supposition that it must be: a pretension often loudest in the wickedest now, to be the successors of the apostles. And when Judas asks how the Lord could be present, it is explained in another way by the Lord. Christ, who had been their Comforter or Paraclete, was going away from the disciples. This was a deep sorrow, an affecting loss. He promises another, who should not thus leave them, but ever abide with them. And surely as long as the church remains the Holy Ghost will remain. Who has Him dwelling in him is another question. The Lord says He is with those who love Him and keep His word.

Now as all truth was taught to the apostles, one question is, How can we have this securely and surely as they had it? But that there were any successors to the apostles in the true sense of the word I entirely deny. First, in a mass of places churches were found in which they never were, so that there was no proper successor to an apostle, for there was no apostle to succeed to. There may have been godly administrative care and teaching by those called and sent of God, and a great blessing too; but no proper successors of the apostles where there were no apostles to succeed.

But I go farther into the root and heart of the thing than this. There was no successor to an apostle at all as to what he was as an apostle. No one was chosen, sent directly by the Lord Himself, and this is what an apostle means. It is a name given by Christ. No pretended successor could say as Paul (and the rest too) “not of man, nor by man.” The pretension to be a successor denies the person being in an apostle’s place; for it denies that immediate relationship to Christ, which alone constitutes apostleship. The Timothys and Silvanuses and the rest, precious as they were to the church, were by man; or simply gifts without any local office, as the prophets. An apostle, in the nature of things, cannot have a successor in any official place in the church. For such successor is as such not the founder of the church as an eye-witness, and sent directly by Christ as such. Nobody pretends that those called successors of the apostles are inspired to make revelations. Individually they have no pretension to be considered in any respect as successors of an apostle. Nor was it (unless possibly at Jerusalem, and this is quite uncertain) the office of an apostle to govern any particular see, nor did any, unless the case I have just alluded to, and then that was not the apostolic office.

But I go farther. There is distinct proof that the apostles themselves recognized no successors. Paul insists on the diligent care of the elders, because he had no successor. This is very distinct. He knew (Acts 20) that after his decease grievous wolves would enter in, and perverse men would arise. Who, after his decease, if he was to have a successor? Evil would spring up because there was not an apostle to check or control it by his spiritual energy and consequent authority. He urges the elders,

those whom the Holy Ghost had made overseers, to watch—a thing wholly out of place if another was to succeed him and take his place. Some say Timothy was afterwards bishop of Ephesus. There is no evidence of it, but the contrary; but if he were, it upsets the theory altogether, for the same authorities tell us John was at Ephesus, so that we have an apostle there governing and guiding, and yet a successor at the same time to do it as if the apostle were gone.

So Peter says, seeing his departure was near, that he would take care they should have these things always in remembrance, and writes his Epistle; but if he had a successor who was to secure the truth, and it be not the scriptures which are to do it through grace, he made a great mistake in the whole matter. Paul therefore, and Peter and John practically too, all deny the whole theory on which the Romish system is founded. They know no successor, deny by their words that there will be such, and give other means of security as regards the truth; for Paul is still clearer than Peter as to the scriptures. Not only does he commend the elders of Ephesus to God and the word of His grace, but he tells us positively that in the last days perilous times should come; that the professing church would be in a horrible state, having a form of godliness but denying the power of it; and that we should turn away from such; and that the security of the faithful Christian would be the scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation. Not a word of tradition, but the contrary; for Timothy is made to rely on knowing of whom he had learned the things he knew. This was Paul himself.

James. Where is that, sir?

N*. In 2 Timothy 3. He says evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, but Timothy was to continue in what Paul himself had taught, and hold fast to the scriptures as able to make him wise unto salvation, and make the man of God perfect. Thus the apostle had no thought of anything else than apostolic teaching, and the scriptures as the security of the faithful in the perilous times of the last days. And you see too, plainly, that instead of such security and right conduct and good state of the church continuing through the care of the successors of the apostles perilous times were to come; and indeed at the end, as he tells us in 2 Thessalonians 2, an apostasy; and that when the state of the professing church made it perilous for the saint, the scriptures and the certain teaching of the apostle himself would be the means of securing us by faith in Christ Jesus. The Christian would have to be secured in perils arising from the state of the church. Paul does not refer to the hierarchy as the safeguard, but to the scriptures and Timothy's knowing who had taught him.

James. That is very clear, M.; because, if the state of the church was so evil as to make it perilous, it could not be a security for him who desired to walk right; and if I read what Paul says I do know of whom I have learned it, and that and the other scriptures will keep us through faith in Christ.

M. But you may take a false meaning out of them. Every kind of notion and religion is come out of scripture.

James. That I do not believe, because both you and I believe they are the truth of God, and therefore error cannot come out of them. That people, if they are not

humble, and if they read scripture with their heads and not depending upon grace, may follow their own thoughts and wrest scripture to prove them—this may be; but they cannot get anything but perfect truth out of scripture, that you dare not deny. If they are proud, wise in their own conceits, they will reap the consequence of it, but grace will keep the humble soul. Besides, I may take a wrong meaning out of what your books or priest teach me. And, further, I do not despise at all the help of those whom God has sent and fitted to teach and help us: only they are not the rule of faith. They cannot, I see they cannot, have the authority God's word has; they are not inspired. I must prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. That is what the apostle tells us to do; 1 Cor. 10:15.

M. Why you are growing quite a little teacher yourself, James. What can a poor man like you know about it?

James. I know well I am not a learned man, M.; but I have faith in what I find in scripture, and therefore am certain of the truth that is in it. Ought not I to believe what Paul says?

M. Of course; but how can you tell what he meant?

James. By what he says; and do you not believe that the grace of God will help a poor man as well as a learned one in what concerns his soul?

M. Well, I do not gainsay that.

James. And the blessed Lord who cared for the poor said, that the Father hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes: "even so, Father, for so it seems good in thy sight." And Paul says, "If any man will be wise in this world, let him become a fool

that he may be wise." And the Psalm says, "The entering in of thy word giveth light and understanding to the simple."

M. Where do you get all this scripture, James?

James. Why, by reading it to be sure. You pretend we cannot understand it, M., and you have never tried. Read it, and try and see if it is not light and food for the soul. Of course we need grace for this, as for every blessing. And tell me, M., to whom did the Lord speak when He was teaching, the learned or the poor?

M. Why, they say the poor. The scribes and Pharisees would not listen to Him.

James. And do you think He spoke so that they could understand Him if their hearts were not hardened? Alas, there are many such, poor and rich.

M. Well, I suppose, of course He did.

James. And why should not I, if I humbly seek His help? I do not know Greek of course, but (thank God) it has been put into English, and I can trust Him to get the truth from it. I am not looking for a learned knowledge of it, but for the edification of my soul. Read it in your own translation. There is one they approve of, read it in that, if you won't have ours. I do not believe the blessed Lord meant to make a way for learned men to get to heaven and not for the poor. He says "to the poor the gospel is preached"; and the apostle, "not many wise men, not many rich, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise." Yet he wrote almost all his Epistles to these very people.

M. Well, what you say there, James, is reasonable. I should like to see what scripture does say; but I do not know whether Father O. will allow me.

James. Father O.! But what right can Father O. have to hinder your hearing what God has said to you? Who gave him the right to keep away from the poor God's word that was once written to the poor? For, as Mr. N*. said, the Epistles, save a few, were written to all the Christians in a place, not to the clergy.

M. Well, but you do not know whether he will hinder me.

James. Perhaps not. They would not be apt to do it when all around can read them; but how comes he to have the right to hinder? or how comes it you are dependent on another man as to whether you may hear what God has said?

M. Well, I doubt that is right too. But surely we ought to obey those who have the rule over us.

James. I have nothing against that, for the scriptures say so. But how comes it they only give you these scraps of them? If one of the family would not let me see my father's will, pretending he was wiser than me, and I was no lawyer, and I should only take a wrong sense out of it, I should not, as a man, like it. I am not a lawyer, and he might be better able to explain lawyer's words in it; but I should like to know what my father did say. Some of it might be plain and for me, and I should know if he was keeping something back from me that was mine in what was plain. I should like to see it. And when one does see the scripture, one sees that God meant us to see it.

N*. Yes, and that is a very important point; because it is not merely going against our rights, as between man and man, but against God's rights as to His own people. And Dr. Milner lets out that Rome does not wish Christians in general to see the scriptures. He says she has confirmed her decrees by them. She enjoins her pastors to read and study them. Finally she proves her perpetual right to announce and explain the truths, etc., by several of the strongest and clearest passages (Lett. 10), but not a word of the faithful seeing or reading them. And James is quite right in what he supposes: where there are many Protestants, the Bible is allowed, and occasionally to those they feel sure of elsewhere, with notes; but otherwise it is not thought of, and Dr. Milner could not speak of liberty to read the scriptures existing, because it is formally denied by the highest authority of the Romish system.

The Index of prohibited books has been referred to a committee by the Council of Trent. In the last session this was referred to the pope, and the pope sanctioned the rules they had laid down. In the fourth rule, if a person shall have presumed to read or to have a copy without the express permission of the parish priest or confessor, he cannot receive absolution till the Bible be given up; and a bookseller who sells or otherwise lets a person have one is to forfeit the value for pious uses, and undergo other penalties. Dr. Milner therefore says the Catholic church does not cast any slight on the scriptures. He could not say Christians were free to read them, and M. must get leave from his priest to do so, and that in writing (Rule 4 at the end of Council of Trent), or he would not get absolution.

The Romish system interferes with God's rights—His title to send His own message to His own people; and no one denies that in the primitive churches all were free to read, and encouraged to read, the scriptures. St. Chrysostom insists on it. Nor does Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) conceal that many things were done by the early Fathers which were changed by the church in after times, on a critical examination of the matter. God has addressed His word to the people, not, save a very small part (three epistles), to the clergy, and the clergy have taken them away—taken away, as the Lord says, the key of knowledge.

M. And do you not think ignorant people may wrest the scriptures to their own destruction, as it is said?

N*. I think anyone may, if he does not look for God's grace to help and guide him. But I do not think ignorant people do it a thousandth part as much as learned ones, because they come to it more simply as God's word, and respect it. Whereas the learned, thinking they are able to exercise their minds on it and judge about it, do not receive it as little children. Heresies have not come from the ignorant, but from doctors.

God has given the scriptures to the people, and the clergy of Rome have taken them from them. And it is to God they will answer. Augustine insists largely in his book on the unity of the church (chap. 10) against the Donatists, who insisted, just as the Romanists do now, on the obscurity of scripture.

We now turn to another part of your rule of faith—tradition. Your Dr. Milner says, Paul puts the written and unwritten word upon a level, leaving us to suppose that this last is tradition.

James. And I thought that was tradition—a doctrine handed down from one to another.

N*. It is not, in the New Testament, except where it is condemned, when the Lord says, “Thus have ye made the word of God of none effect by your tradition.” Where remark, that traditions are put expressly in contrast with the word of God. The word of God was complete in itself, and their traditions set it aside, and so do Romanist traditions.

But the passage which Dr. Milner quotes proves that tradition is not used as he uses it. Where the word is used of written and unwritten, the written is called tradition as well as the unwritten. It means any doctrine delivered. Now if Paul delivered a doctrine to me by word of mouth, I ought of course to observe it as if it was in one of his epistles. There is no difference: only that I might forget or change it if it were not written. Here is Paul’s phrase— “Stand fast, and hold the tradition ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.” Of course, what he had taught as truth, they ought to keep. Tradition means what he had taught.

But where are the doctrines which Paul taught which are not found in scripture? They have none to produce: we shall see this just now. Dr. Milner tells us an old wife’s tale about the apostles agreeing upon a short symbol, a story which everyone knows to have no foundation. The Apostles’ Creed is the Roman creed, with some additions, and the creed of the church of Aquileia, in the fifth century, preserved by Ruffinus, the descent into hell being added afterwards. But, further, a very just and important remark has been made by another as to the way tradition is spoken of by the

Fathers, on whom Dr. Milner chiefly rests his case. The word is not used as meaning a source of additional doctrines, an unwritten word besides the written, but as a sure proof of the true faith to be received, and way of knowing the right use of scripture. Tradition for them was a testimony to scriptural truth of a surer kind, as they alleged, not a communication of additional truths besides the scripture. They charged heretics with pretending to a tradition of this kind. They as often appeal to the scriptures against everything else as to tradition; but with them tradition is not a source of additional truths, but a surer proof, as they say, of common truths. Now, I admit freely that, supposing the apostles had not left us the scriptures, men ought to have followed tradition (that is, what the apostles taught) when they had it. The question is, first, would it have secured the preservation of the apostles' doctrine? The apostles thought not, and left us the New Testament —that is, really, the Holy Ghost did. But, secondly, now they have left us the scriptures, are we not to use them? and are we not to reject everything contrary to them, even if it pretends to be a tradition?

We will now see what the Fathers say about it, as Dr. M. quotes them. The early Fathers, those near to the time of the apostles, appeal to tradition, not as an additional source of truth, but a security for truth against heresy, against new doctrines, proving by what everybody held all over the world that such heresy was new. Now, though not an authority, it might be useful as a proof of this when it was universal. But as to its securing the certainty of teaching, it cannot, and so God thought, and gave His people a book. History has shewn that it does not, for doctrines have changed. Afterwards tradition

came to be appealed to as an independent source of like authority, because the scriptures did not contain a multitude of superstitions which came in; and at last the scriptures were taken away, because they condemned well nigh all that was done and taught, as a certain Peter Sutor (a.d. 1525), a Carthusian monk, innocently confesses, that “the people will be apt to murmur when they see things required, as from the apostles, which they find not a word of in scripture.” Whence he concludes it was a rash, useless, and dangerous thing to translate them.

Irenaeus, for example, uses tradition as a security for truth, not as revealing other things besides what is in scripture. The quotation from Tertullian surprises me, because this same Tertullian, after saying the traditions of the different episcopal sees secured the faith, left what called itself the Catholic church, because its state was so bad. It did not secure his faith. Not only so, but the particular tract Dr. Milner quotes was assuredly written when he had left the universal church to become a Montanist, or, at any rate, accepted the Montanist rhapsodies as prophecy, for he says in the first chapter, No wonder they would not face martyrdom, when they reject the prophecies of the Spirit, that is, of the Paraclete, so called, of Montanus. Even here he only insists on rites and ceremonies, and on no doctrine of faith, saying, that if certain ceremonies have been always used they are to be observed, and it is to be assumed there was some tradition as their origin—just shewing that it was to justify superstitious practices they began to use tradition because there was no scripture for them.

The other proofs of Dr. Milner are drawn from authors from the end of the fourth to the end of the fifth century after Christ, when every perplexity of doctrine, and the grossest relaxation of practice, had come into the church, so that they were glad to get anything to rest their foot upon. Popes had denied the divinity of Christ. The bishops had killed the poor old archbishop of Constantinople by blows in one of their councils, and the vices of the clergy were such that they surely did require something not in scripture to support them. What I have said I will justify when we speak of the marks of the true church. But it will be well to examine the point of tradition a little closer. We will take Tertullian, because he is the first that speaks largely of it in the tract Dr. M. refers to. Here are the points for which he refers to tradition as an authority:—

“Therefore let us inquire whether tradition also should be received if it be not a written one. We will deny that it is to be received if no examples of other observances which we defend, without any written document, on the ground of tradition alone, and then, by the patronage of custom, prejudge the case. Finally, that I may begin with baptism. When we are approaching the water, there but a little before in the assembly, under the hand of the president, we witness that we renounce the devil, and his pomps, and his angels; then we are immersed three times, answering something more than the Lord determined in the gospel. Received back [from the water], we taste a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day abstain from our daily washing for a week. The sacrament of the Eucharist, which was received from the Lord at a time they were eating, and committed to all to celebrate, we take in meetings held before

daylight, and not from the hand of others than the president. We make offerings for the dead. We celebrate the anniversaries of martyrs. We count it a wickedness to fast on the Lord's day, or to worship on our knees. We enjoy the same immunity from Easter to Pentecost. We are grieved if any even of our own cup or bread drop on the ground. At every progress and advance, at coming up or going out, in clothing, putting on our shoes, washing at tables, when we bring the lights, when we go to bed, when we sit down, whatever we are engaged in, we sign our forehead with the cross. If you ask scripture for the law of these and other like practices, you will find none. Tradition will be alleged to you to be the source. Custom has confirmed it, and faith observes it."

Now that none of these observances are found in scripture I fully admit. But we see what tradition was worth—not kneeling on Sunday, giving a taste of milk and honey to the newly-baptized, and such like futilities, which, not being in scripture, they alleged tradition for. Now it is well to see what the earliest tradition was worth. You have it from Dr. Milner's witness for us; we were to take him as a guide in our inquiry; I have examined what he has alleged. But then I have a few remarks to make here. Had these traditions the authority of the word of God, the alleged unwritten word? The triune immersion in baptism, which some took for a sign of the Trinity, some for three days of Christ's being in the grave—Jerome of the unity too—was insisted upon by Tertullian, Basil, and Jerome, as coming from tradition, Chrysostom refers it to the words of Christ Himself in sending His disciples; Matt. 28. And the so-called apostolical canons order a bishop or presbyter to be deposed who should administer baptism

not by three immersions, but by only one in the name of Christ. Pope Pelagius condemns it too, and founds the practice on Christ's words in Matthew. So, it appears, does Theodoret, who accuses Eunomius of changing baptism in not immersing thrice; so Sozomen.

Here, if ever, we have a tradition of the highest character and greatest authority. Alas! it is given up. The Arians used it, and in Spain this alarmed the orthodox, and many gave it up, and others would not, and the whole country was in a practical state of schism. Leander, of the See of Seville, wrote to Gregory the Great. He answers: "Concerning the triune immersion in baptism, nothing can be answered more truly than what thou hast felt, that in one faith a different custom does no harm to the holy church; but in being thrice immersed we mark a sacrament of the three days' burial, as when the infant is taken up the third time out of the water, the resurrection on the third day is expressed. But if anyone thinks that there is an assertion of the exalted Trinity therein, neither as to this is there any hindrance to being plunged only once; since, as there is one substance in three Persons, it can in no way be reprehensible that an infant should be immersed once or thrice in baptism, since in three immersions the trinity of persons, in one the unity of the divinity is designated; but now, as infants are baptized by the heretics with three immersions, I judge that it should not be done among you," Greg, lib. 1, ep. 41, ad Leand.

Still the pope's advice did not succeed in stopping the schism. The Spanish Council of Toledo decided that, though, as Gregory judged, both were perfectly innocent, yet they should only immerse once, and

comfort all parties by saying that the plunging is a sign of death; the coming up of resurrection; the one immersion, of the unity of the Godhead; the three names, of the Trinity of persons. (Cone. Toledo 4, can. 5.) So this tradition, enforced by deposition from office in the canons which tradition asserted to be those of the apostles, as the same tradition did the creed to be theirs, came to an end. And faith observed it no more. How certain an authority it is ! You cannot complain of the choice I have made; it is Dr. Milner's own. I suppose Roman Catholics kneel on Sunday, and from Easter to Pentecost too; so that what Tertullian alleges to be tradition observed by faith has no authority at all.

I shall refer to what Irenaeus says of scripture just now. I do not quote him as to tradition, because his use of it is to appeal to the universal voice of the church to confirm his reasonings from the word against heretics, which is quite another thing from Dr. Milner's use of the word.

But a word more as to Tertullian, who was a lawyer and also a great stickler for church prescription, which is only a principle of Roman civil law, and what Dr. Milner quotes only an advocacy in the terms of Roman law. One question is, Can the authority of tradition secure us in the faith? The answer is, Tertullian himself who insists on it received, at the time he wrote this, the Montanist rhapsodies, as inspiration and the Comforter, and went amongst them, leaving that which he said alone had authority. The most important of his traditions which was universal was given up, Pope Gregory very wisely saying that, if there was unity of faith, such things were of no consequence. How futile most of his traditions are, anyone can see. They are notions and practices crept in from a lively imagination, and that is all; but a

dangerous thing in the church of God, because a long observed custom becomes a matter of faith for many.

M. But have we not the Apostles' Creed by tradition, and that they composed it before they went away to preach?

N*. The Apostles' Creed, as the church has it now, was composed at different times, and no two churches hardly had just the same. "The Communion of Saints," for example, was added quite late; "the holy church" earlier; the word "Catholic" again later still. The descent into hell was not there at all in the Roman creed called the Apostles'. And it was added very late indeed; it appears in the creed of Aquileia, in the fourth century. As to the apostles making a creed, as Dr. Milner alleges, I am surprised he should quote such a fable; for such it is now, I suppose, universally owned to be. All the creeds are called apostolic, meaning they contain apostolic doctrine. What is now called the Apostles' Creed was the creed of the Roman church with one or two articles added.

This story of the apostles composing it does not appear before the fourth century, and then the story went rapidly farther; for an author, passing under the name of Augustine, gives us the particular article contributed by each apostle. But all this is trumpery and contrary to known history, for it is known that many articles were added, as I have said, quite late in the church's history. Dr. Milner urges, too, that they (the apostles) profess belief in the church (Lett. 10), not in scripture. This is an unfortunate observation. The authors of the creed were stating objects of faith, what they did believe, not sources of revelation, nor the authority for their believing it. They do not speak of believing in tradition

either: both would have been absurd, because the question was briefly what they believed, not why, or where they found it.

But, further, the author quoted by Dr. Milner—he who tells us the apostles made the creed—Ruffinus charges his readers to remark that they are not called on to believe in the church (that is, have confidence in it as an authority and source of faith), but only to believe the church—that is, that there was such a thing. If anyone says that it is just the same with every article that they are all objects of faith whether there be “in “or not, I shall not contest with him. However Dr. Milner’s (Lett. 10) authority presses strenuously the remark that we are only to believe the objective fact that there is a church, but not to believe in it—that is, draws exactly the opposite conclusion to that for which Dr. M. quotes him. He says, “By this syllable of a preposition (believing the church, instead of in the church) the Creator is separated from the creatures, and divine things are separated from human.” (Ruffinus in Symb. Apostolorum); and St. Augustine and after him the schoolmen insist on the difference in principle.

But I must return a moment to a remark I made to you. The word “tradition “is shamefully abused. No one doubts that the disciples ought to receive whatever the apostles taught by word of mouth. The question is whether we can have it now handed down unwritten outside scripture. Now the scripture and the earliest writers used the word simply in the sense of teaching; as in the passage quoted by Dr. Milner, “the tradition which ye have received by word or our epistle.” That had not been handed down. Paul had taught them by word of mouth; he had taught them by letter: they were to

receive both. Of course they were; but they had received both directly from the apostle; there was no handing down. It means his teaching, and he uses it so elsewhere. Now it is dishonest trifling to use this to prove what is alleged when the word is used in another sense. Tradition means now what is handed down unwritten from one to another, the unwritten word as distinguished from scripture. Paul says, tradition by letter or words. It is not the same thing he speaks of. The duty of receiving what Paul taught by word of mouth has nothing to do with proving that handing down by words of mouth means our having what was not written by them. Ignatius, as quoted by Eusebius, uses tradition as Paul does— that is, as apostolic teaching.

James. Well, M., that seems quite clear. When Paul speaks of tradition by letter or word, he does not use it as you do now, and Dr. Milner ought not to have quoted it. It has nothing to do with the matter.

N*. We say Paul and the rest did teach by word of mouth; but what God meant for the church in all ages he caused them to commit to writing. Now first let us see how the Lord speaks and acts in this respect. He does speak of tradition, when it was something handed down added to the written word; and thus the scribes and Pharisees asked Him why His disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders. “But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? … Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition”: adding from Esaias, “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Now we charge the Romanists with this. They worship God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

They have taken away one of the ten commandments, and made two of the last to make out the ten, and added six commandments of the church (others make eight, dividing one, and adding one—to pay tithes). They are to be binding as God's commandments, besides a hundred other human ordinances.

James. Is that true, M.?

M. The church has given commandments besides the ten.

James. And left out the second?

M. Deuteronomy proves that it is only a part of the first, and that the last two are distinct, for they are in a different order from Exodus.

N*. But you have left out the second and divided the tenth, and that second is, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, or the likeness of anything that is in heaven or on earth." And you have made graven images and set them up in all your churches, and in your streets and roads, where you can.

James. Well, I had no thought of what their doctrine was. My wife might well say that it was not Christianity as God gave it. Why, a child may see that.

N*. The Lord never appeals to tradition but openly condemns it, and appeals to scripture, saying it cannot be broken. The apostles never do, but always quote the scriptures, not only so, but foreseeing by the prophetic Spirit what would come on the church, they tell us our security would be the divinely-inspired scriptures, and Timothy's knowing the person who had taught the doctrine which thus only could have authority, and so of us. And Peter expressly says he would take care they

should have the testimony of God, and writes his epistle, clearly shewing that thus, and thus only, and not by oral tradition, the truth would remain and be secured to them.

Further, the Romanist cannot tell us one truth with any knowledge of whom it came from—cannot authenticate as apostolic a single tradition. Paul does refer to what he had taught by word of mouth without repeating it in writing. “Now ye know what letteth.” Now here the Romanists cannot supply anything by tradition at all. Where tradition (if of any value) would come in they can say nothing at all. Yet they have the Fathers very clear upon this. They have a church tradition upon this. The apostle says that, when this hindrance was removed, the man of sin would come. Now the Fathers taught it was the Roman empire; and prayed for its continuance, persecuting as it was, that the dreadful time of Antichrist might not come. But there they were all wrong. The Roman empire is gone and the man of sin not come, however much the pope may have his spirit. See the wisdom of scripture.

Now, as an external hindrance the Roman empire may have been what hindered (though the presence of the church on earth with the Holy Ghost dwelling in it I believe to have been the cause); but if the apostle had said, in what God was giving for all ages, it was the Roman empire, it would have turned out subsequently to have been inexact. And therefore the Spirit of God, in what was written, left it in terms the import of which are to be learned by the spiritual mind from the word. The Fathers may have been right that the external hindrance then was the Roman empire. I can suppose Paul may have even spoken of this as the then hindrance; but by

leaning on tradition they went all wrong. The Holy Ghost for all ages only taught the general truth. The tradition has proved false, and the body that trusts to it now cannot supply one word to say what it meant.

Now I do not own the smallest authority in the Fathers. I own it in nothing but the word of God; but, as they have been quoted, I shall quote them as to the scripture, to shew they argued exactly in an opposite way to which Dr. Milner quotes them for. I recognize no authority of any kind in the Fathers, for the simple reason that they neither give us, nor pretend to give us, any revelation from God. Whether they have given the doctrine of the apostles correctly is easily ascertained by comparing them with the apostles' writings; and as a general fact I affirm that they do not, and this on all the most vital subjects. It is all nonsense to talk of their judgment being surer than ours, because the scriptures are not easy to understand. I answer, the scriptures are just as easy to understand as the Fathers. If they are to be the rule of faith they are in Latin and Greek, and instead of one volume full of truth and riches, I have masses of folios, with some good things in them here and there, but a vast quantity of confusion, heresy, and trash. If I am to take them as witnesses of what the apostles taught, it is much simpler to take the apostles' own writings. However I shall refer to them, since they are quoted and made a parade of, to shew how little ground there is for trusting what is said of them, or, I must add, what they say.

Irenaeus, whom Dr. Milner quotes, begins the reasonings of the passage thus (Contra Haereses, lib. 3, chap. 3):—"We have not known the dispositions of our salvation but by those by whom the gospel came to us,

which, indeed, they then preached, but afterwards by the will of God have delivered to us in writings, which were to be the foundation and column of our faith. Nor is it right to say they preached before they had a perfect knowledge." He then refers to the Gospels as flowing from their teaching.

In the second chapter we come to the key of the whole matter. The Valentinian heretics against whom he wrote (who held it was a bad God that made the world and gave the Old Testament), finding they could not prove their doctrines by scripture, pretended there were other doctrines which the apostles taught and had not written, appealing, that is, as Romanists do—for it is the old heretical story—to the unwritten word known by tradition. "For when," he says, "they are convicted out of the scriptures, they turn to accusations against the scriptures themselves, as if they were not right, nor of authority, and because things are variously said there, and because the truth cannot be found out from them by those who are ignorant of tradition, for that was not delivered in writing, but viva voce." Thus, what Dr. Milner insists on is exactly what these horrible heretics insisted on, and Irenaeus' language is. The Fathers had no such tradition, but believed in one supreme God. The heretics appealed to unwritten tradition, because the scriptures were not clear, nor could be understood without tradition, and that there were things taught by tradition besides the scriptures.

Irenaeus then takes them on their own ground, and says, "Let them take their own ground. How can we have surer tradition than in the churches founded by apostles, and especially Rome, where Peter and Paul both were? None of them teach, nor have taught, that there was a

bad God." He does not appeal to them for any doctrine not contained in the word, but to confirm his reasonings, taken from the scriptures, against the spurious traditions of these heretics; and adds then that missionaries, who taught heathens who are utterly barbarous without written documents, taught no such doctrine, and their testimony was to be received. In this way Irenaeus uses the common faith of the church to refute a pretended tradition, saying that what the apostles taught was written down, and condemning the appeal to an unwritten word for something not in scripture. Only he shews that tradition, if heretics would have it, rejected them. Remember then, that Irenaeus is arguing against heretics, because they appealed to tradition as revealing doctrines not in scripture, and interpreting scripture itself, and resists this doctrine, adding that if you appeal to the universal consent of the churches they confirm what he alleges from scripture. It is the Romanists who take the ground which the godly Irenaeus denounces as the conduct of the heretics, who insisted there was tradition besides scripture, and that scripture could not be rightly used without it.

It is the same in substance, but yet stronger, in the case of Tertullian, who is blindly quoted as the great authority for tradition. He too complains of the heretics for affirming that the apostles taught doctrines besides what is in scripture, alleging sometimes that they did not know all things, sometimes that they did not teach all things publicly. And he declares that these heretics quote certain passages of scripture to shew that there were secret doctrines which they did not teach to all, founding the doctrine of an unwritten tradition on them. The very same course is pursued by the Roman doctors

to prove there is an unwritten tradition besides scripture. Tertullian declares there was no such thing; but that the apostles taught publicly all they had received to teach, first by word of mouth, and then afterwards in their epistles; and, denying these heretics to be Christians at all, he says they ought to be, according to the scriptures rejected after one rebuke (a mistake of his, by the bye, Paul says a first and second), and not after disputation, and that Christians had better not dispute with them.

Now, though declamatory and loose, there is a great deal of truth in this. But I will shew you from the passage the exactness of what I have said. He speaks as one weak and vexed, but with a great deal of truth, though on some points we shall see his reasoning is defective at any time, and wholly useless for the purpose Romanists quote it for. He speaks of the twelve (strange to say, he does not notice Paul here) being sent forth and promulgating the same faith, and founding churches in each city, from which other churches afterwards borrowed in turn the continuation of the faith and seeds of doctrine, and yet, says he, “borrow, and thus are counted apostolic, as the offspring of apostolic churches. It is necessary that every kind of thing should be estimated according to its origin. Therefore so many and so great [as the] churches [may be], that first one [founded by] the apostles, from which all are [derived], is one; so all are the first and apostolic, while all together approve unity… Here therefore we found our prescription. If the Lord Jesus Christ sent the apostles to preach, others are not to be received as preachers than those Christ instituted; since none knew the Father but the Son, and he to whom He has revealed Him, nor does

the Son appear to have revealed Him to others than to the apostles, whom He sent to preach surely that which He had revealed to them. But what they have preached, that is, what Christ revealed to them, and here I use prescription (the Roman form of pleading), that it ought not to be otherwise proved, but by these churches which the apostles themselves founded by preaching to them, as well viva voce (by word of mouth), as men say, as afterwards by epistles… Let us communicate with the apostolic churches, because none have a different doctrine; this is the testimony of truth." He then insists largely that all was revealed to the apostles, and that there could not be any other doctrine added which they had not. Now note here that he insists on the epistles as containing these same truths that were taught. But suppose I follow now Tertullian's advice, and that I go to the churches which the apostles founded. They have pretty nearly disappeared. I go to Jerusalem, and I find such fighting for the Holy Sepulchre between Armenians, Greeks, and Romanists, of different ways of thinking, that the Turks are obliged to have troops and men with whips to keep order.

The churches founded by apostles have almost disappeared by the judgment of God, they were become so corrupt. Rome was not founded by apostles. That is certain, for Paul writes a letter to them, and to a church there, before any apostle had been there, and when he went there he was a prisoner. In fine, if I go to the places which the apostles did found, as far as they subsist, they reject the Romish church altogether, and Rome is striving to gain proselytes from them. They are Greeks, Armenians, Jacobites. In result these early Fathers did not use tradition as giving additional truths,

but as the common consent of the churches, to shew that their statements from scripture were sound and true, and that none had ever held what the heretics advanced. That the heretics' opinions began since the apostles, and therefore could not be true, because the apostles had been guided into all truth. Tertullian says, if the heretics were in the apostles' time, they are condemned, being only now somewhat more refined in form; or they were not in the apostles' time, and their later origin condemns them.12 Now that is exactly what is the truth as to the doctrines of Romanism. Peter Lombard, in the twelfth century, was the first who taught there were just seven sacraments, and Bellarmine confesses that Christ taught nothing directly as to some, and Cardinal Bessarion admits there were originally only two, baptism and the Lord's supper. And we can give the date or gradual growth of the doctrines in which we differ from them.

On the other side, the practical force of Tertullian's argument is wholly gone. There he reasons to prove that no churches had these new doctrines of the heretics, so that they were proved to be new. "Go through the apostolic churches," he says, "where as yet the sees of the apostles preside in their places, where their own authentic letters are read, sounding out the voice, and representing the face of each one. Is Achaia nearest to you? "You have Corinth. I go to Corinth now; it condemns Rome. "If you are not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi, thou hast Thessalonica." I cannot go to Philippi, all the place has disappeared. I go to Thessalonica; they condemn Rome again. "If not, thou canst go into Asia; thou hast Ephesus. But if thou art adjacent to Italy, Rome, whose authority is to be had for

us." (He lived in Africa, over against Italy.) He declares they would find none of the new doctrines. Now remark here, first, that his appeal to this sure tradition was finding the scriptures, the authentic letters, still extant, which proved what the doctrine of the apostles was; and, secondly, if I go to these churches now, those which remain (except Rome itself) condemn Rome, and the rest can furnish no evidence at all, they are gone. What does remain of apostolic churches outside herself universally condemns her.

James. I do not see, M., what I, or any one, can gain by what is here said of tradition, nor what your doctors can gain from it but confusion. He appeals for the doctrine which is in scripture to Corinth and Ephesus and others, as witnesses that they never held such a doctrine as these heretics. But though that may have served as a testimony, as far as it went then, yet the facts prove how unsteady a foundation it was for the truth; for of these places, some of them do not exist at all, and if I were to go to the others, they do not agree with Rome. Of the means referred to I have nothing hardly left to prove scripture right; and what is left, if it be worth anything, proves Rome wrong. This is not much help to your cause. The churches mentioned in scripture I find are against you, where they still exist. Not that I believe any of them as authority, but they upset your argument from tradition entirely. You must find something better than this to build on. If I followed the direction Dr. Milner, I see, quotes—which I should be sorry to do, because God has left us the scriptures, but if I did—I must reject him, and Rome with him; because, in following the ordinances of tradition in the apostolic churches, I find that they are separated from Rome and condemn it.

N*. You are perfectly right, James; and there is a plain proof in Dr. Milner himself that he knew this well and saw it plainly enough, because in quoting Tertullian he has left all this part of the passage out. Tertullian says, “Go through the apostolic churches. Is Achaia next to thee? thou hast Corinth. If thou art not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi, thou hast the Thessalonians; if not, thou canst go into Asia, thou hast Ephesus; but if thou art near Italy, Rome,” etc. Now all the former part Dr. Milner carefully leaves out, and begins with “if you live near Italy.” He saw plainly enough that all his fine security by tradition would fall to the ground, overthrown by the passage, if he had honestly quoted it; because, as I have said, either the witnesses which afforded the security, the apostolic churches, had gone, having ceased to exist, or they were opposed to Rome. I regret to say half one’s work with the advocates of Romanism is to detect deceit of this kind.

James. Well, but, M., what do you say to this? This is not honest. Had he quoted all the passage, it would have upset all he was pleading for.

M. Well, I never read Tertullian of course. I should take it as Dr. Milner gave it. I supposed it was fair, and never meant to deceive you.

James. I am sure you did not. But you must see we cannot take all as Dr. Milner gives it. It is something to see that we cannot trust his reasonings. That is not the spirit of Christ any way, and that helps one to see clear.

N*. We have gained three points. The heretics first contended for some doctrines delivered by tradition, and not contained in scripture. The Fathers resisted this.

Next, when tradition was first spoken of by the early Fathers, they used it as a testimony of the churches confirming the doctrines taught from scripture, not as containing additional doctrines. Thirdly, as to the basis laid by Tertullian, on whom they so much rely, it fails altogether as a secure proof, and what it does testify of condemns Rome. I add, that they used it so far with a good intention that their object was to shew what Christ and His apostles had originally taught, and that they had taught everything openly to all, in order to reject novel doctrines introduced subsequently. Their insisting on having what was at the beginning, what Tertullian for example asserts, “That that which was from the beginning is true,” is perfectly just. This is what we insist on. And we condemn the Romanists because all their peculiar doctrines are novelties, the dates or gradual introduction of them being historically demonstrable.

Thus purgatory was hinted at in the fifth century, said to be useful for very small sins in the sixth, and then only gradually grew up. Transubstantiation was never decreed definitively till the thirteenth, and the contrary was taught by the most famous doctors previously. The saints were prayed for, as we have seen, not to, for centuries, so that they had to alter the Roman liturgy to suit the change. So the so-called sacrifice of the Mass can be traced from the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (whence the word Eucharist), the presenting offerings before the consecration (whence the word Offertory)—both of which were called the unbloody offering, or sacrifice—to the applying it to the elements after consecration; and, lastly, but not till very late, to its being the real sacrifice of Christ, efficacious

for the sins of quick and dead, and the liturgy was changed accordingly. I am not now examining the truth or falsehood of these doctrines, but their novelty. Romanists are now in the position of the heretics of old, alleging tradition for new doctrines which are not found in scripture. We, on the contrary, rest solely on the word of God, the scriptures, as authority, for this is certainly what was at the beginning, and, on the other hand, we can appeal to history, and prove the introduction of the particular doctrines they insist on as novelties among Christians.

But Dr. Milner cites other Fathers, and it will be useful in many respects to refer to them. The fact is, they argued as it suited them at the moment. When heretics pressed scripture, they flew to tradition, not at first as containing distinct truth, but as a witness of the truth of what they alleged was scriptural— a use we have seen to be impossible now, because the churches they appealed to, the apostolic churches, have disappeared, or are hostile to Rome. But, besides, these citations will give us the worth of the Fathers' reasonings, and how they contradict, not each other merely, but themselves. Dr. Milner passes by, he tells us, Clement of Alexandria; he was right in doing so for his cause. Clement resists the Gnostics, or men of knowledge, who infested the church, saying that ordinary Christians had elements, but that the secret full doctrine of Christianity was in their blasphemies. Tertullian met this by shewing that the apostles had taught all publicly (Tert., de Praescriptione 22, and following).

Clement took another course. He says that Christ spoke in parables in order not to be understood by ordinary Christians, but that there were christian Gnostics, who

by temperance,13 a human thing, and desiring and laborious, and prudence, a divine thing, arrived at Gnosis, and thus had got higher truths and intelligence to understand what was concealed from vulgar eyes. This was to be received according to the ecclesiastical rule, and the ecclesiastical rule is the consent and harmony, both of the law and the prophets, with the covenant delivered14 during the Lord's presence. (Clem. Alex., Potter 2, 802, 3; Strom. 6.) His principle is bad, but his appeal is to the scriptures. Nor is Clement, after all, very famous for orthodoxy. He was saturated with Alexandrian Platonism, and was thoroughly sound neither on the divinity nor on the humanity of the Lord. I do not make a heretic of him, but, to say the least, he uses very awkward language, so that the famous Romanist doctor, Petau, charges him plainly with not speaking in an orthodox way.

Dr. Milner passes over Cyprian too, quite naturally. He strenuously resisted all the pretensions of Rome to the day he was martyred. But not only so, Stephen of Rome, not being able to prove his point against him on a subject of practice and discipline, appealed to tradition on the usage of the church. "Let nothing," says Stephen, "be innovated on what has been handed down "(tradition). "Whence," replies Cyprian, "is that tradition? Does it descend from the authority of the Lord and the Gospels, and come from the commandments and Epistles of the apostles? For God bears witness that those things are to be done which are written, and speaks to Joshua the son of Nun, saying, 'The book of this law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all things that are written therein.'… What obstinacy

is that [in the pope]! what presumption, to prefer human tradition to a divine disposition, and not to take notice that God is indignant and angry as often as human tradition sets aside and passes by divine precepts, as He cries out and say by Esaias the prophet, 'This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.'" (Ep. 74, 80, Oxford.) He tells us that if a canal does not give us the water as purely and freely as it used, we go up to the source; we see if the water has failed, or the canal is leaky, or stopped—so we must return to the original of the law and the gospel, and the apostolic teaching, and let the principle of our acting spring from that whence its order and origin spring.

James. No wonder he passes by Cyprian. He pleads here just for what we do in insisting on the scriptures against the pope.

N*. We may turn to Origen. Dr. Milner does not say where the passage he quotes is, but Origen speaks distinctly in the beginning of his Principia of tradition as all these early Fathers do. That is, when the heretics brought in tradition besides scripture, they condemn it; and when they pervert scripture, they say it is to be understood according to the common faith of the church, and novelties, whose beginning could be shewn, were not to be received. However, Origen himself was driven away by his bishop for every wild novelty imaginable. He allows no knowledge out of scripture. Speaking of the peace-offerings, he says, "These two days are the two testaments, in which we may search out and discuss everything relating to God, and from thence receive all knowledge of things. But if anything remains which is not decided by divine scripture, no other third writing ought to be received as an authority

for any knowledge (because this is called the third day), but what remains let us give to the fire, that is, leave to God, for in the present life it has not pleased God that we should know all things." (Horn. 5, on Levit. (213) 2.) Thus, while he referred to the common consent of the churches against the novelties of heretics (those who taught there were two Gods), he allows no authoritative source of knowledge but the two testaments.

This is just what we have seen with Tertullian, from whom I add a sentence here: "But that all things were made from subsisting materials I have not yet read. Let Hermogene's workshop shew that it is written. If it is not written, let him fear the woe destined to those who add or take away." (Tert. adv. Hær. 22.) Bellarmine does not venture to quote Origen.

Dr. Milner quotes Basil. The passage he quotes has no reference to any doctrine, if, indeed, it be genuine, which others than Protestants have doubted. Some objected to saying in a doxology, "the Father and the Son with the Holy Ghost," and said scripture always said "in the Spirit, not with." He says, "Surely this one expression, used with no premeditation or purpose, may be allowed, so long in use as it has been," and then refers to practices in the church which rested solely on tradition, the sense of which most did not understand, just the same as Tertullian refers to praying towards the east (how few, he says, know it refers to paradise), signing with the cross, praying standing on Sunday, and from Easter to Pentecost, anointing with oil, immersing three times in baptism, and so on.

Now, that superstitions were creeping in, and more than that, when Basil wrote, nearly four hundred years after

Christ, when, indeed, corruption and false doctrine had made havoc of the church, is quite true. Men used to live in sin, and wait till they were dying to be baptized, in order to get off quite clear. I do not mean that all did, but adduce the fact to shew the corruption that had come in. It was nearly at the same epoch that the whole of Christendom, save confessing martyrs, had denied the divinity of the Lord. We have seen that Basil was not speaking of doctrine when he referred to traditions, but to mere rites or liturgical forms, “one expression.” But when he speaks of doctrine, here are his words, “Believe the things that are written; the things that are not written do not seek.” (Horn. 29.) (Adversus Calum., Bened. ed. 2, 611 E.) “It is a manifest falling away from faith, and convicts of arrogance, to annul anything of the things that are written, or to introduce anything of the things that are not written.” (2, 224 D.) Poor Basil himself too became suspected of heresy. He never would say the Holy Ghost was God. The excuse was that, if he had, he would have been driven from his see, and the heretics would have had all his flock in their power; so he avoided the word, and said what was equivalent. So he defends himself, and says, “If a Jew owned Jesus to be the Anointed, but would not say Christ, ought he not to be received, as it is the same thing? “Such is the security Fathers afford; but we will return to this state of things.

“Every word or matter ought to be accredited by the testimony of inspired scripture. (Basil, Moralia Reg. 26, p. 254.) Nor ought anyone to dare to annul or add anything. For if everything which is not of faith is sin, as the apostle says, and faith by hearing, and hearing by

the word of God, everything outside inspired scripture, not being of faith, is sin," (79,22,317).

Let me add at once that what Dr. Milner quotes from Augustine and Vincent of Lerins confirms all I have said. Neither speak of doctrines learnt from tradition, but both take the universal faith of the church to guide in the interpretation of scripture. Epiphanius applies also the authority of tradition only to practice, namely, that unmarried persons who dedicated themselves to God sinned if they married afterwards, quoting what Paul says of the younger widows as analogous; but says, if there is no scripture, it ought to be accepted as founded on tradition. He is reasoning against those who forbade to marry, and says the church approved marriage, but admired people not marrying, and then he refers to tradition as helpful in understanding scripture.

Chrysostom alone speaks to the point of all Dr. Milner has quoted. He has given the whole sentence. It is all he has on 2 Thessalonians 2:15. But it is a very unfortunate case, because the Fathers, as we have seen, had a traditional interpretation of this chapter, namely, that what let (or hindered) was the Roman empire; and they, though persecuted, prayed it might subsist, because when removed Antichrist would come. It was removed, and Antichrist did not come, unless the pope be Antichrist; and if you ask Romanists what tradition was given which is not in the passages, or what is the tradition by word of which the apostle speaks, they cannot tell you a word about it. That is, the passage shews that tradition is wholly incompetent to preserve an unwritten apostolic teaching. Here is one alluded to: who can tell me what it is? I see the wisdom of God in it, I think clearly, in the scripture not saying what it was;

because what was then the hindrance is not the present one; but at any rate your tradition is dumb and can tell us nothing. When rehgion became a religion of ordinances, not of truth, the traditions which were in vogue for them became the groundwork of all the Christian system and the Bible disappeared. But little as I trust the Fathers for any doctrine, they speak plainly enough as to scripture, and Chrysostom urges with all persevering eloquence and zeal everybody's reading them, saying they were written by poor uneducated men on purpose that they might be plain for such; and that laymen occupied in the world had more need to read them than monks or clergy.

I add a few passages as to the exclusive authority of scripture-Athanasius against the heathen says," For the holy and inspired scriptures are sufficient for the promulgation of all truth." (Oratio contra Gentes, Ben. 1.) So Ambrose, "How can we adopt these things which we do not find in the holy scriptures? "So Gregory of Nyssa, quoted by Euthymius, "As that is not supported by scripture, we reject it as false." So Jerome, "As those things which are written we do not deny, so those which are not written we refuse." (Contra Helvid. 19, 2, 226, Veron. ed.) So Augustine, "In those things which are specially laid down in scripture, all those things are found which contain faith and the morals of life." (De Doctr. Chris. 2, 9.) And again, "I owe my consent without any refusal to the canonical scriptures alone." (De Nat. et Grat.) And similar quotations might be multiplied. So even as to councils, "Neither ought I to object the Council of Nice to you, nor you that of Ariminum (an Arian council of some eight hundred bishops) to me; by the authority of scripture let us weigh matter with

matter, cause with cause, reason with reason." (Contra Maxim. 3, 14.) So in contrast with the doctors of the church (that is, the Fathers), "For we should not consent to CathoUc bishops if they by chance are deceived, and have opinions contrary to the canonical scriptures of God." (De Unit. Eccl. 11, Ben. 9, 355.) And so in his Epistles and other writings he says, over and over again, he has liberty to differ from them, and is bound only by the scriptures. Now either I am to receive these passages as right, and then, if the Fathers are consistent, consider this to be their doctrine; or if you can quote passages from them contradictory of these, then you make their authority to be simply and totally void.

If you ask me what I think, I think they used, like other men, the best grounds they thought they could find, and, when the heretics or the pope pleaded tradition, said that all must be proved by scripture. When they were, as Tertullian, perplexed by their subtle quotations of scripture, instead of doing as the Lord did when Satan quoted it, quoting another passage, which forbade what Satan used it for, they turned to tradition, but not to learn doctrines not in scripture, but to prove that of the heretics to be new. As a mere argument as to fact, it might prove it so far; but if a doctrine be in scripture, clearly it is not new but from the beginning, and it is able to make the man of God perfect. What Dr. Milner has said of tradition is at any rate entirely unfounded. What is of more importance than all, the blessed Lord has condemned it as the false foundation of His enemies, and that God was worshipped in vain by men who followed it.

M. And what do you make of the sabbath, and the change from the seventh day to the first? Is not this a proof that you must follow tradition?

N*. Certainly not. If the blessed privilege of the Lord's day depended on tradition, I for one would hold it as of no force whatever. I might bear with one who observed it, because Paul tells us to do that—"one man regardeth one day above another, another man every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." But it does not rest on tradition. The change from the seventh day to the first is connected with the essence of Christianity and the Person of the Lord Jesus. The sabbath was the sign and seal of the Old covenant, the witness that God's people had a part in the rest of God, which in itself is the very essence of our everlasting blessing. But it was then given, as all was, in connection with an earthly system, and was a sign of the rest of the old creation, as it indeed was originally so instituted in paradise. But the rejection of the Lord when He came into that is the proof that man cannot have rest in the old creation, that he is a sinner and needs redemption out of that state. The blessed Lord, become a man, was for that not less the Lord, and came to accomplish this redemption, and as Son of man was above all these things—was Lord of the sabbath as of everything else. It had been given for man in grace and goodness, though it took the form of law, as all did among the Jews.

But we as redeemed have to do with the new creation. All that system has found its end in the death of Christ; not the rest of God, but the hope of rest in the old creation. So Christ lay in the grave that sabbath, but now He is risen, risen the first day of the week, and the firstfruits of them that slept. We begin our Christian life

as the firstfruits of God's creatures. We begin as dead and risen in Christ. We do not therefore celebrate the rest of the old creation—we were utterly lost as belonging to that; but the resurrection of our blessed Lord, as the foundation and beginning of the new, when redemption is accomplished. Hence, after His resurrection He meets His disciples that first day of the week when they were assembled, and the first, or Lord's day following the same thing, and thenceforth it is carefully distinguished in scripture. We learn the disciples came together the first day of the week to break bread. They were to set apart, in grace, for the poor on the first day of the week. And in the Revelation it is called "the Lord's day," just as the supper is called "the Lord's Supper." Hence we own with joy the Lord's day, as scripture teaches us, the first day of the week, not the seventh, in which the Lord's body lay in the grave, the witness that the old creation was judged, condemned, and passed away—that there was no rest in it but to die: no rest for the old man, but the restlessness of sin and the misery of its fruits; no rest in it for the new man, nor for Christ, because all was polluted and alienated from God. And He teaches us that He came to work in grace and die in it, and begin all anew, of which His resurrection, and the Lord's day as a sign of it, is witness.

M. I do not understand a word you are saying. I see scripture says Christ was Lord of the sabbath, and that the first day was set apart, and that it speaks of the Lord's day. But what you are saying about it is too high for me.

N*. Well, M., take the fact at any rate that you admit that Christ was Lord of the sabbath, that His authority

was above it, and that after His resurrection the first day is the day distinguished in scripture, not the seventh. This proves our point now, that we do not receive it from tradition but from scripture.

James. Well, M., I am no wiser than you, yet I do understand it. But I see plainly it is not from any wisdom in me, but that I know that in the flesh and under the law I am lost, and that Christ has died and is risen again, and if any man be in Him, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, all things are become new. And Christ's resurrection is the beginning of this hope, and that is where our rest is founded, and not in the old creation; so we have that and the first day of the week as the witness of blessing and that God's rest belongs to us, not a sign of the rest of the first creation, when God rested on the seventh day, when He had made all things good, for sin had spoiled that, and the apostle says (Heb. 4) that man never entered into that. And I am sure we know he did not. Toil, and sin, and death are not rest. At any rate, as you say, we have it taught in scripture that the first day of the week, not the seventh, is the one marked out "the Lord's day," and that suffices. The Jews had the seventh day.

N*. Well, I turn to washing the feet, which is the other point Dr. Milner speaks of. It is a foolish point, because the Lord expressly declares that His meaning in it they did not then understand; that is, it had a spiritual signification which they would afterwards understand; in a word, that He did not mean the literal act, but that it was merely the sign of what required spiritual understanding. It is absurd to suppose that such a mere outward act gives a part with Christ. And what the sign of water means is told us, "Ye are clean through the

word which I have spoken unto you." And again to "sanctify and cleanse it [the church] by the washing of water by the word."

The next proof of tradition Dr. Milner gives is a singularly unhappy one for Romanist doctrines. "The whole sacred history," he says, "was preserved by the patriarchs in succession, from Adam down to Moses, during the space of two thousand four hundred years by means of tradition." Now the flood came in this period, because men had grown so wicked and cast off God that Noah alone remained to be preserved. And after the flood all the world fell away into idolatry, so that God called Abraham out of it to begin afresh and have a nation for Himself in which He should keep the knowledge of the true God alive by a written law, because men so entirely lost the knowledge of Him when they had not one. Here is Paul's account of this time, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness… And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind," etc. This is a poor but true history of the time when man was left to tradition. The difference of Romanism now is this— there is a written word, and they have taken it away and put reproach upon it; and as the heathen corrupted the doctrine of one God by idolatry and many false gods, so the Romanists, when God had sent His Son to bring men

back, have corrupted the doctrine of one Divine Mediator by making many human and false ones.

James. I do not see, M., how Dr. Milner could refer to that time. It upsets all he seeks to prove. Why, it shews that, when man had only tradition, he was lost in sin and idolatry altogether, so that only one was saved from the flood with his family, and Abraham had to be called out miraculously because all had gone into idolatry. And it is true you have gone away from the one Mediator to have many false ones that we do not want and that are of no use.

N*. Well, we will go on with Dr. Milner. He quotes Pope Stephen as referring to tradition. But this is just the tradition on which St. Cyprian opposed him; and all the African churches and Firmilian and those of Asia Minor opposed him, saying his tradition was false. It is just an additional proof of the uncertainty of tradition, and it is the very case which makes Augustine say that, if the doctors of the church go wrong, he is not bound by them. Dr. Milner's statement as to the agreement of the Greek, Nestorian, Eutychian, and other bodies in the East along with Romanists (save on the pope's supremacy—a pretty important point when infallibility is in question) is simply untrue. They are corrupt enough, God knows; but they reject a quantity of Romanist doctrine and discipline too: as, to name no others, purgatory is wholly rejected in the Greek church, and the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son. And as to Eutychians, they held that Christ had not really two distinct natures, but that the Godhead was as the soul of Christ; the Nestorians, on the other hand, divided the Person, though at first it was merely a very just refusal to call Mary the mother of God.15 Nestorius wished to

say the mother of Him who is God. However, intrigues had the upper hand.

As to Dr. Milner's saying that it was easier to change the scriptures, so that they would be uncertain as a rule, nobody read them, a few monks copied them in the monasteries, but save that, nobody, could read, and the clergy taught what they liked. There was no object in changing scripture; besides, I doubt not God watched over it.

As to saying that religious novelties would have produced violent opposition, and of course tumults, it is too bad and dishonest. Why, half the time of the emperors was spent in keeping the peace or trying to do so, for they never succeeded. The majority of bishops in Africa seceded, and some of their partisans got the name of circumcelliones, or vagabonds, for going about using violence. And at last they were put down by the emperor by force. One council, gathered to settle these doctrinal disputes, killed an old archbishop because he did not agree with them. First, the orthodox got the Arians banished, and then the Arians got the orthodox. On the subject of images, council voted against council, and then it came in the East to wars, in which a strong party held their ground a hundred years against the emperors. Why, the whole history of the church is the history of violence and banishment, and bloodshed, and tumult, on account of doctrinal and church disputes. The streets of Alexandria and Rome have streamed with blood through them, and the civil authority had to put it down. As to transubstantiation and invocation of saints, we shall come to them in their place. History will shew whether Dr. Milner has been rash in trusting to the presumed ignorance of his readers in referring to them.

I have now gone through the question of tradition and what Dr. Milner has to say on it. I do not think we have found either certainty or the church by it yet. I still ask, Since you appeal to the church and authority, where is it? The scripture does act on my conscience and heart, and I bow to it as the word of God, as that word which pierces to the dividing asunder the joints and marrow and soul and spirit; it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and I bow as finding myself, when I read it, before Him in whose sight all things are naked and open. Not so when you speak to me of the church and what you hold up to me as such. As an outward authority in unity, where is it to be found? Dr. Milner suppresses that part of the passage in Tertullian, it is true, but what he referred to as his great authority sent me to the East. These were confessedly the most ancient churches, but they are opposed to Rome. If I am in England and northern Europe or North America, the immense majority of professing Christians owning the Lord, and even active in propagating Christianity, denounce Rome as the corruptest body in existence. Where is this one church which has authority? You tell me Rome is one. One with what? In itself. So are the Greeks. Yet Rome is not more one, as we have seen, than Protestants; not on election; not on the authority of the pope; and not, till a year or two ago, on the immaculate conception; but especially not able to tell me where infallibility really resides.16 James. My trust is in scripture as the word of God. I know it is in my soul, and you own it is the word of God, and it tells me to trust it, and that I ought to have the witness in myself, and I have: but I must say, Bill, though I know nothing of it of course myself, what Dr. Milner has insisted on all comes to nothing, and worse than nothing when it is examined.

Nor have you any doctrine which you can refer to tradition when scripture says nothing. What I know of your doctrines, as purgatory, and the popes being successors of Peter, and worshipping the saints, is only a corruption of what is in scripture, or quite condemned by it. And then what you appeal to goes against you. Why did Dr. Milner leave out these other churches from the passage he quoted? They just knock up his argument.

M. Well, it is no good my arguing, or any of us. I had better bring Father O., and he will make it plain for you.

N*. By all means. We are just coming to a point of which Milner says nothing, and naturally would not—the difficulties of his own case. And you could not tell whether I was stating it correctly or not, and I suppose Mr. O. can: at any rate I will give the proofs. Hitherto we have only examined what Dr. Milner says, so that we wanted no one. We will meet then, again, to see if we can find the church, where it is, and where the infallibility is, which is to guide us. I will now say Good-day. Good evening to you both. May the Lord guide us into all truth.

James. Good evening, sir.

1 Any authorised Romish catechism on the baptismal service may be consulted, or Cat. Cone. Trid. 42; and Conc. Trid. 5, 4, for the last words of the sentence. The Roman doctrine on baptism speaks very little of giving life in it; much more of taking away sin, original and actual, and insists on taking it away, not removing imputation only, adding that concupiscence which does remain is not properly sin, as Cat. Cone. Trid. on Baptism 43. It teaches it, however, distinctly, not only in

the term made children of God, in every catechism and the baptism service, but very definitely also Cat. Cone. Trid. (Lord's Prayer) sect. 10. It is altogether remarkable how very little is said of life in authorised Romish teaching. Eternal life is wholly in the future, Cat. Cone. Trid. (on the Creed), art. 12. They are replenished with divine grace, a divine quality. See on Baptism 50, and Cat. Cone. Trid. 6, 7, where hope and charity must be added to have eternal life. However, they are said to be born again, made children of God, and incorporated in Christ by baptism.

2 Cone. Trid. Sess. 7, 9; Cat. Cone. Trid. 54.

3 There is a strange and startling anomaly on the point of mortal sin, surely a very grave one, of which Irish catechisms furnish an example. Each gives a catalogue of deadly or mortal sins, but they are different. One is by the Right Rev. Dr. Plunket, thirteenth edition, Dublin, 1827. How many are the chief kinds of mortal sin? Seven, called capital sins. Which are the seven capital sins? Pride, covetousness, luxury, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. The other is by the Most Rev. Dr. Reilly, Dublin, 1827. Both are printed by the same printer, Wogan. How many capital or deadly sins? Seven: pride, covetousness, lust, gluttony, envy, anger, sloth. So in two dioceses in Ireland, the sins which would take a man to hell and kill his soul were different.

4 I give a translation submitted to the authorities at Rome, and printed at the Propaganda. Those in mortal sin have a true but not a living faith. VI, canon 28 on Justification.

5 Dr. Milner's book is craftily written. He introduces the whole inquiry by essays, etc., of members of the

supposed society, by which the truths of natural and revealed religion are proved true as a starting point. But if I am to discover a true religion, this cannot be, for the true one is discovered, and fundamentally the true faith in the revealed religion already demonstrated. Else I have not the true religion. But that is found, it seems, without the church at all, and what is the professed inquiry in the book is settled. But this avoids admitting openly the authority of scripture in itself. But then, having the true religion of true faith, I have not to discover it, but whether Romanism is consistent with it. Every true Christian believes in the authority of the word of God: with this I do not discover a religion at all, but, having it, judge the pretensions of the Romanist to the possession and the exclusive possession of it. The whole statement of the case is a subtle fallacy, for which the way has been paved by what precedes. We are not discovering a religion, but judging Romanism, and Protestantism too, if you please, when I am a Christian. In a word, if I have natural and revealed religion demonstrated, I have discovered the true religion, for the demonstrated revealed religion is the true one. Our inquiry is not then the discovery of Christ's religion; it is discovered and demonstrated. We are inquiring if Romanism, the state of the church, is according to what has been demonstrated.

6 Baronius says he must give the names of popes as dates, but how can he own as popes the sons of the mistresses of the Marquis of Tuscany, whom they put in to be popes by their guilty influence? (Bar. An. 912, 7, 8.) There were the two parties, the Roman nobles and the Marquis of Tuscany, who in turn put in the popes, or drove them out, so that there were often two at a time,

and each habitually when he got the upper hand quashed all the ordinations of his adversary as invalid. (Bar. An. 907, 3.) Auxilius wrote a book on the ordinations, exordinations, and super-ordinations of the Roman pontiffs. (See Baronius' Account of Sergius, 908, 2.) At last the Emperor came in to introduce some decent order. But this lasted a great while. We may examine this a little more exactly when we come to succession as a proof of the true church. Here I only give the undoubted facts, which may be seen in Baronius as in other historians.

7 Perhaps more; chiefly in Bavaria, Baden, Rhenish Prussia, and Silesia.

8 Dr. Milner's Letters, 6 and 8.

9 The decree of 1715 allowed the Chinese to continue the worship of their ancestors, with gifts and burnings before them, and prostrating themselves, the principal worship of the heathen Chinese. Since China has been opened recently to Europeans, they have found a great dragon on the altar of a Jesuit church of that day, so that the Chinese could worship that and the host at the same time.

10 Since this was written, as every one knows, the Council at Rome has declared the pope infallible. But what has taken place only proves the truth of what is here said.

11 Vincentius Lirinensis' rule is a real farce on the face of it. I must know all the church ever held to say, "held always, and by all" before the rule can apply. And when I do know it, as in this instance, I have a doctrine declared to be a dogma of faith which the most

important body among the Roman Catholics denied publicly for centuries.

12 Tert. de Præscriptione Haereticorum 20, and following: ed. Rig. 208. I do not think Tertullian's confidence in scripture and grace, to use it by the Spirit, was sound. Hence, when tested, he had no strength against the fanatic pretensions of Montanus. In a preceding part of this treatise he, leaning on human argumentation, says, "If you quote a text, the heretics will quote another, so you are losing your breath"; but his arguments refer to them as a means of convicting heretics, not as the source of truth, and he refers Irenaeus to what was held by all, and not as a proof of an unwritten truth, but as a proof that what the heretics taught of two Gods, a bad and a good one, and the like, did not come from the apostles; it was new, or already condemned by the apostles. The apostles knew all that was revealed, and taught it all. The heretics pretended to some secret or concealed doctrine, but no church had these doctrines. It is a proof of what was taught. The Romanist is clearly on the ground the heretics were on.

13 oion e sophrosune de ateles phronesis ephiemene men phroneseos, ergatike de epiponos.

14 paradidomene, the word used for tradition.

15 The heathen, who had rejected the preaching of Christ, gave up their temples in crowds when they had a woman to worship.

16 The Council of Rome, as all are aware, has settled this for those who own it; but proved it was not so settled for eighteen hundred years, as it was opposed by many prelates, and is publicly by many intelligent Roman Catholics still.

Fourth Conversation --Infallibility

N*. Good evening, Mr. O.; I am glad to see that you are come. You are already aware of what is occupying us; we shall get on more satisfactorily by your being here. Up to the present we could meet the case fairly, because I was only answering Dr. Milner's statements, but now I have to refer in turn to historical facts, and our friends here are not learned of course; and though, I trust, I should deal fairly with them, yet you can tell them if what I quote is not just. M. insists on our listening to the true church, and tells us it is infallible. We ask, Where is it? Where are we to find this infallibility?

Father O. I do not see what an ignorant person, such as Bill M., has to do disputing about religion: he has only to mind the direction of his pastor. How can such an ignorant person as he is judge about controversies that the most learned men discuss, and that the authority of the church alone can decide? He had much better have minded his religion, and shewn charity and good works in his life. However, as I found he had difficulties, I did not refuse to come and shew what the judgment of the true church is: otherwise, as Tertullian says, heretics are to be rejected, not discussed with. And I do not think it is a gentlemanlike thing of you, sir, to be coming and troubling my flock about their religion.

N*. We have been looking into that passage of Tertullian. As to troubling your flock, dear sir, you will kindly remember that our good friend, Bill M., had recently changed, as is commonly said, his religion, and, I suppose, gentlemanlike or not, some one had been troubling him, though I do not think he has much to say

about a great deal of religion he had before, nor indeed since. However he is very zealous for his new opinions, and tells us he is so happy now that he could not but try and get James to turn to what he calls the true church, and he had succeeded in perplexing James. Now I suppose you hardly blame his zeal in this: there is a good deal of it going.

Father O. I do not blame his zeal; it is the natural fruit of charity and the peace that the true church always gives.

N*. Very well, then, you can hardly blame our meeting his arguments. We had procured Dr. Milner's "End of Controversy," and we have examined that hitherto. Now I deny entirely that Rome is the true church, or the Catholic church, in any sense; and Bill M., however zealous, was at a loss, and went to you: you can hardly blame him for that, and we are much obliged to you for coming. We will not ask you to go into all the marks of the true church; we can take them from Dr. Milner and the Catechism of the Council of Trent; but we want to know where the infallibility is. Here Bill M. and James, ignorant and sincere men, one a Roman Catholic and the other a Protestant, want to know (though James, like myself, is satisfied that the scriptures alone are certain truth, and of absolute authority, and sufficient) where this infallibility is to be found. I affirm that you have no certain source of truth at all, and no infallible guide to refer to.

Father O. Pardon me, you are to hear the church. God has promised to preserve it from error, and all it binds on earth is bound in heaven.

N*. The last is not said of the church, unless a particular assembly, two or three gathered together in Christ's

name, be considered such; but let that pass now. Where is the church?

Father O. That is a question easily answered. It is the holy Roman Catholic apostolic church.

N*. Well, that is just what we deny; but where is the seat of infallibility, or, if we do not adopt the scriptures, the certain rule of faith? I met a Jesuit priest abroad; he told me there were three.

Father O. You must have mistaken him.

N*. I do not think you will reject what he said. He said, the authoritative decision as to the truth or infallibility was in the pope and the whole church; the consent of the church universal with the pope, or the pope and the whole church represented in a general council; or, lastly, the pope speaking ex cathedra.

Father O. All that is still the church itself, or the church by its divinely appointed organs.

N*. Very well, we may accept this then, and, by your permission, we will inquire whether certain truth is to be found by their means, and where. The first itself comes short of Vincentius Lirinensis' vaunted rule, "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus," what was held always, everywhere, by all, and the rule itself invalidates the decision come to at any given epoch, and obliges me to inquire what was always held. But man's holding anything is no proof of its truth: nor even all Christians, simply as such, holding anything. To have certain divine truth we must have God's revelation. Till Paul arose, or at any rate till the case of Cornelius, all Christians held the perpetual obligation of the law of Moses. Yet they were all wrong. God was obliged to give

an express revelation to Peter, and the same to Paul, to lead the church from what all held. And even after that, the Jewish Christians held so ardently to their traditions, and sought so diligently to force the Gentile Christians to receive them, that the question had to be settled by the apostles and elders coming together at Jerusalem.

Nor even did this suffice; for so little unity, after all, was there on the subject, and so perverse is the human mind in its adherence to ceremonies and legal righteousness, that Paul had to resist him of whom you make so unholy a boast, the apostle Peter, to the face, because he, and through him Barnabas and all the Jews, were carried away by dissimulation on this point. And those at Jerusalem maintained their views, and harassed the apostle Paul unceasingly in his ministry, and finally induced him at Jerusalem to follow that course which, under God's over-ruling hand, ended in his imprisonment and death. Yet this was a point in which, according to Paul himself, the truth of the gospel was concerned. So little, even in apostolic times, is the unity of the church in its views to be depended upon, or even Peter himself. But the teaching of scripture, whether in the decrees in Acts 15, or in the Epistles—Galatians, Romans, Colossians, Timothy, and elsewhere—is as plain and as decided as possible. Revelation decides it simply; what is held by the church gives no certain sound at all. And this, remark, upon a vital point, which half fills the Epistles of Paul, and at a time when we are told that nearness to the apostles must make us sure of their doctrine. The word of God is quite clear; but even an apostle, and a great apostle, stumbles in his walk as to it. There cannot possibly be a stronger case.

Father O. But it was settled by the council at Jerusalem.

N*. Undoubtedly what was setded as truth by the decision of the apostles, none of us are disposed to question. The authority of councils as a foundation for the truth we will consider in its turn. We are now upon the consent of the whole church, including the pope. Now this fails at the first step; and if we are to take Peter at Jerusalem even as the first pope, he was to be publicly reproved by the apostle Paul, so that your great champion, Bellarmine (De Summo Pont, lib. 1, 38, 29-31), is embarrassed to the last degree by the case; tries to make the sin venial, etc., but is obliged to admit that the Latin Fathers hold it for sin. It is quite certain Paul did. But let us seek this unity and consent of all later down in the history of the church. Were all agreed as to re-baptizing heretics?

Father O. They all came to an agreement, and submitted to the pope.

N*. I admit the pope prevailed at last, as he has on many points more evil than this, but has broken up and divided the church by his pretensions to do so. But we are looking for the consent of the church to secure truth. Did not the godly martyr, Cyprian, and all Africa, Egypt, and Syria, and Asia Minor—that is, all the most ancient apostolic churches—reject the pope's dogmas on this point?

Father O. Yes, they did, but it did not succeed.

N*. Did they ever yield till the death of Pope Stephen removed the difficulties?

Father O. No, they did not.

N*. You uprightly admit what is a matter of notorious history; and then they came to a middle term—of not

baptizing again if they owned the Trinity, and baptizing them again if they did not. (Canon 8, Council of Aries.) Now, I do not blame the concord thus established, but as a source of truth the common consent of the church failed thus early in the church's history. In a very large portion of the church, if subject to their bishops, they must have differed from Rome. Now I might multiply instances. In the case of the Donatists, the African bishops applied to the Emperor Constantine, and the civil authority interfered to settle it. For, alas! when the Emperor turned Christian, so servile was the church, that he for a time was the true pope. Yet when Constantine called councils, and regulated everything, he was not even baptized— was so only on his death-bed, to be sure to be clear of his sins.

Father O. Do you think it right to cast a slur upon the whole church of God thus?

N*. I think it right to examine facts, when you make such a body as this an authority for the truth. But we will go to more serious points than even the re-baptizing of heretics. I suppose you, as I do, abhor the principles of Arius.

Father O. Surely; and he was condemned by the church, and especially in the Council of Nice.

N*. He was justly so, we all admit; but did that settle the church in unity on the point? You know that Athanasius was the great and able champion of the truth. Did he not die excommunicated and banished?

Father O. Yes, but that was through the intrigues of a wicked Arian emperor.

N*. I agree with you; but then how can the consent of the church secure the faith? Here was, if any be, a fundamental article—the true divinity of the blessed Lord—given up (save by some honoured and blessed confessors) by nearly the whole professing church, instead of its securing doctrine. But further. The pope himself, though for some time faithful, at last signed a semi-Arian formulary. Constantius had banished him from Rome because he would not be an Arian. In this he was to be honoured, and Felix was appointed pope in his place. The Emperor, on entering Rome to celebrate a triumph, found he was loved, saw him afterwards, and he signed a formulary which omitted the testing word, and got an acknowledgment from the prelates who were with Constantius that they should be condemned who said Christ, as to substance and in every way, was not like the Father, and then he was restored, and there were two popes till Felix's death. Further, was not Arius restored by Constantius' order to full communion at Jerusalem, and recalled from exile to Constantinople?

Father O. Yes; but he died miserably at Constantinople before he could be restored there.

N*. Be it so. I know it is said so. If that were God's judgment upon him, what are we to make of the churches who, on Constantius' order, restored him? Is it not as plain as can possibly be that in the very foundation truth of our religion the professing church, bishops, pope, and all, failed wholly to preserve the truth? Indeed Constantine, who had first condemned the Arians, falling under the influence of Eusebius, the prelate of Nicomedia, an able and learned man but a semi-Arian and worse, recalled the Arians everywhere, and, as we have seen, Athanasius was excommunicated

and banished; then Constans, who held to the Nicene Creed, ruling in the west, and Constantius in the east, the east was Arian, and the west held to the Council of Nice; but Constantius, having defeated the usurping assassin of his brother Constans, held a council at Milan, where Athanasius was condemned. He banished those who would not subscribe its decrees—Pope Liberius, Hosius, Lucifer, and others; but, as we have seen, Liberius compromised the matter, and returned, and the aged and respected Hosius, alas! gave way. Lucifer remained firm, and became the head of the sect of Luciferians, whom Jerome wrote against. Now, mark that all this confusion was on the very essence of the faith.

Father O. No doubt it was a sad time; but do you not see how God has been with His church, and preserved it in the faith, notwithstanding all this?

N*. That I admit, and bless Him for with all my whole heart. The gates of hell shall never prevail against it. That is the comfort of one's heart in reading its history. But our point now is, can the professing church secure our faith by its maintaining with one consent any doctrine? The history of Arianism clearly proves that this is not so, and that it cannot be trusted for it. We shall have to touch on this again when we speak of councils. Take, again, the case of image worship. Was there universal consent as to that?

Father O. There is now; Romans and Greeks unite in it.

N*. But if now, what comes of the rule what was always, everywhere, and by all? Is it not true that for centuries there were none? Your great dogmatist, Petavius, admits that none were used for four hundred years, and gives

as a reason that there was danger of their being confounded with the heathens, but that in the fifth, when she got her liberty, she began to have them openly. (Pet. de Incarn. 15, 13, 3.) Epiphanius, finding an image on a curtain in a church, tore it with his own hands, as contrary to scripture. He charges their introduction on heretics, as does Augustine, and declares that the church condemns such habits. (Epiph. in Jerome fit. LL. ed. Vallar, I, 253.)

The Council of Eliberis, in Spain, a.d. 305, decreed that pictures ought not to be in churches. For a length of time they were rejected in the East, and insisted on by the popes; solemnly condemned in a council of three hundred and thirty-eight prelates at Constantinople, in a.d. 754; approved by a council of three hundred and fifty in a.d. 787; condemned in England in a.d. 792, and by a great council of prelates at Frankfort, under Charlemagne, a.d. 794.

Now this will come before us under the question of councils. But how am I, then, to learn anything sure from the consent of the professing church, or hold what is held always, everywhere, and by all? These are only examples on the most important points of doctrine and practice. The truth is, for some hundreds of years, from the third to the sixth and seventh centuries, there was an endless war of opinions, and the Emperors trying to keep the peace by their own decrees, or by convening councils. Then, if we come down lower, after bitter and prolonged conflict, and mutual excommunication, the Greek and Roman, or Eastern and Western, Christendom, finally separated in the tenth century, and all the most ancient apostolic churches condemn Rome; so do the Nestorians and Eutychians. And now the

majority of professing Christendom stands apart from her. Where am I to get this general consent? And remark, Mr. O., I am not now speaking of the doctrines or practices referred to; for instance, as to the wrongness of the heathen practice of images. Our inquiry is, if the universal consent of the church furnishes a sure ground of faith. My answer is, it cannot in principle, because it is not a revelation of God; and, secondly, that in vital points it has totally failed, and, in fact, is not to be found, and does not exist. Let me ask you, Do you believe in the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary?

Father O. Undoubtedly. The pope decided upon it a few years ago in an assembly of several hundred prelates.

N*. And was it an article of faith before?

Father O. No, but it was celebrated by pious Catholics.

N*. I am aware of that. But can an important dogma be introduced above eighteen centuries after the Lord?

Father O. It is promulgated then as an article of faith; but when an article of faith is promulgated, it is not new; all that is maintained is, that it was always the faith of the church.

N*. But is it not true that the Dominicans and all their doctors held that this doctrine of the immaculate conception was contrary to the truth?

Father O. They did, but it was not determined by the church then.

N*. They were the inquisitors of heretical pravity, were they not?

Father O. The inquisitors were taken from that order.

N*. That is what I mean. But is it not strange that so celebrated an order, to which the maintenance of sound doctrine was specially confided in the church, should have been for centuries diligently teaching what now turns out to be heresy? I do not blame them, but how can the universal consent of the church secure our having the truth if this be so? and it was not merely a notion. They insisted on it, and used such scandalous means to make their cause good against the Franciscans, that four of their order were burned at the stake for it about the time of the Reformation.

Father O. You mean the history of Jetzer, at Bern?

N*. I do. They had some one to personify the Virgin Mary in an apparition, and carried it so far that the fraud was discovered.

Father O. Of course I do not excuse them. It was in dark and ignorant ages, and they were punished by the church for it.

N*. They were, they were burnt for it, because it was found out. But our question is, what is the security for the truth, when your greatest lights, your maintainers of sound doctrine and judges of heresy, have brought us into ages so dark as this, and are now judged to be maintainers of false doctrine all the time?

But we will now turn to the other means of infallible knowledge of the truth; the pope speaking ex cathedra, as they say, and councils. The first is soon disposed of. In the first place, we have seen Peter himself rebuked by Paul on the gravest question that could occupy the church of God. It is not possible to think of the first popes, whoever they were (for this is uncertain), as the authorized sources of truth, for the apostle John lived

during the time of those who first occupied the See of Rome, and they were clearly bound to listen to and be subject to the apostle—that very apostle who says, “He that is of God heareth us.” And if the first chiefs had not this authority, its descending down to others is all a fiction. But the case of the pope goes farther, and, without multiplying cases which would carry us too far, there are the plain cases of Marcellinus, who was a traditor, that is, gave up the scriptures in persecution, and offered incense to the gods; Honorius, who was publicly condemned for being a Monothelite by the sixth General Council confirmed by the pope; Liberius, who signed a semi-Arian creed. These we will notice a little more fully.

First, then, there is the sad case of Marcellinus, who, when pope, offered to idols and apostatised from Christ. Bellarmine says he taught nothing against the faith nor heretical. (De Sum. Pont. lib. 4, c. 8, 25.) Augustine is on safer ground. He says, “whatever he may have been it is no prejudice to the Catholic church, and in the threshing-floor there may be good and bad.” But where is security for infallibility?17 Bellarmine tells us it is not of much consequence if he lost the papacy by it, as he abdicated soon after, and died a martyr. I trust the poor man’s weakness may have been graciously forgiven, but we are looking for infallibility and security for faith. It is easy to understand Bellarmine’s motive for making it no matter, because either there would have been an apostate pope or one deposed by a local council for unfaithfulness. Marcel-linus did the best thing he could do, if he abdicated, and we may trust all was right with him after all. Augustine’s ground for its being no matter is a better one.

Father O. St. Augustine was right to say the church's faith was unaffected by it; and, indeed, as Bellarmine says, he taught nothing dogmatically wrong.

N*. Well, I should have thought it wrong every way to worship idols. A worshipper of idols is a strange security for faith. But we will turn to some other instances equally notorious: Pope Vigilius in the dispute about what are called the three chapters, two of which were sanctioned by the great General Council of Chalcedon. In truth Vigilius was elevated to the See of Rome on purpose to favour Monophysite heresy,18 and restore Anthinus, the heretic, to the See of Constantinople, the Empress putting him in by force, by means of Belisarius, and banishing Silverius. When once in, he turned right round,19 but quailed before the Emperor as soon as he got to Constantinople, and intrigued in vain. Then he condemned the three chapters as the Emperor had done. Then, when the fifth General Council was called, though at Constantinople, he defended the three chapters. The Council of Constantinople broke communion with him, and approved the Emperor's condemnation of the three chapters, and Vigilius, the following year, assented to the decrees of the council, and his successor, Pelagius I, acknowledged the orthodoxy of the council. Where is the security for faith here anywhere? The Council of Constantinople condemned the Council of Chalcedon, both being accounted æcumenical, nominally saving its credit, and the pope, ex cathedra, condemned, approved, and then condemned the same doctrine, what all held to be a vital question as to the Person of the Lord! You cannot deny this.

Father O. I do not defend Vigilius; the persecutions of the Emperor on the one hand, and the voice of the Western church on the other, made him vacillate. And see how, after all, the church was preserved, as Baronius says, “God’s hand was seen in his refusing to support the heresy when once he was really pope.”20 N*. But his condemning, and approving the three chapters, and then acknowledging the synod which had condemned him and them, were when he was pope. It is a plain example that the pope’s judgment, ex cathedra, is just worth nothing at all. I admit that God has preserved the faith and the church, but it is in spite of and not by the hierarchy. But take another example: you cannot deny Liberius acquiesced in Arianism.

Father O. He never taught it.

N*. He subscribed an Arian creed, and in the largest council ever held, of some 800 prelates; and he communicated with Arians and condemned Athanasius. Bellarmine says he was deceived by ambiguous terms; but if he was, he was no security for our faith. The truth is, he did it to free himself from the persecutions of an Arian Emperor, who sought to unite all by vague expressions, which really gave up the word on which all then depended; and, as Jerome expresses it, the world was surprised to find itself Arian. But if Bellarmine is right, and he was deceived, it is just the proof that the pope is no security for faith, nor indeed a pope and council together. To say he did not teach it, when on the solemn discussion of the question with the assembled hierarchy he signed the creed, is a miserable subterfuge. Others of course, if he was any authority, were to believe what he signed. Ought a simple

Christian to have followed his faith then, when he subscribed the Arian creed?

Father O. No; he should have abode by the faith of the church.

N*. How was he to know the faith of the church when the pope and by far the largest council ever held had subscribed deadly heresy? No, the broad fact is there. The pope and the largest body of prelates ever assembled in council signed and promulgated an Arian creed. Nor did the church, as a body, recover itself at once.

I now turn to Honorius. Bellarmine labours hard to free him also; but then he cannot deny that he was condemned and anathematized as a heretic by not one but two general councils, the pope's legates taking part in one case. Bellarmine says they wanted to secure several Eastern patriarchs being anathematized, and so, that they might succeed, threw Honorius in with them. 21 Moreover the pope, his successor, undertook he should be anathematized. And then, says Bellarmine, if it cannot be denied in the least that the pope was anathematized, the council made a mistake; but then the pope's legates were there, and it is accounted an (Ecumenical Council amongst you. So that either the pope was a heretic, and he was struck out of what were called the Diptychs (those whose names were remembered in the public service) as unfit to be there, or pope and council confirmed by him can err, and nothing is certain. It is really a flat denial of your own history to pretend popes and councils (and both together) cannot err. There is no security for faith to be found in them.

I might mention a multitude of cases and statements of Fathers, but I take only notorious cases, which may be found in Bellarmine, Baronius, and all church histories. 22 John XXII I have mentioned; his case may be seen in Bellarmine, and John XXIII23 deposed by the Council of Constance.

I might insist on the absurdity and ungodliness of making infallible in faith men of whom Baronius24 says he must use their being in the see as a date; 'but how can we own as popes persons who were illegitimate sons of the Marquis of Tuscany's mistresses, put in by them into the see?' But I leave all this, and a great deal more, and confine myself to notorious cases, known by everyone who has read church history at all, though the general point of what the popes were is of great weight in the matter. I ask you, solemnly, if a Chinese or a Hindoo were seeking, with sincere heart led of God, for the rule of faith and means of discovering the true religion, would he find it in the most licentious, depraved, wicked series of men that ever were found? and while I admit they were not so at first, what is to be a rule of faith must be always one, to say nothing of there being two or three popes at a time.

If we take history, we find there was no such doctrine in the early church, and further, that popes have grievously erred. Thus Cyprian, and all the African and Asiatic, and Egyptian bishops, resisted Stephen's doctrine. Before that, when Victor refused communion with the Eastern churches on a question of keeping Easter, the godly Irenaeus rebuked him, many bishops concurring. "This did not please all the bishops," says Eusebius, some of them speaking pretty sharply to him (the pope). (Eus. 5, 24.) And till the Council of Nice, the East and West

continued their own observances as to what Victor excommunicates them for. So Augustine, in the case of Marcellinus (which, strange to say, Baronius quotes with approbation, thinking only of Catholic doctrine), says, “Whatever Marcellinus may have been, it is no prejudice to the Catholic church diffused in the whole world. We are in no way crowned by their innocence, nor condemned by their iniquity… In the threshing-floor (of the church) there can be good and bad.” (De Unico Baptismo, Cont. Pet. 16, or Ben. 39.) He had not the remotest idea of infallibility in a pope. If he was a bad one and sacrificed to idols, the faith was not affected by it. So indeed Tertullian asks triumphantly in respect of such falls, “Do we prove faith by persons, or persons by faith? “Listen to the plain language of Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, the great friend of the pope, the great stickler for orthodoxy and church authority in his day: “Nor is the church of the Roman city to be esteemed one, and that of all the earth to be another. Both the Gauls, and Britons, and Africa, and Persia, and the East, and India, and all barbarous nations, adore one Christ, observe one rule of faith. If authority be sought, the world is greater than a city. Wherever there is a bishop, Rome, or Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, or Alexandria, or Tunis, he is of the same worth, he is of the same priesthood. The power of riches and the humility of poverty make neither a more exalted nor an inferior bishop; but all are successors of the apostles.”25 This is a poor way of treating infallibility. Cyprian expressly declares that, when Paul rebuked Peter, the latter never thought of insolently and arrogantly pretending to have the primacy, and that he ought to be obeyed. (Litt. 71.) Accordingly, as we have seen, the African bishops maintained their views against

the pope. The thought of infallibility did not exist. When we come lower down in history, the claims of the popes increase, and their authority extends; but the effect was that all the most ancient part of the church, that is the East, broke off from them altogether, and remains opposed to Rome to this day.

The University of Paris solemnly condemned John XXII26 for heresy, and the Council of Constance charged John XXIII with saying that the soul died with the body. Now this shews how little infallibility was supposed to be inherent in the pope. The Council of Basel says, “Many of the supreme pontiffs are said, and so we read, to have fallen into heresy and error. It is certain that the pope can err. A council has often condemned and deposed a pope as well on account of faith as morals.” Now, I quite understand that you will say this council has no authority, but we are looking for a sure ground on which to found the authority of the church; and surely when the assembled prelates of Christendom declare that the popes may err, and have erred, in faith and morals, the infallibility of the pope is no longer a very sure ground. Their claiming it, which we all know they do, does not give it to them. We will enter on the ground of councils when we come to that point. I turn to the history of the popes, that we may understand what happened at Constance. There were two popes, and even three from the Council of Pisa, till after the Council of Constance: were they both infaUible, both heads of the church? Half Europe obeyed one, half the other. Did not they mislead, one or both, the church of God? Where was certainty to guide the faithful here? They anathematized each other. Is this what the faith of God’s church, or the saving of souls, is to rest upon? But, further, the Council of

Constance, after exacting the resignation of the principal but most wicked of the three (which, after some tergiversations, he gave on being threatened to have his awful wickedness exposed), on his running away fearing the consequences of his crimes, deposed him, and chose another; the two others lingered on a little while, and then died out.

Father O. But the Council of Constance was not ratified by the pope.

N*. It created the pope, and all your alleged spiritual authority flows from hence, that is, from its acts; you have no pope at all if its acts are wrong. But we will speak of this when we come to councils, we are now on the popes being infallible. But here, I will add, Martin V did confirm the Council of Constance, and not only so, but Eugenius, though he afterwards found means to break it up, recalled his three bulls (one, he said, was not genuine), which condemned the Council of Basel, and gave in his adhesion, and recognised it and its acts as met in the power of the Holy Ghost; which acts fully confirmed the decrees of Constance.

M. But is all this true, Father O.?

Father O. The facts are true; but I must beg you not to interfere and enter into what you cannot possibly judge of. When Mr. N*. has done I will shew how fallacious all this is. I only now say, It is just a proof how, if men have been individually wicked, God has preserved the church. The faith of the church has remained the same, and that is all you have to say to.

N*. That the excessive wickedness of the popes and clergy, which we shall be obliged to look into when we speak of the marks of the true church, is a proof that the

blessed God has preserved His church, and the faith of God's elect in spite of them, I admit fully and bless Him for it. But we are examining, not if God has preserved the faith for us in spite of them, but if they are a warrant and security for the faith. But if these facts are true, the popes are no kind of security for the faith, and that is our question now. Let me add, dear sir, that your rebuke to M. is the best possible proof of the untenableness of the ground he and you are upon. You say he cannot possibly judge of the validity of this ground of faith. But that is what you want us to do—only you want us to do it without honest examination. Dr. Milner says we believe the Catholic church, and therefore everything which she teaches, upon motives of credibility, and Mr. John Newman (who turned Roman Catholic) avows he has only probability, though of a high character. Now, in no case can this be a divine foundation for faith. It is upon the face of it merely human. It would be blasphemy to say that what God said was probably true.

But so utterly futile is your rule of faith, that when we begin to examine it, you tell our friend M. here that he cannot possibly judge of it. Now, where is he to get his motives of credibility? And though it may be difficult for a poor man to examine for himself folios of fathers and councils, as of course it is, yet, according to your rule of faith, he must, or be led blindfold by a man. But the facts which are brought forward by those who can examine them, shew that your rule is a dreadfully false one, and when they are thus honestly furnished to him, he can judge that the foundation you build on is utterly worthless. If the pope be a sure foundation of faith (a thing not thought of for hundreds of years) God has given a premium to the most horrible wickedness that

ever disgraced human nature, for such wickedness characterizes the popes above all men on the earth. Do you deny the wickedness of John XXIII of whom we have just been speaking, or of Alexander VI, and many others? You cannot, you dare not, with any one who knows history. Even your Pope Gregory VII, who built the grandeur of the papacy, raising it above the empire, and established the celibacy (that is, the corruption of the clergy) died away from his see, having been first deposed by a council of German bishops at Worms, and afterwards condemned as a heretic, and sentenced to be deposed by the Council of Brixen, and a new pope chosen, Clement III, who was consecrated at Rome. Now, I attach no authority to this council, or their pope (though, in supporting the emperor, to whom God gave authority, against the pope, to whom God gave none, the prelates were right) but what sort of foundation for faith and salvation is all this?

James. Well, to think of all this being called the church of God and authority for our faith. I am glad I have the Bible and know nothing about all this. There one has holiness and truth, and not wars and ambition for Christianity. It is terrible to think what the professing church came to, if all this is true.

N*. It is terrible, and the thousandth part of it has not been told, but we must pursue our enquiry soberly. Our point is the pope’s infallibility being the source of certainty as to the faith. Now, the second point I stated was that they had confessedly erred. And we have cited examples. For it is perfectly well known that plenty believed nothing at all. But I have selected cases that have been brought out in history as to the faith. Marcellinus offered incense to idols, Liberius signed a

semi-Arian creed. Honorius was condemned for being a Monothelite by a general council sanctioned by Pope Agatho. Zosimus, I may add here, corrupted artfully the canons of the Council of Nice to found the authority of the See of Rome, and was detected in the East and in Africa. John XXII was charged with heresy as to the state of souls after death. John XXIII, deposed by the Council of Constance, was charged there with denying the immortality of the soul.

Father O. I do not admit all these cases. It was never proved against Marcellinus; John XXII was only condemned by a council of divines at Paris. And Zosimus' act at any rate was a fraud, not a heresy. He quoted Sardica and said Nice. And it is a question if these canons of Nice were not burnt.

N*. There is this much obscure in the case of Marcellinus, that the deacons and presbyters who bore witness to it only saw him go into the sanctuary of Vesta to do it, and did not see it done. I admit the acts of the Council of Sinuessa, in which it is fully stated, and where he is said to have confessed it on his knees, may be, and are possibly justly called in question, and I do not depend on them, though even Baronius, your great historian, did not wholly give them up, and all St. Augustine ventures to say is, that we ought not to hold him guilty till it is proved. But the account is as circumstantial as possible. It is said that he resisted the emperor's violence, but gave way to blandishments and money, and that he said he did not sacrifice, but only put a few grains of incense on the fire to the idol, the names of the priests and deacons who went with him to the door being mentioned, so that it is impossible to believe it is a mere fable. Moreover, he gave up the popedom in

consequence.27 But is this what faith is to rest on? As to John XXII there is no doubt whatever. Your own historians relate it, and say he coldly retracted the error before he died, and that his successor, Benedict, condemned it. So that, as a foundation of faith, we see a pope cannot be trusted.

As to Zosimus, I admit that it was a fraud and not a heresy; but it was a fraudulently citing as the canons of the Council of Nice what were no part of them, and what was put forward as the foundation of the whole jurisdiction and authority of the pope. The council of bishops in Africa, in which the famous St. Augustine took part, denied their genuineness, sent and got the true Greek copies in the East and rejected Zosimus' claims. And the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch, did the same thing, sending full copies of the canons of Nice. Is not this true?

Father O. Yes. But they were the canons of the Council of Sardica which he cited as those of Nice.

N*. That is, he attributed the resolutions of a little petty conclave of his own partisans, assembled to give him this power (from whence all the bishops of the East had separated when they found what they were about, meeting elsewhere, and condemning the Sardicans), to the first great General Council in order fraudulently to set up that authority of the See of Rome which it now claims: and Rome has ever since built largely on this fraud.

It is well to refer a little to this history as elucidating the supremacy and alleged appellative jurisdiction of Rome. I will go a little further back, as, among other things, our allegation is that we can trace the origin of these

pretensions. In Cyprian's time, besides the case we have already spoken of about rebaptizing heretics, another question arose. In a.d. 252 two Spanish bishops guilty of being Libellatici (that is, having received certificates of having owned heathen idols, obtained by money from heathen magistrates without having really done so) were deposed by a provincial synod of the country. One was re-admitted to communion though not to his see, but went to Rome and complained to Pope Stephen. The pope, always glad as popes were to augment their authority, ordered the Spanish synod to restore both to their sees. Meanwhile, Cyprian being everywhere known by his activity, the bishops of the synod laid the affair before him. He summoned a local council, and they declared that Stephen had been evidently deceived, and that Basilides and Martialis (the other bishop) had greatly increased their crime by appealing from the local judgment. He declares the judgment he communicated to be conformable to the understood practice of the church. There the matter ended. The great Roman historian is careful not to notice this transaction. It may be found in other histories. (See Cyprian's letter 67, Oxford, Pam. 68.)

Cyprian in every respect maintained the independence of the episcopate against Rome. He says, "Among us there is no one who will arrogate to himself any authority over those of his own order or claim to be a bishop of bishops … inasmuch as every bishop has equal liberty of judging and determining upon all questions that come before him, and can no more be judged by, than he can judge, another. Therefore it should be our resolution to await the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all our powers to govern His church

are derived, and who alone has authority to call us to account" (Prologue to judgment of 87 bishops in Council of Carthage). So when Pope Cornelius had received Felicissimus, who had been excommunicated in Africa, Cyprian writes to blame him severely, and says the crime ought to be judged where it is committed, and where the witnesses are, "unless to some few desperate and lost persons the authority of the bishops established in Africa seem to be inferior. Their cause is already taken cognizance of, the sentence already passed on them," and declares a special portion of the flock is appropriated to each shepherd, which each is to rule and govern, having to give an account of his acts to God (Epist. 58, Oxford).

The history of Sardica, which was subsequent to this, was the following:—

When Athanasius had been condemned by the Councils of Tyre and Antioch, and banished, he first fled to Julius, who held a small assembly at Rome, and acquitted him; then to Treves, and the Emperor Constans got Constantius, emperor of the East, to call a council. This was held at Sardica. Athanasius, whose cause was to be tried, sat there. The Eastern bishops.claimed that he should be excluded. This the others refused. The parties were equally divided, and the Eastern prelates seceded; the Western ones remained. The Eastern half at Philippopolis condemned Athanasius; the Sardicans acquitted him, and then gave for the first time an appeal to Rome. These latter canons Zosimus sought to foist on the African bishops as canons of the Council of Nice. But they were never heard of (as being those of a Council of Sardica) as of any authority, nor ever received in any way in the Eastern church.

And note, the giving then, which is what they do in honour of Peter, a title to Rome to require a re-examination on the spot in case of an appeal, or to take other measures, proves that he did not possess the right before. It was very convenient to Athanasius, as he had been thus acquitted by Pope Julius, and condemned in the East, to set up this power in Rome. This Council of Sardica and its canons were, however, no way recognised in the church; for three general councils, Constantinople, 381 (34 years after), Chalcedon, 451, Constantinople, 681, all decree what is entirely in opposition to the Sardican, namely—that causes should be heard by the provincial synods, with appeal to the patriarch to whose jurisdiction they belonged. It was Julius' successor, Liberius, who signed the Arian or semi-Arian creed, when Constantius, the Eastern emperor, had all his own way, and so did Hosius, one of the alleged presidents of the Sardican Council.

I will now return to Pope Zosimus. A certain presbyter, Apiarius, had been excommunicated by his bishop and others for ill conduct. He goes off to Rome. Zosimus pronounces him innocent, and sends Faustinus and two others to Africa to a synod then gathered about it. His messengers went to see Apiarius reinstated, and to urge that any presbyter might appeal to Rome. The African prelates answered there was no such rule in the church as that. Zosimus' messengers plead the canons of the Council of Nice. The prelates said these canons were not in their copies of the canons of the Council of Nice; but they would send to Constantinople and Alexandria and Antioch, the three great patriarchates, and see. Cyril of Alexandria, and Atticus of Constantinople replied, and it was found that there were no such canons of the Council

of Nice at all. Zosimus was now dead, and his successor, Boniface, who pursued the claim, was dead also; and the African prelates write to Pope Caelestine to say that the Council of Nice had committed these things to the metropolitan, or a local council, or even to a general one.

It is worth while, though it be long, to recite what the prelates say in what they call the universal African Council of Carthage:— "No determination of the Fathers has ever taken this authority (of judging its own clergy) from the African church, and the decrees of Nice have openly committed both inferior clergymen and bishops themselves to their metropolitans. For they have provided most prudently and justly thai every matter should be terminated in its own place where it arose. Nor is it to be thought that to each and every consideration the grace of the Holy Spirit will be wanting by which equity may be prudently perceived by the priests of Christ, and firmly maintained, especially because it is allowed to every one, if he be offended by the judgment on the charges, to appeal to the councils of his province, or even to a universal one. Unless perhaps there be some one who may think that our God may inspire justice in examining to a single person, whoever it may be, and deny it to innumerable priests assembled in council.... For we have not found it established in any synod of the Fathers that any should be sent as legates of your hohness (tua sanctitatis a latere, the common name since for popish legates). For that which you formerly transmitted by the same Faustinus, our co-bishop, as on the part of the Nicene Council, in the truer copies of the Council of Nice, which we have received, sent from our co-bishop, Cyril, of the church of

Alexandria, and the venerable Atticus, prelate of Constantinople, from the authentic copies, which also had already been sent by us to bishop Boniface of venerable memory, your predecessor, by the hands of Innocent, presbyter, and Marcellus, sub-deacon, by whom they were forwarded to us from them (Cyril and Atticus), we have not been able to find anything of the kind. Also do not think of sending, nor granting, upon any of ours requesting it, any of your clergy as executors (agents to enforce decrees) lest we may seem to introduce the smoky pride of this world into the church of Christ, which offers the light of simplicity and the day-light of lowliness to those who desire to see God."28 And then the council declares that Africa could no longer endure the presence of Faustinus, if brotherly charity were to be preserved. Apiarius was already put out.

Now here papal infallibility is treated with scorn by all the African bishops in council, the pope's sending legates declared to be utterly unlawful, and the canons he pleaded as his justification declared to be a fraud, and that he must know it, for they had sent the true ones from Constantinople and Alexandria to his predecessor, Boniface.

But Zosimus had had some other transactions with these African prelates, among whom was the famous Augustine. Zosimus fully sanctioned the confession of faith of Pelagius, and his teaching. Now here was the very essence of Christian grace in question. He reproves severely the African prelates for condemning him, owns him and Celestius as in communion. His predecessor had totally condemned him just before. The African prelates having done so, and communicated it, as was the custom, to Innocent, he had returned an answer

condemning and excommunicating the two heretics, and claiming, I freely admit, all manner of authority in the case, for the popes were at this moment striving hard to establish their power, and profited by every opportunity. However Innocent condemned and excommunicated them by his full authority ex cathedra. Zosimus, to the said African prelates, declares them sound and in communion. And note, this was on an essential doctrine of the faith. The Africans did not of course remonstrate with Innocent for agreeing with them.

But Zosimus' pretensions set aside their judgment. They met at Carthage in May, 418, Augustine presiding, and condemned and anathematized Pelagius and his disciples, and, not content with this, took the opportunity, in the Council of Milevis, of republishing the Nicene canon, and in their 22nd decree that the appeals should be to local synods or metropolitans, and that if any appealed across the sea (that is, to Rome) he should be received into communion in no African church. Zosimus gave way, summoned Celestius, whom the Africans had condemned, and condemned him too. So much for the pope's infallibility and authority.

I have dwelt more on this because just at this time the pope was seeking to establish his authority over the West, having succeeded, through a quarrel of two prelates, to do it in the south-east corner of France, and in a measure in Eastern Illyria, naming the archbishop of Thessalonica there as "executor" —what the Africans call the introduction of smoky pride into the church. This had been done already some 40 years before, when that country was politically transferred to the Eastern empire, and the ambitious popes were afraid it should be ecclesiastically under the influence of

Constantinople, the Eastern capital. But all this was ambition, not infallibility; and when there was moral courage, the pretensions of the pope were entirely rejected as wholly contrary to the canons, as indeed they were before the canons of Nice were made. Thus did Cyprian, thus Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria in his day; thus Spain, thus Irenaeus in Gaul; while the popes have been proved both fallible and heretics.

In the Councils of Basel and Constance these bodies were openly declared to be superior to them, and, in the last, three popes (all infallible, we are to suppose) were set aside, one as a heinous monster. Nor has this doctrine been given up in later days. The Gallican church, that is, the Roman prelates in France summoned by Louis XIV, declared publicly that the decrees of the Council of Constance, which maintained the authority of general councils as superior to the pope's in spiritual matters, are approved and adopted by the Gallican church, and that the decisions of the pope in points of faith are not infallible, unless they be accompanied by the consent of the church. Here, then, by the authority of the clergy of that great kingdom, a person who holds the infallibility of the pope is judged to be in error. Now, in what a sea of uncertainty you plunge people if they are to discover the true rule of faith in this way, to say nothing of its being impossible for a poor man to get at it at all!

Father O. Yes, but the poor man has the voice of his pastor, who will not lead him astray.

N*. But this is admitted to be no security. Thus, the faithful in France would be led to hold that the pope was fallible in matters of faith.

Father O. But that is no longer the case.

N*. Where then is your rule of “what is held by all, everywhere, and always”? Moreover, many do hold this still,29 and it was favoured by the Bourbons, and was, even often, by the emperor, who can do so because he names the different prelates. But see what you have brought us to. Your rule of faith in 1682, for France at least, was different from your rule of faith in 1862. Is this its certainty and clearness? Now when I turn to scripture I find that which I surely need the grace of God to understand; but what is of admitted certain authority for all (except for infidels, with whom we have nothing to do here), and the same at all times? The word of God, the direct revelation given by God by prophets and apostles and inspired men, and that with a holiness, plainness, graciousness of love, and divine love and authority which act on the mind of the poorest, and which the poorest can appreciate. You hinder his having any rule, or else he must have councils and fathers, and read through folios in Latin and Greek; and, when a man is able to do that, he finds, as we have seen, contradiction and heresy, and no sure rule anywhere. If he cannot do this, he must resign himself blindfold into a man’s, perhaps a wicked man’s, hand. With scripture he listens to Paul and Peter and the rest; he finds and knows in his own conscience that he has to do with the word of God, which discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. You have no certain rule of faith, nor any living word of God in what you call such which can judge your thoughts and heart.

Father O. But the very word you quote declares Peter to be the rock on which the church is built, and that whatever he bound on earth should be bound in heaven.

N*. I do not admit that this scripture says so at all, but I have already enlarged on history, proving that the popes are not infallible, so that it is quite right you should have ample opportunity of stating your views.

Father O. It is written, “Et ego dico tibi quia tu es Petrus, et super hanc Petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, et portse inferi non praevalebunt adversus earn.” “Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

N*. Forgive me if I interrupt you. Where does this come from?

Father O. From Matthew 16, from the scriptures.

N*. But we have not got them yet. You tell us we must first find the church to enable us to receive the scriptures, and we have not found the church yet. You must, on your own shewing, find that for us first. You cannot quote the scriptures before you prove them to be such—before you believe in them.

Father O. Well, but you do believe in them.

N*. Nor am I going to hinder your appealing to them. But as you have not made good the church’s claims, the scriptures must have authority of themselves, and be intelligible too.

Father O. I receive them from the church, and the interpretation of them also.

N*. No doubt you do, but that is your private opinion. You are occupied with proving what the true church is, and you have not done that yet, and therefore cannot, if the church alone can authorize them, say anything is scripture. And this is really important practically, not only to shew the unsoundness of your views, but

because in fact the Romanists receive as scripture what other parts of the church do not receive as such, the ancient church and fathers included. I am not bound to listen to anything you quote from scripture, because scripture cannot have authority, you yourself tell me, till the church has declared it to be so, and we have not the church yet. But proceed: I shall not make any difficulty. Yet I take it as an admission of the absolute authority of scripture in itself, for otherwise you cannot thus quote it.

Father O. This passage then shews clearly that the church is built on Peter, and that the church built on him can never be overthrown. To him also the keys are given, and what he bound on earth was to be bound in heaven. And it could not be to him only, and then the church fail, for it was never to fail. Hence his successors must have this same authority, that is, as all admit, the pope. In confirmation of this, we find him always named the first among the apostles, as he was the first called also. Thus it is as clear as anything can make it that he had the pre-eminence, and so his successors. He always spoke the first, and took the lead. He was the president of the college of apostles, as we see all through the Acts. In the same way, after His resurrection, the Lord committed His sheep to Peter, saying, “Feed my sheep,” giving him universal dominion over the church. And this was always recognized by the church, as the testimony of the fathers proves.

Thus Origen so very early says (Horn. 5 in Exod.), “See what is said by the Lord to that great foundation and most solid rock upon which Christ has founded His church, * O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt’”? So Athanasius, in his epistle to Felix, and,

indeed, the Alexandrian Synod with Him, “Thou art Peter, and upon thy foundation the pillars of the church, that is, the bishops, are established.” Gregory Nazianzen says, in his oration on moderation in discussions, “Peter is called a rock, and has the foundation of the church trusted to his faith.” Again, Epiphanius (in Ancorato), “The Lord constituted Peter, the first of the apostles, a firm rock on which the church of God is built.” So Chrysostom (Horn. 55 on Matt.), “The Lord says, Thou art Peter, and upon thee will I build my church.” So Cyril, “Commodiously shewing by that word (Peter), that on him, as on a rock and most firm stone, He was going to build His church.” So among the Latin fathers. Tertullian, in his remarkable book on prescription, says, “Was anything hid from Peter, called the rock of the church which was to be built? “And Hilary, “Oh! in the gift of a new name, happy foundation of the church. Oh rock! worthy of the building of it which should dissolve the laws of the infernal regions.” And the martyr Cyprian, “The Lord chose Peter first, and built His church on him.” And Jerome, “According to the metaphor of a rock, it is rightly said to him, ‘I will build my church upon thee.’” So Ambrose. I might add a crowd of other fathers, as Augustine, but I refer to these as both ancient and of just renown in the whole church.

Only I would remark to you that Jerome refers it not only to the person but to the See of Peter. And to close all with a still greater authority, the whole Council of Chalcedon (Action 3) of 630 fathers declares Peter the foundation and basis of the church. The words which follow this declaration that he is the rock shew the extent of dominion conferred upon him. “Et tibi dabo claves regni cælorum, et quodcunque ligaveris supra

terram erit ligatum et in cælis, et quodcunque soheris supra terrain erit solutum et in cælis." "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven."

M. Well, that is clear; what do you say to that, James? Is it not plain Peter had the first place, and was the foundation? And all he bound was to be bound in heaven; and sure the pope is in his place.

James. Of course Peter had the first place in a certain sense. He was blest by grace above others, as Paul says: God was mighty in him to the circumcision. No Christian denies that. But as to his being the foundation, save as a mighty instrument in God's hands, I do not believe it a moment, because Paul says, "other foundation can no man lay, save that that is laid, that is, Christ Jesus." So that, though I do not pretend to reason with learned men, and I had rather hear what these gentlemen have to say, yet, I am sure, if I were all alone, for my own soul, that Peter cannot in any true sense of the word be the foundation, because the word of God tells us there can be none but Christ. In a general way all Christians own the apostles to be foundations, and the prophets too; but if we make one real foundation, it can be only Christ. As ordained servants of His, and inspired witnesses of the truth, they are all foundations. But I could not trust my soul to any foundation but Christ. None has died for me but He. None is the truth but He. Besides, if Peter was the foundation, how can the pope be so now? The foundation of the church cannot be laid now.

But I would rather hear what Mr. N*. has to say; only these gentlemen will excuse my speaking as I was asked the question. I have no pretension to answer about fathers and all that. But I know what my own soul's hope is built upon, and on what alone it can be built, and the church, if it be the true one, too. It cannot have, as the real rock, two foundations.

Father O. You had much better hold your tongue, M., and not make your observations when you cannot know how to answer on such difficult questions, nor pretend to interpret scripture which the most learned men find hard to interpret.

N*. He did but put his Amen, Mr. O., however, to what you said. He does not alas! know the scriptures, or he would not be where he is, and I fear he will not learn much of them now. What James has said is really the true solid answer for a soul taught of God. It knows that a church built on Peter would be no church at all, that would be a ruin or rather be no church, and that no mortal sinful man can be personally the foundation of the church, and that none such could be the rock on which the church is built, if it is to stand. In the same chapter the Holy Ghost is careful to record that the Lord calls him Satan; and, even after he had received the Holy Ghost, Paul had to withstand him to the face. And I suppose the popes cannot pretend to be better than he. Still you have said the utmost that can be said. The arguments naturally are not new; and, while referring to what James has said as shewing that a divinely taught soul has its answer from the word for itself, I will take up what is, after all, the inferior part, the reasoning on scripture and quotations from the fathers; but just to learn that they are no security for anything, which

indeed it would be a sin to think them. And, first, as to scripture, “Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.” You say this is on Peter, and that it gives him, with what follows as to binding and loosing, to be the foundation and to have the primacy.

Now setting aside Paul for the moment, who was called later, I admit in certain respects a personal pre-eminence in Peter; no official one, nor one which could go to a successor, if he had one, which in office he had not, for he was an apostle, and they had no apostles to succeed them, and could not have. For none were eye-witnesses of Christ, and sent by Him to found the church; Paul was, and so he was in the fullest and strictest sense an apostle. I admit a personal pre-eminence in certain respects, because scripture teaches us there was: James and Cephas and John seemed to be pillars. All three were preeminent in gift and energy, and all three had names given by Christ Himself. But, even among these, Peter was preeminent. Paul tells us that God was mighty in Peter to the circumcision, as in Paul himself to the Gentiles. As the fathers note, he was the first to make that particular confession, and specially noticed then by the Lord. His ardent character made him forward sometimes in a sad way, for he spoke not knowing what he said, and he had to be called Satan, and the too great confidence it led to brought him to curse and swear he did not know Christ. Yet even this energy, when he was humbled and ceased to trust himself so much, as taught by his fall, and was filled with the Holy Ghost, served to fit him, as a vessel of God’s choice, for the special ministry he was appointed to.

We see this pre-eminence in service, and how he was fitted for it by being humbled when the Lord says to him, “When thou art converted [restored from his fall], strengthen thy brethren.” This kind of pre-eminence scripture gives him; and we find him using the keys, not of heaven, but of the kingdom of heaven, that is, administering in the kingdom. He was the first in admitting the Jews, and the first in admitting the Gentiles, to found the unity of Christians in one company on earth. All this scripture teaches us, and we bless God for His holy wisdom and sovereign pleasure in it. But he never was the apostle of the Gentiles at all, though employed to receive them first. On the contrary, when the relationship of Jews and Gentiles was settled, it was agreed by the apostles that Paul and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles and themselves to the Jews; Gal. 2:9. He was the apostle of the circumcision, God mighty in him to the circumcision, and in Paul to the Gentiles.

Nor do we ever read in scripture of Peter, or indeed any of the twelve, going to the Gentiles. There are vague traditions, and they are very vague, but no scripture and no history for it. It is certain from the Acts of the Apostles that the Lord employed other instruments than they to send the gospel forth into the world: first, those who were scattered by persecution, when the apostles all remained at Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-4; ch. 11:19-21); and then Paul specially called for that purpose, and sent to that work by the Lord (Acts 26:17; Rom. 11:13; Eph. 3:7, 8; Rom. 1:5 where he refers to Rome), and his companions, who could say, “it is come unto you, as it is in all the world, bearing fruit and increasing” (Col. 1:6); and the same Paul positively declares, when the chief apostles “saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was

committed to me as the gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter … they gave to me [Paul] and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcision," Gal. 2.

How the commission in Matthew 28 was not fulfilled I do not stop to discuss, though I have thought of it too; but we have the apostles' authority in Paul's account for saying that what was settled by the apostles was, that Paul should take the Gentiles, and Peter and the others the Jews, as their sphere of work; and so Paul tells us elsewhere a dispensation was committed (Eph. 3:2) to him. He was debtor to Greeks and barbarians, and to those at Rome too; Rom. 1:14. He was a minister of the gospel to every creature under heaven, and besides that, specially, a minister of the church (Col. 2); and it is found on examination that he only, in all the Epistles, speaks of the church (John once of a particular church, not of the whole body).

The divine account, therefore, that I have of the dispensation of the gospel and the establishment of the church among the Gentiles is that Paul, not Peter, was the instrument in the Lord's hand for this work. And Paul very assiduously contends that he derived no fresh knowledge from Peter, and that he did not get his apostleship from man nor by man; and he resisted him to the face when it was needed; Gal. 2. So that I find from scripture that he to whom the dispensation of the gospel to the Gentiles, and especially Rome, was committed by God (and the ministry of the church too), was in no way subject to Peter, got nothing from him, and owed nothing to him; that God was mighty indeed in Peter to the Jew, but in Paul to the Gentiles; and we know by the Acts that in fact the world, as Paul says,

was filled with the gospel by his labours, who rejected diligently all subjection to Peter, without having a hint in God's history of the matter that Peter ever went to a single Gentile after Cornelius, while we have him agreeing that Paul should, and he to the Jews.

Further, neither in discourse nor in his Epistles does Peter ever speak of the church as a body on earth, while Paul enlarges and teaches on it everywhere. No doubt this left him free to preach it to anyone, as it did Paul to preach to Jews, but the mission, the official relationship, of Peter was with Jews, not Gentiles, while the Gentiles were committed to Paul, and he carefully, in the Epistle to the Galatians, sets aside any superior authority of Peter. Is not this strange if Peter was to be the head of Gentile Christendom, and the rock and foundation of the church? It seems as if God, foreknowing what man would corruptly make of him, had taken pains for those who own the truth and authority of His word to shew it was impossible; just as He has never given a case in which the blessed Virgin applied to Christ that she was not refused. The authority of Peter, and deriving ecclesiastical position from him and the rest of the twelve, was a work of the enemy with which Paul had specially to contend, and which he wholly rejects.30 But further, in particular, we are certain that at the first Peter had nothing to do with establishing Christianity in Rome. Numerous Christians were there before any apostle was there, so that Paul addressed a letter to them, and speaks in it of a church gathered there (Rom. 16:5); and not only so, but he claims it as a part of the measure which God had allotted to him, part of the sphere of work committed to him. He was the apostle of the Gentiles, and the seat of Gentile power came within

his prescribed apostolic district. He never hints at Peter's having any right or title there, or even at his having been there at all. He teaches, lays the foundation for them, as an apostle to whom they were confided as his sphere of work, shewing them the relative position of Jew and Gentile, all real difference being, as sinners on the one hand and by grace on the other, done away. "By whom," he says, "we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations [all the Gentiles] for his name, among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ," Rom. 1:5, 6. And so he goes on to shew the ground of his connection with them without a thought of Peter, and really to the exclusion of their being his sphere of work, or Peter's ever claiming any apostolic relationship with them or with any other than the circumcision.

Not that only, but Paul came to Rome and laboured, though a prisoner, for two years, and we never hear of Peter. If he ever came to Rome, he must have come when the church was already long founded by another. I am aware that afterwards there was a tradition that he did it jointly with Paul; but that is certainly false, because we have the history of the Acts to prove he did not. If he came, he came into another man's measure, to use Paul's expression. Rome liked, no doubt, foolishly to give itself this credit. It is just possible he visited the Jews there, which was his sphere, as he did apparently everywhere, addressing two Epistles to the believers of the dispersion in Asia Minor.

The tradition given by Eusebius from Dionysius of Corinth is clearly false, or has nothing to do with the matter, for it states not merely that Peter and Paul went together to Rome, but that they had also been at Corinth

together, and taught the same doctrine, and then gone on to Rome to be martyred together (Eus. Hist. Ec. 2, 25). Now either this is false, as the Acts prove, if it be taken literally, for it is said," I have planted," which the Acts and two Epistles to Corinth prove to have been the work of Paul alone, who declares that in Christ Jesus he had begotten them all by the gospel, a fact fully maintained in the Epistle; or if it be not false it is only a flourish of words referring to some visit to Rome (and Corinth on the way when on their way to prison), and in that case the churches were founded long before. That Peter planted the church of Corinth is undoubtedly false; for not only have we in the Acts the history of its planting by Paul with Silas and Timotheus exclusively, but he says, in his Epistle to them, that if they had ten thousand instructors they had but one father, for in Christ Jesus he had begotten them all by the gospel; 1 Cor. 4:15. Thus, as to the founding of the church, Peter certainly did not found the church at Corinth, and as certainly did not found the church at Rome. This we are perfectly sure of, as we have (besides the absence of all trace of it in scripture) Paul's Epistle to the Romans and two to the Corinthians, and the history of the Acts, which exclude any possibility of Peter's having done so. If it be true that they both suffered martyrdom there under Nero, this would say nothing of founding the church there, nor of any official place they had there. If we turn to those who followed in the See of Rome, the case is, if possible, clearer, for the apostle John survived Peter and Paul some thirty years; so that the first three popes governed one of the pillars among the apostles, which is as absurd as it is wrong. The notion of the beloved apostle being subject to the supremacy of the possessor of the See of Rome is monstrous.

Father O. Of course the apostle was not subject to him, but this did not hinder others being so.

N*. Pardon me. The church of Ephesus, where John dwelt, could not be subject to the bishop of Rome when John was there to guide them, and indeed the bishop of Rome must himself, if the case arose, have been subject to the apostle, for the authority of the apostles was confessedly supreme. Thus the pretended supremacy of Peter, and of his successors too, is clearly shewn to be false, unscriptural, and impossible. We have already seen in part, when you were not with us, that other prelates, the most eminent of their day, as Cyprian, Firmilian, Augustine, while shewing the greatest respect for Rome, and treating it (as tradition then did) as Peter's chair, utterly refused to be subject to it or own its supremacy, and asserted the independent jurisdiction of the different sees. The Jewish Christians sought to set up Peter in this way; but Paul resisted everywhere the Judaising of Christianity and the supremacy of Peter with it. Alas! how has it overflowed the church since.

But, further, how came it that the apostles never suspected that Peter had received this supreme place by these words, to say nothing of Rome? They were afterwards continually disputing who should be the greatest. This was strange if, in presence of them all, Christ had conferred it on Peter.

Father O. But they had not yet received the Holy Ghost.

N*. True; but they acknowledged the authority of the Lord, and, when the Holy Spirit was given, we find pre-eminent activity, as we have seen, in Peter (and the blessed apostle cared more for serving His Master then than for supremacy), but we never find him claiming

supremacy. Nor could he have done so, because the Lord had forbidden it: “It shall not be so amongst you, for whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant.” How would this do for the pope? And how could Peter, with the Holy Ghost bringing, as was promised, these words to his memory, have set up to be great among them? Your papal system denies the precepts of the Lord, as well as the history which scripture gives us. In the Acts Peter and John are sent by the apostles to Samaria.

So in the meeting to settle the solemn question of how far the law was binding on Gentiles, much discussion took place. Then Peter, ever forward, relates the case of Cornelius, and gives his thoughts as to the burden of Judaism. Then Barnabas and Paul are listened to, giving an account of the blessing among uncircumcised Gentiles. Each takes his place freely and suitably, and James closes the whole discussion as president of the church at Jerusalem. Peter has no place at all but what his gift and apostolic place gave him. He fills up that place rightly, and we hear no more of him in the council. In the decree we read, “It pleased the apostles and elders and the whole church.” There is not a trace of any supremacy of Peter. If of any, it was of James. He says, “my sentence is”; and this place of James was so marked, that when Peter was at Antioch and had eaten with the Gentiles, “when certain came from James,” it is said, “he withdrew and separated himself,” so that Paul had to rebuke him to the face; and accordingly, when Paul speaks of those whom he found pillars at Jerusalem, he does not put Cephas first, but says, “and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars,” and then it

was that they gave up the work among the Gentiles to Paul.

It is therefore as clear as noonday that Peter had no supremacy anywhere. Personal pre-eminency in energy and service, till Paul was called, he had. After that it was not the case; even as to that, Paul laboured more than all the apostles; 1 Cor. 15:10. He tells us he was not a whit behind the chiefest of them (2 Cor. 11:5), and in particular had to rebuke Peter to his face. Nor was Peter even the first called: Andrew, who had followed Jesus, brought Peter to Him. As regards what he bound on earth being bound in heaven, it is incontrovertible that all he apostolically pronounced upon or established was sanctioned in heaven. That is in Matthew 16; but in Matthew 1 18 it is said to all His disciples, and indeed to the church, going so far as to any two or three gathered together in His name. So as to forgiveness, as far as it is administration in man's hands (though I agree with Bellarmine, who furnishes all the arguments used on this point, that binding and loosing goes much farther, and includes all he established as divinely ordained), Paul forgives, and recognizes the assembly's title to forgive too; 2 Cor. 2:5-10. And the Lord confers the title to do it expressly on all the apostles; John 20.

As to feeding Christ's sheep, it was most gracious of the Lord to commit this to him thrice after he had denied Him thrice. And that he had this charge eminently as regards the circumcision we have already seen. But he desires the elders in his Epistle to do the same think. So Paul, when he sent for the elders of Ephesus, charges them to feed or shepherd the church of God. And this leads me to another remark, that is, whatever place Peter had, an apostle can have no successor. Those who

had the authority of the twelve and Paul were invested with it immediately by the Lord, and sent of Him as eye-witnesses chosen by Him. And Paul and Peter both distinctly confirm this. Paul declares that after his decease grievous wolves would enter in, and commends the disciples to God and the word of His grace. Now, if he was to have a successor, why should he speak of the state of the church as deprived by his death of any such care as he bestowed on the saints? So Peter, in writing his Epistle, says he would take care they should have what he taught always in remembrance. He has no idea that he was going to have a successor of great authority and infallible.

And your own Bellarmine, the first of your controversialists, says plainly, “The bishops have no part of apostolic authority” (Bellarm. 4, 25). And again, “There can be no succession properly but to one who precedes; but there were apostles and bishops in the church together.” I am aware that to avoid the consequence he distinguishes between Peter and the other apostles, and says the pope succeeds not to their extraordinary power, but to Peter’s ordinary jurisdiction over the whole church. But where is this ordinary jurisdiction to be found? Not in binding and loosing, for that all had; not in finding that others did not exercise independent jurisdiction as it is called, for Paul exercises it in the most entire independence of him, names elders, sends Timothy, Titus, where he pleases, James and Cephas and John having agreed with him that he and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles, they to the Jews. And we find Paul, not Peter, exercising over the churches this wide care with authority not derived from Peter, for he very carefully disclaims this. He was not of

nor by man, and withstood Peter to the face. It is all a fable. It is never said Peter had this authority, or that he exercised it, or named one elder in his life. Whereas we find Paul exercising what is called ordinary supreme pastorship (though it is really apostolic authority, and nothing else, directly received from the Lord) constantly and everywhere, and among the Gentiles, whose conversion and care the Lord had committed to him as a dispensation. As a wise master-builder, he says, he laid the foundation; 1 Cor. 3:10. He planted, others only watered after him. It is the dispensation of the grace of God given to him; Eph. 3.

As to “Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,” Peter had by grace confessed what none ever had, that Christ was the Son of the living God. As entitled to be called Son of God according to promises to Messiah, He had been owned, but Son of the living God He had never been called. This the Father revealed to Peter. The Lord owns the grace conferred on him, and declares that his name should be called Peter (a stone), partaking by grace through his confession of that which he confessed, for it was upon that truth so confessed (that is, on Christ’s being the Son of the living God) that He would build His church. Hence it is said that the gates of hades, of the power of death (Satan as having the power of death), should not prevail against the church. For Christ by resurrection was declared to be Son of God with power, above all the power of Satan; and, the church being built on this rock, of His being the Son of the living God, Satan’s power, that of death, could not overthrow it. So Chrysostom repeatedly uses it. As James has said, to suppose any real foundation but Christ is denying the Lord. And it is in this character of

a divine person having the power of life over death that He can build the church.

But your statements that the fathers are agreed on this explanation, though you are borne out by Bellarmine, is quite unfounded. Some of them say it is Peter, some say it is Christ, some say it is the confession of Christ. St. Augustine says, “I know that afterwards I have very often expounded that ‘ upon this rock * should be understood of him whom Peter confessed.” And so he had. As, again, “‘Upon this rock,’” he says, “which thou hast confessed ‘I will build my church.’” So Chrysostom in Matthew 16:18, “‘on this rock,’ that is, on the faith of the confession.” I do not quote as his, “‘Upon this rock’; He did not say ‘upon Peter,’ for He built His church not upon the man but upon his faith,” for it is generally considered spurious; but it is, at least, some very ancient writer under his name.

The famous passage in Iren. 3, 3 does not apply to the supremacy of Peter, but deserves a short notice here, as it is used as a foundation for the authority of the church of Rome. Irenaeus is not speaking of the authority of any church, but of security as to doctrine, found in the teaching of all apostolic churches, and then says, as it would be tedious to go through all, he will refer to Rome, with which all must agree as having “potiorem principahtatem.” Then he states it to be founded by Peter and Paul, Linus following, etc. No one reading the passage, of which we have only a poor Latin translation, and comparing the context, and in the least acquainted with Irenaeus, but must see that in Greek there must have been archen, and the real meaning of the writer to be, “a more excellent origin,” namely, two apostles themselves. He is using the testimony “of the faith

manifested in all the world," as a proof that these hidden mysteries of the Gnostics would have been known somewhere, if the apostles had taught them, and the rather at Rome as the two great apostles were there. Of course this has nothing to do with the supremacy of Peter.

So Hilary, "Upon this rock of confession is the building of the church." Origen says, "Every disciple of Christ is the rock." Pope Gregory the Great says, "Persist in the true faith, and establish firmly your life in the rock of the church, that is, in the confession of the blessed Peter, the prince of the apostles." Now, it is quite true Chrysostom also says that Peter confessing his being a sinner was made the foundation of the church. But this shews only the vague sense they use it in, for when interpreting the passage he declares it to mean his confession. Be it that he contradicts himself, or with Augustine leaves, as he expressly does, to the reader, in his Retractations, to choose which sense he likes. It only shews what the authority of fathers is worth, and what the Council of Trent requires teachers to be bound by in finding the sense of scripture. The consent of the fathers is not to be had.

But it will be well to give a specimen of the interpretation of the fathers here, which will prove that it is anything but true that they uniformly speak of Peter as the rock, and, further, what the value of their authority in such matters is. You will find almost all you have quoted. My first quotations shall disprove your assertion; the second prove that each contradicts himself: only, you will mark, it is rhetoric when they make Peter the rock, sober interpretation when they say he is not.

Origen says, in his commentary on the passage, tom. 12, c. ii, “If you think that the whole church is built by God upon Peter only, what shall we say of John, the son of thunder? Shall we dare to say that the gates of hell were not properly to prevail against Peter, but that they will prevail against the rest of the apostles and the perfect? Is it not also of all, and of each of them that is spoken what is said before?— ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and that on this rock I will build my church.’ Are the keys of the kingdom of heaven given to Peter alone, and shall no other of the blessed receive them? And if that also is for others also in common: ‘I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ Now is not both all that is said before, and what follows as addressed to Peter? “and says much more to the same purpose, referring to its gift to all in John’s Gospel, and then adds, “as the letter of the Gospel says it to that Peter, as His Spirit teaches, it is to every one who is as that Peter,”31 and in the whole chapter applies it diligently to every true Christian.

If you want a totally different interpretation, where every faithful Christian is made a Peter, and the keys given to him, you may see Com. 12,14.

Hilary de Trin. 6, 36, says, “Upon this rock of confession, therefore, is the building of the church (37). This faith is the foundation of the church; through this the- gates of hell are weak against it. This faith has the keys of the heavenly kingdom,” etc. So on Psa. 140, “We have known no rock but Christ, because it is said of him, ‘that rock was Christ.’”

There is quoted from Origen, to support the Romanist view, the following passage, Horn. 5 (De la Rue, 2, 145).

“See what is said by the Lord to that great foundation of the church, and most solid rock on which Christ founded the church, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” This is, however, only a translation of Ruffinus, in which he professes to have added what was necessary, because Origen touched on questions often, and did not answer them, which might annoy the Latin reader.

Hilary, in the treatise on Psalm 131, says, Peter, to whom above he had given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, on whom he was about to build the church against which the gates of hell should not prevail, and as to whom what he should bind and loose on earth should be bound and loosed in heaven; and what you have quoted already. But then he is really insisting on his confession.

As regards Athanasius, the passage quoted (of which Bellar-mine speaks as so beautiful) is a notoriously spurious letter, and placed among the spurious ones by his Benedictine editors; the proofs you can see in Dupin on this Father, and it is a proof only of the practices resorted to by papal advocates to clothe their pretensions with the authority of great names, and which have acquired the name of pious frauds. We will therefore leave Athanasius, who affords you no help, though he resorted to Rome to help him against the Arians. It is strange moreover Roman Catholics should quote a letter to Felix, for Felix was a pope thrust in by the Arians, while Liberius was banished by the Arian Emperor; and Athanasius says it was a deed that bore the stamp of antichrist. Cardinal Baronius, the great Roman Catholic historian, will not admit him to be pope at all, as there cannot be two. BeUarmine says he was a fresh instance of how solid a foundation popes are for

the church to be built upon. Roman Catholics cannot agree whether he was or was not a pope. When the Emperor let Pope Liberius back on his agreeing to communion with the Arians and signing an Arian or semi-Arian creed, Felix and he had to rub on together, two popes and two heads at a time, till Liberius died.

As to Gregory Nazianzen, it proves, orator as he was, what I maintain; though in rhetorical language, without exactness, he says Peter is called a rock, which is not exact as to fact, for in the text Simon is called Peter, or a stone. But his explanation of it every Christian would allow, and it is what the Fathers often say, that the foundation of the church was trusted to his faith. No doubt it was, under God's grace. But, in this figurative sense, Paul also declares that he had laid the foundation, and that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the corner stone. So in the heavenly Jerusalem, the twelve foundations have the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. In this general way no reader of scripture could for a moment make any difficulty. But it proves that the popes can have nothing whatever to say to it. For since that foundation was once laid, all others, who have that blessed privilege, are built upon it. To lay the foundation of the church now is simply to deny it and its foundation as originally laid. It is perfectly clear that no pope nor any Christian in after times could have this place. Next as to Epiphanius.

He does exalt Peter abundantly in the place quoted, and in the book on heresies also. In the former with much else, nearly as you say, "It became the first of the apostles, the solid rock on which the church should be

built, and the gates of hell not prevail against it, by which gates the founders of heresies are meant."

Here, however, I will add a passage farther on, from the same section 9 of the Anchoret:

"He (John) learning from the Son, and receiving from the Son, the power of knowledge; but he (Peter) obtained it from the Father, founding the security of faith."

But the same Epiphanius says (Heresy of the Cathari (59) 7):— "Upon this rock of a solid faith I will build my church."

Here the faith is the rock. And note that, even in the passage in the Anchoret, the difference is founded on the immediate revelation by the Father, so that it applies only to Peter personally. Indeed, even where Peter is stated by the Fathers to be the rock, it is always on the ground of his personal faith.

Epiphanius therefore does not much help you out. It is Peter's faith one time, Peter himself another; but then because of the immediate revelation made to him by the Father. You next press Chrysostom on us; we will examine him too. You quote him on Matt. 55.

"The Lord says, 'Thou art Peter, and upon thee will I build my church.'"

This is a very unfortunate quotation of Bellarmine's. Because in the Commentary on Matt. 55, Chrysostom says just the contrary: he is insisting on the special blessedness of Peter as having owned Christ to be the Son of the living God, and directly taught there the consubstantiality of the Son. And thereon says, "Therefore He adds this: Thou art Peter, and upon this

rock I will build my church," that is, upon the faith of the confession. The Sermon on Pentecost, which is as strong as possible in the same sense, I do not quote, as the best editors consider it spurious. There it is said, "He did not say on Peter, referring to Petra, a rock, for He did not found His church on a man, but on faith." At any rate, it is an ancient testimony.

However, Chrysostom's testimony is exactly the opposite to what it is alleged for.

I next take Cyril.

"That in him as in a rock and most firm stone, he was going to build his church." What I do find in Cyril nearest to this is "[Christ] most suitably from the rock changed his name to Peter (petra, petron), for he was about to found his church on him." That is in Commentary on John 1.—(Paris, 1638.)

But Cyril in his dialogue on the Trinity 4, vol. 2, p. 1, 507, says on the verse, "Calling a rock, I think, by a change of word, nothing else, I think, but the immovable and firm faith of the disciples upon which, without possibility of falling, God has established and fixed the church of Christ."

We have not thus made much progress with the Fathers yet. The Greek Fathers do some of them speak of Peter, but I have taken up those presented by you, and all but one say the contrary of your interpretation, though they, several of them, contradict themselves, which it is important enough for us to remark. We have not only Fathers against Fathers, but Fathers against themselves. This is a poor foundation for faith. The Council of Trent will not allow the consent of the Fathers to be rejected

in interpretation; but we find no such consent, in most cases not even of one Father with himself.

But we will turn to the Latin ones. You quote them also. You quote Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilary, and refer to Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose. I will follow here also. For one has only to know the Fathers to know what their authority is worth. Of Tertullian it is somewhat difficult to speak, because after having been a very great stickler for ecclesiastical authority (not for Rome) he became a very violent opponent of it. So that what was declared by him to be a sure foundation proved to be none in his own case. One could hardly have a more solid answer for one who would rest on his or on any Father's authority.

Father O. But any one may fall.

N*. No doubt, but it is a proof that what he has pleaded as a security from falling is not a very solid one. Tertullian pleaded the prescription of the church, that is, tradition, as the grand security. He abandoned it all as carnal (physical). But I add it never was the authority of Rome on which he rested his case. Not only when a Montanist (de Pud.) he charges his adversaries with overturning the manifest purpose of Christ who conferred authority personally on Peter— "I will give to thee…;" "whatsoever thou…"; in which he is perfectly right; but in the book "de Praescriptione," and the passage so much relied upon, he makes doctrine the test. "In the same way they, the heretics, will be tested by these churches, which, though they can allege no apostle nor apostolic man as their founder, as having a much later origin, yet agreeing in the same faith, are accounted apostolic by reason of consanguinity of doctrine." This we are quite ready to accept. Of

Tertullian's system we have spoken. Strange to say, even this book is held by many learned men, Romanist and Protestant, to have been written when Tertullian had become a Montanist, as Dupin does on the one hand, and Allix on the other. Nor has he a thought in the treatise of setting up the authority of Rome. He insists that in Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Thessa-lonica, or Rome, you can trace up the doctrine to an apostolic source, and thus confute the heretics who have introduced new doctrines. Now we hold entirely that what was at first— not early merely, but at first—was right, and that only (see i John 2:24). Therefore we condemn Rome which has innovated. But it is evident that an inspired epistle of an apostle is a better evidence of what the apostle taught than a tradition after the lapse of centuries of uninspired men. What was first was and is right. But the Epistles and other scriptures are what was first, and therefore we receive them only. To shew Tertullian's mind and how little he referred exclusively to Peter, I will quote another passage of his. The apostles were all sent forth, he says, after the Lord's resurrection, "and promulgated the same doctrine of the same faith to the nations, and then founded churches in each city, from which other churches have borrowed, and daily borrow, the descent of faith and seeds of doctrine, that they may become churches; and by this they also are accounted apostolic as offspring of apostolic churches. The whole race is necessarily referred to its own origin. Therefore so many and so great churches are that first one from the apostles from which all are. Thus all are the first and apostolic, while all prove unity together." How far this is from having anything to do with Roman supremacy or Rome's being a security for truth, save as part of the whole, or Peter's

being the one who ruled over all and secured truth, I need not say. It shuts out any such thought wholly. This was the common ground of those who pleaded prescription.

I turn to Cyprian. You quote from him, “The Lord chose Peter first and built the church on him.”

I will complete the phrase, “But custom is not to be used as an authority, but one must be overcome by reasons. For neither did Peter, whom the Lord chose first and on whom He built His church, when Paul afterwards contended with him about circumcision, claim anything insolently to himself, or assume anything arrogantly, so as to say that he held any primacy.” This is a strange passage to quote to prove Peter’s primacy by; but, the truth is, Cyprian was the stern and successful resister of the commencing pretensions of Rome, and maintained an active correspondence with Asia Minor, Spain, and other parts to consolidate the whole episcopacy, for that was his system against any pretensions to a primacy. He expresses himself thus: “One episcopacy diffused in the accordant multitude of many bishops.” So with the whole synod of Carthage, speaking of the apostles, he says, “to whom we succeed, governing the church of God with the same power.” By no one, while acknowledging Peter as a centre of unity, is the equal power of bishops and their independency more stoutly maintained. In his fifty-fifth letter he says, “The bond of concord remaining, and individual fidelity to the Catholic church maintained, each bishop disposes and directs his own acts, rendering an account to the Lord of his course.” And writing to the pope, to whom he never yielded, he says, “In which manner we neither do violence to any one, nor give the law, as each one who is

set over [a church] is to have in the administration of the church the free judgment of his own will, having to render account of his conduct to God." The history of what passed between him and popes in this respect we have referred to already.

You quote Jerome.

"I will build my church upon thee."

Jerome does say so, and in a letter full of flattery and servility flies to Pope Damasus to know whether he is to say three hypostases or three persons; and he says, "I know that the church was built on that rock," that is, the See of Peter. And he says pretty much the same in his commentary on Isaiah, lib. 1, chap. 2, though he makes all the apostles mountains. But then on Amos, lib. 3, chap. 6, he says: "Christ is the rock who granted to His apostles that they should be also called rocks— 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.' Whoso is on these rocks, the adverse powers cannot pursue him." And this application of it to all the apostles is common in the Fathers, as Ambrose and Augustine. So Jerome himself, in his violent letter against Jovinian, in favour of celibacy, says, "Thou sayest the church is founded on Peter, although the same in another place is so upon all the apostles, and all receive the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and the stability of the church is established equally upon them." Then it suited him to say so. He says that John was more loved of Christ and dared to ask when Peter did not; knew Him when Peter did not, etc.

You cite Ambrose. He does call Peter a foundation. Let us see how far his statements make for your cause. "He acted in the first place (took the primacy), the primacy

of confession truly, not of honour; the primacy of faith, not of rank."

And, after saying he was thus a foundation, he goes on, "Faith, therefore, is the foundation of the church; for it is said not of the flesh of Peter but of his faith that the gates of death should not prevail against it. But confession conquers hell. And this confession does not exclude one heresy. For, as a good ship, etc., the foundation of the church ought to avail against all heresies." He is speaking just as Hilary in the same case of Peter's owning Christ to be the true Son of God, his subject being the incarnation and the eternal divinity of Christ.

Augustine comes next. In his Psalm against the Donatists, a poor production—poor in thought and morality—which he says he wrote for the poorest that they might commit it to memory, and be able to meet them—he presents Peter as the rock and a sure centre of unity to these poor people. He did the same (he tells us in his Retractations) in a book also against the Donatists, not now extant. Augustine is not happy in his spirit or reasonings with these Donatists. They had resisted one who had given up his Bible in the last persecutions, being a bishop. A vast number of bishops and their flocks sided with them, and the schism lasted a very long time, more than a century. The Catholics, as they call them, appealed not to the pope but to the Emperor, and the Donatists were cruelly persecuted and put to death. Their passions were roused, and many of them took arms and fought and used violence against the other party—a wretched scene in the so-called Holy Catholic church. But so it was. Augustine cannot justify the party he espoused, but says there must be evil in the

church, and the Donatists were worse. But he was every way embarrassed with these people. For, contrary to Cyprian and the East in earlier times, their baptism was held good. Now Augustine believed the Holy Ghost was conferred by baptism. They said to him, “Well, then, we confer the Holy Ghost, so we must have it.” Yet he said they were not in the unity of the Catholic church, and so had not got the Holy Ghost; and here he toils and labours, to get out of the net he had got himself into, so as to make any one pity him. But I must pass on, only it is well to keep in mind what this so-called Holy Catholic church was.

Now hear the same Augustine when he is soberly seeking to edify souls in his sermons. In one of them we have an elaborate statement on the point, of which I can quote the kernel. It is on Matthew 14:24 (or de verbis Domini 13 in some editions). He quotes the passage 16:18, and says, “But this name that he should be called Peter was given him by the Lord; and this in such a figure as that he should signify the church, for Christ is the rock, Peter the Christian people, for rock (petra) is the principal name. Therefore it is Peter from petra (rock), not petra from Peter, as Christ is not from Christian, but Christian from Christ. ‘Thou therefore,’ says he, ‘art Peter, and upon this rock which thou hast confessed, upon this rock which thou hast known, saying, Thou art, etc., I will build my church,’ that is, upon myself, the Son of the living God, I will build my church. I will build thee upon Me, not Me upon thee.” And again, “Thus they were baptized, not in the name of Paul, not in the name of Peter, but in the name of Christ, that Peter might be built upon the rock, not the rock

upon Peter." This is plain enough. Faith was at work, not controversy or servile theology.

In his sermon on Pentecost (or ex Sirmondianis 22) he is equally plain. "For I am a rock, thou Peter … and upon this rock I will build my church, not upon Peter, which thou art, but upon the rock which thou hast confessed." So in the sermon on Peter and Paul's day (ser. 295, or de Diversis, 108): "Upon this which thou hast said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' I will build my church. For thou art Peter, from petra (a rock), Peter, not the rock (petra) from Peter. Do you wish to know from what rock Peter is called? Hear Paul." He then quotes I Corinthians 10:1-4, ending "and that rock was Christ," as whence Peter comes. He goes on then to say, "These keys not one man but the unity of the church received," and quotes John 20:22, 23, to shew that it was to the whole church to whom Peter was given, there to represent in its universality and unity, all the other apostles having then received it; and then Matthew 18:15, 18, to shew that it applies to all the faithful saints, concluding "the dove binds, the dove looses, the building on the rock binds and looses." His words are, "That you may know that Peter stood there as representing the whole church, hear what is said to herself, what to all the faithful saints."

Such was the teaching of Augustine. In his Retractations he mentions that in the lost book against the Donatists he had called Peter the rock (he refers to the psalm, but not to Peter's being named in it), and then says, "I know I have very often afterwards [he had written the book against the Donatists when only a presbyter] expounded it as meaning him whom Peter confessed;… for it was not said to him, Thou art a rock, but Thou art Peter, but

the rock was Christ." "Of these two opinions the reader may choose which is the more probable."

That makes a solid ground, by the consent of the Fathers, for your theme of Peter's being the rock. What I have cited proves two things, that is, that the Fathers generally contradict you, and that their authority is worth nothing, for they contradict themselves. No one taught of God would hesitate which to choose, the blessed Lord or Peter, for the rock on which the church or his own soul is to be built. It is evident that the Lord rests on the word, as Hilary and others say, of the blessed truth, that Jesus was the Son of the living God. Over what was founded on that he that had the power of death could not prevail. Nor will he. Happy those that are built on Him. But I will quote one more so-called father, because he was a pope, and an eminent one—Gregory the Great. Of all the earlier popes, save Leo, he, while condemning the present papal claim of universal jurisdiction as the act of a forerunner of antichrist, most pushed on the papal power. Yet he says (lib. 31, 39, Job 97), "Where rock in the sacred language is used in the singular number, what else is understood but Christ, of which Paul is witness—'But the rock was Christ?'" In lib. 35:42, 13 of the same book, he calls it the solidity of faith, of which solidity the Lord says, "On this rock I will build my church," and refers the whole thought to the incarnation.

There is a passage still stronger in his letters, which I cannot lay my hand on, where he says, "Persist in the true faith, and establish your life on the rock of the church, that is the confession of Peter, the prince of the apostles." It is said forty-four Fathers and ten popes have given it the sense opposite to the one you say all

give it. So Felix III, Nicholas I, and John. I have never verified the accuracy of this assertion. What we have examined suffices to shew that not only do the Fathers contradict your assertion, but each other and themselves. And we have two points where they refer to Peter. Very many make Christ, or the confession of Christ, the rock. When they make Peter the rock, it is individual—his own faith, and the grace personally given to himself; many to his personal work in founding the church—two, you allege, carry it into the See of Rome; of these, one states the contrary also, and it is only in a most servile correspondence with his patron, Damasus, that he says what you quote him for, when he was attacked as a heretic, and wanted the pope to back him up. The other case, Augustine, was an effort in controversy to gain the poor among the Donatists, while in his own expositions he carefully and elaborately taught the contrary.

What kind of a foundation of the truth is this? what security for it? for that is what we are seeking. And we have learnt another thing, that is, that the boasted Fathers are a security for nothing at all. But you have said that the famous Council of Chalcedon, composed of six hundred and thirty prelates, declare the same truth. So Bellarmine says. But alas! we have always to examine the assertions of your party. It is quite unfounded. What is said there of the prerogative of Rome is solely and exclusively the pretensions of the papal legate in giving his voice. Paschasinus, his two colleagues joining, after going through Dioscorus' misdeeds,32 says, "archbishop of the great and elder Rome, Leo, by us and by the present synod, with the thrice blessed apostle Peter, worthy of all praise, who is the rock and base of the

Catholic church, and foundation of the right faith, has deprived him of his dignity," etc. Then Anatolius, archbishop of Constantinople, gives his voice, and so on the rest. But the Council was very far indeed from admitting the pretensions of Rome. Indeed I am surprised that you should quote the Council of Chalcedon, only that your writers reckon on people's ignorance.

Pope Leo, most holy and blessed, urged that the council should be held in Italy, but the Emperor would not agree. The council decreed (Action 15, 28) that Constantinople, or new Rome, should have equal privilege with old Rome in ecclesiastical matters, as it had in civil matters, having the Emperor and Senate there. In the next Action, 16, the legates complained, and said the bishops had been compelled to sign this, which they all denied, and the said Paschasinus, quoted a forged copy of a decree of the Council of Nice to give the primacy to Rome, but Constantius, the secretary, read a true copy, provided by the archdeacon of Constantinople, which confounded the legate. It gave Alexandria authority in Egypt, Antioch in its Eparchy, and Rome in its own district. The judges then—for they sat with the council—recited the decree giving equal rights to Constantinople. The bishops all declared this is a just sentence: "This we all say, this pleases us all. What is established must remain valid. All was regularly decreed. Let us go, we pray you; we all remain in this sentence, we all say the same thing." Lucentius, another of the pope's legates, then said, "The apostolic see ought not to be humbled in our presence," and begged that what had been decreed the day before in his absence might be reconsidered, or else he should have to protest

against what was done, and that he might clearly know what he had to report to the apostolic man [chief bishop of the whole church],33 who would judge of the injury done to his see, or any subversion of the canons. (Hardouin, vol. 2, Cone. Chal.) The bishop of Sebastia said, “We all remain in the opinions of your magnificence.”34 The judges said, “What we have spoken of the whole synod has approved”; and so it ended there.

That Rome never approved this is natural enough. But this was a general council, and held to be such in the whole of Christendom, and remained in force. Alas! it was wretched ambition on both sides. Leo’s legate had orders, when he could not get the council in Italy, not to consent to anything prejudicial to Rome. But what kind of foundation is all this for the faith? Really it is miserable worldly ambition; but how is a simple soul, when told to hear the church, to find out who and what he is to hear? Can a divine faith be founded on confusion like this? It is impossible divine faith can be founded on a parish clergyman; and when I go to learn what the church holds, which requires enormous research, I am only launched in a sea of confusion. I turn to scripture, and all has divine authority.

Note another point here. The patriarchal and metropolitan authority really followed the civil divisions when Constantinople became an imperial city. The Council of Constantinople, professedly for that reason, made it next in honour to old Rome, declaring that Rome had the first place, because it had been the ancient seat of empire. So the prelates who sat at Antioch and Alexandria respectively, as the great cities of Africa and Asia, were patriarchs there. And this was the case with

all metropolitan cities. The Eparchies had patriarchs, the provinces metropolitans, and the chief cities bishops. All followed the civil order. This is an historical fact. Two general councils state it in establishing Constantinople, which before was not even a metropolitan see, but subject to Heraclea. And the different metropolitans were forbidden to outstep their provinces; only in the Council of Chalcedon, the dioceses (which at that time meant large civil divisions, including provinces) of Asia, Pontus, and Thrace, were made subject to Constantinople. This aggrandisement of Constantinople led to unceasing war between its ecclesiastical chief and Rome, ending in the separation of East and West, and still more jealously between it and Alexandria, which, till Constantinople was given the second place, had enjoyed that pre-eminence. To end this sad history, John of Constantinople took the title of universal bishop. Gregory writes to the Emperor that such pride proves the time of antichrist was come, and to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, to stir them up against him, because their authority was gone if they allowed this; and, he says, the faith too. He quotes Matthew 16:18, “On this rock,” and says, “Yet Peter never claimed to be universal apostle “(Letter to Maurice, p. 300, Ven. 1770, to the Patriarchs, p. 325.)

This Maurice, whom he relates as the most pious lord constituted by God, had just murdered his master and predecessor to get the empire. He says in both that Chalcedon had offered Rome the title, and Leo had refused it, which was a great untruth. Who would think that we are occupied with those who profess to be the followers of the blessed Lord (who forbade withal any to be great among His disciples), or that such authorities

could be alleged as a foundation and security for divine faith? Rome, as a great centre, did early acquire great power, and sought greater. The Emperors leaving Rome left them free. The setting up Constantinople as a new patriarchate above Alexandria and Antioch excited the jealousy of those sees, and they often appealed to Rome to help them. Rome profited by this too. In the west was no other patriarch, so Rome had free scope, though for centuries Africa openly and positively condemned and rejected all appeals there, decreeing, so late as Augustine, that if any one did so appeal, he should be excommunicated, as we have already seen. When the Emperors lost the West, the German nations having overrun the western empire, the popes formed the only centre, and, these nations being heathen or Arian, they extended their influence gradually over them. Ireland and Britain, strange to say, remained entirely independent till much later, the eighth century.

The evangelization of Germany and Switzerland was by British missionaries, though the pope got hold of Boniface, and so of Germany, making him archbishop of Mayence. But this was not all; actual and deliberate fraud, as is now owned by all, was the great means of the popes establishing their authority in the church. There was a collection of canons, that is, of church rules, by Dionysius, containing various decrees of popes. These were continually added to, and among the rest a collection of them by Isidore, of Seville in Spain, a widely-respected man. This last dated from 633 to 636, as its contents proved; but in the ninth century a new edition of the Isidorian collection appeared, with spurious decretals of early popes, containing, as a matter of acknowledged right, all they now pretended to

—others interpolated to the same purpose. It was a regular system of fraud and forgery. This the popes constantly used as proof of the legitimacy of their claims as having subsisted from the earliest days. No one questions the forgery now. They quote a translation of scripture then current as cited by popes who lived long before it was made; they make false dates of two hundred years, and the like. The French bishops, in the question between Pope Nicolaus I and Hincmar about the excommunication of Bishop Rothad by the latter, looked up Dionysius, and called them in question even then; but Nicolaus persisted, and reminded them they often quoted them for their own purposes, so it passed into authority till later and more critical ages. Only think of resting the foundations of faith and infallibility on such materials as these! It was on these spurious decretals and subsequent forgeries that the fabric of the pope's authority was all built.

Father O. Nobody pretends now that these decretals are not forgeries, but it was in the dark ages they were current, when there was very little critical discernment anywhere.

N*. All true, but they were used by the pope as giving him his true position, and sustaining his loftiest claims. He gave away, kingdoms and hemispheres, and had, he said, the world entirely at his disposal; he rested his tide on these decretals. And if there was an infallible teacher and rule, how came there to be such dark ages? how did they get so dark? And how can I recognize as a security for truth one who either could not discern imposition from truth, or was rogue enough to profit by it because people were in the dark? One or other of these was the case of the pope. There is no doubt or question that

their pretensions to authority and power were founded on, and justified by, these spurious documents, forged in order to give it to them. A dark age could not detect the falsehood, but this does not affect the question of the forging them, and the use of them by the popes. And they did so as long as they could. It was only at the Reformation the fraud was detected, and at last Romanist writers were obliged to give them up, and bow their head to the shame of it. Is all that like Christ, or the truth, or security for the truth, as it is in Jesus? The popes founded their authority and rights on these forgeries of their friends. Either they knew they were spurious, or they did not. If they did know it, they were unprincipled impostors; if they did not, their pretended infallibility is not worth a straw. They pronounced things ex cathedra continually on the ground of these decretals being genuine, and appealed to them, and they were all false forgeries, forged to give them this power.

However, what gave them the West lost them the East, and the Greek church remained independent to this day, so that a Catholic or universal church has never subsisted in unity since the ninth century.

Father O. But how can these poor people judge of all this history, or found their faith upon it? I do not see any good in pursuing such questions.

N*. They can see that the pretensions of Rome, founded on Matthew 16:18, alleged to be so interpreted by all the Fathers, are false pretensions, and that Fathers contradict it. As to founding their faith upon it, they surely cannot. But that is exactly what I am contending for, It is perfectly ridiculous to have a poor man founding his faith on ponderous folios of Fathers, and on

a consent which does not exist. The pretensions of the pope, your pretensions, are no foundations for the church to be built on. As to feeding sheep, the Fathers insist that it applies to all pastors.

We have councils to consider, to see if they are infallible; though how some dozen, and even thirty, folios in Greek and Latin are to help an inquiring soul to the truth of doctrine is hard to tell. They are an entangled web of questions and ambitions of every kind. They were never begun till the Emperor, being Christian, called them to settle disputes, and quite as numerous ones, and more so, decided for error as for the truth. And who is to decide which is general? The pope never called a general council while the church was united; he has only called such as he calls general since the East and West have been separated and hostile, so that a general council, whatever it was worth, was impossible. The early ones referred their decrees to the Emperors, and the Emperors held the chief place and authority in them. Next, they were not reckoned infallible by the gravest authorities among Fathers and popes, so that they can be no foundation for faith. They were gathered to settle points in question, not to lay any foundation. There were none for three hundred years after the apostles' days, and never any till the Emperor Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, who thought of, called one, and directed it. Thirdly, their history will tell us what a poor foundation they are for faith, for Romanists cannot even clearly tell us which are general councils, nor shew any unanimity as to their authority.

The truth is, there never was such. All the first councils in the East were called by the Emperors, and under their authority, and at the council in which the greatest

number of Western prelates were found, there were not more than six of them. The later ones were called by the popes in the West, and no Eastern prelates were there. The empire was then in rapid decay, and had wholly disappeared in the West. In the ninth century the Eastern church was entirely separated from Rome. The only council where both Easterns an4 Westerns were found was that of Florence, in the fifteenth century; the Eastern Emperor had need of the West, being pressed by the Turks, and sent some Eastern bishops; but the steps they took were protested against then by the most eminent among them, Mark of Ephesus, and were repudiated by all the Greeks on their return.

It is extremely difficult to say what constitutes a general council, as we shall see when we come to their history. Those who plead their divine origin appeal to Acts 15; but here there was no general council at all. The apostles and, if we look beyond apostolic authority, the elders of one church assembled to consider the matter. At this time there were churches throughout Palestine, in Syria, where the question arose, and in the south of Asia Minor, and settled in full order by the Apostle Paul where he had been. They do not hear a word of the said council, only some went from Antioch, where the question had been raised, to propose it at Jerusalem. The truth is, it was a question whether Judaism was to be forced on the Gentiles. God, in mercy, did not allow it to be rejected at Antioch and prevail at Jerusalem, so as to split the church in two at once; but in His gracious wisdom, under the apostolic guidance, led the Jewish part of the church to decide that the old ordinances they clung to were not binding on Gentiles. This was most gracious. But most certainly there was no general

council, but the apostles and a single church. And the epistle sent out so declares.

Under the heathen Emperors there were constantly provincial councils, and all was regulated within each province. When Constantine had succeeded in finally subduing the heathen Emperors, he took up the church, finding it distracted about Arianism and the time of celebrating Easter. He sent Hosius, his very particular friend, to Alexandria, the great scene of conflict, and wrote a letter to make truce between Alexander and Arius, saying they were disputing about trifles, but in vain. He then called the bishops from all parts to meet and settle the question.35 The ecclesiastics were not the movers in it.36 Constantine appointed the place of meeting, which was in his palace at Nice, and when they were assembled, came in in a splendid dress, on which Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, expatiates, and on his fine figure, and with great airs of modesty took his place amongst them. He over and over again says to bishops in his letters, it was his pride to be their fellow-servant, and declares that he had undertaken with all the bishops to settle the question. It has been discussed who presided. It is a vain discussion. Constantine did. He had a little modest golden seat at the top of the room, and the bishops sat on seats down the sides. The first on the right said a few words of compliment to him, how happy they were to see him there; and then he opened the session with a long speech.

Nor was this all. As soon as he had done, neither his fine figure, nor purple robe and jewels, restrained the bishops: they began disputing fiercely. He soothed some, reasoned with others, encouraged and approved others, and so got all to sign the creed but five, who were

banished, though some of them came round. And on a very strange explanation of “consubstantial” by the Emperor himself, Eusebius also signed the word. Strange to say, it had been positively condemned in a considerable Eastern council before.37 Afterwards a subsequent Emperor turned Arian, and all the bishops Arian with him. One Emperor was Arian in the East, and another Nicene in the West. The Easterns were all Arian, the Western Nicene; a few rare exceptions were true to their conscience. The pope was not at the council, it is said, through old age, but sent two presbyters; not only did they not preside, but never signed; first, Hosius, the Emperor’s private friend, did that. Constantine, in his letter to Egypt after the council, recommending unity, repeats his having called the council, and undertaken the business. Though this council, under God’s good providence, may have been in some respects helpful in stopping so horrible a doctrine as Arianism, yet a vast number of prelates, sound in the faith, were far from being satisfied, especially when Marcellus of Ancyra, a great stickler for the council, who even assisted at it, was condemned as a heretic, and deposed; having run, through his views on the subject, into denying the eternal Sonship of Christ, and being suspected of Sabellianism.

However our point now is the Emperors calling the councils, and here the Emperor managed it altogether. The next council called general is that of Constantinople. Yet here we are at a loss to know why it is a general one. There was only a hundred and fifty Eastern bishops. The popes Leo, Gelasius, and Gregory rejected the canons, only accepting the doctrine. Yet the canons were always received in the early and are in the

code of the canons of the universal church. The popes took no notice, and had nothing at all to say to it, when it was going on. Up to this Arianism ruled under Valens. Now Theodosius turned all the Arian bishops out. Here again Theodosius convoked the council, chose the bishop of Constantinople, and the council formally refers all its acts to his ratification. (See the first document in Hardouin, Conc., vol. 1, 807.)

As to the Third so-called General Council, it is quite certain the Emperor Theodosius the younger called it.

It is well, perhaps, we should look into the character of this council, and the principal figure in it, a little closer. If it were not for the heartless and relentless persecutions he underwent, there is nothing in Nestorius' character to attract regard. An eloquent, it would seem a vain, man, on whose character there was no reproach, he had a reputation for sanctity as a monk, and thought himself perhaps a great theologian. He came from Antioch, whence Chrysostom had been called to Constantinople, and was called to that see, to the bitter disappointment of two others who aspired to it.

In judging the expression, "the mother of God" (a monstrous and really offensive expression), although he fully admitted the two natures and one Person, he used expressions justly objected to, and which his enemies did not fail to take hold of; but he did not really swerve from the truth as far as Cyril, who over and over again asserts that Christ had only one nature.38 At Ephesus, at the instance of John, patriarch of Antioch, he consented to use it even as capable of a good sense, as he had indeed already stated in his reply to Proclus' sermon.

I now leave him till he appears in the history of the council, and turn to Cyril the great actor in it, a man who is the very stay of modern high-church notions. The church of Alexandria was a very powerful church indeed, and its patriarchs had been always counted next to Rome in dignity. But Constantinople, having been made the seat of empire, began somewhat to eclipse its grandeur, while the pope was left by the same fact freer than ever. The jealousy of Constantinople was great at Alexandria, which continually looked to Rome as a support equally jealous of Constantinople, which originally had been a subordinate city. The predecessor of Cyril had got Chrysostom banished, now counted a saint, but who died, banished from his soe, and put out of church records, as unworthy of being recognized among Christians, in what were called the Diptychs, a kind of ecclesiastical record of bishops' names. Rome had restored him, Alexandria not, so that there was a breach of communion between them. Cyril began by persecuting the Novatians, a body separated from the general church, and seizing their property. The Jews, very numerous there since the time of Alexander, having raised sedition against the Christians and slain many, Cyril put himself at the head of his adherents and the Parabolani (a kind of military monks whose nominal office was to visit the sick, etc., in seasons of plague or the like), attacked the synagogues, and drove the Jews out of the city, and gave up their houses to be sacked. Recourse was had to the emperor. The monks, so famous and so numerous in Egypt, attacked the governor and wounded him. The individual who wounded him was executed. Cyril canonized him, and ordered him to be honoured as a martyr. Other violences took place, and brought on the intervention of the emperor.

At Constantinople, one of Nestorius' clergy preached against the expression "mother of God," and then Proclus, previously candidate for the see, made a famous sermon for it. Nestorius then answered him, and the controversy was commenced. Cyril wrote to the monks on the subject, and this letter Cyril sent to Constantinople by his agents, then pretending in his letter to Pope Celestine that it had been brought by some to Constantinople. The pope now became engaged in the matter, and sided with Cyril, finding the court against him. Cyril wrote then, and particularly to the Emperor's sister, for which the Emperor rebuked him severely, as sowing divisions in the imperial family. She was ill-disposed to Nestorius, who had charged her with too great familiarity with some great man about court. At last, Nestorius, it seems, proposing it, a council was called at Ephesus by the Emperor, and the patriarchs ordered to bring only a few bishops to settle the question. Cyril came at once with as many as he could bring. Meanwhile, the pope commissioned Cyril to act for him in carrying out the Roman judgment against Nestorius, who was summoned to retract within ten days from receipt of the monition; and Cyril published twelve anathemas as to the doctrine of the incarnation, containing his views. The Emperor, in calling the council, put Cyril on his trial as well as Nestorius, and the former, not only as to the doctrine, but as to crimes committed at Alexandria. Cyril had at the same time excommunicated Nestorius, and sent to him the denunciation, and exhorted the monks of Constantinople to be firm. These and those in Egypt were main agents in the violence that took place. The patriarch of Antioch and the Eastern church were opposed to Cyril's views,

and he wrote a work at this time against one which had been approved by a council at Antioch.

It is attempted to be said that Theodosius summoned the council by advice of the pope; but all honest Roman Catholic historians admit it was not, and could not be so. The pope held a local council at Rome, excommunicated Nestorius, and commissioned Cyril to carry it out, and Theodosius' notice to the pope of the Ephesian Council came first from the Emperor to Celestinus after that. The dates prove it. Cyril presided at the council, such as it was, and all was over as to Nestorius before the legates arrived, and they then agreed to what had been done. Nestorius, and those with him, and John of Antioch, never took part in it at all. Nestorius came first with the ten bishops from Constantinople, Cyril with some fifty from Egypt. The Emperor's lieutenant ordered them to wait for the Oriental bishops who could not yet arrive. This did not suit Cyril. He met with his party, which was the more numerous, on June 22, summoned Nestorius, who did not go, nor some sixty-eight bishops who were now with him. Cyril went on, suspended and degraded Nestorius from the clergy without further ceremony, and his twelve anathemas were read, approved by silence, for there is no other positive decision of the assembly found as to them, though it be asserted by their adversaries and not questioned till afterwards, when they were used by the Monophysites, 39 and all was finished on this main point. Cyril drew up the acts of the council and (it is admitted) dressed them as it suited him, and there are gaps hard to understand. Candidius, the Emperor's lieutenant, protested against it as well. Memnon raised a tumult in the city, so that

Nestorius was protected by troops, nor did his partisans, as it appears, refrain from violence.

A few days after John of Antioch came; he would not receive Cyril's deputies at all; met with the bishops who came with him—he had only, it is said, brought three from each province—and he deposed and excommunicated Cyril and Memnon. The result was, both parties appealed to the Emperor, who sent a commissioner. The Emperor confirmed the depositions of the three. Then eight deputies went from each party. The Emperor ordered Nestorius, Cyril, and Memnon into custody, and they were kept prisoners.

Meanwhile matters went against Nestorius at court. A mob of monks had beset the palace. Cyril found means to escape and get to Alexandria. Nestorius' mainstay at court died. The Emperor sent Nestorius back to his monastery at Antioch, and let the bishops go home. Cyril had already gone back, having escaped from his confinement; the Emperor peremptorily refused to condemn John and the Easterns, and they went home. Cyril spent all the treasures of the church of Alexandria, which was very wealthy, and brought it into considerable debt in bribing the courtiers, and even the Emperor's sister. This we know, not only from the accusations of his enemies, but from the statements of John of Antioch, of Acacius of Berea; and the letter of his archdeacon and Syncellus states that Cyril had sent the presents, and the list is given to whom the presents should be made. This sister of the Emperor, made a saint of afterwards, married a nobleman, on condition of not living with him as a husband, to raise him to the throne. But Cyril and Memnon remained excommunicated by the East, which denounced his anathemas as heretical. The Emperor

sent an officer to make peace. The Easterns refused to the end the anathemas of Cyril, and would not condemn Nestorius, nor indeed say anything about him. The Emperor's officer finally succeeded as to John and the majority. But they would not accept Cyril's doctrines. They drew up a document which condemned Cyril's anathemas; he explained, then he would not retract them, but signed the Eastern confession of faith which set them aside. Then John and most of the Easterns came into communion with him, and they condemned Nestorius. But a great many, firmer than John, would not, and two or three whole provinces separated from Antioch. Then John got the Emperor to persecute. Those who would not yield were driven from their sees. These provinces after some time were reunited with Antioch, and the greater part of the unyielding bishops went into Persia, where the Emperor's authority did not reach, and Nestorianism remained a large body with a hierarchy, and, though now overrun by Mahometanism, still subsists. In the sixth century it had christianized large tracts of Asia, and China itself was in the main nominally Christian. Nor was this all.

The successors of Cyril held that Christ, after the union of the divine with the human, had only one nature, and this has subsisted with its hierarchy in Alexandria ever since, and constitutes the Jacobite or Coptic church of Egypt, Abyssinia, etc., though also oppressed by Mahometanism, but having its hierarchy like Nestorianism, with the patriarch of Alexandria for its head. Nor was this the only result. The term "mother of God "pleased the heathens as Nestorius alleged. And in the West they flocked in swarms into the paganised church, the heathen temples and worshippers being

turned into Christian churches and congregations without more trouble.

I add the account given by a Roman Catholic of this result in the West, in an essay crowned by the French Royal Academy: “They [the peoples] received this new devotion [to the Virgin] with a sometimes too great enthusiasm, since for many Christians it became the whole of Christianity. The pagans did not even endeavour to defend their altars against the progress of this worship of the mother of God. They opened to Mary the temples they had kept shut against Jesus Christ. It is true they mingled often with the adoration of Mary their pagan ideas, their vain practices, those ridiculous superstitions from which they seemed unable to separate themselves; but the church rejoiced to see them enter into her bosom, because she knew well that it would be easy, with the help of time, to purify from its alloy a worship whose essence was purity itself. Thus some prudent concessions [he had before spoken of these] temporarily made to heathen manners (or morals), and the influence exercised by the worship of the Virgin—such are the two elements of force which the church used to overcome the resistance of the last pagans.” He adds in a note,” Amongst a multitude of proofs, I choose only one to shew with what ease the worship of Mary swept before it the remains of paganism, which still covered Europe. Notwithstanding the preaching of St. Hilarion, Sicily had remained faithful to the ancient worship. After the Council of Ephesus, we see its eight most beautiful pagan temples, in a very short space of time, become churches under the invocation of the Virgin.” He then gives the list, “The ecclesiastical annals of each country furnish similar

testimonies." (Beugnot, Histoire de la destruction du Paganisme en Occident, 54, 12, chap. I, vol. 2, 270-1.)

Nor was this council held then for an æcumenical council. No Western was there unless a deacon from Africa, and the pope's legates, after Nestorius was condemned. Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, wrote against the twelve anathemas. The Eutychians always appealed to Cyril's famous sentence, 'The union was made out of two natures; but after the union there was one nature of the word incarnate in Christ.' I give it as Petavius states it. I have already given the words from Cyril. No one can doubt that Eutychianism (the doctrine of one nature in Christ) and the Jacobite church of Alexandria were the fruit of Cyril's doctrine. He says positively that Athanasius stated expressly (and quotes it), that there was only one nature after incarnation. A century afterwards this was denied and is still uncertain. But that Cyril does not really deserve confidence, it would be hard to refuse his testimony.

The truth is, that both Nestorius and Cyril were meddling with matters beyond their depth, and that both used unjustifiable language. But the orthodox East never received Cyril's anathemas. He signed their creed. The subsequent Council of Chalcedon alone gave credit to this Council of Ephesus, but declared Theodoret and Ibas orthodox, who had written books favouring Nestorianism; but a general council after that (Constantinople) declared these same books heretical, saving always the authority of Chalcedon. The Cyril party—very probably the Emperor's sister, St. Pulcheria, who was charged with incest, and had great power over the Emperor—persecuted Nestorius, who was banished to the desert and died in want.

For the authorities for the details I have given the reader may consult Baronius (who, of course, condemns Nestorius, and approves Cyril), Tillemont, a great favourer of Cyril, also Dupin, who is much more moderate. If he can read German, Walch's Heresies, vol. 5, where the subjects and documentary evidence are fully investigated, and which judges Cyril more severely, as indeed every honest man and humble Christian must, though not accepting the doctrines which Nestorius held or was accused of. With these come the Collection of Councils and Mercator. The English reader may find a full summary in Gieseler's Compendium 1, 393 following. But I have not used Protestant writers for the history, save as an index to the various authorities. Cyril and Mercator, both bitter enemies of Nestorius, and the council itself, with something on ecclesiastical authorities and collections of letters at the time in the Synodium, are the original sources. With these I have used the Roman Catholics, Baronius, Bellarmine, Petavius, which last is full as to the doctrine of Cyril.

It is difficult to speak of this council, it was conducted with such fraud and violence. Cyril, the open enemy of the person charged, and himself charged too, and to be judged by it, began it before the Eastern bishops, or even the pope's legates were come, not in this heeding the protestation of the Emperor's lieutenant, who protested publicly and left.40 Some seventy bishops who were come protested also against beginning. Then, with those of his party, he cited Nestorius twice in one day, judged the case, and pronounced his deposition. Both parties appealed to the Emperor, who banished Nestorius, and desired all the bishops to return to their dioceses. The Eastern bishops had on their arrival

excommunicated Cyril and Memnon, and Cyril and Memnon excommunicated them. However Cyril's party gained the court, and the Emperor had some one consecrated in the place of Nestorius, who was banished. And the Easterns and Cyril, a layman having been sent to bring them to terms, had years of negotiation before any peace was made, and then only by Cyril signing a creed drawn up by the Easterns, which condemned his doctrines promulgated and tacitly accepted at Ephesus, but without his publicly condemning them, and a large number of bishops were after all deposed by the Emperor, and the doctrines of Cyril became the seed of endless disputes and controversies, and in truth led to Eutychianism, and were its greatest stay. The papal legates never presided in this council. The Emperor's lieutenant, when he came to make order, turned Cyril and Nestorius out, and Juvenal of Jerusalem presided. This, let me add in passing, is a pretty thing to call a general council to found faith upon. The doctrines of Cyril have never been accepted. It is quite certain that Athanasius largely condemns in his second book against Apollinarius the expression on which Cyril so much insisted. Would anyone think we had to say to Christians? The Emperor's lieutenant had to have guards mounted to prevent acts of violence.

Father O. I do not see what we can gain by going through all these points; but allow me to remark that though Theodosius called the Council of Ephesus, it was on the demand and by the advice of the pope. The Emperor did it administratively.

N*. Not only is the historical fact admitted by all, even by Bellarmine and Baronius, that the Emperor did call

the council, but it is impossible that the pope could have anything to say to it, because he had held a council at Rome and condemned Nestorius, and written to Cyril that he was to publish his deposition if he did not retract in ten days after notification. Cyril assembled a local council at Alexandria, on November 3rd, to carry this into effect, and on the 19th the Emperor issues his order for the council to meet, writing to the pope as to others; and the pope in answer recognizes that the Emperor had convoked the council, and that it was his business to care for the peace of the church (Hard., 1473). You will find the facts I have alleged as to councils in this book, Socrates, Sozomen, Baronius (consulting Bellarmine), Dupin, and Tillemont. Baronius, it is true, tries to call in question the canons of the Council of Constantinople, but his well-known annotator, Pagi, shews it is impossible to do so. It only shews he felt how it pinched. I pursue my history.

As to the Council of Chalcedon, the Fourth General Council, the pope wanted to get one in Italy to condemn Eutychus. The Emperor Theodosius refused, saying all was settled at Ephesus, that is, at a second in that town, of which hereafter: so little did popes call general councils then. His successor was well disposed, but refused peremptorily to have it in Italy, called it at Nice, and then, in order to manage it better, brought it to Chalcedon, close to Constantinople. His commissioners sat in the council save one day, suppressed the violence of the prelates at the beginning, saying they ought to shew a better example, and made propositions, gave their consent, in fact presided actively all the time in the council, save one day. On that day, on which they left the prelates to settle about the creed, the council deposed

Dioscorus, also patriarch of Alexandria for his crimes at the previous Council of Ephesus. On their return the next day the commissioners said they must answer for it, they had not been there. In truth their consciences need not have been much burdened. But even as to the creed to be signed, one was proposed. The papal legates opposed, and said they would go if Leo's letter was not assented to as it was, along with the creeds of Nice and Constantinople. The letter was in point of fact in many respects an admirable one. But what was done? It was referred to the Emperor, who decided what was to be done, and the council stated their views in detail for themselves, though approving Leo's letter, but would give their own definition of faith. Afterwards Constantinople was put on an equality with Rome. The legates craftily keeping away, they protested on their return; but the bishops maintained it, and the commissioners declared it had passed, and the council said, We remain in this judgment. In this council Ibas and Theodoret, favourers of Nestorius' views, were declared orthodox. They publicly recognized the Empress Pulcheria as the person who had put down Nestorius.

The Fifth General Council is too plain in its history to need more than the plain statement of facts. There had been a great contest about the merits of Origen, and the monks had been breaking into each other's monasteries, and in the course of the disputes which followed, blood had been shed in the churches, indeed it was far from being the first time. However, they got the Emperor to condemn Origen's doctrine. As to the merits of the case, there was reason enough. He was a powerful prince, and recovered Italy and Africa from the barbarians, and

liked his own way. A certain Theodore of Caesarea, a great favourite with the Emperor, was fond of Origen and of Eutychianism, and determined to have his revenge, and he engaged Justinian to condemn three persons' writings, Theodore of Mopsuestia,41 Ibas, and Theodoret, all three opposed to Cyril, who had his way in the Council of Ephesus. These three persons had been pronounced to be in full communion in the Council of Chalcedon, which had rather tended to set up Nestorius' reputation again, whom Cyril and Ephesus had condemned. Justinian published a long decree condemning the three chapters, as the writings of the three prelates above-named were called. He had a kind of council, and the Oriental patriarchs and prelates were obliged to condemn them too. Pope Vigilius condemned them and excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople and all who had condemned the three chapters. However Justinian thought he would be more tractable at Constantinople, and made him come. There, in fact, he joined in communion again with the excommunicated ones, and condemned the three chapters. But then all the prelates of Illyria and Africa, in fact of all the West in general separated from his communion as unfaithful—a bad business according to modern Romanist notions. To get out of the scrape he acceded to the proposal by some of these prelates of a general council, and withdrew his condemnation of the chapters, and forbade any resolution till there was a council. The Emperor persecuted him (indeed he had exiled him and afterwards brought him to Constantinople); he fled to Chalcedon, and the Emperor compromised, and he came back. He then pressed for a council in Italy. That did not suit the Emperor, and he refused, but called one at Constantinople. Vigilius would

not go there, and he signed his private judgment with eighteen other Western prelates, while one hundred and sixty or one hundred and seventy sat in the council under the Emperor's authority. This letter of his, called Constitutive, was given to the Emperor, but is taken no notice of in the council. To say the truth, it was on the whole the most sensible paper in the whole miserable business, and he forbade by the authority of the apostolic see in any way to contravene what he then pronounced. However, the Emperor went on with his council, when, save a very few renegades, there were no Western prelates. The council condemned altogether the three chapters, which was quite different from Vigilius' constitutive; and Vigilius refused to sign as he had refused to be present. Justinian banished him again, and he gave way, and signed; and it became thereby, say Baronius and the Romanists, a general council. If that does not make a sure foundation for faith, what will? Yet universal confusion was the result.

The Nestorians established a patriarchate at Seleucia, were favoured by the Persians in opposition to the Roman Empire, and spread over all the East, Christianity becoming very nearly the established religion of China at that time. And the Eutychians, raising their head through the activity of a monk, Jacobus, spread too; and the patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch, such as they are since Mahometanism overran the East, are in their hands, spread as far as India, and have a primate in Abyssinia. Both subsist. Not long ago violent persecutions were set on foot against the Nestorians, it is said, at the instigation of the so-called bishop of Babylon in connection with Rome, the Consul of France.

James. But where are we got, sir? Is all this really the history of what they call the church? Why, there is no Christianity in it. At any rate, the Bible is simpler than all this. I had, sure enough, rather have the plain holy words of Paul and Peter, which are really the words of God.

N*. No wonder. I go through it because it is well we should know the difference. Mr. O. cannot deny these facts. They are drawn from the authentic histories of the day, from his own historians, such as Baronius, a great stickler for the pope; Dupin, a most honest Romanist historian, whom perhaps he might not like so much; Tillemont; Hardouin's Councils— books you cannot of course judge of, but Mr. O. can very well. I have referred to Protestant books merely to assist me in collecting the information.

Any one can judge whether such proceedings can be a foundation for a Christian's faith, or whether it is by wading through all this, instead of reading the Lord's and the apostles' words, a poor man will get at the truth. Here the pope contradicts himself, and one general council, let them say what they will, contradicts another; for Chalcedon had acquitted and Constantinople condemns the three writers we have spoken of.

Here is Baronius' remark: "If you compare this synod with all that of which a synod ought to consist in order to be called a general council legitimately congregated in the Holy Spirit, things standing as the acts plainly shew they do, you will agree that it does not merit the name, not merely of a general council, but not even of a private one, being one which was gathered, the Roman pontiff resisting, and judgment pronounced by it in like

manner against his decrees." "We will say farther on how it came to obtain the name of a general council." He then abuses it (his annotator, Pagi, approving it) and cites Pope Gregory and others as disapproving it too; however, though he says certainly Vigilius did not consent to it by letters, as either he or his successor, Pope Pelagius, consented to it, it became oecumenical, as the first of Constantinople had done, which was gathered in spite of Damasus (Bar. Ace, 553, 220-224).

The sixth General Council will furnish us with some curious elements as to papal infallibility and the progress of church history. Eastern Christendom was always discussing points, Rome pushing its power. In the East they got a new point, on which it is surely not my purpose to dwell here:—Christ had only one will, or at any rate His divine and human will coalesced, though He had two natures. The Emperor adopted, and Pope Honorius wrote a letter approving it. However, there was a change, the Roman legates opposed it at Constantinople, and one of them, Martin, became pope; he then denounced all holders of it. The then Emperor published a rescript forbidding discussions, and all men to be left in peace. The pope denounced this as sanctioning evil. The Emperor tried to get hold of him, failed the first time, but succeeded the second, and brought him prisoner and kept him so till he died. The Roman clergy, less staunch than the people, gave way, and elected another pope whom the Emperor confirmed; he never had confirmed his stern predecessor, Martin. So now there were two popes. The one at Rome soon after died, his successor was on good terms with the Emperor. The Emperor, who had always maintained his

rescript, died too, and his successor was a gentler prince. He proposed a conference to settle it.

Four popes had succeeded one another rapidly during his reign, and at last Agathon assembled a Western council, at which, however, no prelates from Spain, Britain, or Germany were present, save one on his own affairs, and three from France. However, they put themselves forward as representing the whole Latin church. In truth, save Scotland and Ireland, and the north of England, it was at this time pretty well papalised. However, as the council of the apostolic see, as they say, they condemn the Monothelites, as they were called. Legates went from the pope to Constantinople, but they were not to discuss, the pope said, nor a title to be altered in the confession. The Emperor had removed a stiff patriarch and put in a milder one, and formed an assembly at Constantinople, and ordered Macarius, the patriarch of Antioch, the Monothelite leader, to assemble as many as he could of his party. Thus, besides other prelates, the Eastern patriarchs, or their legates, were present. The West was only represented by the pope's legates. Macarius was deserted by most of his partisans who found the tide against him, for the Emperor sought peace, though they had pretty well reviled each other. Macarius, however, insisted on the authority of Honorius, of Sergius, previously patriarch of Constantinople, and of Cyrus, patriarch of Alexandria, but he was all but unanimously deposed and excommunicated.

But now comes the strange result. They condemn all the writings of these heretics, and their memory they anathematize —that is, deliver over to the curse of God —Theodore of Pharan, author of the mischief, Sergius,

Patriarch of Constantinople, and two of his successors; Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria, Honorius, Pope of Rome, and Macarius of Antioch, and all following them. In the thirteenth session they are declared out of the pale of the Catholic church, that is, lost for ever; and, in the sixteenth, anathema is pronounced on the heretic Sergius, etc., etc., on the heretic Honorius, Pope of Old Rome. This council was accepted and confirmed as the Sixth General Council, when the result was notified to him by Leo, the pope who succeeded to Agatho; and he anathematizes expressly Honorius and the others.

Father O. But Baronius rejects this letter.

N*. He does; but his annotator Pagi, as do others, treat this as folly, as indeed it is worse, for all the acts of the council, the letters to the pope, the Emperor's edict, the reading of Honorius' letter, which gave occasion to his condemnation, the acts of subsequent councils, and the old Roman breviary, and every other possible proof exists to shew that it is a mere foolish effort to get rid of what he cannot deny. He pretends that it was the Patriarch Theodore of Constantinople, and that his name was scratched out everywhere and Honorius' put in. But why read Honorius' letter to condemn Theodore? You must know that Baronius' notion as to this is rejected by everyone.

Now mark the result. Constantine, the Emperor, presided with his court and judges in person at the council during the first twelve and the last sessions, and, excusing himself in the interval by public affairs, left his representative. The acts of the council declare it called by his command and recognise his presidency. The general council declares the pope a heretic, and

condemned for ever for it; and this was sanctioned by another pope (Leo II), who confirms the council and anathematizes his predecessor. Nor is this all. What Pope Gregory the Great called the See of Peter in three different cities, that is Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch (which he was uniting against John of Constantinople, who claimed to be universal bishop), three, he declared, derived from one (Peter), and which were one, all three were in this same heresy, Cyrus of Alexandria, Honorius of Rome, and now Macarius of Antioch; all successors of Peter, we are assured, are anathematized as heretics, and held to have no place in the Catholic church, and that by a general council and another pope. How am I to get security here? In the pope as successor of Peter, or in the council who sent him to hell as a heretic (happily the poor man was dead)? If you blame the council, your security for the faith is gone by any council, or in the pope either; for they acted very much on the letter of one pope, and all their definitions were accepted by another. If you accept the council, then all the fine theory about a successor of Peter fails, for his successor was a condemned heretic.

Father O. But I think Pope Honorius may very well be defended against the charge of being a Monothelite, and Maximus, a martyr, did so.

N*. Well, I should not be indisposed to accept your excuse. There is certainly something to be said for him, though he went very far. But if you are right, what becomes of the authority of the general council and another pope's condemnation of him and his doctrine? No; great as their influence was become—quite paramount in the West at this epoch—no one dreamt then of the popes being infallible. As to general councils,

it is rather hard to tell what they were. No Western bishops were in this; only the pope assured them that what he wrote was the judgment of all the West. But that did not make their assembling in the Holy Ghost. Agatho's Roman council was composed of Italian and Sicilian bishops. Only two bishops signed as deputies of all France and England; a queer way, too, of assembling in the Holy Ghost. At any rate the Emperor gathered and presided in the Sixth General Council, and the pope was condemned as a heretic by the council and by his successor. In this Sixth General Council there were at first some thirty or forty bishops, at the end one hundred and sixty.

I will now go on to the Seventh General Council, if we can find out which it is. An Emperor, Leo the Isaurian, who had long known the Arabs, and seen them despise the idolatry of Christendom, had a strong desire to reform the abuses of image worship. He issued a decree in 726, forbidding them to be worshipped, and the pictures and images were directed to be put high up, but were not ordered to be taken away; but Germanus, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and Pope Gregory II opposed vehemently; the Greeks rose in insurrection, and, advancing to Constantinople, were defeated. The Emperor now went farther, and in 730 had the images and pictures destroyed; thence tumults, murder, and reprisals by the Government. Germanus and the popes sustained their cause by appealing to the most ridiculous fables, which no one believes now, that Christ sent a miraculous picture of Himself to Abgarus, King of Edessa; insulted the Emperor in the grossest possible language; and Gregory the pope says that Uzziah profanely removed the brazen serpent which David had

sanctified, and put with the ark into the temple—a confusion a child could have avoided who had read a little scripture. Hezekiah is commended for doing it. He says, where it is said, “Where the carcase is there are the eagles gathered together,” the carcase meant Christ and pious Christians, living men flocking to see Him at Jerusalem, and that so strong was the impression of the figure of Christ on their minds, that at once they made portraits of Him, and carried them about to convert people with. However, he says they did not of the Father and the Holy Spirit. But now even that is done.

Strange to say, however, he looked for the Emperor to preside in a council. The Emperor had called, he says, for one, but where was a God-fearing Emperor to preside? However the Emperor persevered, and the new patriarch went with him. His son Constantine called a council in 754 of three hundred and thirty-eight bishops of the East, and they condemned images; they called themselves a general council. This went on till one, Irene, a widow of his son, remained with a young child. She wheeled round; and now three hundred and seventy-seven bishops and the pope’s legates authorized image-worship. This was at Nice in 787. There were no Western bishops, but the pope ratified it. But the West were not, after all, such image-worshippers as the pope. They held to what the great Pope Gregory had written to Serenus of Marseilles, when he had broken images there, which were then coming in, that all worship of them was wrong, but that they might be useful for the ignorant to recall the mind to those represented by them. Here then superstition had made progress, and the popes had changed with the times, but it seems the West had not.

In the Western empire, under Charlemagne, the Council of Nice was rejected. First of all this great founder of the new Western empire assembled his bishops, and put forth a book in his own name, in which he condemned the Council of Constantinople, which suppressed all pictures and images, and equally the Council of Nice, which allowed them to be reverenced and worshipped. He went through scripture and the Fathers, and proved that this worship and reverence was all wrong. But the Emperor's and bishops' book goes farther. Pope Adrian had sent them the decisions of the Council of Nicaea (or Nice), to which they had never been called, and they say, "We receive the Six General Councils, but we reject with contempt novelties, as also the Council held in Bithynia (that is, the so-called Seventh General Council of Nice), to authorize the worship of images, the Acts of which, destitute of style and sense, have come to us "; and then they refute seriously all that the pope had said to the Eastern Emperor. They declare that the Council of Nice is not a general one, because it was not gathered from all parts of the church, and appeal to Gregory the Great's letter to Serenus. But this work of the bishops of France and Germany, then one empire, issued in Charlemagne's name, was not all. In 794 he had a council at Frankfort-on-the-Main, at which were the pope's legates and 300 prelates of Germany, France, and Spain. This council refers to the Council of Nice as the council of the Greeks, and rejects entirely, unanimously, and with contempt its doctrine and decision. All this was sent to the pope. He replies in a long letter on the doctrines, and adds, "We have received the Council of Nice because conformed to the doctrine of St. Gregory [Gregory the Great, which it was not], fearing the

Greeks might return to their error. However, we have yet given no answer to the Emperor as to the council."

So here we have an alleged general council received by the pope, disowned publicly by all the West, except Italy, and its doctrine condemned. All the assembled bishops of the West, with the pope's legates, declare that the Council of Nice is not a general council, and reject with contempt unanimously (these are their words) its doctrines and authority; and accordingly it was not for a great length of time received in the Western empire as a general council, and this the Council of Frankfort was. The pope's legates were at both. The pope received and defended Nice, but said he had not written to the Emperor, so he only half agreed to Nice either, but urged Charlemagne to come and help him to get back his territory, which the Eastern Emperor had seized on. Gradually superstition advanced, and Nice was in credit, and Frankfort went down.

In Frankfort the Emperor is recognized as President; Louis le Debonnaire's commissioners, prelates of France, condemned the pope in the matter; and they, as Charlemagne, that is, the Western prelates, had before done, do not admit any council or the pope to be universal or Catholic, unless they hold the Catholic truth according to the scriptures and Fathers. Indeed, it is curious enough, for those that cry up the Fathers, that Augustine, a Father of perhaps the greatest authority of any in the Western church, thus speaks of councils, shewing how little he thought them an infallible security for the faith. All councils, be it remarked (not merely, so-called, general ones) claimed the guidance of the Spirit. After stating that holy canonical scripture is superior to all writings of bishops, "so," he adds, "they can be

corrected by wiser discourse or reproved by councils if in anything they have erred from the truth; and councils themselves, in particular districts or provinces, are without any doubt to yield to the authority of plenary councils, formed out of the whole Christian world; and prior plenary councils themselves may be amended (emendari) by later ones, when, by due experience of things, that which was shut was opened, and what lay hid is known, without any inflated arrogance, or any elation of sacrilegious arrogance, without any contentions of livid envy with holy humility, with catholic peace, with Christian charity" (De Bapt. con. Don. 2, 3).

It is singular if what is infallibly taught can be amended. The passage is fully given farther on. Now, where is the foundation for the faith here? Which was right, the general council, or Gregory the Great, or Gregory III? What a sea of confusion and contradiction we are in here! Three hundred and thirty-eight prelates, all of the East, calling themselves a general council, vote against images; three hundred and seventy-five, with Pope Gregory III, vote for them; three hundred of the West and the pope's legates, appealing to Pope Gregory the Great's authority and following his instructions, condemn both and the then pope, and declare in the most solemn way that the former council of the two they condemn was no general council at all, but a Greek one, which they reject. The pope takes it easy, because he wants his territory defended. You cannot deny the facts I quote. The Greeks contended about it for a length of time, sometimes one, sometimes the other party prevailing.

And now note another important point. In the Council of Nice there were no Western prelates, in the Council of

Frankfort no Eastern. Really general councils had ceased, if ever they could have been called so, for in none of the first was the West represented by prelates; they were convened by the Emperors in the East to settle heretical disputes. The only exception was Sardica, and there East and West were so opposed that they separated, and the Easterns sat at Philippopolis, and the Westerns at Sardica. The three hundred at Frankfort remark it fairly enough; they reject it, as they say, with contempt. Further, these three hundred prelates do not hold the pope's authority in any way final. He had approved the Council of Nice, though he shuffled about it when he wanted Charlemagne to secure the territory the See of Rome now possessed. Yet they reject what he had approved. And Louis le Debonnaire's episcopal and ecclesiastical commissioners declare the pope to have been quite wrong. Again, the Emperors had always convened the councils up to the present time, and presided in them; and, as soon as there is an Emperor in the West again, he does the same thing, nor does the pope question it; they assist, and the council states that the Emperor presided. At this time the English and Irish churches were not under the authority of the popes at all, nor for long after.

But another important matter to remark here is, that the breach which ambition on both sides had brought about between the heads of the Roman and Greek ecclesiastical bodies now became complete. They anathematized each other, and no universal ecclesiastical body ever subsisted since. The Emperor's power in the East was reduced to a shadow by Saracens and Turks. The Western Empire, founded by Charlemagne, in which the prelates acted, as we have

seen, independently of the pope while it subsisted, fell to pieces by the weakness of his successors; and the pope gradually acquired, through violent struggles with the German Emperors, at last in the person of Gregory VII, the desired supremacy. Yet he died, driven from his see by the Emperor. And mark, there was from this time, confessedly, pitch darkness in everything, as Romanists themselves confess; they are called the dark ages. And a vast number of the popes were the greatest monsters that ever disgraced the name of man, and the clergy the most corrupt of the whole population. But we have touched on this point, and what is necessary we will speak of when sanctity as proof of the true church is spoken of.

What I now remark is, that no serious man can find a foundation for the faith of his soul in all this. The word of God is operative by the power of the Spirit of God. “He begets,” says scripture, “by the word of truth,” but prelates’ disputes in councils never begat anyone by the truth.

The Eighth General Council is important to us in this respect, that the Greeks hold one, the Romanists another, for a general one. The Greeks one in 879, the Romans one in 869; the latter, with very few prelates and pretended envoys from the patriarchs, condemned Photius Patriarch of Constantinople, and set up Ignatius, who had been driven away. The legates of Rome were at the former, and it was so far owned of the pope that he agreed to Photius being patriarch, Ignatius being now dead; but as Constantinople would not give up Bulgaria to the jurisdiction of Rome, the pope excommunicated Photius, and he the pope, and all pretension to a

Catholic church ceased. The schism between East and West was complete.

From this time out, beginning with a.d. 1122 under Callixtus, there being no imperial power of any sufficient weight remaining in the West, the popes held councils of their own and for their own interests. The first of them passed decrees about the Duchy of Benevento belonging to the pope, and forgave the sins of those who would go to war to recover Jerusalem from the Saracens. They were Western councils, and I freely admit entirely under papal influence for some centuries— centuries, as all admit, of utter darkness and wickedness. That is, as long as there were emperors, emperors called them (it was first an idea of Constantine's to make peace in the church), and when emperors ceased to call them, their power being gone, the schism between East and West was complete, and no universal church ever externally existed since. The East was overrun by the Mahomedans; the West by darkness and atrocities.

James. But what came of true Christians all this time? for all this is very Uttle like Christ, sir. I do not know what to think of such Christianity.

N*. There were hidden ones all through, no doubt, who took no part in all these painful and ambitious contests; some in the midst of them who mourned over them. At the time we are speaking of mysticism began to come in, that is, the seeking for a hidden life of God and love to Him in the soul, and leaving outward things to go on as they may, with very little clearness as to redemption. The propagation of the gospel was chiefly carried on in the East, indeed almost exclusively by the Nestorians, whom the so-called Catholic church had cast out, and by

the Scotch,42 who were entirely independent of Rome. What was done elsewhere was done by force of arms, as the Saxons, conquered by Charlemagne, and forced to become Christians in name, and the Saxons in England still earlier through Ethelbert. This was from Rome, but with distinct orders to leave them their heathen habits in many things and to connect them with Christian profession. Bulgaria and Hungary were brought in by the Greek church, and it was the dispute about that with Rome which brought about finally the division which ended the history of a Catholic church, and constituted a Roman and a Greek one.

James. It is a sad history; but, I remember, Paul says the mystery of iniquity was already at work, and that things would wax worse, and that in the last days perilous times, would come.

N*. It is just there that he tells us that the scriptures are our security, and able to make the man of God perfect.

M. But, Mr. O., is all this true? I thought you said the Catholic church was so holy and there was much unity.

Father O. These facts may be true; but all that supports the authority of the pope, and all the good they did, and how they maintained sound doctrine is left out. How can a poor man like you understand all these questions?

N*. I do not deny there were some godly men among the popes, though all were ambitious as to the power of the See of Rome. Our object was not to record the history of their lives nor to deny that there were some true saints during all this time. Even in the darkest ages many separated themselves and protested when it was darkest, as the Waldenses and others; many protested and remained where they were, saying Antichrist was

already at Rome, and even persons held to be saints;43 but our point was how councils or popes, or councils and popes can be a foundation for a poor man's faith, or any man's faith as a Christian; and no one can deny the facts I have quoted. I have taken them from Hardouin, that is, the councils and original letters, Petavius, Baronius, Dupin, Fleury, and similar histories, that is, of Romanists. The three first were zealous papists.

And note here, when the schism took place the Greeks charged the Romans with adding an important article to the creed, what is called the "Filioque "clause, the proceeding of the Spirit from the Son. This came in very late, had been adopted in no creed in the ninth century, came perhaps from Spain, and when Pope Leo was consulted about it he said it was right, but forbade it to be put in the creed, as general councils had forbidden anything to be added to their creeds long before, an order equally despised by subsequent ones.

Now, I do not deny that M. cannot judge well of all these things we have been speaking of, nor understand the bearings of all of them; but he can understand that neither he nor any one else can build his faith on such a quagmire of confusion and wickedness.

M. Why, I do not know whatever my faith can be. These councils seem to be only disputes and violence and striving to get uppermost.

N*. And so they were, and really used by the emperors who presided in them to make peace among fighting ecclesiastics. Providence may have used some of them to maintain important points of truth.

I shall have to notice a few more general councils when the papacy grew so wicked that the universal body was

obliged to interfere;, but I will close this part with a statement of St. Augustine on this point. The schismatic Donatists quoted St. Cyprian against their adversaries. “Who is ignorant,” says Augustine, “that holy canonical scripture, as well of the Old as of the New Testament, is confined within its own limits, and that it is so set before all posterior letters of bishops, that as to it, it is wholly impossible to doubt or discuss whether whatever is found written there be true or right; but that letters of bishops written, or which are now written, after the canon was settled, may be blamed by the wiser speech of perhaps one more skilled in the subject or the weightier authority and more learned prudence of other bishops, and by councils, if there be in them perchance any deviation from the truth; and that councils themselves which are held in particular districts or provinces without any question to the authority of plenary councils gathered from the whole Christian world (called general or ækumenical), and that often previous plenary ones are corrected by later ones, when by any experience of things, what was closed is opened out, and what lay hid is known, without any puffing up of sacrilegious pride, without any inflation of arrogance, without any contention of livid envy with holy humility, with Catholic peace, with Christian charity?” (De Bapt. 2, 3). Excellently well said, allowing even all his high opinion of councils; but if this be so, how can anything but the scriptures be a foundation of faith? Everything else may be corrected, as Cyprian might be wrong, as Augustine held him to be, but no one can at all doubt or discuss if what is found in scripture is true or right. That is soundly and well said; and though I may not have so high an idea of councils from the history we have of

them, we could not have sounder principles than Augustine's. But they are not the principles of Rome.

It may be well, as we are passing through the councils, to mention the Fourth Lateran Council, under Innocent III, at a time when the papal power was at its height. It was a general council of a very particular kind, a large number of Western bishops, four hundred and twelve it is said, and some eight hundred abbots and priors, others, such as ambassadors, assisting at it. But there was no consulting about anything. The pope had prepared seventy canons or rules, read them out ready-made, and silence was supposed to confirm them. They were simply decrees of Innocent III, graced by the presence of prelates, abbots, and ambassadors. At this council, for the first time, transubstantiation was decreed to be a church doctrine, and confession required yearly to the parish priest. At this council the horrible iniquities of the crusade against the Count of Toulouse (who protected his subjects, the Albigenses) were sanctioned, and the Inquisition began, perfected soon after as a system by succeeding popes.

We come now to some important councils, omitting several by which the pope sought to strengthen his power ecclesiastical and temporal. The papacy got so bad that disputes arose in its own circle, and in 1378 there were two popes, this state of things lasting about forty years. But this only made matters worse; Europe was divided, and they could only get money from half, and every sort of ecclesiastical corruption and oppression was introduced to have it, which some spent in dissoluteness in their courts, some heaped up. The University of Paris strove to heal the matter, and, after long negotiating and intriguing on all sides, the

cardinals of both parties summoned a council at Pisa for March, 1409. The council deposed both the popes, and after the cardinals had solemnly engaged themselves to reform the abuses which existed, Alexander V was elected, the effect of which was that they had three popes instead of two.

James. What are the cardinals, sir?

N*. A body formed originally of the principal ecclesiastics of Rome, of different ranks in the hierarchy, by a decree of Nicolas in 1059 to elect the pope, a right enjoyed up to that time by all at Rome, and which had led to all sorts of tumults, violence, and bloodshed, and to appease the opposition of the rest added to by Alexander III. Others, perhaps, have added to them, and now many out of Rome are named. They form a kind of court to the pope; they have the highest rank in the papal system, though not necessarily in the episcopacy, as they are from the various orders of the hierarchy.

To return to my history, Alexander V's successor, John XXIII or XXII44 was such a horrible monster, and a King Ladislaus, of Naples, whom he had provoked, having forced him to fly from Rome, the Emperor took advantage of it to get him to summon a council, which was called for November, 1414, the famous Council of Constance. Already the state of the popedom and the writings of the famous Gerson had prepared men's minds to consider a council superior to a pope. The council declared its superiority to the pope, tried to get him to resign, which he promised, fearing his conduct was going to be inquired into, but evaded, and they deposed him. One of the other two, for there were three, Gregory XII, resigned, and the third was deserted, and,

though he had a kind of successor, the schism thus ended. But little reformation was effected, the council leaving it to the pope whom they chose, Martin V.

Father O. But the pope never confirmed the decrees of the Council of Constance, so that you cannot appeal to it as a general council.

N*. You are somewhat bold to say that. It is, as Romanist historians say, the wisdom of Rome to approve nothing at Constance and to change nothing at Constance. It is a kind of bridge, but such a broken one for them, that though it seems to enable them to cross the river, it is likely to plunge them only more dangerously into it. If Constance had not the authority it claims, what comes of the popedom? You have no right to call anyone a pope; there is no legitimate pope at all, for the council deposed John XXIII and chose Martin V, besides setting aside the two other anti-popes. Where are we to find the foundation of our faith here? On the other hand, if the council had the authority, your doctrine as to the infallibility of the pope falls to the ground. And in point of fact you are reduced to this, because since then you have no popes but those who derive their authority from the council.

But then you have another difficulty, your living judge disappears. Popes, save perhaps for an interval of two or three years, you have had, but councils only from time to time, and as your popes actually exist only in virtue of the council's authority, which declares that it holds that authority immediately from Christ, the infallible judge is not a living one. There was none for near three hundred years. Yet scarcely any Roman Catholic now would recognize the authority of the Council of Constance, or

what it has pronounced to be the true doctrine. Yet if it be not, the popedom has no legitimate foundation at all. But I must beg leave to deny even what you affirm. John XXIII confirmed expressly its decrees before he was deposed, whatever his confirmation was worth. At any rate it was the confirmation of a legitimate pope. Not only so, but Martin V, though he avoided making any reformation in his court, yet owned the council expressly as a general council met in the Holy Ghost. Nor was this all. He recognized as valid all that had been done in the sessions, though not what had been done separately in the meetings of the nations, for the bishops of the different nations met first among themselves, and then there was a general meeting. Now the famous decree and the setting aside of the pope were decided in the sessions, so that the decree was confirmed by John XXIII before he was deposed, and by Martin V when he was made pope. This decree declares that the council is legitimately gathered in the Holy Ghost, has its authority immediately from Christ, represents the Catholic church militant, and that everyone, even the pope, is bound to obey it, even in what concerns the faith, and threatens punishment to the pope himself if he does not.

Father O. But this, as to faith, was introduced by the Council of Basel, as well as another paragraph of the decree.

N*. I know Schelstrat has tried to maintain this, but this is all a fable. It is quoted and referred to subsequently in the council. Not only so, the words he attempts to invalidate in the fourth session are beyond all controversy in the fifth session. In Hardouin’s Councils they are left out in session IV, but he does not pretend to leave them out in session V. The Council of Constance

was the reaction of the universal conscience of Christendom against the state to which the wickedness of the popes had reduced the church. Nor did it close the open wound. The Council of Constance had decreed that another council should be held at Pavia. Martin called it. It was removed on account of the plague to Sienna: hence few were there. However, they began to reform, and the pope ordered the closing of the council. The prelates protested; he said it was not to be considered broken up, it would be continued. Basel was the place chosen, the council to be held in seven years. It was held, but soon began to be refractory against the pope.

They renewed the two decrees of Constance, subjecting the pope to a council, word for word, and declared they could not be dissolved. This was in the second session. The pope decreed their dissolution. They rejected it, and summoned him. The pope was in great trouble by his local wars, and sent legates to say he recognized them as a general council legitimately continued from the time they had commenced. They received the legates on condition that they swore they approved the decrees of the Council of Constance as to the authority of a general council. The pope Eugene decreed the removal of the council to Ferrara. The council declared the decree of a removal void. The pope, however, began at Ferrara with some of his own Italian bishops, the Council of Basel remaining where it was. The Council of Basel deposed Pope Eugene after long delay, the princes seeking some way of peace, and chose another, Felix V. The princes remained neutral, and, when the popes censured each other, received the decrees of neither, though many held to the Council of Basel as a legitimate general council,

as France and England, and would not own that of Ferrara, and sought to transfer it elsewhere. To this the prelates of Basel agreed.

Felix went to Lausanne. Gradually the interests of Eugene gained the upper hand. Eugene's council, already transferred to Florence, was moved to Rome. The Council of Basel dissolved itself, calling a future council at Lyons or Lausanne. Felix and Eugene remained popes. Eugene died, and Nicolas V, at the instance of the princes, agreed, if Felix gave up the papacy, to revoke all censures against him and those engaged in the Council of Basel, confirm all its other acts, as well as those of Florence, and make Felix first cardinal and perpetual legate in Germany; and this was accordingly done. Felix, on his part, revoked all his censures, and resigned, and thus this schism terminated.

But is not this a strange foundation for faith?

M. Well, but Father O., is all this true?

Father O. We do not own the Council of Basel at all.

M. Well, but I have been listening attentively, and the pope recognized it as a legitimate general council. And, if all this be so, how can a man build his faith upon such a foundation as this? Why, I do not know what I am to build on. The council condemns the pope, and the pope condemns the council. Nobody dares condemn the apostles, and it is much simpler to believe them than all these disputes. Why, they cannot agree among themselves. How can I tell which to trust?

Father O. All this comes of your pretending to discuss these things, instead of, in a humble spirit, listening to

the church. Are you wiser than all the holy and blessed men who have done so, and taught the truth, from Christ downwards, yea, obeyed Christ Himself, who told them to hear the church?

M. Yes, sir, but you were to shew us where was the church. Most people in this country don't think yours the true church. Besides, how can I tell who was holy and who was not, hundreds of years ago? It seems one pope was deposed, he was so wicked. And now let me ask you, sir, for I want something certain for my soul—you will excuse me, but it is a serious thing, after all—what a man is to build upon as sure ground for his soul—Are you infallible?

Father O. No, of course I am not; but I teach you infallible truth; if I did not, the bishop would look after it.

M. Is he infallible?

Father O. No, he is not; but he has a sure rule, and even he would be called to account if he did not teach according to it.

M. Who would call him to account?

Father O. Why, finally, the pope.

M. Well, but here was a pope deposed, and two or three popes at a time; so he is not infallible. And we were hearing of one who was condemned as a heretic—two, I think; I forget their names.

N*. Honorius was condemned publicly, and Liberius signed an Arian creed.

M. Aye, well, they are not infallible, and they are not the church. And a council you, Father O., do not hold to be

infallible, for they have condemned the pope, aye, and deposed him, so that, after all, you have no right pope, if they are not. And what is the rule?

Father O. The decrees of the Council of Trent and the creed of Pius IV.

M. Well, but I cannot understand them better than I can understand the Bible, if that is all. Why cannot I understand the apostles, Paul and Peter, as well as that, and both must be translated, for all these rules are written in Latin, are they not, sir?

Father O. To be sure, and they are for the clergy. You must receive what you are taught—what the church teaches.

M. But you see, sir, we were looking for the church; it is the very thing I want to find out; we have not found it yet. I took your word for a great many things, that all were agreed since Christ's days—all handed down the same doctrine, and there was a living judge to decide. And now I find it was far different. They were disputing and condemning each other, and the popes had to be put down, they were so wicked; and it makes a wonderful difference to get at the facts, to be sure; and hence I find I cannot trust what you want me to trust on. You made me think all was unity and was everywhere and always, and by all (as you said) held, the holy church that every one could depend on. And it is not so. Can you deny the scriptures to be the word of God?

Father O. No, the church honours them as such; but you cannot understand them, and they are written in Greek and Hebrew.

M. I know, but I am no better off with your rule; and I know the scriptures must be the truth, for God had them written. I never cared much about them, to be sure, but that is my fault; and as to understanding them, I can try. I see James, that has no more learning than I, understands them wonderfully, and I will try. I will see what they say, if I cannot understand all, I can leave what I do not, and I dare say I shall some.

Father O. Well, if you are determined to go your own way, and set yourself above holy men and the whole Catholic church, I must only leave you to yourself as an obstinate heretic, and put you, if you remain obstinate, under the church's curse, that you may be a warning and a terror to others.

M. Well, I did not mean any offence, sir; I am an ignorant man, and I do want to find some sure ground for my soul, and, begging your pardon, sir, I do not think that cursing me because you have not been able to shew me one is the way to do me good; nor do I believe Jesus Christ would curse me for looking for it in His own words; so, though I am sorry to offend you, I cannot think He curses me, nor see that it is like Him to do so, and I do not think yours will hurt me if He does not approve it.

Father O. But He has promised that what is thus bound on earth He will bind in heaven. It is the church curses you through her unworthy minister, for the good of others, if not for your own; but be wise, M., give up this searching into religion. You have what has brought millions to heaven, and is the mother of all holy men that have belonged to Christ. Go and earn your bread quietly,

and take care of your family, and leave these questions that you can never settle for yourself.

M. But that is not what was said to me when they got me once to be a Catholic. Then I was told what a solemn thing it was not to be in the true church, out of which was no salvation, and that I must look seriously to it, and see if I was in it, and so on, and they gave me books to shew me it all, as Milner's "End of Controversy," and so on; and now I am told that I cannot inquire or judge about it, and am to be cursed if I do not obey.

Father O. And did not that book make it as plain as possible? You had better come and speak to me at my house, and I will make it clear for you.

M. Well, I thought it was all plain enough in Milner, to say the truth; but then I had only heard one side of the story, and if I go to your house, sir—no offence—I shall only hear one side then, and of course I cannot answer you, I am too ignorant; but here I can hear both, and I like that; and I have begun to get anxious since I have heard, and I see James is happy in a way I am not. I do not understand it; he is happy with God, and I am not, and he is a changed man, that I see, and I am not. Though I have done every penance, and said all the prayers you bid me I am kept from something; but I am not changed in what I like. I will be very glad to hear what you have to say, for I only want to go right, and I do not know where the real truth is yet; but I want to know, and I hope God will shew me.

Father O. Well, I must leave you to your own obstinacy.

M. Do not say I drove you away, sir, for I only wish to hear all you have to say. And if you won't, we must only

go on with Milner as we did before, if Mr. N*. will be so good.

Father O. No, it is no use. You are a heretic in heart already, for you refuse the authority of the church already, and are trusting your own judgment, and searching out what you cannot understand, and will certainly plunge into error— indeed you are, as I said, there already. The church will have to disown you, the only mother, as God is the only Father, of souls for life, and he who has not the church for his mother certainly (as a holy father has said) has not God for his Father.

N*. There is a sense, though I do not like the terms, in which that is true; but you forget, Mr. O., that we have not yet found the true church, so that your warnings can have no effect at all. Every true Christian belongs to the church of God, and has to seek to live in its unity; but Romanism you have not shewn to be that church. As yet we have found, outside scripture, no solid foundation for anything. Popes and councils have striven for superiority. The popes seeking ambitiously for the universal authority, the pretension to which they once condemned, and when the progress of Mahometanism in the East, and the decay of the Greek church, left them free, plunging into such wickedness and oppression as roused the clergy, supported by the princes of Europe, to seek to assert the superiority of a council over them, which they confirmed because they could not help it, evaded as soon as the councils were over, and by their wickedness, and at last specially by their sale of indulgences, which was really selling permission to sin, brought about the Reformation, that is, the breaking loose of half western Europe from their sway, Eastern Europe having never been under it. This brought on the

Council of Trent, which, in fixing the Romanist in his errors, gave a deeper character of apostasy from the truth to Rome, and left the separation of Northern Europe where it was.

Father O. Well, sir, I think I must wish you a good morning.

N*. Good morning, Mr. O.

James. Well, I never could have thought that what they say such great things about could have been like this. But how can people build their faith on such things? But the history of the church seems a terrible history.

N*. Well, James, you must not boast much, you were very near running into the snare yourself. If redemption is known, and the word of God believed in, it is impossible; but how many are living simply by tradition themselves; and hence, when what seems an earlier and more reverend tradition comes, are led away by it, because they have nothing for themselves in their own souls! I have gone through so much of the history of their councils with Mr. O., in your presence, that I have only a very few details to refer to. We have seen they were always called and presided over by the Emperor, as long as the East had any part in them; that they condemned the pope when needed; that, when there was no Emperor in the West, the pope got them into his hands there, and, as power is a corrupting thing, after getting the upper hand, in a great measure, of the new Western Emperors, the popes became so wicked—and afterwards, through disputes, two at a time anathematizing each other—and so oppressive and despicable, that the clergy at large, in a general council, first deposed both at Pisa, electing a third, and, as the

two did not yield, had three, and then succeeded in deposing all, and naming one at Constance; but that he, once named, avoided the reformations demanded, but, forced by circumstances, his successor was obliged to yield, and hold another council at Basel; that this made many reforms, and then the pope, alarmed, called the council, first to Ferrara, then to Florence; the council deposed him, and named another, and at last, both being tired, and the succeeding pope conciliatory, he confirmed the decrees of Basel and Florence, and the anti-pope resigned.

Since then till the Reformation the popes had it pretty much their own way; but their excessive wickedness destroyed respect for them, and the oppressions were so great, that God, arousing not princes nor the hierarchy, but simple individuals, brought about the Reformation in His own way; the selling pardons in the grossest way, to get money to build the cathedral at Rome, being—in Germany and Switzerland at least—the exciting cause. The last pope before the Reformation poisoned himself in seeking to poison his cardinals to get their money.

James. Well, to think that any one should make all this a foundation for faith and salvation! It is more likely to make an infidel.

N*. It has made, and does make, thousands and millions. Seeing all this connected with the name of Christianity, the mass of men reject it altogether with disgust, where they think at all for themselves.

James. But what do you say to this, M.? You used to talk so much of the holy Catholic church.

M. I do not know what to say. But what can a man believe?

James. He can believe what Christ and His apostles have said, and, of course, inspired men before them. These popes and others were nothing like this.

M. That is plain enough.

James. Well, see what they have said then, and if you read it, you will find it upset all the Romanist clergy say. But you were going to tell us something more of the councils, sir.

N*. What you were saying, James, was much more important. The only object of referring to them is to shew the false pretensions of Rome, who would deceive us by them. However, I will finish what I had to say, and we will then return to Milner, from which Mr. O. has diverted us, on a point Milner was, of course, careful not to touch.

In the Council of Nice Hosius presided under the Emperor, not the priests sent by Pope Julius, who, says the historian, was absent by reason of his great age. It was decided that Alexandria should have jurisdiction over its district, as Rome had over its own. And so at Antioch the old customs were to be maintained. It commanded that bishops should be judged by their own metropolitan. The reason I refer to this is, that the popes attempted by forgery to introduce the words, “The Roman church has always had the supremacy.” In the great fourth General Council of Chalcedon the council decreed that Constantinople should have equal honours with Old Rome. The pope’s legates protested, and cited the above sentence, and it was shewn by the authentic acts to be a forged interpolation, and rejected.

The pope would not receive this, but it remained part of the council’s acts for all that. The pope had a council of

his own at Sardica, of which I have spoken, and it was there decreed that, if there was wrong complained of on the part of a metropolitan, it should be brought to Rome, and the pope decide (not the cause, but) if there should be a new trial. This was cited as the acts of the Council of Nice, and rejected by Africa and the East as a fraud of Rome. The second General Council, that of Constantinople, decided that the patriarch of that city should have priority of honour after Old Rome, because it was New Rome, resting the precedency of honour on the importance of the city only—a thing impossible if it had been an idea of necessary supremacy, as Peter's chair. But let us only recollect the Lord's words, "But it shall not be so among you; for he that will be great among you, let him be last of all, and servant of all," and we shall soon feel what the true character of these claims is—the world and Satan, and nothing else.

Ephesus, the third general council, decreed that nothing should be added to the creed. The great doctrinal point on which the Greek church split from Rome was the addition of filioque; "and from the Son," made to the creed. It appears to have come from Spain; and the eminent Pope Leo, a very able man, when consulted about it from France, said the doctrine was right, but that it ought not to be added to the creed. Yet this remains one great point of difference between East and West to this day. So little is there any certainty of faith to be found in this way, so false is it, that if we have scripture we can have what was held always, everywhere, and by all, unless they departed from the faith once delivered to the saints. The rule is true, not because that universality gives authority, for the church only receives truth, but if it was always held it was held

by the inspired authors at the first, who received the revelation from God, and hence, and hence only, has authority. And the simple way of knowing what they held is by seeing what they teach. Holding gives no authority; revelation does. Hence we have what is certain in scripture, and nowhere else.

I might go into a mass of details, but I do not know that we should gain anything by it. We have seen enough to understand clearly that church authority is no security in matters of faith, though we may rejoice when its teachers teach the truth, and listen to them according to their gift with thankful deference. But there is no rule of faith to be found here.

M. Well, I am sure I am all at sea: excuse me, sir.

N*. It is no wonder. You have no faith of your own; a Romanist, as such, never has; he believes by another whom he calls his pastor, or the church, without knowing what it is. When he is shaken in that, he has no foundation for anything, and that is just now your case. But you had never any faith of your own; you thought what the church taught was right, but you had nothing from God—no real faith.

M. I see James has a certainty about what he believes that I do not understand—that I used to call presumption. I used to be certain that what Mr. O., or the church taught must be right, and so I received it; but I did not know anything as believing it from God, as if God had taught me. And the scriptures were a dead letter for me—a book for the clergy to explain.

N*. Look for it now, M. “If a man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.” On this point Rome is infidel and

contemptuous. God has ordained gifts of ministry, pastors and teachers, to be helpful to His saints, as evangelists to preach to the world, and we should be thankful for them, and pray to Him to send out labourers into His vineyard. But it is one of the distinctive promises we enjoy, “they shall be all taught of God.” Rome confines the action of the Spirit to the clergy. Now God has given a ministry; but if a man be not personally taught of God, he knows nothing with divine faith at all, supposing even he heard it rightly from his clergy, and took for granted it was true, and never doubted it. It is to all the saints, yea, especially to the babes in Christ, that the apostle says, in order to encourage them, and throw them on their own responsibility, “ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” The doctrine of the Holy Spirit’s working in grace in the soul, that our faith may be real, is of vital importance. To deny it is to deny that grace—is what is called in theology the Pelagian heresy, and of that Rome is guilty.

If it does work, it works holily, it makes us humble, because it applies the word to the conscience, does not give us opinions, or make us judge the word, but makes the word judge us. It is by this it is an “engrafted word,” “effectual in them that believe,” faith mixed with it, as the scripture speaks. The word without the Spirit remains a dead letter. If we speak of the Spirit without the word, we may be taking our own imaginations for a guide. The word by the Spirit is saving, and brings divine light into the soul. We have discussed the truth of this point. I refer to it here for its practical importance. A man may be orthodox without it, but he cannot have faith. The word cannot be a living word without it. “Whosoever,” says the Lord, “hath heard and learned of

the Father cometh unto me." Grace, remember, M., is needed. With this the scriptures, the word of God, will be alike living and certain for the soul.

M. Well, I think I will read them, at any rate. But should I read the Protestant one or the Catholic?

N*. Read both. The Authorized Version is incomparably superior. They have left hard words on purpose in the Douay, and in some passages mischievous expressions, and inconsistent with their own doctrine. Thus, "Do penance and be baptized," for in their system penance is a sacrament that comes after baptism. It is a translation of a translation; but I say read both, because you will soon see, with God's grace, what the truth of God is, and the Douay will shew you that the truth is in the other too.

But we must now separate; if spared, we will go on on other points to find the true rule of faith.

M. said James. Good day, sir.

17 I do not quote authorities for this account of Marcellinus, as it is a known matter of history, to be found in any considerable church history.

18 Baronius 9, a.d. 538, 540, etc. He had represented Rome at Constantinople. Bellarmine, De Sum. Pont. 4, 10, 16, does not contest the letter given by Liberatus (in Breviario 22); Baronius does. The facts are plain any way. Pagi adds, in a note, that there can be no doubt of it. Still, he adds, that it does not prejudice the pope's authority, because Silverius was not dead, though deposed, so that Vigilius was not really pope: a nice security for faith, a pope who could not act because he was deposed, and an acting one whose acts, though

consecrated, were not valid, because the other was living.

19 Baronius attributes this to the grace given to the papacy. But this accords but ill with his excusing his undoubted heresies afterwards, on the ground that he was not pope because the banished Silverius was alive. What a foundation for faith!

20 He acted as pope, while Silverius, who had been banished, still lived, and so (they say) was legitimate pope. What was the validity of all the papal acts, their ordinations, etc.?

21 Bell, de Sum. Pont. lib. 4, c. ix.

22 Bellarmine gives a list of cases of alleged failure in infallibility. Baronius is not to be trusted without Pagi's corrections. The latter is much fairer.

23 The numbers attached to their popes vary in different Roman Catholic historians; for, with all their boasted succession, nothing is more uncertain, irregular, and defective than the succession of the popes; often two at the time, and no one knowing who was the right one, and this not merely at the time of the great schism; and when one got the upper hand of his rival, he annulled all his ordinations, so that nobody knew who was ordained and who was not. But of this farther on.

24 Vol. 15, a.d. 912, 8.

25 Hieron. ad Evang. Epist. 146 (ed. Vail.)

26 His history is a little pleasant. The cardinals who had to choose the pope, several of them being ambitious, would not agree, and at last agreed to leave the choice to the one who became John XXII, sure he would choose

one of them; but he thought the best thing was to choose himself, and became John XXII.

27 Here are Bellarmine's words (De Sum. Pont. 4, 8): "The tenth is Marcellinus, who sacrificed to idols as is certain (ut constat) by the pontifical of Damascus, the Council of Sinuessa, and the epistle of Nicholas I to Michaelis. But Marcellinus taught nothing against the faith, nor was he a heretic or unfaithful, unless by an external act through fear of death. But whether on account of that external act he lost his position of pope (exciderit a pontificatu) or not, is of little moment, since he himself soon abdicated the papal see, and soon after was crowned with martyrdom. I should consider rather that he did not ipso facto lose his position of pope, since it is certain enough for all that he sacrificed to idols through fear alone." Bellarmine, therefore, had no kind of doubt about the matter. We may surely hope his sin was blotted out.

28 See Hardouin's Councils, I, 950. The Latin has "in quibus" here, which does not hang together to make a sentence.

29 This was written before the last Roman Council, which decreed the pope to be infallible: only this is an additional contradiction in church dogma.

30 It is a remarkable fact that popery and all ecclesiastical unity refers itself formally to Peter, never to Paul (he merely, at the utmost, coming in by the bye); the see is Peter's See; the unity is founded on him who was never an apostle to the Gentiles at all, but gave it up to Paul.

31 In chapter 14 he says, "As all who claim the place of oversight (bishop's charge) use this saying as Peter, and

having received the keys, etc. It is to be said they say it rightly if they have the works, on account of which it was said to that Peter, Thou art Peter (a stone), and if they are such as Christ can build His church upon … but if he is bound in the chain of his sins, in vain he binds and looses."

32 He had presided at what was meant to be a general council at Ephesus, which was called by the Emperor and attended by the legates of Rome, where they had beat poor old Flavian, archbishop of Constantinople, so that he died of it, and had even excommunicated the bishop of Rome, which was doubtless worse in Rome's eyes.

33 What is in [ ] is not in the Latin copy.

34 The Greek is wanting here, and in the Latin the sense is not very clear.

35 The truth is, what are called general councils were all of them, till the Emperors lost their power, measures taken by them to get peace among church leaders. They managed and governed them, and sanctioned what was done. They were for ever meddling in church matters, and the various bishops recognized continually their right to depose them, and the like, and they exercised it.

36 The uncertainty which hangs over the Council of Nice is curious for no unimportant event. Eusebius, in his Life of Constantine, says expressly there were two hundred and fifty prelates there. Afterwards it was held there were three hundred and eighteen, but reference was then made to the number of Abraham's servants, which was then held to be a great mystery.

37 In the Council of Antioch, where Paul of Samosata was condemned. Then the very word, omoousios, which was afterwards the orthodox test of Arian or not Arian, was condemned as false doctrine. Athanasius, de Synodis, 43, says both judgments are to be respected; that we are not to think these seventy prelates at Antioch were wrong, and seeks to reconcile the two. In Nice, if I understand the matter aright, as distinctly stated in the authentic accounts of the council, which are confirmed by Ambrose, Eusebius, who was Arian, or semi-Arian, in his views, wrote (I suspect referring to this council), saying, If we say that He is Son of God, and uncreated, you begin to own Him omoousios, (Ambr. 3, de Fide 15.) And the council took up the word thereupon, and made it a test.

38 Thus, in his 17th Paschal Homily (v, p. 2, 230 B) he denies that it was as man He grew in wisdom and stature. That is to divide and make two Christs, he says. So in his first and second letters to Luciessus (v, p. 2, 137, 143), after the union we do not divide the natures from one another. We do not cut the one and undivided into two sons, but we say one son, and, as the Fathers have said, one nature (phusin) of God the Word made flesh. Again, after union in an ineffable way, he shewed to us one nature of the Son, but, as I said, made flesh. And so very frequently. What was offensive in Nestorius was his saying that he could not say a child of two years old was God; but he excused this as said in the heat of argument, and urged that his words should not be insisted on. It was verbally at Ephesus. Cyril’s statements are in elaborate treatises on doctrine. The Council of Chalcedon, though sanctioning the Council of Ephesus and Cyril by name, condemns (Actio Quinta) in

express terms what in express terms Cyril taught, and what Nestorius and the Easterns objected to.

39 The reader may consult Tillemont.

40 Or, as he says, was driven out, for Cyril had with him what were called Parabolani, a bodyguard of military monks that he had brought with him from Alexandria.

41 His writings were greatly read in the East. Cyril tried to get him condemned; but the Easterns absolutely refused. He is said to have been the originator of Nestorianism, and even teacher of Nestorius.

42 That is, the Scoti, who include the Irish, or people of greater Scotland, at least as much as those alone called Scotch in modern times.—Ed.]

43 No one was stronger than St. Bernard and St. Buonaventura, both of the highest reputation for sanctity, and canonized.

44 The succession of the popes is so uncertain, that the numbers attached to their names vary in the best Roman Catholic historians. In the Johns there are three numbers; of others, a question between two, for different writers hold such or such an one to have been no legitimate pope; and if one put another down he broke or pronounced null and void all the ordinations of his competitor, so that at times none knew who was a priest or who not. But of this hereafter.

Fifth Conversation --Holiness

N*. Well, M., if you are so disposed, I will come and see you, and look more into this matter. If Mr. O. still deign to visit and seek to keep you, or recover you to his communion, we shall have the matter fairly discussed; and if not, we have “Milner,” the book which led you to go over to the Roman communion, and which is commonly used to lead others the same way.

Bill M. I shall be very glad to see you, sir, for I feel more in confusion than ever I did, and begin to feel it is not such a light thing to settle the ground of one’s faith. There are things I never heard or knew of; I do not see clear, but maybe I acted hastily. I do not think I could do so now. I think James has a kind of happiness, and a certainty too, that I do not know anything about. I do not want to doubt the word of God, but I have not the kind of faith in it he has, which makes him so sure of everything he finds in it. I do not understand how he can be; yet, to be sure, one ought, if it is the word of God. But, to say the truth, I never studied it; so it is no great wonder perhaps. Any way, I should like to know the bottom of it; and I am sure Father O. will come to call me to account, and he will hardly come here again; so if you will kindly come, sir, I shall be glad.

N*. You need the grace of God with the word, M.—just as Christ opened the disciples’ understanding—to understand the scriptures. If you look to Him, He will give it to you. It is written, “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.”

Bill M. Is that in scripture?

N*. Yes; in the Epistle of James i:5.

Bill M. Well, it gives comfortable words, any way; it is not hard on you, like the priest.

N*. It would be far happier to look directly into the contents of that blessed book, where God has given us His own thoughts in the midst of the darkness of this world, and told us, especially in these last and evil days, when there is a form of godliness, and the power of it denied, to have recourse to it; but I suppose we must go into all they have to allege as the ground of faith, and see whether it is solid. That the scriptures are, they do not deny—remember that; and we can examine all by them, as we have already done as to many points. The scriptures, we are sure, are divine; they do not deny it, only they say you cannot understand them. Why unwritten traditions should be easier or surer, it would be hard to say. The Lord treats tradition in His day as most mischievous and evil. However, we can go into all this if we meet. I shall be very glad to come and see you, and we will examine all that is to be said for the system which they uphold. Good-night to you all now.

Bill M. Good-night, sir.

James. Well, Bill, I should have liked to have heard it all; but if it is useful to you I am content, and my mind is at rest, and it might be curiosity on my part; for I see now that it is not the true doctrine of salvation they have, and the rest is not so much matter. They would save us by works and ordinances, and that is not God’s way; and, after all, they do not know whether they are saved or not, and God never meant us to be in misery that way; and a man that has his conscience awakened, and judgment before him, must be miserable till he knows he

is in God's favour—till his conscience is purged, and he has peace with God; and scripture is as plain as can be as to that, just as plain as it is that we must lead a godly life. But there was a thing Mr. N*. said to me which made plain where that came in, as plain as anything can be, only we have no sense really in the things of God till He teaches us. It was this, Bill i that a man's duties flow from the place he is already in; they cannot be the means of getting it, or they would not be duties. A man's child, or his servant, or his wife, has to obey and be dutiful because they are his child, and so on. What they are bound to do could not be their duty if they were not children, or servants, or wife. Now, if I am a child of God, as scripture speaks, and know I am one, that is the very reason I am bound to behave as a child. That is my duty, and cannot be my duty till I am one, and then we get strength as well as the duty. Scripture says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace," and "My grace is sufficient for you." So it is just when I know I am a child of God that my duty becomes clear.

Bill M. But you do not mean to say we may do as we like till we are what you call children of God?

James. Nay, nay; but we have done what we liked, a deal too much, little else when we could; but on that ground we are lost. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. But I was answering what has been said—that, if I know I am saved, I can go on as I like after; whereas, if I am saved, I am a child of God, and all my duties as a child of God just begin then. Instead of doing as I like, I am bound to walk, not merely as an honest man, but as a child of God, because I am one; and then that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and delights in the things of

God, though he may have to resist temptations from within and from without, and, if he is not watchful, he will fail. And then they that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. But I speak of duty.

Bill M. Well, that is plain enough, that if we are in a place, the duties of the place belong to us, and we are bound to fulfil them. But, as for me, I want to know how to get into the place. Not that I understand well what it is, either; and I do not understand how you can be so sure of yourself.

James. Not of myself, as you mean the words, Bill; God forbid! but I am sure of what God says. True, the grace and Spirit of God must work to dispose our hearts to care for such things, and to give us understanding with such hearts and minds as we have; but the thing in itself is very simple. As scripture speaks, when I receive the Lord's testimony, I set to my seal that God is true, and hence am fully assured of what I find in His word.

Bill M. Of course what God says is true; that is plain enough.

James. Well, if Christ, or even His apostles, have said anything, it is God's word, and we have to believe it.

Bill M. Of course, if we know what they have said.

James. Well, there it is. The Spirit and grace of God bring the word of God home as His word to the heart. It is not my poor wits setting up to judge about it, or teach; a great deal I do not understand yet, and I must wait and hope to get on; but the word comes down on me and tells me what I am (and I know it is true), and what God is and His holiness and love and judgment of sin are revealed to my soul. Now I find there that by Christ all

that believe are justified from all things; that He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; that he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; that God will remember their sins and iniquities no more; and many, many more comfortable words, and I believe them—I am sure they are true, because God has said so—just as sure as I am that, if God had entered into judgment with me for my sins, I should have been lost. I know I was lost in my sins, but Christ came to seek and to save what was lost, and died for our sins, according to the scriptures. I believe in Him. I know He is the Son of God, and God has pronounced His judgment on those that believe in Him, that they are justified and have eternal life; and I believe Him with all my heart. And it is because I see that He has His own self borne our sins in His own body on the tree that I have peace with God. That I could not say till I believed in Him, but I can say it now.

Bill M. Well, I can't say it: of course if you can, you must be happy; anybody would.

James. I understand that too; I could not myself once, but God is very gracious, Bill. I was no better, and in myself am no better, than you. I do not say you see clear, but I believe you are a changed man, Bill—thank God for it.

Bill M. Well, I do not see that I am changed, unless it is to be worse, and more unhappy than I was.

James. That is the very reason I say you are changed. You have found out somehow that there is badness in you, and it makes you unhappy. It is not flippantly judging me because I trust with assurance in the Lord Jesus, nor talking of the church that you know nothing

about for yourself, only repeating it from others who had got hold of your mind. Now there is a real want in your own soul of something better, and of peace; that is what the Holy Spirit always produces in us. It is not levity and judgment of others He puts into us, but a want in our hearts, and tenderness of conscience; and the gracious God will surely meet such a want, and make all plain in His own wise time. Doubtless, you may get help from others, as I did; but the work within is all His own. Till that is done, nothing is done; and He will do it for you, Bill. I feel confident the Lord is leading you on in His own blessed grace.

Bill M. I hope He may. I am not there yet; but I do feel different towards you and in myself too; and somehow my confidence is shaken in Father O. Still I am afraid of denying the true church. The Lord guide me right.

James. He will, He will, Bill; trust Him for it.

Bill M. Well, good-night now; I must be home. But I'll let you know how it all goes on.

James. Good-night, Bill. The Lord be with you.

* * * *

Bill M. Good evening, Mr. O., will you kindly sit down. I am thankful to you for coming to see me; and Mr. N*., as I mentioned to you, is here.

Father O. I am sure it is of very little use arguing on these subjects; but I was willing to make one effort to save you from abandoning the church and ruining your soul for ever. For it is certain, as the holy fathers have said, that he who has not the church for his mother has not God for his Father. But I have little hope of you; for when once a person has begun to judge for himself and

despise the faith of all holy men in all ages, to say nothing of the authority of the church, he proves himself to be in a state of pride, which makes him incapable of receiving the truth at all. However, the good shepherd will care for his flock, and I have consented to make one effort more. I had indeed much rather have seen you at my house, where I could have spoken seriously to you without any controversy; and this gentleman—I say it without wishing to be guilty of any offence—is a confirmed heretic, which makes it a still more unsatisfactory way of treating these holy subjects. However I have consented to make a last effort to rescue you from falling down the fatal precipice, on whose edge you are standing; only remember that eternity is before you. This world will soon pass away, and if you are not in the true church, then where will your soul be? Remember what a solemn and terrible thought eternity is, and think of your soul's salvation, and let no carnal or interested motives come in competition with that.

Bill M. Well, Mr. O., I have just begun to get really anxious about my salvation. As to interested motives, I can honestly eat my bread, any way, and nobody has offered me anything to go back to where I was. And one thing that greatly attracted me to the Catholics was, that they were so kind to me. I am much obliged to them, but that won't save a man's soul. As to eternity, I begin to feel it is a very solemn thing; and it is not only dread I feel, for that is all it was when I turned Catholic, but I want to be saved. Now James and this gentleman tell me, and bring scripture for it, that if a man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ in his heart, he will be saved; and that if any one has the Spirit of Christ, he belongs to

the true church; that all such are united to Christ, who is the head of the church, and that their lives will prove whether this is really so; and you tell me that I must belong to the one true holy Roman Catholic and apostolic church, or I cannot be saved, and I want to know the truth of it. I see what this gentleman says is in scripture; but then I have been brought to think there must be a true church, and I should not like to be out of it; and what is the true church is the very thing I have to learn.

Father O. It is just this pretending to read and judge of scripture which will be the ruin of you. How do you know whether it is true, or how can you get at the right sense of it? St. Augustine says he would not have received the gospel but for the church. And then, besides that, you have only got a false translation.

Bill M. Excuse me, Father O., I have got the Catholic Testament as well as the Protestant one, and it is what has troubled me more than ever, because, though there are hard words I do not understand in the one you approve of, and it is not such fine reading as the Protestant, yet one sees in a minute it is the same thing in the main—different words sometimes, but the same book. I do not pretend to judge all about it, of course; but I can see that the truths they insist upon are in your Testament as in theirs. I found, where it was said in the Protestant Testament, there is no more offering for sin, it is said in the other, there is no more oblation for sin. And then, too, that He should not offer Himself often, for then He ought to have suffered often; and that dashed me greatly about the Mass that I used to think so much of. And it says in your Testament, too, that by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are

sanctified, and that is just what James tells me. And then, too, I found in your Testament that it is said, he that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and, I believe in the Son of God sure enough, and why should I not believe I have eternal life too? I do not see clear, that is true, for I know I am not what I ought to be; but there is what they tell me in what you say is the word of God, and the true translation.

Father O. How should you be clear, pretending to judge all these things, and perplexing your mind with what you are quite unable to interpret, ignorant as you are? We had better see at once what the true church is, and then you will be rightly guided. There is no end of disputing out of scripture. Why there is no end of sects and heresies, and all come from the Bible.

Bill M. If you please, sir, I shall be very glad to hear about the church; but you will allow me to say, sir, that I do not find what I was saying so hard to understand, not harder than many things you say, nor so hard. When it says, he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, it is a great comfort, but it is not hard to understand. I may doubt sometimes, if I really believe, when I see how bad I am, though I do not think I can doubt it; but the words are plain enough. And when it is said there is no more oblation for sin where there is remission of sins, it is plain enough too, and I do not see how the Mass can be true; and I see then that, if there was another oblation, it must have been a real one, and that therefore Christ must have suffered, and He cannot do that in the Mass. As to Augustine, I do not know anything about him, but these things I read in the scriptures that the church has given us.

Father O. Who gave them to you? You are not properly prepared to read them; you are not in a state of mind, docile and subject to the church, to do it properly, and so are perplexing yourself. And the Council of Trent very justly forbids any having them without a written permission from his pastor, and I never gave you one; and we may see in your case the wisdom of the church making such an order.

Bill M. And why may I not read them if they are the word of God, and I have read them in a copy approved by the church? There it is with Archbishop Troy's sanction. And the pope says there that we should above all read the holy scriptures. And I cannot see, if God has written so many blessed things for us, so many good words of the Lord Jesus, and the letters of apostles, why those who want to be saved, and know God's will, should not read them. It looks strange.

Father O. They are given to the church, and she dispenses the food in due season.

Bill M. But am I not in the true church if I am a Catholic? and yet it is only we that are not allowed to read them.

Father O. You will get from your pastors meat in due season.

Bill M. But I want to know what God has said Himself, and why may not I know that? Why should my pastor keep that from me?

Father O. Because there are things you cannot understand, and will pervert; as St. Peter says, "which the unstable and unlearned wrest to their own destruction."

Bill M. That is a very solemn warning surely, sir, not to let one's mind be prying and judging beyond one's depth; but if we only want humbly to learn, and not to twist anything, may not one trust in God's goodness to keep one from rashness, and pretending to go out of one's depth? I only want to know God's truth; and will He not give me it? I remember hearing of Mary that sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. May not I do that, and believe He will teach me too? Surely His words will not lead me astray, if I only listen to Him, to learn from Him.

Father O. But you do not know what part of His words to take. He could tell Mary just what was fitting for her, and how do you know what is fit for you? It is this wilfulness and presumption that is ruining you.

Bill M. I do not wish to be presumptuous, sir; I shall be very thankful to be helped, and I do not doubt a great many could do that. Only I do not want to be shut out from the word of God, and not hear what Christ and His apostles say.

Father O. Well, if you listen to the church, you will get just what is fit for you, and you will be helped. It is just what I have been insisting on with you.

Bill M. Yes, but you want me to hear the church, instead of having what God says for myself, having it direct from Himself; and that is what I feel I want, and begin to have a great desire for, though very thankful to hear what you, or any that knows better than me, can say to help me, only so as I have the word of God itself; and what even as your own archbishop says is the right reading. And forgive me, sir, if I make bold to say a word as to twisting the scripture. That warning comes from scripture, does it not?

Father O. Yes, from 2 Peter 3:16; and do you take heed to it.

Bill M. But then the scripture comes to save us from the danger. The scripture itself stops us, and corrects us, if we are willing to mind it, where we might otherwise go astray. If I began to pry into things too deep for me, and hard to be understood, the scripture itself is there, if I mind it, to stop me. It does not tell the people not to read them, but God writes in the scripture what is necessary to guard them against the danger. So I see it is good to read it all, though I may not be able to understand it all, as I am not; one learns nothing all at once. And I begin to feel one may trust to the grace of God to help one. You will forgive my saying so much, sir, but my heart is getting concerned in it; and I have found, now I have read in the Testament, a great deal I cannot understand, and I am obliged to leave it, hoping I may; but a great deal that is very plain, and holy, and very comforting, which shews how gracious the blessed Lord Jesus is to poor sinners, and how He never turned them away; and a great deal that is uncommon comforting, though it pierces one's conscience through, too, very often. But I beg your pardon, sir; I was just letting out what was in my heart, and I will listen to all you have to say.

Father O. It is little use when once you have got into this sort of confidence in yourself, and talk about the word of God as if you were a learned man, when you can know nothing about it. But I came to speak of the church, and the right it has to be heard and obeyed. It just shews what you are, pretending thus to reason and teach those who must know better than you. But I will shew you what the proofs of the church are, and, as I have told

you, if you are not in that, there is no salvation for you. You ought to know all this, and you have learnt it, and that is what makes me tremble for you. And I must beg not to be interrupted, neither by you nor by this gentleman—though I do not know if I ought to have consented to speak before one who is evidently rooted (if any such falsehood can have a root) in his heretical views—while I set before you the plain irrefragable proofs of the one true church, and that that church is the church of Rome.

N*. I will not interrupt you, sir. It is quite fair you should have opportunity to say all you wish, and as fully as you please. I will examine what you say on each point when you have done.

Father O. I will proceed, then, to state the grounds on which everyone is bound to receive the Catholic church as the only true one, and out of which there is no salvation, as the Fathers all testify. So says Irenseus, so Cyprian, so Augustine, so St. John Chrysostom. All declare emphatically that salvation belongs to the church alone.45 And if you take the views which all Christendom acknowledges, we shall easily find the marks by which it is known.

The Apostles' Creed says, "I believe in the holy Catholic church," and the Nicene," one Catholic and apostolic church."46 The church, then, is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

Now if we look amongst the rival communions, we shall have no ground to hesitate a moment as to which is the true church. In the Catholic church alone you find unity of doctrine, of all that is essential in her worship and in her ecclesiastical constitution and government. Her

doctrine is the same from the Council of Nice to the Council of Trent. Every Catholic— English, Indian, Canadian, and of whatever nation under the sun—will join in the same worship in any Catholic chapel here. So, wherever they are, the faithful submit to their pastors, the pastor to his bishop, the bishop to the supremacy of the successor of St. Peter. Take the most ignorant Catholics, they are alike in doctrine substantially; and, however ignorant, will declare their belief in this—I believe whatever the holy Catholic church believes and teaches. Whereas Protestants are split up into a hundred sects, and the same sect varies in its doctrine from one century to another. I must be brief; but the statements I have made are corroborated by facts which everyone can take cognizance of; he has only to ask the first Catholic he meets, or attend the service in any Catholic place of worship.

The next mark is that it is the holy Catholic church. That the church should be holy no Christian can deny; as belonging to God, and sanctified by Christ, to present to Himself without spot; Eph. 5:25-27.

The Catholic church is holy in doctrine, in the means of holiness, in the fruits of holiness, and, lastly, in the divine testimony of holiness. She is holy in doctrine, especially in that of the Unity and Trinity, in the incarnation, death, and atonement of the Son of God. And she has always been the same. If she was holy in doctrine in the apostles' age, she is holy in it now.

Next, she is holy in the means of holiness; and the principal and most efficacious means are the sacraments, which the Protestants have reduced to two; but all other communions— Greek, Nestorian,

Eutychian, Russian, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian—before as after their defections, agree with Catholics in making them to be seven. By these all the wants of Catholics are supplied, and the faithful, having free will, and not putting an obstacle in the way, through them have justification, or sanctification, conferred and increased. The fruits of holiness are to be seen in a multitude of saints, in all ages, whose names would be far too many to enumerate here, but whose sanctity has been attested by the miracles they have performed. These last are a divine attestation of sanctity, and have been the stamp of approval and divine recognition put upon the Catholic church in all ages.

I might add other marks, as antiquity, the confession of enemies; but they would only be the development of those I have noted, and it is needless. These are a sufficient proof to a reasonable mind that the Catholic church alone is the church of God, out of which there is no salvation; a doctrine which, however obnoxious, is held by St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, and the early Fathers; and is stated in the strongest language. It is this one only Holy Catholic Apostolic church, called Roman, because the supreme pontiff and successor of St. Peter has his See in Rome; into which you, M., had been graciously brought, out of one of the various sects of Protestants which condemn each other, which are confessedly of yesterday; have no pretension to be Catholic, confess they have no miracles; and whose doctrine, or at least what it was at the outset—for they fall into every sort of opinion—is utterly immoral: that no matter how great a sinner any man is, if he believes, he is saved; who have rejected five sacraments, and of the two they profess, have made one a mere memorial,

contrary to scripture; and if the other remains, it is administered with such carelessness that we can hardly practically say whether anyone among them has the benefit of it nor not.

And it is not only antiquity, to which I briefly alluded, but an uninterrupted succession of prelates in every see, and especially at Rome, from the apostles and their successors; at Rome from the prince of the apostles down to this day; and we have the record of all their names, preserving the transmission of both grace and truth to us. Take care you do not fall from this one place of safety into the uncertainty and darkness of that from which you have been delivered. My object is to warn you; I might multiply proofs; they may be seen in Milner, more largely in Bellarmine; one you have read, and your very catechism teaches you the same. If you do not receive proofs so plain, no reasoning of mine could hinder your ruin. I have done. Of course, sir, you can now say what you wish. But I must beg you to keep to the point, and not launch out into vague charges; but shew where unity, catholicity, sanctity, and apostolicity, are found elsewhere than in the holy Roman Catholic church.

N*. Well, Mr. O., we have patiently listened to you, and you have given us a summary of Milner, or indeed what may, as you say, be found briefly in any Roman Catholic catechism— the common doctrine of the Roman Catholic body, though of course more fully developed in one book than in another. As to Indians, Americans, Canadians, etc., all coming to the same worship, there is a very simple reason for it; they are all on the same ground. Not one understands a word that is said, for it is all in Latin, and where the service is only an outward form,

kneeling to a wafer when a bell rings, of course all can do it together. But there is a point which you have assumed, which, when I have answered your statements, I shall touch upon: whether God has not shewn us in His word that through the sin of man the church outwardly in this world would lose this unity and catholicity of character and sanctity too. Not surely that the unity of the body of Christ as built up by Him for eternity would be lost. That cannot fail, nor the gates of hell prevail against it; but does that blessed security, assured by Christ's power to what He builds, affirm that, as an outward body and whole system in the world trusted to man's faithfulness, it would continue in its integrity to the end? I affirm that God in His word teaches us the contrary. There is another point which presses very strongly upon me, which I will with the Lord's help touch upon. It will suffice to speak of it at the close as a most weighty one, and as to which the ground on which the Roman argument stands is profane.

Father O. Profane!

N*. I do not use it as a hard word, but as the one which expresses strictly my meaning. We shall see whether it be just when we come to it. But I will first reply to the pretensions of unity, catholicity, etc., directly.

Father O. That is the best way. And I must beg you to be as brief as you can. I cannot give up all my time to a fruitless discussion.

N*. I will try to be brief. But it takes more time to disprove a statement than to assert it. When you say that the succession of Roman pontiffs, of whom Milner gives a list, is known from Peter to Pius IX, it is easy to say it, and Dr. Milner may make a fair show of it without

betraying the weak points of it, but I cannot reply without shewing them. It is to me quite indifferent whether they have so succeeded or not. Truth is in God's word, not in a succession of prelates. Still I am to answer you, and consequently must go into the facts. However I will be as brief as I can. And forgive me if I use the word ridiculous. The statement as to unity and catholicity seems to me to be such. You tell me we are to see which of rival communions is one and Catholic. Now, if there are rival communions, there is neither unity nor catholicity. I do not say that the fact of heresies existing, where individuals have been excluded for denying fundamental truths, in the least affects unity or catholicity, because the one Catholic body, if such there be, has done its duty, and rejected a sectarian head of error. There is in such case a one Catholic body out of which he is put.

But that is not the case we have to consider. You call upon our friend M. here to leave the body he was in, and to choose, on certain grounds, another. He has to choose between rival communions. If he takes his own sphere of knowledge, he finds your sect a very small minority, and your place of worship called a chapel, and the one he is leaving, the church. If I go beyond his field of view, then I find rather the majority of Christians condemning your sect, and the pope's claims as corrupt, false, and unfounded, and by a vast body of Christians held to be the corrupt Babylon of scripture. If he goes to the United States, every place of worship is alike called a church. The greater part of Europe and Asia hold your pretensions to be false.

Not only that: I find the most ancient churches as to which you often allege that they agree with you against

Protestants, the churches founded by the apostles, and before Rome, refusing communion with you, denying some of your doctrines, refusing your claims of supremacy for Rome altogether; you call them schismatic. But if they are more ancient than you, and some sixty millions of Christians, and a hierarchy pretending with good reason to be yet older than yours, and even as to Peter insisting that they are in possession of his most ancient see, Antioch, how am I to know you are not the schismatics? One thing is certain, that, besides some eighty or ninety million Protestant-professing Christians, there are all the Greeks, more ancient than yourselves.

I do not here decide who is right, but this is a clear matter of fact, that there is no catholicity to be found, nor unity. It is a palpable falsehood as to fact if I look at the outward professing body. You insist on the word Catholic, and on your adversaries admitting the term; this is equally false. The Greeks never call you Catholics, nor intelligent Protestants either, and were it otherwise it would be no more than calling Protestant places of worship churches, and yours and others' chapels; it proves really nothing. To use a lawyer's maxim: Allegatio ejusdem rei cujus dissolutio petitur, nil valet (to allege that as proof which is the thing sought to be disproved has no force). There is the Greek body, the Latin body, the Established church, the Lutherans of Germany, each established in different countries, in America all on the same footing. Unity or catholicity does not exist. You know as well as I do that all I say is the simple fact.

Father O. Yes, but the Catholic church maintains unity in itself.

N*. You allege you are at unity among yourselves. A little body like the Moravians could say as much. It proves nothing. This I admit, that the Roman system is admirably organized, that centralization47 (which was in no way the case in the early ages) has been carried out with admirable skill. That its leaders have known how to draw into its effective force the means at its disposal in an admirable way as to skill, that it has used its power over the populations to make kings and the civil power subservient to it, is all true. Every intelligent person is aware of and owns this. There have been serious divisions within itself, as Gallicanism, Jansenism, etc. It does not hold on some really important points what its greatest doctors once held, and as to many of its own dogmas, there have been great changes. I do not mean from original truth now, from which it has fatally departed, for that is not our subject, but on the seat of religious authority, which, in its present form, dates only from the Council of Trent; upon the doctrine of election, as to which Thomists and Scotists, Dominicans and Franciscans, have been altogether divided, as they were upon the immaculate conception. I do not insist upon them because the papacy has succeeded in reducing them all to order. Centralized power has prevailed. As to infallibility and the seat of certain truth, surely an important point, the Roman creed is not quite one year old at the present moment, and general councils confirmed by popes held to be in error. On the immaculate conception some eight or ten years old; on transubstantiation some six hundred and fifty. Still the pope has succeeded in bringing all the Roman body into unity of dependence on himself, and he can decree what he likes as a matter of faith, but only for his own body. The Greeks reject his authority and doctrine, the

Protestants look with horror on his taking a place which belongs to God only, that is, the greater part of professing Christendom. Unity and catholicity do not exist. But you seem to wish to make some remark. It will not interrupt me.

Father O. Merely that while you admit the Catholic system has resulted in unity and subordination, and, I add, to Christ's vicar upon earth, the Protestant has issued not merely in a multitude of sects, but in rationalism so-called and infidelity.

N*. Forgive, me, I deny the contrast altogether. Protestantism has produced such fruits; that is, the mind of man, breaking loose from the authority of God's word, has taken its own thoughts as its guide, and pretends to judge God and the revelation He has given of Himself. But the mind of man in popish countries has done the same with the authority of what you call the church, and with the word, too. Infidelity is far more general, I do not hesitate to say, in many Roman Catholic countries, than in Protestant ones. I am not at all denying the great evil that exists in the latter. It is more published perhaps in Protestant countries because there is more intellectual activity and greater freedom. Nor is it only my own judgment that I express. Not only the French Revolution was in a Roman Catholic country, and spread its principles over such; but, in more modern times when the violent reaction against the papal system was over, Gregory XVI gives us this account in his Encyclical letter of 1832, "We speak, venerable brethren, that which ye behold with your own eyes; which therefore we deplore with united tears. An unrestrained wickedness, a shameless science, a dissolute licentiousness, are triumphant. The sanctity of holy things is despised!…"

After stating that the church was exposed to the hatred of the people, he adds, “the academies and schools resounded in a dreadful manner with new and monstrous opinions, by which the Catholic faith is no longer assailed secretly and by mining, but a horrible and impious war is now openly waged against it,” and then refers to “attacks on the order of the church by members of the clergy and associations of them.”

You see, while I recognize the deadly evil of infidelity and corruption, the Roman Catholic nations are not more exempt from them than the Protestant. Nay, no man acquainted with Roman Catholic and Protestant countries but knows that faith and morality are more common in the masses in Protestant than in Roman Catholic countries. Abject superstition, devotion if you please to call it so, is to be found in the darker parts of the land in Roman Catholic countries, but closely connected very commonly with violence and corruption. The Italian brigands are most devout, and in Spain houses of ill fame supply the needed certificate of priestly absolution to commercial travellers who never troubled themselves with priests, when these documents were needed for their journey off the great routes. Whether the recent revolution has made a change I cannot tell. But no one can have been in Western papal Europe without knowing the universal spread of infidelity where there was any energy of civilization, and the degradation and corruption which pervades those countries. This is not in the same way the case in Protestant Europe. Plenty of evil I full admit. Scripture predicts an apostasy and I doubt not we are in the high road to it. But if we are forced to compare them, the evil is greater in Roman Catholic countries. I have replied to

your remark, but we were speaking of unity and catholicity.

Wherever external Christendom exists, the Greeks, whom you call schismatics, but who are older than you, have the same succession to boast of. They do not call you Catholic, but the Latin or Western church, and declare you have departed from the truth. It is in vain to say they hold, as against Protestants, the same truth as you do. It only strengthens my argument, that unity is gone, and consequently catholicity. And your friend, Dr. Milner, knows it well and feels it, so that, as I said, what he says is plain self-contradiction even to absurdity. He tells us the true church is Catholic or universal in three several respects—as to persons, as to places, as to times. It consists of the most numerous body of Christians, it is more or less diffused wherever Christianity prevails, and it has visibly existed ever since the time of the apostles. Now this last it partakes with a body half as large as itself, the Greek church—the more ancient of the two. This therefore gives me no help in discovering which is right. But we seek what is universal, and I am told it consists of the most numerous body of Christians. That is, it is not universal as to persons— nay, very far from it indeed. As to places, it is more or less diffused wherever Christianity prevails; that is, again, it is not universal. In fact, in many countries, it is a very small minority. But on the face of the argument it breaks down altogether. It constitutes the main stock of Christianity. But if it is only the main stock, it is not Catholic.

I conclude, what every one who is acquainted with the facts knows, that unity and catholicity are not to be found embodied anywhere in Christendom. Whoever be

right and whoever be wrong, the unity does not exist, and the Roman or Latin body is not Catholic because it is Roman or Latin, as constantly called by itself, by popes, and councils. When it insisted on Rome's being supreme, catholicity and unity departed, even in outward form, from Christendom. All the tirade of Dr. Milner on free will and Calvinism I pass over as being a question of doctrine; only saying that he is here really dishonest, for he knows as well as I do that Augustine (the most eminent and influential perhaps of all the Latin fathers) held it, and that it was the doctrine of T. Aquinas and of all the Dominicans, that is, of all the greatest doctors of Rome in her most flourishing state. Dr. Milner treats it as something frightful, and spends pages on it in order to attack the Protestants. I offer no comment on the question now. But if it be so horrible ('no impiety can be more execrable' he tells us) he condemns the most famous doctors of Rome; the most famous father of the church, and, till the Jesuits arose, the most famous order of the monks. This is strange unity. I might quote a host of the most celebrated prelates of those ages who held it.

Father O. But the church never held it as her faith.

N*. I did not say she had; I only say that Dr. Milner conceals the fact that the most famous doctors and ecclesiastical body, the judges of heretical pravity, held this view, which he charges on Protestants as having held and given up. If it be so, which universally they have not, they would only have done what (according to you in point of fact, though there may be no decree upon it) Rome has done.

But we were speaking of unity and catholicity, and on these points I have done. It is clear from facts that there is none such to be found in the external body of Christendom.

Father O. Then the gates of hell have prevailed against it, which is impossible.

N*. By no means: Christ will build His church in spite of all this sad and humbling failure of man. Of this I will speak. All we have found now is that by your own admission, and by the force of facts, Rome is not that church and because (mark it) she is Rome. The existence of the Greek church, to say nothing of the claims of Protestants or the English episcopacy, is a standing protest against the claims of Rome to Catholic unity. I only add here that I have accepted your four marks of the true church which are those of Milner, and generally given. Were I to search further, my objections on the one hand, and, if I were inquiring, my difficulties, would be proportionately multiplied. Bellarmine (lib. 4, cap. 3, 3, 4) tells us that these marks are variously designated and enumerated by different persons: for Augustine there are six, for Jerome two, Vincentius, three. Of the moderns, one gives three others; Cardinal Hozius four, Sanders six others, Medina has given ten, adding an eleventh in another place, another (he thinks) thirteen. Bellarmine himself gives fifteen. Now, if a sincere soul is seeking to find the true church on your plan, in what confusion he finds himself! How can he find the grounds of a divine faith here? Your doctors give him different marks of the true church, and, if he has found out half, perhaps he cannot make out the rest.

But, further, to say that he has found the church by them, either he must take for granted the whole matter, or know the history of the church in all ages, or how can he tell they are there? How can he tell whether Rome has had always the same doctrine? How can he tell whether Vincentius' rule "what everywhere, what always, what by all" has been verified? The last statement of the rule he knows cannot be true, for common doctrines are not held by all now, or he would not be inquiring. And in all the North of Europe, and North America, all the most learned men will tell him, Rome, as to her distinctive doctrines, does not hold what was held at first. But, when he looks into his Bible, he finds the truth for himself. At any rate he is lost in finding that the greatest doctors have different sets of marks, some of which he knows do not hold good. And this leads me to the point I said I would touch upon, and which I have already alluded to in our conversations, but which comes in naturally here and I return to it as of all importance.

Rome, by the confession of her own teachers, has no divine ground of faith at all, and this in a way I call profane if God has given a testimony. Thus Bellarmine on the marks of the church, lib. 4, cap. 3, "They do not make it evidently true that it (the Catholic) is the true church of God, but they make it evidently credible." "We say therefore, that the notes of the church which we bring forward do not give evidence of the truth simply, since otherwise it would not be an article of faith, that this church is the true church. Nor would any be found who would deny it." Now the words which Bellarmine here uses prove distinctly that, on Roman Catholic principles, no article of faith can be founded on the

simple evidence of truth.48 That is, in Roman Catholic faith, there is no divine faith; for it would be a simple blasphemy to say that, if God had spoken, what is said is credible but not simply true. How I thank God that I believe simply in His word as His servant John the Baptist teaches: “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.”

Nor does Mr. Newman, who became a Romanist, give any other ground for his having changed from Anglicanism to Romanism; no other ground for faith. Keble had told him it was probability as put to account by faith and love. These moral qualities, or what is called the pious affections of believing (see Pet. de Inc., 8, 12-16) I make no difficulty about, that is, a divine disposition given by grace, inclining the will, as Augustine also teaches; but their belief is only probability. Mr. N. says, “My argument is in outline as follows:—That that absolute certitude which we were able to possess, whether as to truths of natural theology, or as to the fact of a revelation, was the result of an assemblage of concurring and converging probabilities; and that, both according to the constitution of the human mind and the will of its Maker, that certitude was a habit of mind, that certainty was a quality of propositions “(Apol. pro VitS suS, p. 70). “I say that I believed in God on a probability; that I believed in Christianity on a probability; and that I believed in Catholicism on a probability; and that all these were about the same kind of probability, a cumulative and a transcendent probability, but still probability; inasmuch as He who made us has so willed, that in mathematics indeed we arrive at certitude by rigid demonstration; but in religious inquiry we arrive at certitude by

accumulated probabilities; inasmuch as He who has willed that we should so act cooperates with us in our acting, and therefore bestows on us a certitude which rises higher than the logical force of our conclusions" (232). His faith, then, does not rest on divine testimony, but on logical conclusions.

Mr. Newman has since written a book (Grammar of Assent) in which he speaks of a transcendent adhesion of mind, intellectual and moral, when assent follows on a divine announcement, and a special self-protection beyond the operation of these ordinary rules of thought; but adds—which alone have a place in my discussion—from some Roman Catholic divine that faith is more certain than even natural truth; and that concerning those things which it is certain (constat) are revealed by God, no one can be disturbed. (Gram, of Assent, 180, 2nd ed.). But we have not a word how it is certain they are revealed by God, or on what faith rests. The quotation is happy as far as it goes, it would be blasphemy to say the contrary, but it does not touch the question how we get the faith. I notice it because it sounds well. But nobody in his senses would say, if it was certain that God revealed anything, anyone could doubt it. "It is impossible for God to lie," as the apostle says: the question is, what is the ground of faith? how is it certain to us? But even this question, Mr. Newman, in his new book, declares he is not writing about, but the laws of thought, on which I think him exceedingly poor and illogical, though right on some points—but that is not our question now—for he does not get beyond what he calls concrete certainty, that is, practical certainty for matters in this life, which nobody denies.

Dr. Milner assures us distinctly of the same thing; though he, sensible of where it placed him, seeks to smother it up in a note to make it less apparent, calling it a vulgar objection (Letter n on True Rule). “I believe the Catholic church; and, therefore, everything which she teaches, upon the motives of credibility, namely, her unity, sanctity, etc., which accompany her.” Nothing can be clearer than that these statements shew that the Roman Catholic system has no divine ground of faith at all. All rests on motives of credibility (that is, the rules of ordinary human thought where we may be misled), not on any divine testimony. There is no divine faith. I do not deny individuals may through grace have it from God, though in the system and in spite of it; but Romanism has no divine testimony or faith as its basis for my soul, but motives of credibility only.

I am aware that Mr. Newman objects to requiring an infallible proof; that is, one as to which no doubt can exist for the infallibility of the church. But there can be no divine faith without [not indeed an infallible proof (which has no real sense), proof is only the ground of inference, which Mr. Newman justly distinguishes, but] a testimony we know to be infallible, or rather without absolute truth.

In his account of himself (Apologia pro Vitâ suâ), he openly —and his Grammar of Assent carefully, but not openly— confounds the certainty on which men have to act, and must act, with the certainty of divine faith, which is quite another thing. Chillingworth was perfectly right; but Mr. Newman never had, or has lost, the idea of what divine faith is; what it is to say, “impossible for God to lie.” Not that he would deny this: but if I am not certain, with divine faith, that God has

spoken, I cannot be certain of what is said, that it is divine truth. There can be no divine faith. He argues very hard for concrete certainty; that is, practical assurance on which to act; but so as to exclude divine faith. The church, I am told, tells me a book is divine; and so I have divine faith in what is said in the book. But I have, on their own shewing, only human grounds for believing that the church tells me the truth. I cannot, therefore, have certainty which is of a divine order, that God has said what is in the book; I have only a fallible, or human ground, for believing it.

Remark further, that the church, on its own confession, reveals nothing. It professes to be preserved in the faith and to define it when it is called in question. It is only infallible in knowing and expressing what is revealed already; that is, its representatives, or representative and head, are. The question is, ought not the church to have directly what is revealed? This is what is objected to. The faithful are incapable of understanding what Paul, and Peter, and John, or Christ Himself, said to them; though they did say it, and address it to them expressly. This is the real point. The faithful who do believe, that is the church, cannot have, without a written permission, what the apostles said and have left written for them; but of this we have spoken. Infallibility belongs to God. God has spoken and left written records of what He has addressed to the church; the church professes to reveal nothing; but only to hinder the faithful from having what God has revealed.

And remark further, that this is to get in authoritatively between God and the soul; so that God should have no direct authority over it. It is admitted that the mass of truths revealed are the matter of faith, always accepted

and taught; only definition is necessary, when heresies or questions spring up; but the thing defined was always believed.

Father O. Just so.

N. But the church can have none of them directly; not even the undisputed truth, unless by written permission. Besides, I deny the fact. The pope's infallibility was never dreamt of, but denied by the early church; though when disputes as to worldly precedence began, a wholly unchristian and antichristian thing, precedence was allowed to him because he was the prelate of the ancient capital city of the empire, and expressly on this ground, and his prescribing in matters of faith, or even order in the council, or Rome's rank49 is expressly denied in the Council of Chalcedon.

But this is not my object now, and has been spoken of. But, if it defines what was always the faith of the church, still these things were not held as of faith before; though, if revealed to be faith, and that is what is defined, they were always of faith in nature and obligation, yet never really held and possessed by the church; nay, often denied. Thus, the infallibility of the pope is now alleged to be a matter of faith. This was denied by the assembled hierarchy representing the whole church at Constance and Basel—to say nothing of Pisa— was denied formally by the Gallican church, synodically; never held by the Greeks; and in fact denied in every possible way by the acts of all the various parts of the church; for theoretically it was never dreamt of for centuries. The Council of Chalcedon would not accept of Leo's famous letter defining the faith, when

required to do so; but because it agreed with other more authoritative documents.

Now I am not discussing the infallibility, but using it to shew that the pretension to define the faith by the church is really a proof that, on matters of faith, the church, at least what has been called such, had been in error as to matters of faith; the whole, or very large parts of it, for centuries.

For the defined point was, it is alleged, matter of faith always, but not believed; often denied, till defined: as, for instance, the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary; which the greatest body in the church—the authorised judges of heresy— constantly denied, and openly wrote against for five centuries, that is, almost as long as they existed, and to our own days.

Father O. Yes, but they were not obligatory as matter of faith, till they were defined.

N*. How not obligatory? Were they not always revealed, and really articles of a faith which never changes?

Father O. Yes, but till they were defined the faithful were not bound to hold them as such.

N*. Worse and worse. This is terrible. Here it is acknowledged that truths were revealed of God, always part of the faith in themselves; but, though God had revealed them, the faithful were not bound to hold them till they were defined by ecclesiastical authority. That is, God’s truth when revealed is not obligatory till the church makes it so.

Father O. We do not say that. But it was not put forward as such till the church was obliged to define it by its being called in question.

N*. But it was revealed; and if held, the authority of the church is not necessary to receive the truth. But further, the contrary to what has been since defined has been held by large bodies of the church, or even all of it; so that the subject was before the minds of the faithful, and before doctors, and even assembled councils; and they have been in error as to matters of faith, when the question was before them.

And now tell me this, Was not every soul bound, for its salvation, to believe in the divinity of the blessed Lord before the Council of Nice? That, when truth is denied, godly care should be taken, individually and collectively, to maintain it, is all very right. But this is not the question; but whether the church's definition makes it obligatory. Were not souls bound to believe in the divinity of Christ before the Council of Nice, as a truth their soul's salvation was concerned in?

Father O. Of course they were. It was always the true faith.

N*. Very well—they were bound to believe what is divine truth before the church so called defined it. But they were not bound to believe in the immaculate conception or the pope's infallibility, and in point of fact very large bodies, counted orthodox now, hold these to be wrong, or the whole church did not hold these doctrines. Yet there was no peril of their salvation. Now there is. Nay, there were those, and many called saints among those, who openly denied what is now necessary to salvation as being 01 the faith, and i» is alleged, always was.

It is thus evident that the whole system is false; that, according to your system, the church so called gives divine authority to these doctrines, an authority which

they could not claim before, though God had revealed them. The persons might be wrong, as you say. Be it so. But the doctrines they denied had no divine claim on their faith till the so-called church gave it. They died denying it, in the odour of sanctity. You hold the faithful are bound to believe in the infallibility of the pope because the church has defined it; but that it was revealed before already, really a matter of faith, yet nobody bound to believe it. That is, God's revelation gave it no authority; the church's statement of it does. Yet even you dare not deny that there are truths which a man must believe at the peril of his soul's salvation, before even they are defined at all. You know very well that there is a faith that saves, and notions convenient at times to be established as such.

And here I have to accuse your writers of want of honesty, even in their statements in these matters. Thus Dr. Manning says, quite quietly, there had been eighteen councils before this last at Rome;50 but says nothing of Pisa, Constance, Basel. But he cannot honestly leave them out; for parts at least of them were confirmed by the popes. They are called general by Bellarmine. Pisa deposed two popes and appointed a third, Alexander V; and the next Alexander calls himself VI, so that Bellarmine says its authority is so far owned. It is therefore neither approved nor disapproved. But then its authority was superior to the pope. The same is true of Constance. The popes have no existence but by its authority; and, as I have said, parts of it at any rate are confirmed.

Many allege, from positive historical documents, that the pope did confirm it as a council. The facts are these. When all was ready for the dissolution of the council, the

ambassadors of Poland and Lithuania demanded the formal condemnation of certain errors. Then follows, in the Acts of the Council (Sess. 45), “Our most holy lord the pope said, in replying to the aforesaid, that he would hold and inviolably observe all and singular the things conciliarly determined, concluded, and decreed, and never go against them in any way, and approved and ratified the things themselves so conciliarly done, and not in any other way. And that the same he caused to be said by the organ of Augustine de Pisa, the aforesaid fiscal and advocate of the sacred consistory, who, in the name of the pope, sought public instruments to be made (acts to be drawn up) by the proto-notaries, and notaries ordained and deputed to write the acts of the said council.”

He further, formally, by a public act, confirmed, not only the condemnation of Huss, Jerome, and Wicklifle, but the following test of faith to whosoever was suspected of favouring them:—It contained (in what he confirmed) “whether he believes that that which the sacred Council of Constance, representing the universal church, has approved, and approves to the advantage (favorem) of faith and salvation of souls; that this is to be approved and held by all the faithful of Christ; and that what it has condemned and condemns as being contrary to faith and good morals, this is to be held, believed, and assented to by the same for condemned.”

This the pope confirms of his proper movement and certain knowledge, with all the usual papal formalities (Hard., Conc. 9, 914). That he was an intriguing, unprincipled, tyrannical man, so that his own cardinals were against him, is true, and it was only by word of mouth he confirmed all conciliarly done, though the

instruments were called for. But the testing question which owned Constance fully is signed. No honest man could deny he confirmed it. He may have meant to play fast and loose and to deceive. Did Martin declare this to be a general council or not? That he did in writing. As to order in the church, he was not pope if the council had not title to make him so. Nor is there any true succession at all. Why does Dr. Manning say there are eighteen, and keep a profound silence as to this? There are twenty-one more or less owned by Roman Catholics; but these three are (as Paul Sarpi says of one of them) one of the secrets kept close at Rome. The councils are above the popes if they are councils; the popes are not popes if they are not.

I do not go further into Basel. Bellarmine recognizes that some particular decrees were confirmed, and that it was well begun but badly ended; a singular thing, if it was under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, which, if well begun, it certainly was; and if pope and council and all can turn away from the Holy Ghost's guidance, how can we trust them? The conduct of Pope Eugenius as to it was a miserable tissue of political intrigue, and we have already spoken of it. He set up another council, and the council set up another pope, and there was a compromise. My object now is to shew that you cannot trust the statements of papal advocates, even if they are archbishops. There is no real doubt that Eugenius' friends stole the seal of the Council of Basel to use it for a decree to suit his purposes.

But we may return to the marks of the true church. We have found little security in them as yet. We have still to look at holiness and apostolicity.

You first allege doctrines, and speak of the Trinity and the Incarnation, death and atonement of the consubstantial Son of God. Now these are most holy and fundamental doctrines. We cannot esteem them too highly, or hold too fast to them, through grace. But where is the person, according to your system, to have learned them when he has not yet got the church? Your whole system fails in its base here. Either the seeker after the true church has learned all these immensely important, saving, and vital doctrines without the church, or cannot use them to find it. Your ground of reasoning is absurd. I can understand natural conscience making a man feel that what professes to be of God ought to be godly. But that such doctrines as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and con-substantiality of the Son are the means of judging of the true church, if the true church is to teach and give authority to the scriptures, is simply absurd.

Upon the face of it you suppose a person to be a true orthodox Christian, holding fast the deepest doctrines of Christianity, so as to use them for a test before he has found the true church, according to your view of it. He is a true, good, orthodox Christian, and all Dr. Milner's talk about rinding a book printed by the king's printer, etc., is nonsense, an attempt to throw dust in people's eyes; for he supposes a man to have learned the most important truths of Christianity without the church at all, and to use them as a means to judge which is the true one.

But then he is in a greater difficulty. The Greek church holds the doctrines, the Protestant Episcopal church, the Lutheran, the Presbyterian.51 So that as a means of learning which is the true church, the confession of

these truths is of no avail, for many rival communions hold them. I have already remarked that the distinctive doctrines of popery are very unholy, as that the church has provided an easier way for remission than contrition, and that penance can be commuted for money.

Our friend Dr. Milner next comes to the means of holiness. Here we are in greater perplexity; for I must hold not only fundamental truths, but all the Roman sacramental system, to be able to find the true church. This is the cart before the horse with a vengeance.

Now the early church called a hundred and fifty things a sacrament—every solemn truth mysteriously expressed. And as to what is now called a sacrament, if I look at Justin Martyr,52 Tertullian,53 Chrysostom,54 Cyril of Jerusalem,55 Augustine,56 I find two, baptism and the Lord's Supper, distinctly referred to, and the rest ignored. Anointing accompanying baptism is spoken of as fully by Cyril or TertuUian, but no other such ordinances are taught; and Lombard does not attempt, nor does T. Aquinas (De Sacr., 45); nor I am assured (for I do not pretend to have read them all) do the rest of the schoolmen, who make seven, attempt to quote the Fathers for them. It was Lombard defined them as seven (Lib. 3, Diss. 2, etc.).

If I turn to scripture, which alone has authority with me, I find distinct reference in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, and an allusion in chapter 12:13 to these two ordinances as characterizing Christians, while their institution by the Lord is unquestioned. Thus if I take ancient authority even—still more if I take the sure word of God—I find you wrong as to the sacraments; if I would take modern,

you allege the Greek church. But this is an additional difficulty; for then how am I to choose between you by this sign? I find two who have it, and both unscriptural.

Father O. And what do you make of extreme unction?

N*. Anointing was used not for the dying, but as a sign when people were healed. Your sacrament of extreme unction has not the least ground to stand upon. Thus, in Mark 6:13 we read, the disciples, sent forth to work miracles, anointed many that were sick with oil, and healed them. So in James, the elders of the church were by the prayer of faith to restore to health, and the Lord should raise them up. But if your anointed sick man, on the contrary, is raised up, the unction goes thenceforth for nothing; it is only pretended to wipe away the remains of sin when men are dying; and yet people go to purgatory after all.

But we may have a word on another point—miracles as a proof of holiness—before we turn to the real question. I speak of them only as a true proof of the church. I deny entirely, in the first place, that miracles are the criterion of truth. Many believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles that He did; but Jesus did not commit Himself to them, for He knew all men. That is, a faith founded solely on miracles was of no value whatever. Again, in the time of the great tribulation there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they should deceive the very elect. Again, of the man of sin, the son of perdition, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the

truth that they might be saved. Jannes and Jambres wrought many, though God confounded them before Moses. So, in Deuteronomy 13, the case is put of a man giving a sign or a wonder, given as proof and happening, to lead away from the truth of the divine testimony and Jehovah Himself; and it is said, “Thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” It is certain, then, that miracles are positively not a criterion of truth, and, indeed, a number of Fathers insist on this.57 When truth and especially the revelation of Christ came, God graciously gave miracles confirming the word; but He begat souls by the word of truth, never by miracles, though, when the truth was received and the heart disposed by grace, the works surely confirmed the word. So scripture puts it, Hebrews 2, “confirming the word by signs following.” And in John 15, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but,” etc. And elsewhere the Lord says, “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works’ sake.” In a word, the word testifies of Christ and the Father’s love; and to establish its efficacy and claim, the works are added. And the character of the miracles is of all importance here. Christ’s miracles (the cursing the fruitless fig-tree alone excepted, which only confirmed the truth of what I say, for there rebellious Israel, man under the old covenant, was figuratively judged as having leaves but no fruit) were the expression of the power of divine goodness present in the world in man, the incarnate Lord, who, by a word, removed every fruit and effect of sin.

Again it is striking in Israel. Signs are wrought to establish God's religion under Moses—they were wrought by Elijah and Elisha in the midst of Israel, when Israel had departed from Jehovah; but in Judah (save one sign given by Isaiah) where God's word was already owned, and His temple as yet stood, no miracles whatever are wrought. The effect of the word in the conscience is what is looked for. Further, if we compare saints' pretended miracles, or other legends of the kind, the difference in their nature strikes the heart and conscience at once. In Christ, or even in His apostles by His power, we find a perfect conformity in the miracles to His Person and mission, and word: the hungry fed, or as He says to John's messengers, "the sick healed, the dead raised, the lame walk, the blind see, demons are cast out, the gospel is preached to the poor," the effect, "blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." As I have already said, His divine power present in goodness, setting aside in men the power of Satan already vanquished. The strong man being bound, his goods were spoiled, as the Lord expresses it. In that He, as man, in His sovereign goodness, had entered into conflict with him in the wilderness, afte.r His baptism by John, the outward effects of sin being in the world, were set aside.

Now if we compare legendary accounts, what do we find? I am almost ashamed to recount such things of the blessed Lord. I do not speak of the Roman church receiving all the miracles I refer to, but I cite them to shew the taste of early ecclesiastical writers and their frauds. The Lord and other boys were playing, and one fell from the top of the house, the rest fled, and the Lord remained. The parents of the dead child came and

charged Him with throwing him down; He approached the dead child and said, Zenuine, who threw you down? The dead child answered, You did not throw me down, but such an one did. His mother sent Him to the well to get water, and when He took the vessel up full, it was broken, and so He brought the water gathered up in His cloak, and His mother hid all these things, and kept them in her heart. He was with other boys making fish-ponds and mud-sparrows. A boy came to destroy them because it was the sabbath; he destroyed the children's fish-ponds, and the child Jesus laid His hands on the sparrows, and they fled away piping. The boy came near His fish-pond, and the water disappeared; and He said, "As the water has disappeared, so shall you," and immediately he dried up. Another boy met Him as He was returning home in the evening, and knocked Him over in running hastily; "As you have knocked against me," said He, "so fall, and do not rise again"; and the boy tumbled down the same hour and expired. A master was teaching Him his alphabet, and, on the child asking the meaning of "aleph," stretched out his hand to strike Him, when his hand dried up, and he died. And then Joseph and Mary would not let Him go out any more; for whoever opposed Him, they said, was struck with death. Other stories there are of many boys bitten by serpents also, and healed by His clothes by the hand of divine Mary—but I suppose we have enough. "But Dr. Milner has quoted, among others, those of the great St. Martin of Tours, and of St. Francis Xavier. Let us take these two patterns of Romish miracle—eminent examples and at different periods, some one thousand years apart, and surely men devoted to the cause they had at heart. I will recount some alleged miracles of St. Martin, called the apostle of Gaul, as St. Francis Xavier is called the

apostle of the Indies. I quote from the same book as Dr. Milner, his life by Sulpitius Severus. “When Martin put his foot out of his cell, a couple of miles from the church, all those possessed with devils in the church shewed he was coming, so that the others knew the moment. I saw,” says the historian biographer (Dial. 3, 6), “one caught up into the air as Martin was coming—suspended on high, with his hands stretched out, his feet unable to touch the ground. St. Martin prayed for them. There were those who, their feet being carried up on high, hung as if from a cloud, yet their garments did not fall down over their face lest the naked part of their body should put people to shame. He met a furious cow that had gored several and was rushing at him. He told her to stand, and she did; and then he saw a devil on her back, and ordered him off; and he went, and the cow was quiet. The cow knew very well what had happened, and came and knelt down before Martin, then, on Martin’s order, went and found the herd “(Dial. 2, 9). He was very familiar with demons, knew when it was Jupiter and when Mercury, the most troublesome of all; and when Sulpitius and Gallus went to see him, they had to wait outside—he was talking, as he told them afterwards, with Agnes and Thecla and Mary (deceased persons held to be saints); he said he was often talking with Peter and Paul. Then suddenly a whole lot of devils came, whom Martin denounced by their names. Jove was a brute, he said, and stupid. They beset his dying bed (Let. 3, to Bassula). “Why are you standing there, bloody beast? he said. [He did not imitate Michael the archangel, at any rate.] Thou shalt find nothing in me, O fatal one.” In these conversations he had promised pardon to the devil if he repented, telling him the judgment-day was near, crimes were pardoned by the

conversation of a better life, and if he even then left off following after men and repented of his deeds, he himself, trusting in the Lord, promised him the mercy of Christ.

Now compare this with the Lord's life and words and the miracles themselves, and let any Christian man say, have they the least similitude? Are they a testimony to the Son of God, to the very nature and dealings of God toward the world in grace? or are they vaunting an individual by absurd exploits? One of the anchorites in Egypt was visited by an enormous lioness; the anchorite followed it; her cubs were blind, the anchorite stroked them and gave them sight, and the lioness brought him the skin of a curious beast to wear (Dial. 1, 9). Another lived naked on Mount Sinai, and, when at last seen, said, "He who was visited by men could not be by angels."

I may mention another, as shewing the character of the miracles and the credulity of men's minds when once this system was given in to. Paulinus, the same that complains of their mixing drunkenness with their celebration of his patron saint, St. Felix, relates that a countryman had two capital bullocks which were stolen; the countryman sought them in vain; no marks were to be found where they have been driven. He goes to the said St. Felix, pleading with him to send the bullocks back; that he had trusted him, he really had kept his bullocks, and he was answerable for them; that as he kept them, he should hold him for being in league with the robbers if he did not bring them back; that he saw and knew all things, and therefore could do it, for he knew where they were. He might pardon the robbers, but he must have the bullocks (the pardon belonging to the saint, but the bullocks to himself); he would not go

after them nor leave the place; he would give up his life on the threshold if he did not bring them back; and so spent the whole day praying. The martyr heard him joyfully, and laughed with the Lord at his reproaches. He helps him. He is thrust away from the face of Felix to shut the doors at night, and goes and lies down in his stable, crying still on the saint; and frightened by a noise outside, there are the oxen come home without a guide! It may be said this is only the credulity of a rustic. But the account is of Paulinus of Nola, a saint, a prelate, a correspondent of the famous Augustine. (S. Pauhni Opera, 433, Ed. Mur., Verona, 1736.)

It has been remarked by others that up to a.d. 350 the heathen ridiculed the Christians for worshipping a dead man; after that, for worshipping saints' and martyrs' tombs; and Augustine tells us that, above all, the monks drove a lively trade in relics. We have already seen it forbidden. Strange to say, the heathen insisted on the one universal God and Father, reproaching the Christians with going to martyrs and their memories, as they were called.

Father O. But they did other miracles than these.

N*. Which rest on the same authority and spiritual discernment as these do, and no one can read the accounts of them without seeing that they are legends adapted to the taste and spirit of the age in which they are related. And remark, dear sir, you are increasing the difficulty to a sincere soul, because in saying this you admit that instead of incontrovertible miracles proving the word (and Martin, you cannot deny, was quite unsound too in doctrine, for he offers pardon to Satan as the day of judgment was near), the miracles themselves

have to be proved which is quite another thing. Christ's miracles were done openly when no man could deny them, and day after day, always, uniformly the power of Satan quailed before Him, and so of the apostles. Fleury admits the quantities of miracles and false relics that credulity believed in, and Dr. Milner admits they have to be proved. He says indeed Rome proves them carefully. But Rome, who proves them and approves them, accredits herself by them. It was not so with Christ's. He appeals to all the world, to His adversaries. They were open, constant and accrediting God's glory, not man's fame. The name of Jesus was made glorious by it; not Ignatius Loyola, or F. Xavier. Did giving sight to a lioness' cubs, and a lioness bringing the spoils of some poor slain beast glorify God's nature and character, or set up an anchorite and his wonderful doings? And, remark, Rome's provings are after the miracle-doer is dead, and it is not a living power which constantly proves itself, and the present interference of God's goodness to everybody around. It is accrediting the man, and the party he belongs to, nothing else. You and Dr. Milner are using it to that end. And the court of Rome approves the miracle in order to its being approved itself.

"I admit," says Dr. Milner, "that a vast number of incredible and false miracles, as well as other fables, have been forged by some and believed by other Catholics in every age of the church." They then have to be proved, and all is still uncertain. Not only so that many false miracles have been forged by Roman Catholics, but the Fathers admit that the heretics have done miracles. Irenaeus tells us that heretics cannot do miracles of goodness, nor cast out all devils, only those

they have introduced themselves, though one might think these were all (lib. 2, 31); and in lib. 1, 13 he states that a certain Marcus wrought miracles, and made others prophesy. Cyprian tells us that miracles are no proof in themselves of any one being in the right way though admirable things, quoting Matthew 7:22 (De Unitate Ecc. 114, ed. Fell). So Jerome in his Commentary on Galatians (lib. 1, c. 3, v. 5) distinctly states that heretics do many miracles and think they have a proof of their faith by it, and appeals to Matthew 7 as the Lord's testimony that they do not prove that they are right. Augustine again, refers to Pontius and Donatus working miracles, and says if they removed mountains and had not charity they are nothing. He refers to Mark 13, that false christs and false prophets shall arise, doing signs and wonders: therefore he says the Bridegroom has warned us that we ought not to be deceived by miracles (Evang. Joh. Tract. 13).

But others of the Fathers are still stronger. I do not quote the imperfect work of St. Chrysostom, which says that miracles are wholly done away (levata). It is accused of being Arian, and Baronius rages against it for more reasons than that, I suspect.58 But the statement of the author as to the fact may have weight as having no connection with his heresies if guilty. He declares, as a notorious fact, that miracles had wholly ceased. But the true Chrysostom says that in his time signs were not to be looked for, were restrained (sunestalmena), and were no criterion of a saint according to scripture; that in the beatitudes they are not spoken of and in the reprobate whom he rejects they are (Vol. i, 136, 7, Ben. ed.).

And again Augustine (De Unit, Ecc, c. 49 or 19) says, Do not let him say it is true because Donatus or Pontius has done such-and-such wonderful things, or because he has been heard at the memories of our dead, or has had such a vision in dreaming. Let such figments of lying men or potents of deceiving spirits rather be removed. For either they are not true, or if any wonderful things are done by heretics, we ought to be the more on our guard, and he then quotes Matthew 24:25; 1 Timothy 4:1.

Again, Bernard, proclaimed after his death by others as the greatest miracle-worker that ever had been (Life by Philip de Claravelli, Opera, vol. 2, 1176, and Bellarmine de Nat. Ec. 4, 14), declares himself that miracles were not wrought in his age or by excessively few at any rate (perpauci); he comforts the monks as to the text, * these signs shall follow them that believe,' that then nobody would be saved, if believers were to work these signs, for they were not wrought, but that new tongues were spoken when pious religion replaced vicious, and holiness, poisonous lusts, and so on (Sermo 1, de Asc. Dom., vol. 1, 918, par. 1719).

Dr. John Henry Newman goes farther; he tells us that no Catholic is bound to believe for the most part any particular miracle, only in general that the church has power to do them. His words are these, "Though it is a matter of faith with Catholics that miracles never cease in the church, still that this or that professed miracle really took place is for the most part only a matter of opinion, and when it is believed, whether on testimony or tradition, it is not believed to the exclusion of all doubt whether about the fact or its miraculousness" (Gram, of Assent, 2nd ed. 193, 4). Here

clearly the miracle is an object, not a means of faith. In his hands they cease wholly to be a proof. For supposing I doubt of each particular one, my belief in the church's power to do them is gone, or rests on wholly different ground. In the first life of Ignatius by Ribadeneyra there was no hint of miracles;59 when Ignatius was to be canonized, the account of his life is full of them. Among the rest he raised a hen, accidentally drowned, to life, Xavier invoking him in India, and the hen remained in absolute celibacy ever after; and Xavier routed a great army by his presence. Within a few years, it was alleged that the Virgin had visited a little peasant girl on a mountain in France. The local prelate issued a pastoral against it, but it was attractive. The government took it up and proved the fraud in open court; but then the wind turned round, and church authorities made a great deal of it, and pilgrimages were made there.

But we must have a few words on St. Xavier, surely a self-sacrificing man—one would fain hope from the best motives, but if so, only proving the evil of the system he was in. He carried on his work by the force of the arms of the Portuguese; one of his miracles was Ignatius' miraculous appearance in India, heading the troops, and routing the infidels. The first multitudes whom he is said to have converted already called themselves Christians, but had been made so by the arms of the Portuguese without knowing a word of what it meant. They did not understand the Portuguese nor the Portuguese them. Xavier got some who knew his and their language a little, and translated the creed, the commandments, Lord's prayer, and a supplication to the Virgin, learned them by heart (though subsequent statements give him the gift of tongues) himself, made them repeat them,

and say, Lord give me to believe, and then a short word to the Virgin, and then, as sufficiently tested, baptized them. It went so far both in the conduct and relapses of the converts that Ignatius himself was dissatisfied. “Sometimes,’* writes Xavier, “I baptize a whole city in a day. Much of this success is to be attributed to the Viceroy of India. By his endeavour we have now thirty cities of Christians on this coast. He has lately given four thousand pieces of gold to those who with all diligence profess the truth in the cities of the Christians.” Xavier promotes in the same way the Viceroy’s efforts, organizing expeditions, and enforcing the Christians to behold Jesus Christ crucified before their eyes during the battle. And he announced far away from the scene, “Jesus Christ has conquered for us, the enemy is routed with very great slaughter.” But what was the result? He left India in a few years, disgusted and avowing himself useless, and went to Japan.

Now as to some of the miraculous events:—One night as he was praying to the Virgin the devils attacked him in crowds, and beat him so that he was half-dead with the blows, and forced to keep his bed for some days. He spoke so that in one sentence people of ten languages understood him all the same time. An island was infested with tigers; he sprinkled holy water on them and ordered them to leave and never come back, and so it was. I may remark here that Ignatius Loyola himself is stated to have been horribly beaten by devils so as to cry out, and another ran in twice to see what was the matter, and then was forbidden to come.

But to return to Xavier. On a voyage a child fell into the sea. Xavier asks the Mahometan father, Would he believe if his child were restored? He said, Yes. Three

days after, the child appeared on the deck; neither he, nor anyone, knew whence it came. Again he gave a chaplet of the Virgin Mary to an infidel. The ship was wrecked; they made a raft, he thought himself with Xavier as in ecstasy; and when he recovered his natural sense, found himself safe on shore, all his companions lost. It is said he raised the dead several times. It is stated he spoke with tongues; but it is quite certain, both in India and Japan, by his own statement, that he used interpreters to begin his work. His conversions were really none.60 He converted a whole island, and built churches, in some three years, and left; when gone, through the influence of the chief of another island, the churches were pulled down, and all turned idolaters again. The Portuguese sent an expedition, and they all turned Christians again. That he was a man of indomitable energy and rare courage, is unquestionable. But all his work in India, Japan, and in general the Jesuits' work there and in Abyssinia, has come to nothing. Where European dominion has been established, the Roman Catholic system has continued, as in Brazil, and similar countries.

Now that God can do miracles at any time, if He pleases, no Christian can deny as to His power to do it; that He should interfere extraordinarily for faithful men, or martyrs sacrificing their life for Christ, would be no surprise to me. That He answers the prayer of faith, so that the sick should be healed—where the prayer of faith is—I do not doubt a moment either. James tells us so, and John likewise. Nay, that one having the Spirit of Christ should control the power of Satan, and cast him out, ought to be the case. But when I find in scripture, that true miracles confirm the truth and word of God,

and the truth is not present; that faith, founded on miracles, the Lord accounts of no value; that there is no testimony in these to Christ, but to the Virgin Mary, and Ignatius or some other ambitious human being, or head of a party, to make good his party claims; when I find them multiplied continually in the accounts of these persons, as occasion called for them; when I find, that instead of having power over demons, it is alleged that Satan had dreadful power over them, and the demons beat them furiously; when I find the miracles suited entirely to the superstitions of the age, and the object not to be the truth of Christ and the word, I see ground to disbelieve the most, altogether; and if power be manifested in some, to judge that it is not the power of God. That, if a devoted man—if even superstitious men were devoting themselves to God in sincerity—God should extraordinarily help him in difficulty, I have no disposition to deny.

God gives counter-checks that His people may not be deceived. Miracles must be for the truth, or they are not to be received. If they are for what is not the truth, the worker of them is to be utterly rejected; Deut. 13. I add that it is revealed that Satan will work wonderful signs, to deceive, if possible, the elect; and further, that it is only on the side of Satan, that signs and miracles are stated to occur in the last days. Then they will. It is the sign of the coming of the man of sin. It cannot therefore indeed by itself be the test of truth.

Further, false and pretended miracles began early in the professing church, because there was this desire to aggrandize men by wonders. In the earlier history of the church, this was resisted. An imperial edict of a.d. 386 forbade carrying and selling a martyr. At a council held

at Carthage in a.d. 401 it was ordered that all false martyrs' memories, and unauthenticated relics, should be destroyed; and if popular tumults hindered it, the people should be warned (Can. 14); and the connection is pretty evident with Can. 15, when the emperors are to be begged to destroy the similar remains of idolatrous holy places, fixed by dreams or like superstitions.

We have already seen how deliberately, by Gregory Thaumaturgus, and in Africa, the martyrs' relics, and memories, so-called, were deliberately substituted for pagan holy places, to draw the people off from them. And they got drunk in church to their honour; as they had to Theseus or Hercules. And the Virgin Mary, mother of God, displaced Cybele, the mother of the gods, with the church's, so-called, full sanction. Our friend, Martin of Tours, was useful in this in Gaul. A martyr altar, consecrated by bishops, and frequented by the pious, he suspected, as old priests could not tell whose it really was; so he went to it, and asked the Lord to shew whose it was, and then saw a sordid fierce ghost on his left. He commanded him to tell his name and deserts; and he confessed he was a thief and no martyr; he in punishment, and the martyrs in glory. I add another, that follows in Severus (Sulp. Sev. Vita Martini, 8, 9). He met a crowd, which he supposed to be an idolatrous procession, with an image. It was really a funeral. At some distance, he lifted up the cross and commanded them to stop and lay down their burden. They could not move, with all their efforts, and at last rolled round with a ridiculous vertigo, and laid down their burden. Finding that it was a funeral, he lifted up his hand and gave them the power of going away and taking the body. This is astonishingly like mesmerism.61

I forgot to add, that in imitation of Saul, in the thief's ghost case, his companions heard the voice of him that spake, but saw no person.

The present use of miracles is not to testify of Christ, but to what is called the church; and individual glory is the fruit of superstition, used to confirm false teaching; and many are confessedly false, so that the civil power had to forbid hawking relics about for sale, once opposed by the ecclesiastical authority, now gloried in, in its most absurd and superstitious shapes. But, I repeat, I wholly reject miracles as a test of the truth. They confirmed the word, but the word is the test of truth. When it was settled62 that no church could be consecrated without relics, a supply was to be found. The catacombs at Rome supplied them; and when no one knew anything about the bones they got, they gave a saint's name to them; and it was called baptizing them (Mabillon, Posth. Works, 2, 257-287, quoted by Maitland, Catacombs, 181).

And now allow me to suggest that there is another witness of holiness, which it would be important to have if we are to judge of the church by it; and that is, the church itself being holy, really and practically. In that there is something; for "by their fruits ye shall know them." But I never find this in the holiness alleged as proof of the true church by Romanists. Dr. Pusey reminds Mr. Newman that it is only by faith we can know the church to be holy. What a bitter sarcasm! If it is to be a proof, would it not be a nice way to know it by fact, not by a few individuals of questionable sanctity; but the body being taken in the mass, by the practical holiness produced by the Spirit of God? And here I shall be brief, for it is dismal to think of: but the church of

Rome has been the unholiest body of persons probably ever found in the world; and their leaders, the clergy, the worst of them; and the popes, perhaps the worst of them all. Even so early as Cyprian, he declares (De lapsis, 124, Ox. ed.) that the Decian persecution was a light chastisement for nominal Christians. Jerome (Ep. ad Nep., 52, ed. Vail., 1, 261) has to mourn that the Emperor has to make an edict to prevent the clergy surrounding dying beds, to get money from the sick by legacies, an edict not needed for heathen priests; and declares that they were characterized by excessive luxury. Drunkenness in church to celebrate the martyrs' memories was common; Augustine speaks of it (Ep. 22, 29, ed. Ben.) in Africa and elsewhere; and Prudentius in Europe, both testify it. Not only does he state the fact that they mixed their cups with the holy thresholds (Natal. 9 and elsewhere); but, though regretting and disapproving it, he thinks such errors are to be pardoned, because error breaks into rude minds, fancying the saints delight in it. A strange holiness for teachers and taught! This was in the fourth century. Long before this, the pretended holiness of great saints was sleeping with the other sex; proving how holy they were above sinning. And this was common enough to have a name given to it, and, at last, to be forbidden.63 I mention so sad a thing here with reluctance, only because it came in quite early in the primitive church, as it is called. It was prevalent in the second and third centuries, and is freely spoken of as excellent, in a book read in the churches (the Shepherd of Hermas, 3, torn. 9, 11), in the middle of the second century, long believed to be the Hermas known to Paul. Irenaeus charges the Gnostics with it. Later down, what pretended to be the church became a sink of corruption.

Thus, in the tenth century, Ratherius, bishop of Verona, charges the clergy with corrupt avarice, and universal incontinency; the popes, he says, many being married, were warriors, perjurers, heretics, gamblers, and drunkards. There were among the clergy, bigamists, concubine-keepers, conspirators, perjurers, drunkards, usurers. The cause of the ruin of all the people was the clergy. The Italian clergy despise the canons the most, because they are the most given to impudicity and minister to this vice by ragouts, and excess of wine (Dupin, vol. 8, 19, Fleury, 12, 193).

Damianus, a great champion of Rome, who reduced Milan, till then independent, under its authority, declares the clergy were given up to unnatural crimes. And it was alleged they could not be deposed, as people must have the sacraments. He demanded they should be deposed. The pope answered, they deserved it; but he would depose (out of clemency) only the most immoral. The canons imposed only trifling penances for fornication: Damianus insisted they must be forgeries. Fleury remarks on the pope's answer, "which leads us to suppose that the numbers were too great to treat them with rigour." Pope Alexander II got Damianus' book, and hid it; of which he complains bitterly. In the Romish Council of 1059 he wished to take the matter up; but it was refused, as likely to produce scandal (Fleury, 12, 532, Dupin). Already in 888, in two councils (Mog. and Met., Hardouin 6), canons were made against the danger of incest among the clergy; and in the Council of (Enamheuse, like, and, as it is said there, worse disorders are denounced. In 1045 Rome was full of robbers and assassins, who drew the sword at the altar, to carry off the offerings to use for wickedness.

The pope threatened and excommunicated in vain, and at last met it with arms, and drove them away.

Father O. But these were the dark ages, when everything was in disorder and confusion.

N*. The last things I have spoken of were. But this is the church, to be proved such by the mark of holiness, and never to fail; and, allow me to ask, was it not in these very ages that the popes and their church had the greatest power and influence?

Father O. And if they had, they used it to great blessing, establishing the Truce of God, and protecting the weak.

N*. They may have balanced, as the only central power, the rude warriors of feudal times; but, after all, history shews them using it persistently, and with constant craft, for self-aggrandisement, till the pope made the Emperor give his neck to mount on his mule by. But with this I have nothing to do here. We are looking for holiness as a mark of the true church. Can you honestly say it was found here?

Father O. You see yourself there were holy men condemning it all, and the pope too; and canons were made against it.

N*. Canons imposing trifling penances on habitual fornication, and the ecclesiastical authorities not daring to enforce them even; and a Roman council refusing to take it up, for fear of scandal. I have quoted your own authors for these statements.

Father O. Dupin and Fleury were very far from respecting the chair of St. Peter as they ought.

N*. But they are sincere and respectable Roman Catholics, and refer to contemporary writers, partisans

of the Roman See; and Baronius, whom you cannot deny to have been as attached to it as possible, we have already seen declaring that for a hundred years he must quote the popes to date his history by; but how could he own as popes people put in because they were sons of powerful mistresses of the Marquis of Tuscany, or of the popes themselves? No, if holiness is to be taken as a mark of the true church, the church of Rome is not that true church. If you allow me, I will say a word of what scripture says as to the whole subject before I close; but I am now only following what is alleged as to the true church. That there were those inside and outside the Romish body who sighed and groaned over the abominations committed, is true. Your St. Bernard declared that all that was wanting in his day was to have Antichrist revealed; and hunted saints who left Rome were a witness to the revolt of consciences against these enormities.

Father O. But they were heretics and Manicheans.

N*. I think it can hardly be denied that one class of the Albigenses were, another not. But the Waldenses were not at all so. That is evident by the sentences pronounced by the Inquisition itself, who only treat them as schismatics.64 There were many of whom no certain judgment can be formed, as may be seen by the letter of Evervinus of Cologne to Bernard, and Eckbert's tract. Those who came to England, led by a certain Gerard, were, says William of Neuburg, sound in substance as to the Supreme Physician, but unsound as to the remedies; that is, they were sound in faith as to Christ, but rejected Roman superstitions as to the sacraments.65 The state of professing Christendom was such, that it gave occasion to convulsive efforts for good, and for evil

under protest of good. Waldo sought what was good; and somewhat later such men as Gerard, Groot, Thomas-a-Kempis, and the fratres vitæ communis; even Wickliffe, Huss, Jerome; and, on the other hand, there were the Brethren of the Free Spirit, who were very bad; Beghards, Beguines, Lollards, whose real character it is often hard to determine. But all these— generally persecuted indeed, were they good or evil, if not subject to Rome—did not alter the general state of Christendom, which had in every way become intolerable, though nobody knew how to mend it.

Bill M. I beg your pardon, sir; I would not, of course, interrupt you, and I wished to know if Mr. O. would reply to what you say of the Catholic church. But, your reverence, what is the meaning of the church being holy, if all this be true, and Mr. N*. quotes from Roman Catholic books which I do not know, but which you do not deny to be such? If these things are true, it was not holy at all. I am all upset by what I hear.

Father O. I told you that you would be. You cannot judge from all these things, collected to blacken the church, which must be holy. Indeed, when you set about to judge for yourself, you cannot but go wrong; and I see plainly you are on the high road to infidelity.

Bill M. Well, such conduct in the church is enough to make a man an infidel. But you told me that I should look for the marks of the true church, and Dr. Milner, whom you approve so highly, tells me so; and how can I know whether it was holy or not without knowing what it was, and what it did? and surely all this dreadful wickedness was not holiness. It might turn a man an infidel; but I begin to think the word of God is something

more than ever I thought of, and that there is something I can believe there surely. There are the words of the blessed Lord, and the apostles, and the rest, as you do not deny; and if I believe them, I shall not be an infidel.

Father O. Well, you must go on your own way, and be ruined, I suppose. I do not know whether I should stay and listen to any more, only that I hoped to save you from ruin.

I do not understand what pleasure Mr. N*. can have in raking up all the wickedness he can find of unfaithful men, who are found everywhere, instead of looking at the bright and blessed examples of sanctity that are found in the Catholic church alone.

N*. Pleasure I have none, nor have I searched out the course of wicked men. The history would have been insupportable if I had. I have taken Roman Catholic accounts of the general state of their own body, and merely broad general statements—what you cannot escape if you read ecclesiastical history. You give holiness as one of the marks of the church, the best you allege. Truth you do not attempt to give as a mark, though you slip it under the head of holiness, because, if a mark, then we must seek the truth first outside the church, to know what it is, and see if your church has it; but holiness, which natural conscience, if not corrupted, seeks in that which is of God, at least when the true God is at all known, you call one to judge of the church by, in seeking the true one. How can I do this but by inquiring if the body you present to me as such is holy? That is what I have done, and not by accusations from without, but by complaints of honest men within. If you can prove it to be a body characterized by holiness, you have only

to do so; but the shameless corruptions are written on every page of her history. These awakened Wick-liffe and Huss to denounce the state of things. These put Wessal in prison. You would refuse their testimony to the evil, however notoriously true; one was burnt for his pains by the Council of Constance, after it had pledged its faith to him, because faith was not to be kept with heretics; the other, defended during his life by the Duke of Lancaster, had his bones dug up and cast away.

But I have quoted your own writers. As to saints being only found in the Roman body, I wholly deny it. That there were some godly men I do not deny, though generally persecuted, and very dark as to truth; and many called saints, anything but such; but the truest saints were hunted down on every side, then burned by your prelates and inquisition for the truth they held, giving their lives rather than give it up. There were many such, whose names live, though often in hidden archives, but whose record is rather on high. And as to the kind of saints you pretend to—those canonized by men— the Greek church have a full complement of them, and some of them as far from sanctity as need be, and those among the most famous, too, as St. Cyril, a most violent and unprincipled man; St. Jerome, the bitterest and most unforgiving and abusive; others, as Cyprian, independent of, and opposed to, Rome; or Augustine, who led the way in an African council in excommunicating all who appealed to Rome after they had decided anything in Africa. The pretension to have all the saints may do very well for ignorant people, who know nothing about the matter, but will not do for those who do. If a calendar is a proof, the Greeks have about

as full a one as you. I do not know if they have St. Veronica too.

Bill M. Who is that, sir?

N*. It is a curious history enough. There was a story, as there are many such, that some woman gave a handkerchief to wipe the face of the blessed Lord on His way to Calvary, and, as a reward, His likeness was imprinted on it. This was copied, and sold everywhere in Italy at any rate. The word Veronica is a corruption of true likeness, and then was taken to be the name of a woman; and she is in the calendar, and worshipped as such, and the handkerchief exposed to the worship, I must call it, of the multitude at St. Peter's in Rome. One dreads mixing up the very name of the blessed Lord with such things, but it is well to know how that blessed name has been brought down to profanation by the system of Roman superstition.66 Sure I am, if any one did so serve in truth that blessed One, she will not lose her reward. Happy she to have been permitted such a service. But it is not in having a handkerchief worshipped in St. Peter's, and what is a fable in itself turned into the name of a woman. Roman superstition really debases all it touches. Forgive me, Mr. O., if the feeling which bringing the holy name of the Lord into such things has led me to express itself severely.

But I will pursue, as briefly as I can, what remains of this sad history, and see if holiness is a mark to be found in the Roman ecclesiastical system, in order to recognize it as the true church. One of your own saints, Bernard, says, in his sermon on the conversion of Paul, "The whole Christian people, from the least to the greatest, has conspired against God. It is not the time to say, 'as

the people, so the priest,' for the people are not even as the priest is. They are the ministers of Christ, but serve Antichrist. All that remains is, that this ' man of sin' should be revealed." I refer to this because it attests the universality of the corruption; and, further, that what you look up to as the church—namely, the clergy—were the source of it. It was about this time that the celibacy of the clergy began to be enforced, giving occasion to endless and universal corruption. Still many priests were married, though the popes treated their wives as concubines. And people were desired to receive the sacraments from them if they were dying; only their sons were not to inherit their parishes, for these were even given as portions to daughters. In England it is admitted all the best priests were married; but the king took money for it, and so did the bishops in different countries, for allowing them to live, as they said, in concubinage, so that councils had to forbid it; but it continued (Hard. Cone, 7, 1147, 1804, 1807, 8, 31). Canons as to it are found in Hardouin, from a.d. 1217 to 1302.

Thomas Aquinas advises them to have a wife secretly, as being better than general fornication. In the canon law (Distinction, 81, c. 6) a clergyman convicted of having begotten children in the presbytery was to be deposed. But the gloss says, it is generally said a clergyman is not to be deposed for simple fornication, for few can be found without that sin. All this system of corruption went on increasing if possible; and in an address to Pope Leo, the very year of the Reformation, W. F. Picus, Lord of Mirandola, nephew of the famous Pic de Mirandola, states that the priests, having got into the state described in Romans 1, parents gave meritorious boys to

them, and these, when ruined, afterwards became priests. At an earlier period than this, before the Council of Pisa, during the schism in the papacy, Clemangis, the rector of the University of Paris, says, after a general description of the avarice and debauchery of the highest clergy, “if any one is lazy—if any one hate to work—he flees to the priesthood. As soon as he has attained to it, they diligently frequent brothels and taverns, and spend their time in drinking, eating, dining, singing, playing at dice and games; gorged and drunken, they fight, cry out, make riots, and execrate the name of God and His saints with their most polluted lips.” And he, as was commonly done, complained of their going from their nightly wickedness to serve at the divine altar. Clemangis further states that the nunneries were brothels of Venus, and that to make a girl take the veil was to give her up to prostitution.

This is the testimony of a most respectable Roman Catholic, the correspondent of kings and popes, labouring to heal the papal schism, the rector of the first university in the world. In Innocent IV’s time, Matt. Paris, p. 319 (a citation I cannot myself verify, not having his history), gives the parting address of Cardinal Hugo at Lyons, where a so-called general council had been held, saying that they had been very useful to the city; for that when they came there were only three or four brothels in it, now there was only one, but it was the whole town from the eastern gate of the city to the western. That the popes were no better I shall quote only Baronius to shew. That reprobate, Sergius (908, 2), the slave of all vices, the most iniquitous of all men—what did he leave unattempted? Again (912, 7), one pope undid all the acts of another. “What, then, was the

state of the holy Roman church? How filthy, when the most powerful and basest harlots ruled at Rome, at whose will sees were changed, bishops given, and, what is horrible and unutterable to hear of, their lovers were introduced into the See of Peter, who are only to be written in the catalogue of Roman pontiffs to mark such times! For who can say that persons intruded without law in this way by harlots can be said to be legitimate Roman pontiffs? The clergy never elected, nor is there afterwards any consenting mention."

I shall have to touch on this as to apostolicity and succession; I only refer to it now as to the mark of holiness. Is it not a solemn mockery to say, "What, then, was the face of the holy Roman church," and then to give such a description? What is "filthy" holiness? I have done. One has only to consult the canons of councils to see the horrible state things were in, or the complaints of the laity, or any sober Roman Catholic writer. The laity tauntingly said to the clergy, sin is one thing for you, and another for us; for us to have one wife is no sin, but to have to do with another woman is; for you it is a sin to have one lawful wife, but you can have a hundred others. And for a century or two it was an outcry for reformation in head and members. If holiness is a sign of the church, the Roman body is not the church of God. It is not holy in doctrine, teaching that God provides by the church an easier way to get forgiveness than true contrition, because that is too hard;67 and that alleged wholesome discipline for sin, or proportionate pain in purgatory can be remitted for money. As to holy practice, we have seen what the facts are. Can you deny the statements I have made?

Father O. I do not deny that there was evil, or that these statements exist; but it seems to me a sad thing to pass over all that is good, and fasten on the corruption, and specially that of those dark ages. No doubt there were times when the church sank very low; but it has been kept and preserved through all. They were the manners of the age.

N*. Is that—that they were the manners of the age—an excuse for the church when holiness is in question, and we are referred to it as a proof of the true one? I have not turned to accusers, as I said before, but to the most respectable Roman Catholic writers, and, among the rest, the great Jesuit historian, Cardinal Baronius; and I have not gone into details, of which many are to be found, edited with biting sarcasm; but quotations which shew the awful depth of depravity to which all were sunk under the influence of Romanism, its universality, the clergy being the worst, and the popes, if anything, the worst of all. Has the Roman body the mark of holiness to prove it is the true church? It is more decent since the Reformation, but still frightfully corrupt through enforced celibacy.

Bill M. But is all this so, Mr. O.? It is terrible to think of. Please tell me, is it true?

Father O. You have heard what I have said to this gentleman. But I do not see what is to be gained by continuing the discussion on such a ground as this. I came in hopes to rescue M. Of that I have no hope; and you must excuse my pursuing the argument any farther. If it is only to throw reproach on the only true church in the world, it is a scandal to a true Catholic, and shakes the foundation of all faith.

N*. Well, Mr. O., we can still take Milner, and see what he has to say. You will please to remember that it is the ground you put it on yourself in presenting holiness as one of the marks of the true church. I have followed you on your own ground, which is indeed that of all Roman Catholic controversialists and catechisms. Only you give a proof of this, that the Roman body has no ground of faith at all. No believer could speak as you do. They know the word of God is true; have received it as God's word. You have only the church; and when your boasted marks, only affording us at best a human ground of judgment, break as a reed, and pierce your hand, you have no ground of faith at all, but are cast on the wide sea of infidelity without a compass.

We remember the loving apostle's word, when he foresaw the evil that was breaking in upon the church: "I commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." To that grace and to that word we trust. You trust the church, which he said was going to be invaded by wolves, and even corrupted by those within, commending the individuals to God and the word of His grace. We trust not the professing body, assailed by wolves from without and corrupters within, but God and the word of His grace, which is able to build us up; Acts 20:29-32. As I see you are preparing to go, though I have to acknowledge your courtesy in so long listening to what must have been painful to you, and indeed to every one, though you doubtless know something of it from your own writers, I should have been glad to state what it seems to me scripture states of this sad moral ruin of the professing body of Christendom. We have already seen what the apostle

says in Acts 20 and in 2 Timothy 3. He describes its state pretty nearly in the very terms which he applies to heathen depravity in Romans 1, adding the form of piety, and tells us to look to the scriptures as our sure resource.

Father O. I have no wish to have your biblical expositions. I am content to hear the church, as its Master directs us. If you and M. will go after your own minds, you must answer for it yourselves. I have felt it useless replying to a system of calumniating what is holy. It is just the way with you Protestants. I will wish you a good evening.

JV*. Good evening. You will only remember that I have quoted only your own writers attached to the Roman hierarchy and system on the point you raised yourself.

Bill M. Good evening, sir.

N*. Well, M., I must go, I think, too. Mr. O., I suppose, will not return. If so, we can follow Milner with James; and Mr. O. could give us no more, only I was glad you should have been here. It was a very sorrowful and painful part of the inquiry; but when they make holiness a mark of the church, it must be inquired into. Happily I could only go into the general statements, which are full enough; for if details were given, it would be endless and every way unprofitable. But Mr. O. could not deny it, because the state of things is described by their own contemporary writers and admitted by their historians.

Bill M. Well, I am confounded. I never thought of such a thing; and then they seem so holy and devout.

N*. That is what the apostle says, “having the form of godliness,” but he tells us to turn away from them.

Bill M. I see that the mark of holiness is wanting, for they avow it in these past ages; and they all say it is always the same church. I do not know how they can dare to give holiness as a mark.

45 Milner's "End of Controversy," lib. 2, c. 13.

46 Milner's "End of Controversy," lib. 2, c. 14.

47 This centralization has been very diligently carried out. Not only in early ages was one universal episcopacy insisted on, contrasted with a central power, but in details the process of centralization has been carried on. After canonization of saints came in, prelates besides the pope did it till a decree of a pope in the middle ages appropriated it to the See of Rome. So with indulgences, all prelates gave or sold them. That too was appropriated by the pope.

48 Bellarmine continues—"Nor would any be found who would deny it as none is found who denies sentences which mathematicians demonstrate, but they make an evidence of credibility according to the Psalm 92:5. Testimonia tua credibilia facta sunt nimis [a bad translation of a bad translation, the Latin from the LXX]. But with those who admit the divine scriptures, and histories, and writings of the Fathers, they make them evidence of truth. For although the truth of articles of faith cannot be absolutely evident to us, yet it can be evident to us hypothetically, that is, the truth of the scripture being supposed." (De N. E., 4, 8.) Now, several things are to be noted here. First, the scriptures must be first believed before I have the truth of the church or any marks of it. Secondly, in order to confound all divine grounds of faith, the writings of the Fathers and histories are put upon a level with God's word. Thirdly,

when we have the scriptures, the marks of the church are only known by inferences deduced. It is a very solemn thought that the Roman system has no divine foundation of faith, that is, in principle, it denies the direct claim of authority of God's word over the heart of man.

49 Zosimus expressly owns that the decrees of the Fathers gave Rome this place.

50 Note this, which is the common enumeration, denies, and justly, the meeting in Acts 15 to be a general council. The list began with Nicaea.

51 That many individuals in Protestant bodies have turned infidel is sadly true, and so they have in popish countries, as Gregory XVI tells us; and in France as openly as in Protestant countries.

52 Second Apology, 93, 97 (Col. 1688).

53 Tertull. De Cor. 3.

54 Chrys. in Joannem, 85 B. or 84.

55 Cyril, Cal. 19, sive Myst. I and following.

56 Aug. Ep. ad Januar., lib. 54.

57 See an excellent summary in Ribadeneyra's life of Ignatius Loyola, written by command of the Jesuit general, of the grounds on which he or any may be accounted a saint, without performing miracles (Lib. 5, c 13).

58 The writer speaks in the strongest way of the scriptures as the only criterion.

59 Far from it, it is a curious piece of Roman sign-making, and shews what these things are really worth.

In Ribadeneyra, the disciple and companion of Ignatius himself, we find (lib. 5, 10, Mad. 1586, 335) a long proof in the objection that he did no miracles, that they were not to be sought as proofs. He quotes Gregory, saying the proof of sanctity is not in doing signs; quotes John 15, that disciples were to be known by love to one another; that John the Baptist did no sign; those (Matt. 7) whom He rejected do them. He cites Aug., quoting Matthew 24, Jerome on Matthew 7, 1 Corinthians 13, Augustine, Chrysostom, Gregory Naz., and Nyss. Athanasius wrought no miracles. Then he refers to 1 Corinthians 12; gifts were various. All these are reasons for Ignatius not doing any. Two hundred well-proved ones were produced for his beatification, as is stated by the Père Bonhours. (Vide St. Ig., lib. 6, 3rd ed. p. 540.) It is a striking thing that, whatever was the reason, Ignatius died without the sacraments. It is asserted that he died in terror. I dare say it is disputed, too, but certainly he died without the sacraments.

60 In writing to Francis Henry, a missionary desponding in the work, and thinking of leaving (Epist. 2, 24, Bononiae, no date), “You profit more than you think in preparing infants, diligently obtained for heaven by baptism; for if you are willing to look round in your mind, you will find that out of the Indians, white or black, few come into heaven but those who depart this life under fourteen years in the innocence of baptism.”

61 It is related by a Roman Catholic eye-witness, M. Huc, that a great tree, said to spring from the hair of Tsong Kaba, a Buddhist saint, bears Thibetan characters on every leaf, and no fraud in it. (Voyage dans le Thibet, vol. 2, chap. 3.)

62 The second Council of Nice so decided, Canon 7.

63 Besides canons made against it, it is denounced by Cyprian ad Pomponium (Ep. 4, ed. Ox). Chrysostom denounces it in two treatises against the men (1, 228, ed. Ben.), and against the women, 248; and in this declares the meretricious acts of the virgins were intolerable. It is degrading in character. (Compare Hieron. Ep. 22, 1, 38, ed. Vail, ad Eustochium.)

64 The records of the Inquisition of Toulouse were published by Limborch. The history of the Albigenses is full of interest. A man escaped from the Saracens gave the Gospels and Paul's Epistles to a man who gave him hospitality. A very great awakening took place, and many companies of saints were gathered. The Eastern Emperors attacked them, and, unhappily, they took arms, and for long years withstood the Greeks; but retreating into Persia, it seems they got infected with Manicheism, which joined with them in rejecting images and superstition. At last the Emperor made peace with them, and transported them to Bulgaria, as a check against the northern hordes. Thence they spread by Lombardy to Spain. There were two classes, the Albanenses and the Balioli. The former held two principles, a good and an evil one; the Balioli, not.

65 This all of them were accused of. In general they were accused of denying marriage. But it is plain that it was only the Romish sacrament as to it, which they denied; for their wives and widows are spoken of. (Elliott, Hor. Apoc, part 3, ch. 7.) Section 4 gives a pretty full account of all these revolters from Rome. As those who went to, and perished in, England were Germans, and were pronounced sound in faith as to Christ,

probably those at Cologne, in Germany, and elsewhere, were also. But it is quite possible some, in breaking loose from the horrible iniquities and superstitions of Rome and Romanists, may have been misled in some points too by heresy. Evervinus' letter is interesting; there is heart and conscience in it, though he saw them all burnt.

66 See Baronius 34, 133, where it is distinguished from the napkin found in the sepulchre.- He quotes from Bede. The latter is said to have been given to Charlemagne. Pope Urban erected a statue to the supposed Veronica, and an altar. The superstition is a late one. Mabillon puts the scene in Gethsemane, and Ducange on the way to Calvary. In 1083 it was alleged to have cured the Emperor Tiberius of leprosy, Christ being now dead. This was supported by a false quotation from Methodius. It is now an object of gorgeous worship at Rome. The English reader may see Maitland, "Catacombs "260. But the general fact will be found in any history treating of such subjects.

67 As to this, Dr. Milner states what is absolutely false.

Sixth Conversation --Apostolicity And Succession

N*. Well, James, we were able to come back to you, and thought you would like to be present while we pursue our inquiry, and Mr. O. will have no more to say to us. And though it was well for Bill M. that Mr. O. should be there, and not to fancy that if one more capable than he were present, there would be an answer, yet we can follow Milner just as well, and more quietly; and he is what they all refer to, and what M. had and trusted in; and I can give you as before what I have collected in reading, so as to judge how far it is true.

Bill M. I hope you have no objection, sir; but though Mr. O. would not come, a gentleman he knows would be glad to be present, and I said I was sure you would not object.

N*. Not in the least. I shall follow Milner as a guide to the points we have to inquire into; but this gentleman can make any remark he wishes, or either of you, of course, if you have anything on your mind; though I shall have, as you two cannot know much of the details, to go pretty straight forward myself through the history.

James. I am very glad to see you, sir, and obliged to you for thinking of me and coming back.

N*. Well, our next point is apostolicity and succession. To me it has no importance whatever. In the Spirit and word of God there can be no succession. They are themselves complete and perfect, and remain the same. Truth is itself; you cannot apply the idea of succession to it. That truth we have in God’s written word. The word

of God abides for ever. To talk of succession as to it is simple nonsense. They speak of succession as a means of securing the truth. But we have it in the word. It is very striking how the truth is never made a mark of the church by Roman Catholics. The scriptures are full of it. Christ is the truth; the Father's word is truth; we are sanctified by the truth; the aposrie loved in the truth and for the truth's sake. If a preacher did not bring sound doctrine, even a woman was to judge him, and not receive him into her house nor bid him God speed. Souls are begotten to God by the truth. The truth sets free. But for the Roman Catholic system it is no mark of anything; for if the truth were a mark of the church, those who seek the church must have the truth first to judge of it by, before they have the church, and if the truth was really possessed by them, they then would be begotten of God and sanctified before they find the church. And so it was at the beginning; the truth was preached and received, and men thereupon entered into the church, because they had received it, if it was really savingly received; and this they do not deny when first preached to heathens and Jews.

As to the use made by Irenaeus and others of this succession against heretics, though soon abused as a mere human argument as I have already said, I have no great objection to it. What was from the beginning is the truth; the surest way of finding it is reading what was at the beginning, which we confessedly have in the scripture; still as a mere external proof, if he could shew that no one had ever held it, and that it sprang up now in his own time, it might be used as an argument. Only it has this defect, that the carelessness of men may lose the discernment of many things in scripture, and truth

may be brought up which really was at the beginning, and lost or somewhat enfeebled or even corrupted, so that to the men of the age it may seem new, when only reproduced from scripture. But when heretics said it was a bad God that made the Old Testament, as the heretics did, it might be honestly argued: No one from the beginning ever heard such a thing; and this is what Irenaeus did.

The scriptures were the surest appeal, and Irenaeus does appeal to them, only he shews he has not just confidence in using them in the power of the Spirit of God, and with Tertullian it is utterly so. He is just a lawyer, as he was, arguing a brief. And the result shews clearly the danger of leaving scripture; for what was at first used as a testimony soon came to be considered an authority, and then as more convenient for the corruptions of men, so that the scriptures were put out of sight.

However, that was the use especially made of succession by those early writers. We will therefore examine the succession they plead, and see how far apostolicity in this respect will accredit their system. I take them on their own ground, not on mine; for grace and gift, I am perfectly assured, came directly from God, and not by succession. I examine it only as an alleged mark of the true church. They allege from early writers that the episcopal order can be traced up to the foundation of every see by apostles and apostolic men, or afterwards through them in places subsequently founded, and in particular the succession of Rome to Peter; for poor Paul is nowadays pretty much thrown overboard: his teaching does not suit Rome.

James. But pardon me, sir, I do not see how this affects the truth or the authority of the word of God. That is true whether there are popes at Rome or not.

N*. Surely it does not; but the idea of authority of what has been handed down from Christ and His apostles to these days, by those, as they allege, commissioned of God, has great power over the imagination. Wherever the word of God is received by faith, all these things drop like autumn leaves, because we have the truth itself with divine certainty, and know it would be a sin to doubt of it. But all have not this simple faith in the word of God; it has not that simple but absolute authority as God's word over them; and habits of mind are very powerful, particularly when they are superstitious habits of mind. It seems humble, though it is not. It is a sin to yield up our souls to man when God has spoken, it is what the scripture calls voluntary humility; and people are afraid to trust God in His word, and do not know that word.

Here is our friend Bill M. He thought the clergy secured all truth to him, though it was official authority, not truth; and even now he has not the word of God at his command to meet these difficulties. He distrusts his clergy after all they have been obliged to admit, and he does not yet know how quite to trust the word.

Bill M. That is true. I hope you will go on, sir.

N*. I will. We must take Milner then, which is the book they gave you, and see what their apostolicity amounts to.

First, remark that the word "bishops" in the word of God does not mean what it does now. There were bishops and deacons in the church at Philippi; there were

bishops in the church of Ephesus, called also elders of the church. You have “overseers” in the English version, of Acts 20:28, for bishops, which is indeed the meaning of the word. This is equally plain in Timothy and Titus; so in Acts 14. The apostle chose them for every city. There is no one stationary president of any church in die New Testament, unless we take James at Jerusalem to be such; but then he presides over apostles, which is an awkward position for a bishop. I know Timothy and Titus are alleged to be such. That they were on certain occasions entrusted by the apostles with the care of one or several churches is true, but we do not find them in the scripture locally resident as such anywhere. They were at the apostles’ service elsewhere afterwards, as need called for it, according to Christ’s will. All this is uncontested and incontestable. Tradition localized them afterwards; scripture does not. That very soon indeed there were local presidents, who very early got the name of bishops, I do not contest; but the origin of this lies historically buried in the most absolute obscurity.

It is stated that the apostle John appointed bishops in various places in Asia Minor. Thus Tertullian says that the order of bishops, followed up to its origin, will have its standing in John as its author (contra Marcion. 4, 5), Clemens Alex., quoted by Eus. (3, 23), saying he went round to establish bishops, formed churches, and named as members of the clergy persons pointed out by the Holy Ghost. But this was quite at the end of the century and would prove that there were not any bishops before, that Paul had not established any, just as scripture shews. Indeed Tertullian goes farther, for he makes John the author of the episcopate. Certainly, if this be true (which is possible as history, not scripture or the word of

God), he was in contrast with Paul, or rather with God's word.68 Jerome gives a different account. In his epistle to Evangelus (146 in Vallar. Ben. 101), after shewing from scripture that bishops and presbyters were the same, he declares that if afterwards one was chosen to be above the rest, it was done to avoid schism, lest one drawing [it] to himself should break the church of Christ. However this may be, there very soon were such, but not recognized in scripture. There we find the authority of the apostles, particularly Paul, in these matters, and those whom he employed as serving with him under the Lord, particularly Timothy and Titus.

Eusebius also relates (3, 11), that after the martyrdom of James and the destruction of Jerusalem, the apostles and surviving disciples of Jesus met and chose Symeon, son of Cleopas, cousin of the Lord, to fill up James' place. When we come to details, difficulties accumulate. We know from the Acts that Peter did not found the church at Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, whose episcopal succession is traced up to him. Barnabas, as a Paul, laboured there; all that we read of Peter there is that Paul had to rebuke him to his face for his want of uprightness. Indeed Peter never appears in scripture but as apostle of the circumcision. His epistles are directed to the dispersed Jews who had become Christians. Antioch, which was the Gentile capital of that part of the world, was the known sphere of other labourers. He may very likely have visited the Jews there. But here too Peter is said to have established the first bishop. Eusebius, nearly three hundred years afterwards, tells us he established Evodias the first bishop; Athanasius, about the same time, says Ignatius

was the first after the apostles, Origen says the second, Jerome says he was the third.

Bill M. Here is Mr. R., sir.

N*. Good evening, sir.

Mr. R. Good evening, sir. I have taken the liberty to bring with me this clergyman of the Anglican body, Mr. D., who though not of the church of Rome, may shew how universal or Catholic principles condemn the rashness and heady mind which does not listen to the church, and the deadly evil of schism.

N*. Well, gentlemen, I am very glad you are here. We had come to apostolicity and succession, and I was about to take up Dr. Milner's statements on the subject, as he is the authority constantly used in these countries, and to compare his statements with authentic history.

Mr. D. It is a most important point, the security for grace and truth. It is just what keeps me in the Anglican church. It possesses a hierarchy which can be traced up to the apostles, and maintains the primitive faith of the church, though unhappily expressed in language too hostile to the great body subject to the Western patriarch; still these expressions are supportable, because they only refer to the common usages and popular views on the points treated, and not to the recognized faith of the church, which is to be sought in her creeds and formularies, and hence do not preclude the hope of reunion between the Anglican and Roman parts of the same body.

N*. I am aware that these are the views of the party you belong to. The authority of the word of God does not allow me to entertain them. Its statements are the truth,

so that we have it directly from God, and, with a mind humble through grace, can learn and profit by it.

D. How do you know it is the word of God, and, if it be, how can simple and ignorant people understand it without being taught?

N*. We have spoken of this. The first part of your question is infidelity, which is the uniform resort of Romanists, and of all your school. People who have had it (the word of God) will be judged by it in the last day, when your clergy cannot help them, and therefore it behoves them to look to it now. The ministry of it is an ordinance of God, and to be highly valued; but the test of truth is the word of God itself. And in point of fact, as a rule, the clergy and not the laity, the teachers and not the taught, have introduced heresies.

As to the second point, it is a presumptuous charge against the apostles and other servants of the Lord, for they addressed themselves to the people (what you call the laity in the church) and indeed it is charging God with folly, for it was by inspiration that the apostle and others addressed their writings to all the church. But these points we have considered already.

We have now to see whether what you allege to be a security for grace and truth is really one, or a security for anything. I mean the succession of the episcopate, and particularly of the Roman pontiffs. The succession of the archbishops of Canterbury since they have existed, is much more certain, though doubt hangs over that too, because of the principles of Edward VI’s reign. I think if I were to put you to legal proof there, you would find it difficult to make it good. But that I will not meddle with now. We can take the popes, for this is confessedly the

key-stone of the arch, and your authorities send us there.

D. By all means, though I should be curious to know your reasons for casting doubt on the Anglican succession. You do not believe in the story of the Nag's Head?

N*. Not a word of it. It was a mere Jesuit invention, by a person named Holywood, set up as a tale nearly fifty years afterwards. There can be no doubt that Barlow consecrated Parker, and then it flowed regularly on. But even all this is a poor security for faith in contrast with the actual word and Spirit of God, which (unless open infidels) no one denies we have. But the Anglican flaw lies elsewhere, as you may see even in Milner (Letter 29): the question is who consecrated Barlow. But I will not go into this now, but see what security Roman succession gives. I deny the principle, and appeal to the word of God as the truth actually possessed by the church. And as regards the truth there can be no succession; it is itself. But we may examine the alleged security.

D. Be it so. You have a writer as early as Irenaeus appealing to the succession of Roman pontiffs, as of all other places, but specially to Rome, and giving the clear succession to his own days.

N*. We have, and that there were very soon local presidents who early got the name of bishops, I do not contest. But for all that, nothing is more uncertain than the origin of the episcopal order, the principle on which it is founded, and the succession to which Irenaeus refers. As regards the scriptures, we find in general elders called bishops, as Jerome insists, and no

president or presiding authority. The apostles were in direct communication with the elders, or with the church, or with both, employing some Timothy and Titus in personal service when they were wanting, and then recalling them to themselves.

The nearest approach to anything of the kind is James at Jerusalem, who is often therefore called the first bishop. But then he presides over apostles and Peter himself, in the assembly held at Jerusalem, as is evident from Acts 15. If we are to believe Chrysostom (Horn. 38, 1 Cor. 15, ed. Ben. 10, 355), the Lord Himself imposed His hands on His brother, and made him bishop of Jerusalem. So Epiphanius (Haer. 78, 7), “He first took the episcopal throne to whom first the Lord committed His throne upon the earth!” How Peter came into it as a source of episcopacy, it would then be hard to say. How contrary this is to every scriptural thought, I need hardly say.

D. Why do you treat these holy traditions and fathers thus?

N*. What throne had Christ upon earth? Rejection and the cross was His portion. And how could He establish James by imposition of hands and make him bishop, when He Himself was there, and when He had not yet made propitiation so as to lay the foundation, or ascended on high and sent the Holy Ghost so as to begin the work for which He expressly tells the apostles to wait. Besides, if Christ gave James His throne on the earth as a religious supremacy, where was Peter? However great the folly of all this, Chrysostom and Epiphanius knew no supreme throne at Rome, which Peter had received as the first of the apostles. On their system, there would be a superior one at Jerusalem,

unless Christ's throne was inferior to Peter's. It is also related by Eusebius that the remaining apostles and disciples appointed Symeon, also the Lord's relative, after James' death and the destruction of Jerusalem. It cannot be alleged that James took the Jewish throne, Peter the Gentile, for then there would be two, and Peter was unquestionably the apostle of the circumcision, not of the Gentiles. If we are to credit what Epiphanius (Hær. 80, 7) calls "the divine word and teaching of the Apostolic Constitutions," James was consecrated by Christ and the apostles (Const. Ap. 8, 35). I know all learned men admit the Constitutions to be forgeries. But this helps the simple mind to judge what we have to trust in these fathers and ancient writings. For this writer-down of all heresies holds these forgeries to be the divine word and teaching.

D. But you cannot deny the fact that James was bishop of Jerusalem.

N*. That he was the leader or president there, no person subject to scripture denies; Acts 15; Gal. 2:2. But from that to a universal episcopacy as a note of the true church and security for grace and truth, is a wide step over a large abyss (and not only that, but the succession from them), and if true denies the pope's supremacy. The apostles as instruments were the security then, and when they were going they did not commend to successors as a security; but Paul commends the elders and flock to God, and the word of His grace as sufficient. And Peter takes care that, by his writings, they should have the truth in remembrance. But we will see what even Roman Catholic authorities and fathers furnish us, that is, on the episcopacy or apostolicity being a security

and that by which the true church may be known. We may begin with Jerome, whose authority is so great.

In his epistle to Oceanus (Vail. 69, 416): “With the ancients bishops and presbyters are the same, for that is the name of the dignity, this of age.” And it was no casual thought, no occasional argument. In his letter to Evangelus (Vall. 146, old edd. Evogrius) after quoting Philippians 1:1; Acts 20; Titus 1:5, etc.; 1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Peter 5; 2 and 3 John, using the strongest language in citing them, he says, “that afterwards one was elected who should be above (præponeretur) the others was done as a remedy for schism, lest each drawing the church of Christ to himself should break it! “Again on Titus 1:5, still more positively: “A presbyter is therefore the same thing as a bishop, and before, by the instigation of the devil, there were parties in religion, and it was said among the peoples, I am of Paul, etc., the churches were governed by the common council of presbyters. But after every one thought that those he baptized were his, not Christ’s, it was decreed in the whole world that one of the presbyters should be chosen, who should be set over the rest, to whom all the care of the church should appertain. Does any one think that the judgment that a bishop and a presbyter are one, and one the name of age, the other of office, is ours, not that of the scriptures? let him read again: “and then quotes Philippians 1; Acts 20; 1 Peter 5; adding here Hebrews 13:17, on which he comments.

He continues, “These then that we may shew that the presbyters were the same thing as bishops. But, by degrees, that the plants of dissension might be pulled up, the whole solicitude was deferred to one. As therefore the presbyters know that they are subject to

him who is set over them by the custom of the church, so will the bishops know, that they by a custom of the church, rather than by the truth of a disposition of the Lord,69 are greater than presbyters," etc. And in the same letter to Evangelus, he tells us, that till the time of Heraclas and Dionysius, in Alexandria, if the patriarch died, the presbyters chose and put into office (as the soldiers an emperor, or deacons an archdeacon) one of their own number; and other more modern authorities state that Mark, who was said to have founded that see, appointed twelve presbyters to be with the patriarch, and, when he died, they all laid their hands on one of their number, and that this continued till the time of Patriarch Alexander in the year 318, who ordained that the bishops should meet and do it.

Augustine in a letter to Jerome confirms the notion that it is by the usage of the church that bishops have a more honourable name than other presbyters: "Honorum vocabula quæ Ecclesiae usus obtinent." Urban II in a Council at Beneventum, A.D. 1091, and a countless number of bishops and abbots, decreeing that none but presbyters and deacons could be chosen bishops, declared, Art. 1, "We call sacred orders diaconate and presbytership only. It is read that the primitive church had these alone, as to these alone we have precept of the apostle." The object was evidently to exclude any of the sub-orders being chosen, for in exceptional cases by permission sub-deacons might. But the fact is clearly stated, which is what is important. The Decretal of Gratian quotes Isidore Hisp. to the same purpose, Deer. 21,1, and what we have seen of Jerome 93, 24; 95, 5, and in the following sections, the relations of bishops and presbyters.70 I have no idea of approving or

disapproving these views, but when you make apostolicity, and in fact episcopal succession, a mark of the true church, your whole ground fails under you. “What was from the beginning “is true. As to the truth, I hold that the truth that was from the beginning is surely the truth for me. But as to that on which you make the certainty of truth rest, I have here your greatest authorities admitting it not to have been at the beginning, as says Pope Urban, “the precept of the apostle refers to deacons and presbyters alone.” You, gentlemen, a Ritualist and Anglican Catholic, and Mr. R. a Roman Catholic, would impose this succession upon us as a necessary mark of the true church. But, when the apostle founded it, and as scripture presents it, it has not this mark at all. Your own authorities confess it. Tertullian, if he is to be trusted, gives other and indeed different information. He says expressly (Cont. Marcion. 4, 5) that, “The order of bishops, followed up to its origin, will have its standing in John as its author.” And Clemens Alexandrinus, quoted by Eusebius, 3, 23, says, John went round to establish bishops, form churches, and name as members of the clergy persons pointed out by the Holy Ghost.

But this was at the end of the century, and where Paul had laboured; and if true, it would prove that there were not any bishops before that. Paul had not established any, just as scripture shews. I have scripture, that is, a positive revelation of God, exhibiting churches to me without this kind of bishops having individual authority; and the founder of these churches, the apostle Paul, instituting another kind of church government: that is, that another order of things was what was from the beginning. And then I have a tradition more than one

hundred and fifty years afterwards that the apostle John went round these churches and appointed bishops; and moreover, the most learned of the fathers of the church, as they are called, telling me that in fact it was not so from the beginning, that presbyters and bishops are the same, and that, if one individual was set up over the above presbyters, it was only to keep quiet and unity in the church, because of the ambition of the clergy, a mere arrangement of men, but not God's ordinance.71 Another most famous doctor, Augustine, tells me that it was according to words of honour by the custom of the church, bishops were greater than presbyters. That is, it certainly was not from the beginning, was not a mark of the church at the beginning, consequently never can be. This then forms no possible security for grace or faith. It shews only how early the clergy began to be ambitious and to create divisions. If you reject Jerome, Augustine and Pope Urban, and the rest who state this, where are your Fathers, your tradition, and your authority? lam then too thrown back on the scriptures which have neither bishops in the modern sense, nor succession. It is possible that as a human arrangement John may have done so, setting aside Paul's arrangement; but this is certain, it cannot have the authority of the word or be alleged to have been from the beginning, and your Peter plan falls to the ground. You have other traditions for him, I know, which we will examine, but to which the same answer will apply.

D. But you cannot go against the whole stream of tradition, and make John contradict Paul.

N*. You must remember, dear sir, that we are not proving bishops to be right, or to be wrong; but seeking the sure marks of the true church as alleged by the

system you uphold. In the scriptures or in the beginning, as is confessed by those I have referred to, and strongly asserted by Jerome, and fully recognized by Pope Urban in a numerous council, there were none such as you call bishops, and St. Augustine confirms it, saying it was a name of honour by the custom of the church. Tertullian comes to tell us it originates with the apostle John, who went round to do it, and so Clemens Alexandrinus or Eusebius. All state or confirm the fact that there were none at the beginning. If, as Jerome states, it was to meet factions in the clergy, it is possible that John may have accepted and suffered it as a necessity. It is a mere tradition of a century after, and refers to one locality, and we have the positive testimony of scripture that it was not so ordered at the beginning, but positively otherwise, which fact is insisted on by those you call fathers. Paul calls for the bishops or elders, warns them of coming evils, and refers them to God and the word of His grace, without an idea of any bishop being a security for grace or faith or anything else. How can I take it as a mark of the church, when the church in its best estate had no such mark; the scriptures, as confessed by fathers and popes, stating distinctly that it was not so? Your famous rule, “What always,” etc., condemns you entirely here; and Jerome and Augustine knew the episcopal succession well enough, and were attached to the unity and order of the external professing body as devoutly as any one could wish.

As to opposition between the apostles, I believe only what is in the word. You by your traditions bring in John changing Paul’s system. If it was historically the case, it only proves God would not give scriptural authority to it. I am in no way held to believe these traditions, nor do I

know the import of them if there be some historical basis. And remark this, by no possible means can succession be a mark of the true church, as the church must subsist before the mark could be there. If there, it may be used as a testimony, wisely or not, but it cannot be a mark, for it cannot be at the beginning.

D. But we have the lists, up to the apostles, of the episcopal succession, to which the earliest writers appeal.

N*. Who furnish them to us?

D. Irenaeus for example. Tertullian makes the same appeal.

N*. Only they?

D. Others may speak of it, but in them we have a clear testimony which none can gainsay.

N*. Well, let us examine what is said, and how far it affords a mark of the true church. We may first take Antioch, as we shall have a good deal to say to Rome. Who was the first person who filled that see?

D. Evodias.

N*. Is that quite clear?

D. Well. He came first after Peter, and Ignatius followed.

N*. Can you rest your case on the certainty of this?

D. I rest it on the general tradition which traces the churches up to their founders.

N*. But Peter did not found the church at Antioch at all. Some of the scattered disciples addressed the Gentiles there, and it was the sphere of Barnabas and Paul’s labours for a length of time, and the place whence they

went out to preach the gospel to the heathen. Peter was not the apostle of the Gentiles at all. The Lord Jesus expressly sent Paul to them, and the Holy Ghost sent him forth to that work from Antioch, and there he returned when he had gone over a considerable part of Asia Minor. Not only so, but when he went up to Jerusalem, James, Cephas, and John, pillars there in the assembly, when they saw what God had given Paul, gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that they should go to the Gentiles, and themselves to the circumcision. That is, to Paul was given the apostolic commission to the Gentiles. God was mighty in Peter to the circumcision. Whatever commission (which was not from Christ ascended, but risen and in Galilee, nor from the Holy Ghost) he had to the Gentiles, with the rest in Matthew 28, he gave it up to Paul and undertook to go to the Jews. The apostleship of the circumcision was committed to Peter, that of the Gentiles to Paul. So that all your derivation from Peter is antibiblic. Peter we never hear of at Antioch in scripture, but as rebuked to his face for his dissimulation.

D. Is it right to speak of the holy apostle thus?

N*. I suppose it is, as the scriptures so speak of him,72 and Paul does it expressly to combat this superstitious derival of authority from Peter to which you attach such importance. The Judaizing Christians made everything of it then, and opposed Paul. Paul in the beginning of Galatians boasts of his acting independently of it. So do we. “It made no matter to me “is all Paul has to say for them. Every Christian acknowledges the apostolic title of Peter (to say nothing of his zeal and devotedness) and receives his writings as inspired; but they know he was the apostle of the circumcision, not of the Gentiles; and

it is remarkable that Paul owns no apostles but as consequent on Pentecost (Eph. 4:10, 11); and he tells us that, as to the church outside the circumcision, no doubt in the world at large, he as a wise master-builder has laid the foundation. From him you have no succession, and succession from Peter he rejects and despises. This no one who owns the authority of scripture can deny (Gal. 2:7-9; Rom. 11:13; Acts 26:17; ch. 9:15; ch. 13:2-4); and Peter addresses his epistle to the scattered believing Jews, however precious it may be to every saint.

D. But you do not mean to call in question the apostolic authority of Peter.

N*. No, surely not. But I take his ministry as the scripture gives it, the apostleship of the circumcision or of the Jews. So he let in Cornelius that there might be unity, the first Gentile brought in. But the ministry of the gospel to every creature under heaven was committed formally to Paul by a Saviour revealed in glory, and further he had a distinctive ministry of the church, Colossians 1:23-25: where we see, it was a dispensation committed to him. (Compare Eph. 3; 1 Cor. 9:17.) Now you have no succession but a Petrine, one which Paul rejects, I may say with scorn, and from an apostle who, it is quite clear, was not the apostle of the Gentiles at all.

D. I am rather afraid of this slighting of the first of the apostles, whose very name is a witness and seal of the testimony Christ bore him. It is hazardous, the spirit of pride, which is just what misleads you all. The authority of the church is gone with you; and now, the authority of Peter, to whom the keys of the church were confided, and the feeding of Christ’s sheep.

N*. Peter, that is, his writings, have exactly the same authority for me as Paul's, because both are inspired. There is no pride nor hazard in the matter, but simply learning and bowing to what the Lord Jesus, or the apostle Paul himself has said, and there we see that, finally, the mission to the Gentiles was confided to Paul by the Lord Himself, without any derivation from, or reference or subordination to, Peter. But where do you find the keys of the church?

D. In Matthew 16.

N*. I do not. I find the Lord, not Peter, going to build His church; and so Peter, in his epistles, does not speak of doing it, but of living stones coming. Paul does; he lays the foundation. But there are no keys of the church at all. People do not build with keys, and I repeat it is Christ who builds, not Peter. Nothing is said of him as regards the church, but that he was Peter, a stone; the keys of the kingdom were given to him, and there, I doubt not, all he bound or loosed was sanctioned in heaven; but it was not in the church; there, as to this passage in Matthew 16, Christ alone is active.

D. But I never heard this called in question; it seems to me a mere quibble. The church and the kingdom of heaven are the same thing.

N*. Surely they are not. The church which Christ thus builds will be in glory with Him for ever and ever, and, in another aspect, the tabernacle of God. It is what Christ will present to Himself—a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and that it is in any sense, or at any time, His body or His bride, can in no way be said of the kingdom. Tares are sown in the kingdom among the wheat. He gathers out of it all things that

offend, and them that do iniquity; He will deliver it up to God, even the Father. The church, His body and His bride, He will never give up.

When the marriage of the Lamb is come, judgment will follow here below. It is then that He takes to Him His great power, and reigns. The kingdom is the sphere of His title and power as King; the church is His body. But the passage itself is clear; Christ builds the church. The administration of the kingdom is committed to Peter, symbolized by the keys. Scripture, that is, God Himself, is much wiser, and more accurate, where it is wise to be so, than we are, and He has attributed the use of the keys to the kingdom, not to the church. This, as here spoken of, Christ builds, and the temple is not finished yet. It grows to a holy temple in the Lord. And, where such a system of authority is built upon it, it is very hazardous to change what is stated, and then to build on the change you have made.

D. But surely there is a church on earth.

N*. Undoubtedly; it is there we are to look for it now. But into that building, as founded wisely by the apostolic ministry upon earth, wood and hay and stubble may be brought in—a distinct thing from the body which is formed, as 1 Corinthians 12 informs us, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, where every member partakes of the fulness of the Head, and is united to Him. But tell me, do you think that there can be rotten, bad, members of the body of Christ united to Him by the Holy Ghost, and who go finally to hell?

D. There may be hypocrites in it on earth.

N*. No doubt. False brethren may creep in, and take their place amongst the members of Christ’s body, but

they are not united to Christ by the Spirit, and thus members of His body. But you admit that there cannot be really dead, rotten, members of Christ's body?

D. Of course there cannot.

N*. Then the external body you call the church is not the body of Christ; for there, confessedly, are multitudes of bad members. They are members of your church, perhaps priests in it; they are not members of Christ's body. That is, your church is not the body of Christ. They are wood and hay and stubble, it may be, viewing it as a building built by man. But the attributing the privileges of the body to it is all a delusion. The apostle compares it in 1 Corinthians 10, referring to baptism and the Lord's supper, to Israel's coming out of Egypt, and many falling in the wilderness after all. The members of Christ's body do not perish in the wilderness.

D. But you are running after the phantom of a pure church.

N*. I am not running after anything; I am simply taking the statements of scripture as to facts. It goes further, for it not only warns me of the possibility of wood, and hay, and stubble being built into God's building, but that in the last days perilous times will come, and that there will be a form of piety, denying the power; nay, that evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse.

D. And what do you make of the gates of hell not prevailing against it?

N*. I thank God with all my heart for it. What Christ builds, no power of Satan shall frustrate or cast down, but that is not built up yet. There is a building into which could be built what the fire of God would consume

in judgment, and I do not confound that with what Christ is building for eternal glory. All that God ever set up in good has been entrusted to man, and he has always failed. This does not hinder God accomplishing His purposes all the same. The church, as entrusted to man, has failed, as Adam did, as Israel did when they got the law. It is revealed that in the last days there will be die form of piety, denying the power. The church that Christ builds, the gates of hell will not prevail against. Now when you are claiming security of faith and grace by episcopal succession, you are claiming it for what is connected with man's responsibility (not with Christ's building), for that which the apostle declared would fail. He says (Acts 20) that after his decease, from within and without the danger would arise, and refers the elders of Ephesus to God and the word of His grace. Why after his decease, if he left a secure guard in apostolical succession? Nor does Peter know any such. Nor, I may add, John; for as to the churches he superintended, he warns them of having their candlestick removed, or being spewed out of Christ's mouth, and he knows no such security.

D. But I do not say a particular church may not fail, but only that the whole church cannot.

N*. Pardon me, you refer, and your authorities refer, to Antioch, and Rome, and others, even those referred to in the Apocalypse. And where is the promise to the whole once planted by man, I mean the apostles, on the earth, if each particular one may fail?

D. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

N*. But that is what Christ is building, and it is not complete yet. Living stones are, we may trust, still

coming to the living stone; it is not what was externally planted as a whole on earth, already established as a corporation, so to speak, settled by men on the earth, however perfectly, at the beginning, according to the mind of God; still left to man's responsibility, whose dangers the apostle warns the elders of, and which he declares would end in a form of piety, denying the power. What Christ builds will not fail; but when man builds, man's responsibility and its effects come in. Judgment begins at the house of God. And if the evil servant say, My Lord delays His coming, and beat the men-servants and maidservants, and eat and drink with the drunken, his portion would be with the unbelievers. The result, in one case, rests on man's responsibility, in the other on the unfailing power of Christ; but this last is not yet finished, it is not a complete structure on earth. It grows to a holy temple: so scripture teaches us. But now I take you on your own ground. When we diverged to this point, you had just said that Peter, Evodias, Ignatius, was the order of succession at Antioch.

Let us see what tradition tells us here, for history is all we can have—statements made long after what men had heard. Theodoret (Dial. 1, vol. 4, 33; Harris, 642), and Chrysostom say that Ignatius was ordained by Peter. Athanasius calls him the first after the apostles (De Synodis, 1, 607; Ben. ed. Pat.); Origen calls him second after Peter (Horn. 6, in Luc.); Jerome says he was the third (Cap. Script.). Now, in the first place, these statements, if to be reconciled, shew that neither Evodias nor Ignatius were successors of Peter, for he was alive during both their lives, and, if the statement be true, Evodias died before Peter did. Indeed

Bellarmine, though he makes Peter the first bishop of Rome, admits that the apostles, as such, had no successors (De Sum. Pont. 4, 25). The pope, he says, succeeds to him as ordinary pastor of the whole church, the bishops not—as to them, the apostles having only an extraordinary place. According to him, Christ ordained Peter, or we should have no episcopate at all; he, James and John, and they, the rest; and so they were all bishops.73 Still he makes Peter, James, and John ordain James after the Lord's death. Thus, at Antioch, one Father says Ignatius was first after the apostles, another that he was the second, another that he was the third.

This is hard to be reconciled, and to mean the same thing. One says that he was the first bishop after the apostle was gone. Another counts him second, that is, after Evodias, not reckoning the apostle Peter at all. Another, counting Peter in, makes him third. But then here come the Apostolic Constitutions, and Baronius, the great Catholic historian, approves seemingly their views of the case (Bar. 12, 45), that Evodias was named by Paul, Ignatius by Peter for the Jewish Christians. So that there were two bishops and the unity of the church gone, and the fruit of the settlement and decrees of the apostles wholly lost, Paul and Peter acting in contradiction to the object of them. Then they suppose that Ignatius gave way to Evodias when matters were settled, and, when Evodias died, Ignatius came in, and was bishop by himself.

In general the Constitutions (7, 46) give a list of one to a see, but in Philadelphia, and Rome also, two, one by Peter and one by Paul. These testimonies may be little worth, and, if true, in splitting the church into two, shew anything but a ground of confidence or security of

doctrine: the succession itself has to be settled. Eusebius is quite clear that Evodias was first bishop, then after him Ignatius (3, 22). Now, as Theodoret distinctly affirms that Ignatius received the grace of the high-priesthood from Peter, for which Chrysostom also admires him, all this account is not only utter confusion in itself, but the whole story contradicts the account we have in the Acts, which gives us accounts of Antioch later than the time in which a great part of what these ecclesiastical authors speak of should have happened. That very soon, unless at Rome, the order became regular, no one disputes; but the important links on your system are the first, and, the moment we seek any details of these, all is confusion and uncertainty. We get, as in Apost. Const., a list of names, possibly taken from scripture, as Timothy for Ephesus, Titus for Crete, Crescens for Galatia, but really nothing more than a fancied list of names, because after ages would have it so.

D. But why do you except Rome? Its succession is sure enough.

N*. Anything but that. It is so uncertain, that the best Roman Catholic authors are often not agreed which of two, sometimes of three, rivals was legitimate pope, and to such a point, that you have two, and even three, numbers attached to the names of popes. Some historians say John XX, some XXI, some XXII, for the same person, and so of other popes. But this we will, of course, look into; but, as I have said, the origin is the chief point, though, of course, if there be breaches in the conduit, it will not bring in the water rightly, if water indeed there be.

D. But you do not question that there was originally this living water?

N*. No. But I have this water in the perennial spring itself, the word of God, and your long, and, I am afraid, very muddy, canal gives me more mud than water, and what water it gives remains spoiled by the mud that is in it; and we follow the advice of your great friend Cyprian: when the water does not come properly, we go and examine if the spring has failed. It certainly has not, so we get straight to the words of Christ and His apostles. As you insist on the canal water, we, though rejoicing in the fresh springs of God's word, examine your canal with you, because you are trying to persuade people that there is no other way of getting the water, seeing the canal was made on purpose, and that they are all wrong in going to the spring, and should trust you. We have drunk of the water, and engage them to go and drink of it, and they will soon see the difference between that and what your canal furnishes, and learn what the fresh and living water is which God originally gave them. We cannot but think, from your attempts to hinder them, that you do not like the pure water, and have got a taste for mud. Now your grand reservoir is Rome, and we will see whether the security of the first inlet you rely on is very great.

And here I must beg you to remember that it is a security for faith by a clear and unquestionable succession we are seeking. To us it is quite immaterial, because we have the water itself, the divine word, and can reckon on God's grace and Spirit for the use of it, both for drink and for cleansing; but to you the question is vital. It is your security for truth. Now we are met by exactly the same difficulties as in Antioch, to me a plain

proof (not merely of particular uncertainty, which no one can, and no one acquainted with the facts does, deny, but) that the system which asserts this apostolic appointment of successors is utterly groundless. Scripture not only is silent as to such, but really denies it. The apostle appointed elders or bishops, many in a place, and on leaving their service speaks of no others, so that the plea of Theodoret is that they were called at first apostles (Com. on Phil. 1), and gradually declined the name, and were called bishops. Of this there is not a trace in scripture, those called apostles having no such office, and in one case merely meaning messenger of an assembly.

Tradition, on the other hand, in the only two cases where any details are given, proves, through the uncertainty that surrounds them, that there was no such appointment known, though, as centuries rolled by, and the system prevailed, they traced it up to the names best known at the first. Thus Irenaeus goes up to Polycarp at Smyrna. But Polycarp writes as one among the presbyters in his letter to the Philippians; “Polycarp and the presbyters with him,” and afterwards, at the end of Section 5 and the beginning of Section 6, knows only presbyters and deacons. Perhaps the first positive recognition of it is in Ignatius’ letter to Polycarp as it stands in the Syriac version. And this was in Trajan’s time, in the year 116, at which time nobody doubts that one presiding prelate existed. Yet even he (3, 22) speaks of the succession of presbyters. As to Polycarp himself, Tertullian says he was put into the office by John, referring to no one before him (De P. Hær. 32): Irenaeus, 3, 3, says he had seen him young ordained by the apostles; so Jerome (De Viris Illustribus), that he was a

disciple of John, and made bishop of Smyrna by him. But in the Apostolic Constitutions we have three bishops, and no Polycarp—Aristo, Stratias, and Aristo (7, 46). But Cotelerius tells us that those celebrated are Bucolus first, and then Polycarp. Irenaeus knows nothing of Bucolus, but, as Polycarp knew John, and he knew Polycarp, traces the certainty through what they taught, that the church had never held that the world was created by another and evil god, who had also given the law; for this was the subject of Irenaeus' controversy.

Next, as to the church in Rome. This double foundation of the church, which we have already seen alleged in Antioch, cannot be admitted for a moment as being laid of God. We find it carefully guarded against in both doctrine and ecclesiastical care in scripture. It is stated that the church of Rome was founded by Peter and Paul (Iren. 7,3);74 but the same thing is said of Corinth (Eus. 2, 25), or, if not founded, jointly established in the faith. Paul and Peter went together by Corinth to Rome. It may be so at the end of their lives, but it seems very uncertain. One thing is quite certain—Peter had nothing to do with founding the church in either place. The divinely given history of the Acts assures us of that.

D. But they may have journeyed together to Rome to their martyrdom.

N*. It is possible; but the church was long founded, and that does not make Peter bishop of Rome; indeed, in your earlier75 traditions Linus is represented as first, or Clement, but never Peter. And now, as to this succession, we are in the same uncertainty. Irenaeus tells us Linus was first, then Anacletus, then Clement; so Eusebius some two centuries later. But Tertullian much earlier

than the latter, giving it as a positive register (census) of the succession, says Polycarp was appointed by John at Smyrna, and Clement ordained by Peter for Rome. But then our Apostolic Constitutions do as they did at Antioch, give us Linus appointed by Paul, and Clement by Peter (7, 46). Jerome (Cal. Vir. Ill. 15) tells us that Clement was the fourth from Peter, as he must be, if indeed Linus was the second, and Anacletus third. However, most of the Latins think that Clement was the second from Peter the apostle.

But in Optatus Mil. (De S. Don. 3, 3) we have another list given as quite certain—Peter, Linus, Clement, Anacletus. Epiphanius (27, 6), after a very long story as to how it came about, says that it was uncertain whether Cletus (the second, according to him) was ordained by the apostles, but that they were bishops during the lifetime of the apostles (Peter and Paul having both been bishops of Rome together). They having gone away, left Linus and Cletus in charge; then Clement, who had been first named but would not serve, on the death of Cletus was forced to take the see; but that at any rate the succession was Peter and Paul, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Evaristus. And to shew how little secure these lists are, were it of any importance, in what follows he leaves out one known to have held the See of Rome altogether, and puts another quite wrongly in his stead, having left him out in his proper place. Ruffinus (Praef. ad Recogn.) accounts for two of the statements, for people objected to them in his days, by making Linus and Cletus bishops while Peter was living, and Clement appointed by him before his death; he says it was the same at Caesarea, where Zaccheus was bishop. One of the popes (Celestine V) gives us another explanation of the matter; that

Clement resigned because one pope should not appoint his successor, and Peter appointed him, and that then he took it afterwards on surer ecclesiastical ground—a singular view of apostolic authority. Remark again here how Paul, who certainly was first at Rome, is ignored.

Now let us see what conclusion the most respectable Roman Catholic historians have drawn from the sources to which I have referred. Fleury (54, 2, 26): “The apostles having founded and built up the Roman church gave the charge of governing it to St. Linus, the same of whom St. Paul wrote to Timothy. To St. Linus succeeded St. Clement or St. Cletus, otherwise named Anacletus. It is certain that they were the three first bishops of Rome; but neither their order nor the time of their pontificate is certain. Twelve years are given to St. Linus, and yet it is more likely that he only survived the apostles a year or two, and consequently that they had established him bishop of Rome to govern it under them as they were accustomed to do in other places.” There are two things certain here, that Peter was not bishop, and that he did not appoint Clement before his death. All the rest is uncertain.

Dupin, another most respectable Roman Catholic historian: “St. Clement, disciple and coadjutor of the apostles, was ordained bishop of Rome after St. Anaclet.” And in a note, “St. Irenaeus, and Eusebius and the ancients put him only the third of Rome, although others make him the immediate successor of St. Peter. But I think it better to adhere to St. Irenaeus.” Natalis Alexander (3, 19) makes Peter preside twenty-five years, then Linus twelve, then Cletus twelve, then Clement nine, but the length of time uncertain. Baronius sets them all right (35, foil.); will have Linus succeeding

Peter after his death; rehearses endless discussions and opinions, but insists that Linus came first, Clement third, or even fourth, as Tertullian's verses put it, Linus, Cletus, Anacletus, Clement. But he says Anacletus came after Clement. All others make Cletus and Anacletus the same person; but for him they are all wrong, and the true order is Linus, Cletus, Clement, Anacletus; others putting, he thinks, one Cletus for Anacletus or the converse. If you wish to see confusion and contradictions, you have only to read Baronius on the first successors of Peter. Pagius insists he is all wrong.

D. But with all this uncertainty, it is clear that there was a succession of the followers of the apostles who presided over the see.

N*. I do not doubt that these companions of the apostles laboured in the care of the Roman assembly; but, as to succession to secure doctrine, there is none such to be found. Some will have Linus and Cletus assistants to Peter, who was often away in his lifetime. Baronius insists it was after his death they were regular bishops. Others insist Clement was the first. It is evident there was a state of things not clearly known, and that all these were efforts to reconcile this with a well-established system which prevailed when the efforts were made, and which were arranged by one one way, by another another—by scarce two alike, while the most learned of the Fathers insists it was only an arrangement to crush factions, and the most eminent confirms his thought. But this can give no security for successional grace and truth, were such an idea just.

But I see, James, your wife has something on her mind, and is only deterred from speaking by our being all here.

But we are in her house, not in a church, and she is quite at liberty to say anything.

Mrs. —. I should not think of intruding, sir, on the conversation. I was only saying to James that I cannot understand what the meaning of looking for all this security for the doctrine of the apostles is, when we have the doctrine itself in their own writings.

N*. Well, I should think common sense, to say nothing of faith, which must have a divine basis, could think nothing else. But there is a human thoughtfulness about antiquity, and it looks like a feeling of reverence to make much of these ancient writers—some of them really saints and martyrs; and then you must remember that our friends here, at any rate one of them, considers, like the Pharisees of old, the tradition of the elders as part of the word of God; besides, they profess to take their interpretations of the word from these Fathers. Of this we have spoken; and as to the security of doctrine, it is nothing less than absurd to look for it in an uncertain succession of men, when we have the teaching itself given by God, and proclaimed by inspiration, which none of them can or do pretend to. We have gone into the subject because it is alleged by all Roman Catholics and Ritualists, and alleged by Milner as one of the marks of the true church. It is in that light we are now considering it. Nor can I consider Milner’s statement as honest. First, he states it as unquestioned that Simon Barjonas was called a rock, which he was not, but a stone.

Mr. R. But it was spoken in Syriac, and the gender makes no difference.

N*. I know your advocates allege this; but you believe that, as we have it, to be inspired?

R. Undoubtedly.

N*. Well then, we have the difference made by inspiration in the sentence itself. Thou art petros, and on this rock (petra) I will build My church. And therefore it is not honest to say Peter or rock. Further, he must have known that the Vulgate and Rhemish alike say, Thou art Peter, as a name. And he was too learned not to know, what we have already seen, that half his authorities take the passage in a different sense.

Next, he gives the list of popes as if it were all a clear case, when his own historians differ entirely, and quietly says he will leave out some, as there would be too many to recount all; whereas an accurate succession, though a matter of perfect indifference to those who have the scriptures, is yet, in his point of view, quite essential; but it enables him to leave out those who would make the pretension to a regular succession a mere farce—forgive me, gentlemen, for speaking plainly. Dr. Milner not only smooths over difficulties, but conceals the fact that there were two or three popes at a time, anathematizing and excommunicating each other, and Europe divided between them; and when one faction put down the other, and put their pope up, the latter cancelled all the ordinations of his rival, so that a book had to be written as to there being any real ordinations at all.

R. But ordination imprints a character, and cannot be destroyed or revoked.

N*. I am aware this is your theory; but here, as they held the pope to be null, they held all his acts to be null, and declared them all invalid. And, as it is, different Roman

Catholic authors hold different popes to have been the true ones; and if so, where is the security of a true apostolic succession?

We will go rapidly through their history (not repeating the atrocities they were guilty of, but) in view of succession and apostolicity. I sum up what we have found in a few words. The scriptures, as Jerome and others, and Pope Urban, know no difference between bishops and presbyters. The same persons were called by both names, and there was no resident person holding such an office as is now called bishop. James at Jerusalem is the only appearance even of anything like it. Elsewhere, where Paul had laboured, he established bishops or presbyters. Paul founded the church among the Gentiles and established no bishops, as the word is now understood. The Fathers so called cannot give us any certain list, and historians are disagreed which is the true one, as to Antioch, Rome, and Smyrna, where there is some account of the names. When insisting on the point of succession, they contradict each other.

Then come in the Constitutions, a forgery evidently in their present form but very ancient, which give a totally different account of the matter, and make two, one established by Paul, another by Peter; the more striking because it affects alike both Antioch and Rome, where the contradictions are found, and in exactly the same way. Save this, there is no tradition making Paul the founder of any succession of the church, but Peter, who was not apostle of the Gentiles at all. Tertullian says episcopacy is to be traced to John; Jerome, that it arose from the factious spirit of the clergy.

The fair conclusion to draw is, that there was no such post or succession at the beginning, as I have already said; and that, when it had become important through feebleness of faith and want of dependence on the word of God, they tried to make it out.

R. It is a most bold conclusion against the faith and tradition of the church.

N*. It is a question of fact; and the fact you cannot prove. The scripture, by the confession of your own writers, makes no distinction between bishops and elders, and there is no consistent tradition even on the point, but quite the contrary. Nobody denies that they very soon began to have them. Then they tried to make out the list, but they did not agree.

D. Nobody can deny that bishops and elders are the same in scripture, but there were really bishops with a different name, as Timothy and Titus, whom I name because they were appointed by Paul, not to say James also at Jerusalem.

N*. For what sees were Timothy and Titus appointed?

D. For Ephesus and Crete.

N*. You must kindly remember that we are discussing the point of succession. I am not arguing for presbytery against episcopacy or episcopacy against presbytery. If James was bishop, he was bishop over apostles, saying, when Peter and Paul had spoken, “Wherefore my sentence is,” so that Peter’s primacy is gone. As to Timothy and Titus, they were left merely occasionally by the apostle Paul to watch certain cases, and sent for to go elsewhere afterwards, or to stay with him (1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:21; Phil. 2:19) when he was in prison at Rome;

as to Titus, see 2 Timothy 4:10; Titus 3:12: so that it is certain they were not local prelates in Paul's time, nor appointed by him to be such. I am aware you have Theodoret's authority some 300 years after for calling them apostles, but nothing in scripture. Those the church sent with money are called their messengers, as Epaphras the messenger of Colosse to Paul, who, as "messenger "in Greek is "apostolos," is so called, as the apostles were Christ's messengers. There were those of the different churches. "Apostolos" means nothing else than "one sent"; and then, being at a loss, they make him an apostle, and then say, "that is, a bishop," apostle being given up, out of modesty.

But it is a lame effort to prop up the case; for apostle means one sent, no more and no less; but, when Christ sent them, they had divine authority and commission. A resident prelate is just one who is not an apostolos. As to modesty, it does not seem to have grown much with advancing years amongst the ecclesiastics. The epistles of Ignatius do not bear much trace of it, though I do not attribute them all to him.

Here is a curious example among so many others of the frauds and forgeries perpetrated in the vaunted primitive church, which got the name of pious frauds: Gospels, Apostolic Acts, Canons, and Constitutions, Sibylline prophecies, Ignatius' Epistles, visions, even a letter from Christ. Nothing was wanting in the way of falsehood, in the early centuries of the church, to impose superstition and corruption on the ignorance they were in, and exalt the clergy at the expense of the authority of the word of God.

Bill M. But is this true, Mr. R.?

R. There is no doubt such things existed, but the church is not answerable for them; they never were received into the church.

N*. The Visions of Hermas, which were composed about a hundred years after Christ's death (or little more) and are not forgeries, were read in the church, and nothing could be worse. But I referred to them to shew what was the character and spirit of the times; and no honest man can deny the fact. As to Ignatius' Epistles, they were relied on, and are, by Baronius and Protestant episcopalians.

D. But some of them are true.

N*. They were interpolated, and some confessedly spurious, and now all but three pretty clearly proved to be so; and save in one passage, I think, all the bombastical language as to bishops, presbyters, and deacons has disappeared.

I refer to them to shew (by the multiplying this one passage, so exalting the bishop and putting him on a level with God or Christ) the taste of the times, that it was not modesty and lowering episcopal authority. One modern author, who accepts a great deal of them, seeks to prove by them that they were a recent introduction, and therefore so urgently insisted on as not being quite solid. But oh, what a ground is all this for faith!

But, as we have examined the source, let us examine the stream. Your traditions are not much good. The first Father, I believe, who makes Peter the first bishop, as we have seen, leaves out one and puts another in his place quite falsely. Still history helps us out pretty clearly as to the succession, and what it was worth. Only human history cannot make a divine ground for faith. Of

the first popes or bishops of Rome I have only to speak in honour. The heathen emperors ruled there, and any prominence they might have exposed them the more to persecution. The church was poor and without honour, but spiritually great. Some, as Clement, Anacletus (according to some) Evaristus and Alexander, Sixtus and Telesphorus were martyrs. This was the bright time of the church; pagans in power, the church poor, but honoured of God, and a witness to Christ, suffering for Him. It suffered everywhere; but Rome, under the eye of the Roman authorities and a bigoted populace, had a large share in this honour.

R. I am glad to see you own that there was some good at Rome.

N*. I pay unfeigned honour to these men thus honoured of God. It is good for us in our days of ease to remember them. They were members of Christ, of that one true church, true saints, as all Christians are, and specially honoured in suffering for the blessed Lord. It was the glory of those days. It is not what you call the Fathers (a name forbidden by Christ, which I use myself merely as a well-known title) that I honour in early days, but these faithful witnesses for Christ, in all the Roman world, and not least in Rome. They were one in spirit and grace. The church was then wholly separate from the world; afterwards the popes were the head of it—not persecuted but persecutors. Superstition and heresy, however, began to invade the church of Rome under the next pope, Hyginus. These heretics Polycarp of Smyrna met, and many deceived by them were delivered, it is said, by his means. In his follower’s time, Pius, the superstition increased. Hermas, his brother, with whom he is said to have been intimate, wrote pretended

visions, full of the worst practice and the worst doctrines, and even blasphemies, against the Lord. Yet it is said to have been read in the churches, a fact which proves the total want of discernment in the primitive church. A greater quantity of trash could scarcely be found. He states that God took counsel with the Holy Ghost and the angels what He should do with Christ. Then He put (the, or) a holy spirit,76 which He had first created, in a chosen body, and the body obeyed the holy spirit put into it, and so the body was to be rewarded, and Christ got more than had been promised, for He had done more than was prescribed to Him.

The similitude is this: A man with a great estate planted a vineyard, and chose a servant, and delivered the vineyard into his care. He does more than what is commanded. The Lord seeing this, calls his son, who is to be his heir, and his friends with whom he was wont to consult, and shews what the servant had done, saying he had promised him liberty, but now he would make him heir with his son, which all approved. And this was confirmed by his sharing presents from his Lord with his fellow-servants. The son in the similitude is the Holy Ghost, the friends the angels, the servant Christ.

I need not cite any more. I do thus much that we may see what was current in the church in those days.77 I have already referred to this book as sanctioning the vile things called holiness in these days.

But here we begin to get into our old difficulties as to the succession. Optatus, Jerome, Augustine, and others put first Anicetus; nexflrenaeus, Tertullian and others put Pius first. Not only so; it is disputed whether Hyginus sat four or twelve years. As Platina, an ancient

secretary and historian of the popes, says (sub Pio), “In this place the times vary, as some put Pius, others Anicetus first. The histories also vary. However it may be in so remote a history and such great negligence of [our] ancestors, it will be better to get at the things themselves in some way, [though] done a little sooner or a little after, than pass them altogether” —a strange ground for certainty of faith. In his time arose the dispute of the East with Rome as to the observance of Easter. The East, alleging the apostles’ authority, kept it on the 14th of the moon. Victor would have it on the Lord’s day, and take the next one to the 14th. Polycarp had come to make peace during the time of Anicetus, but Victor refused communion with all the East, who alleged they followed John; and it remained in abeyance till the Council of Nice, which decided it should be on a Lord’s day. So the day of the week carried it against the day of the month, and the church was not divided in spite of Victor.

It is a curious piece of history that the Scotch and British Christians, too, with the north of England, kept Easter as the Asiatics did; and it was centuries after, in 664, that the Roman practice prevailed after a conference in the north of England. It was the Scotch Christians of Iona, who were not subject to any bishop, but governed by presbyters, who evangelized Germany and Switzerland and the north, as far as it was done in early years, but it fell under the power of centralizing Rome. The British and Irish churches did not till long after. The Saxons were evangelized from Rome; and by the Normans, already in subjection to Rome. But this by the bye.

When we arrive at Anicetus, we find ourselves in serious difficulties. We can hardly doubt there was such a pope —at least Irenaeus puts him clearly in his list, not, after all a very sure one, as we have seen in Cletus and Anacletus, whom some hold to be one person, some two. And Polycarp, it must be supposed, had interviews with Anicetus about Easter; but when he was pope, and even whether he was pope, is in no way certain. In “what is called the “Chronicle of Damascus” no mention is made of him at all; but Soter immediately succeeds Pius. Baronius makes Soter succeed Anicetus, a.d. 175; others declare Soter began his episcopate in 168; others say Anicetus died a.d. 161. Baronius makes Pius pope in 158; but some make the beginning of his pontificate in 142 and Eusebius (4, 11); gives him fifteen years, and says he died in 157, a year before Baronius makes him pope. Baronius gave him ten years, Pagius begins his pontificate in 141, and places his death 151; so that the first year of Pius for Baronius is the sixth of Anicetus for Pagius, who makes Amcetus begin his pontificate in 151, where Baronius places the twelfth of Telesphorus. (Baronius, vol. 1, under these popes).

Now a difference of one or two years’ date, I admit, does not make a material question as to facts. But what I have produced from Roman Catholic historians and ancient ones here shews that the history of those times is very uncertain, and that such a succession can in no possible way be a foundation or security for faith or grace.

I may add here that the pope gave letters of peace, as recognizing them, to the Montanists and their wild and demoniac prophecies. Praxias came from the place, and forced the pope to revoke his letters. I apprehend this

was Victor, though it would seem Baronius puts it under Anicetus, others under Eleutherius. There are those who introduce a Pope Cyrianus between Pontianus and Auterus; but it is hardly worth considering, though Baronius notices it. It only shews the succession was not very certain.

I may mention here that it was from the time of Cyprian only that Rome obtained the title of Peter's chair. Baronius indeed gives twenty-five years of Peter's holding the See of Rome, but all early authors make Linus the first bishop. Ruffinus, as we have seen, conciliates them by keeping Peter in his apostleship, and making two of them sit in the see while he was alive. The first author who makes Peter bishop is Optatus (De Schis. Don., lib. 2, 3) in the latter part of the fourth century; while Epiphanius (thinking it possible Clement was first named, but would not act till after Linus and Cletus were dead, and then was compelled) says that Peter and Paul were apostles and bishops (27, 6), then Linus. Eusebius simply says that Linus was the first bishop after Peter. He may perhaps be considered an earlier testimony that Optatus. They were nearly contemporaneous, and Optatus is the first who explicidy states it. That Peter was twenty-five years bishop of Rome is a simple absurdity; because if the tradition of his being put to death by Nero be true, this was a.d. 68 or 69. But the Lord suffered a.d. 34. More than fourteen —say fifteen—years after that (Gal. 2) Peter had not left Jerusalem, and there had been as yet no apostolic work at Rome at all. This makes a.d. 49. He is still at Jerusalem. After this he goes to Antioch; but tradition says he was seven years in the see of Antioch, before coming to Rome, and in a.d. 49 he had not yet gone to

Antioch, and certainly was not fixed in the see, for Paul was labouring there and rebuked him for his conduct. How long after, we cannot tell—say it was immediately, which I do not believe, because Paul was the apostle labouring there—but I take up the tradition as it is given. He was at Antioch then, at any rate, till a.d. 56 or 57; thus he could not by any possibility have begun to have to address Rome as its pope at all till about eleven years before his death. The whole thing is a fable upon the face of it.

Mr. R. But you cast aside all tradition.

N*. I do, as having the smallest authority. But here you have not any two agreeing. You may consult Baronius in the first and twenty-fifth year of Peter, and see what he says with Pagius, who notices the attempt to make two comings of Peter, one in Claudius' and another in Nero's reign, and rejects it all, taking the plain statement of Lactantius that the apostles had been preaching everywhere for twenty-five years, and then that Peter came to Rome in the time of Nero (Lac. de Mort. Pet. 2, 95). That Peter may have come to Rome for his martyrdom, or to see the Jewish saints there, is possible, though we have little proof of it; but vague and late statements that he ever held the see are mere got-up fiction; that he founded the church of Rome, we know from scripture to be totally false, let the good Irenaeus say what he will. No apostle did; of this we are sure from Paul's epistle to them. If we are to believe Dionysius of Corinth, quoted by Eusebius (2, 25), Peter and Paul both planted the church at Corinth too, a statement useful to shew what such statements and traditions of the Fathers are worth. Yet in this passage of Dionysius we get, if it be true that Peter ever was at Rome, a glimpse of the

truth, namely that Peter and Paul were taken prisoners to Rome together, or at least went together there on the journey which ended in their martyrdom; but all is utterly uncertain. The only thing certain is that Peter's sitting—still more his sitting twenty-five years at Rome—is a got-up fable, and a very poor and transparent one.

I have spoken on this point here, because we are at the date in the history of Roman pontiffs at which it is first called the chair of Peter, or Peter Bishop of Rome.

Of several pontiffs I have nothing to say; but, when we come to Marcellinus and Marcellus, difficulties begin again. Eusebius (his contemporary) does not mention Marcellus, nor does Jerome, which is strange, and very learned men exclude him from the list, and ancient accounts state the see to have been vacant seven years —Fleury says three. Baronius says they are all wrong; that it is a confusion of names, that it must mean months instead of years, that no prudent person will hold the see to have been so long vacant. Pagius makes it, as Fleury, three years instead of seven, with the ancient chronicle called of Damasus (Bar. a.d. 304).

Mr. R. But you cannot doubt Marcellus was pope.

N*. Probably he was. Augustine at the end of the century mentions him; but the church was headless for more than three years. We speak, moreover, of succession, and such a certainty is a poor foundation to rest our faith upon. This Marcellinus is the one charged with offering incense to idols. Some say he was afterwards a martyr. But, further, Optatus (2, 8), where insisting on the succession of pontiffs against the Donatists, and Theodoret (lib. 1,2), leave him out; the

former quite in his own age, one may say, and the latter some hundred years after.

R. But Optatus leaves out Eutychian and Caius too, and Theodoret makes Melchiades succeed Marcellinus, which is surely wrong.

N*. What you say is quite correct, and I dare say Marcellus, Eutychian, Caius, and Eusebius were all really popes, though the learned editor of Optatus says whether Marcellus be different from Marcellinus is no slight question— “non modica qusestio est.” It is all alike to me, because we have the word itself, as to which there can be no possible succession, and assured grace to use it. But for you, who rest on succession, such uncertainty is fatal.

R. But God will take care of His church.

AT*. Most assuredly. But that is not the question, but whether what you allege is the way He takes care of it. You and Dr. Milner and the rest teach this poor man to rest on succession. Now either he must swallow it down true or false, on your word, or he must examine a long history of the church; and, if he can, he finds confessed uncertainty and no sure ground of faith at all.

However, we will proceed; for I have examined your famous succession. Sylvester, from whom the Waldenses date the apostasy of the Papacy, Marius, and Julius I pass over without remark. We then come to a serious difficulty. The Emperors were now Christian in profession, and the actual Emperor Arian, with, we might say, all the bishops, save some rare banished ones; that is, they had denied the faith. The world awoke, as Jerome says, and found itself Arian. So little is the security in the hierarchy for the faith. If the people

then had followed the clergy, all were Arian. However Pope Liberius at first was not, and he was banished; and Felix, a deacon of Rome, was ordained Pope by the Arians, and there was the greatest confusion at Rome and even many killed. However Felix was there. Baronius will not own him, for Liberius was alive. Bellarmine says he must be reckoned pope, and gives his reasons. Liberius at last gave way to the Emperor, and signed an heretical creed. Then Baronius says at the utmost Felix could be chorepiscopus, a kind of coadjutor, but will not count any years of his as pope; but this saves appearances, in part at least, not wholly, for if he were not in office his ordinations go for nothing. Optatus and Augustine do not count him among the popes, but he is reckoned in the list, because Felix III and IV would not be such if he be not counted. Liberius returned from exile, brought back at the intercession of Roman ladies. The Emperor wanted them to be bishops together. But Felix was driven out. However he got back again and sought to exercise clerical functions in the city, but was again driven out, and lived on his own estate (Fleury, 14, 7). He ordained twenty-one presbyters and nineteen bishops (Bar. 357, 66). Was he pope or not? What was the succession worth here, two popes at a time, one subscribing an Arian creed, the other ordained by Arians, sitting while the other was alive, and ordaining others: some holding him to be pope, others not?

But this dispute did not quite end with the death of Liberius. Damasus who was chosen to succeed had been of Felix's party. This dissatisfied many, and they met and chose Ursinus who was consecrated too. The See of Rome was worth coveting by men who loved the world. Fine chariots, rich feasts, and regal luxury characterized

their life. This is not only the testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, but Jerome informs us that Praetextatus, a proconsular Roman and of high family and other important offices, when no longer proconsul said that, if they would make him Bishop of Rome, he would turn Christian directly.

Well, there was fighting among the people at Rome who should be pope. Juvenitius, prefect of Rome, and Julian, prefect of provisions, banished Ursinus; his party rescued him and others who were banished. Ursinus' party shut themselves up in a church of Licinus, where he had been consecrated, and they were attacked there, and 137 persons were found killed in the church. The prefect, unable to appease the tumultuary violence, had to go to the country. However Ursinus was banished, and Damasus could amass wealth and leave costly silver vessels to the church at his death. Ursinus then tried again, but the people would not have him; and Siricius was chosen.

R. But the succession was uninterrupted.

N*. And do you soberly think that securing succession in an office that vied with royalty, by fighting and slaughter that magistrates could not stop, is a security for the truth and grace that came by Jesus Christ being conveyed to us, and a mark of the true church? Must not the heart and conscience be dead to everything that constituted Christianity to think so? And, besides, even the succession is not certain. It cannot be said whether Felix was pope or not, or partly yes and partly no, if Liberius lost the papacy by subscribing an Arian creed. But if so, if he really had lost it, Felix should have remained, who had replaced him, and he have not

supplanted him again. At any rate we have two popes, one signing an Arian creed, the other consecrated by Arians, both de facto at the same time, whoever was pope. Siricius closed the century.

But early in the next we have the succession even more grievously in question. On the death of Zosimus the greater part of the clergy and people chose Boniface, others the archdeacon Eulalius who was consecrated by the prelate of the See of Ostia, who always regularly consecrated the new pontiff. Boniface was consecrated by others. The prefect wrote to the Emperor in favour of Eulalius, who convoked a number of bishops to decide; but there was great division, and he called another council, including the African and Gallican prelates, but, meanwhile, ordered (on a fuller report of the prefect, who said neither were to be trusted) both Boniface and Eulalius to stay outside Rome, and sent another prelate of neither party to celebrate Easter, which was just coming on. Boniface had tried to get in, but was, after first driving back the civil officers, driven back by a large number of them. Eulalius got in, and would not leave on being warned, but Boniface's friends in arms attacked Eulalius', who were not. The Emperor banished the latter for being in the city against orders, and let Boniface have the see. There were the usual tumults and battery and violence on either side. What kind of succession is this?

But towards the end of the same century the difficulty is still greater. Symmachus and Laurentius were both elected popes the same day. In order to terminate the schism they apply to Theodoric, king of the Goths, an Arian, who decided that he who had the majority for him, or was first ordained, should be pope. Symmachus

had the majority. The party of Laurentius however subsequently brought him back, and accused Symmachus of crimes. Some of the clergy and others communicated with Symmachus, and some with Laurentius. The king referred it to a council, they to the judgment of God. Symmachus appeared the first time, but, having been nearly assassinated on the way, refused the second time and stood on his privilege, and then they left it to the judgment of God. So he remained pope. The grossest outrages, even against nuns, and fighting and murders, took place on this occasion.

A previous council held at Rome had passed decrees against the canvassing and intrigues which took place at the elections, or rdther before them. Symmachus was never cleared of the charges. The only really godly man we read of in the case was with Laurentius' party. In their strifes the clergy went so far as to spend all the church's goods to push their candidates, so that civil laws had to be made to repress the abuse. So uncertain was the succession here, that Baronius says that right might seem on either side, and there was not much to blame in Laurentius and his friends in maintaining his right to the Papacy till after the Council of Rome had decided for Symmachus (Bar. 498, 3). But this was a council of Italian prelates held by Symmachus. Symmachus presided himself. Of course it owned him pope. They saluted him with acclamations of long life and his see many years. But it was really no regular council, for the presbyters of his party and deacons signed as well, and it was held a year after his election (Hard. 3, 958).

The Roman Catholic body at that time did not think so much of divine succession. They sent to the civil power,

and to an Arian to settle it. To quiet the matter Laurentius was made bishop of another see; so his consecration was owned. Hormisdas succeeded Symmachus, and John, Hormisdas. But then the king, Theodoric an Arian, put Felix into the see —Felix III for Fleury, Felix II for Baronius, as he will not own Felix I at all, though he sat and consecrated various prelates, only Liberius was alive. Felix, though put in by an Arian king, was a good pope, at least there was no competitor; they ordained him on the Arian king's nomination. But the case of his successor was worse still. King Athelric appointed Boniface to be pope; but, if we are to believe Baronius, the Romans wishing to have a pope of their own, chose Dioscurus, and as appears in a letter he quotes, the great body of people were with him. Both were consecrated. However Dioscurus died after some months. Boniface called a council and forced the clergy to condemn and anathematize him after his death, and to give him the power to name his own successor and give it in writing. And Vigilius was named. However in a subsequent council this was all revoked and the writing burned. But if Dioscurus was elected canonically and by the majority of clergy and laity, as rather appears to have been the case, both from Baronius' statements and Boniface being obliged to use such efforts to reduce the clergy to subjection, Boniface was never rightly and canonically pope at all, and the whole succession fails.

R. But you have no proof of this, and Boniface was always afterwards owned as pope.

N*. If we are to have apostolic succession as an essential mark of the true church—and it is a vital point in your system— the proof of there being such must be clear, and lies only on you. But you cannot deny that both were

consecrated. Baronius, though speaking very cautiously, gives us to understand that the Roman choice by the multitude fell on Dioscurus. He does not attempt to say more than that it happily closed by his death. But if Boniface was not originally pope but Dioscurus, he never could be legitimate pope at all. As to being owned afterwards in the lists, it proves nothing but that he sat in fact, which nobody denies. We shall find a multitude of cases where they are in the lists, and Baronius will not own them. We have seen such an one already in the case of Felix, so that, if you are searching out history, you have to settle, by chronology and contemporary names, which it was. See such a case in Dupin (Cent. 6 under Felix IV). Boniface seems to have pleaded the deliverance of the see from the nomination of the king. He made all the clergy swear to it; and then, when in the subsequent synod it was all set aside and the writing burnt, he absolved them from their oath. The truth is that the breaking up of the Roman empire had put power into the hands of the Roman pontiffs, and all was ambition and wickedness.

After the short pontificates of John II and Agapetus, we arrive at a case in which all pretence of legitimate succession fails. The Emperor of Constantinople was by means of Belisarius engaged in the reconquest of Italy, and the king of the Goths, Theodotus, distrustful of influences not his own at Rome. The clergy met to elect a pope, but he would not allow them to elect the one they desired, but obliged them, under penalty of death, to establish his nominee pope, which they did. Baronius speaks of their wisdom and divine guidance and approbation, that they all consented to nominate Silverius, whom Theodotus had forced upon them. He

was son of Pope Hormisdas. He was charged with bribing the king to have him made pope. It is also said this was a calumny. It is possible. Things were in such a state that they were as capable of false accusation as he of bribery. Which was the fact, I do not pretend to say. It is the statement of the historian Anastasius. However he was a pope.

But Vigil, who was at Constantinople, intrigued with the empress to be pope, promising to own her favourites who were condemned for false doctrine in the East, if she would have him named. And she sent him with a letter to Belisarius, who was at Rome. The empress had promised 700 pounds of gold if he owned her favourite, and he promised 200 of them to Belisarius if he installed him pope. The Goths had returned to besiege Rome; Silverius was accused of treachery with the Goths. They at last raised the siege however, and Silverius was banished to Patara, in Lycia, by Belisarius, who took off his vestments, and made the clergy elect Vigil; and Vigil sat as pope. Silverius, however, went to the Emperor, who sent him back to Rome, saying, if he had engaged in treacherous correspondence with the Goths, he was not to be reinstated, but if innocent, he should be. But Vigil, fearing for himself, fulfilled then the conditions on which he had got the papacy, and Belisarius delivered Silverius up into his power, and he was sent off to the island of Pontecune, where he died, it is said, of hunger, and Vigil remained pope. This is the pope who had to do with the Emperor and the general council at Constantinople, and condemned and retracted, and retracted his retraction, and at last was let go by the Emperor, who offered to the Romans him or the Archdeacon Pelagius for pope. The two returned together. Vigil died on the road and

Pelagius was accused of poisoning him, and could only get two out of the prelates of Italy to consecrate him; all the rest refused. But he purged himself on oath and was the next pope. Nice work to secure faith, and give a sure mark to the simple of the true church!

R. But still they were regularly consecrated, and grace and truth were handed down.

N*. Why the Bishop of Ostia (who was the regular person to do it) laying his hands on a man chosen to be Peter's successor at Rome should convey grace or authority from Peter, it is hard to tell. If Peter had done so, and then his successor on his successor before his death and so on, I might not believe it, but I could understand it. But it is not so. As the case is, the pope, who consecrates ever so many prelates, never confers Peter's authority; and a prelate who has it not, nor any pretensions to it, confers it on the pope. Succession here there is none. However I drop that, as we are examining the facts.

Now in Vigil's case the failure is complete on your own shewing. Silverius was deprived by the violence of Belisarius, by the intrigues of some women, and Vigil was thereupon consecrated and made pope. While the pope was alive this was impossible; he could not be Peter's successor while Peter's true successor was there, and he never had any other election or consecration. Baronius tries to make out a second election six days after Silverius' death, but does not dare to hint at a second consecration, so that the fallacy is apparent on the face of it; and Pagius shews that the six days' vacancy mentioned by Anastasius was from Silverius' deposition by Belisarius, and not from his

death. It is a miserable attempt to get rid of what is a hopeless flaw in the succession of Roman pontiffs. Pelagius, very probably the poisoner, certainly the successor, of Vigilius, who was no pope at all, has wholly broken the succession of the pontificate, whatever it is worth. We have the true account no doubt in Fleury (32, 57, 58). He wrote secretly to the heretics and remained in possession of the Holy See; at the same time he professed entire orthodoxy to the Emperor, a strange security for faith. Dupin (under the title of Pope Vigil in Cent. 6) tells the truth too plainly: "Although Vigil had mounted the See of Rome in a way wholly unjust, he did not the less remain in possession after the death of Silverius, nor was he the less recognized as legitimate pope, without its appearing even that they proceeded to a new election, or that they confirmed that which had been." Further, Vigil was consulted as pope by foreign prelates as Eleutherius before Silverius's death.

Mr. D. But if you undermine thus the foundations of faith and of the church of God, what have we to rest upon?

N*. And do you mean that one who certainly could not be really pope while another was alive (himself put in by the violence of the king), introduced by an intriguing woman to support what the church called heresy, and paying the general a large sum of money to secure him, and send away his competitor to die of hunger in an island, and his successor so suspected of poisoning him that in all Italy all refused to consecrate him, but two who were not the regular ones to do it—do you mean that these are the foundations of faith and of the church of God? Really it seems to me a man must have his conscience utterly deadened; it is a kind of blasphemy to me to make such things God's security for faith in the

church. As to faith, who can tell what Vigil's faith was?—one thing for the Empress and the heretics, another for the Emperor, and then yes and no and yes, as he vacillated between the Emperor and Rome as to the three chapters.

R. But it is not certain he wrote those letters to the heretics. It was, as Baronius says, a proof of God's care of the Roman See that he was providentially forced to be orthodox as soon as he became pope, though he had engaged himself to the Empress to favour heresy in order to get it.

N*. Your fairest historians admit he did. I have quoted no Protestant statements. Besides it is a mere shuffle of Baronius that he then became pope, as we have seen. That he made a public confession of orthodoxy to please the Emperor and Rome, when he feared them somewhat, is true; but he went backwards and forwards at Constantinople in just the same unprincipled way. But the fact is, he never was rightful pope at all. He was appointed when a pope was living and only then. But if you say this is so uncertain, how can what is so give ground for certainty of faith? It is, at any rate, certain he never was really pope on your principles of succession. To me, save as I may sorrow over any other sinner, it is quite immaterial; but I consented to examine the boasted succession, as it had been put into other people's heads to puzzle them. My trust is in the sure word of God and in His grace, where, as I have said, there is no succession to be sought; it is itself and always the same.

You may remark here that Silverius was the son of Pope Hormisdas, and subsequently the great Gregory was a descendant of Pope Felix.

I pass over John III, Benedict, Pelagius II, Gregory—a really great man, who just hints at the possibility of a purgatory for extremely small faults (for the gospel had disappeared) and who reformed or composed the Roman Liturgy—Sabinianus, and others, and come to Honorius, in the seventh century, where we meet a difficulty of another kind. Honorius, so far from keeping the faith of others, could not, it seems, keep the faith himself. He is formally condemned and anathematized by name in the third Council of Constantinople, confirmed by Pope Agathon, and anathematized again by Pope Leo II,78 whence it is formally taught in Canon Law that the pope can be judged for heresy.

R. But it is not sure, as Baronius shews, that the letters were Honorius'. A certain Theodore was the person, and that it could not, if they were, be called heresy.

N*. Did you ever read Dupin's remarks on it?

R. Well, I never did.

N*. I should think not. All Baronius proves is that he himself was at his wit's ends about it. No honest Roman Catholic questions it. He is called pope in the acts of the council (the decree was sent to the pope, confirmed by him). Honorius was anathematized by name by Leo II. In a word, the objections are simply, as Dupin says, frivolous and unworthy of attention. As to its being heresy, he states positively in terms what the council condemns, and Leo and Agathon too, and the Roman Council, with Martin and Agathon, popes; so the Emperor in his letter to Rome too. In a solemn judgment

on heresy they condemn and anathematize the pope by name. A strange security for the faith! They did not dream of his being such then. And what is the value of the succession of a heretic as a mark of the true church? For my own part I do not think worse of Honorius than of his adversaries. He was in error, but sought to put an end to useless chicanery too. But if he was not wrong, then the popes and the council were wrong in anathematizing him. John IV seems to have no great opinion of him, or at least to think more of Rome's importance, and explains Honorius' doctrine in a statement well meant in the main, but which shews ignorance of the truth of God, confounding man's spirit or conscience with the Holy Ghost, as a Quaker might now. They all confounded, I think, will as a quality of nature, and will in action or self-will; but on that I contest not. The next pope to John, Theodore, was son of a bishop.

As we proceed, we may see how little like divine order was in the succession of these popes. The Emperors of Constantinople had lost almost all their authority and possessions in Italy, but held Ravenna, where the ex-arch and a governor resided, and Rome. He could not thus directly hinder any pope but those he wished being chosen, but by means of the troops in Rome acted on it indirectly, so that those who sought to be pope bribed the ex-arch to get in (Bar., Conon Pap.). Thus, in the case of Conon's election, the troops held one church, the people another, with two candidates, and could not agree. The clergy and populace went to the Patriarchate and saw Conon, and the troops fell in with the common feeling, and he was elected. The two competitors remained excluded. On Conon's death, Paschal promises

the treasures of the church (or, as Baronius says, a hundred pounds of gold) to the ex-arch. One party elect Paschal as pope, another Theodore, and there is a contest between him and Theodore, one holding the inner part of the patriarchal palace, the other the outer, and nothing could be done. The populace see Sergius, and all acclaim him. Theodore gives way, and Paschal has to quit in spite of himself. He sent, however, the gold promised to the ex-arch, and he came down on Rome, and Sergius had to give him some precious treasures of the church, or he would have been sent off. Paschal, charged with magic, died secluded in a monastery.

James. But surely, gentlemen—excuse me for speaking—there is nothing holy or of God in all this. It is mere human ambition and wickedness. How can this be a sign of the true church? It is a sign of man's lusts and sin.

N*. Holiness is not required in a pope. The Canon Law says no one is to judge them, save for heresy, as we have seen; and either they adorn their position by their own conduct, or the worth of Peter's excellency rests on them (Dis. 40, 41 non nos.).

Bill M. Well, I must say this is all very strange to me. I did not rest on scripture, and I thought, from what these gentlemen and their friends said, all was holy and blessed, and the pope was called His Holiness, and I took it all for true. But I see now it is all very different from that. How can you, gentlemen, take all this as a proof of the true church? And Dr. Milner has not really told the truth about it. One expects, at any rate a poor man who has not read much does, to find truth in a book like that recommended by people that seem so holy; and

it is not honest, I see it plainly. You will forgive me, gentlemen, but I see I have been deceived.

R. But holiness and authority attaches to the office, and not to the man; and we are looking for the true succession in the office. Besides, many were very holy men.

Bill M. But, from what I have heard, the succession is anything but sure; and if it were, what is a succession of ambitious men striving for a great place to do with the church of God? I do not see anything very apostolic in that.

D. But you must not impugn the efficacy of sacraments, because the administrators of them were unholy. We are all imperfect.

Bill M. It does seem strange, if holiness is a mark of the true church, that unholiness should be no hindrance to the continuance of grace in it, and God's acceptance of it. Would the greatest villain in the world be the same security for grace and the true faith as the apostle Peter, who was inspired of God? However I do not judge much about that: I am not fit for it. But do you mean that if the church and its heads get unholy and evil, the acceptance and grace of God is as much there as before? Is holiness as much a mark as before? That is hard for an honest man, or any man, to swallow. At any rate, if so, they should not give holiness as a mark of the true one; for, when it is unholy, it is just as true as before.

D. You are pretending to reason, and a person always is ruined when he begins to do that.

Bill M. But you tell me to judge of the church by these marks, and that is what I am trying to do; and when it

does not serve your purpose, then you tell me not to judge. I mean no offence, sir, but I do not understand this.

N*. Well, M., we must have patience. I will say a word on Dr. Milner before I close; but we will search farther into this sure succession. What we have seen only gives a faint budding forth of what was to come. The papacy was still in its infancy yet, though already very powerful, and an object of ambition; what you say is in the main perfectly just. Conscience revolts at such a thought, and it upsets their own argument. God is above His own ordinances, and He can inspire extraordinarily a wicked man, as Balaam and Caiaphas. But the moment it is a mark of what the man or the true church is, that is wholly another matter. We are all imperfect; but holiness is that which God works and produces, and a mark of what He owns. He may bear long in patience with us, and does so, but He cannot accept unholiness and sanction that which is contrary to it. He is sovereign and can make a dumb ass reprove a prophet if He will; but what He owns cannot as a mark bear the stamp of unholiness. Where there is the form of godliness without the power, His word is, “From such turn away.” But we have closed the seventh century, and I beg you and these gentlemen to remark I have drawn my facts from Roman Catholic sources alone. The names of the popes suffice to point out the places in Baronius and Dupin; in Fleury I have given the place; Tillemont and Platina are the others I have referred to.

But I have somewhat more to add of the history while Sergius was reckoned pope. His epitaph is extant (Bar. 701, 8), and by this it appears he was not consecrated till after Theodore’s death, who must be considered as a

pope, and then Sergius was brought back at the entreaty of the people; indeed it was only then that he was consecrated pope. Thus, during the alleged thirteen years of Sergius' pontificate, Theodore was pope at first, then John (that nobody knows anything about), and Sergius was only consecrated above seven years after he was chosen by acclamation. Then the ex-arch sought to put in another pope, and the soldiers rebelled, and would not let him. Where is apostolic succession to be found? Now without this epitaph no one would have known of Theodore and John being popes. How they were no one knows; papal historians had wisely buried it.

At this time Spain renounced obedience to the Roman See, but northern Italy rejoined it, for it had all been long in what was called schism, not receiving the fifth General Council; and Ravenna still was.

Two events happened about this time, I may note in passing. The Lombards having driven the Greeks out of Italy, Pope Stephen called the Franks in. They had sanctioned already the French mayors of the palace who really reigned, setting aside the puppet kings who did so nominally. The pope received territorial authority under the new Western empire, established in the person of Charlemagne crowned Emperor at Rome. The second fact was the forgery of supposed early decretals, ascribing superior authority to the popes from the first. These were the great foundation of papal authority till the Reformation, when the forgery was detected and exposed, being admitted now by all. There was some opposition from metropolitans at the time; but, as they increased their authority over the prelates under them, they too accepted them.

A little farther on in our history we arrive at still greater confusion. At the death of Paul, a Tuscan noble brought his brother Constantine to Rome, and forced a bishop to consecrate him, and he was pope for more than a year, and his election and consecration as pope confirmed by a council. He ordained clergy and consecrated eight bishops. But one of the Roman court, Christophle, went (swearing to Constantine that he would not do it, and perjuring himself) and by treachery brought forces into Rome to drive out the pope. But while this was going on, Constantine, having hid himself, one Philip was taken and consecrated pope. However, Christophle made his way in, and Pope Philip swore that he would not leave Rome till he had been driven out, which was done, and he quietly retired to a monastery. They deposed Constantine, and then elected and consecrated a third pope, Stephen; and Christophle's son went and got Charles, called Charlemagne, and Carloman, Pepin being dead, to send French prelates to Rome to set things in order.

Meanwhile they tore out the eyes of Constantine and his partisans and other suspected persons, and put them into monasteries, or used other torturing processes. The French prelates came and assembled. The blind Constantine was brought before them. They struck and abused him when he cited similar cases of the consecration of laymen, burnt the acts of the council which confirmed his election, ordered the prelates he had consecrated to come to Rome to be reconsecrated, which was done; but many Roman Catholics held the second as simply null and void. His presbyters were left as they were, contrary to the decree of the council. Sergius and Christophle had their eyes torn out by

Didier, and Christophle was put to death (Fleury 43, 44, and subsequent; Dupin, Etienne 3, cent. 8). Baronius treats the see as vacant till Stephen was elected. He will not at all allow that the eight prelates were re-consecrated, which is impossible (he holds), and puts in the margin of the historian quoted, “reconciled.” So he does for the presbyters, when the same word is used, without saying they were never consecrated by Stephen, as the prelates were.

Now they were clearly reconciled, and remained as they were. It is a mere come-off for Constantine’s episcopacy; and as it was the episcopacy of Rome, pontificate was thereby acknowledged. All was confusion. There were three popes all consecrated, one having ordained many others, and even bishops of sees; if Constantine was bishop, he was bishop of Rome and pope; if not, here was the whole clergy vitiated in its source. And they were literally tearing out each other’s eyes, and laymen using violence to put their favourites into the see. Stephen got in by the perjury of Christophle and the arms of his followers, Constantine’s armed brother being killed by treachery in the fight, and another consecrated pope glad to get off unscathed and end his days in a monastery.

Bill M. Well! well! and is that the holy Catholic church? Who would have thought it!

JR. There were dark and gloomy days, no doubt, and violence and confusion prevailed; but Stephen was regularly elected and consecrated, so that the succession continued.

JV*. How can I say that? Constantine, who had been consecrated and confirmed by a local council, was alive,

though his eyes were torn out, and Philip too. And if Constantine were not properly consecrated, then all the clergy he ordained were no clergy at all, and there were no real sacraments; I speak always on your own principles. As to violence, violence there was. But the violence was as much on the side of Stephen as Constantine. The only difference was, that John, Constantine's partisan and brother, was guilty only of violence; Christophle, of perjury too. Rome was an object of ambition, and they fought for it. Stephen ordained in his council that only the clergy should elect, and the people then salute him; that images should be adored, which was forbidden at Constantinople by a very numerous council, and by a still larger one (under Charlemagne, at Frankfort) of several hundred bishops. They condemned images in the strongest terms; however the adorations and superstition prevailed. King Pepin gave tithes to the clergy, and Charlemagne issued orders for the regulation of the church and clergy. The pope's legates were at the Council of Frankfort, where a late Constantinopolitan council, which restored the use of images, presided over by the pope's legates and received by him, was utterly rejected. This was somewhat later in 794; I speak of it here in order not to return to it. Pope Adrian answered Charlemagne very mildly, excusing himself. This pope's letter to Charlemagne makes no objection to the Greek doctrine as to the procession of the Holy Ghost. Pope Stephen IV (or V, one having died as soon as elected, and hence not counted by many) ordained that the clergy only should elect, the people being present, and that it should not be done without the Emperor's ambassadors being there, in consequence of the violence often used.

The words of the decree are, When a pope is to be instituted, the bishops and all the clergy coming together, let the person to be ordained be chosen, the senate and people being present, and, thus elected by all, let him be consecrated, the imperial ambassadors being present. The reason of the decree is that the violence took place because the consecration of the pope took place without the imperial knowledge, and that according to canonical right and custom, direct messengers from the Emperor were not there who would hinder these scandals from being perpetrated. He made the Romans swear fealty to the Emperor. I refer to this because it shews what this pretended succession was—such scenes of violence, that the Roman pontiff, jealous enough of civil interference, is obliged to call in the representatives of the Emperor, that it may at least proceed with some decency. It forms also a kind of turning-point, excluding (though in ambiguous terms) the people from direct election. But what an idea of Christian care and episcopal succession, if such be the rule; armed men forcing a pope on the see, or armed men driving him away, and lynch-law executed in tearing out their eyes, and a third smuggled into the see between the two competitors, and then smuggled out!

James. Well, it is dreadful to be sure! And when one compares the words of the blessed Lord, how can one think there should be grace, or faith, or anything belonging to Christ here?

N*. There were Christ's hidden ones surely all through, but it is not in the great or the doctors that we find in general anything like Christ. And now all was superstitious, translating relics and the like, though there was, as we have seen, resistance to it. The power

of Charlemagne was a remarkable feature of the time, and the way he governed the church in his empire, and led hundreds of bishops in council to reject image worship, as now restored in the East. Still all was confusion and violence; he conquered the Saxons who were heathens, and drove them with the sword to be baptized in the Elbe, and so they were made Christians of. There were devoted men, however, who occupied themselves with the spread of Christianity such as they knew it. The Roman See had very great wealth and possessions, and, Pepin having added large territories to those the see already had, it was hence the object of ambition. Piety was occupied with buildings, and sumptuous clothes of service in the church.

After Pope Adrian's death there were again two popes chosen, and the conflict was so serious that the Emperor's son had to go to Rome to settle it. But it does not appear that the second was consecrated, though nothing is known of the matter, save that it was important enough to take the Emperor's eldest son to Rome. The Emperor asserts fully his imperial rights over Rome, and against the pope even, but uses them to have elections free, and forbids tumults. The nobles, it is said (Fleury, 46, 52), were for Eugenius, and carried the day. The Romans all swore however not only allegiance, but that no pope should be consecrated in their presence without swearing allegiance to the Emperor. Still the pope's authority was gradually increasing, to which the forged decretals, which came out about this time, largely contributed. But till the decay of the empire, which was rapid, the Emperors within its limits governed prelates and lords, a bishop and a count being sent to have all things in order. When their power was

quite decayed in Italy, the popes were engaged in the intrigues of the great nobles to set up kings and emperors there, the Marquises of Tuscany at length getting authority over Rome, and putting their creatures into the papacy, often their illegitimate children, or those of the popes themselves. I merely state this briefly in passing, as the condition of the empire, that we may better understand the state of things.

It was at this time that the famous history of Pope Joan had its date, a history believed for centuries, not indeed doubted till the Reformation. A German woman, born however in England, went to Athens, and thence to Rome, and became so distinguished in her literary teachings, that she was at length, it is said, elected pope, and held the see two years; but, having given birth to a child on the way to the Lateran church near the Coliseum, died, and was buried with disgrace.

R. But you do not believe this odious fable, invented by the enemies of Rome, and long after the event?

N*. Could you say by whom it was invented? I know Harding, the Jesuit, and Pagius ascribe it to Martinus Polonus, who, remark, was an eminent Roman Catholic writer, the latter thinking even Martin falsified. But why should a famous Roman Catholic invent it? The efforts to refute it are various: some say it was a retort of the Greeks to an accusation of a similar case in one who held the patriarchate of Constantinople; while the strongest argument against this is that the Greeks never mention it at all when most hostile to the See of Rome, but speak of Benedict III as successor of Leo IV. This, with the difficulties of chronology, are the strongest answer to it. But, in numbering the popes, this Joan is

required to make them out. John XXI would only be XX without this Joan. It was believed and not questioned for centuries, indeed admitted as true till the Reformation, spoken of as true by ecclesiastical writers, by John Huss without the Council of Constance reproaching him with it. The pope's sex was examined by the youngest sub-deacon from the eleventh century.79 Platina introduces her under the title of John VII, saying he would not seem to omit what almost all affirm. Whence did the story originate? It is not a Protestant allegation. It was fully believed and affirmed centuries before Luther. Roman Catholic historians since the Reformation pass it under silence, or deny it, as Baronius in his Annals (853, 56) with Pagius' notes, and others. But before that, it is Roman Catholic historians who record it.

R. Leo Allatius ascribes its origin to the history of a false prophetess at Maine.

N*. But this is outrageously far-fetched. What should turn a false prophetess at Maine, who did not conceal her sex, into a pope of Rome who did? And why should the sex of the pope be examined continually afterwards? It is alleged, and still by Roman Catholic authors, that there were monuments recording it (indeed as to some it cannot be doubted, their destruction being also recorded) and that the pope never passed that way (the straight one) from St. Peter's to Lateran.80 Now I will not say it is proved; but no one has yet accounted for the story, nor for the facts in connection with the pope. Rome is their source, and, as to some of the monuments of it, there can hardly be any doubt. Men may very well question the truth of the story, but when we are looking for a certain succession as a foundation and security for

our faith, this is very serious. It makes such a ground of security worse than nothing.

James. But what a way we have got from anything Christian, sir!

N*. Far indeed; but this you must, if you follow the popes. But it is the very thing which this sad history is useful for, to prove that the Roman system is as far from Christianity as anything can possibly be. But alas! though this story makes the certainty of succession utterly untenable, we shall find in this and the whole whole condition of popery far more grievous and flagrant facts still, and that their own marks—their apostolicity, as much as their holiness and catholicity—are wholly wanting. It was just about this period that the separation of the Greek and Roman bodies began, and began really about hierarchical importance, though consummated somewhat later, when dogmas were alleged as an excuse. The manners of the clergy, and of the popes particularly, became at this time so licentious and corrupt (incest and unnatural crimes flowing from imposed or lauded celibacy) that it is hard to say in such corruption what is to be trusted. But we will proceed.

Schroek attributes, citing from others, the story of Pope Joan to this. Universally recognized as it was, it must have had some source, and the source was Rome. The attempt to put another on the papal throne instead of Benedict failed, and may be passed over. His follower was crowned, a thing immaterial to us, but shewing the progress of anti-christian character. He began too, to use the forged decretals in his conduct towards metropolitans. His follower absolved the Emperor from a solemn, though forced, oath.

I have nothing to remark till we come to the end of the century, when, in 891, Formosus (already consecrated bishop of old, but sent as legate to Bulgaria) was chosen pope, and enthroned, but not consecrated over again, the first example of such a transfer to Rome. Whether it may be considered a succession to Peter may be well questioned. Such translation was strictly forbidden in the early church. But on that I do not insist. He was never consecrated to the Roman See, or to be successor of Peter, as they say. Either the consecration of a pontiff to be Peter's successor has nothing to do with the matter, and any other is as good, or he was not a successor at all—he was only his successor by election, and any special descending grace and security by being consecrated successor of Peter is a fable. After this we are plunged in struggles and confusion, so that to speak of succession is really ridiculous. The empire was weakened, Italian nobles struggled for the crown, and popes brought in German princes to counteract their efforts, and whichever party prevailed put in a pope, who undid what his predecessor had done.

We have an instance of this in Formosus. He is called bishop of Porto, but fled with others from Rome with the pope's treasures. After his return from Bulgaria he was cited to appear, and was condemned by regular process before the Pope, John VIII, deprived of his priesthood, degraded, and, after delay given, anathematized. This sentence was confirmed in the Council of Troyes. The pope condemned those connected with Formosus, who belonged to his own court, and did rob, and would have killed, him.81 They fled; but it appears that Formosus not only was banished, but had to swear that he never would join in public service but as a layman. Marinus (or

Martin) followed, who, Platina says, got in by evil arts. He undid all that John VIII had done as to Formosus, and absolved him from his oath, and restored him to his bishopric (Fleury 53, 45). He was pope little more than a year. Adrian followed for two months, then Stephen, and then Formosus himself became pope by bribery, says Platina, more than by virtue.

Boniface was then consecrated pope, elected by the popular voice, but died, it is said, of the gout in fifteen days. Platina says he was pope, Fleury that his intrusion was condemned (54, 28). He, too, had been deposed from the subdiaconate and from the priesthood.82 Dupin (9, 16) says, Formosus, having returned under Marinus, intrigued to get the Holy See; then the see was disputed by Boniface and Stephen. Baronius will not own Boniface at all; yet he was consecrated pope as well as any one, but died somehow in fifteen days. I may as well quote here, though somewhat long, the statement of the history by Baronius (897, 1), no Protestant account, but a very great stickler for the Roman See. “He (Boniface) held the see fifteen days. He is not to be reckoned among the pontiffs, being condemned in a Roman Council under Pope John IX,83 as shall be said in its place, a wicked man, already twice deposed, once from the diaconate, then from the priesthood, but against him Stephen the Seventh, called Sixth, was substituted, the intruded Boniface driven out by one in like manner intruded. All these things were extorted by force and fear, and have brought the greatest ignominy on the holy Roman church. But that some of the intruded pontiffs have afterwards been received as pontiffs, others altogether set aside, as Boniface, of whom we speak, comes from this, that those, however tyrannically they

got hold of the see, yet the consent of the clergy having followed (accidente), it was better to tolerate them, whatever they were, than have the church divided by schism, and than that legitimate pontiffs in new electoral assemblies be chosen by accustomed rites. That we should say this, evident necessity compels us, because the universal Catholic church honoured them as legitimate pontiffs, obeyed them and recognized them as vicars of Christ, successors of Peter, and went to them with the respect (cultu) due to a true pontiff."

This is a direct acknowledgment that they were not legitimate pontiffs, but that it was more convenient to own them than have a schism. If they succeed in holding their ground, better own them. If a stronger, like Stephen, intrudes and puts out the first intruder, and he dies of the gout in fifteen days, then he is not in the list at all. Yet Boniface was as much consecrated pope as Stephen, and if Stephen was consecrated after him, before he died of the gout, Stephen, the successful intruder, was never legitimately consecrated at all. Is not apostolic succession a farce after such facts and acknowledgments as these? The attempt to have a legitimate pontiff would have produced schism, so better to accept unprincipled intruders; and it was done. Luitprand (quoted by Baronius) says, Formosus being dead, and Arnulf (the Emperor he had favoured and brought to Rome to help him) gone home, he who was constituted pope after the death of Formosus is expelled, and Sergius (Stephen, Baronius says, at the instigation of Sergius) constituted pope by Adelbert; and then he relates the horrible history I shall now briefly relate, Stephen getting his act withal to be confirmed by a council at Rome.

He disinterred Formosus, set up his dead body on the pontifical throne, and dressed it in the pontifical robes, and, a kind of assembly being formed, addressed it as an unworthy intruder in the see. A deacon was given him to defend him, but, counted as unable to defend him, he was stripped of the robes, the fingers cut off with which he consecrated, and his body thrown into the Tiber, and all his consecrations held for nothing, and the subjects of them consecrated anew. All this was condemned and annulled afterwards. But before we proceed to further history, I must remark that at this epoch all is a sea of confusion as to the succession of the papacy. If I take up an ordinary history, I find John VIII, Marinus, Adrian III, Formosus, perhaps Boniface, and then Stephen VII (or VI).

But if I look a little below the surface, I find Sergius elected pope, as well as Formosus. Luitprand's account of it, quoted by Baronius (891, 3), is that they were in the act of consecrating Sergius when Formosus' party came and drove him by force from the altar; so Formosus was pope.

But then further, most respectable Roman Catholic writers, historians every way recognized among them, introduce two more popes here, Agapetus and Basil. These authorities are Marianus Scotus and Sigebert, who remark that these names were not found in some writers in his time, nor did the latter even die of the gout in fifteen days. Others follow these; how they came to be put in is hard to say. They may have been antipopes, whom their party owned, the others not. The chronology does not suit; but that is hardly more certain than the list of popes, Leo Ostiensis leaving out Stephanus VI. Now Agapetus and Basil may be supposed

popes, and Stephen a real one; Sergius may have just escaped, being one half ordained, and Formosus succeeded by the violence of his followers, who expelled Sergius with no small tumult and outrage from the altar, says Luitprand; but where is the certainty of succession and decency—I will not condescend to say holiness—in your Roman Catholic church? To say nothing of Formosus going against the ancient canons, and being already Prelate of Ostia, never being consecrated pope at all.

R. But he could not be consecrated over again.

N*. Be it so; but he was never consecrated successor of Peter at all. He was an ambitious prelate, who had sworn never to come to Rome to be anything but a layman.

R. But Pope Marinus absolved him from his oath and reinstated him in his see.

N*. A strange way of maintaining holiness as a mark of the church! But then, the canons peremptorily forbidding translation from one see to another without any fresh consecration, he seizes by open violence the See of Peter, so called, when another is actually being consecrated, and so becomes successor of Peter. The only thing he was Pope of Rome by was by outrage and violence; and your Baronius is obliged to own that popes who intruded were dropped out of the list or kept in it as it suited convenience, to avoid worse schisms; so that there are many popes not allowed in the lists, who were as much popes as those in it. Agapetus and Basil may have been as much popes as Boniface, and others we shall find, whom Baronius leaves out. Nothing is more uncertain than what you call apostolic succession.

R. But do you believe that Agapetus and Basil were really popes? There is no ground really to suppose they were.

N*. I really do not know. But I know that several most respectable historians say they were, and that Baronius, whom you trust, admits that many illegitimate popes were recognized rather than have schism, and Boniface he does not own, who was certainly consecrated pope. All I say is, that there is no certainty at all in your apostolic succession; and that ordinations too were annulled, and set up again just as parties varied.

R. There were doubtless dark ages, and the empire too was in dissolution and confusion, and Italy in the disorder of incipient feudalism, different parties having the upper hand in their time, and this had its effect on the church in those turbulent times.

N*. Quite true; but this merely says that, instead of a holy apostolic succession, a light to the world in the lowliness of Jesus, it had fallen into the world and its darkness, and was a prey to the violences, which set one up and another down, as parties had the upper hand, and so it was. But then what becomes of holy apostolic succession?

R. God has doubtless preserved it.

N*. He has preserved the church in spite of it; but you make it a matter of faith, like its holiness (as Dr. Pusey says); but history denies it in fact, and as we are looking for marks of the true church, which even a poor man can use to find it, we ought to have facts, not believe one thing that he may believe another by the proof it gives. You have no apostolic succession in fact, but require one

to believe there must have been, and then take it as a mark, as if it were.

It is well to give Baronius' account of the papacy at this epoch. It will give us a just idea of apostolic succession. He says of Stephen, who had so treated Formosus' body (906, 6): "In this year Stephen, the invader of the apostolic See, and himself driven out, is thrown into prison and strangled." He then quotes his epitaph: "Thus indeed the wicked man suffered, who entered as a thief and a robber [a singular kind of apostolic succession!] into the sheepfold, closed his life by a halter—so infamous an end—through an avenging God."

"Indeed, all things at Rome, sacred and profane, were mingled up with factions, so that the promotion of the Roman pontiff to the apostolic See was in the hands of him that was most powerful; so that at one time the Roman nobles, at another time the Prince of Etruria, intruded by secular power whom they would, and cast down him who might have been promoted to the Roman pontiff by the contrary faction; and this was done almost all this century till the Othos, Emperors of Germany, came in against both opposing parties, arrogating, however, also to himself the election of pope, and putting down him who was elected."

And we shall find consequently two or three at a time, all successors, or none a true pope. But at this moment (900, 8), the faction of the Romans having the upper hand of Adelbert, Marquis of Tuscany (Pope Stephen, called Sixth, having been removed, as you have heard), they created a certain person, Romanus by name, who lived, it is said, four months and twenty days, but it is not easy to say what month or day by ancient

monuments. But Stephen, he adds, lived to the end of the year. Theodore succeeded Romanus, but lived only twenty days, and John IX succeeded him. Platina says, Romanus set aside the acts of Stephen. At any rate, Theodore buried Formosus and brought back the bishops to their sees, and the priests he had ordained in their offices. Those who replaced them were to be counted of course intruders and false, whatever their ordinations and sacrament-giving were worth; but John IX went farther.

Still the same conflict for the papacy; some chose Sergius, who had been trying to be pope a long while, and had been half consecrated (Formosus having, as will be remembered, driven him from the altar), was chosen pope. However John had the stronger party, and Sergius was driven out from Rome, and retired to Adelbert, Marquis of Tuscany. John held council, re-established fully the memory and acts of Formosus, restored his bishops in a council, burnt the acts of the council held by Stephen, and forbade any translation again from another see, which the canons forbade under a penalty of being reduced to the state of a layman, and also anyone being placed in the See of Rome without the presence of the Emperor's commissaries, that these violences might not take place.

But decrees do not destroy passion or ambition. Sergius was still hankering after the papacy, and the history of the see is full of darkness here, though the discovery of monuments has thrown some light on it. Benedict IV succeeded John IX, if Sergius was not true pope. If not, Baronius admits that Sergius held the papacy during the time he gives to Benedict (906, 1). Pagius gives to Sergius all these years. Dupin (10, chap. 2) gives only

about a year to Benedict; Platina says, three years and four months. Leo succeeded him; he was pope forty days; his house-chaplain Christophle took him and put him in prison and made himself pope in his stead. However our old friend Sergius heard of it, came to Rome, took Christophle and put him in prison in his turn, and seated himself on the papal throne. We hear of no consecration; indeed he seems to have sat on the papal throne already. If he was, all the late popes were no popes at all; or if he was not, then he sat as pope without any consecration and conferred orders. At all events there had been two popes all the time from Formosus, Benedict IV, Leo, Christophle. Really to talk of apostolic succession, as a security for the true church and the faith, is worse than ridiculous.

But further, Sergius renewed his hatred against Formosus, annulled all his ordinations, and forced the ordained to receive ordination over again, and annulled all that John IX had done in his council to make valid the acts set aside by Stephen.

It was at this time that Auxilius wrote a book against the pontiffs, assailing the ordinations, annulling of ordinations and re-ordinations, so that nothing was certain. It was hard to know who was a priest and who was not. These were unhappy times, says Baronius, when each intruded pontiff set aside what had been done by another. So here that wicked Sergius, a man, the slave of every vice, the most wicked of all, what did he leave unattempted?

We must now alas! plunge into details more horrible still. Bad enough that ambition and violence should be called apostolic succession, when it is quite impossible

to know who was really pope, and two or three, and even four, were at the same time, of the last few: Benedict IV, Leo V, Christophle, Sergius. But it is now the most worthless of women and their illegitimate children who will dispose of the papal see as they please, putting in their paramours or illegitimate children.

R. They were very sad times, it is quite true. All Roman Catholic historians admit it. Baronius, as you know, says, how can he hold them for really popes who were thus put in? Only he must date by them. But God steered the ship of the church through all these waves and tempests, and the bark of St. Peter was never lost.

N*. St. Peter's bark I think little of; God's church will never, and can never, be hindered from arriving at port. What Christ builds, the gates of hell will not prevail against. But was Christ building all this? And remember we are looking for apostolic succession as a mark of the true church, and holiness too. If they are, it is quite clear the Roman church is not the true one, if church we are to call it. Come now, gentlemen, you make great account of the succession; you believe the existence of the church depends on it. Which of the four I have just named was the real pope?

R. We do not answer for irregularities in an evil time. We only say the succession was providentially secured.

N*. So as to be a ground for faith?

R. Yes.

N*. Well, which is the succession here?

R. Well, Benedict IV, Leo V, Christophle, Sergius.

N*. Does not Baronius admit Sergius sat during Benedict's pontificate!

JR. Well, yes; but that is uncertain.

N*. What is certain?

R. The distance of time has thrown obscurity over it.

N*. True; that is, the boasted succession is quite uncertain. At any rate Sergius and Benedict were alive together, and which was pope?

D. Benedict was pope after the death of John IX.

N*. But Sergius had been chosen at the same time as Formosus, and was driven, as we have seen, from the altar when he was being consecrated. And if he was (and if not, it does not appear he ever was) Benedict could not be legitimate pope at all. The truth is, it was a struggle between the power of the Marquises of Tuscany and the Roman nobles, who had many of them fortified houses in Rome, who should have the upper hand, and whichever had put his creature in and his adversary's out, so that it is extremely difficult to know who was or who was not pope, till these wretched women, Theodora, Marozia, and the younger Theodora acquired paramount influence by their personal charms and wealth and noble race, and put in whom they would.

James. But what has this to do with apostolic succession? The apostles had little to do with all this.

N*. Nothing, James; save to shew that there was none. In the first case which we have gone through there is no certainty of any succession whatever but violence; in the second, the vilest of harlots putting in her paramours or children.

Bill M. But is this really all true, Mr. R.?

R. Well, the- facts are very sad, as all own; but we must believe that God would not forsake His church, and that those who did sit as popes were regularly consecrated, and so communicated the deposit.

Bill M. But we are trying to find if it is His church or not; and you want me to believe it is, to shew me that there must have been succession. But I was told to look for the succession to know which was the church. We are looking for proofs of the true church, and Mr. O. made apostolic succession one of them, as does Dr. Milner. So we must get the fact to believe it is the true church; and there is no succession here, but two or three at a time, and driving one another out like robbers. And how can I know whether they were consecrated or not? Here was one of them driven out in the middle of it from the altar. How can I tell he was ever consecrated? If things went on quietly, we might suppose they were, if it was the rule; but, with all this violence, we cannot tell what was done. Then they set aside the ordinations, and others set them up again. This is no sure foundation to build a man's soul upon. I do not see anything apostolic, or indeed any Christianity in it at all. I am amazed: that is certain. How can people call such things the holy church of God? But I beg pardon; I'll say no more; but it is no good to tell a plain man that this is apostolic and holy, to find the church of God by.

N*. There is nothing, M., like having the facts in such a case; and if we are to believe it is the church without proof, I have no need to seek then the proofs or marks that it is so. The word of God is quite sufficient for me to

build my faith on through grace. But you know this is the ground you were put upon, and so we went into it.

We have still a little farther to go to make the matter plainer if possible. “It is evident,” says Baronius (900, 3), “no one could scarcely believe, nor is it indeed scarcely to be believed, unless one had himself seen it with his eyes, and handled it with his hands, what shocking and what base and hideous and execrable and abominable things the holy apostolic see was compelled to undergo, on which the whole Catholic church turns as on a hinge.” This he attributes to princes meddling with it. But it was, remember, in the popes that sat on the see these things were found, and this dark state of things lasted and characterized, as Baronius states at the beginning of it, the whole century, till they called in a powerful Emperor, Otho, to set it to rights, swore fealty to him, got him to name a pope, and then rebelled against him. It had become hopelessly intolerable. It was partly, not all, the consequence of the interference of the Marquis of Tuscany and his family.

It is necessary to mention one fact in civil history to explain the history of the popes. The Marquis of Tuscany had got possession of the castle of St. Angelo, which still exists, and had been the tomb of the Emperor Adrian, but had been fortified and commanded the city. He gave this to a noble Roman woman, Theodora, not his wife, and she and her two daughters lived there and governed Rome. Her daughter Marozia had a son by Pope Sergius, with whom she lived. After Sergius came Anastasius, who, says Platina, lived modestly and in integrity. There was nothing worthy of reproof in him, a good deal to say in those days. After him came Lando. Theodora was all powerful at Rome. A certain presbyter, John, came from

Ravenna to Rome, whom she seduced to live with her; one of her daughters living in adultery with Adelbert, Marquis of Tuscany, as the other had lived with Pope Sergius. Theodora had a son, Alberic, by the Marquis. Theodora makes Lando consecrate John to the See of Bologna, but Ravenna, a great archbishopric, falling vacant just then, she makes the pope promote him to that. Lando did not live long, and then she, not liking him to be at a distance from her, brings John to Rome and makes him pope. Such is Luitprand's (a contemporary who resided even at Rome) account, adopted by Baronius, Dupin, and Fleury. Muratori seeks to invalidate it some eight hundred years after, but nobody ever doubted it till then. Baronius does not attempt to deny it. His remark is this, "Such was the unhappy state then of the Roman church, that everything was set in motion by the will of the powerful harlot, Theodora, the mother. By her meretricious acts she had this power; but besides, the son of Adelbert, by his wife Wido, had married Marozia, the mistress of Sergius. What then was the face of the holy Roman church! how filthy when most powerful and at the same time base harlots ruled Rome, by whose will Sees were changed, bishops given, and, what is horrible and unutterable to be heard, pseudo-pontiffs their paramours were intruded into the See of Peter who are not to be written save to mark the dates in the catalogue of Roman pontiffs; for who can say that persons intruded by harlots of this kind without law were lawful Roman pontiffs? Nowhere any mention of clergy electing or afterwards consenting, all canons buried in silence, the decrees of pontiffs suffocated, ancient traditions and old customs in electing the sovereign pontiffs proscribed, and sacred rites and ancient customs utterly

extinguished!" (912, 8, 7). He justly says all the clergy chosen by them were of course like them. Thus at Rheims, the Count Hugo made his son of five years old archbishop, and took the revenues; then, some getting the upper hand, another was consecrated, and there was a fight, and councils about that, and two archbishops at a time.

But if Baronius is right in this, that they were not legitimate popes, where is the succession? I know, he says, though the abomination of desolation was there, destruction did not follow as at Jerusalem, that Christ seemed to sleep in the ship, but He was there and the like, so that the church emerged out of it.

But we are seeking apostolic succession as a mark of the true church, and here we are for some fifty years without a true pope at all. There was no true succession, no election, no consent of the church, but nominees of vile women putting in their paramours or their sons without either. If this be apostolic succession, apostolic succession is a strange mark of the true church. And as Auxilius says, when they each annulled the ordinations of another, all was invalidated; there were no true ordinations, no true sacraments. What security is this for the church of God, or any soul to build its faith upon?

R. But, as Baronius says, the church emerged out of it, and was more flourishing than ever.

Bill M. But all this is very shocking, and to make the church of God, out of this and such things, a security for our faith, and their own great men saying they were not legitimate, so that whatever else there may be, there cannot be succession.

R. But you are not to take an individual's statement, however eminent, as an authority in matters of faith.

Bill M. And what am I to take?

R. The church.

Bill M. What church? The church of Rome governed by harlots? We are just looking for the true one. Is that the true church that was governed by these women, and the creatures they had about them? I never can think that is Christ's church. He does not govern His church by harlots. How they do deceive us!

D. Who deceives you? What right have you to make such charges?

Bill M. Milner deceives me, or had; for I am pretty well undeceived, to say the truth. To talk of the holy church and apostolic succession! And you, gentlemen, I must say, deceived me. You cannot deny these things are true.

N*. Allow me to ask, Who was the head of the church of God at this time?

R. Christ is always the head of the church, and He could and did take care of it.

AT*. That I admit; but then if He be the head always, we have need of no other; nay, another is impossible: the church cannot have two heads. Christ is the one ever-living head of His body, and Son over God's house. But then what is the pope?

R. He is the head on earth, and vicar of Christ who is in heaven; and what he binds on earth is bound in heaven.

N*. Then they are no real heads, only representing Him who is Head, as you say. But were these infamous

dependents on these vile women the vicars of Christ, and was what they did on earth bound in heaven?

R. What they did in their official capacity was bound in heaven.

James. This is very shocking. I had no thought it was so bad. To make these men the vicars of Christ, and their acts Christ's acts!

R. Not their wickedness; I say their official acts.

James. And is all my security to rest on my finding out what were official acts in this horrible history, even if they could represent Christ in anything?

JV*. But you will please remember that we are looking for the true church by the mark of apostolic succession. That is the reason I quoted this well-known passage again, as I did as to holiness. But tell me, were their ordinations official acts?

R. Of course.

N*. Well, those of one pope were annulled by another as void from the beginning, and then set up again by a third. Auxilius wrote his book because prelates were disposed to give up their sees, as having no real orders, to persuade them not. What was—perhaps I should say which was—sanctioned by Christ here? But further. Here is your Baronius' account of those whom they did ordain. "Not only was Christ," he says, "asleep in the ship, but (alluding to the history in the Gospels) there were no disciples who should wake Him up, they were all snoring. What presbyters and cardinal deacons can we suppose should be chosen by these monsters, when nothing is so implanted in nature as that each should beget what is like himself? Who can doubt that they

consented in all things to those by whom they were chosen?" (912, 8). And so history tells us it was; iniquity, corruption, vice, walked shamelessly abroad; and the clergy, the worst, were screened by official sanctity.

Now these were their official acts: I mean the putting the clergy into their offices. Were these sanctioned by Christ in heaven? The gates of hell did not prevail against the church which He builds, and that is all He says; but is this His church, the choice and installation of the clergy, of people like themselves, by these monsters, the work of Christ sanctioned by Him in heaven?

James. You surely cannot say that, sir?

R. All I say is that sacramental grace continued, so that the church endured.

N*. Even that is doubtful on your own ground, from what we have seen. Baronius will not own them for legitimate popes; some put those in the list that Baronius will not. How is a poor man like Bill M. to judge of such questions when he is seeking a mark of the true church?

D. He must humbly take it for granted.

N*. Take what for granted?

R. That God will be faithful to His church in spite of all.

N*. We do not doubt that. It is begging the question. We are inquiring which is the true church. Is he to take for granted that securing grace to monsters of wickedness by sacraments, and they communicating it to profligates like themselves, is sanctioned by Christ, and His way of maintaining the security of the true church, when he has been taught by yourselves to look for holiness as a mark

of the true church and apostolic succession? when, if he could read these things, and were not deceived by men like Milner, he would know that Baronius says he cannot own them for legitimate popes?

When he says, Christ was still in the ship, it is saying that He did not fail when there were no legitimate popes, which I fully believe; but that is the ground we rest on, not yours. We own none to be legitimate, nor the papacy itself to be legitimate, but Christ to be faithful, and infallibly to assure His church to the end in spite of these illegitimate popes. But we hold all this to be illegitimate, and therefore not the true church. God is true if every man is a liar; but to make Christ sanction illegitimate monsters as the true church is horrible.

R. And how is a man to choose amongst all the Protestant sects?

N*. I do not want him to choose anything, but to bow to the word of God, and follow it.

R. But how can he tell it is the word of God?

N*. Of that we have spoken; but I answer briefly, bj divine teaching. Do you not believe in preventing and assisting grace?

R?. Yes, surely; I am no Pelagian.

N*. Well then, he learns its truth and power by that, quite recognizing that ministry of grace which may be a great help to him, while he must be himself taught of God.

D. But cannot grace make him subject to the church?

N*. When he has found it, as the word directs him. But he must find it first, and take the word for his rule, that is, believe in the word first.

But, if you please, we will continue our history. John X buckled on his armour, and led his troops with others against the Saracens with success; but Wido and Marozia were jealous of the authority of Peter, his brother, conferred on him by Pope John in Rome. They killed Peter before his eyes in the Lateran palace, and put John in prison, where he died, some say of grief, some of a violent death. Leo VI succeeded; he was put in prison, and died there after a year's and a few days' pontificate. Stephen VII (VIII) succeeded, and was over two years pope. Then Marozia put in her own son John, whom she had by Pope, or as Baronius says pseudo-pope Sergius. Wido died, and Marozia offered her hand and Rome to Hugo, King of Lombardy, brother by the same mother to Wido, who accepted it. But he insulted Alberic, son to Adelbert (Marozia's father) by his wife; he raised the Romans, and put Marozia and the pope in prison. Accounts do not agree how far he was allowed to officiate, some say privately, others more publicly. Alberic made him authorize the patriarch of Constantinople to wear the pallium without Rome's sending it.

For twenty years there is not much to remark. There were three popes after Leo VII who succeeded John to John XII. Alberic, who had so long ruled at Rome, had a son named Octavian, who inherited his authority, though the power of Otho I, an able prince, began to make itself felt in all the West; he was crowned Emperor by John XII (XIII). But this was later. This Octavian, it is said at the suggestion of the Romans, made himself pope, being a

mere boy not possibly more than eighteen, probably a good deal less, not of an age to be a deacon, mimicking a pope in a play, says Baronius; but (though on no possible condition to be called a legitimate pontiff, no law in his election but force and fear, but as it was acceded to) it was better, he says further, as those worthless times persuaded, to bear with him than have a schism—no true pope at all, that is, rather than two questionable ones (955, 4). Octavian (or John XII) first led his troops to war against the Duke of Capua, but was forced to make peace. He then began a life of unparalleled debauchery. He wrote to the Emperor, whose influence now was great, to deliver him from the violence of the chiefs in Italy. The Emperor came and was crowned Emperor. The pope swore allegiance on the bodies of Peter and Paul that he would never in any way help Adelbert and Bereuges, the rebellious chiefs referred to; and all agreed that the pope should be canonically chosen, and not consecrated until he had bound himself, in presence of the commissaries of the Emperor, to preserve the rights of all.

However, no sooner was the Emperor's back turned than he joined Adelbert. The Emperor sent to Rome to inquire what this meant. The answer was that the pope hated the Emperor as the devil hated his Creator; that he had turned the Lateran palace into a house of ill-fame; and they related the vilest wickedness of which he was guilty; and, not content with that, violated matrons and virgins in the very churches. Otho said he was a boy, and would, on being spoken to, mend his ways.

It resulted, after several missions, in Otho's coming to Rome, and the pope and Adelbert fleeing. The Emperor entered, and the Romans swore never to elect or have a

pope consecrated without the consent of the Emperor. The Emperor, the prelates of Germany who came with him, and nearly all those of Italy, met in council. His misdeeds were publicly stated: he consecrated bishops for money, had made one of ten years old, drunk wine in honour of the devil, and with various cruelties caused the death of persons that were named. The bishops and clergy and people of Rome declared in the most solemn way it was all true. The Emperor wrote to him to say: "You are accused of homicide, perjury, sacrilege, incest with your own relations and with two sisters, of having drunk wine in honour of the devil, of having invoked in gambling Jupiter and Venus and other demons, and we beg you to come and clear yourself." The pope answered, "We have heard that you are thinking of making another pope. If you do, we excommunicate you in the name of Almighty God, so that you can do nothing, not even communicate as layman." They sent again, but John had left. The council deposed him, and chose Leo VIII, who sat as pope more than a year. Eighty-five prelates or clergy of Rome were assembled in council besides Roman nobles.

Otho, after troubles, and the Romans again swearing fidelity and giving hostages, left Rome, and at the instigation of Pope Leo gave up the hostages. John returned, held a council of twelve bishops (of the papal states chiefly), and twelve of the clergy of Rome, deposed Leo, who saved himself by flight, broke all his ordinations, perpetrated brutal acts against some who had borne testimony against him, and some three months after, being found committing adultery outside Rome, was killed by the husband—by the devil, if you believe Luitprand; and this is apostolic succession.

The Romans thereupon, not heeding their oaths, chose Benedict. The Emperor returned to Rome with Leo, whom the Romans recognized, and Benedict was brought before them. He humbly acknowledged his fault and begged for mercy, gave up his pallium and crosier to Leo, who broke the crosier and stripped him of his other robes, and he acknowledged himself a usurper. He was reduced to the diaconate, but was to go into exile, where he died peacefully at Hamburg. He seems to have been a quiet respectable man. Leo himself died very soon after.

The Romans, who (it seems) had given the Emperor the right to choose the pope in this synod, sent to him to know his choice. He sent ambassadors to Rome, and Jean, bishop of Narni (one of John's accusers) was unanimously chosen pope, and accepted by the Emperor. The latter seems to have been a wise, moderate, and moral prince. Baronius does not own Leo; he does own Benedict. Dupin does not own Benedict, he does Leo. Benedict had joined in choosing Leo. Certainly John XIII succeeded Leo, not Benedict. Fleury also owns Leo. Platina says Benedict was seditiously elected pope by John's friends; as to Leo, the Romans, finding John insupportable, begged the Emperor to choose one. He said it belonged to the people and clergy, and they chose Leo, whom he confirmed; then changing, they brought in Benedict. The Emperor came, and, tired with all these things, he transferred the right of election to the Emperor. This Platina was in office under the popes, and at last librarian, which involved other important charges.

Now here, with this pretended succession, all is uncertain as to who was really pope at all. Baronius has Leo IX afterwards, without any Leo VIII at all,

concealing the difficulty; to say nothing of such an one as Octavian, of some sixteen years old (consented to because there he was by his own power, but confessedly no legitimate pope), as a proof of apostolic succession. The consent was merely that he was strong enough to maintain himself in his place till Otho came.

R. No doubt they were dark and dismal times.

N*. Be it so; but the darkness was in the papacy more than anywhere else (the Emperor seems to have been a worthy man), and we are looking for light as to the true church, and do not find it here—not on your own principles. True succession there was none. This is upon the face of your histories. You have no Leo VIII in your greatest historian, though he is obliged to put in Leo IX. The others explain fully what this means. He really sat as pope for more than a year, and died in the see, and John XIII was chosen on his decease. We can understand Baronius, because Leo was introduced by deposing John for his enormities, and he and all the Romans gave the right to choose and establish the popes to the Emperor, in order to have some decency in the matter; and they sent to the Emperor on Leo's death, who sent his commissaries to Rome for the choice of John XIII, being a moderate and able prince, who sought moral order at least in what he held to be divine and the church of God. I gather the facts from Platina, Baronius, Fleury, Dupin, all Roman Catholic historians.84 But we now arrive at utter confusion and uncertainty as to the whole succession itself. (Fleury 56, 36; Dupin, cent. 10, c. 2; Baronius 972, and following.) Domnus II, Benedict VI, Boniface VII (whom Baronius will not own, who plundered the Vatican church of all its wealth, and went off to Constantinople, but was a regularly ordained

pope) follow—it cannot be ascertained as to the two first in what order. Baronius puts Domnus first, making him hold the see three months; Fleury puts Benedict VI first, then Boniface, then Domnus, but says many allege he was never pope. All is obscure as to him. Baronius says, "everything save that he was pope three months after John XIII is obscure." Dupin85 puts Domnus first, then Benedict; Platina, Benedict first, then Domnus, then Boniface. Domnus' pontificate is quite uncertain. What comes of succession I know not. If pope, he was pope only three months. After a while he was pope (Baronius says the day after his death). Benedict VI was pope, whom others make to follow John XIII.

Crescens, or Crescentius, son of Pope John X, it is said, at the instance of Francon, called Boniface, put Benedict in prison, and Boniface became pope, and afterwards had Benedict strangled, so that he was never really pope as successor to another. After a year or more he too was obnoxious, and Benedict VII drove him away; but he escaped, and took all the treasures of the church with him to Constantinople, and lived on them. He never was truly pope, as Benedict VI was still alive, if we are to count him or Domnus. I do not pretend to unravel this history. Muratori and Fr. Pagius have contested the accounts of others, such as Hormann Contractus. I do not pretend to have examined and settled it. The last two, if I am not mistaken, with Sigbert of Gemblours, put Domnus between Boniface and Benedict VII. He, for once in these times, died quietly a natural death. John XIV succeeded; then Boniface came back, seized him on the throne, put him in prison and starved him to death, and sat as pope four months—murderer of two popes and robber of the church. Baronius will not own him for

pope, but pope he was as much as others. It was a question really of political parties (Bar. 983, 1).

Boniface died in the papacy. His corpse was dishonoured by his own party (Dupin, cent. 10, c. 2). On his death a pope was chosen, and held the see four months, but was never consecrated, and is not reckoned. John was then chosen, called John XV. Crescentius took the castle, and the pope fled, but Crescentius was found to be quiet, and John returned, and held the see peaceably. The Emperor was in Italy, and the Romans sent to him. He recommended his chaplain, who was elected, and made Pope Gregory V; but Crescentius drove him away, and set up John as pope. The Emperor came, hanged Crescentius and his principal followers. John was deprived of eyes, nose, and tongue, and made to ride an ass backwards. He is said by Fleury (57, 49) to have been put in prison, but is no more heard of. John XV was the first who canonized any one. The council says, We adore the relics of martyrs and confessors (Bar. 993, 4).

Sylvester II followed Gregory V. He demands some notice, as the object of the utmost horror of Roman historians. Baronius declares him a horrible blasphemer, heretic, and schismatic (992, 22, and following), and spends folio pages in railing against him. Cardinal Beuno says he bought the papacy, and sold his soul to the devil, under condition that he should not have it till he said Mass in Jerusalem; but having done so in a church in Rome called Jerusalem, he died thereupon; and we learn from Sigbert that many in the twelfth century would not reckon him among the popes. However Baronius will not quite admit that. His commerce with the devil, however, obtained currency, as he was the most learned man of his age—a great

mathematician and astronomer. But the motives of Baronius' hatred are hardly concealed. A council at Rheims had deposed Archbishop Arnulf for giving up the city to the Duke of Lorraine, one of the common political struggles with which the ecclesiastics were mixed up. Gerbert was ordained archbishop, but the pope put him down and set up Arnulf. The Emperor made Gerbert archbishop of Ravenna, a much greater see, and on Gregory V's death he made the Roman people make him pope. When turned out of the See of Rheims, he wrote against the popedom, and brought to light and depicted the frightful depravities and ignorance which characterized it, saying, if a man was not pious he was Antichrist, however he was ordained, and if ignorant, an idol. This, and his nomination by the Emperor Otho, excited the spleen of Baronius.

After him we find the difficulties of apostolic succession in our path. (Baronius, 1003, 9.) "John," he says, "XVI of that name, called XVIII; then another John XVII, more commonly XIX. Marianus Scotus, a writer of that age, calls XVI XVII, and the second, John XVIII; however, more frequent usage makes him XIX, but against all reason, as some in this number, schismatics, unworthy of the name of pope, are included." So Dupin: "John XVI according to us, XVIII according to others." This comes from John VI (or Pope Joan), whom Baronius will not recognize, and John, who sat as pope when he had turned out Gregory V, and was then turned out himself, and deprived of eyes, nose, and tongue. Fleury makes it, with Marianus Scotus, XVII XVIII; Baronius XVIII XIX, only that the first sat only some months, and hence is not counted in dates. The second of these Johns calls himself XVIII (Pagi ad B. 1003, 3). But then he reckons

either Pope Joan (John VI) or the John that drove out Gregory. The uncertainty of succession, whatever its value, is evident; XVII and XVIII seem most generally owned, and the expulsor of Gregory owned as pope, so that there were two at a time, and not John VI. Platina counts XVIII XIX, counting the John who drove out Gregory and John VI.

In John's time it seems Constantinople and Rome were reunited in communion; under Sergius, not. It is not known why. Sergius, who followed, and his follower, Benedict, were of Henry of Germany's party (Bar. 1009, 4). The Romans made one Gregory pope, who drove out Benedict. He fled to Henry, who brought him back to Rome with an army, on which the Romans drove away Gregory, and took Benedict back. John, his brother, succeeded him by bribery (says Glaber, a contemporary author), when a layman wholly unordained. He dies. These two popes were brothers of the Count of Tusculum. He did not like the papacy going out of his family; so, by money and influence, his son, a boy not ten years old, was made Pope Benedict IX. Some affirm that John XIX was driven out, and re-established by the Emperor, but it seems uncertain. Some give Benedict seventeen or eighteen years; Fleury says only about twelve, but Glaber (quoted by Baronius, his contemporary), ten. His life was one of infamy, murder, and debauchery of every kind, till at last it was insupportable. He had sat ten or twelve years. The Romans put in his place the Bishop of Sainte Sabine, who became Sylvester III. But after three months Benedict returned, and drove out Sylvester of Sainte Sabine. But, desirous of devoting himself to pleasure, he agreed for a sum of money with John Gratian, arch-

priest, that he should have the papacy, reserving only the revenues of England. Gratian became Gregory VI. A strange apostolic succession!

But there were now three popes. However, the Emperor came to Rome to put them all down. Benedict fled, Sylvester was sent back to Sainte Sabine, and Gregory arrested and finally sent into exile. No one was found at Rome fit to be pope, and Suidger of Bamberg, who was with the Emperor, was made pope by the name of Clement II, a respectable man, it seems. So now there were four popes at once. Clement II died in nine months; back came Benedict, though the Emperor had sent one Poppo, consecrated pope as Damasus II, but poisoned within a month, as is said. Baronius says Cardinal Beuno is not trustworthy, and Benedict sat as pope eight months longer. Baronius (1033, 8) would persuade us that the church of Rome suffered, did not do, all these things. But who was bribed to set up the boy Benedict? Who agreed to let him go with a sum of money and the English revenues? Who accepted the rule of Theodora and Marozia, and their sons made popes, and fathers of subsequent popes? The only decent popes, with very rare exceptions, were those put in by the Emperors. On the contrary, the evil was at Rome.

R. No doubt it is very sad, but your selecting these cases of wickedness gives a false idea of the general state of things.

N*. I am not speaking of the general state of things, however apparent it may be from what has been said. Had I done so, it would have been a history of murders, incests, crimes not to be named, and a depravity especially among the clergy, of which all contemporary

writers are witness, as Ratherius and Damianus. Simony was universal. A pope introduced by the Emperor laboured, by himself and by councils, to put a stop to it.

But our present subject is apostolic succession. Now the four I have named are counted among popes at any rate there. Baronius has Benedict IX Gregory VI. He does not own Sylvester III (1044, 1, etc.), but says (from Otho Frisingensis) there were three schismatic popes at once. Damasus he does own. Platina says, “Damasus took the See by force, with no consent of clergy or people, for this usage had become so inveterate, that every ambitious person could invade the See of Peter.” But God arranged it, he tells us, for he died in twenty-three days, so that some do not count him among the popes. At any rate Benedict was pope all the time. Baronius says he was regularly chosen, yet reckons among the popes Benedict, who was alive at Rome, and is said to have had him poisoned. Fleury says Benedict at last repented, and retired; and Poppo, whom the Emperor had sent from Germany, was consecrated the same day. I do not pretend to decide who is right or who is pope, but the vaunted succession is not worth a straw. It is making a mockery of religion and Christianity to rest anything upon it.

R. Why, then, did God bring it out of all this, and raise it to still greater power?

N*. The power was worldly power, which their cunning and men’s superstition put into their hands, and it was over men of the world, and only lasted till it became quite intolerable where there was any conscience left. As to continuing, Buddhism has continued longer—from 540 years before Christ—has been much more moral,

and has a vastly greater number of adherents to this day. This proves nothing. Spirituality does not go by number, and true Christians are a little flock.

R. What do you rest on then?

N*. We have spoken of it. The word of God, which knows no succession, being always itself; and the grace of Him to use it, who is ever the same. The faithfulness of Christ to His church can never fail.

As to the history, I should add here that Baronius distinguishes John and Gratian. John was a third schismatical pope; Benedict's conscience then yielded to conviction, and Gratian, or Gregory VI, was a regular and commendable pope. He says (following Otho Frisingensis) that he bought off all the three (heads of Cerberus, as he calls them) with money, (the English revenues being left to Benedict, as having most title), and then was made pope. This does not hang together with history however. It was poor repentance, being bought off with money and England's revenues; but there was a reason for Baronius owning him Gregory VII. The famous Hildebrand owned Gregory VI as legitimate pope, and called himself VII; so Gregory VI must be acknowledged. His paying the others to be gone, he will have it, was canonical virtue, not simony. However that may be, he was deposed in council on the arrival of the Emperor, along with Benedict and Sylvester, and taken to Germany, though Benedict managed to get the see for eight or nine months afterwards. Such is apostolic succession.

On the death of Damasus II, Leo IX succeeded, a very respectable man, a German, sent by the Emperor, chosen at Worms, but who, it appears, only took the

place on condition of the people and clergy of Rome confirming it. Victor II succeeded, also a German, under the influence of Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII; after him Stephen X of Lorraine. Then the Romans chose Benedict X; but Damianus and other cardinals left Rome, and chose another, Nicholas II, who was settled in the see by the Emperor's power, and Benedict degraded. And Nicholas first settled the popes should be chosen by the cardinals. These popes were Germans, and at least decent people. On the death of Nicholas there was great conflict for the papacy. Alexander was chosen, supposing it would please the imperial court. But the Emperor was not content. Another was chosen; the Emperor came with an army but was defeated, and in the Council of Mantua a compromise was made, and Alexander was sole pope. Cadulous (Honorius II) does not count in the list.

Gregory VII, the most able and ambitious of all the popes, came next. He had long governed Rome, and was seated in the papacy before his predecessor was buried (some say by soldiers, and a host devoted to him; some say the cardinals and people had their part). He sent to the Emperor, at any rate, to say it had been done without his will. The Emperor sent a commissioner to Rome to inquire, and found it better to acquiesce. He pushed the power of the pope to absolute dominion over everything, and enforced the celibacy of the clergy more than any of his predecessors. Meanwhile corruption reigned everywhere. The Emperor Henry struggled against his power, a struggle I need not enter into here; but councils were held in Germany. In that of Bresse, Gregory was deposed, and another chosen, who took the name of Clement III. Henry besieged Rome, took it, and

Clement was placed in the see, and crowned Henry Emperor. Gregory sent for the Romans, and Gregory got into the castle of St. Angelo. Henry retired to his camp; Robert Guiscard, the Norman, fired the city, and in the confusion Gregory escaped, and (Baronius, 1083, 1, and following) retired to Salerno, under protection of the Normans, and died there. William, king of England, alone effectually resisted him, suffered his legates to hold no councils, nor the English and Norman prelates to go to Rome. Gregory it was who laid the foundation of Roman pretensions, the pride and the shame of the papacy.

The general state of the clergy at this time was indescribable in vice and degradation of every sort. Gregory VII enforced celibacy, which made it worse. It is impossible to describe the excess of wickedness and its universality among the clergy; but it is not our subject now, but succession. These German popes were brought in as no decent ecclesiastics could be found in Rome, and men were wearied with sin and violence. But, on the other hand, it was the custom for monks, as a way of holiness, to do penance for others by proxy. A man had sinned enough to be put to penance for 120 or 100 years. A monk undertook it, reciting the psalter, with flagellations, it is said about a thousand for 10 pss.; 3,000 were worth a year's penance, and so 15,000 worth five years' penance; thus twenty recitations and the lashes paid the whole hundred years. It took about six days thus for a hundred years' penance!

R. But you do not believe these ridiculous stories?

N*. There is no doubt it was the practice. It is the statement of one of the brightest luminaries of the age,

who, if superstitious, at any rate sought to stop the floods of abounding iniquity, Peter Damian. He had learned it from Dominic. You may see it in Fleury (60, 52). In his letter, excusing what he had said of voluntary penances, he says that laymen get rid of them by giving so much money, and that was not in the canons, and why not monks by austerities? (Fleury, 60, 52, and Dupin, 11, cent., c. 8). It was the same Damian who wrote a book about the prevalence of unnatural crimes among the clergy, approved by Leo IX, which the Pope Alexander II hid away for fear of scandal, refusing in council to take it up. Victor III and Urban II closed this century.

Gilbert of Ravenna, however, was still pope or anti-pope through their pontificates as Clement III, a council of thirty bishops and others having elected him and deposed Gregory VII at the time of the latter hurrying into the see before his predecessor was buried. Gregory, we have seen, died out of Rome, among the Normans. Paschal II, who succeeded Gregory VII, made war on Clement III, and drove him into Calabria. His first successor was, after four months, taken by Pope Paschal's troops and confined in a monastery; his successor had it three months and retired; the third, who took the name of Sylvester IV, was better sustained, but died soon after; so Paschal was sole pope. The Emperor and popes were at war. The Emperor had put Paschal in irons, and made him yield the right of the investiture of the prelates in their Sees. In this, on a trial with Callixtus II, as afterwards in France, the princes gained their point: only it was agreed to be done with the sceptre in Germany, by writing in France—not with staff and ring.

On Paschal's death Gelasius II was raised to the pontificate; but the Emperor came, and he, as yet only deacon, fled with some difficulty to Gaieta; but there was consecrated pope. The Emperor made another at Rome, Gregory VIII. After some time Gelasius fled, and died in France, where Callixtus II was chosen by the Romans with him, and acknowledged pope on his coming to Rome. Gregory VIII fled and shut himself up in a fortress called Sutri. After some time Callixtus sent an army, soon joining it himself. The inhabitants gave him up, and he died imprisoned, having been three years pope. All his ordinations were annulled. Honorius II succeeded; then Innocent II by some, and Anaclete by others, the majority at Rome being for the latter. Innocent fled, but was acknowledged by France, England, and Germany, not by Guyenne and Southern Italy. Lothaire came from Germany, and set up Innocent; but, as soon as he was gone, Innocent fled from the Romans again. But some in southern Italy took up arms, and, Anacletus' party being defeated, could do nothing against Innocent. Anacletus died; another pope was chosen, but finding he could not hold his ground, he submitted to Innocent, and all his ordinations were annulled.

R. But Anacletus is never reckoned among the popes.

N*. He was chosen by a large majority of the cardinals, clergy, and people. The civil power established Innocent, but Anacletus was canonically consecrated and installed. Innocent was elected by Honorius' private friends in secret before his death was publicly announced. He died at Rome, having been pope some eight years (Fleury, 60, 45; Dupin, 12, cent., chap. 3; Platina). Baronius makes antichrist of him (1130, 6). This he borrows from

Bernard (Epist. 124, etc.), who was excessively active in promoting the cause of Innocent. No plain man sees why he should prefer to Anacletus, who sat at Rome regularly elected, Innocent who did not sit there.

R. But Anacletus could not be pope because Innocent was already.

N*. Innocent was chosen in a hole-and-corner meeting, before it was known Honorius was dead, because they knew this Peter de Lion (Anacletus) would be. But Peter was chosen by the large majority, so that Innocent had to flee, though he sought to defend himself by force—a pretty apostolic succession.

R. But the church owned Innocent.

N*. Not the church at Rome, if church we can call it at the time. But we are finding out the true church by apostolic succession, so we cannot find out apostolic succession by the church. But we shall have more of this when even this false plea fails. It is possible that if not Antichrist, at any rate what was antichristian sat at Rome in St. Bernard's time. But what comes for the holy Roman Catholic apostolic church of all the ordinations made for eight years? They were annulled, though I know not why he was not legitimate pope. But then what of all your sacraments meanwhile? Either they were void, or else, as is said, once a priest always a priest, and the decree of the council was invalid which annulled them. And they will have ordained others. All is hopeless confusion. Innocent carried on war in person against South Italy, and was taken prisoner. Eugene had to fight for Rome, was consecrated away from it, had to fly after his entrance, went to France, returned, took St. Peter's, which had been made a fortress, but died out of Rome.

Anastasius IV succeeded him; then Hadrian IV. Alexander III was chosen after him, but also Octavian. At first France and England, and partly Italy, owned Alexander, but Germany only Octavian. Both had referred to the Emperor to have it decided, who summoned a local council in Italy to decide who had right. Alexander would not go, Octavian did, the council decided in favour of Octavian, and the Emperor never owned any other; at the end England joined him too.

France and part of Italy held to Alexander. Octavian called himself Victor III. The English and the French, though having long hesitated to pronounce because of the Emperor, held also local councils, who supported Alexander, and the French excommunicated Victor III. The Emperor convened one in Germany, having letters from Denmark, Norway, Hungary, Bohemia, and many prelates beside those present, and then Alexander was excommunicated. Frederick, the Emperor, proposed putting both down, and the French and English kings met him to settle it. Alexander would not go, and nothing was settled; then Alexander called a French council, and excommunicated Victor and all his adherents. Victor died, and Alexander went to Rome. Victor's party, however, chose another pope; Frederick supported him, but was defeated by the Italians, and his prelates were driven out of Lombardy, but Paschal remained seated pope at Rome, Alexander having offended the Romans. He died at Rome, and a successor was chosen to him too, but the Emperor made peace with the pope, and Alexander was received at Rome.

Now I do not pretend to say who was canonical pope; but we have half Christendom owning one whom the Romanists do not own, and the sacraments and

ordinations in a vast extent of country depended on his being real pope. Out of Northern Italy, when the Emperor was beaten, all his partisans were driven out, whom all supposed in the succession of these sees. What became of succession? If ever there was a thing disproved, it is what is ridiculously called apostolic succession at Rome (Dupin, cent. 12, chap. 9).

If we are to believe the Council of Pavia, where were fifty archbishops and other prelates, with a quantity of abbots of Germany and Italy, and the deputies of France and England, after seven days' examination of witnesses and deliberations, the Emperor having left it to them, Victor III alone was duly elected and made pope. The majority of the cardinals were for Alexander, but the senators for Victor, and they put Alexander in prison; but he escaped by the intervention of the people (Fleury, 70, 41). Though the Emperor accepted Alexander, it does not appear Victor's party gave up. We read of one Lando antipope, calling himself Innocent III, who submitted to Alexander, the latter having made peace with the brother of Victor, who supported Innocent III, and bought the castle on which Innocent maintained his ground. This was the time of Waldo of Lyons. Baronius treats all the testimony received at Pavia as lies (1160), but gives no other facts than what are before us. I cannot find that he mentions Innocent III. Urban III, Gregory VIII, and Clement III follow in peace, as far as our question is concerned. Innocent III followed.

In his days, transubstantiation was made a dogma of, and the Inquisition established. Honorius was his successor. Gregory IX followed him. After him all was confusion. Two popes were chosen, but neither had a sufficient majority, according to the constitution of

Alexander III that the majority of cardinals must be two-thirds. Both at last yielded, and then one of them, Godfrey of Milan, was chosen, Celestine IV, and died in about a month, some saying he was poisoned (Fleury, 81, 51). The see having been vacant a year and a half, the Emperor and the king of France, the former having marched against Rome to enforce his letters, at last compelled the cardinals to choose, and Innocent IV was pope; Alexander IV followed. Then three or four months' vacancy; there were only eight cardinals to choose, and they could not agree which should be pope. At last they chose the patriarch of Jerusalem.

Again four months elapsed, and Clement IV was chosen. Then intrigues for three years and no pope; the cardinals however made a compromise, and the pope, Gregory IX, made the constitution that the cardinals should be shut up till they agreed. Innocent V, Adrian V who died unconsecrated, John XIX or XX, XXI, rapidly succeeded each other within a year; then Nicholas III. Then after six months' delay, through intrigues of Roman families, one connected with the king of Sicily and Martin IV;86 Honorius IV; then a year's vacancy, the cardinals were hardly shut up all the time; then Nicholas IV; then two years and some months; then Celestine was chosen and resigned the see for quiet, at the instance, some say, of Benedict, who got himself chosen in his place. Celestine renewed that decree to shut the cardinals up, and made another that popes might resign —a useless one, says Dupin: no one ever did since (cent. 12, chap. 3; Fleury, bks. 79 to 87). Boniface VIII succeeded.

In Celestine's time, if we are to believe it, the Virgin Mary's house went over the sea of its own accord to

Loretto; Raynaldus (we have Baronius no longer) says he does not know from what motive.

I have gone rapidly through these last-named popes, as (though the intrigues of cardinals are very little like apostolic succession, and the ambitions of eight men a very questionable source of Peter's authority, and long vacancies prove what was at work) there is nothing peculiar. We have no pope at all, instead of two at a time. The times were changing. But how the pope could give exclusive authority to his nominees to choose a successor to Peter, I know not; as a human provision against tumults and fighting, we can easily understand it; when they snatched a man from the altar while being consecrated. But what all this has to do with apostolic succession is hard to tell.

James. I am sure it is a disgraceful history of ambitious men, not apostolic succession. I see in scripture Paul looked for no apostolic succession, but ravenous wolves to come when he was gone. But at any rate this is all a history of ravenous wolves more than apostolic grace and authority.

Bill M. It is all shocking; but what I feel most is how they deceive one in talking of holy and apostolic. If the church be holy, this is not it. As to succession, no simple person could find out where it really was; and to say that these monsters, as some of them were, were successors of the apostles is too bad; it shocks a man's conscience. Why, the devil was revelling in wickedness there.

R. But the grace was handed down.

Bill M. What grace? And when there was no pope for two or three years, where was the grace and the head of the church then? And when there were two or three, and

even whole countries owning each, who can say where the grace and the title was?

R. But we only count those who were recognized by the church.

Bill M. But some recognize some, and others others; and how am I to settle it?

N*. M. is quite right; for example, Gregory VI, was he a real pope?

D. I suppose we must reckon him such, as the great Hildebrand called himself VII, and so Baronius owns him.

N*. But he resigned and owned he was not one, having been set up when Benedict IX was there, but such a monster that he was first driven out, and then went to pursue his pleasures. So in other cases.

R. Well, I hold to the church's judgment on these things, and recognize as popes those she does.

N*. Where is that judgment? We have Baronius declaring that for a hundred years he must put in their names as dates, but otherwise cannot recognize as legitimate popes infamous men put in by the mistress of the Marquis of Tuscany or of the popes themselves; and he admits there was no election or consent of clergy, only it was acquiesced in to prevent schism. I go on your own principles, for I agree with M. that it does shock natural conscience to think such people successors of Peter. It is making grace, or the security of the means and channels of grace, the security of unholiness: grace has its security in holiness. If so, I need not look for holiness as a mark of the true church; it is secured

without it, and Christianity becomes a guarantee of unholiness being no matter.

R. This is strong language, sir.

N*. Is it not true, if what proves the church and secures grace is the most awful system of wickedness and series of wickedness we have on record?

R. I do not know that we can gain anything by pursuing the subject. The church and its unity are thrown overboard by you, and it is hopeless then to come to any conclusion or to find any security at all.

N*. We are looking for the true church as taught by your own doctors, and just now by the mark of apostolic succession; consequently we must have the facts. Nothing, I admit, can be more absurd than to set any one to build his faith upon such ground, and to say he cannot find the true church, on which the word of God affords him with divine authority the fullest light, without going through this long dark history of wickedness.

D. But all the bright examples you leave out.

N*. Which are they? A few popes introduced by the Emperor were decent people, and poor Celestine, who resigned his popedom because he was not man of the world enough to manage things; but, save two or three, it was one series of wickedness. I have not now gone into the revolting accounts of crime, simony, wars, and violence which make up the history of these times. It was in these times that the cardinal who relates the history of the general council of Lyons at which Pope Innocent excommunicated and deposed the Emperor Frederick, and professed to reunite the Roman and

Greek churches, declares that their stay there had made one universal brothel of the whole town, and that with shocking levity, saying that they ought to be grateful; there were two when they went there, but now only one, but that it reached from the west gate to the east. Damianus' book I have already referred to; but I have confined myself to the question of succession. I understand you have not much to say, because I have merely related the facts as recorded in Roman Catholic historians, or ancient annalists.

Baronius admits that in some cases there was no choice or consent of the clergy whatever. To avoid the crimes committed, for a long time the Emperor put them in; then, when more free from the Imperial power, to avoid these things it was put in the cardinals' hands, and, as their ambition and jealousies sometimes kept the system without any head for several years, or two were named, they settled that two-thirds must concur, and they were to be shut up till they had a sufficient majority; and this is still the rule. It is said that, after the death of Innocent IV in Naples, the governor shut the cardinals up in the house he died in till they elected one. But, however absurd resting the certainty of one's faith and the continuance of grace on such a history, it is utterly impossible to base apostolic succession on it. We shall find papal breaches in the succession yet wider in the next century, and two or three popes at a time excommunicating one another, and then all deposed.

R. I know it was so, but it has been healed.

N*. Healed by others interfering and putting them all down; but then where was the succession? Through whom was it conveyed when there were two, and half

Europe recognized one, half the other? And to whom was the pope a successor, when two and even three were deposed? It was a new appointment by a council, not a succession. Indeed why a choice by people, or emperors, or cardinals, should make a successor of Peter would be hard to tell.

Bill M. I do not see much Christianity at all in all this.

N*. I see none at all. But I suppose we must break up; but we will meet again, and if these gentlemen are inclined, they can of course come; but we will pursue for a while the history of the popes.

On The Succession

Part 2

N*. Good evening, James, and you too, M. We can go on without these gentlemen. And as we are going through the facts of history, very little of course can be said, and the great schism which broke out in Rome in this century is so well known that no one can call it in question; but it upsets all pretence of a regular succession altogether. There are a few pontificates to notice before we come to it. Boniface VIII begins the century. He was in continual conflict with the civil powers, (excommunicating and deposing emperors and kings), especially with the king of France, whose agent in Italy finally took him prisoner; and, though rescued by the inhabitants of Anagni where he was, he died almost immediately after of chagrin.

He was violent and imperious to the last degree; many alleged that he was no true pope, as no pope could resign as Celestine had done to make way for him, and if so, he could not be pope as Celestine was. The latter

alleged the example of the first Clement, whom Peter had named and resigned, because no pope ought to be nominated by his predecessor, and so was pope after Linus and Anacletus. He was charged also with poisoning Celestine. Wickedness and violence were so rife, that crimes and false accusations from supposing them were both so common that it is often hard to tell what is true. He was charged with heresy, denying the immortality of the soul, and all manner of crimes; but it was all quashed in the Council of Vienna.

Benedict, called XI and so recognized by subsequent popes, followed this tide, however set up as Benedict X one who was not reckoned lawful pope—so uncertain is the succession. Raynald (Cent, of Baronius) says he took the name of Benedict XI (though if the thing be more accurately examined he was only X) (1303, 45). He was respectable, but fond of monks, and was (it is believed) poisoned, and it seems to be proved (Rayn. 1304, 35). He revoked all his predecessor's acts against Philip. In all these times excommunication and deposition of kings and emperors were the common weapons of war between state and church.

There were now two parties in the body of cardinals who chose the pope, and so evenly balanced that they could not agree; hence for some time there was no pope. At last they agreed that the Italian party should name three French prelates, and the other choose one out of them in forty days' time, for the parties were the French and Italian parties. The Italian named three French greatly opposed to the French king: but before the French party selected their chief, knowing the ambition of the first of the three, he sent to the king, who told him he could get him made pope if he agreed to his conditions; he

accepted all, with one secret one, and was named by the French party, the Italians thinking they had their way, and that a friend of Boniface's, against the king, was chosen. He became Clement V, and did everything openly agreed on with Philip—a nice specimen of succession to the apostolate of Peter. He stayed in France, but after staying awhile at Bordeaux and Poitiers, settled at Avignon, which did not then belong to France, and there the popes were for seventy years, called by the Romans the Babylonish captivity. The Emperor set up another pope at Rome, Nicholas V, but he did not succeed in his plans, so that after some time this Roman antipope submitted himself to Clement. The abuses in the monarchy, and in the way the pope, by various inventions, got all patronage into his hands at this time, incensed the nations. (Fleury, 90, 49; Dupin, cent. 14, c. 1; Rayn. 1305, 2, 3). Clement V passed away.

The difficulties were greater than ever. The Italians wanted the pope back to Rome, the French to keep him. The decision being long protracted, the mob assembled, the place was set on fire, some say by the cardinals, others by their servants or the mob. The cardinals dispersed, and could not be got to trust each other to come together. At last the next French king sent his brother, who invited them individually to Lyons, had long conferences with them, but in vain; at last, having summoned them all to a monastery, shut them all up, and would not let them out till they chose a pope. They spent forty days still, and John XXII was elected. Some say, not being able to agree, they did agree to put the nomination in his hands as a cardinal of no account, and he named himself, having sworn not to mount horse or mule if it were not to go to Rome, and so went by river

to Avignon, and walked to the palace. At any rate he sat pope at Avignon. Pope John condemned as heretical what Nicholas III had affirmed (Fleury, 95, 15). It was in his time Nicholas V was set up by the Emperor. He also published dogmatic sermons on the beatific vision of God, condemned as heretical by the universities and other doctors, and their judgment was published. He would have left it open, but the doctors were firm. It is said he fully retracted on his death-bed. However one of the friars was burned under John XXII, and two by Innocent VI, at Avignon. Four were also burned at Marseilles for holding absolute poverty to be the right path, which Nicholas III had pronounced right. Benedict XII succeeded John. The first thing he did was to preach against his predecessor on the beatific vision, and then held a consistory, with many doctors, on which the proposition of Pope John was formally condemned, and those who maintained it were declared heretics.

Bill M. But I thought the popes were infallible.

N*. So they have decreed lately. But they have been, as we said before, openly condemned as heretics, as Honorius. Liberius signed an Arian creed. And here one condemns the views of another as positively heretical, and another burns two friars for persisting, as to Christ's possessing nothing, in the opinion affirmed to be true by his predecessor, Nicholas III. Clement VI, Innocent VI, Urban V, and Gregory XI, some time before they died, made a declaration, by which they retracted all that they might have advanced in disputing, or in teaching, or preaching, or otherwise (Dupin, cent. 14, c. 3), so that they hardly thought themselves infallible. I suppose the Romanists would say it was not ex cathedra, but disputing, teaching, preaching, or otherwise, takes a

pretty wide scope, and what was pronounced ex cathedrâ would come seemingly within teaching, preaching, or otherwise. At any rate, if a man may teach and preach, and in every other way of communicating his thoughts teach error, his pronouncing ex cathedrâ is not worth much. In disputing, a man may be hurried away. But the apostles, whose place they pretend to hold, know nothing of their preaching or teaching error (quite the contrary), and their being safe when speaking ex cathedrâ. It was their teaching and preaching which was inspired. But we are tracing succession.

Why a number of French cardinals electing one of their number at Avignon should make a person bishop of Rome, it would be hard to tell. But we will proceed with our history, for we are at an important epoch.

Gregory XI died at Rome when on the point of going back to Avignon. The Romans insisted on a Roman, or at least an Italian, prelate, and attacked the conclave, so that the cardinals were in fear of their lives. The greater number of them were French, but of these many were of the country of Limoges, so that they did not act together, as these wanted one of their party, the other Frenchmen not. There were only four Italian cardinals. It is said that one was made to put his head out of the window, to tell the people to go to St. Peter's, which was taken by the people to mean that they had elected the cardinal of St. Peter's. Meanwhile it was proposed to elect the Archbishop of Bari, who at any rate was an Italian, but not a cardinal; the French party say he was only elected to pacify the people, with the understanding that he was not to take the papacy, the choice being only made under the influence of fear of the populace, and hence having no validity, and so afterwards they certified the

king of France. So Dupin. The Italian party, while not denying the clamours and violence but making them arise later in the affair, insisted that the election was regular and valid. Fleury's account gives this colour to it. Raynaldus, of course, insists that it was free, and urges that the people's leaders went to the window, and insisted it should be a Roman, and that the choice of one not a Roman proved that they were free.

The tumults then were great, at any rate. Some would have made the Cardinal of St. Pierre pope, but he disclaimed it; and the Archbishop of Bari was crowned and enthroned pope in the midst of these tumults. He took the name of Urban VI. But the cardinals were not content, and under pretext of the hot weather went to Anagni, and there they chose one of their own body, who became pope also, under the name of Clement VII, who removed to Avignon. The cardinals sent a long account to the king of France, who assembled prelates and doctors, but not satisfied with this, sent ambassadors to Italy to ascertain the facts, and on their report owned Clement to be the true pope. Spain, after some time, owned him too. Urban was occupied with politics and fighting in Italy, but he succeeded in maintaining himself as pope there, and putting down the Clementines tolerably completely, though Jeanne, queen of Naples, was for Clement, but she lost her kingdom and her life. England and Germany were for Urban, Scotland for Clement, Northern Europe for Urban, but Lorraine, Savoy, and other provinces for Qement. Each pope condemned and excommunicated the other and his adherents. Both consecrated prelates and clergy; so that the idea of a secure succession and the maintenance of the church in sacramental grace by it is a simple

absurdity. If Urban, as Raynaldus and Platina would have it, was pope, then all France and Spain, and other countries, were excommunicated out of the pale of the church, and all their orders invalid, and all they conferred on others null and void, and all the sacraments which they hold to be necessary to salvation invalid and of no efficacy.

James. But what do they say to all this?

N*. They deplore it, of course, and say it was a source of infinite mischief, but, as Raynaldus expresses it, that He who has dominion over heaven and earth brought the church out of it. We shall see how they got out of it; but the whole order of succession and clergy was broken in upon while it did last. Urban may have been true pope on their system, but hardly so if what all the cardinals and others allege was true. He was named, they declare, under violence and threats, to escape the populace. The riots and violence, and the attacking the conclave, are not denied; and as soon as they got out of Rome they protested; and France, and Spain, and Naples, and other places accepted their view of the facts. All is uncertain in the succession. It is not denied there was the utmost violence and tumult. Contemporaries state that the people forced their way armed into the court of the palace of the conclave into which they had been driven with threats by the populace. Bundles of rice stalks were laid under it to set it on fire; and they threatened to cut down the cardinals if they did not choose a Roman. The heads of that district of Rome came and told them they must do as the people required, or they would suffer violence.

The Archbishop of Bari had been previously in consultation with the cardinal's, and, though an Italian, being opposed to the Romans, the cardinals thought he would go with them in their views, and was then chosen in a hurry, as it was thought he would reject it. If so, the temptation was too great. This account seems pretty well authenticated. It is to be remarked that the Italian cardinals, three at least out of four, joined the rest at Anagni, where they went, and then to Fondi, to be secure to choose Clement VII. Various depositions are given in Balergius' "Notes to the Lives of the Popes of Avignon," and especially those of the cardinal of Florence. If he tells true, Urban's friends were false and perjured in their statements. One thing is clear, the French would have had a Frenchman for pope87 if they could, and that fear actuated them in choosing Urban VI; on the other hand they were jealous of the cardinals of Limoges, because the Avignon popes had been thence. The fullest and clearest account of the proceedings, as far as I know, is the first life of Gregory XI, in Balergius (443, and following). Before the conclave, according to this account, the Romans had driven the upper orders out of Rome, and introduced a mass of rough countrymen, taken possession of the gates, that the cardinals might not leave, and when they met, broke in with them. The Bandarenses, chiefs of the twelve districts, had warned them before individually, and on going into the conclave assembled them, and said they must elect a Roman, or at least an Italian, or meet with worse; and the mob filled the palace and room under the hall of conclave with weapons and dry reeds, and all night rioted there, vociferating while they, were saying the Mass of the Holy Ghost.

The cardinals sent the three deans or chiefs of the three classes of cardinals (the people having insisted on the windows being opened) in the hope of calming them, but in vain; and a second time, but the people raged violently at the doors, insisting on the nomination of a Roman or Italian, threatening death, etc. They thus chose Bartholomew, Archbishop of Bari, as he had been present at the Roman consultations to force the choice of a Roman, was a doctor of canon law, and supposed to be upright. They supposed he would give it up when elected, and there was calm. For the same reason they had to go through with and crown and enthrone him. The account is by one who favoured Clement, but it all hangs perfectly well together, and the main points are certain. That they were forced by the populace against their inclination is certain, for they would have desired to go to Avignon. Whether it was sufficient to annul the election is another question. Of course the Romans, as such, call the others schismatics. But it clearly was not so certain. The university of Paris, writing to Benedict XIII, just elected, on the point, says: “Clever and upright men scarcely see their way in it” (Quicquam ibi videant). Nicholas, Cardinal Panormitanus, says that the pontificate of Benedict XIII (of Avignon) was probable; for the question was arduous in law and in fact.

Cardinal Cajetan (or de Vio, legate to Germany about Luther) reproves those who consider either obedience, so-called, schismatic; declaring that the right of each had been, and was, doubtful, and what is positive on the point is, that both were deposed as popes from their papacy, and Martin V confirmed the decree of Constance, which by depriving both recognized both; and Sylvester Prierias says neither were; as men most

skilled in scripture and canon law, and pious, and more, conspicuous as workers of miracles, adhered to each; and that it was necessary to believe there was only one pope as one church, and whichever was canonically elected; but no one was obliged to know which was, nor canon law. In this the people will follow their ancestors or prelates. This is a strange certainty of succession—so uncertain that nobody was bound to say which was true; the general council and pope treating both as true, which, according to the famous Dominican, was contrary to what was necessary to salvation, for men were bound to believe there was only one. Another says plainly that for those forty years he does not know who was pope. (See preface to Balergius.)

Bill M. But this is poor ground to build a man's religion on.

N*. I should think it was; but succession is one of the marks Dr. Milner and all give of the true church.

Bill M. I do not see who is to find it, if it is.

Mrs. James. But I do not understand, sir, how a person who reads scripture can think of such things being a security at all. If my faith rested on all this, where should I be? It is a sad history; but from what I have heard (and those gentlemen that were here yesterday did not deny the facts), I do not see how they can put the church in connection with such things. And when there were two popes at a time, and whole countries, and the clergy in them, following such, succession could not have been a proof of the true church, for there was no sure succession there. But what strikes me most is how foreign it all is to everything in the word of God.

N*. Foreign indeed! We are following it out, because above all it is the ground this pretension to be the true church is based upon. But men may take up scripture as a matter of learning, not in its power over the conscience, and as working faith by the power of the Holy Ghost in grace. A mere store of learning is a different thing from God's word brought with divine power to the soul. It is conscience that is cognizant of, and intelligent in, the word of God, because it is what the word acts on. It is man pretending by his mind to judge the word that leads to what is called rationalism. The human mind thinks it can judge of scripture; but this is denying it to be the word of God, to start with, for, if it be, I must bow to it. And hence it is that, while we must have divine teaching by grace to use it, the simple, if humble, understand it better really than the learned, because they come to it as God's own word for their consciences and hearts, and not to discuss and judge about it, so that it practically loses that character. "I thank thee, O Father," said the blessed Lord, "Lord of heaven and earth, for thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Of course, if an ignorant person is not humble, and affects to judge about it by his own mind, he will go astray like another. He is not before the word as if God were telling him His thoughts, as He is there.

Bill M. But a person must know it is the word of God.

N*. But it is by its acting on his heart and conscience, and revealing God to him, that he knows it. I know what a knife is when it cuts me, and honey when I taste its sweetness. It is not a matter of proof. The word acts through grace on the soul, and I am conscious of its

actings from God as sharper than any two-edged sword, and I rind all things naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom I have to do, and that is God. So I know it is His word, His eye on me.

Bill M. That is true. It gets sharp into the conscience, sure enough, and makes you know what you are.

N*. Thank God you find it so, M. That is just God working in mercy in your soul, though it be humbling to find all the evil that is there, but it is God's light come into it.

Mrs. James. But even when we know it is God's word, and own it with all one's heart, sometimes it takes no effect in the soul. That is what troubles me sometimes.

AT*. We are wholly dependent on the operation of the Spirit of God for profiting by it. But that is as all the rest of our history; only it is brought plainly before us when we have to do with the word. Your heart is cold and dull if you are preparing James' dinner, and very likely you do not find it out; but if you take up the word of God, where we know we ought to take an interest and the heart be affected, we find out our darkness and coldness, but so much the better. That is what is needed then, and in looking to the Lord He will help us and give it power in our souls. I find often I may read a chapter, if not watchful, and, through knowing it well, not have a thought out of it, but not if I am looking to God. Then there is always fresh light and divine power on the soul to keep us before God, and lead us on.

Mrs. James. It is true, sir. We need grace every moment, and, thank God, we know where grace is. May He make us diligent.

N*. May He indeed do so. The diligent soul, it is said, shall be made fat. But here are Mr. R. and Mr. D. Good evening, gentlemen.

R. I do not disturb you?

N*. Not in the least; quite the contrary. At the moment we were speaking of the way the word of God made its power good in the conscience. But we had been speaking of the beginning of what is called the great schism, which so fatally breaks into the boasted unity of the outward church, pretending, as it does, to be always one and the same.

R. I know you Protestants profess to rest on the word of God, slighting or denying the authority of the church, and resting on private judgment.

N*. And do not you rest on the word of God? We can easily judge what you are if you do not.

R. Of course I do; but you look to private judgment, and we look to the church's judgment.

N*. Well, I attach no importance to the word Protestant, save as it has come to mean a protest against the false doctrines and abominations of Rome. In that sense I call myself so as a matter of earnest faith. At first it was merely a protest of the German electors against the recess of the diet of Spires. And the rationalist sense of private judgment I wholly repudiate. Faith is subject to the word of God; it is blasphemy to judge it. As we have often said, it judges me, and at the last day will judge those who have had it, and not bowed to it. We were speaking of this when you came in. But you bring in the church between God and the soul, to which He speaks by the word, and you have no right to do that. It is

openly trampling upon the rights of God in addressing Himself directly to His people, as He has. If by private judgment you mean not my judging of the word, but my having it directly from God Himself, and that no man has a right to come in and hinder God from speaking directly to my soul, then, though it be an abuse of the term, I insist, I will not say on my rights (though, as between man and man, there would be reason in it), but on God's rights, with which you are wickedly meddling.

R. But did not the apostles command with authority?

N*. Command with the authority Christ expressly gave them they did; but they never exercised any authority as between God and His dealings with men's souls by the word. They were inspired to communicate it directly to people's souls; but they had no more to do with judging it, or thought of withholding it, than the meanest of God's people. They were channels to give it to them, and they appealed directly to those which people had already had, and those that searched them to see if what even they taught was according to them are commended. Even when persons wrested them, as of course may be done, there is no thought of withholding them, or turning any, even the weakest, from them for that reason. Doing so is a proof men are afraid of the light, be they Romanist or infidel. As to the church's judgment, we are just come to a point where we have necessarily to judge the church.

R. That never can be.

N*. Well, now, can the church answer for me in the day of judgment? Must I not answer for myself?

R. It cannot: you must answer for yourself; but the church will not mislead you here below, and if you follow it, you will be all right then.

N*. How do I know that? Was Urban VI or Clement VII the true pope?

R. Urban, of course.

JV*. Well, all France and Spain, and other places too, held Clement VII to be the true pope, so that the faithful in those countries went all wrong by following what you call the church, and were schismatics, and had no true sacraments.

R. But they ought to have recognized Urban, and not Clement.

N*. Then they must have judged for themselves, and judged what called itself the church. And this lasted, with various phases, some forty years or more; so that a whole generation died in this condition. At any rate, to be right, they must have judged the church, and popes too, for themselves, and the ablest men, and the most pious, even saints, as they were called, were uncertain, and could not tell. And some say they were not bound to know which, only to believe in the abstract: there could be only one. But then apostolic succession goes to the wall, for none could find it out certainly; and the sacraments were just as good without it, for they were not both in due succession at the same time. Further, one or other (if either) must have been the true pope, and then all the rest were excommunicated, and could, as I have said, have no sacraments. If not, their validity depends simply on the faith of the receiver. No; your system breaks down altogether here. It is absurd, with two, and even three, popes at a time, and all Europe

divided between them, to keep up the fiction of apostolic succession. I do not mind any pope, and very likely neither was rightly pope on their own principles, but that does not help you.

JR. No doubt they were sad times, and the schism produced infinite mischief; but see how God brought the church out of it. “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall rise again.”

N*. The professing church, no doubt, was brought out of the schism at last, but Rome brought it into it. Where was unity then? And all pretension to security by apostolic succession was gone.

Bill M. I beg your pardon, sir, but you say that the pope that was at Rome was the true pope.

R. Yes.

Bill M. What, then, was a Frenchman to do? To judge for himself, and follow him, and go against his own clergy and church, or to follow his clergy in France?

R. He must follow his own clergy in France; and if he was sincere, God would forgive him his ignorance.

Bill M. But I understand they were all excommunicated and condemned by what you say was the true pope, who appears now was infallible; and how could he be all right when the right pope excommunicated him for doing it?

R. Ignorant persons cannot be expected to judge of such questions, and, as I said, God is merciful, and will have compassion on them.

Bill M. Still they are excommunicated by the true church, and have no real sacraments, and their own

clergy led them all wrong. It is a different story from what I thought; that it is.

N*. What M. says, Mr. R., is quite true. That God has compassion on poor souls deceived by the clergy, if they look to the Saviour, I doubt not; but to pretend that the clergy or the church is a security for any soul is clearly proved to be unfounded by the facts we are contemplating. God’s bringing them out of the ditch they were all in is no proof they could keep people out of it. They were in it themselves, and all that hung upon them with them. The blind had led the blind, and both were in the ditch, just as the Pharisees did the masses against Christ. For, as M. has said, the clergy that led the people, all that you call the church, in France, were excommunicated by what you call the rightful pope, while their pope excommunicated the one at Rome; and this was not a temporary accident, but they had their successors, till both were alike put down by the Council, first of Pisa, and then of Constance.

Meanwhile the corruptions in the papal government of the church increased tenfold. The popes made their fortunes out of ecclesiastical benefices, in provisions, reservations, annates, all sorts of inventions to bring money to themselves in conferring benefices. One person is said to have had five hundred benefices. The university proposed an inquiry as to who was pope, so that they were not sure; that both should abdicate, as each proposed an inquiry as to his competitors; if they would not abdicate, a general council, and, as most of the prelates were very ignorant, to have doctors and others with them, though by rights prelates alone had the right to sit there.

It is at this time that Nicholas Clemangis,88 rector of the University of Paris, gives such an awful picture of the immorality of the clergy and the corruption of the Roman court, saying, that from the head to the feet everything was given, or rather sold, for money, Cardinals having as many as five hundred benefices; that the convents were brothels of Venus, and to make a girl a nun was to give her up to prostitution; nor is it denied. The famous Petrarch gives a like account of the court of Avignon before the schism. Everything bad, and nothing good, was found there. Everything was sold for gold (Raynald, 1311, 55, and Fleury, 92, 11). It was the same at Rome under Boniface, pope after Urban. Sales of benefices were regularly carried on with every kind of fraud (Fleury, 99,26). Meanwhile much was done by the princes of Europe to put an end to the schism, and to get both popes to abdicate. France withdrew its obedience, and then Castile, to the pope at Avignon, but rejected Boniface at Rome. Benedict, at Avignon, was besieged by France, and agreed to abdicate on the Roman pope doing so. Boniface refused, but would appear before a council. England supported Boniface; Innocent VII followed Boniface at Rome; Benedict had sent an embassy to Rome proposing the abdication of both; Innocent proposed a council, and the cession of the papacy by the pope.

Gregory XII succeeded Innocent; Benedict proposed conference, and refused cession, excommunicating those who approved it. The king of France burned the bull. Benedict fled to Genoa, then to Perpignan. Gregory was elected under promise to resign if union could be effected; Benedict protested the same thing. At last the cardinals of both sides met at Pisa, and then at Leghorn,

and sent a circular letter, proposing a council as the only means, as the popes would not yield, and there was such exceeding difficulty as to law, and as to fact; and they blame both popes as ruining the church, and so did the council, going into all the facts, and charging them with bad faith, and even collusion. Finally they depose both, take off the excommunications of both, as it was so doubtful who was pope, and chose Peter of Candia, Alexander V, who confirmed all their acts. But Gregory, who kept the south of Italy, and Robert, King of the Romans, and his partisans, and Benedict XIII, who still held fast hold of Spain, kept their ground.

Each held a so-called general council, Benedict having a hundred and twenty prelates, but who could come to no conclusion, and sixteen only remained, who decreed he was pope and was not to yield. Gregory held a council, but could get scarce anyone to come, and fled through fear of the Venetians, and went to the south of Italy. Each of these condemned Pisa, and their pope, and each other. Pisa deposed the two as schismatic, heretic, and as guilty of other crimes, all the cardinals of both obediences being there, save one. A new council was to be held. Now there were three popes, two doubtful and deposed, and a third chosen, but it was alleged unlawfully. And this is so much the case that the highest Roman Catholic authorities are not agreed who was pope. Raynaldus counts Gregory as pope all the time, till he gave up at Constance. Bellarmine says Alexander V must be owned, as the next was Alexander VI (De Cone, i, 8). Raynald (1409, 80) says that is nothing, as the Stephens had two numbers, one of them not being owned, and the Johns three, as two of them were not owned by many. Balthasar Cossa was the leader in the

affairs of Pisa, but would not be pope; yet he got Alexander V elected, and governed under him, and then became pope at his death.

Dupin speaks of the schism as going on to the Council of Constance; Fleury says nothing either. Platina reckons Alexander V and John XXIII. One reason Bellarmine gives for the authority of the council is that a doubtful pope is no pope. Now I ask if, in such a state of things, we can talk of the apostolic succession. Pisa, Constance, and Basel professedly deposed popes, the two former finally succeeding, the latter not, while the latter pronounced a council to be superior to the pope. Constance confirmed the acts of Pisa, so that we have the authority of the episcopacy as to the wickedness, heresy, and deposition of both popes engaged in the schism; but it consulted without John, and, when he fled because of the charges brought against him, they deposed him. Raynald, however, treats the see as vacant, Gregory having resigned. Who was pope now?

R. It was a time of sad and admitted confusion: only God had mercy on the church.

N*. Is confusion a security for faith? or can apostolic succession be a mark of the true church, when nobody knows who was pope, and at last all were deposed?

Bill M. Who do you think was pope, sir?

R. Well, when so many great and pious men have doubted of it, it would be presumptuous for me to say. The only real difficulty lay between Gregory and Alexander V, and that was healed by the Council of Constance when Gregory resigned, and John, the successor of Alexander, was deposed, and Martin V became pope.

Bill M. But according to that, sir, the only ones who could be really considered so—at least one or other—were set aside, and Martin was nobody's successor, but new made by this council. He does not seem to be the successor of anybody.

R. If we consider Gregory as pope, the see was vacant on his resignation, and Martin succeeded him.

Bill M. Pardon me, sir; you say, If we consider him so. But how can I tell whether I ought to consider him so? You say it would be presumptuous to decide when so many great men take different sides, and I am told to rest my faith on apostolic succession.

R. You must take it, trusting to God's care, as the whole church receives it now, when no such questions exist.

Bill M. But this is taking it for granted that it is the true church. I was told to find that out by apostolic succession, which they pretended was quite clear; and what they said to me was not true, for it is not quite clear; and now I am told to believe in apostolical succession by the church's owning it; but I must first know it is the church, and most Christians do not believe it is the church, and do not believe in succession either. I find nothing to rest my faith on here. You are obliged to admit, and these great doctors admit, it is uncertain, and some are for one, and some for another. When I read the scriptures, I have no need of succession; I have what you own to be the word of God, and I feel it does me good. I should be lost in looking into all these histories of the popes, when even learned people do not know what to think. In the scriptures I have what I know is right, though I may be very slow to learn all it means.

And, let me ask you, sir, had this council the right to judge the pope, and depose him?

R. Well, it is a very delicate question; perhaps, if he left the faith. But the more probable opinion is—and now generally received—that a council cannot depose a real pope.

Bill M. But it seems they did depose them here.

R. Gregory resigned, and it was doubtful if John was the legitimate pope, and then he could be more easily set aside. A doubtful pope is not like an acknowledged legitimate one; so says Bellarmine.

Bill M. All is then uncertain. If they could not set him aside, another could not be appointed, and you have no real succession from the one that was put in his place; if they could, there was no succession at all. If he was not pope, there was nobody to succeed. All is uncertain that I see.

James. But I do not think Dr. Milner says anything of all this.

Bill M. Ah! let us look at him, and see. Where are we to find the place?

N*. It is here, part 2, letter 28, cent. 15, and it is thoroughly dishonest. He says: “The succession of popes continued through this century, though, among numerous difficulties and dissensions, in the following order: Innocent VII, Gregory XII, Alexander V, John XXIII, Martin V,” etc. He adopts, without saying a word of the others who had almost half Europe under them and were owned by many of the greatest authorities, the Roman succession. This for a zealous Romanist, we can understand, though an honest man would have spoken

of the others. But, more than this, if Gregory XII was pope, Alexander V was not. Alexander died long before Gregory, and was not his successor. Raynald will not own Alexander as pope at all, though relating his case, and that of his successor, John XXIII. Nor could Raynald own John properly at any time; because, if Gregory was pope, John was not, and Gregorys resignation could not validate John's illegal election. Possibly Dr. Milner would say Alexander was Gregory's successor when the latter was deposed by the Council of Pisa. But to say the succession of the popes continued is not honest, for there were three at a time who claimed to be, and Gregory had been, regularly elected at Rome; and if Alexander was pope, it was by the authority of the council who set aside Gregory as not legitimate pope, as well as Benedict. If not, then Alexander was no pope at all.

Bill M. But what do you say, Mr. R., to this? I took their statements all for true.

R. It is not my business to defend Dr. Milner. I suppose he thought Gregory legitimately deposed, and Alexander V to be the true pope.

Bill M. But if you say "the true pope," I have to search out which was the true pope, and I find now other learned men do not think he was, this Gregory being there. He gives it for an unsuspecting person as a plain succession. And it is not plain, for they doubt about it themselves, and, if I have understood, put them all down at last. I see he cannot be trusted a bit.

N*. And your great historians and teachers insist that a council, instead of healing a schism by pretending to depose the pope, made it worse, for they had three

popes instead of two. Clearly Milner deceives his readers here, and you, gentlemen, who rest on apostolic succession must either be ignorant of history, or seek to mislead. For two popes at a time, with half Europe believing one to be pope, and half the other, and a council deposing both as no true popes, but schismatics and heretics, and naming a third, and then leaving three, is no regular succession.

D. But our English succession is not involved in this.

N*. Your English succession cannot secure the whole church. Besides, it is not so sure either, for though the "Nag's Head" story is a miserable falsehood of the Jesuit Holywood, propagated by Stapleton, you would find it very hard to prove that Barlow, who consecrated Parker, was ever consecrated himself. However this is not our subject. Apostolic succession at Rome is too uncertain to prove anything but the shame of those who allege it, when once history is honestly inquired into.

But we may pursue that history a little farther. There were still three popes, the French, the Roman, and the Pisan council pope. It had been settled that a general council should be held in three years. John, the Roman pope, called one at Rome, but nobody came. Then the Emperor Sigismund agreed with the pope to call one, which met at Constance, much to the grief of John, who was not disposed to have the council in a place under the Emperor's power (Fleury, 100, 54). John fled the council after a while, and the council deposed him as guilty of perjury, being a heretic, schismatic, and other things. Some twenty charges were not read publicly, as scandalous, but proved—as incest, adultery, fornication, poisoning Alexander V and his physician, etc. He had

been a corsair, and afterwards sold all benefices for Boniface IX, then under Alexander, then for himself. This was, according to Platina and Milner and others, the true legitimate pope, the successor of Peter. Gregory authorized the council, if John XXIII did not preside.

Raynaldus then counts the see vacant. Gregory gave in his resignation, who, according to Raynaldus, was the legitimate pope, but whom Christendom had wholly abandoned, and then they deposed Benedict, to whom Spain had held, with Navarre and a few others, but by whom he was now abandoned. However, on his death another was chosen, and then his line was extinct. This is a strange apostolic succession, and security by it. The council declared itself superior to the pope, and one large party, now suppressed, held that this was clearly conciliar, and confirmed by Martin. Of this I have spoken. They then burnt Huss whom they had sworn not to touch, as faith was not to be kept with heretics, and Jerome of Prague, and chose another pope, who swore with the rest he would reform the church, but when once in power forgot all that. Martin took up the papacy, while Benedict's successor was pope for himself and little else. Whose successor Martin was it would be hard to tell. It is hardly necessary to pursue the list of popes any farther. Pope Eugenius condemned the Council of Basel, and Basel deposed Eugenius; he transferred the council to Florence, but those at Basel still sat on, and elected another, Pope Felix V. However, he had little influence, and compromised with Eugenius, and resigned.

Eugenius at Florence united the Greeks for a time, as Milner says—that is, starved the deputies to agree; but they were all disowned on their return to the East. He

had the seal of the Council of Basel stolen, to put to a decree, as if of that council, to serve his interests. The popes that followed were as bad as they could well be, and though the popes had succeeded in baffling the councils held, at the desire of all, to heal the schism, and reform head and members, yet the conscience of Europe was aroused. It seemed prostrate at their feet, and the reform of the court of Rome was in that court's own hands, that is, the hands of those who profited by the abuses and wished to keep them up. Constance had pronounced a council to be above the pope. France held to this principle in what are called the Gallican liberties; intelligence was increased, the royal power much greater by the decay of the feudal system, and the popes could not play off one prince against another as they had. They sought to aggrandize their families in Italy; one (for popes an honest pope) declared it was impossible to be one, and save your soul. He had been a stickler for the Council of Basel, but when pope he condemned appeals to a general council, for these were now becoming universal; but he soon died. Paul II undid all he had attempted to do in the way of reform.

Our old friend, the historian Platina, librarian of the Vatican and secretary to one of the popes, complained bitterly of it, saying they must appeal to kings, princes, and have a general council; so he was put in prison and in the stocks for his pains. Sixtus succeeded, then Innocent VIII. They mocked him at Rome, saying Rome might well call him father. He had seven children while he was pope, and sought to make them great in Italy. After him came Alexander VI, whose infamies are past belief—a thorough debauchee at all times, so as to attract reproof even at the papal court. He was elected

to the papacy by bribery and promises, and got rid by various means of those who had bought him in, that he might not have to fulfil them. Almost all (quasi omnia) the monasteries were, says Infessina, turned into brothels, no one gainsaying it. It was currently said, “Alexander sells kings, altars, Christ; he first bought them, he had good right to sell them.” He had five illegitimate children; one of the daughters kept the papal court when he was away, and opened the dispatches, consulting the cardinals. One of the brothers killed his sister’s husband to marry her better; the marriage was celebrated with pomp in the pope’s palace; he killed another, and the pope’s secretary who had sought to screen himself under the pope’s mantle, so that the blood spirted up upon the pope. He was seeking to poison some rich cardinals, to get their money, and being very hot, drank the poisoned wine himself, the servant who presented it being ignorant of the plot, and died. Is this a successor of Peter?

Raynald tries to hide the last scene, but nobody believes him. After Pius III came Julius, who made a league to fight the Venetians and then the French. The French king held a council at Tours, which held that the king could depose the pope. If armed for war he pronounced sentence against him, it had no force; the king should keep the decrees of Basel, and appeal to a general council. A council was attempted at Pisa, but came to nothing. Francis, king of France, and Leo, made it up. But the latter, desirous of finishing the great church of St. Peter’s, farmed out indulgences to the gay young archbishop of Mentz, to whom bankers, of the name of Zugger, advanced the money, and they by Tetzel in

Germany, and Sampson in Switzerland, commuted sins by wholesale, and the building was completed.

But the consciences of some could no longer bear the iniquity of Rome. Kings were glad to have power in their own kingdoms, saints to get free from the rule of such wickedness, and nearly half Europe broke with the Roman See. Conscience at Rome had sunk below the measure of what there was of it elsewhere; kings and people were weary of exactions and iniquity, and oppression, and the debauchery of the clergy, and God having raised some men of faith, all were roused, and though horrible persecutions89 and Jesuitical craft pushed back the effect in many places, yet a very large part of Europe remained separated from the pope. The instructions to Tetzel are extant, promising pardon for anything at any time on confession. As to the actual course pursued, no one denies that it was shocking. The Jesuit Maimbourg (Hist, of Luther, 3rd ed., Paris, p. 9) admits that the agents made people believe that they were sure of their salvation (that is by getting these indulgences), and souls were delivered out of purgatory as soon as the money was paid.90 And as they saw the clerks of these same agents carousing in taverns on their profits, much indignation was created. Is this Christianity, or apostolic succession? Was Alexander VI a successor of the holy apostle to secure grace and faith to the church? Was his illegitimate daughter, who managed the affairs of the Roman court with the cardinals in his absence, a successor of Peter?91 Since then, the popes, curtailed of universal dominion, have been more decent outwardly, though not less opposed to the truth, and harassing princes by their unlawful power over their

subjects. But the succession has not been in question; all things are more decent since the Reformation.

James. I am thankful to you, sir, for having gone through all this long and sad history. It is wonderful how any Christian man can take such godless people to be the successors of the blessed apostle. It is making Christianity a security for wickedness, and grace and faith identified with the worst of sin. We are to look for this grace when the most heinous wickedness abounds. That is not Christianity. It separates grace from real Christian life. Besides, I should be sorry to build my faith on being able to ascertain, and be sure of the succession of popes when all is so intricate and uncertain, instead of the word of God which one has oneself, and from God Himself. Peter's successors too cannot be more sure than Peter himself. As to Paul, they do not seem to think of any successor for him, nor of the other apostles. Yet Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, not Peter.

Bill M. Well, I am shocked; who could have thought it? I see plain enough that all this cannot be the ground of my faith. They do not agree themselves about the succession. It cannot be brought down with any certainty; and it seems to me absurd to found one's faith on such a history, or to make it the mark of the true church. I do not believe God would put a poor man, or any one, on such ground as this. And how silent Dr. Milner is about that dreadful Alexander VI! Yet he puts him in, I see, as the channel of grace. It seems it can be bought and sold. I am glad, I am sure, we have got the scriptures. They, any way, are worthy of God, and a comfort to a man's heart, though they search it out. But there is one thing I am not clear about yet: why is it said

that the gates of hell should not prevail against it? They seem to have done so.

N*. It was this Mr. O. would not listen to; and I said too I would touch upon it. That is said of what Christ builds, which is not finished yet. It grows unto a holy temple in the Lord. This Christ secures infallibly, and will have all the living stones built up on Him (the foundation, the Living Stone), a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, the dwelling-place of God for ever. But as built by man, however well done by the apostles at first, it is another matter. There is no such promise, then, but the contrary; and the confounding of the two is one great source of the worst of abuse in the Roman and Ritualist systems.

R. I do not understand what you mean. Surely the church of God was established on earth, and it was to that the promise was made.

AT*. Undoubtedly. But there is a vast difference between Christ's building and man's building, between living stones coming by grace to the living Stone, built up a spiritual house, and man's building with wood, and hay, and stubble.

R. Are there two churches then?

N*. No; scripture does not so speak, but what is in the counsels of God to be made perfect in due time by His power, in His own way, He always puts first into man's hands as responsible. So it was with Adam's state of favour at first. The result, according to God's counsels, is in Christ, the second Man, the last Adam. So it was with the law: first on tables of stone, then to be written on men's hearts. So the priesthood, so the royalty in Israel, so supremacy among the Gentiles. In all these was man's responsibility, and man failed; in all

perfection is found, or will be in grace, and in the second Man Christ. And so with the church: it was set up right by God, but first entrusted to man's responsibility; in the end it will be set up by divine power, perfected as a holy temple to the Lord. Not a different church, as built by Christ for ever, but an external one built by man in his responsibility, the other built by Christ to be the habitation and temple of God.

R. But this is a theory of your own, just to enable you to get rid of the plain promise of God to His church.

N*. Nay; were it so, it would be indeed worthless. I have only referred to the plain statements of scripture; and the result even is declared as plainly, the removing by judgment of what has man for its builder; and, further, that after the apostles there was no security for its continuance in the order of God.

R. Let us hear what you have to say, for I never heard of such a thing.

James. I should be very glad to hear it too; for I could not rightly understand about the church, and what is said of it in scripture.

N*. Well, in Matthew 16 we have the promise as to the church; and a blessed one too. Simon had, through the revelation of the Father Himself, confessed the blessed Lord to be the Son of the living God. It was not that He was the Messiah, or the Christ, true as this was (in the next chapter He forbids them to announce this, because He was going to suffer and to take another and a heavenly place); nor yet that He was Son of man, a title He continually gave Himself, to our great comfort and joy, for we are men. His taking that too in its full display in glory was yet to come, and He had to suffer and

accomplish redemption to take it according to the counsels of God, though we know He was it, and it was the name He loved to give Himself. Nay, more, none had as yet confessed Him in the full extent of the title He here gives Himself. Son of God and king of Israel, Nathanael had confessed Him, according to Psalm 2. But the full expression of the living God, Son in the full power of divine life, this was what the Father now gave to Simon to know. This was proved in resurrection. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead. This was a wholly new place for man, and consequent upon the accomplishment of redemption. And this glorious truth, that Jesus was not only the Messiah, or Christ, but the Son of the living God, was the basis or rock on which He would build His church.

This was the real church of God, built up by divine grace and power, built by Christ Himself—no stone in it not laid by Him, and all living stones. So we read in Peter's first epistle, "Unto whom coming, as unto a living stone, ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house." Here there is no builder mentioned; Christ is a living stone, and they are living stones, and a spiritual house. So in Ephesians 2, there is no builder spoken of, but "in whom [Christ] all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." Here again we have no earthly builder, and the temple is not built; it grows to a holy temple in the Lord. This surely cannot fail. What Christ, the Son of the living God, builds, though not yet complete, the gates of hell, the power of him who has the power of death, shall never prevail against.

But in 1 Corinthians 3 we have human builders, and a temple or building which is then in existence. As a wise master-builder, Paul had laid the foundation; the work was well done; but here man's responsibility comes in. Every man is to take heed how he builds thereon. Wood, hay, stubble may be built into the building, and the work come to nothing, though the builder be saved yet so as by fire. And a third case is mentioned: one who corrupts the temple of God; such God will destroy. We have a good man, and a good builder, who has his reward, the fruit of his labour; a good man, but a bad builder, whose work is destroyed, though he is saved: and one who corrupts God's temple, and is himself destroyed. Now in all this we have a temple whose state depends on builders or corrupters. The responsibility of man enters into the question, and the state of things depends on his faithfulness. Hence it may be badly built or corrupted. This cannot be where Christ builds.

It is supposed then, that it is possible that the church as subsisting here on earth may be badly built, and the work destroyed or corrupted. The pretension therefore that this must always be preserved perfect against the craft and power of Satan is unfounded: what Christ builds will. This is confirmed as to the general state of the dispensation in the Lord's own teaching and the apostle's. "Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household to give them meat in due season," Matt. 24:45. Now here the possibility is supposed of that servant set by the Lord in this place of service being unfaithful, mixing with the world and usurping oppressive authority over the fellow-servants. Now this is just what the clergy, and especially the Roman hierarchy, have done: they have

mixed with the ungodly world, and they have oppressed their fellow-servants.

The professing church, and especially the teaching and ruling responsible body can be unfaithful and destroyed as hypocrites, and left to weeping and gnashing of teeth. Paul tells us that in the last days perilous times shall come, and then describes their state, adding, “having the form of godliness, but denying the power of it”; and desires us to turn away from such. Thus we know that the professing body, as a whole, will be ruined; that, instead of its being said, “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved,” one could only say, “the Lord knoweth them that are his.”

We read that an apostasy or falling away will come and the man of sin be revealed. The parable of the tares and wheat tells the same tale, that the mischief that the devil did in the crop Christ had sown could not be remedied till the harvest came, that is, the judicial dealings of God. This did not hinder the wheat being in the garner, but it spoiled the crop in the field. As to the time this began, Paul says in the Philippians, “all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ”; Peter, that the time was “come for judgment to begin at the house of God”; John, that there were “many antichrists, whereby they knew that it was the last time,” for antichrist is the mark which characterizes the last times. Jude pursues the development of this power of evil from his day, when false brethren had crept in, to the end of the times when they perish in their opposition.

So far from looking for successors in the care of the church, Paul tells the elders of Ephesus that he knows that after his decease grievous wolves would enter in

and ravage the flock, and perverse men arise to turn away the disciples. He has no idea of a successor to his place, but warns the elders to watch, commending them to God and the word of His grace as the resource. Peter takes care by his epistle that they should keep what he told them in remembrance. Neither knows anything of a successor. Both refer to the elders already there. I find the practical ruin of the church clearly stated, and no successor supposed by those most interested in it. The Lord Himself recognizes the difference between the care of human shepherds and its effect, and the security afforded by His own. In speaking of the security of His sheep, He says, “the hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep; and the wolf cometh and seizeth the sheep, and scattereth them.” But further on He says, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck [seize] them out of my hand.”

R. But do you mean to say that the church failed from the beginning?

N*. As entrusted to man. The apostles held their ground against encroaching evil; but the evil was there, and Paul tells us that it would break out after his departure. All that was already there. The warnings are most solemn in Jude, who reports its first inroad and progressive character. Paul tells us what the end would be in what was antichristian and in judgment; John, that in principle it was already there; Peter, that the time was come for judgment. Hence we claim as a rule what was from the beginnings nothing after it being to be allowed as certainly good, though good may have remained in spite of the evil. And further the principle of succession is a false one, denied by the apostles; and, if I look to

history, it becomes a security for the worst and most abominable evil.

R. But do you mean to say that there was no succession?

N*. Certainly, in the sense you mean it; though always a ministry of the word by the grace of God. Further I find for the ordinary elders the apostles appointed them, or their delegates did. They were never chosen by the people, nor by the clergy, nor by men-invented cardinals. Your sources of ecclesiastical power have no foundation in scripture.

R. But tradition is clear as to the bishops who succeeded in every place.

N*. I admit no authority of tradition in the things of God. But we have seen that it is not. Jerome tells us that there were no such local prelates at first; that they were merely chosen by human arrangement to prevent jealous disputes for primacy among the elders; hence, even in Rome prelacy is merely a matter of jurisdiction, nothing in order is above a priest. Others tell us that John quite late went about to establish them. And at Rome the real history is pretty apparent by the utter uncertainty as to the first three, or, as some say, four: but this we have gone through. For succession you have no scripture ground, but the contrary; tradition is confused and uncertain, though the principle—the church being already far departed from the Lord, which none dare question, for the apostle, nay the Lord Himself, says so—came in very early.

R. Well, I must leave you at present; I will call for Mr. D. on my way back.

D. I shall wait for you. But, Mr. N*, you set aside in the strongest way not only all tradition but the whole ordained channel of blessing downwards.

N*. I set aside nothing. We have been inquiring whether it really exists as you state, or whether there are not irreparable breaches in your channel. And mark, the essential character of the great Shepherd is, that He has an untransmissible priesthood. He ever lives, and therefore can save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him. He secures His sheep and will gather the wheat into His garner. And the word of God, the truth itself, and security for it, there can be no succession in; the grace that uses it must be individual.

James. This is what we have to trust in, and can surely trust in Christ and the word of God; and I remember, the apostle commended them to God and the word of His grace, when he expected not to see them again. He spoke of no successor.

Bill M. I begin to see into it. There is a true church of saints that the Lord builds, and that cannot fail, which is not finished yet; and a body formed on earth and put under man's care, and it is predicted it would be corrupted and ruined in its state, and we see that it was.

N*. Just as it happened to Adam, and to Noah, and to Israel, and to the priesthood, and to everything else trusted to man. Man spoiled all as entrusted to him, and indeed it was the very first thing that happened; but all is made good in Christ the last man.

Bill M. But then it makes a trying time for simple people.

N*. The apostle speaks of perilous times, or, as the Rhemish Testament has it, "dangerous." But the

scriptures have predicted it so as to confirm our faith when we find ourselves there. The scriptures give the fullest directions for them, and the Lord, who ever lives, is able to secure us in one time as in another, and we have His promise.

James. That is sure, and I believe, if we hold to scripture and lean on Him and cleave to Him, the danger only makes us feel so much the more how sweet it is to have His help, and how faithful He is.

N*. None shall pluck them out of His hand.

Bill M. I am satisfied as to the truth of this. The word of God is a wonderful thing; how it makes all things clear, and suffices for all times! They say one is not able to understand it. Well, I have not much knowledge in it, but I think it gives understanding more than requires it.

N*. That is just it, through grace.

Bill M. But what do you say to this, Mr. D.?

D. I think it very dangerous ground to set up one's own judgment against the church of God.

Bill M. But I do not set up my judgment at all about the matter. I submit to what the apostles Paul and Peter and John have said, and the Lord Himself. This cannot be false ground. But, begging your pardon, sir, you know we have been looking for the true church; which is it?

D. We desire its re-union; but there is the Roman Catholic, and the Greek, and the Anglican, besides schismatical bodies.

Bill M. But these are all opposed to each other; that I know as to the Roman Catholic and the English, for they tried to get me out of it, because it was all wrong, and I

was like to be damned if I stayed; and they did get me out of it, because it was not the true one. And the Greeks, as I learn, condemn them, and they the Greeks; so that I have no surety there at any rate. Scripture you all own to be of God; but these bodies utterly condemn one another, and how is a poor man to know which is the true church?

D. He should stay where he has been baptized: this all own.

N*. No, sir, excuse me, Dr. Milner says your baptism is so uncertain that it cannot be trusted, and they baptize them over again, when you have done it already.

D. That is very wrong.

Bill M. But they say it is very right. How could I tell if I or my children had been rightly baptized? Which of you can I trust? And they told me I must on no account stay where I was baptized; I was outside the only true church.

D. Well, I do not deny the disunion is very sad. We pray, and have a society to pray for the union of all, that there may be no such sad division.

Bill M. Do you pray that the scripture may be right?

D. Of course not.

Bill M. Does Mr. R.?

D. I suppose not. All Catholics hold the scriptures are inspired of God.

Bill M. Then I had rather trust it which is surely right, than you that confessedly, some or all of you, are wrong. Besides I have learned a great deal I never knew before. They hide the truth, I find I cannot trust what they say.

Who would have thought, with Dr. Milner's fine words, there was such a history as there is behind it?

D. Well, I cannot give up my confidence in the church of God.

Bill M. Are you sure you are of it?

D. Well, there are many things I am not satisfied with. We have departed from many church truths, and we shall never be right till we return to them and unity.

Bill M. Are you satisfied with Rome?

D. I deplore the spirit that will not own us, and I have some difficulties about the worship of the Virgin Mary to the extent they carry it to; but if they would leave us free on these points, unity would soon be re-established. We own their orders and sacramental grace.

Bill M. And do they own yours? Dr. Milner says they cannot; that you have no grace at all, but a very doubtful baptism. It was all this shook me when I was among you. Now I see God can work in grace in a man's heart by the word, though I am far from being what I feel I ought to be.

D. Well, they ought to own them. If you have attended to what Mr. N* has been going through, you might have seen that we in England have escaped from all the uncertainty occasioned by the great schism.

Bill M. But Dr. Milner says your orders cannot be proved; that they cannot be proved in the time of Queen Elizabeth; that somebody who consecrated the archbishop had never been consecrated.

D. I think it can be proved, or that at least it is highly probable he was; and at any rate the one who assisted the Suffragan of Thetford was.

Bill M. Is that all I have to rest my hopes of salvation on? I had rather have the scriptures and the grace of Him that died for me. Very glad to learn from any minister; but when you, gentlemen, give it me as the ground and security of salvation, I find you all disown and condemn one another, and that there is nothing certain for a soul to rest upon. I do not find this in the word of God. It is sure, though it condemns me in many things. But here is Mr. R. returned.

R. I am come to look for you, Mr. D.

N*. We have just done. We have been speaking with Mr. D. on the differences between the Roman and Anglican systems, after closing our survey of the popes' succession. You spoke, when here before, of the common judgment of those who had Catholic principles alike condemning what you call our rashness who rest in scripture. Now our friend Bill M. finds more uncertainty in your discord than sure ground for his soul to build upon. He judges that, as your friends took pains to get him away from the Anglican body that he might have his salvation assured, you must think them entirely wrong.

R. Of course they are wrong in not being united to the sole head of the church, the vicar of Christ, besides other points on which they would get clear when once they accepted Catholic unity. Having got the church's authority they would get the church's truth.

N*. We are on the search for the true church. But I understand your principle, one held by all Roman Catholics, when once the church's infallible authority is

admitted, whatever she teaches is to be believed implicitly, though a person does not in fact believe really any one of the things taught. So Dr. Newman puts it as to himself, that, when he joined the Roman Catholic body, he did not hold as true what it taught as vital truth. So, Dr. Milner says, every Catholic will say, I believe all that the church teaches, though he does not know what it is. This is no faith in the truth, for such an one has not even heard what it is. In the word of God I have not only divine authority but the truth itself. It is not a body competent to teach, but a revelation of the truth. Hence, though I go on learning, I have not implicit but explicit faith. I believe what I find there. I do not believe that the church teaches. The apostles and others appointed to it by God's gifts and grace taught or may now teach the church; but let that pass now. Who is this sole true head of the church?

R. The pope.

N*. If he then be the sole head, there is no other.

R. There can be but one, and of course therefore no other.

N*. Then Christ is not the Head of the church at all.

R. Nay, He is the head in heaven, but the pope is the head on earth, His vicar.

N*. Then are there two heads, one in heaven and one on earth? Now I know no head but Christ, and could not own any other. The Spirit of God has in a certain sense replaced Him as the Comforter; but there is one only head, that of the church as a body, and this is the way head is spoken of. "He gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body," and this being

the scriptural sense of the head and the body, Christ alone in glory can be it. It would be simply a blasphemy to call the pope the head of Christ's body. There is only one unchangeable living head, the source of grace, that nourishes and cherishes it as a man does his own flesh, "for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." To apply this to the pope would be as absurd as it would be wicked. We should have a different head, and perhaps a wicked one, every few years.

R. Christ alone of course can be the heavenly head. But the pope is the head of the church on earth.

N*. But Christ is the head and source of grace to the members of His own body united to Him by the Holy Ghost. No one can be thus united to the pope.

R. But the pope represents Him on earth.

N*. But he cannot be the head of the body as the scripture speaks of it. We are members of Christ. We cannot be members of the pope.

R. But he has the rule and authority down here as representing Christ. I do not understand your mysticism about members of Christ.

N*. What you call mystical is distinctly taught in the Catechism of the Council of Trent (Cap. 2, 52, De Bapt.); only it is ascribed to baptism. Now the children or others are clearly not made members of the pope, and the pope is not at all head of the church as scripture speaks of it. You have made a mere earthly thing of the church, a great tree (to use the scripture figure), and set the pope the chief and now infallible ruler in it, of which the scripture knows nothing. It does know a great fallible system in earth on which judgment will come.

But this is figured by a house, or the state of a kingdom, not by a body and a head. I say then Christ is the head of the true church which I own and bless God for; the pope the head of yours. But allow me to ask you, as you are both here, for clearing the ground for our two friends whose minds have been occupied with these questions—Do you believe that transubstantiation is an essential doctrine of the church?

R. Most assuredly; we should have no sacrifice without it; no priesthood, which supposes a sacrifice. In a word the whole edifice of true worship would fall to the ground.

N*. But what does Mr. D. say to this?

D. I have no objection. I believe the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed there.

N*. But what does your church say?

D. I am only bound to believe its teaching in a general way.

N*. Well now. It is stated in the articles that transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of bread and wine) in the Supper of the Lord cannot be proved by holy writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of scripture, overthrows the nature of the sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. Now, Mr. R., what do you say to this?

R. I reject it as evidently heretical and false.

D. As a scholastic account of the manner of the change we are not bound to it, and the Catechism of the Council of Trent advises also that it should not be curiously searched into.

N*. Be it so; but saying that it is repugnant to the plain words of scripture is not curiously searching into anything, and saying you are bound generally may do to leave a wide margin to make conscience easy, but cannot reconcile its being an essential article of faith and being repugnant to the plain words of scripture. So your church says," the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping, and adoration as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a forced thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God." So in Article 31, you own, "Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain and guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."

Now I know that some of those seeking the union of churches say it refers to what was commonly said, and that it speaks of masses, not of the Mass. But two masses are not said at once, and excusing oneself by saying it was only what was commonly said which was condemned, is a miserable subterfuge, because the same thing is explicitly stated in the decrees of the Council of Trent (Sess. 22: c. 2). What Mr. R. holds to be essential truth and the essence of his worship, anathematizing all who do not hold it (C. of T. 17, canon 3), you declare to be blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits. You stand anathematized by Mr. R. and then come to preach to us unity and catholicity. This does not quite hold water.

Bill M. It is true though, and the Mass is what was made the most of with me.

N*. But I hold it is a sacrifice, only commemorative.

N*. You profess to hold, generally, if you like, that what Mr. R. holds to be the highest divine worship is a blasphemous fable. What he would do to bring people out of purgatory or help them there, you, as far as the act goes, consider would lead people to hell; for I suppose blasphemous fables must do that.

D. But if once the church was one, these things would be easily settled.

N*. Well, then, by your own shewing it is not one; so according to your ideas, and Mr. R. says your common ideas, there is no true church such as you point it out by its marks. Unity and catholicity both fail; and what kind of unity is it when you begin by uniting with blasphemers? That is a strange kind of union. It has always struck me how Roman Catholics, and all who tend that way, are indifferent to truth. Now the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. With you blasphemies are no matter.

D. I wish the expressions were away.

N*. This I understand, but it would be simply your going over to what you now profess to believe to be blasphemy.

D. But I do not believe it to be so.

N*. This is a strange thing. You have professed to believe it, and have your present position by having done so. We must have the truth of God, “whom I love in the truth, and for the truth’s sake.”

R. But where shall we find truth, if not in the church?

N*. That is Pilate's question. I answer, in the revealed word of God; His word is truth, and by grace you will find it there. As I have already said, what you call trusting the church is simply unbelief. He that has received Christ's testimony has set to his seal that God is true, and we have the apostle's declaration, "He that is of God heareth us."

D. Well, I suppose, Mr. R., I am keeping you, and our continuing our conversation can profit little.

R. Well, I should like to talk a little with Mr. N* on the sacrifice of the Mass and transubstantiation. He takes the questions up boldly, I see, and on this point I do not see how he can answer, even on his own ground of scripture, which tells us of a pure offering that was everywhere to be offered. But now I must go.

N*. I shall be very glad to speak with you on it. For the present then good evening, gentlemen. We will meet the day that suits you.

R. And our good friend here will let us come to his house again.

James. Surely, sir. I shall be glad to see you, and happy to hear about it.

D. Will to-morrow suit you?

James. Any day, sir.

D. And you, Mr. N.?

N*. I will.

D. Let it be to-morrow then. Good evening all—good evening, gentlemen.

Bill M. Well, I shall be glad to hear about that. I see one thing, that what they call the church is all fallen and gone away from what it was, and their pretended unity with some of the clergy is all hollow. They are only going away just as I was, only not so simply, for any way I was straightforward, only I knew nothing.

James. But how can people be so deceived as to think of offering Christ in sacrifice now? Why, then His work is not finished, though He says it is. He cannot die upon the cross again. He cannot shed His blood again, and without shedding of blood is no remission. I cannot think how they can speak of such a thing. It is not then a finished work!

N*. It is very simple when once we know what redemption is, and that blessed work which Christ has done. But they do not know this at all; and we must remember, James, that neither you nor I knew it at one time, and when one does not, it is easy to be in difficulties and perplexities. We are not what we ought to be, and look for something to get us out of the uneasiness, and are easily seduced by what seems to offer a resource. The evil is that in this case the enemy has made a system of it, and so denied really, not the fact, but the efficacy of Christ's offering.

Bill M. Well, it is just the point I should like to be clear upon.

James. What you say, sir, is true. I see the impossibility of it; but it is not long ago it would have been a snare to myself. How precious a thing is faith! But I feel I ought to be more humble about it, and thankful for the grace that has delivered me.

N*. Thankful, indeed, we ought to be. And you, M., you see just what you want; you want still the knowledge of an accomplished redemption, and that, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. But He will graciously help you on, I fully trust. But now I must say good evening till to-morrow. I am never surprised that any one who does not know redemption should be ensnared by Romanism.

James and M. Good evening, sir.

Mrs. James. Well, James, I am sure we have to be very thankful for the grace that has given us peace. It is a great thing to cry Abba, Father, and know one is reconciled to God. And all through grace. All is simple and clear then. How thankful I am! But who would have thought of all this wickedness, and that the church of God could have come to this? I did not hear it all, but I heard enough. I never thought that what God set up so beautiful had sunk so low. But He warned us of it. But how it shews what man is! The Lord graciously keep us near Him.

Bill M. Well, it is shocking to think, but what I am thinking of most is how they deceive us. Though as Mr. N* said, I do not know redemption clear yet for myself, but it is not in that unholy place Rome, but on the cross of the blessed Saviour, I believe.

James. God will lead you on, and give you rest, Bill. The work is all done, and you will find peace through it yet. Goodnight.

Bill M. Good-night both.

68 In this same chapter of the treatise (contra Marc.) we have the false point of Tertullian, prescription, which

thus wholly breaks down. If what is earlier is truer, if what is earlier is from the beginning, what is from the beginning is from the apostles; and this assumes not that what was from the beginning is true, as the apostle John states it (which we have in the scriptures of the New Testament), but what is earlier is truer, which has no force at all, and is the basis of the whole, because it does not go to the beginning, and often is not true. Unless his assertion, “what is earlier is from the beginning,” be accepted as necessarily true—and this assertion is utterly groundless—clearly a thing may be earlier than another, yet not from the beginning.

69 “Dispositionis Dominicæ veritate.”

70 Medina, a Roman Catholic theologian, says that not only Jerome but Augustine, Leontius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, (Ecumenius, and Theophylact were all in the Aerian heresy on this subject. That the church had condemned in Aerius Wycliffe and the Waldenses, but that it was borne in these fathers or dissembled on account of the reverence paid to them. Bellarmine says that (to speak very gently) this is very inconsiderate, as it puts a slur on these illustrious fathers, and makes the church an accepter of persons; and they were guilty, more so than Aerius, who lived before them; and more, the fathers (if this were so) could not be cited as an authority. (Bell. 2, 161; De Hær. 1, 15.)

71 This was felt so strongly that Roman Catholic doctors have declared that such as Jerome were materially heretics—that is, in what they said; but Bellarmine says this is rash.

72 Augustine, in a letter to Jerome, calls on him to sing a palinodian for making the scriptures tell a lie as to this, which made Jerome very angry. The Benedictine editors say Jerome recanted. He says he put down borrowed matter in his commentary as well as his own, and perhaps in this way taught error. God is his judge, not I; but I do not see by fruits a sign that Jerome was a real Christian influenced by grace.

73 Of what see? The proof that Christ ordained Peter is as curious a piece of reasoning as we might easily find. It is only worth citing to shew what kind of ground these subjects rest on. See Bell, de S. P., 1, 23, 2, 4, and other places in this treatise.

74 I have already said that I do not think there can be the smallest doubt that “principalitatem,” as to the Roman church, was archen, in the sense of origin; It is of that Irenaeus is speaking, so that the context proves it.

75 But for two hundred years and more.

76 The utter confusion of Hermas as to the one Holy Spirit may be seen in the 10th Command, 2, 3. If it were not puerile folly, it would be outrageous heresy. In Command 6 each man has two angels.

77 Hermas is quoted by the book of Roman Pontiffs, if it be the same (Bar., Pii, 159, 4, 2, vol. 2, 204), and the angelic visitation is treated as true. Origen, Eusebius, Jerome and others say he is the one mentioned by Paul, which is surely a mistake. His book is treated as excellent by Irenasus, quoted by Eusebius, quoted by Origen, who says some did not value it, by Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian when orthodox and Catholic, but denouncing it when a Montanist; Athanasius says it

is a most useful book; Jerome, following Eusebius, very useful and publicly read in churches of Greece, but not known among the Latins. Rufnnus says they had it read in churches, but not quoted as authority to establish faith.

78 It is expressly taught, Dis. 40, c. 6, that a pope can be judged for heresy; and in the gloss, also if he is incorrigible and the church scandalised for evident crimes, because contumacy is heresy; but that the church should pray against it much, as its salvation so depends on the pope.

79 This is also attributed to another motive; after receiving the salutation of all, he was set on the night-stool (stercoraria) to shew he was a poor mortal. This continued to Leo X.

80 The authorities are cited—too long to go through here—in Jewel's answer to Harding (5, 351, Kele's edition), Basnage (Hist, de l'Eglise, 408 ff.). These authors are Protestants, but the books they cite from are not. So L'Enfant's translation of Spanheim. Those who read German can consult Schroek, who does not think it proved. All authorities are quoted. It is difficult to deal with. Anastasius, in the same century, states it; but it is said to be interpolated, and there is a long history as to this, and Jesuit frauds connected with it. It is in Marianus Scotus. Here again it is said the best manuscripts have it not, but Baronius admits he has the story. He was in the eleventh century. Martinus Polonus has the whole story in full in 1278. These are two renowned Roman Catholic writers. But interpolations are charged, as the taking out in editions is insisted on too. That it was then universally accredited is evident.

And who should have put it into so many grave Roman Catholic writers? The strongest proof against it is Hincmar's letter to Nicolaus I in 866, which was sent to Leo IV and found Benedict there, but this is sought to be avoided. However, having given a short view of the question, for there is a vast deal more said, I leave the matter where it is.

81 The whole history discloses scenes of excessive wickedness, even in the pope's family; one named George was accused of having murdered Pope Benedict, whose niece he had married.

82 Fleury (54, 31) says it was really for not following the political views of the pope, John VIII.

83 Not ninth unless Pope Joan be counted as a John.

84 I have consulted Anastasius Bibliothecarius and Luitprand; others I take, as Baronius, etc., cite them.

85 In this part of his Nouvelle Bibliotheque Dupin gives a chapter on the church of Rome. In Baronius the name of the pope at once gives the reference, as in Fleury.

86 Or II here only, because Marin has been confounded with Martin. This, and one of the Stephens, do not affect the succession, like the Johns and others.

87 "Notæ ad Vitas Paparum Avenionenum," page 1040, and following.

88 Van der Hardt's "Council of Constance," vol. 1, part 3, where all is gone through, save that he declines much as too shameful.

89 The Duke of Alba slaughtered 30,000 in Belgium; and when Charles IX of France sought to slay all the Protestants in France, and thousands were massacred,

the king looking on in Paris, the pope had a medal struck in commemoration of it.

90 I have known this still promised in Ireland, in the programme of a confraternity.

91 The accounts of Alexander VI may be seen, Appendix to Ranke. Raynald (1492 and following). Dupin (15th century, 62). Fleury, 1492, 31, etc., 1503, 6, 117 to 120.

The Testimony Of God;

Or The Trial Of Man, The Grace And The Government Of God Nothing, unless it be personal salvation and the communion of the soul with our God, can be of greater importance, or of higher interest for the Christian, than the testimony which God has given to Himself in this world of darkness. After all, salvation and communion depend on this testimony. What would the state of man be without this testimony? What is his state where this testimony has not penetrated? What an immense privilege to possess the thoughts of God Himself, above all with regard to that which concerns us morally, to be in relationship with God through means of the communication of His thoughts, to be called His friends and to enjoy this privilege as a matter of fact by the possession of the truest, the most intimate, testimonies of His thoughts and His affections! And observe that, man being the great object of His affections, these develop themselves in the ways of God with regard to man—ways which even the angels desire to look into.

In fact man, according to the wisdom of God, is the being with regard to whom the character of God and all His moral ways unfold themselves most completely and in the most perfect and admirable way. It is not, by any means, the intellectual capacity of man, nor his moral power which renders him so fit for this, because it is not the judgment which he can form of what God is that is capable of revealing God— without even taking into account the fall of man. This judgment would always, by the fact that man is an imperfect and feeble creature, be

below the truth with regard to God, in the proportion in which man is below God.

Moreover innocent man would have neither the need, nor the desire, to pass a judgment about God. He would enjoy His goodness with thanksgiving. Man who is a sinner is in no way capable of judging rightly, either of his state, or of his position before God; he has not even the wish for it. No, God reveals Himself in His own ways with regard to man. An angel does not furnish Him the occasion for it as man does; an angel has no need of mercy, of grace, of forgiveness, of divine righteousness, of a sacrificing priest, of power which, while sustaining him in weakness, raises him up from the dead. An angel is not, following upon all these things, made like to Christ, the glorious man, identified with His interests by the incarnation. Angels are a witness rendered to the creative and preserving power of God. They excel in strength. We see in them creatures kept by God, so that they have not lost their first estate. Now, grace and redemption, patience, mercy, divine righteousness, do not apply to such a state, but to fallen man they do.

Here the angels desire to fathom the wonderful ways of God with regard to man. It is from the heart of man, descended to the lowest step in the scale of intelligent beings, resembling alas! the beasts in his desires. Satan in his pride, a weak slave in his passions; strong, or at least proud, in his spirit and in his pretensions; having the knowledge of good and evil, but in a conscience which condemns him; by reason of sufferings, sighing after something better but incapable of attaining it; having the want of some other world than this material one, but fearful of getting to it; having the feeling that we ought to be in relationship with God, the only object

worthy of an immortal soul, but at an infinite distance from God in his lusts, and animated by such a desire for independence that he is unwilling to admit God to the only place which becomes Him if He is God, and seeks consequently to prove that there is no God; it is from the heart of man, capable of the highest aspirations, with which his pride feeds itself, and of the most degrading lusts with which however his conscience becomes disgusted; it is from the heart of man, that God forms the divine harp on which all the harmony of His praises can resound and will resound for evermore.

By the bringing in of grace and the divine power which unfolds itself in a new life communicated to man, and by the manifestation of the Son of God in human nature, fallen man is brought to judge all evil, according to divine affections formed in him by faith, and to enjoy good according to the perfect revelation of good in God Himself manifested in Christ; while man gives God His place with joy, because He is known as a God of love. Man also takes again the place of dependence—the only one which is suitable for a creature; but of a dependence which is exercised in the intelligence of all the perfections of God, on which he depends, and depends with joy, as a child on his father, like Christ Himself who has taken this place in order that we may enter into it.

But in order that the character of God, that which He is, may be unfolded in the state of man, and that our hearts and consciences may take knowledge of it, man must pass through the different phases which furnish occasion for God to unfold Himself thus in grace. He must be, on God’s part, an innocent and happy creature, by his own will fallen and guilty, and in a state in which all the grace of God displays itself, and in which God

unfolds all its riches and righteousness, while His sovereign good-pleasure raises man to a height which depends wholly on this good-pleasure and glorifies God Himself in the result which is produced but glorifies a God of love. In result, His sovereign goodness is displayed towards the most perfect misery, and causes to enter into its communion the most perfect excellence.

We are about to examine briefly these ways of God toward man.

God created man innocent, that is to say, having neither malice nor corruption nor lust, and without the discernment of good and evil—a discernment he had no need of, for he had only to enjoy with gratitude the good with which he was surrounded. At the same time he was bound to obey, and his obedience was put to the proof by his being forbidden to eat one tree alone which was found in the midst of the garden.

It has been supposed that he had the knowledge of good and that he acquired the knowledge of evil. To say so is to misunderstand the force of the expression. He acquired the knowledge of the distinction of good and evil in himself. He began to judge concerning that which is good and that which is evil. Eating of the forbidden fruit was only evil because it was forbidden to be eaten, it was not evil in itself. God has taken care that, in a state of sin, conscience should accompany man.

Man would have had opportunity, while in a state of innocence, to enjoy the visits of God, and to hold intercourse with God; but God did not dwell with him, nor he with God.

Man did not fall without being tempted. The enemy suggested to his mind distrust with regard to God; and

this distrust, separating his heart from God, gave place to his own will and his lust, as well as to the pride which would be equal with God. Now self-will, lust, and pride are what mark the actual condition of the natural man. Thus man separated himself from God in making himself, as far as his will was concerned, independent of Him, that is to say, as much as sin can make independent, and as moral degradation does make us independent of sovereign good. In this state man could not endure the presence of God. On the contrary, that presence, which cast the divine light on the state of. man and made him feel what he had become—that presence which recalled his fault to him and what he had lost, must have been to him of all things the most intolerable. Man might cover himself to his own eyes from the shame of sin, but before God he knew that he was naked, as if not a fig-leaf had been found in the garden.

The question of God, “Adam, where art thou?” was equally touching and overwhelming. Why, when he heard the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, with the divine familiarity of a goodness which could enter into communication with an innocent nature, did not man run to meet Him? Where was he? In sin and in nakedness.

Now the word of God lays man bare. Terrible truth when the conscience is bad!—truth before which all pretence to independence vanishes like falsehood before the truth, only leaving the shameful guilt of the pretence itself, as well as of the folly and ingratitude which have sought after this independence, and in which we have sought to be independent of supreme good.

Observe here that the promise was made to the last Adam, to the Seed of the woman, and that it goes before the expulsion of fallen Adam from the earthly paradise. Thus man fled from the presence of God before God drove him from the peaceful abode in which He had placed him. But the authority of God must be maintained. It was not becoming that sin should remain unpunished. Judgment must needs be put in exercise. The holiness of God abhors sin and repels it. The righteousness of God maintains His authority according to His holiness in executing a just judgment on him who does evil.

Man was banished from paradise, and the world began. Sin against one's neighbour was consummated in the world, as sin against God in paradise, and the death of the righteous one presented a striking image of that of the Lord Himself. Driven from the presence of God, man in despair sought to put in order and to embellish the world: this was all that remained to him; and civilization, the arts, and the delights of a life of luxury occupied and developed the intelligence of a being, who, having no longer any relation with holiness and the divine perfections, lost himself in that which was below him, while boasting himself of the fruits of his perverted intellect.

But, without the repression of the will of man by a superior power, civilization, although it may deceive for a moment the judgment of man as to the state of his heart in occupying the mind, cannot arrest the vehemence of lusts, nor the violence of the will which seeks to satisfy them and to make a way for its passions through all obstacles. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."

But the grace of God did not leave itself without witness. The judgment of God on the serpent announced the Seed of the woman. Abel, who "being dead yet speaketh," testified of the power of evil and of Satan in the world; but he also testified of the acceptance on God's part of the righteous one who comes to God through a sacrifice which recognizes sin and atones for it, and lays the foundation of a hope outside the world in which the one who was accepted of God had been rejected and sacrificed to the hatred of the wicked. The departure of Enoch, who walked with God, confirmed this hope, and tended to assure faith (which believes that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him) that there is a happiness for the righteous in the presence of Him whom he loves—a happiness which the world does not give, neither does it take away. This, although obscure, nourished and sustained the faith of those who sought to walk with God, whilst evil went on always increasing.

When the evil was approaching its height, another testimony was raised up in the person of him who was to pass through the judgment which put an end to the frightful development of evil that prevailed in spite of the testimony already given.

This was a testimony, not for the affections of the saints, fitted to carry them outside the world, but a testimony of the judgment of the world itself—a judgment necessary according to the principles of divine government, but through which a small righteous remnant should be preserved in an ark of safety which God revealed to them.

Such was the condition of man, such his history, when, in consequence of the violation of a law, he had been driven from the earthly paradise in which God had placed him, and left, without law, to his own will, though not without a testimony. It needed that the deluge should put an end to a state of things in which corruption and violence had covered the face of the earth and left only eight persons disposed to listen to the testimony that God granted to them of the judgment which awaited them.

During the period which transpired between the expulsion of Adam from the terrestrial paradise and the deluge, man was one family, one race. There was no idolatry. Man was left to his own ways (not without witness, but without restraint from without), and the evil became insupportable: the deluge put an end to it. After this event—this judgment of God, a new world began, and the principle of government was introduced. He who should kill a man should himself be put to death: a curb was put upon violence, a bridle on outward sin. The corruption of the heart in a world at a distance from God remained just as it was. But although there were as yet no nations, the destiny of various races, such as it has been to the present day, began to dawn at least prophetically. Noah failed in the position in which he had been placed after the deluge, as Adam had failed in paradise, as man has always done; as every creature has done which has not been directly sustained of God.

The reader may, in passing, remark Adam as an image of Him who was to come, of the last Adam; and Noah as also a figure of Christ, inasmuch as the government of the world and the repression of evil were now entrusted to man.

Two great principles, which subsist to the present day, characterize the world which is developed after Noah: they are connected with the tower of Babel. Up to this time, whether before or after the deluge, there had been only the human race, one family only. Now, in consequence of the judgment of man, who seeks to exalt himself on the earth and to make himself a name or centre which may give him strength, God scatters those who were building the tower, and there are nations, languages, and peoples. The actual form of the world was established in reference to its division into different tribes and different nations. Moreover individual energy forms an empire which has Babel for its centre and point of departure. Now that the world is constituted, we arrive at the testimony and ways of God. In the midst of this system of nations, there were languages, peoples, and nations.

The judgment of God had thus ordered the world, but an immense fact appears in the history of the world. The sin of man is no longer only sin against God, manifested in corruption and in the activity of an independent will. Demons take the place of God Himself in the eyes and for the imagination of men. Idolatry reigns among the nations, and even in the race brought the nearest to God, the race of Shem. Although, at bottom, this idolatry was everywhere the same, each nation had its gods. The system established by God Himself, at the time of the judgment of the race at the tower of Babel, acknowledged demons as its gods. This gives occasion to the call of Abraham; The God of glory appears to him and calls him to leave his country, his kindred, and his father’s house. He must break completely with the system established by God, and that in its most intimate

relationships. He must be for God, and for God alone. He is chosen by sovereign grace; being called, he walks by faith, and the promises are made to him.

But this call introduces another principle of great importance. There had already been many faithful ones who had walked with God—Abels, Enochs, Noahs; but none was like Adam, who was head of evil, the stock of a race. Now Abraham, being called, became the stock of a race which was to inherit the promises outside the world. Of course this may be developed in a spiritual manner in Christians, or in a carnal manner in the people of Israel; but the heir of the promise (and this applies to Christ Himself) enjoys it as the seed of Abraham. If the nations, the peoples, the families, and the languages took demons for their gods, God took a man by His grace to be the head of a family, the stock of a people, who may belong to Him for His own. The fatness of God's olive-tree is found in those who grow on the root of Abraham, whether it be in a people, the seed according to the flesh, or in a seed which shares in the promised blessings, inasmuch as belonging to Christ the true Seed of the promise. This call and this vocation, whatever the phases may be which the objects to which they apply pass through, always remain firm. Christ Himself came to accomplish the promises made to the fathers, as a witness of the unchangeable truth of God.

The state of the first heirs, however, changes; and in a little while we find a people who care little for the promises, but who, far removed from the faith of Abraham, groan under the yoke of a merciless tyranny.

This state of the people of God brings in an event in which a principle of immense importance is brought into

view, namely, that of redemption, or of the deliverance of the people of God from the consequences of sin and from the slavery in which they were held. We shall see also, in the fruits of redemption, facts of the highest interest for us. The cry of the people went up to the ears of Jehovah of Hosts, and He comes down to deliver them. But the Saviour is the just Judge, and it is needful that He should reconcile these two characters. In order to be able to deliver, His own righteousness must be satisfied. A God who is not righteous cannot, morally speaking, be a Saviour. It is in this character that God definitely appears, when He intends to deliver the people. He had manifested His power in calling on Pharaoh to let the people go, in declaring the rights he had over Israel; but the deliverance must needs be accomplished without the goodwill of man and by the judgment of God, by the full manifestation of what He is with regard to evil, and in love also, so that He may be known. Now the people themselves were, in certain respects, more guilty than the Egyptians; and God comes in as a judge. But the blood of the paschal lamb is put upon the door, and Israel escapes the judgment that was due to them, according to the value which that blood had in the eyes of God. God judges, and, by reason of the blood recognized by faith, passes over His guilty people. But Israel was still in Egypt; their deliverance was not yet effected, although the price of redemption was paid in figure. Israel sets forth. On arriving at the Red Sea, the question of their deliverance or their ruin must be decided. Pharaoh had pursued them, sure of his victory. The wilderness in which Israel was, in appearance, lost, offered them no outlet; and the Red Sea (figure of death and judgment) was straight before them. On the morrow Israel only saw the corpses of

their enemies who had perished in the sea—the road of salvation for the people of God. The death and judgment of Christ make us pass on dry land, far away from the place where we were captives.

Redemption is more than the fact of our being secured from the judgment of God. It is a deliverance wrought by God. He Himself acts for us, and places us in an altogether new position, by the exercise of the power of God Himself.

We have, in this important history, the figures of the great facts on which our eternal blessing is founded. It prefigures propitiation, redemption, and justification under a double aspect; on the one hand, propitiation by the blood which sets us free from all imputation of sin in presence of the righteousness of God; and on the other, our introduction, in virtue of the value of that blood, into an altogether new position by the resurrection. Christ was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.

Some very important principles come before our eyes, consequent upon deliverance by redemption. God dwells with the redeemed—if you will, in their midst.

He did not dwell with innocent Adam, nor with Abraham called by His grace and heir of the promises. But, as soon as Israel is redeemed and delivered by redemption, God dwells in the midst of the people. Compare Exodus 15:2, and chap. 29:45, 46.

The holiness of God and of the relations of His people with Him then appear for the first time. Never in Genesis was the holiness of anything whatever set before us (except in the alone case of the sanctification of the sabbath in paradise), nor the holiness of God’s

character. But Exodus 15 and 19; Leviticus 19:26, and other passages shew us that, once redemption is accomplished, God takes this character, and establishes it as necessary for everything that is in relation with Himself. Compare Exodus 6:5.

In immediate connection with this truth another is found, which, moreover, flows necessarily from redemption, namely, that the ransomed ones no longer belong to themselves; they are taken for God, consecrated to God, set apart for Him. Afterwards they are brought to God Himself; Exod. 19:4.

Israel enter into the wilderness, the character of this world for the people of God who have the consciousness of their redemption, and the faithfulness of God takes care of His people there. Next, they enter into Canaan, where it is a question of the victories which we must win in order to enjoy in this world the heavenly privileges which belong to us. As to the title, we enjoy these privileges before gaining a single victory; but, in order to realize these privileges, we must conquer. The wilderness and Canaan prefigure the two parts of Christian fife: patience in the world under the hand of God who is leading us; and victory in our combats with Satan, in order to enjoy and to cause others to enjoy spiritual privileges.

But another very important privilege comes to light during the sojourn of Israel in the wilderness. If the reader examines Exodus 15 to 18, he will find that all is grace. But in chapter 19 the people put themselves under the law, and accept the enjoyment of the promises under the condition of their own obedience to all that Jehovah would say. Obedience was a duty; but to place

themselves under this condition was to forget their own weakness and to ensure their being lost, a consequence which did not fail. Before Moses came down from the mountain, Israel had made the calf of gold. The patience of God continued His relations with the people by the means of the intercession of Moses, until, as Jeremiah says, there was no longer any remedy. But our aim now is to point out the ways of God, and not to enter into details.

The promises of God had been made to Abraham without condition, and in consequence the question of righteousness had not been raised. Now this question was raised, and first, as was reasonable, righteousness in man demanded on God's part. It was the duty of the creature. The question must needs have been raised, but the result was—and with sinners it could be no other—that man, having violated the law, aggravated his sin, instead of attaining to righteousness. With a rule which would have made his happiness if he had kept it, he is only a transgressor and by so much the more guilty before God. Moreover, it was in order to convince him of his state of sin that the law, which brought in positive transgressions, was given to him. God never had the thought of saving by a law; and man needs to be saved. The law of God must propose a rule which expresses the perfection of a man, nay, of every intelligent creature. But that could do nothing else than make sin evident, when man was already a sinner. This last truth is forgotten, when people speak of the law. However the law of God must be the perfect expression of what man ought to be, that is to say, must condemn man, a sinner. An exact measure does not add anything to a too short piece of cloth which has been sold to me, but it

manifests the fraud. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” The question of human righteousness has been resolved by the law. Ordained with promise of life for obedience, it has been in fact a ministry of death and condemnation for those who have borne its yoke.

This is an immense fact and principle. Human righteousness does not exist. The guilt of man is made manifest.

We have seen that God manifested all patience with regard to man under the law, the while preparing him for a better hope. He sent His prophets to warn, to seek for fruits in His vineyard. All were rejected. At last He sent His Son. All was useless. He was cast out of the vineyard and put to death. But this exposes to view another character of sin: men rejected the mercy of God, as they failed to meet the just requirements of the law. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” But man had no desire for this reconciliation, and did not wish for God at any price. For His love Christ found hatred. When He appeared, they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him.

Thus the sin of man was completely demonstrated. Innocent, he abandoned God; but afterwards left to himself, except as to the testimony of God, he made of the world a scene of corruption and of violence, such that God must needs bring in the flood. Placed under the law, he violated it, and sought other gods of dung which he had invented. God Himself arrives in mercy in this world of sin, with the manifestation of the most perfect love and of a power capable of re-establishing man in blessing on the earth; but the carnal mind is enmity

against God, and man manifested this enmity in rejecting Jesus and putting Him to death. The cross of Jesus served as a proof that man hated God and expressed this hatred in the rejection of the Saviour. Morally speaking, it is the end of the history of man. Completely put to the proof, he is corrupt and violent, a transgressor, guilty; but, more than that, he hates the God of goodness.

What we have gone through is the history of man put to the proof. There remains the history of the grace of God toward man, and the government of the world on the part of God.

There can exist no more serious question for the soul than this: where shall I find righteousness before God? We have said that the law raised this question. It is of importance to see the position it takes when the law is given.

From the first existence of man on the earth the question between responsibility and grace was placed at issue. In the earthly paradise there was the tree of life which only communicated life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to which the responsibility of man was attached. As to the tree of life, man did not eat of it; and (once become a sinner) the mercy of God, as well as His righteousness and the moral order of His government, closed against him the way of this tree. An immortal sinner on the earth would have been an insupportable anomaly in the government of God. Besides, man had deserved to be shut out of the garden. On the other hand man failed in his responsibility. Before his fall he did not know sin, but he was in the relation of a creature towards God. There was no sin in

eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, except inasmuch as this had been forbidden.

When man fell, the Seed of the woman, the last Adam, was immediately announced: the hopes of the human race are thenceforth placed upon a new ground. The deliverance presented does not consist in something which would have been but a means of raising up again founded on the moral activity of man already in a fallen condition; but another person is announced, who, while of the human race, should be a source of life independent of Adam, and who should destroy the power of the enemy; a person who should not represent Adam, but replace him before God, should be the seed of the woman, which Adam was not, and should at the same time be an object of faith for Adam and for his children— an object which, being received into the heart, should be the life and salvation of whoever should receive it. The first Adam was made a living soul; he was lost: the last Adam, the second Man, is a quickening spirit. Until the coming of Christ the promise only was the source of hope; it alone, through grace, begat and sustained faith. We believe in its accomplishment. When God called Abraham, He gave him (Gen. 12) the promise that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Afterwards (chap. 22) this promise was confirmed to his Seed. The one who was to be the seed of the woman was also to be the seed of Abraham. Thus the ways of God towards man were established on an indefectible promise. It was without condition, a simple promise, and consequently it did not raise the question of righteousness nor of the responsibility of man.

Four hundred and thirty years afterwards the law comes, and, as we have said, raises the question of

righteousness, and that, on the footing of the responsibility of man, by giving him a perfect rule of what man, the child of Adam, ought to be. Now, observe it well, he was a sinner. This law had a twofold aspect, a kernel of absolute truth, which the Lord Jesus was able to draw from its obscurity—supreme love to God and love to one's neighbour. It is the perfect rule of the blessedness of the creature as a creature. The angels realize it in heaven. Man is as far as possible from having accomplished the law on earth. But this rule is developed in the details of relative duties, which flow from the relation in which man finds himself, as a fact, before God, and from the relation in which he finds himself placed as towards others in this lower world.

Now, in the circumstances in which man found himself these details necessarily had reference to the moral state in which he was, supposed sin and lusts, and forbad them. As the law of God applying itself to the actual state of man, it necessarily condemns sin on the one hand, and necessarily proves it on the other. What can a law do in such a case, but condemn—be, as the apostle says (2 Cor. 3), a ministry of death and condemnation? It demanded righteousness according to a rule which the conscience of man could not but approve, and which at the same time proved his guiltiness. It is in this, in fact, that the usefulness of the law consists; it gives the knowledge of sin. God never gave it to produce righteousness. In order to this, an inward moral power is absolutely necessary. But the law on the tables of stone is not the power. The law requires righteousness of man, and pronounces the last judgment of God, makes sin exceeding sinful, and brings the just anger of God. No law produces a nature. Now the nature

of man was sinful. The commandment demonstrates that he will seek to satisfy that nature, in spite of God's forbidding it. The law is thus, and because it is just and good, the strength of sin. It entered that the offence might abound. Those who are of the works of the law (these are not bad works: the apostle speaks of all who walk on this principle) are under the curse it has pronounced on such as disobey it. The flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The promise of God remains sure. Man is put to the proof so that it may be made manifest whether he can produce a human righteousness.

The law was presented to man under a twofold aspect—the law pure and simple, and the law mingled with grace, that is to say, given to man after the intervention of grace, but leaving man to his own responsibility after a forgiveness accorded by grace. The history of the first point of view is very short. Before Moses came down from Mount Sinai, Israel had made the golden calf. The tables of the law never entered the camp. They never were able to form the basis of the relations of man with God. How reconcile the commandments with the worship of the calf of gold? Subsequent to this sin Moses intercedes for the people, and they receive the law anew, God acting in mercy according to His sovereignty and proclaiming Himself merciful and gracious. The relationship of the people with God is founded on the pardon which God grants, and established no longer as an immediate relationship with God, but on the ground of Moses' mediation. The people however are put under the law, and everyone is to be blotted out of God's book through his own sin, if he render himself guilty. At the same time the law is hidden under an ark, and God

Himself is hidden behind a veil, within which the sprinkling of blood was to be made on the mercy-seat which formed, together with the cherubim, the throne of God.

But this mixture of grace and law could not, any more than the unmingled law, serve to establish between God and man relations capable of being maintained. It could serve to demonstrate that, whatever might be the patience of God, man, responsible for his conduct, could not obtain life by a righteousness which he himself should accomplish. Also, the impossibility in which man finds himself of subsisting in presence of the exigencies of the glory of God, however feebly it may be revealed, is presented to us in a remarkable figure, which the apostle makes use of in 2 Corinthians. The people prayed Moses to cover his face, which still shone with the reflection of the glory of Jehovah, with whom he had been in communication on the top of Mount Sinai. Man cannot endure the revelation of God when God demands of man that he should be what he ought to be before Him. The veil disclosed, at bottom, the same truth. God must hide Himself. The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. A law was given on God’s part to direct man’s life, a priesthood established to maintain the relations of the people with God, notwithstanding the faults of which they became guilty; but man could not come nigh to God. Sad state, in which the revelation of the presence of God, the only thing which can really give blessing, necessarily repelled the one who needed the blessing! We shall see that, in Christianity, exactly the contrary takes place: the veil is rent.

But let us pursue the ways of God with man under the law.

We have already seen that, in the system we are considering, life was proposed to man as the result of his faithfulness. Whatever may be the patience and grace of God, all depends on this faithfulness; and not only is the responsibility of man completely at stake, but all depends on the way in which he meets this responsibility. God, no doubt, had patience, and manifested His grace. He bore with Israel in the desert and introduced them into the land of Canaan, in spite of all sorts of unfaithfulness on the part of the people. He put the people in possession of the country, giving them victories over their enemies. He raised up judges to deliver them, when their unfaithfulness had subjected them to their powerful neighbours. He sent them prophets to recall them to the observance of the law. At length, with a goodness which would not judge them without using every means to gain their hearts, He sent His Son to receive the fruit of His vine, on which He had expended all His care, and on which He had lavished so many proofs of love. But His vine yielded only wild grapes; and those who cultivated it, those to whom He had entrusted it, rejected His servants the prophets, and cast His Son out of the vineyard and killed Him. Such was the end of the proof to which man was put under the law: all the grace and all the patience of God having been employed to induce them to obey and maintain them in obedience—all was useless.

There is the history of man under the law. If we examine the bearing of the law on the conscience, we shall find that it brings condemnation and death as soon as it is spiritually understood; but the aim of this article is to consider the ways of God. Nevertheless I cannot leave this subject without entreating my reader to weigh well

what is the bearing of the law, if it be applied to his conscience and his life before God, if he be responsible —and he surely is—if all he can do is to recognize the justice and excellence of that which the law demands. If he sees that he ought to avoid that which the law condemns, and that the two commandments which form the positive part of the law are the two pillars of the blessedness of the creature; if he finds that he has constantly done and loved that which the law and his own conscience condemn, and that he has entirely failed in that which his conscience must acknowledge as being the perfection of the creature: if all that be true, where is the life which is promised to obedience? How escape the condemnation pronounced on the violation of the law, if he places himself on the ground of his own responsibility and has to be judged according to a rule which he himself acknowledges as perfect? Another law could not be found. If he is without law, good and evil are indifferent; that is as much as to say that man is more than wicked; even natural conscience is ruined, good does not exist, and man is unbridled in evil, save by the violence of his neighbour or the just judgment of God displayed in an event like the deluge. No; the law is just and good, and man knows it, his conscience tells him so. But if the law is good and just, man on the ground of his own responsibility is lost. The life which it promises to obedience man has not obtained; the judgment which will make good the authority and justice of the law awaits the one who has disobeyed it, and will at the same time be pronounced against all the shamelessness of an unbridled will. All the guilty will be reached. As to the law, as the apostle expresses it—happily for the awakened conscience—that which was ordained to life, man finds it to be unto death.

The presence however of the Son of God in this world had not alone for its object the seeking, on the part of Jehovah, fruit from His vine. This task was even the smallest part of the object of His coming; necessary, no doubt, in order to make evident the state in which man was, as a child of Adam, responsible before God; but not at all the object of God's counsels in His coming, nor even the principal thing which was revealed by His manifestation in flesh. Moreover neither did the fact that man did not render the fruit which God had the right to expect bring to its full height the sin of man. God has been manifested in the flesh; He has appeared, He is love: love then has been manifested. He has been manifested in relation with the wants, the weakness, the misery, the sins of man. He was divine in His perfection, but He shewed this perfection while adapting Himself perfectly to the state in which man was found. It was a love which was above all our miseries, but which adapted itself to all our miseries and did not weary itself of any of them. The Lord Jesus has manifested in His life here below a power which destroyed entirely the power of Satan over men. He healed all the sick, cast out devils, raised the dead, gave to eat to those who were hungry. He had, as man, bound the strong man and spoiled his goods. And not only that, but what was still more important, the human being who was the most abandoned to sin found in Him a way by which he could return to God, God Himself was come to seek him, God who was shewing that no sin was too great for His love, no defilement too repulsive for His heart. Satan had ruined man by destroying his confidence in God: God neglected nothing to re-establish it, but with a perfect condescension; perfect, because His love could not do otherwise; perfect, because it was the true expression of

His heart, which found in the miseries, the faults, the weakness of man, the occasion of assuring them that there was a love on which they could always count.

We see, in effect, in the cases of the woman of bad life and of the one whom the Lord met at Jacob's well, how the Saviour's love attracted the heart, when once the awakening of the conscience had created in the heart the want of His goodness. There was then produced a confidence which revived the heart, turned it aside from evil, a confidence which no human being knows how to inspire and which delivers the soul from the evil influence which surrounds and possesses it, as well as from the fear of man, to turn it towards God with a sincerity which demonstrates that it is in the light with God, but which demonstrates also that the goodness of God has found its way to the heart, in such sort that it has no desire to get out of a position in which all the evil that is found there is manifested, but manifested where all is love, and where one can rest because all is known. It is a love which inspires confidence, because, when all is known, God remains always love. Here is the divine character of Christ, to be the light which makes all manifest, the love which loves when all is made manifest, which knows all beforehand, which produces perfect uprightness in the heart, because it is a comfort that such a heart should know all.

Such was Christ on earth: one was with God. The sinner who would have been ashamed to shew himself to man could hide his face in the bosom of Jesus, sure of not finding a reproach there. Not a sin allowed (if there had been, confidence would not have been established, because He would not have revealed the holy God), but a heart which, through the midst of the sin, received the

sinner in His arms; and it was the heart of God. Christ was all that in this world, and He was much more than my poor pen could tell; yet man rejected Him. He was all that through opposition, hatred, outrages, and death; but all was in vain as regards man. It is this which has definitively demonstrated the state of man. It is not only that he is a sinner, that he has violated the law and refused to hear the appeals of the prophets; but when God Himself appeared as goodness, man would not have Him; his heart was entirely hostile to God fully manifested, not in His glory which will crush all that shall rise against Him, but with the attraction of a perfect goodness.

All the gravity of man's condition consists not in that God has driven man out of paradise, but rather in that man, so far as it depended on him, has driven from the earth God come in grace into a world such as the sin of man had made it. "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?" "The carnal mind is enmity against God." At the commencement of His ministry, we remarked, Christ had bound the strong man, and had spoiled his goods. But the result of the exercise of this ministry was that man did not want even a deliverer-God, did not want God at any price. Man, the child of Adam, was entirely condemned in the death of Jesus. There no longer remained anything; there no longer remained any resource to God Himself, any means to employ in the hope of awakening the desire for good in the heart of man. Not only was he a sinner, but nothing could bring him back to God. Everything had been tried, save the exceptional mode founded on the intercession of Jesus on the cross (intercession which the Holy Spirit answers

by the mouth of Peter in saying that, if even now Israel repented, Jesus would return). But Israel refused this appeal also. God exhausted all the resources of sovereign grace; He exhausted them, and the heart of man repelled them all.

A new nature was needed, and redemption; a justification available for a sinner before the throne of a righteous God, a righteousness which should render man acceptable, without there remaining on some other side any sin which God must occupy Himself with in judgment, and which should do more still—which should make man perfectly acceptable in the eyes of God, fit for the glory which God had prepared for him. There needed an altogether new state, which should leave to man before God no trace of his previous state of sin. There needed a state which should satisfy the glory of God, and render man perfectly capable of enjoying it.

According to the doctrine of Christianity the question of man's responsibility is entirely disposed of. The doctrine fully recognizes this responsibility, but declares that man is lost. It is a message of pure love, but of a love which finds the basis of its exercise in the fact that man has been already put to the proof and that he is lost. Christianity announces that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The day of judgment, which will execute the just judgment of God, has been for faith anticipated by the clear and distinct declaration of the gospel. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness"; but also "the righteousness of God is revealed on the principle of faith for faith."

It is the death and resurrection of Jesus which reveal to us these things. His death terminates the history of responsible man; His resurrection begins anew the history of man according to God. His death is the point at which evil and good meet in their full strength for the triumph of the latter. His resurrection is the exercise and the manifestation of the power which places man in the Person of Christ who has triumphed, and, by virtue of that triumph, in a new position, worthy of the work by which Christ has gained the victory, worthy of the presence of God. In this new state man is clear of sin, and outside its empire and the reach of Satan.

In the position in which the resurrection of Christ has placed us we see man living in the life of God, where redemption, purification, and justification have placed him, and fit for the state in which the counsels of God intend to place him, that is, for the glory which is attached to this resurrection. Man is also pleasing to God as the new creation of His hands, the fruit of the work in which God has perfectly glorified Himself. Let us examine this a little more closely.

I have said that good and evil met in all their force in the cross. It is well to seize this fact in order to understand the moral importance of the cross in the eternal ways of God. The cross is the expression of the hatred, without cause, of man against God manifested in goodness. Christ, the perfect expression of the love of God in the midst of the wretchedness that sin had brought into the world, had brought in the remedy for this wretchedness wherever He met it. In Him this love was in constant exercise, notwithstanding the evil; He was never wearied, never thrown back, by the excess of evil or by the ingratitude of those who had profited by His

goodness. Sin, disgusting as it was, never arrested the course of Christ's love: it was but the occasion of the exercise of this divine love. God was manifested in flesh, attracting the confidence of man by seeking him, sinner as he was; by shewing that there was something superior to evil, to misery and defilement. This was God Himself. Christ, perfectly holy, of a holiness that remained always unfailingly intact, could carry His love into the midst of evil, so as to inspire the wretched with confidence. If a man touched a leper, he was himself defiled: Christ stretches forth His hand and touches him, saying, "I will, be thou clean."

Man, who might fear to approach God on account of his own sin, found in grace (which was seeking the sinner in perfect goodness, which made of sin an occasion for the testimony of God's love towards man) that which was fitted to inspire confidence in his heart. It could relieve itself by unburdening the load of a guilty conscience into the heart of God who knew all. All was of no avail. The cross was the recompense of this love. Man would have none of God.

But there are other sides of this power of evil, which are shewn in the cross. The effect of evil—death—reigns in it. I say "reigns in it." It is true that this is shewn more in Gethsemane than in the cross, but it is only another part of the same solemn scene, and the anticipation of the cross itself in the soul of Jesus. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Death, as the power of evil, was pressing with all its force on the entire being of Jesus. Death is the present judgment of man in the flesh, wielded by the power of him who thus has the power of it; but it implies the sin of man, and the wrath of God against sin. This is what Jesus met. It is

true that, in yielding himself entirely to the will of His Father, He accepted the cup at His hand in a perfect obedience which left Satan no place. But that was His perfection. He was fully put to the proof. Death was the power of Satan over man on account of sin, but at the same time it was the judgment of God. It was also the weakness of man even to nought as regards his existence in this world.

If we enter into details, we find evil develop itself under the power of Satan in this hour of his power. If a man is a judge, he condemns the innocent, washing his hands as to it. If he is a priest, whose duty is to plead for those who are out of the way, he pleads against the innocent and just person. If it be a question of friends, one betrays, another denies, the rest forsake, Him who had shewn unceasingly the abundance of His affection. In men no fear of God, no compassion for man. The Saviour went low enough for a wretched thief, suffering the punishment of his crimes, to insult Him in death.

In a word, good had been fully manifested in Jesus, and evil attained its moral highest pitch in the rejection of the Saviour. Jesus dies, but He is dead to sin. He never admitted it into His nature, but now He has left the life in which He had sustained the combat. He leaves all relation with the order of things in which sin is found, breaking it by death which destroys this relation. There is no longer for Christ any link with man in flesh. That is what Paul means in 2 Corinthians 5, not even an outward link, or the likeness of sinful flesh. Man has severed every link between himself and God; and Christ has done with those relations in which He never suffered sin to enter His holy nature, but in which He had to do with sin and man. There was an end of man and sin.

Man is left in sin so far as in flesh; and there is a risen man, a man completely outside the condition of the children of Adam, dead, not existing in relation with the state in which man was found, but to live to God outside sin.

Immense truth! Christ (who had a perfect life, who was life, and who, tempted in all things like unto us, passed through this present life in obedience and faithfulness, who manifested nought but the power of the Holy Ghost in His walk and looking only to God, and who passed through all the power that the enemy had over man in soul and body by death) has closed the history of man in ceasing to exist in relation with him, man led by Satan having consummated his wickedness by putting Him to death. Nevertheless it was Christ who offered Himself. Moreover for Him it is the path of life, and He rises beyond the scene of the power of Satan, whether as tempter or as having the power of death.

Let us now see good manifesting itself in all its perfection, and as superior to evil. First, the life of Jesus has shewn the obedience of man by the Spirit through a world of sin, and in spite of all the temptation by which the enemy can try a soul. His life was according to the Spirit of holiness—His death perfect obedience. All we have spoken of, as the power of evil, only heightened the character and value of the obedience. But there is more than this. Man is now by death absolutely set free from evil. He dies to sin. Death breaks his relation with evil, because the nature which can be in relation with evil no longer exists, at least if there is life. We have seen that Christ, although in the likeness of sinful flesh, never for a moment admitted sin into His being; but death ended, and ended for us, all relation with the scene where sin

exists, with all this sphere of existence, and ends it in Christ in a life which is holy. Christ dies, and we die in Him by the power of a life which is divine.

Besides this, perfect love has been manifested, and when man rejected it, it did not weaken, but it accomplished, the work necessary for the reconciliation of those who were enemies. Good, love, God shewed Himself superior to evil, in such sort that, in the act in which the hatred of man against God was fully manifested, in which the iniquity of man's heart came to its height, the love of God in Christ triumphs in the act which sin, come to its height, accomplishes. It is the death of Christ. The greatest sin of the world is (on the part of God and of Christ, who offers Himself as a sacrifice for sin) the propitiation made for sin.

Thus, for the one who is in Christ, for the believer, the sin of the old nature is entirely blotted out, and he lives as raised in Jesus—in a new life in relationship with God. What wisdom of God! We are dead to sin by the act which manifested this sin in the highest degree; and the love of God is declared in that which is the expression of man's hatred. And observe, is it in permitting evil? No; the just judgment of God is also manifested. If His Son takes sin upon Himself, if He is made sin for us, He must suffer. The justice of God is executed against sin in His Person, and grace reigns through righteousness magnified in Christ. If evil has ripened and borne all its fruits, good has triumphed with a divine perfection. All blessing and all glory are but the effect of this work, the moral centre of all the relations of God with man in judgment and in grace.

It remains for us to trace its fruit in the ways of God.

The death of Christ had fully glorified God and shewn His love. It had glorified Him in the obedience of man, had glorified Him in respect of His righteousness, and in the judgment pronounced against sin, in respect of His holy wrath against sin. And at the same time the perfect love of God had been shewn in it by the gift of His Son, His only-begotten, for poor sinners, given to bear the sins of all those who shall believe on Him to the end.

What then are the effects of this work and of this love, free now to exercise itself, because what glorified love exalts righteousness?

In the first place, Christ raised by the glory of the Father, all that is in the glory of the Father (that is, the revelation of His nature, love, righteousness, the relation of the Father with Christ as Son, His good pleasure in the life of the Saviour down here, His satisfaction in that He had glorified Him, and rendered the accomplishment of His counsels morally possible, and in particular the glory of His own among the children of men), all that was in the heart of the Father, answered to the excellence of the One who lay in the tomb—was engaged in the resurrection of the Son of man. The first-fruits of the power of God in answer to this work, in which good triumphed at the expense of Christ, is the resurrection of Christ. Here, as we have already seen, an entirely new position is taken by man; yes, entirely new. Death is left behind. Sin, so far as separating us from God, exists no longer. The divine life is the life of man. Righteousness is manifested in the acceptance of man, not in his condemnation. And man subsists, not in the weakness of his own responsibility and mortal, but as the fruit of the power of God who has been already glorified in respect of His righteousness.

We are speaking in an abstract manner of the position. In applying some of these expressions to Christ, it would naturally be necessary to modify them. Christ has acquired this position for us: we enjoy it as a new position. He is in it Himself; the divine life was always in Him. When in responsibility He was not weak. He was, even in the flesh, born of God. At the same time His own position was very different from what it now is. He was, before His death, in the likeness of sinful flesh; He was not in it after His resurrection. He lived in flesh and blood before His death, He did not live in them after His resurrection. He has been really dead, although it was impossible that death should hold Him; now He dieth no more. He is the first who entered into the position He has gained for His own. Now that the Holy Spirit has been given to us, this position, and even the glory, are already the portion of those who believe in Him by faith, and by the possession of divine life and of the Spirit. As to the actual fact, we are still in our mortal bodies.

But although the resurrection placed the Saviour, and us in Him, in a position which is the fruit of the power of God, not of the responsibility of man, and which at the same time, by virtue of the work of Christ, is the result of the exercise of the righteousness of God; and although Christ was thus declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, this did not constitute the whole result, even as to His Person. He must needs be glorified to immediate nearness to God, and glorified with the glory of God. Wonderful fact! transcendent divine righteousness! a man is in the glory of God—is seated at the right hand of God on His throne.

In placing Himself there Christ takes personally the place which was due to Him according to the value of

His work on earth. “Now is the Son of man glorified” (morally in accomplishing the work on the cross), “and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.” “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” That which Christ demanded He received. The words, “Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” place the Lord at the right hand of God to execute the judgment that will put an end to evil. Looked at as entered into the glory of the Father, Christ makes sure to those who know Him there all the fulness of blessing which is connected with it.

But here we have an immense fact: a man, the Son of man, is seated at the right hand of God in the divine glory.

We may, before pursuing the consideration of the consequences, verify the bearing of this fact. On the one hand we see the first Adam, responsible, fallen, and in sin; afterwards the law and judgment; on the other we see the Son of God, the supreme God, come down from heaven and become man in grace, and, after having manifested the perfect grace of God toward man (grace much more abounding where sin abounded), and, after having accomplished the work of propitiation for sin and glorified God with regard to the position in which man was found, ascend, according to the righteousness of God by virtue of this accomplished work, to the right hand of God, so that man is placed in the glory of God. On the one hand it is the responsibility of man and judgment; on the other the grace of God, the work of

God, salvation and glory, the righteousness of God for us as well as His love, and this righteousness of God ours also, by virtue of the work of Christ.

Hereupon the door is opened to every sinner, and God (by virtue of the blood of Christ, which has glorified His love,92 His righteousness, His truth, His majesty, all that He is) can receive him to Himself.

Man has entered into His place in glory according to the counsels of God, to be the head of everything that exists. (Psa. 8:3-7; 1 Cor. 15:25-27; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 2:5-9.) Compare Colossians 1:15, etc. There is the truth in its full largeness. Christ, as man, is established head of all things in heaven and earth. In this respect the first Adam was only a figure of the last. At the same time, as for the first Adam there was a help who was like himself; it is the same with Christ. Eve did not form part of the inferior creation of which Adam was lord. Neither was she lord; she was the spouse and companion of Adam in the same nature and the same glory. It will be thus with the church when Christ shall take the dominion over all things into His hands. Compare Ephesians 5:25-27, and the passages already cited. But at the present time He is seated at the right hand of God, and His enemies are not yet subjected to Him. But it remains to point out the various parts of the dominion He will exercise. The angels (1 Pet. 3:22) are made subject to Him. (Compare Eph. 1:10.) But His dominion must also be extended over the earth.

Now this dominion over the earth is subdivided with respect to the human race. The Jews are to be subjected to Him, and the Gentiles also. King of the Jews is His indefectible title; He must also reign over the nations,

and in Him shall the Gentiles trust. Every creature is also subjected to Him (see the passages referred to); they sigh after His reign; Rom. 8:21. At the same time all judgment is committed to the Son, because He is the Son of man; John 5:27. He has power over all flesh (John 17:2), and judgment is committed to Him, that all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. In this judgment there is the judgment of the living and the judgment of the dead. The first connects itself with the government of God on the earth, while at the same time it is final as far as individuals are concerned. The other is the boundary of all the revealed ways of God, when the secrets of heart of all the wicked, when their hidden motives, shall be brought into light.

Then the man Christ, when He shall have subjected all things, and set all in order, will yield up (1 Cor. 15) the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all. The yielding up the kingdom makes no change in His divinity, be it carefully observed. Man up to that time had possessed the kingdom according to the counsels of God. This mediatorial kingdom comes to an end. Christ is neither more nor less God. He was God on the earth and in His humiliation. He will be so in the glory of the kingdom which He will hold as man. He will be so when, as man, He shall be subject unto God, the firstborn eternally among many brethren, in the joy of the family of men eternally blest before God.

Some remarks remain to be made concerning the ways of God, which are destined to bring in this blessed result and to establish the mediatorial glory of the Christ.

During the time that the Saviour is seated at the right hand of God, God gathers the church by the action of the

Holy Ghost on earth. The glad tidings of grace are announced in the world in order to convince the world of sin, and in particular of sin in that it has rejected the Son of God; John 16:7-9. It is not the tidings that sin is forgiven, and that this has to be believed; but that the world lies in wickedness, the grand proof of which is that it has rejected the Son of God, and at the same time that the blood is on the mercy-seat, and that all men are invited to come to God who will receive them according to the value that blood has in His eyes. (1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:20; Col. 1:23; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; 1 Cor. 15:3, and a host of passages.) But other precious truths proceed from this descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven. Observe that He comes in virtue of the fact that Christ has gone up to heaven; John 16:7. Divine righteousness is exercised and manifested in that man (Christ), who is at the right hand of God because of His having glorified God and of a perfect propitiation having been made for sin; John 13:31, 32; ch. 17:4, 5; Phil. 2:8, 9.

Now He glorified God by His work, accomplished for those who believe in Him. The Holy Ghost then descends on those who already believed in Him (John 7:39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1 and 2), and announces through their means this glorious salvation; announces to all men that the blood is on the mercy-seat, and invites them to draw near. But, besides that, He gives, as dwelling in the believer, the assurance that all his sins have been borne by Christ (1 Pet. 2:24), and are blotted out for ever (Rev. 1:5; Heb. 1:3, and other passages); that he, the believer, is made the righteousness of God in Christ; 2 Cor. 5:21. For the righteousness of God must accept and glorify the believer: otherwise the work of Christ has been done in

vain, and God's righteousness is not put in exercise with respect to it; God does not recognize the value of this work, does not render to Christ that which He in every way deserved, which is absolutely impossible. Next, the Holy Ghost is in the believer, the seal for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30), that is to say, for his entering actually into the glory of Christ; then He gives to the one in whom He dwells the consciousness that he is with Christ, in Christ, and Christ in him (John 14:16-20); that he is the child of God, and His heir, joint-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:16,17; Gal. 4:5-9); finally, He takes of the things of Christ, and shews them to him, while leading him through the wilderness by the path that leads to the glory; Rom. 8:14.

All that is for the individual. But there is only one Spirit in all believers, and He unites them all to Christ, and consequently all together as one body (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:13, etc.), the body of Christ, head (as we have seen) over all things. It is the church united to Christ, His body, and Christians members of Christ and one of another, the bride of the Lamb; Eph. 5:25, etc. The Holy Spirit thus causes her to wait for her Bridegroom, for the marriage of the Lamb; Rev. 22:17; ch. 19. But this can only be in heaven. Believers, by the Spirit, are there already (Eph. 2:6; Phil. 3:21, 22), united by Him to the One who is there, having a heavenly calling, and detached from the world in order to look on high. Thus they go up to meet Christ in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-17); Christ who has come to take them according to His promise, changing or raising them, and in order to have them with Him in His Father's house, where He Himself is; John 14:2. Thus they are for ever with the Lord; 1 Thess. 4:17. Believers who have suffered are children93

of the Father in the glory, and together form the bride and body of Christ.

This does not establish the kingdom, but gathers the coheirs who are to reign with Christ, and gives their place to them with Him, infinitely above all reign (whatever it be) over the earth; although the latter be the necessary, blessed, and glorious consequence of it. Satan is cast out of heaven, where he will never again enter; Rev. 12:12; ch. 16:13,14; ch. 18:13, 14; ch. 19:18, etc. Afterwards the saints return with Christ (Rev. 19; Col. 3:4; Jude 14; Zech. 14:5), and the power of the enemy is destroyed on the earth set free from evil; Satan cast into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3)—not yet into the lake of fire—is no longer the prince of this world. Even the angels no longer govern it as administrators on God's behalf. Christ and those who are His own—man is established according to the counsels of God (Psa. 8; referred to in 1 Cor. 15; Eph. 1; Heb. 2) over all things, over all the works of God's hands. (Compare Col. 1:16-20.) Christ appears in glory, the saints also appear with Him. (Compare John 17:22, 23.) It is the kingdom of God established in power. (Compare Matt. 16:28, and ch. 17; Mark 9; Luke 9.) Righteousness reigns, and men, the world, are in peace; Eph. 1:10. There is in this state of things, fruit of the reign of Christ, the realization of all that the prophets have spoken of peace and blessing on the earth. Blessed time, in which war and oppression shall entirely cease, and in which all shall enjoy the fruits of God's goodness, without passions inflamed by the enemy impelling men to snatch from each other the objects of their lusts. Christ will maintain the blessing of all; if evil appear, it will be at once judged and banished from the earth.

Some accessory facts have to find their place here. The kingdom of the Son of David is to be established. All the promises of God with regard to Israel shall be accomplished in favour of that people; the law being written on their hearts, the grace and power of God shall accomplish the blessing of the people, blessing which they could not obtain when it depended on their faithfulness, and when they were placed on the principle of their own responsibility. At the same time the dominion over the Gentiles will be in the hands of the Lord, while they will be subordinate to Israel, the supreme people on the earth. Thus all things will be gathered together under a single head—Christ: angels, principalities, the church in heaven, Israel, the Gentiles, and Satan will be bound.

But before the introduction of this universal blessing, the wicked one will be in open and public rebellion against God. The Jews will be joined to him, at least the great majority of the people, and the Gentiles will gather themselves together against God. This rebellion will bring in a time of extraordinary tribulation on the land of Judah, and in general there will be a temptation which shall put to the proof all the Gentiles. But the testimony of God will go throughout the world, and the judgment will come, and will be executed upon the apostates from among Christians, upon the rebellious Jews, and upon all nations which shall have rejected God’s testimony. This will be the judgment of the quick, the first resurrection having already taken place. The fulness of times begins at this period.

A few words will complete our sketch. Satan will be loosed from the abyss, after the inhabitants of the earth have long enjoyed the repose and blessing of the reign

of Christ, and have seen His glory. When the temptation shall come, those who are not vitally united to Christ fall; and Satan leads the world against the seat of God's glory on the earth (Jerusalem) and against all those who are faithful to the Lord. But those who follow him are destroyed.

Then comes the judgment of the dead and the eternal state.

There is a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness. The kingdom having been delivered up to God the Father, Christ, who will have already subjected all things, is Himself subjected as man: a truth so precious for us, because He remains eternally the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover I do not think that the church loses its place as the bride of Christ and the habitation of God. (See Eph. 3; Rev. 21.) The kingdom only, the existence of which supposed evil to be subjugated, will have an end.

All things will be made new, and God will be all in all. We shall enjoy Him in perfect blessedness, and we shall know Him according to the perfection of His ways already developed in the history of humanity. His Son will be the eternal expression of His thoughts, and the First among those who are eternally blessed through His means—blessing founded on the value of His blood, which never loses its worth in the constantly fresh remembrance of the blessed.

92 If God had forgiven all without propitiation, it would have been to shew Himself indifferent to sin. If He had simply condemned all sinners, He would not have manifested His love. By the death of Christ righteousness is glorified, perfect love exercised, the

immutable truth of God proved. The wages of sin were there; and the divine majesty was maintained in the highest degree.

93 See (Eph. 1) the precious instruction of the word on the whole of this subject. Christians, in relationship as Christ Himself is to His God and Father (compare John 20:17), are like God spiritually, and His sons, inasmuch as He is the Father; then heirs of all things; then the body of Christ.

Familiar Conversations On Romanism

First Conversation Faith Is In God And His Word, Not In The Church

N*. Well, James, I hear you have been visited by some Roman Catholics, and are in some perplexity.

James. I have, and they spoke very fair; and I cannot deny that I do not see clear. Christ surely left a church on earth, and some authority to guide us poor people, and instruct us in the right way. It is a great comfort to feel assured that one is of the true church that Christ founded. And, after I had been reflecting awhile on what they said, I began to feel that I have got no proof that the Bible is the word of God.

N*. And did you ever doubt it before, James?

James. No, I cannot say I did; I have always believed it to be the word of God; and, though I am afraid I have sadly neglected it many a year, still I, and my wife more than myself, used to find comfort in it; and the children too used to read a chapter when they came from school; and I think it used to do us all good, and bring God home to us somehow, and keep our consciences alive; and the children took wonderfully to beautiful histories that are in it, and so indeed did we, and it made our home happy. There was only Jem that paid no heed to it; and he was an unruly boy: I have had a deal of trouble with him. But, since I have got more serious and anxious in my mind, I have found the Bible bring trouble into my conscience. I hardly know where I am with God—it condemns me: I see there is goodness and wonderful grace in Jesus; but then I have no peace in myself, and

now I see there is a deal I do not understand, and I should like to know the bottom of it.

Bill M. (my neighbour, who has turned Catholic), says he has never been so happy in his life, his soul never got rest till now. He never thought much about religion, it is true, and those ladies that visit were wonderfully kind when his lass was sick; but he says he knows some who never get a minute's rest in their souls, that were always seeking it, till they found it in the true church. It was he that asked me how I knew it was the Bible; and if the true church had not kept the Bible and given it, who could say it was the word of God? and how did I, an ignorant man, know it was the word of God, as I called it? And that has dashed me uncommonly, because, though I never doubted it a moment before, and saw in infidels that there was no good nor godliness in their ways, yet I felt I had no proof to give, and what am I to do? I know it speaks of a church that Christ would build on the rock, and I think if that would give me certainty it would be a great rest to me. But my Mary says she could not think of such a thing; that she could no more doubt it to be the word of God than that the sun shines, and less, if that were possible: that there is more light and comfort to her soul in the Bible than there is light for her eyes and warmth in the sun. And she is a rare wife to me, and I see she has great sense in the things of God, and is a comfort in the house, and wonderful to the children— very civil to those black ladies that visit, but shy of them and of the way they try to get into the family.

I do not think that I doubt at bottom that it is the word of God; my conscience and my heart too, I think, make me feel it is. But since this talk with Bill M. my mind is

all in perplexity, and I feel I have no proof it is the word of God: and just because I have begun to be anxious about it, and about my soul, I should like to have something certain to rest upon. You will forgive, I am sure, sir, my saying everything, and telling you all that is in my mind, because I have known you so long and your kindness, and I am in perplexity, and, to say the truth, glad to open my mind to some one I can trust, though I do not rightly know what to trust now. I thought I could entirely trust the word of God, and what am I to do now? You will excuse me.

N*. I am very much obliged to you, James, for telling me what was passing in your mind, and grateful for the confidence you have shewn me, and thankful to God that He disposed your heart to do so, and we could not do better than take up the subject: there cannot be a more important one. The faith, or, to speak more truly, Christ, is everything for us poor sinners, and we do want some sure ground on which to believe. Our faith must be a divine faith, in its nature and source, as well as in the things which it reveals; and for a divine faith we must have divine testimony. But there is, in what you say, one thing which strikes me much, namely, that your Roman Catholic friends have only led you to doubt of the authority of the scriptures, which yet they believe to be divine, or they are infidels themselves. They have not ventured to say the scriptures are not divine: that would be infidelity, and, as far as man went, straightforward infidelity; but they have sought to make you doubt of the certainty of their being divine. This may be all very well to bring you under their influence, and to make you believe that they only can give you this certainty; but I confess that I do not see the honesty of making you

uncertain as to the authority of the scriptures, when they own that authority themselves.

James. That is true. If they do believe they are the word of God, I do not see why they should seek to make me doubt as to how I can be sure of it.

N*. Just so; and in respect of such a matter as the word of God, it is something approaching to blasphemy. It is saying, that when God has spoken to men, His word has no certain authority of itself over their consciences. They deprive your soul of certainty in the word of God on one side, and they deprive the word of God of its authority over your soul on the other. This, I must say, seems to me a wicked course, seeing they do not dare to say it is not the word of God. Now an upright heart can very often judge of a thing by the conscience, when it is quite unable to meet argument. These men seek, as to what they believe is the word of God, and which they believe ought to exercise authority over your conscience, to make you doubt whether you have any proof whereby you may know it to be such when you read it. Is not this the course your infidel acquaintance took with you? Only they took it openly.

James. Well, it is just the same.

N*. The word of God, James, carries its own authority in the heart of him in whom it has wrought. And, mark this, if it has not wrought in a man's heart, though all the churches in the world should accredit him, that man is lost. If they believe it to be the word of God, why not take it and see what it says? They dare not: it is too plain, it condemns their whole system. For instance, you know that it is said, "Where remission of these (sins and iniquities) is, there is no more offering for sin" (Heb.

10:13). Now their whole system depends upon there being still offerings for sin. The very way a Roman Catholic is described is—he goes to Mass. Now the Mass is an offering for the sins of the living and the dead. And when the word says there is no more offering for sin, and the most important distinctive point in their doctrine, and the keystone of the system they belong to, is, that there is still an offering for sin3 it is easy to understand why they try to shake your confidence in the word, or to make you think that you cannot understand it. It is because it is very plain indeed, for the poorest, that they do not like it.

You are a poor man, but it does not require much learning to understand that the declaration that “there is no more offering for sin” upsets a system which is built upon offering one continually. They may quote Fathers of all names to prove that there ought to be one, or that there was one; but, if the word of God has authority, they cannot say there is one according to the authority of God. There is a kind of learning, James, learning such as your wife has, being taught of God—a learning from Him according to the promise of that word, the only learning that saves—which gives a weight and power to the truth I am referring to, which all the sophistry of Romanists or infidels cannot shake—I mean the knowledge of the unchangeable value of the one offering of Christ, offered once for all. A man taught of God knows that it is in force for ever, that it gives peace to the conscience, that Christ suffered agonies in accomplishing our salvation in that offering; and that, as is expressly said, if it had to be repeated, Christ must - suffer repeatedly j that if it be an offering wherein Christ does not suffer—an offering wherein He does not shed

His blood—it is an utterly worthless sacrifice—a base pretension to be an offering—a mockery, really, of the solemn truth of the sufferings and agonies of the Son of God for us.

It is said (Heb. 9:25), “Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place with blood of others, for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And, as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” Mark the words “once” and “bear the sins.” Does Christ bear sins in the Roman Catholic Mass? If not, it is a new way of getting forgiveness, which sets aside the unspeakably gracious but heart-bowing way in which God has wrought salvation out for us, namely, the dreadful but infinitely precious sufferings of His own Son. If Christ does suffer in the Mass, He is not glorified at the right hand of God. True Christianity and the doctrine of the Mass cannot go together. And the more you examine chapters 9 and 10 of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the more you will see how the truth of God is set aside by the Mass. For the apostle is shewing the value of Christ’s offering because it was only once, in contrast with the Jewish offerings which were repeated. Those offerings, he says, were a remembrance of sins, brought them to mind; the sins were still there, or why would the offerings for sin not have ceased to be offered? But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God. And then mark, he shews how we know it: “Whereof also the Holy Ghost is a witness to us … their sins and iniquities

will I remember no more." And note, how blessedly this chapter presents it to us. First, the will of God giving His Son, instead of all these useless sacrifices which could never take away sins. Thus I see His thoughts and love. Then, again, the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Thus I see (not only Christ willing, in the same love, to come, but) the needed work actually accomplished. And lastly, the Holy Ghost bearing witness about it. I have the divine will and thoughts, the divine work; and, that I may have divine faith about it, and peace in my soul through it, I have a divine testimony about it.

And note, James, that this testimony is the written word of God; that is, he quotes a passage of scripture as the witness which the Holy Ghost has given. Now that is what as a poor sinner I want, and which I get only by this truth—the efficacy of this one offering testified of by the Holy Ghost Himself. And that is the reason I said that one taught of God knows it with a certainty and blessing which Romanists and infidels cannot shake. And no man that possessed this would, for a moment, think of giving up the divinely-witnessed and known efficacy of the sacrifice by Christ of Himself, once for all, for the vain profitless repetition of it [sacrifice] where Christ does not nor can offer Himself, for He is at the right hand of God, where He does not suffer or bear sin, for this He cannot do now He is in glory.

And note, this repetition of it, if I admit it, denies the lasting, perfect, efficacy of the offering He Himself made. For if it be lasting and perfect, why repeat it? My objection to the Roman Catholic system on this head is that it is built on a pretended offering which Christ does not offer, in which no blood is shed, in which Christ does

not suffer, in which Christ does not bear sins, which is therefore utterly worthless; but which, by the pretension to offer Christ again, denies the abiding efficacy of Christ's one real offering of Himself. What a fraud of Satan's, to be sure, it is!

James. But then do we not commit sins (not only after Christ has died, but even) after we come to have part in the sacrifice of Christ?

N*. Surely we may; but scripture does not speak of the repetition of Christ's sacrifice for that: this was once for all. His blood cannot be shed again, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. It was not our sins up to a certain day which Christ bore, if indeed we have part in that sacrifice. God knows all beforehand the same as at the time, and we had committed none of our sins when Christ died for them: so that it is not the time when they were committed that makes the difference, save that they are worse when we have Christian light and life. Do not think that I count them slight; but we must not confound the efficacious work done about our sins, which was done once for all, and that work of grace and of God's Spirit in the heart which produces in us right thoughts and feelings about our sins and brings us into communion with God. The remedy practically, as to our hearts, if we do sin, is not a new sacrifice, for a new sacrifice to put them away is impossible; but, "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." Christ is our righteousness, and this and the worth of His propitiation remain always before God; and when we fail, in which we never can excuse ourselves, Christ intercedes for us, and the Spirit of God makes us feel the sin, and we are humbled and contrite, and thus

Christ restores our souls, and we are again in communion with God. It is beautifully pictured, let me add, by that blessed expression of the Saviour's condescension and love in washing the disciples' feet. He that is washed—truly born of God—needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. God may use His written word, or a sermon, or the warning of a friend, as means—but it is the work of Christ's grace in the soul.

James. Well, I feel greatly comforted by what you say, but all is not clear to my mind yet; still this grace of Jesus Christ does give rest to one's spirit, and makes one think of Him and of God's goodness and of His love to poor sinners like me; so that one likes to think of Him. Besides, I think it takes hardness and pride out of one's heart, and puts away bad thoughts, and makes one love other people too, whoever they may be.

N*. It does, James. It gives rest, and does what you have spoken of—sheds the love of God abroad in the heart, and purifies the heart by faith. It is a blessed thing to think that God commends His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

James. Yes, that is a comfort, and I like to think of it better than of my doubts. Still, sir, you will forgive me, but they come back like a chill on my heart; and, as I said, I am not clear yet, for if I might take a wrong meaning out of the scriptures, and I feel I am very ignorant, I mean no offence to you, sir, but one wants something sure for one's soul.

N*. All right, James; I have not forgotten our subject. You only make me feel more keenly the wickedness of those who seek to cast a doubt into the mind of a poor

man, poor or rich either, as to the purity and source of these blessed wells of salvation, so that he is half afraid there may be poison in them, or that at any rate they do not suit him, while they know, or (at any rate) profess all the time to believe, that they are divinely given, and divine well-springs of health. I will treat this point in a direct manner by and bye, but you will let me, I am sure, pursue the subject in my own manner. It is well, you know, when a person is disposed to take a step, say to go into a house or a farm, to know what the house or the farm is. He is warned at any rate. All well that he should inquire afterwards what authority there is for what he has heard, and take care there is a title.

James. Ay, that is true. Go on, sir, as you think best. I shall listen, and I have heard what you have said gladly.

N*. I shall say a few words more about the Mass. You are aware that the church, as they call it, does not permit the laity to partake of the cup.

James. Don’t they! Why not?

N*. Well, it is for them to say why they change Christ’s ordinance, but it exalts the priest who does take the cup. They allege the danger of a drop of what they declare to be really the blood of Christ falling to the ground; though it would be hard to tell why there is more danger of this with the layman than with the priest. However such is their rule; laymen do not partake of the cup. They allege, to prove that they lose nothing, that the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ are in each species, that is, in each part—in the bread by itself, and the wine by itself; they call this the doctrine of concomitancy. Never mind the hard words; the sense is that the bread is a complete Christ, no longer bread at

all, and nothing else but Christ, save in appearance. But see how the enemy has mocked them, for if the blood be in the body now, there is no redemption at all. Christ shed His blood to redeem and save us. Hence they were to drink as well as to eat.

I will not dwell on this, but what a pretension this is, that the priest, on pronouncing the formula— "This is my body," turns the bit of paste into God, or (as it is constantly expressed by themselves) the priest makes God; for this is the expression familiarly used among them when they have the courage to speak freely. Now I knew a very poor man in Ireland tell his neighbour, a staunch champion for his church, when he was arguing for this doctrine, that he was contending for what he did not believe; for if that was true, the priest could do what God could not do, for God could not make God. And this is true enough. A poor man, James, if taught of God, often hits right and wrong—truth and error—right on the head better than your learned men that make all kinds of fine distinctions. Nor would their distinctions serve here. They cannot say Christ comes into the bread as God was incarnate, because there the manhood was, and remained manhood; but, according to their doctrine, the bread does not remain at all. And therefore it is called transubstantiation; that is, the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of Christ, and the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ are all there. They make a Christ out of the bread—a whole Christ, divinity and all. It must indeed be a new Christ. You cannot change it into the Christ that is already.

James. But, dear me, can all this be true! Why, I knew nothing of all this. They did not speak of all this to me. The true church! well, it is well to know things. And yet,

sure enough, the Mass is the great thing with them. But I did not know what the Mass was; I thought it was the sacrament with them.

N*. Well, so it is. I shall, as I said, come to the question of the church's authority; but knowing what people teach is one very good way of knowing what authority they can have. They anxiously seek to puzzle you about the church, that, having fixed you on the ground of authority, you may receive everything they say without conscience, without personal responsibility, and without faith in God: for faith in a priest or in the church is not faith in God. You are to believe them, they say; yet if God has spoken by an apostle, you cannot believe that, nor understand it without them. I suppose they know better how to speak of divine things than the apostles and inspired writers did. But this is the point we have to speak of by and bye. Only remark this well, James, you are to believe them. You cannot understand what God has said, nor even believe He said it, without them. You must depend on them. Can they answer for you in the day of judgment?

James. No, of course they cannot. I should be sorry to trust them.

N*. Of course they cannot. Then do not depend on them now. You must answer for yourself without them before God. This is just as true now, though that day be not come, for it is for what you do now that you will have to answer. You are individually responsible. You must assure yourself that the ground you are standing on now will be a sure and solid one in that day. Another cannot do it for you: you are personally responsible. They cannot pretend to relieve you from this. They would

have you trust them blindly now, but they must abandon you when the real need comes, when you have to answer for yourself, and they for themselves.

James. That is true though.

N*. Surely it is true; but, mark, if you believe in Christ, and rest your soul on Him, He never will abandon you. If He who of God is made unto us righteousness is your righteousness now, He will be your righteousness when sitting on the throne, before which you have to appear.

James. Is this in scripture—that He is our righteousness?

N*. It is, James, in 1 Corinthians 1:30: “Of him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

James. Well, that relieves my heart, however, more than all I have heard. Christ our righteousness! why that changes everything, and makes a man love Him too; and He bore our sins to be so! I think I do see it. I understand why Mary is happy now, though I am not like her; and I am afraid I may not keep it as she does. Is there more like that? I know the Bible but too little, and then one heeds it, after all, so little, till one finds one really wants it.

N*. Well, James, as we are on this subject, and a blessed one it is, before our going on with the question of the true church, or Romish doctrines, I will refer to some of the passages you inquire about. You will remark in the one I quoted to you that it says, “Of him are ye”; that is, that these blessings belong to one who is a Christian at heart, one who in his soul (as a sinner who has need of Christ) believes in Him, a man whose conscience has been before God, in whom (as scripture speaks) there is

truth in the inward parts, who does not believe merely because he has been brought up in it, however sincerely, as far as that goes, he may have done so; but who has believed for himself, has come to Christ in his heart, because he wants Him. God will have realities, not notions, be they false or true. When the truth is really received, it is received in the heart and conscience. It convicts of sin, shews the heart to itself, and makes it know the need of the truths which, perhaps, it had learned before, perhaps had never heard of.

James. Yes, yes. I understand that. I have not, I am sure, felt my sins as I ought, but I know I am not right. I am uneasy, I know I am not right with God. That is what made me listen to what they said about the true church and the rest a man might get there; but I do not see, what I think ought to be, in those who go there either. I know I am a sinner. Whatever the Bible is, it has made me see that: sometimes angry with myself, sometimes (God forgive me!) almost angry with the Bible itself and Him that gave it; and yet I am ashamed of that, because it makes me see I am a sinner. I see I could not but be lost if I am judged as I am; yet I hope too it won't be so.

N*. A word about this rest, James. I do not deny that the Roman Catholic system gives rest to some persons. Suppose a child had been at mischief, and was uneasy, and some one was to appease its parent, or its master, and it was let off, or its schoolmaster was to pardon repeated faults which shewed a bad disposition, and not tell the parent: the child would be at ease, and have its conscience quiet, and think no more about it; but it would not have a purified conscience. A little penitence might be added to keep up appearances, but the evil would be unhealed. That is the church's absolution as

contrasted with God's pardon. It quiets the conscience, but it does not purge it. This will not do for God, nor for a soul in which true desires after Himself are awakened. The doctrine of absolution and the sacrament of penance is an unholy doctrine. It is professedly a means of having forgiveness where the heart has not attained to true contrition. This is the express doctrine of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, a work of absolute authority for all Roman Catholics. According to that the sacrament of penance is a less precarious and less difficult means of reconciliation and salvation than contrition, afforded by the Almighty by giving to the church the keys of the kingdom of heaven.86 Thus the conscience gets tranquillity without that true contrition which alone restores the soul to true communion with God. It is, in my judgment, a horribly wicked doctrine, to say nothing of its accompaniments connected with confession. The practical result is that thousands and thousands sin all the year, get cleared off by absolution for communion at Easter, and begin to sin again as soon as Easter is over.

James. But it is impossible an awakened soul, one that wanted really to be in communion with God, could be contented with such rest for his conscience as that; nay, he could not get any rest that way, because he knows he has to say to God, and God's presence awakens the sense of sin when he comes to it, and he cannot rest in his soul till his conscience is purged.

N*. Impossible, James, as you say: but many a natural conscience is uneasy that has never got into the presence of God, and such a fear may be quieted without God, as it was felt without Him. But what has made you feel that it is impossible for an awakened soul

which desires to be at peace with God to content itself with such rest as that?

James. Well, it is the word of God, I suppose, by His goodness, because it has made me see my sinfulness and want to have peace with God Himself.

N*. Then the word of God is true, James, and has power. It has proved itself true to your conscience, told you what you have done, and revealed God to you. It is God's word. It has shewn you to yourself in His sight, and revealed Him. And none could do that but God. You do not want it proved, you do not want it judged. It has judged you in revealing God to you, by His grace surely, but as His word.

James. That is true, I see it now. It has, by grace, power in itself.

N*. Just so. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." But a word more. There is another kind of rest a man may get. When he is not clear as to truth, and is harassed about it, when the truth has not power in his soul as known to himself, he would like to find it out, and be satisfied about it. And he cannot get clear, he is uneasy, and (instead of waiting humbly in the exercise of his own soul to be taught of God, so that his own heart, and soul, and conscience get established in the present truth), he rests through weariness upon authority; he does not know the truth himself in his inward parts, but takes whatever he is told as true. It is rest from the fatigue of his mind, but his soul has not the truth for itself at all. He does not believe for himself. Another (whom, out of weariness, he trusts to) has told him it is true, and he believes him.87 James. That I see. That is just where I was in danger of coming, sure

enough. But that is not having the truth from God at all; it is not having it. I feel I must have it for myself and in myself to have it really at all; but I was almost tired of the conflict, and, as I said to you, sir, they spoke fair, and I saw Bill M. had rest, and I had not, and I wanted to get sure ground for my soul, something certain. I can't say I have rest in my heart yet, but I am a deal lighter, and I see God is good, and I see that His word is the truth, and sure it must be so if it is His, and they don't deny that. So I have something I can surely trust in, and I can understand some of it plain enough. Not all, it is true; but maybe I will more in time. Mary herself does, a deal more than I do, but everything is clearer to me than it was.

N*. You cannot have real rest and peace of soul, James, till you really know Christ as your righteousness before God. The goodness of God makes light and hope shine in, by grace, on the soul; and confidence in Him and His goodness springs up in the heart, which is an immense matter. Still God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look at sin; and hence the conscience once in His presence feels it must be cleansed and forgiven, and find a righteousness which our sinful lives surely have not given us.

James. I know it is said the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin; and that, if a man's sins were as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. That comforts and encourages me, but I have not rightly peace by it. I am not quite sure it is for me: for I am a poor sinner after all. I find sin in myself still, and I think that troubles me more than my past sins.

N*. It always does when grace has wrought in the soul. You do quite right to judge it, and yourself for it. Sin becomes hateful to us if we are really born of God, and we are ashamed of ourselves for it. Nor can we ever excuse ourselves, and especially the true Christian, because the grace of Christ is sufficient for him to make him walk aright. But you will find, James, that power against sin will come when you know what it is to be cleansed from it. Not that it will not always require vigilance and prayer for grace; but, when your soul is in communion with the Lord through the peace He gives, you will find there the strength for victory, and for holding your evil nature in subjection. That communion gives happiness and strength. Hitherto you have been more learning your need of cleansing than the efficacy of Christ's blood for it: and that is all right, because, as we were seeing already, God will have realities, and have inward purification and judgment of sin along with peace with Himself, and so shews us the sin we have to be cleansed from. But now remember what we were referring to in Hebrews 9 and 10, how the blood of Christ purges the conscience.

James. Yes, yes, I see that more and more, and that it is done once for all on the cross, and cannot be repeated; I see, too, more how it applies; yet I cannot apply it entirely to myself.

N*. Well now, as God has brought you to see and judge your sin—though I am sure, as you know Christ better, this feeling will even deepen; but as He has brought you to repentance, I do fully trust—let me ask you, Is it from your righteousness or good deeds that you have to be cleansed?

James. Well, no; nor have I any either.

N*. Well, it is from your sins, then?

James. Yes.

N*. From those you have, or those you have not?

James. Why, from those I have, of course.

N*. What are those you are feeling, I trust hating too; are they not those you have?

James. To be sure, and I can say I hate them, any way. But they overcome me still, and sometimes I think I am worse than ever.

N*. All right, as I said, James, to judge yourself. God has shewn you the evil of sin. It must be so if we are brought into His presence in the light. But do you not see that those are the sins you have, for which Christ gave Himself that you might be cleansed in God's sight from them, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree? God has made you feel the guilt and unholiness of them. Now He shews you the full atonement for them, that in His sight the blood of Christ cleanses perfectly from them; that when God sees the blood, He cannot charge them on you, whom He has taught to trust in that blood, or your faith would be in vain. Thus He said to Israel in that solemn night when God went through Egypt to smite the firstborn, and commanded the blood to be put upon the lintel and the two doorposts. You remember that account in Exodus 12.

James. Yes, yes, the night of the passover.

N*. Well, God said then, "when / see the blood, I will pass over." Now, if a man had not believed God, he would not, of course, have had the refuge, and so it is

now with us: but so God now sees the blood of our true paschal lamb, and passes over. He cannot see the true Christian's sins as on him, because He sees the blood which has put them away for ever.

James. I see it all now. He gave Himself for my sins, and suffered agonies and wrath for them on the cross, that I may be clear from them. Well, it is blessed grace. To think—why one can't think as one ought of it—one is bought with a price, as it is said! I see why Mary is so happy, and no wonder. Why, how blind I was!

N*. And yet God has been gracious to you, James.

James. Ay, gracious to me, that He has. It is I that have to say so; but you will excuse my saying much more about it now, sir. It is too wonderful, and I hardly know how to get my heart to contain it all rightly; but I see it, and thank you, sir, too. Oh, it is all plain, and it is now I see that the word of God is true, and what a book that blessed book is. Yet I have all to learn in it. I did not just doubt it till they spoke to me, but it is a different thing when it is light in one's own soul. It convicted me before; but then I could hardly delight in its being true enough. It judged me, but now it is light to my soul.

N*. So the apostle John speaks, James: "He that beheveth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not hath made God a liar, because he beheveth not the record that God hath given concerning his Son." This last, you did not do, James, though you were in danger of it; but, as a system, Romanism and infidelity does. I say as a system, because I do not impute it to all the poor souls in the system, as if they did it wilfully. Now you have, as I fully trust, got the other part, the witness in yourself. You see what

forgiveness is, but you have yet to learn more fully what divine righteousness is—what it is to be made the righteousness of God in Christ. You will find that there is a fulness in the deliverance of which God has made you partaker, of which you are hardly yet quite aware. You see that there is a perfect forgiveness, and that the blood of Christ has blotted out all the wretched sinful fruits of your old nature; that He has borne your sins and died for you as a sinner, and that all that you are as such is done away by His death, in God's sight; for sin in the flesh has been condemned in the sacrifice He has made for sin, as well as sins atoned for. But, besides that, Christ is risen, and has taken a new place as an accepted Man, who as such is God the Father's delight, and this is your place before God. You are accepted in Him; as well as the sins of your old man, and all its guilt, put away. He has been raised again for our justification.

And this connects itself, you see, with a new life in us, the power of which has been displayed in His resurrection. It was divine power, no doubt, which was displayed in that, but in the way of the energy of life, and that life is made ours in Christ. We are quickened together with Him, and raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. We are made the righteousness of God in Him. This perhaps you cannot fully understand yet; but, as we were speaking of what is given to us in being justified through Christ, I have just mentioned it. It is fully opened out in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in the second chapter of that to the Ephesians, in the third of Colossians, and in the Epistle to the Galatians. You will find there that the fleshly religion, so largely now developed in Romanism, was what opposed Paul in his day; only his energy, through

the power of the Holy Ghost, kept it down. If you humbly study the word of God, looking to Him to help you, He will lead you on in these things. I now only just point them out to you.

A remarkable image of these truths is found in the history of the children of Israel, which may help you to understand what this deliverance is which I speak of. When God passed through Egypt in judgment, the blood on the doorposts protected them against that judgment, and most blessed it was; but Israel was still in Egypt. But when they arrived at the Red Sea, God said by Moses: “Stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah.” Then Israel, as you remember, passed through the Red Sea dry-shod, and got out of Egypt, and into an entirely new position: as a people accepted of God, having a great deal to learn, but with God, and all their former state behind them. So it is not all, that the precious blood of Christ protects us, as the Lamb slain for us, from the righteous judgment of God; but His death and resurrection bring us into a new place, accepted before God in Him, who is risen up from among the dead after having paid the wages of sin for us. But I must leave you, James, thankful that you see that Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. You can rejoice with your dear wife: it will be a cheer to her, and lead your children on. A poor man is the happiest being on the earth when he has the Lord with him in his peaceful, if humble, home. It is not that you will not find questions and difficulties arise in your mind, and temptations to overcome, and sin to resist; the Lord has warned us it will be so—but we have One to go to, whom you, as I trust, now know for yourself, James.

We have, what is a less pleasant part of our intercourse (but may be useful as you are circumstanced), your questions with Bill M. to settle about Romanist views, and I will try and see you again.

James. Thank you, sir, I shall be glad to see you. I am right glad to have seen you to-day, and I do not mind so much about those questions now, but it is as well to look into them, as I meet some of them often. I do not understand all you said about righteousness, but I see that it is there in the word, and that Israel was not only spared in the judgment but got into a new place with God. But my heart has not got in itself into it yet.

N*. Well, good-bye. Search the word, James, now your heart is in it. It strengthens the heart, and it keeps the conscience alive. A dull conscience is apt to be more or less a hardened one, and leaves the soul open to temptations and the assaults of the enemy. And pray continually to God, your Father in Christ, for grace to help and keep you. The Bible has been a blessing to you, even though you long had no divine light on it, James. I often think it is like the fire that is laid, but not lit. The truths it contains cannot take effect till grace puts the fire to them; but the truth, divine truth, is there to be kindled, any way, though it may be increased condemnation if a man give no heed to what God has said. So Paul speaks to Timothy, speaking of the safeguard in the last days, “that from a child thou hast known the scriptures.” God bless you, James; I hope to see you again, James. Farewell, sir.

Second Conversation The Forgiveness Of Sins: Purgatory

N*. Good day, James.

James. Good day, sir.

N*. Well, James, I am come to continue our inquiries into the truth of Roman Catholic doctrines.

James. I am glad you are, sir, and much obliged to you. Bill M. has been here since, and angry at my being so sure of the Bible being the word of God, and that I am so happy because I see that God has forgiven me, and that I have found salvation in Christ. He says I am turned fanatic, and that my head is turned, and what not. It tried me a little, but I know I am happy, and my wife helped me. And it was only what he had said to me before. And when I turned to scripture, it came to me just with light and power; it was like another book to me; so I was not shaken really. If a man sees the sun, it is hard to persuade him he does not see it, though he cannot explain to another how he comes to see it, only that God gave him eyes; but I should like to hear something more about the church, for that is what he always comes down upon. I expect he will be here to-night, and perhaps, if it is not too much to ask, you would have some conversation with him about it. My woman would be glad to hear, too, if you have no objection.

N*. Not the least; we will wait to speak of the church and authority till M. comes. I am glad he will be here, we can have our questions fully out. We will take however Roman Catholic doctrines from their own authoritative sources, which is still better. However he can recall any point I might forget, which will be an advantage. As to their arguments, I have Milner's "End of Controversy," which I know is distributed largely in cheap editions, so that I suppose we shall have the best

arguments which they have to produce. Meanwhile there is a point I can touch on (for which we had not time the other day), I mean purgatory, because it is directly connected with the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, which gave you, through grace, such comfort the last time I saw you. The Romanists teach that there are two kinds of sins, mortal and venial. The first, they say, deprives the soul of sanctifying grace (that is, the grace that makes us friends of God), and deserves hell: venial sin does not deprive us of this. It does not, spiritually speaking, kill the soul, so their catechisms speak. The Council of Trent declares that the grace of justification is lost by mortal sin. Venial sin however, according to the same authority, does not exclude from grace, but by mortal sins men are sons of wrath and enemies of God. They say that if a man dies in mortal sin he goes to hell, but if he dies in venial sin he goes to purgatory; or if his mortal sin has been forgiven, and he is again justified by penance, he may go to purgatory to satisfy for the penalties that may remain after forgiveness.

James. What is purgatory?

N*. They are very shy indeed of saying what it is. Our friend, Dr. Milner, says, "All which is necessary to be believed on that subject is, there is a purgatory, and the souls detained there are helped by tb.e prayers of the faithful, and particularly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar." This is the same as the Council of Trent. Only they anathematize any one who denies that, after men are freed from the eternal penalty of their sins, they have to satisfy in this world or in purgatory the temporal penalty to which they are liable for them. They do not tell us what it is, and forbid curious questions; only

there is, they say, a place of temporary punishment. In the Catechism of the Council of Trent, however, it is called the fire of purgatory, in which the souls of the just are cleansed by a temporary punishment.88 Those who get in must stay there till they have paid the very last farthing, for so they apply that text; yet their friends can help them to get out by prayers, alms, and particularly by the so-called sacrifice of the Mass. Now all this you can easily see (however little clear it may be) goes clean against the whole testimony of God as to the forgiveness of sins. They ground it in their reasonings on the impossibility of a soul suffering for a small sin as it would for murder. They put a person under vindictive temporal punishment, which does not purify, but satisfies God. They are always labouring to get people out; indulgences are used to spare people part of this temporal punishment due to sin, as they say, but "no one can ever be sure that he has gained the entire benefit of an indulgence, though he has performed all the conditions appointed for this end."89 How different is scripture. God does chasten for sin with a view to our holiness, even when we are perfectly forgiven—He, for our profit (it is said), that we may be partakers of His holiness. That, the heart assured of His goodness can easily believe, and bless Him for it. He speaks to us (as it is beautifully said) as unto children: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." It is also true that God governs, and shews sometimes His displeasure against sin in this world. And He has so ordered the world that he that sows to the flesh, of the flesh reaps corruption; but a vindictive penalty—when a man is not in the flesh at all, as to which God can be satisfied by the man's sufferings in this or another world, or by his friends' offerings, with

which no purifying is connected, but which serve merely to buy him off from God's hand, who will not let him go till the last farthing is paid—is a horrible blasphemy against the truth and grace of God. The scriptures do not teach us thus. What should you say, James, to the thought that, after God had forgiven you, and declared that He would remember your sins and iniquities no more, God was going to put you into the fire or some other horrible pain, till you paid Him the last farthing of these temporal penalties?

James. I never could think that.

N*. No one who knows God's truth could, James. It revolts every thought that God has given to us of His grace and of Himself.

James. But, then, what do you say to the murderer not being punished more than one who had committed a small fault?

N*. I say that if they turn to God through Christ, they are both washed clean, as white as snow, even if the sin was as scarlet. The whole argument, James, denies Christian truth. No person renewed in heart will call any fault small which comes from the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. We know that, if we are not redeemed and justified and born again, we are all children of wrath; that if we are, though we may be chastened for our profit, God imputes to us no sin at all, as Paul says in Romans 4, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin," quoting Psalm 32, because Christ has, for those who by grace are in Him, borne and satisfied perfectly for them all; that (Heb. 10) by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified; that, if they are really Christ's, they have a

new nature (Col. 3:10); that Christ Himself is their life (Col. 3; Gal. 2:20); and that, when we die, we are absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5); that God has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1). In a word, we believe in salvation through the work of Christ, and a new, divinely-given, nature. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin (1 John 1). God forgives and cleanses from all iniquity. It was when Christ had by Himself purged our sins that He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1). What do we want of a purgatory, if we are perfectly purged and cleansed, made (as scripture speaks) as white as snow! They would persuade us that God has given His Son for our sins, that He has borne them; and yet, that for those who die in grace, who are really in Christ, all whose sins Christ has borne, cleansing them in His precious blood—interceding for them in virtue of it if they have failed (1 John 2) —God has still a prison in order to punish them grievously for the very sins which Christ has borne, and that He will exact the last farthing of them!

James. That’s not Christianity, I’m sure, nor the God of the Bible.

N*. It is not, James: and what strikes me in all the doctrines of popery is that they deny the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ, His own grace. But a word as regards degrees of guilt. Even in eternal punishment scripture speaks of a difference, of few stripes and many stripes (Luke 12:46, 47); but that is in eternal punishment when Christ comes to judge, as you may see, verse 46; and they are all alike shut out from the presence of the blessed God, and that is what is infinitely dreadful; while, if through grace they have

been brought to repentance and faith in Christ, if they have really been made partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:3, 4), the Lord imputes no sin to them. The Romanist reasoning supposes that the sinner who is in grace has to answer for his own sins, and hence it makes the difference of great and small. Christianity teaches us that, if a man be in Christ, Christ is He who has answered for them, and that hence none is imputed to him at all. But he does look for purifying by the word of God in whatever details he may need it, and by chastening in the flesh when it is called for; but he has a new nature, and, if he dies and leaves this world of discipline, he will not have his body or flesh remaining at all. He departs and is with Christ; he falls asleep in Christ, Jesus receiving his spirit. He could not look on the God who has loved him, given His Son for him, justified him, cleansed him in Christ's blood, made him His own child, and declared He would never remember his sins, as a God who would after all put him into torment till he paid the last farthing.

James. That is true; I see plain enough it denies the very nature of Christianity, all it tells you of God and all the feelings it gives towards God for His love. Why the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost! I begin to feel it now, and see in the Bible that it belongs to the Christian; and there would be an utter end of that, if it was true that God was going, after saving us by Christ, to put us into prison till we had paid the last farthing. No: I believe Christ has paid the last farthing for me (blessed be His name), and that He ever lives to make intercession for me. I do not know what kind of a religion that is, but it is not real Christianity. Of this I am

sure; though I do not say good people may not be blinded by it.

N*. No: its character is not divine. Penances to satisfy an exacting God, purgatory if you do not do enough, multiplied rites and ceremonies to quiet the conscience without purifying it, no confidence in God as a God of love, no resting in thankful peace on the efficacy of Christ's work, no childlike confidence in a Father's goodness taking away fear; these are not the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ, nor their fruits. The system really sets aside grace, and puts us under the terror of an eternity which we are not fit to meet. It pretends that Christ's blood was shed to bring the Old Testament saints to paradise, but that the commandments are given for us to merit it by. Then there are ceremonies to eke out our failures; and, in spite of them all, and of a sacrament that is to wipe out the remains of sin90 (for so they say extreme unction does, which Christ's blood, however believed in, has not done of itself), we are to go to purgatory and finish the payment to a God who will have the last farthing. It is neither God come down to us in love (and this is what Christ really was on earth, and as to His love He surely is not changed), nor we reconciled to God by the death of His Son, which scripture says that we who believe are. Forgive me, James, if I speak earnestly and warmly when I think of the wrong done to God's love and to the efficacy of Christ's precious blood by it.

They can give a thousand cunning explanations about purgatory, which after all are but straw before the word of God; but the end is that the poor soul under this teaching needs, and feels it needs, purging in order to be with God. It does its best, is not purged; gets the

sacraments, is not purged; and then goes to purgatory, and God knows when it will get out. For see what a poor case it is after all. A man is absolved, has the viaticum, the benefit of Christ's sacrifice; afterwards he is anointed, which is declared to wipe away the remains of sin,91 and then after all goes to purgatory. What is that for? Not to purge him—for the remains of sin are wiped away (I use the terms of the Council of Trent92) by extreme unction: what does he go to purgatory for after that? The natural conscience feels it must be to purge the soul, not merely to satisfy a vindictive God; but, if it be, then the sacraments have not done it. And though they have had masses before which have not kept them out of this prison, and they get masses said to get them out when they are in, yet we never know when they will get out after all. They are helped, but we are not told (that is carefully avoided) whether the satisfaction is judicially received for the satisfaction of another: the offended judge is not bound to receive. It is probable it is; but they are only suffrages,93 not satisfaction necessarily applied.

And remark here, that it is with no view of benefit to the souls that are in purgatory that they are tormented. God does chasten men in this world (and to this Roman Catholics appeal); but we read, "he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness." God may bring in judgment, like the flood, or the perishing of the Israelites in the wilderness; but, in this last case, it is said, "As I live, saith Jehovah, all the earth shall be filled with my glory." It was His public government in this world vindicated. But Bellarmine says, the souls in purgatory are sure of their salvation, that death has wholly taken away the principle of sin in them, nor is the

purgatorial fire to correct evil habits that have been acquired. It is purely completing so much punishment imposed on them, satisfying a penalty. And for that they are in horrible torments, perhaps till the resurrection.94 James. Well, how can people be so blinded? For I cannot believe, if a soul is forgiven and purged, God could take pleasure in tormenting it; and if it is not purged, then their absolution, and sacrament, and unction are worth nothing after all. Purgatory and they cannot both be true, that is plain. Ah! when a man is in the blessed light, he sees clear, even if he be ignorant, because he knows the love of God and the value of the precious blood of Christ.

N*. Yes, James, he is taught of God; and what concerns his soul is as clear as daylight, ay, and what God is too, though he have much to learn. We have considered what purgatory is for the soul when compared with the truth of scripture; we will see the value of their proofs of it by and bye. In the meanwhile see how their doctrine of the intercession of the saints hides the. grace of Christ.

The word of God teaches us that the blessed Son of God came down to earth, and got, as scripture beautifully speaks, the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to him that is weary (Isa. 50:4). We are told that He was in all points tempted like as we are without sin; that we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but that, having suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb. 2:17, 18; chap. 4:15, 16): so that I can come boldly to a throne of grace to find mercy and grace to help in time of need; that if I sin, which I can never excuse, still I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for

our sins (1 John 2). Here then God teaches me I have a throne of grace to which I can come boldly, and a high priest who understands all my weakness and sorrows, and feels for me in them, and, if I have sinned, One who has made propitiation for the sin. Now that is all I want. It is holy ground to go on, for no sin is allowed at all, but it suits my heart and my wants. On the other hand, what does the intercession of the saints and Mary tell me? It says to me, No, you cannot come boldly to the throne of grace. Christ is too high, too glorious.95 He does not, and either will not or cannot feel for my wants and sorrows as others do. Mary has a more tender heart. The saints can enter better into my wants—are nearer to me. In vain has the Son of God become a man on purpose to know and to bear my sorrows, to assure me that He feels for me in tender love and compassion: others (if I am to believe the Romanist doctrine) are more suited to me. I must get them to go and move Him to love me and enter into my sorrows, and get what I want from Him for me.96 And if I have sinned, instead of trusting to His intercession who has made propitiation for me, I must get saints to do it, who never could nor ever have done it. Did they ever, when in the form of God, become a poor man for me? Did Mary ever do so, or shed her blood for me?—And see how it denies the grace of God. Is this getting saints to go because I dare not go, coming boldly to the throne of grace because it is a throne of grace? I had rather have the heart of Him who became a man of sorrows for me, and shed His blood for me, and is the one only high priest, than all the Marys and all the saints (blessed as they may be in their place) that ever were.

I speak with you, James, of the substance of these things, and compare the Roman Catholic system with the truth, with what Christianity is as given to us of God; because you have not lost it as given of God, but are rather come to it really in your heart, and thus can understand the difference. Romanism is not the Christianity of the scriptures at all, not God's Christianity: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

James. Thank you, sir, thank you. It does me good, and clears up many a point for me. It does make a wonderful difference when one knows there is such a thing as grace— knows God's grace ever so little, as shewn us in Christ. When one has learned to have confidence in God's goodness, one sees the whole system is false; that it is not grace; that man has to work and suffer to satisfy God. He may have sacraments to get grace and works to merit glory, but it is no God of grace that he has to do with.

N*. But they will not allow you, James, to have confidence in the love of God, or to be assured. They cite the words— "no man can know love or hatred by all that is before him," to prove that no Christian can be assured.

James. Well, I do not see, if a Christian believes that God gave His only-begotten Son for him when he was a poor sinner, to say nothing of His love being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, how he can doubt that God loves him. No doubt the grace of God must work in his heart to make him really think of it, or care for it, or believe it; but if it does, he must know God loves him, and he is bound to believe that the blood of Christ cleanses him from all sin.

N*. Surely he is, James, but this is formally denied by the Council of Trent,97 and every Roman Catholic.

James. I see it is impossible for a true believer to receive for a moment their doctrine. It denies the grace of God, and the real efficacy of Christ's work, so that His love is never known, and the soul has never true peace, and penances are put in the place of inward purity.

N*. That is the truth. Scripture tells us of divine love, and its sweet and blessed comfort known in the soul; of purity, inward purity, required, but communicated to us by a new life, by one being born of God, and enjoying the renewing of the Holy Ghost; of the perfect efficacy of Christ's sacrifice once for all, so that being justified by faith I have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord: and then of walking thus, through His continual grace, in the favour and fear of God, with the assurance that when I am absent from the body I shall be present with the Lord, and finally be glorified with Him. They tell me of meriting heaven by my works; of satisfying God for my sins (even if forgiven), of multiplied sacraments, and ceremonies, and penances, and, when I have done all, of going to hell or to purgatory. And if the blessed Son of God has died, it is only to give efficacy to the sacraments which leave me in this evil case after all. It is a poor kind of religion. They tell me I cannot be saved out of it—and yet, if I am in it, I cannot after all tell whether I am saved or not.98 Well, I do not believe that the God of grace meant to leave a man there. I believe He gave His Son that I might have peace in my soul, and be happy, according to His holy nature; not that I might remain ignorant after all of His love and of my own salvation. I read that the revelation of Christ was "to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the

remission of their sin"; and that peace by Jesus Christ was preached because He has made peace. And I see that Romanism deprives us of all the present blessing of the gospel altogether. But here, I suppose, is your neighbour.

James. Sit down, Bill. This is the gentleman I told you of. This, sir, is Bill M.

N*. Good day, M.

Bill M. Good day, sir.

N*. We have been talking of the true religion, M., and whether the Roman Catholic system is the true one. Hitherto we have mainly compared it with the substance of Christianity as it is set out in scripture for the comfort of us poor sinners. But it is all fair to hear what you have to say for the system which you have adopted and would persuade James to adopt, and I propose we should take Milner's "End of Controversy "as a kind of text-book, for it is largely circulated by zealous Romanists to win Protestants by to Romanism, and printed cheap by your friends, as giving the best possible account of their doctrine and overthrowing Protestantism.

Bill M. The church alone can judge of the truth, sir, and we must submit to her authority, or we shall never arrive at it.

N*. Well, but we are Christians, what you will call Protestants, professing to believe sincerely in Christ, and you must shew us the truth somehow. We do not, at any rate, yet own the Roman Catholic system to be the true church. Of course I do not conceal from you that I am very far from thinking it so. It will not do to say the church teaches so and so, when you have not yet shewn

us what is the true church; but I shall gladly hear all you have to say. You have sought to bring James here to turn Roman Catholic, saying you alone have the true church, and I have sought to guard him against it. You, or Dr. Milner himself, can tell us what that which you call the true church says on the points in controversy; but you cannot use the authority of the church to me before I believe that that to which you belong is so. Indeed, there would be another thing to prove, namely, that the church has authority to teach. I believe it has not, but that the apostles had, and subordinately, the ministry, those whom God has called to it, though these last not so as to be any rule of faith. I am quite ready to discuss the question of the church's authority: it is of all importance; but we cannot use it till we have it, and as your famous Dr. Milner has discussed the different points, we can see what your best authorities have to say. We will discuss the true church like all the rest.

Bill M. I do not know whether I ought to argue with you, because, till you submit to the authority of the true church, you cannot see the truth.

James. Well, but then you must confess you have nothing to say for your doctrines. You used to praise Milner's book, M., to me, and say nobody could answer it.

Bill M. When once the church has pronounced, I believe.

N*. You must first shew what is the church. But besides that, this is not receiving the truth yourself in the love of it. And if you think we are in such deadly error, and do not seek to convince us, you are answerable for our souls. Besides, it is not enough to shew me where the true church is (I believe I am in the true church these many years): I must have the truth of God for its own

sake. I beheve in the authority of the word of God, and one way of knowing whether that which calls itself a church is the true church is to know what it teaches. And when your doctors write books on these points, they do try to persuade us. They must, or we should not be persuaded; though, strange to say, they never give the holding of the truth of God as a mark of the true church.

Bill M. But you cannot tell what the true sense of the Bible is. There the church alone can guide you.

N*. I do not see, if I humbly depend on God's grace, why I cannot understand what Paul says as well as what Dr. Milner says; and if I cannot understand all scripture, I can see where it directly contradicts your doctrine. Besides you circulate Dr. Milner's book, and I suppose therefore I can understand him, and surely I must examine what his book says. You must think me capable of that; or am I to swallow all he, too, says as gospel without inquiry? If you are going to convince me by Dr. Milner's book, you must let me examine what it says. You have put the things before me, and I must examine them. I am surely not to beheve Dr. Milner as infallible. I am willing to take him as correctly representing what the church of Rome wishes to say; though as authority I must take the Council of Trent and what is called the Catechism of the Council of Trent. I do not wish now to discuss the true sense of the Bible, though I shall freely refer to it if needed, as you do not deny its authority, and I shall leave it to its own authority in the conscience. Nor can I swallow all manner of evil doctrines which you may have propounded to me by putting them in the gilded pill, "the church." If you are going to convert me to your system, I must know what it is. We were speaking of purgatory, and, if you please, we will finish

that subject, and then speak of the church, or rule of faith, or any other point you please: only you must let me speak plainly without being offended. I would not willingly hurt any man's feeling: it would be a sin to do so; but when we are discussing the truth, we must have the truth.

Bill M. Oh! to be sure. It is better to speak all plainly out. I shall not be offended.

N*. You will have no objection, then, to my taking Dr. Milner's "End of Controversy" as my guide in learning what Roman Catholic views are, as it has been given to so many for that purpose. This is the best and readiest way, even while referring to any other authority desirable. Allow me now to ask you what is purgatory?

Bill M. It is a place of punishment for venial sins, and for anything that remains of the temporal punishment of forgiven mortal sins, into which Christians dying in a state of grace go.

N*. Well, I suppose that is pretty correct. Dr. Milner says (Letter 43), "AH which is necessary to be believed by Catholics on this subject is contained in the following brief declaration of the Council of Trent: 'There is a purgatory, and the souls detained there are helped by the prayers of the faithful, and particularly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.'" (Sess. 25, De Purg.). This is singularly vague, carefully vague. What is purgatory? Do people suffer there? What do they suffer for? What are they helped out of?—Of all this the statement tells us nothing. Yet on this is founded all the system of masses for the dead, masses multiplied according to the wealth of the dead man or his family (for the poor stand a poor chance here), and the anxious

terror of the living; on this was founded all the dreadful traffic in indulgences. Yet the Catholic is not bound to believe that there is any suffering at all. But Dr. Milner is right: I seek in vain for any authoritative instruction from the Roman rule of faith upon the subject. What is left vague may be filled with terror, and so in practice it is. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, however, gives us a httle further insight into it. Speaking of Christ's descent into hell, it says, "Hell, then, here signifies those hidden abodes, in which are detained the souls that have not been admitted to the regions of bliss" (vol. I, p. 123). And then, after speaking of the hell of the damned, it says, "Amongst them (the places called hell) is also the fire of purgatory, in which the souls of the pious, being tormented for a definite time, are cleansed,99 that an entrance may lie open to them into the eternal country, into which nothing defiled entereth." And then it is left to the minister in these words: "The truth of this doctrine, founded, as holy councils declare, on scripture, and confirmed by apostolical tradition, demands diligent and frequent exposition, proportioned to the times in which we live, when men endure not sound doctrine."100 The truth is, the Romanists are very shy of saying much on this head, because the statements of the Fathers are as contradictory and as full of confusion as they can possibly be. Here we are told Abraham's bosom is in hell (hades).101 Tertullian102 says (when a good churchman), I think that hell (hades) is one thing, Abraham's bosom another.

Augustine says that Abraham's bosom is to be thought a part of hell (hades);103 elsewhere104 he cannot tell—thinks it may, but says he cannot find it is so called; and doubts105 if any one could endure its not being taken in

a good sense, and therefore he does not see how it can be hell. Again, he says the bosom of Abraham is the rest of the blessed poor whose is the kingdom of heaven.106 In the first letter107 alluded to he refutes Christ having taken all out.

St. Jerome says, “Our Lord Jesus Christ descended into the furnace of hell, in which the souls of sinners and just were kept shut up, that without any burning or hurt to Himself He might free from the chains of death those who were shut up there” (in Dan. 1:3). Still I suppose we must take this only as applying to those that were His. He says (in Lam. Jer. 2:3), “Therefore the Redeemer called on the name of the Lord out of the lowest lake, when in the power of His divinity He descended into hell, and, the bars of Tartarus being destroyed, tearing away His own whom He found there, ascended conqueror to the upper regions.” Thus then all the just, all that belonged to Christ, would be delivered. Again, yet further (in Esaiam 6, 14), “hell is the place of punishment and torment, in which the rich man clothed in purple is seen, to which also the Lord descended, that He might loose the bound out of prison.” This was hardly Abraham’s bosom, as Augustine often says.108 Indeed he ventures on rather slippery ground for an orthodox Father, the pillar of Romanism (in Eph. 2, cap. 4). “The Son of God, therefore, descended into the lower parts of the earth, and ascended above all heavens, that He might not only fulfil the law and the prophets, but also certain hidden dispensations which He alone knew with the Father. For indeed neither can we know how the blood of Christ can profit the angels and those who are in hell, and yet we cannot be ignorant that it did profit them.” Whatever this may mean, it is clear that

the preceding statements overthrow the idea of His simply delivering those who in quiet repose were awaiting the Redeemer's victory. I suppose the bars of Tartarus were hardly round Abraham's bosom. Can there be a greater confusion and ignorance? I do not quote as many different speculations as there are fathers. But saints may thus learn what the Fathers' writings are worth.

I add only these to shew that it is no individual mistake of Jerome's. Ambrose (de Mys. Pasch. 4) says, "Christ being void of sin when He descended to the bottom of Tartarus, breaking the bars and gates of hell, recalled the souls bound by sin, the dominion of death being destroyed, out of the jaws of the devil into life." So many others. Now this was not delivering merely those in repose. Either all the just were in repose and better off than Christians, who go (I may say) all to purgatory—and then those fathers are all condemned; or else they were in purgatory, and this deliverance of peaceful souls in a distinct place from purgatory, as taught by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, is all wrong. And what is come of those that were in purgatory none can tell. St. Augustine will help us out a bit perhaps (Enchiridion, 110, 29): "When therefore sacrifices, whether of the altar or of any alms-giving whatsoever, are offered for all baptized persons deceased, for the very good they are givings of thanks; for the not very bad they are propitiations; for the very bad, even if they are no help to the dead, they are certain consolations of the living. But to whom they are profitable, they are profitable either to this, that there should be full remission, or at any rate that damnation itself may be more tolerable." Albert the Great teaches that that must

mean purgatory; but the famous master of sentences, as he was called, Peter Lombard, declares that it is not to be denied that it is accepted for the punishment of those who are never to be set free. All who are in purgatory are middling good: the least bad, who are never to be freed, are middling bad, and their pains may be mitigated. They can do better, it seems, than what the Lord taught as to Abraham and Lazarus: but, oh! how we see the wild unbridled imagination of these Fathers. They had lost the plain truth of scripture, and wandered in every uncertain and unstable thought of their own imagination.

James. Well, it is strange doctrine. It is a terrible thing, after one is justified and in a state of grace, to go and suffer in a kind of temporary hell-fire. And there we must go, and that just if we are in a state of grace. What do you say to that, Bill?

Bill M. It is no good arguing on religion. How could you expect me to explain everything? The church says there is a purgatory, and we are warned not to look curiously into it, and be taking notions to ourselves.

N*. Yes, my good friend, but we are not looking curiously into it. We are paying attention to what is taught in the Catechism of the Council of Trent; and according to that, though the doctrine be inconsistent and contrary to itself, if I am to take the general statement, it would have been far better, to have been a godly Jew than to be a godly Christian.

Bill M. But that Catechism is for the clergy, not for us.

N*. Yes, but the clergy are to teach according to it, and according to the consent of the Fathers. But we will pass on. I will quote BeUarmine’s account of purgatory, as he

is of very high, perhaps the highest, authority among Roman Catholics; for as to the consent of the Fathers, it is out of the question. On this point he says, what is so called is “a certain place in which, as in a prison, souls are purged after this life which have not been fully purged in this life; that thus purged, namely, they may be able to enter into heaven, where nothing defiled will enter.” Yet the same Bellarmine distinctly declares that lust has ceased in death, that evil habits are not corrected in purgatory, that it is purely a penal satisfaction for sin—that is, no purifying or purging at all. See what he says as to satisfaction, lust being gone. Well, I deny purgatory as a wholly false unscriptural idea, and as a denial of the efficacy of the work of Christ. I read in scripture, “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” God declares of the sanctified (and they only, it seems, go into purgatory), that “He will remember their sins and iniquities no more.” I find that, when we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord; I am taught to give thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. I find that the poor thief went, the same day he died, straight into paradise to be with Christ. Hence for the true Christian the fear of death is wholly taken away. He is already one spirit with Christ, and he knows that to depart and be with Him is far better. Christ has borne his sins in His own body on the tree; and he has not himself therefore to bear the consequences of them. He has a wholly new fife by the quickening power of Christ. Christ is his life; and when out of this sinful flesh he is in every sense clear from sin for ever.109 Bill M. Do you think, then, a murderer, and one who steals an apple, will be punished in the same way?

N*. Are you, then, an unbeliever, M.?

Bill M. No, I am a good Catholic.

N*. You are reasoning as an unbeliever would. What you say is as if Christ had not died for those who go to heaven. I do not say that the murderer and he who steals an apple will be punished alike; though we are very bad judges of guilt. It was by stealing an apple that men were driven out of God's presence and the earthly paradise; because they had given up God for an apple, and because lust and sin had come in. The tree is proved by its fruit, and one wild apple proves as well as a hundred would that the tree which bears it is wild and good-for-nothing. I do not say some men have not broken through more restraints of conscience—have not sinned against light, so as to be beaten with many stripes.

But this has nothing to do with the matter we are speaking of, namely, of those that are forgiven, who are going to heaven, who are justified and sanctified; for purgatory is for none others. The question is not therefore about the degrees of punishment for the lost, but of the saved (and according to Bellarmine all in purgatory are all even sure110 they are saved, and so indeed they might well be, since none others go there): and I say as to such, that, whether they had been murderers or apple-stealers before, they are cleansed from all sin. They are, as scripture speaks, as white as snow, if their sins had been as scarlet. When I have washed anything, the question is not how much dirt it had before, disgusting as that may be, if the dirt be there, but whether I have washed it perfectly. Now the scripture tells us Christ has washed us perfectly, and I

believe it. We are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. If we are saved, we have a new nature, and that is a holy one. We are made, says Peter, partakers of the divine nature. And, when we die, nothing remains but this holy life which is born of God. Guilt is gone, all impurity is gone, and in due time we shall have a glorious body too. Purgatory denies the efficacy of Christ's work, and the reality of receiving life from God. It upsets your own doctrines (as I said to James); for, as guilt is wholly removed, extreme unction, which wipes away the remains of sin, must be false, or else one that has been anointed has nothing to go to purgatory for; for men, we are told, go there for the remains of sin.

Bill M. Do you mean that the soul (when it goes out of the body) is fit for heaven or paradise?

N*. Certainly, or how did the thief get there? I see the whole system of Romanism to be the very contrary to the gospel of peace. In that—in the Christianity of the scriptures—I see a God perfect in holiness, but one "rich in mercy," who loved the world, and gave His Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish. God, I see, is love. Christ, the blessed Saviour, gives Himself to bear and put away our sins, that we might draw near to God without fear: as it is said, "to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins." It is with a view to our being happy before Him, serving Him without fear. He gives His Spirit to them that believe, as a spirit of adoption and joy, the Holy Spirit; but He is given, says Peter, to all them that believe. Thus heaven is opened to them, and Jesus has entered as their forerunner; the joy of heaven is in their souls beforehand, the love of God shed abroad in their hearts,

and by that Spirit which is the earnest of their inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession. Having peace with God, they stand in God's favour, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. If they are tempted and tried, the blessed Jesus has been tempted in all things like them, sin apart: and having suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

In a word, God is a source of joy because He is a Saviour, and a gracious help in every trouble. He finds me in misery, lost, going to hell, and warns me of it, and that if I go on in the broad road I shall surely come there. But when He is turned to, when Christ is really believed in, He takes me out of that position and saves me. In so doing He puts me in a place of joy and peace before Him, and He makes me know all this by His word and Spirit. Romanism is the very opposite of that. It brings me before a terrible exacting God when I am a Christian. It brings me by a series of ceremonies (after Christ has done all) into a position where I, even if a true Christian, have still to answer for my sins—may very likely go to hell for them—must do penance (unless I compromise it by an indulgence) for present failings: where I am always dreading eternity, and uncertain what is to become of me at last—only sure that God will exact satisfaction of me; that in any case I must go to purgatory into the fire, and make satisfaction for my faults, and that God will not let me out thence till I have paid the last farthing. Forgiving priests I may find, a tenderhearted Mary, kind interceding saints; but a forgiving God who loves and cleanses me, a tender-hearted interceding Saviour—that I cannot have in Romanism. Even if I am forgiven as to damnation, and if

Christ Himself has effectually died for me, and I die in a state of grace, God will have the last farthing of me after all. This, as to the whole spirit of it, is contrary to the God revealed in Christ. God manifest in flesh, God become a man to die for me—that God I know. But that when He has done all that for me, He is going to exact the last farthing of me, and throw me into a fire of anguish till it is paid, this I do not believe. Such a God is not the God who has come to save us by Christ; it is another, and, morally speaking, a false one. It makes God one who lays heavy burdens on the human heart when we have to say to Him.

Christianity does shew us what an awful burden we are bringing on ourselves if we have not to say to Him, but shews us joy and peace if we have. It calls us from every burden of sin and of sorrow to find rest in Christ; and it shews me He was willing to take my burden on Himself, that I might be free. Christ says: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Is it rest to be put to do penance for my sins, living? and, even if saved, to go to purgatory for them when I am dead? And all this just to sustain the power of those that impose the penance, and profess to be able to help people out of—when they could not help their getting into—this terrible fire!

James. How plain and true it is! Oh, if God had not been a God of grace to me, where should I have been? But I had no thought the Romanists believed all this. What! penances while they are alive, and then the last farthing exacted when they die, and they forgiven and justified all the while! And, as you were saying, sir, told all the while that by extreme unction the very remains of sin are wiped away!

Mrs. J. I am sure we ought to feel for them, and pray for them too: but it is sad to think any could be so ignorant of what God is.

Bill M. But by your system a man may say he is justified, and go on sinning, and get clear to heaven.

N*. So man always reasons when he does not know what grace is; but scripture says, purifying their hearts by faith. Revealing God's presence to a man is not the way to make a man sin. Besides, if a man has a part in God's righteousness, it is by being born again, and thus he loves obedience to God and what is holy. Most true it is that we need grace every moment; but Christ has said: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And besides, if, through carelessness, we get away from God's presence and fail, Christ intercedes for us, and God will warn us outwardly and inwardly: and, if we heed not the warning, He will chasten us. But tell me, humanly speaking, who will be most anxious to keep himself clean: one who is spick and span clean, and going to meet the Queen—or one who is dirty, and does not know whether he ever will go out, unless it be to be hanged?

Bill M. Well, I suppose the man that was clean.

N*. And he must know he is clean.

Bill M. Of course.

N*. So with the Christian. He knows he is cleansed to meet Jesus, and he seeks to be clean in his walk, going to meet Him. We know, says the Apostle John, (mark that word, "we know") "that when he [Christ] shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and he that hath this hope in him purineth himself even as

he is pure." So the Apostle Paul: "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith and not by sight. We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, whether present or absent, to be accepted of" (or, as in your Rhemish Testament, "to please) him." People forget that a new nature, the new man, as it is called, is as necessary and as much a part of Christianity as is the blessed sacrifice of Christ. Your objection is just the one that was made to the Apostle Paul's teaching, because he taught this very doctrine (Rom. 6), and he shews that Christ, who is his life, having died to sin, the true Christian reckons himself dead—cannot live in the thing which he is dead to. We have a part in the righteousness by having a part in the death, and so reckon ourselves dead, crucified with Christ. Having a part in death is not living on. How, says he, can we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? But if I deny that I am dead, I deny I am justified and righteous; for it is only by having a part in His death that I am justified. And it is real life and grace, and these will shew themselves in a man's walk.

But we can come to the proofs. I deny that any such thing as purgatory is found in scripture. When we have examined this, we must see what you all allege from the Fathers. Not that I attribute the smallest authority to them, or believe anything as revealed truth but what is in the word of God; but as we are reasoning about it, it is fair to meet all you have to say. It would be quite enough to say they reveal nothing, and have no authority at all; nor would I allege them for the smallest thing; but as you do allege them, we may examine what

you allege. I own to you I have a very poor opinion of them from what I have read of them, without meaning to say they have no historical value. We have the highest authority for saying we must have what was from the beginning. But that is Christ and the apostles—none of it elsewhere. And John says, “He that is of God heareth us.” Hearing what the apostles say themselves is the test of truth; and he who continues in what was from the beginning (and I repeat, the writings of the apostles and evangelists alone are that) shall abide in the Father and in the Son.

James. Where is that, sir?

N*. In 1 John 2:24 and chap. 4:6. But we will hear all you have to allege from the Fathers.

Bill M. They do not reveal anything; but they must know the truth better than we, and no sense ought to be received from scripture but according to their common consent as to the meaning of it. So says the Council of Trent (Sess. 4).

N*. Are you sure they do agree?

Bill M. To be sure they do, and the church teaches the doctrine they agree in.

N*. It would be a poor thing to have to wait for the truth till we had read all the Fathers. But I think you will find, even in our short inquiries, they are far from agreeing on the subject which occupies us, or indeed on any other.

However, to our proofs. The first that Milner notices is drawn from the second book of Maccabees. He tells us that he has a right to consider these books as scripture, because the Catholic church so considers them. Now,

first, I do not admit the Roman system to be the Catholic church: but I leave this till we come to that question. But no church ever took them to be canonical scripture for fifteen hundred years. Augustine declares the Apocryphal books inferior to the other scripture, and Jerome, who was the translator of the Bible at the request of Pope Damasus, and whose translation, called the Vulgate, is declared authentic by the Council of Trent, and so held by all Romanists, says in his preface that Judith and Tobias, and the books of the Maccabees, the church indeed reads, but does not receive them among canonical scriptures. (Preface to the books of Solomon). So Ruffinus (published with Cyprian's works). He gives the list of canonical scriptures, exactly as Protestants receive them, and not merely as his opinion, but declaring that they are the books which, according to the tradition of the ancients, are believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit Himself. And having given the list, he adds: these are what the Fathers have included in the canon. But however, he adds, it is to be known that there are also other books, now called Apocrypha; and adds, which all they have willed should be read in the churches, but not anything be produced out of them to confirm as authority anything concerning the faith. So Jerome: thus also these two volumes the church reads for edification of the people, but not as an authority to confirm ecclesiastical dogmas. So Athanasius, or the author of the Synopsis ascribed to him, says—they were not put in the canon, but read to the catechumens; and in his festal letter again he gives the twenty-two books of the Old Testament, pronouncing the strongest blame on those who might pretend any others were scripture (I (62) 767).

This is the constant testimony of the early church. Cyril of Jerusalem gives the same list of the Old Testament, and does not admit the Maccabees. The Council of Laodicea forbids any others to be read in the churches, and gives the same list. The Apostolic Constitutions (which of course I do not cite as of the apostles, but which shew the early judgment on this point) give us the same list—2, 57, and that for reading in the churches. The only exception, or apparent one, is that the African churches, as represented by the Council of Carthage and St. Augustine (though Augustine makes a formal distinction between some books and others, and he says that they are not canonical), call the Apocrypha canonical too: but Augustine admits at the same time that learned men did not doubt that two of them were spurious, that is, not written by the professed authors, but says that though they were so, they were received by the Western churches. We learn also how little weight he attached to the word canonical. He says that people ought to attach most authority to those which were received by all the churches; and that in those which were not received by all, they should prefer those received by most and the more important churches. It is clear none of them were even received in the Eastern churches, nor were they in the churches of Gaul, as both the Hilarys shew. Hilary of Aries tells St. Augustine, writing to him on predestination and free will, on occasion of the Pelagian controversy, that the churches of France around him rejected one testimony he had produced, because it was cited from an uncanonical book.

Not only so, but a pope, and a very distinguished one indeed, who earned the name of Great—Gregory—says,

Moral 19, 13 (34) on Job 29, “Concerning which we do not act out of order if we produce a testimony out of books which, though not canonical, are published for the edification of the church”; and then cites Maccabees.

Thus we have the constant sense of the doctors of early ages; and, referring to the African church, Cardinal Cajetan, one greatly employed by the pope about Luther, says, “The words as well of councils as of doctors are to be reduced to the rule of St. Jerome, and, according to his judgment, those books are not canonical, that is, regular, to establish those things which are of the faith. They may be called, however, canonical, that is, regular, for the edification of the faithful, as received and authorized for this purpose in the canon of the Bible: with this distinction, thou mayest discern what is said by Augustine, and written in the provincial Council of Carthage.” Thus he reconciles, as others have done, the statements of the African prelates with the universal judgment of Christendom.

Further, we have a list in the middle of the third century from Origen, the most diligent student of scripture, in his Commentary on Psalm I (De la Rue, vol. 2, 29), quoted by Eusebius, Hist. Ec. 6, 25), bearing exactly the same testimony as to what is canonical. We have a list of Melito’s, about the close of the second century, given by Eusebius, 4, 26. He says he has given, in extracts written by him, “a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament received of all, which I have thought necessary to put down here”; and then he gives the same list as all do, but not the Apocrypha. Epiphanius (B. T. 7, vol. 1, 122), confirms this same list as being received by the Jews, though not speaking of his own judgment. But Christendom is not all we have to look to,

nor indeed the principal thing; because the Old Testament was committed originally to God's people Israel, to the Jews.

Bill M. But you are not going to make infidel Jews an authority?

N*. I am not speaking of infidel Jews, who are now scattered because they rejected Christ (though in this even they are more faithful than Rome and her doctors), but of those of whom Paul says that the oracles of God were committed to them. The Old Testament was committed to Israel as God's people, nor have they at any time failed in keeping it. Now they recognized the books we receive as canonical, and not those which the Council of Trent has wickedly added. This is a matter of undoubted history. Indeed the Apocryphal books are not extant in Hebrew at all. But further, Josephus also states it in a very formal manner, and adds that there were books written since Artaxerxes, but that they were not esteemed worthy of the same faith as the others, for there was no regular succession of prophets. He declares, "We have not a multitude of books, discordant and opposed to one another, but only two-and-twenty, embracing the history of all time, which are fully esteemed to be divine"; and thereon enlarges on their divine authority and the empire they obtain, from youth up, over the Jew's mind. He gives then their number and triple division, as held by the Jews. But there is yet more and incontrovertible authority, which quotes them according to this same division, as the law, the prophets, and the psalms. That is, the Lord Himself quotes them, these same books, as of divine authority, as a known set, to the exclusion of all others; and declares too, in

another place, the absolute authority of the scriptures —“The scripture cannot be broken.”

But I will appeal to yourself, and James here, or any man in his senses that fears God, to say if this book, the second of Maccabees, can be inspired. Here is the writer’s own account of it, at the beginning, 2 Maccabees 2:23: “All these things, I say, being declared by Jason the Cyrenean in five books, we have tried to abbreviate into one: for, considering the multitude of books, and the difficulty of those who wish to occupy themselves with historical accounts by reason of the multitude of events, we have taken care, for those who wish to read, that there should be pleasure for the mind; for the studious, that they may commit it more easily to memory; for all who read, that profit may be conferred on them. And for ourselves, indeed, who have undertaken this work of abbreviating, we have taken on ourselves no fight labour, but, indeed, a business full of vigils and toils.” Then he describes the different style of authors and abbreviators (“to the former belongs truth in details—to abbreviators studiousness of brevity, according to the given form), and adds, he will begin his story, “for it is foolish to be diffuse before the history, and then short in the history itself”: and finally he closes thus (2 Mace. 15:37-39): “With these things I will make an end of the discourse, and if indeed well, and as suited the history, this I myself also would wish; but if less worthily, it is to be pardoned me. For as drinking always wine or always water is unwholesome to us, but to use both alternately is delightful, so to those that read, if the discourse be always exact, it will not be pleasant. Here, therefore, it will be closed.”

Now, I ask you, is it not a blasphemy to say that “if it was well done, it suited the history, but if less worthily, it was to be borne with,” was said by the Holy Ghost?

Mrs. J. And surely they do not give that for scripture, sir?

N*. It is the very book which Dr. Milner quotes as scripture, on the authority of the Catholic church, to prove purgatory.

James. Why, Bill, how can you receive such things? I never could have thought it possible. I am not learned, but sure no one that had a respect for God could ever say that was inspired, or that the Holy Ghost could excuse Himself, and say that what was badly done was inspired, or that He had done it.

N*. Well, James, I do not think M. has much to say for himself in this matter; but note this, that the citation of this passage has proved to us another point—that the Romanists have falsified scripture, and have flown in the face of the constant testimony of the church for fifteen centuries, whatever value that may have, and of that too of the Jews, as divinely-appointed keepers of the Old Testament, who have given a testimony as to what is holy scripture, sanctioned by the Lord Himself, but rejected by what calls itself the Catholic church.

But this is not all: the passage (2 Mace. 12:39), even on their own shewing, can have nothing to do with purgatory, but denies all their doctrine. The men who were slain in Maccabees had votive offerings to idols about them, and therefore had fallen in battle, and hence had defiled themselves with idolatry;111 but purgatory is for venial sins, not for apostasy to idols. And it is hard to tell what was to free them then. And we

must remember there is not one word in the law or the prophets which Christ owned of any such a purgatory, and that He sharply condemned the tradition of the elders who make thereby the word of God void. Dr. Milner ventures to quote no others from the Old Testament. I will give a list from Bellarmine; you may easily see whether they apply. They prove only one thing, that I can see, namely, that they could find nothing in scripture for it.

Tobias 4:18: this is also Apocrypha, a history of an angel, accompanying a good young man as a dog, and helping him to drive a devil away from his nuptial chamber with a broiled fish's liver.

Mrs. J. And do they call that the word of God?

N*. They do.

Mrs. J. Well, well: but pardon, sir; you were giving the list.

N*. 1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12; Psalm 37:1; Psalm 65:11; Isaiah 4:4; chap. 9:18; Micah 7:8; Zechariah 9:11. This last verse runs thus, "By the blood of thy covenant I have brought thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." I may add the proof here, for it is edifying. He says that many apply this to the limbus of the fathers, as he is said to bring them out; but Luke 16:25 proves there is no water to console them, and there is in Abraham's bosom, for Lazarus was comforted there. Hence he adds that Augustine held that Christ visited those tormented in hell, that is, in purgatory, and delivered many of them.

To return to Dr. Milner's proofs. I need not notice 1 Corinthians 15:29, because the apostle does not give a

hint that he is speaking of Jews; he is speaking of being baptized. And supposing he were, I know not what Jewish superstitions have to do with Christians. We are all baptized unto death, and of that's being the sense (comparing verse 28) I have no doubt. The only thing such a quotation proves is that they are very hard run for a passage. The proof from the expression, "Abraham's bosom," is soon answered: the Catechism of the Council of Trent contrasts it with purgatory.112 How Dr. Milner reconciles it with honesty to quote it for purgatory I cannot tell. The force of the expression, however, is evident. Abraham had for the Jew the highest and most blessed place in the other world, and to be in his bosom was to be in the next best place to him, as the beloved disciple in Jesus' bosom, when at the table. Besides, Dr. Milner says Lazarus reposed there. Is it repose to be in purgatory? All this is too bad.

Again, Christ in spirit went and preached to the spirits in prison. This is the prison above mentioned—Abraham's bosom. He says, But Christ went into paradise. This day, He said to the thief, thou shalt be with Me in paradise. Do they preach in paradise? or is Abraham's bosom (and, still more, is paradise) a prison? It is perfectly evident that the Lord uses Abraham's bosom as a place of special favour and blessedness. The poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And again, Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. Did the angels carry him to the fire of purgatory to comfort him, after his sorrowful life on earth?

James. Why, Bill, that can't be. Is it not plain that the Lord meant to shew that the poor man that had so sad a portion below had, after all, if we think of the other

world, a better part than the man that had his good things in this life? And surely that cannot mean making satisfaction to God in torment. But I don't quite see, sir, why the poor man went there and the rich man to hell.

N*. I believe the Lord loves the poor, James. Still, alas! of course, all the poor do not go to heaven because they are poor. But the force of the Lord's history, I believe, is this: He is, in these chapters of Luke, shewing the grace that seeks and receives poor sinners, as the lost sheep and the prodigal, and at the same time opening heaven to our view, and teaching us that we ought to use this world in View of the next, and not as the place of present rest and comfort. You know the Jew had been promised riches and blessings here, if obedient, because in that people God was shewing His government on earth. But after Christ was rejected this was no longer the case, and the veil was to be rent in His death, and saints were to take up their cross daily, and heavenly things were to be their portion and reward, as in very truth they always were; but now it was plainly and openly so, even as Christ speaks in this same chapter, calling them their own things: earthly things were only in their hands for a time, as another's. Hence the Lord draws the veil, as it were, and shews that a poor man, whom a Jew might have thought to be under judgment for his sins, went straight to Abraham's bosom—that is, to a Jew's mind, to the best place in the other world: and riches, instead of being a proof of God's favour, had shut the man up in his own selfishness, for he had slighted the poor man at his door— the dogs had more compassion than he—and when the other world came, he was in torment. He had had his good things.

James. I see, sir, it is all plain enough; and, indeed, if one sees God's ways in the Bible, all becomes plain by degrees.

N.* We must wait upon the Lord to be taught, James, and He will surely instruct us. He has graciously said, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." So the Lord opened the understanding of the two that went to Emmaus, and so He does now.

Bill M. But you cannot deny that St. Augustine held a middle place.

N.* You know the Romanists hold two middle places, one where the Old Testament saints were before Christ came, and another where the yet incompletely purified just go now: and here I cannot exempt Dr. Milner from the charge of dishonesty.113 He says, Christ descended into hell… the prison above mentioned, or Abraham's bosom—in short, a middle state. And he says, What place, I ask, must that be which our Saviour calls Abraham's bosom, where the soul of Lazarus reposed among the other just souls, till by His sacred passion He paid their ransom? … Not heaven, but evidently a middle place, as St. Augustine teacheth. Now, if he had answered his own question, Dr. Milner knows very well he must have said "limbus patrum (that is, the place where they say the saints dying before Christ were), and not purgatory" (which, in the Roman Catholic doctrine, is entirely distinguished from the limbus patrum). This is wholly and wittingly deceiving, for he adds, after speaking of Abraham's bosom, "It is of this prison, according to the holy fathers, that our blessed Master speaks, when He says, 'I tell thee thou shalt not depart

thence till thou hast paid the very last mite.'" This is not Abraham's bosom. Now this they do apply to a middle state, but not to the limbus patrum. Christ delivered the patriarchs and the others from that, and it is now quite empty. They were at perfect rest, they tell us, suffering no pain. All this is attempted to be passed upon us as a proof of purgatory, with the expression, "in short, a middle state."

Further, he says, "As St. Augustine teacheth." Now Augustine says, "Neither is it to be believed that Abraham's bosom, that is, the habitation of a certain hidden rest, is any part of hell" (Letter to Evodiiis). But Dr. Milner refers to De Civit. Dei, 15, c. 20 (it should be 20, c. 15). Augustine does not say a word of purgatory there, but says, "For if it does not seem absurd to be believed that those ancient saints also, who kept the faith of a Christ to come, were in places as far as possible from the torments of the impious, but in hades (or hell, not the hell of the damned) until the blood of Christ, He, having descended also to those places, should bring them up immediately; thenceforward the faithful good, already redeemed thus at the price of that blood poured out, know nothing more at all of hades until, having received their bodies also, they should receive the good things they deserve."

Hence his notion, whatever it is worth (and it is really worth nothing at all—it is a mere notion, and I will produce an opposite one from himself in a moment, but, such as it is, it is here), would prove that Abraham was clean out of hades now, and whatever middle place he is in is not purgatory, nor ever was; and moreover that since the death of Christ the faithful redeemed have nothing to do with hades.

But Augustine has said more than this, for he speculated, and very wildly too, on all sorts of subjects. He elaborately argues, reasoning on the text, “He hath loosened the pains of hades” (hell), which was then applied to Christ’s descent to hell (though an undoubtedly incorrect passage in the Latin translation)114 but insists,115 for that reason, that, as evidently the patriarchs and prophets go even there where Abraham was, Christ could do nothing for them as to loosening the pains of hades (or hell), a word which he declares was never yet found to be used in scripture in a good sense, for they were not in it, and the great gulf fixedly separated them at an immense distance. And he wonders if any one could dare (if the scripture had said Christ when dead went into Abraham’s bosom, not mentioning hades or hell) to assert He had descended into hell.116 He says that, if it is nowhere read in the divine authorities, it is not to be believed that that bosom of Abraham—that is, the habitation of a certain secret quietness—is any part of hell at all. Now, it is quite true that the Catechism of the Council of Trent says it is. How they manage about the consent of the Fathers I do not know. I believe, in all this utter confusion, one knew nearly as much about it as the other. How blessed is the simplicity that is in Christ! To depart and to be with Christ is far better, knowing that if we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, and desiring rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. The more I see of the Fathers, the more I see what darkness and confusion they were in; only I was to answer what you should bring forward. A word more, therefore, from St. Augustine. He declares that (Letter to Evodius 3) he does not see what Christ could have conferred on these just who were in

Abraham's bosom, "from whence I do not see that, according to the beatific presence of His divinity, He had ever left them." As also He promised the thief, that on the same day on which he died he should be in paradise with Him, when He was going to descend to loose the pains of hell. So that before even He went into hades He was in paradise and Abraham's bosom, and even before, by His beatific wisdom, and in hades or hell by His judicial power (Epistle to Evodius). He says indeed that loosing the pains of hades might apply to Christ Himself, as there follows, "in which it was impossible for him to be holden." This is undoubtedly the sense, only the true word is having loosed the pains of death. If Augustine had only looked 130 the Greek!

On the whole, he seems to deem it best to think that Christ's soul descended to hell (hades), His body remained in the grave, and His divinity in Abraham's bosom, and to believe that the thief was with Him as God in paradise. As to preaching to the spirits in prison, he is inclined to think (Epistle to Evodius) it was by His Spirit in Noe. Peter speaks only of the souls then disobedient, an interpretation which I have no kind of doubt is the true one. Peter speaks of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets; so here in Noe. The Jews, who expected a glorious Messiah in the body, had only His presence in Spirit, and were a small minority. So in Noe they were a small minority, and Christ was only there in Spirit: but those who despised that, are all in prison to await the judgment of the great day. We are saved, like Noe, by death and resurrection in Christ, as he in a figure was. In Genesis God says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, but his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." It would be monstrous to say that these were the

only ones to whom more time would be given, and they be preached to when dead, for those only are spoken of.

Augustine refers also in this letter to i Peter 4:6, as well as to 1 Peter 3:19, 20. There it is said the gospel was preached to them that were dead. He prefers the sense of dead in sins; I believe it was simply when they were alive, hence to be judged accordingly (as said in verse 5). The truth is, this letter is an answer to one written to Augustine on the former passage, and the writer had used the expression that Christ had emptied, or made void, hades or hell which he questions, speaking uncertainly as to this—as to whether souls could believe after they were there. And a second question raises more nice points too, into which it is not necessary to go. But he arrives, on the point that now occupies us, at exactly the opposite conclusion to Dr. Milner, namely, that Abraham's bosom had nothing to do with hades, or hell, that it was Christ's Spirit in Noe, and that preaching to the dead meant the dead in sin, but allows his friend, Bishop Evodius, to think otherwise if he liked.

As to purgatory, he does speak of it elsewhere, but with the greatest possible uncertainty, so that to say he taught it is alleging what is false. He speaks of the subject in three different places, and in all of them in reference to i Corinthians 3—he shall be saved, yet so as by fire—and using the same arguments, and indeed in a great measure the same words. The places are, Defide et operibus, 15 and following (or 24 and following); Enchiridion de fide, spe et charitate, 69 (or end of 18); and De Civitate Dei, 21, 26.

In the first he is resisting persons who viewed the text as meaning that, if men believed and were baptized,

they were on the foundation, and, let them live in whatever sin they might, they would be saved; passing through certain pains of fire, they would be purged so as to obtain salvation by the merit of the foundation.117 This he resisted by a multitude of texts. Some other sense, he said, must be sought for, and that this text is one of those of which Peter speaks as hard to be understood, and adds, “When I consider it, I had rather hear more intelligent and learned men.” He then puts the case of Christians living in a lawful state, but while never denying Christ for pleasure, yet not living in a self-denying way, and consequently having grief and distress when they lost the things. Those who sought only to please God were building gold, silver, and precious stones; those who please themselves, though Christians, wood, hay, and stubble.118 All would be tried by fire and tribulation, and the latter feel the loss, yet be saved, as on the foundation. Then he adds, “Whether in this life only men suffer these things, or whether after this life certain judgments of this kind follow, my understanding of the passage is not abhorrent from the principle of truth.” At any rate, he says, however we interpret it, the living wicked will not be saved.

In the Enchiridion, after going over the same ground, and saying it happens in this life that man is so proved, he says, That some such thing takes place after this hfe is not incredible, and whether it be so may be inquired, and it may be discovered, or remain hidden, etc.

In The City of God he insists that it cannot be what is said in Matthew 25, as in 1 Corinthians 3, all go through this probation; and after speaking of self-willed, and unsubdued souls, though Christian, he says, “After the death of the body, until they come to that which is to be

the last day of remuneration and damnation after the resurrection of bodies, if, in this interval of time, the spirits of the dead are said to suffer a fire of this kind, which they do not feel who have not had such morals and such loves in the life of this body, in order that their wood, hay, and stubble should be consumed, but which others feel who have carried that kind of building with them, whether there only, or here and there, or, be it so, here and not there, they find a fire of transitory tribulation, burning worldly things, although not imputable to damnation (or pardonable as regards damnation), I do not oppose, because perhaps it is true."

As to Psalm 37, there is not the smallest proof that what he says refers to purgatory. He does frighten the people (for it is to the people he speaks here) with a terrible fire, more terrible than anything in this life; but he may refer to his purifying work of the day of judgment, which is quite as likely, or seems so.

Now, no Christian soul who knows what it is to be cleansed from all sin could be shaken by confused notions of possible punishment such as this poor father debits here. It is as poor a foundation to build anything on as could well be thought of. Had he looked soberly at the passage, he would have seen it applies to those labouring in the ministry in the world— builders in the church; and that the things destroyed are not bad works, but bad building, so that the man's labour was lost, though the builder was saved, yet even he as a man that just saves his life out of a fire.

As to the controversy—for as to divine truth such statements are not worth a thought, and only shew what an unstable foundation the doctrine of the Fathers is—as

to the controversy, it is not purgatory he speaks of, for all saints go through it. He insists on that as its distinctive character; whereas into purgatory only those go who need partial purging. He adds, as a possible interpretation of it, persecutions when martyrs are crowned, and all stand good; others are consumed in it if the foundation is not there; others saved, but suffer loss. He instances Antichrist also as a possible explanation.

To shew how little he can be reckoned on, I may add that he holds that the judgment of the last day itself, the final judgment, will be purgatorial fire for some. He saw nothing of the judgment of the quick in this world, and so misapplied Malachi 3:1-6 to the judgment of the great white throne (De Civitate Dei, 20, 25). And when Malachi says the sons of Levi shall offer sacrifices of righteousness, he applies it to their being themselves offered up to God pure when thus cleansed, “for what could such offer more grateful to God than themselves?” and then says that that question of purgatorial pains, to be diligently treated, “must be put off to another time.” He thinks that thus they will offer perfectly, the floor being purged, and they that need it purified by fire.

That I may complete however the doctrine of the Fathers on this subject, and shew how sure a foundation they give for us to build upon, Origen tells us (and Dr. Milner quotes him among the holy Fathers as an authority, and he was very early in church history indeed) that we shall want the sacrament to purify us after our resurrection. Having spoken of purifying of women after child-birth, “If, because the law is spiritual, and has a shadow of good things to come, we can understand that a truer purifying will happen to us, I think that after the resurrection from the dead we want the sacrament,

washing us and purging us; for no one can rise again without filth, nor can any soul be found which is immediately free from all faults." That is comfortable doctrine (Origen in Luc, Horn. 14, ed. De la Rue, 3, 948). 119 James. Well, Bill, how can you or Dr. Milner bring such confusion and uncertainty for us to build our faith on? The Bible is a thousand times clearer and more certain than all this. I understand plain enough, thank God, now that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin, and that God purifies the heart by faith, and that I am born again, and have a new nature in Christ; but all these doubts and dark doctrines could only blind and puzzle the mind.

Bill M. But I did not quote them.

James. No, but Dr. Milner, in the book you gave me, quotes different places in them; and, now I have heard what they say, I doubt if they understood the gospel at all—at least what redemption really is.

N*. It is just what they did not, James. The evil that pressed so sore upon Paul, even in his time, had now overrun the church, as he forewarned it would; and true saints, as surely Augustine was, having lost the full sense of the value of Christ's work, indulged in all kinds of speculation, and were in confusion and darkness as to doctrine. They had lost the truth of the full value of Christ's sacrifice, that by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Hence, each had to get clear somewhere of his own sins, each differing in degree from another, and having to answer for them in proportion, and as there was nothing in scripture, none knew exactly how.

James. But is that all you have for purgatory?

Bill M. No; there are a number of holy Fathers who are quoted, as you may see in Milner, and passages of scripture too.

N*. I will refer to one of them, as one on whom the Roman Catholics build a good deal (the rest will soon be disposed of)—I mean Jerome (adversus Jovinian., lib. 2, 23). Jovinian denied human merits, and said all were equally saved who persevered in the faith of Christ, and opposed celibacy. Jerome, who was a very violent and abusive man,120 though called a saint, was furious, and St. Augustine was severe upon him too. In this work he refers to the same text of 1 Corinthians 3, but does not say a word of purgatory, and contradicts Augustine expressly. Augustine, from the text, refutes those who used the passage (Matt. 25) by shewing that every man's work would be tried. Here Jerome says that he whose work remains will be saved without being tried by fire, and there is a certain difference between salvation and salvation. This is an attempt to answer Jovinian, but not a syllable about purgatory.

The truth is, Jerome expresses himself so strangely about the matter, that some accused him of denying eternal punishment, and say that Augustine refers to him in rejecting certain views on it. At all events one thing is certain, that it is not of purgatory, as held by Roman Catholics, that he teaches. In speaking of punishment, as contrasted with perishing, he quotes: "They that have done good unto resurrection of life, they that have done evil unto resurrection of judgment," adding, to explain it (a gross misapplication), "those that have sinned without law shall perish without law" (that is, an impious person, who perishes altogether); "he that has sinned under the law shall be judged by the law, and

shall not perish." That is pretty interpretation! the sinner with light will not perish, the sinner without it will, contrary to all righteousness and the Lord's express teaching. But, at any rate, in Jerome's statement the judgment, in which man does not perish, comes consequent upon resurrection; that is, it is not purgatory at all.

The passage on which he is mainly charged with denying eternal punishment121 is in his Commentary on Isaiah 66. I do not know that there is more than gross confusion, and, I must say, excessive ignorance of truth. But I will trace his views more closely just now. It will help us to understand the truth of purgatory. But one has really only to read the so much-vaunted Fathers to see the utter worthlessness of their doctrine, and their excessive perversion of scripture. I have paid attention to these two writers, because they are the two great teachers of western or Latin Christendom, and are the real source of the establishment of these doctrines there, though we have seen that one of them affirms (indeed both) quite another doctrine, namely, that of the final judgment itself being a probationary fire; and the other saying that, as to the fire after death, he could not tell: he did not oppose it, for it might be true, but repeatedly expressing his doubts about it, and declaring that several of the scriptures relied upon, in his judgment, meant another thing. But both shewed that of the clear and scriptural doctrine of redemption, and the forgiveness of sins, and the perfect cleansing of Christ's blood, they were wholly ignorant. It was practically lost in the church. Superstition and horrible corruption had come in like a flood.

As to the other Fathers, a single remark will suffice for them; they speak-of prayers for the dead, not of purgatory. This was the common practice, to pray for all the dead, that they might have a part, or a speedy part, in the resurrection to glory, or in the first resurrection. They were remembered in the sacrifice of the altar. But this had no possible connection with purgatory, for they named patriarchs, apostles, prophets, martyrs, and the Virgin Mary herself. I suppose, M., you do not think all these are in purgatory?

Bill M. Of course they are not; they are all in heaven.

James. In heaven! and what do they pray for them for?

Bill M. Well, I did not know they did.122

N*. I dare say not, but Dr. Milner did very well; and I must say, if he had been honest he would not have quoted them. If he was only proving that superstition and false doctrine and immorality came in very soon into the professing church, I should have nothing to say; the true thing to say would be that they characterized it; but that it was yet fallen into modern popish doctrine is not true. Faith is not shaken by the corruption of the early church (and you shall have proofs of that corruption), because the scripture foretells it as plainly as possible, saying that on the departure of the apostles the evil would break out, that the mystery of iniquity was already at work, and that in the last days perilous times would come— men would have a form of piety, denying the power of it; and scripture warns men to hold fast by the scriptures.

James. So it does; I remember that, to be sure. How blind one is when one has not them in one’s heart! And

yet how good God is; He has saved me from all this confusion I did not know of.

N*. We shall get on this point when we touch on the authority of the church and scripture. We will try and finish with purgatory. One of the books quoted is a treatise of Tertullian's, which he wrote when he had left the church, and refers in it to a fanatical teacher, whom he calls the Paraclete, or, as we should say, the Comforter; for Tertullian, the first and one of the most distinguished of the Latin Fathers, left what you call the Catholic church as insupportable.

I do not know that I need go farther into the Fathers. I admit that they prayed for the dead, and remembered them at the Eucharist. Their ideas were wholly unscriptural, and full of confusion; yet what they held was not the Romish purgatory, but what was entirely inconsistent with it. It was a doctrine which arose from their having entirely lost the sense of the completeness of redemption, and got back to the Judaism which Paul so contended against; so that when a person stated that all true believers persevering in the faith of Christ were alike saved, he was cried out against as a dreadful man. I have already quoted them as to their view of men going one of two ways after their death.

As regards the scriptures quoted, I have spoken of 1 Peter 3:19, and 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. The fire would try the work of every man who was a workman in God's house. This was the day of the Lord, to be revealed by fire. But it is not purgatory. The work is the work of the labourers, not the conduct of Christians at all, and the day of the Lord, not purgatory; and it is alike evident and admitted that it cannot be applied to the Romish

doctrine of purgatory, because every one's work is to be tried. As regards not going out till men have paid to the last farthing, I have not the least doubt that it was addressed to the Jewish people, with whom God was in the way while Christ was there, and they have been delivered to the officer, and are still under judgment, and will remain so, till they have received the full chastisement under which they are lying, and then will be brought to repentance and blessing. This may not be as clear in Matthew 5:25, but it is as clear as possibly can be in the parallel passage in Luke 12:54-59. St. Augustine (Sermo 9, Sermo 109, and Tract, in Joh., 45) refers both the passages to the day of judgment in contrast with this life, and does not hint at purgatory.

As to the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the incontestable meaning of the passage is that which is expressed in the Gospel of Mark; it "hath never forgiveness." The Jews believed in an age to come, in which, under Messiah, there would be a fuller revelation of God's grace and favour than under the law; and, in a general way, they were right. The Lord declares that this sin would be forgiven in neither—that is, never forgiven at all. Besides, this text, if applied as Roman Catholics apply it, would not prove purgatory, but deny eternal punishment, for purgatory is for those who are forgiven and justified. Hence this passage cannot apply to purgatory, for this sin is not to be forgiven, and it would mean that the unforgiven, the lost, would be forgiven in the next world. In Gregory the Great we find another view of purgatory. In general he rejects it, but admits it in a very small degree, referring to the last passage I have quoted. He quotes a number of passages to prove that we shall be in the day of judgment as we are when

we die, and that now is the time to settle all with God—John 12:35; Isaiah 49:8, quoted by Paul; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Psalm 117—concluding from which sentences it is evident that such as any one goes out of this world, such he is presented in judgment. But, however, concerning certain light faults, it is to be believed that there is a purgatorial fire before the judgment, and he refers to 1 Corinthians 3 as the proof; but, however, as I said before, for little and the very smallest sins, such as "idle speech,123 immoderate laughter, or the sin of carefulness in family matters," etc. And then he gives us an altogether novel explanation of the passage in 1 Corinthians. Augustine makes gold, etc., to mean works so good that they stood the fire: for Jerome it was salvation without going through the fire at all; Gregory does not notice them, but speaks of iron, brass, lead—such dreadful sins that men are wholly lost. He says, However the passage may be understood of the fire of tribulation applied to us in this life, however, if any one take it as speaking of the fire of future purgation, it is to be diligently considered that he says he can be saved through fire, not who shall have built on this foundation iron, brass, or lead—that is, greater sins, and therefore harder, and then already insoluble— but wood, hay, stubble, that is, the very smallest and lightest sins, which fire easily consumes."124 (Dial. lib. 4, c. 39.) How fire consumes sins, every one must judge for himself.

The result is, purgatory has infinitely more influence than the truth: note what it is. A man, according to Pope Gregory, can build on the foundation—that is, on Christ—iron, brass, lead, such dreadful and indissoluble sins, that he goes to hell, and that no man is free to die in peace; for, for the smallest, he must go to purgatory.

Christ has fully and effectually cleansed from none. To hell, however, no Catholic who goes to the priest can go. If a man neglects the church, he goes to hell; at any rate, if he does not confess once a year, he is in mortal sin: but for the most grievous sins he gets absolution on his confessing them—prayers and fasting, perhaps, for penance; but for not finishing these, or for venial sins, he goes to the horrible fire of purgatory, so that is really the only thing to fear. The most dreadful sin can be built on Christ, according to Pope Gregory, and a man not go to hell; but Christ saves none but some rare martyr from purgatory, the true and real place of suffering; all must go there. And that is Catholic Christianity!

Scripture, not history, is the warrant for doctrine; but the historical fact is that half the church, and the oldest half of it, never held purgatory, nor do to this day (the other half, when expressing their personal faith, spoke in a way entirely contrary to it), but had, when the true knowledge of redemption was lost, and the purifying power of ceremonies and works came in, some mere vague notion of an intermediate state, or its possibility, or a purgatorial fire in the judgment of the last day, which ripened gradually in the West to the fact of a purgatory stated, as we have seen it, by Gregory at the end of the sixth century, but then only, if these were just, for very little sins, such as idle words. Before that prayers for the dead were offered, but then for all departed in peace, including the Virgin Mary. I give a specimen from Chrysostom: “We offer to thee this reasonable service for those that are absent in the faith —our forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets and apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, religious persons, and every spirit perfected in the faith,

but especially for all-holy, spotless, over-and-above-blessed, God-bearing, and ever-Virgin Mary."

The importance of this is that it shews that all that Dr. Milner says of the connection of prayers for the dead and purgatory is without foundation, and is, I must say, disingenuous. I have quoted quite sufficient of the Fathers' denying purgatory; I only fear that it might be supposed that I attach any importance to their opinions. From Epiphanius we may find both doctrines of going to the Lord and prayers for the dead combined. Aerius had objected to prayers for the dead, just before the time of Augustine and Jerome, saying, What good could it do them? Epiphanius answers, What can be more useful, more opportune, more worthy of admiration, than the hearing the names of the dead: first, in order that those present may be persuaded that the dead live, nor are reduced to nothing, but still exist and live with the Lord; then, that that most religious doctrine may be preached by which it is evident that those who pray for their brethren think well of them—that they are gone on a journey. But the prayer which is made profits them, though it may not cut off all the sins: but it is profitable in this, that, for the most part, while in this life we fail, voluntarily or involuntarily, something more perfect may be signified, for we make mention at the same time of the just and of sinners, of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, bishops, authorities, and all of the whole universal assembly, that Jesus Christ the Lord, receiving a special honour, may be separated from the rest of men, etc. The Lord Jesus was, of course, not prayed for; His mother, Mary, we have seen, was.

The statement of Dr. Milner, that the Greek church holds it, is an unworthy statement. The deputies did agree to it

at Florence. The Emperor was pressed very hard by the Turks, and looked to help from the West, and so came to get the Greek and Roman sees and systems united. The Greeks strongly resisted purgatory, saying they were afraid it would lead to Origen's doctrine, that there was nothing else for any one—no eternal punishment. However, they did yield; but their concession was rejected with outcries on their return. They themselves said they had been deceived, and the doctrine is denied to this day, and they remain separate from Rome as before.

Alphonsus de C. (Adversus omnes Haereses) admits that in the ancient writers "there is almost no mention of purgatory, especially in the Greek writers, and that therefore by the Grecians it is not believed unto this day." So Fisher, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Rochester, "that no orthodox person now doubts whether there is a purgatory, concerning which, however, amongst the ancients, there is either none, or, at any rate, very seldom indeed, mention (rarissima). But among the Greeks, even to this day, it is not believed." I give the quotations from others, but there is no doubt of their correctness.

Neither this reference then, to the Greek church, nor that to the Fathers, proves anything, save that the statements of Dr. Milner are unfounded. The Fathers cannot be trusted for doctrine a moment. Justin Martyr declares that it was impossible that the Supreme God could assume a body, and that it was not He who appeared to Abraham. He, I may say all the early Fathers, if we except the good and gracious old Irenaeus, held that there was no personality of the Son till the time of the creation. Hardly any of them—none,

perhaps, but Irenseus— before the Council of Nice, were clear as to the divinity of Christ. All this came from the same source as purgatory, a mixture of Judaism and Platonic philosophy; so, indeed, did saintly and angelic mediation. This mixture of philosophy and Judaism at Alexandria in Egypt was the fertile cause of corruption in the church.

A few words as to the true origin of purgatory.

The Romanists do, as heretics always do, take a hard passage, which people do not understand, and use it for their false doctrine. If one knows the right interpretation, one can answer at once, and say, “No; it means so-and-so”; but if you cannot, you are exposed to be led away by false interpretation, because you do not know at all what the passage means. One may be guarded by other plain truths, but, as to such a question, a person has nothing to answer. But the true source of the doctrine of purgatory is a mixture of Judaism and Platonism. Roman Catholic authors refer to both as being the same doctrine in substance as the Romanist doctrine of purgatory; and so they are. It will help us, if I give you here a sketch of the history of purgatory. No one denies that the modern idea of purgatory is found nowhere so closely stated as in Plato. Dr. Milner125 admits and insists on it; and Bellarmine, De Purg. lib. i, c. 2, appeals to Plato, Cicero, Virgil, and the Mahometans, to prove that it is according to natural light. Now, what does that mean? That redemption and the complete putting away of sin by the work of Christ for the believer—his heart being purified by faith—having been set aside, natural conscience (having the sense of faults in it, having nothing else to make amends for these faults according to their gravity, and unable to

quiet or purge itself here) looked with hope and fear to some satisfying for them, or being purged from them hereafter; that is, that Romanism, through the loss of the knowledge of redemption, is a return to heathenism, or, at best, to the instincts of natural light.

I will now give the statement of Plato. After a pretty elaborate description of hades, or the infernal regions, he continues: “These things being so, when those who are departed come to the place where the demon126 carries each, first they are distinguished in judgment, both those who have lived well, and piously, and righteously, and those who have not; and those who seem to have lived in a middle way, having come to the Acheron, having ascended the vehicle for each, they come to the lake, and there they dwell and, being purified and paying the penalty of their unrighteous deeds, they are absolved, if any one has acted unrighteously, and have the rewards of their good deeds, each according to his desert. But those who seem to be incapable of being healed, because of the greatness of their sins—having committed either many and great sacrileges, or many unrighteous and illegal murders, or whatever else such-like they may be involved in—these a fitted fate hurries away to Tartarus, whence they never get out; but those who have committed such as may be healed, yet great sins … are kept a year, and, if need be, more, till they obtain release from those they have injured for the wrongs done; for that is the penalty adjudged them… But those who are esteemed to have excelled as regards living piously, these, liberated and removed from their places on the earth, as from prisons, going away to the pure dwelling-place, dwell over the earth. And of these same, those who have been

adequately purified by philosophy, live without pain all time after, and come into a better habitation than these, which it is neither easy to describe, nor is there now time." And again, "If a soul depart in this state (a good one) it departs to what is like itself, and invisible—what is divine, immortal, and wise, and, coming there, begins to be happy, is freed from the contagion of human ills, and is in the society of the gods. But if it shall depart contaminated out of the body, it will be, when separated, impure.127 Those who have passed through life justly and piously, when they die, go to the isles of the blessed, to dwell in all happiness, without any evils. But he who has lived unrighteously, and without God, will go to the prison of vengeance and punishment, which they call Tartarus. But they who have committed the worst unrighteousness, and on account of such unrighteousness cannot be healed any more, of these examples are made. These cannot indeed any longer be helped who are incurable, but they help those who see them, when they see them, for their very great sins, suffering most painful and frightful sufferings for ever."

All this was borrowed from Egypt, as different points shew, though made up into Grecian philosophy, as in other parts we find him stating the Egyptian doctrine of the transmigration of souls, accompanied with another doctrine, greatly taught there afterwards, that the soul existed before, and came down to dwell in the body, two natures making up one person, as will be found in the places I have quoted from. But, though in a heathen form, we have the Roman doctrine of saints who go to heaven, the wicked to hell, and a middle class to purgatory. So Virgil,128 when ALneas goes down to hades, he is told by them in purgatory, "When life leaves

with the last light (of day), not yet is every evil over to the unhappy, nor all corporeal infection129 wholly gone; and it is altogether necessary that many things should have grown up as part of ourselves in wonderful ways; 130 therefore they are exercised with penal torments, and pay the penalty of old evils." And then he speaks of different punishments before they go to elysium.131 And, further, in the Odyssey, souls complain that sacrifices have not been offered for them, to get them out of this place. So Ovid's Fasti, lib. 2, 33.

Plato teaches the pre-existence of the soul (Phasdo, 923) and transmigration. Only true saints, who had kept alone from every snare of corporate existence, went, it is suggested, to God: so did Pythagoras. Philo, the Jew, held the pre-existence of the soul, as Plato, and that the air is full of demons up to the moon; and the lower, or inferior class, were disposed to be earthly, and came into bodies. This came from Indian or Egyptian heathenism. Why do I speak of these things? Because the great early doctors of the church, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, were educated in Platonism. Origen, too, embraced the whole system—transmigration, and the renewal of the whole series of the soul's history in another earth. Jerome and Ruffinus (Latins), and even, in part, Ambrose followed Origen in a great deal, as did Gregory of Nyssa, and many others in the East.

Origen was followed and defended till the fifth general council. Jerome and Augustine, who hesitated, as we have seen, about it all, led in the notions of the Western church. But Origen held that angels, devils, and men, were all on the same footing of responsibility, though in different states; and withal, that all would be ultimately saved; punishment was only purgatory for any.132

Ambrose we may speedily dismiss, the only difficulty being that he directly contradicts himself. But that is nothing with the Fathers. His doctrine, in result, is, that all professing Christians will be saved, and heathen unbelievers, that is, Christ's enemies, will not; that Christ chastens those that are His, and consigns those who are strangers to Him to eternal punishment (Enar. of Ps. 118, Octon. 20, sect. 24). As to the manner of it, he gives two directly conflicting statements: first, that there are three classes, the godly Christians, who will not come into judgment at all; those who have failed, though Christians, who will come into judgment; and the wicked, who will not come into judgment, abiding under wrath, so that it is not needed (Enar. in Ps. 1:53 and 56). He held two resurrections, and the failing Christian class to be tormented between the two; but it is after their resurrection. To the third class he refers the passage, "They are condemned already." Those who have added good works to faith will rise to blessedness, not judgment. He rests on John 5:28, 29, and the Revelation. But there is nothing clear as to when the resurrection to life or judgment takes place. In another place he declares that all must pass through the fire, even John and Peter; that the flaming sword is in the way of paradise (confounding the garden of Eden and the paradise of God); and hence, though John, the beloved of Christ, might escape death, he could not escape the fire, only such as John would be soon done with it (Enar. Ps. 118, Octon. 20, sect. 12, etc.).

Jerome may be fairly said to have also held that all Christians would be saved; but his history demands a little more attention. He admired and quotes Origen, or his views, at least, largely. Ruftinus, a great friend of

Jerome, translated Origen. This made him known, and he was widely condemned. Jerome attacked Ruffinus, and Ruffinus answered, it was no worse to translate him (Origen) than to cite him continually on these very points without the smallest disapprobation. Jerome, though a saint, got badly out of the scrape, as Tillemont and Dupin, honest Roman Catholics, confess. He alleges all sorts of bad excuses, and at last says, if he had held the views, he did not hold them now. I will now give some of his statements, and the result.

On Ezekiel 1:4, 5, our God, he says, is a consuming fire, and, as the ember comes after the fire, so happier things will be afforded after the torment of fire, which is for all believers (nobis omnibusque credentibus). Here all professors of Christ are to be delivered: we are to be in the fire, to give better things to the pure and purged; though, indeed, it goes farther than believers here, saying that after judgment and torments comes the precious brightness to the sufferers, as the providence of God governs all things, and what may be thought penalty is medicine.

On Ecclesiastes 9 he records the opinion of some, that reasonable creatures can offend and merit in another age, though death ends it in this, and he does not blame this.

In the end of his thirty-fifth Homily on Luke, “agree with thine adversary quickly,” he gives getting out of prison, not as he excuses himself, and is pleaded for him, but as his own, the effect of paying the last farthing is that a man gets out; a minute sin soon paid; greater ones longer; and, if they are very bad, how long will people

remain? But it is all after judgment, but no one can say how long; it may be infinite ages.

Finally, at the end of his Commentary on Isaiah, after quoting a series of passages, as alleged by others, to shew punishment will have an end [citations which shew utter ignorance of scripture, and the misleading of human imaginations, spiritualizing, as it is called, what is plain], after quoting, as the assertion of others, that this future mercy is hid for the sake of useful terror [which is Origen's doctrine], he adds for himself, "which we ought to leave to the knowledge of God alone, who knows how to weigh both mercy and torments, and knows also how and how long he ought to purge," etc.; and then he closes by saying, "and as we believe the torments of the devil, and of all deniers and impious men who say in their heart, 'there is no God,' to be eternal, of sinners and impious men, yet Christians, whose works are to be proved and purged in fire, we think the sentence of the Judge to be moderate, and mixed with clemency."

Worse doctrine one could hardly have, for Christians, who have light, are to be dealt with in clemency, even if impious, but the impious heathen are to be eternally lost. With purgatory it has nothing to do; it takes place after judgment, and of forgiveness, which is the groundwork of purgatory, there is no hint.

James. But, with all this confusion and darkness, why do they quote the Fathers, and make so much of them? This man does not seem to know the truth, nor grace, either.

Bill M. How can an ignorant man like you judge these holy men?

James. I do not know what they are, nor why they are called Fathers; but I am sure what we have just heard is not according to scripture nor God's truth, as the Lord Himself, and as Paul, and the rest—that is, the word of God—has taught it, and we are told to call no man father on the earth. But why is it, sir, so much is made of them, when such things are in them?

N*. It would not be so, James, with one who knew the truth and the scriptures of God. But what is ancient is venerable in men's eyes, and the word of God is too powerful for any one whose heart does not bow to it to hear, and they put it practically aside. The writings of these men are a matter of learnings the tradition of the elders, not of conscience; and, besides that, we must remember the influence and power of the enemy.

James. But then, surely, sir, Paul, and Peter, and John, and all the apostles, and others, are more venerable than they are— the inspired apostles of the blessed Lord, chosen by Himself; and so the other inspired writers. But these writers are not inspired.

N*. Undoubtedly, James, they are more venerable; and we are specially charged to hold fast to that which was from the beginning, as the apostles clearly were, and those called Fathers clearly were not.

Bill M. But you will be taking a wrong meaning out of the scriptures, and those men that lived hundreds of years ago must know better what the apostles taught than we can.

James. Well, Bill (begging your pardon, sir, for answering; we are poor men, and understand each other), but surely the best way of knowing what the apostles taught is to read what the apostles say? I know

we need God's grace for it, and I am ignorant of many things in scripture; but, at any rate, the right meaning is certainly there to get, and it is not in what we have heard of these Fathers at all; and I find it a great deal easier to understand, upon those things we have been speaking of, than what we have heard out of these books. Anybody can understand that if the writers of the scriptures were inspired, they must have said it right, and "perfectly, rightly, and better than those Fathers, who were not inspired at all; and why can they tell me the matter better than those we know God sent to tell it?

Bill M. But it is the priest will tell you what the truth is; you need not be reading those books.

James. How can I tell that he is inspired?

Bill M. No, of course, he is not.

James. Then he is no better to me, as to this matter, than any other; and why can I not read the scriptures that are for myself?

Bill M. You are too proud entirely. The priest is not inspired, but he teaches what the bishop teaches, and the bishop teaches what the pope and the church teach; and the scriptures were written in Greek, and languages you do not know.

James. Sure, it is not pride to listen to what God says. The Lord Jesus commended a poor woman for doing it, and said it should not be taken from her; and I know that the New Testament scriptures were written to all the Christian people, except a small part. How can I tell the priest teaches, or the bishop either, what the church teaches? I cannot rest the salvation of my soul on that; it is resting it on man. I know what the apostles and the

Lord taught is right, and my soul can trust it for salvation; but you give me nothing for my faith to rest in, except fallible men, for that you do not deny they are: and, as to Greek and Latin, what are these Fathers written in? I have no need to judge anything about them, for I rest my soul on the word of God, that I know is His; but what I have heard of the Fathers is very poor stuff any way.

N*. Poor stuff indeed; but it is what these doctors refer to, and the truth is, if you were learned, James, you would know that to refer to what the Fathers teach is to put your foot on a quicksand, in order to have firm ground. They contradict each other, and contradict themselves, as indeed we have seen already. But go on with Bill M.

James. I have not much more to say, sir. You see, Bill, I have a soul to be saved, and I must have some sure foundation from God for it, and I have got that, and through mercy know I have got it, in the word of God, in what you do not deny to be such. There I find that God hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes. It was not through learning I found salvation and got peace in my soul, and to know I was saved, but by the grace of God.

Bill M. It is awful to hear you talk so. Know you are saved! Who can know that?

James. I wonder you can rest a minute till you do know it. I do not mean to offend you, Bill, but what is your church worth, if a man cannot know he is saved in it, after all? You would be a happier man, if you knew you were.

Bill M. Of course I should; who would not? But it is all presumption.

James. Not if a person comes honestly to Christ. He says, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”: and through mercy I came to Him, and found rest. If you go to Him, you will find it. Sure, He cannot deceive us, nor tell us what is not true; and him that comes to Him He will in no wise cast out.

Bill M. I suppose you are going to turn preacher; and what about all your sins?

James. And what did the blessed Lord give Himself for? was it not our sins? and His blood cleanses from all sin; and I have read, “by him all that believe are justified from all things,” and “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” That is the comfort, Bill, having God’s own word for it. And, as to preaching, I am no preacher, but only giving, as I ought to be able to do, a reason for the hope that is in me, I trust, with meekness and fear, as I read we should.

Bill M. And I suppose you may sin now as much as you please?

James. No, indeed; I have to watch and pray, lest I enter into temptation, and find I need it too. But a Christian is a new creature, is born again, and hates sin; and there are blessed promises of help and grace for time of need, and that God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; and, if we do fail (and we have no excuse, I know, if we do), we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins. But there is no work to put away sin but the blessed Lord’s one offering of Himself, and that is

finished and perfected for ever, and He is set down at the right hand of God.

Bill M. But there is the holy, unbloody, sacrifice of the Mass.

James. Now, I know all your religion is a false one—forgive me for being plain, Bill—for the word of God declares that, where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Now, either you have no true remission of sins in your church, or there is no more offering for sin; and an unbloody sacrifice is of no use at all. Ah! Bill, when one has learnt the truth from God, and has the word of God to rest on, one does not want learning to know these things. I am very ignorant of scripture itself yet; but what one wants for the saving of one's own soul, one gets through mercy fast hold of. My missis, there, knows a great deal more of scripture than I do; but, through mercy, I know what saves me. I wanted it, and, through mercy, I have got it; and I know what scripture is, not by learning, but because I found the holy God and a Saviour in it, or it found me, perhaps I should say. Any way, I know what I have got, and where I got it.

Bill M. But how do you know you are not deceiving yourself all the while?

James. That I might well do; but God cannot he, and it is on His word I rest—on what you do not deny is His word, what I know to be such. It found me out, revealed my sins and myself to me, told me all I was, and told me what Christ was. The Spirit of God (as it must for that) worked in my heart; I was convinced of sin; it was not I judged about it, it laid hold of me—was God's eye, that

brought me naked before Him. No one, Bill, who has been under its power doubts what it is; and it is always so, and is holy, and will have holiness. Besides the Holy Spirit is given to those that believe, as it is promised; and he that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself.

Bill M.. I told you you would turn preacher; your head is just turned. I do not understand a word you say.

James. Well, Bill, I hope you may, and be as happy as I am, though I am a poor, ignorant, and feeble creature, and know only what I want for my soul's salvation; but I hope to learn more of this blessed book the Lord Himself has given us. But you were telling us about these Fathers, sir. I was led on, talking to Bill M.; but it is well to know what they are. They say so much about them, and, of course, I cannot read them myself, and they make a wonderful deal of them.

N*. What you have been saying is far happier, and much more important, James, than all the so-called Fathers. You would have poor work to do, to read the hundreds of volumes of them, if you even knew Greek and Latin. It is only because they make much of them, and you cannot tell what they are, and all that is unknown is apt to be wonderful, that it is well to know what they are. We were giving the statements by which they are alleged to support purgatory, and, I am glad to say, we have almost done. Of one more I will quote some passages, because he, as well as Jerome, is made a great deal of, and he will nearly complete our history. He is called Augustine —was a very ungodly, and undoubtedly became a truly godly man. As to poor Jerome, saint though he be called, he had an awful and wholly unsubdued temper, and was

abusive and revengeful to the last degree: however, he was a saint for Rome. I hope it was all right with him; but really, one can say no more. And now for Augustine.

What we have cited from Ambrose and Jerome has nothing to do with purgatory, but made judgment a temporary and purifying thing for all Christians, and was chiefly borrowed from Origen, admitted to be a heretic on all these points. But I will give you Augustine's statements, a good man, and partially led by what we have already looked at, but confessedly uncertain in his own mind; only he rejects positively the doctrines of the earlier Fathers, Origen, Ambrose, and Jerome. In the. twenty-first book of The City of God, chapter 25, he had insisted that a man might outwardly partake of the Lord's supper, and not really receive Christ, that he who fed on Christ abode in Him, and that they were not members of Christ if in sin. Then he takes up the case of being burned (1 Cor. 3), and first refers to tribulation. "So," he says, "as far as it appears to me, that fire is found"; and goes on to declare it cannot be the eternal fire, as some have said, into which those who are on the left hand are cast, and that only those who are set on the Lord's right hand go into that fire, inasmuch as they are saved, though their work is burnt; whereas those who go into the eternal fire will never be saved, but punished for ever (21, 26, 3). Then, in 4, "if in the interval between death and resurrection the spirits of the deceased are said to suffer this kind of fire, that their wood, hay, and stubble may be consumed, which those who have not such morals and affections in the life of this body will not feel, but those feel who have carried building of this sort with them, whether there only, or here and there, or therefore here, that it may not be

there, they find fire of transitory tribulation, consuming worldly things, but pardonable as concerns eternal damnation, I do not controvert, for perhaps it is true." Death may belong to it. "Persecution, in which martyrs are crowned, or which any Christians suffer, tries both kinds of building as fire, and if they do not find Christ in them, consumes some works and builders, some without the builders, if Christ be found," etc. He was a good man, and knew what it was to have Christ, and could not confound the substance of the matter with chaff, however dark he might be on a passage, and owns he was. "There will be, too, in the end of the age, tribulation in the time of Antichrist, such as never was." Thus his own mind rests on tribulation. He utterly rejects Origen's notions, taken up by Ambrose and Jerome; but, as I said, is partially led by their views, so as to admit the possibility of another purifying fire when a true Christian had allowed evil in himself. The application of 1 Corinthians 3 to purgatory, Bellarmine assures us, is quite wrong, because there every one's work is tried, and that will not do for purgatory (Bell, de Purg., lib. 1, c. 5, sect. 37, 38), and he rejects Augustine's own opinion, which is that of Gregory, that it is tribulation here (sect. 22, 26, 36). So little have we to trust in these doctors for unanimity of judgment. But in the tract on Faith and Works, 25 (15), this same Augustine utterly rejects the opinion of Ambrose and Jerome, though not naming them, and shews their views to be contrary to scripture where it is plainest, because of this, to him, obscure passage133 in 1 Corinthians 3, and quotes 1 Corinthians 13; James 2:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:19-21. "All this will be false," he says, "if they are saved by fire who persevere in such evil things, if only they believe and are baptized. And

thus the baptized in Christ even who do such things will possess the kingdom of God." He adds a great deal more to the same purpose, which I need not quote. He then adds, 29 (16), "Perhaps it will be asked me here what I think of the sentence of the apostle Paul itself, and how I think it is to be understood. I confess I had rather hear more intelligent and learned persons, who shall so expound it, as that all those things which I have above recited should remain true and unshaken, and what I have not cited by which scripture most openly testifies that faith profits nothing save that which the apostle has defined, which works by love." He says, however, he will explain, as well as he can, that if there is a faith which works by love, that faith will not suffer him to perish; he will be saved: but if he has with that allowed his heart to be attached to earthly things, "in losing them they suffer loss, and by a certain fire of grief arrive at salvation." It is all poor and uncertain teaching, but of a godly man. On the same point, in the Enchiridion 18 (69), referring to the same passage, he says, "It is not incredible there may be some such thing after this life, and whether it be so may be inquired, and it may be discovered, or lay hid, that some of the faithful may be saved by a certain purifying fire; by how much they may have more or less loved perishing good things, by so much they may be more quickly or slowly saved."

His doctrine as to good works shews how he lay open to these thoughts, and such uncertainty, for here we have a different doctrine from what he says in the tract on Faith and Good Works. In The City of God he gives both, but that the fire means tribulation, as his own view. In his book on Dulcitius' Eight Questions (1, 14), he earnestly rejects Origen's doctrine of the salvation of the wicked

after a time of punishment 1 and, while mourning over those he cannot mend, nor refuse at the sacrament, still bows to scripture that they are lost. But in the thirteenth chapter of the twenty-first book of the Civ. Dei, citing the Platonicians and Virgil, which I have already referred to, he accepts purgatorial pains between death and judgment, though rejecting (what Origen and Jerome and Ambrose taught) that all the baptized would be saved. But in the twenty-fifth chapter of the twentieth book of the Civ. Dei, he teaches, from Malachi 3, that the day of judgment itself will be purgatorial for some, and as Malachi (who really refers to Israel) speaks of offering, he says they will then offer, but it will be themselves when purified, for what offering could be more acceptable to God? They cannot offer for their sins when purged; but he puts off the full discussion of that subject to another time. He then goes on, as the sacrifices would be offered as of old, to state that they were offered in paradise before the fall, and he loses himself in other ideas.

James. But you say, sir, Augustine was a godly man; yet he is confused and uncertain on the plainest things in scripture.

N*. That is the very use of referring, as I have done, to the Fathers. They are quoted, and Bill M. had referred to them as great authorities to you, and so do Dr. Milner and all Roman Catholic teachers. Nay, their Council of Trent will have no interpretation of scripture but what is by their unanimous consent. Hence it was well to know what they are really worth. Augustine was a godly man, and hence his spirit rejected the vagaries of Origen, copied by Jerome and by Ambrose, who must have had great weight with him as his spiritual father, but he

rejects it all. But not knowing the fulness of redemption, as not one of the Fathers did, nor that the poor thief could go straight into paradise to be with Christ, because Christ's blood (who was in grace on the cross by him) had cleansed him from all sin, nor able, as scripture speaks, to "give thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," they were at a loss what to do with the faults and failings of real Christians. Before Augustine the purifying was held to be after the day of judgment: this he sometimes teaches—sometimes that it was tribulation here—sometimes between death and judgment; and then he put off its full discussion (but never took it up again), and wished some more learned man to treat of it— would not controvert its being after death, or here and not there, or here and there both.

But the seed of the doctrine was now sown. Gregory the First, of Rome, a great but very superstitious man, whom sober Roman Catholics acknowledge to have stuffed the very book I quote from with absurd and incredible stories, thus speaks in it, founding his doctrine on the Lord's words, "neither in this world nor in the next": which refer solely to the age of the law and that of the Messiah, a perfectly well-known Jewish distinction, of which he knew nothing. He says it is to be believed that there is a purifying fire for very light faults, but only for small and the very least faults, as frequent idle talk, or immoderate laughter, or error of ignorance in immaterial things; and then refers to i Corinthians 3, which, as we have seen, their great doctor, Bellarmine, says can not apply to purgatory, and which Gregory says may be understood of tribulation in this life, but with the strangest application, saying,

contrary to the rest, “not iron, brass, lead—hard things, and these, indeed, indissoluble; but wood, hay, stubble—that is, the smallest and lightest sins, which the fire easily consumes”: and then he adds, “only if a man has deserved it in this life” (Dialogues, lib. 4).

James. But that has no sense, and the apostle speaks of gold and silver, and precious stones, and what the teacher has built in his service. They don’t seem to have understood the scriptures at all, according to what you have quoted, sir.

N*. Nothing can be more foolish as an interpretation; but they had all lost the doctrine of a complete redemption and purging of the conscience by the precious blood of Christ, and therefore all was dark to them. They had to make out some other way of clearing themselves, and hence penances and purgatory and indulgences and such like means. But this is all poor Romanists have to rest on. How different from the clear and sure testimony of the word of God, with its holy claim on the conscience, and full and perfect grace for the soul, the constant presence of Christ before God for us, and His intercession unsought, for every need and every failure, in virtue of a blood and righteousness which never can fail, and sanctifying correction by His word and Spirit in our hearts, with chastening, if needed, for our good, not as an exacting God, for “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,” and for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness!

But I have done my history of purgatory. The doctrine fyad now come in, and soon after the dark ages, when wickedness, and corruption, and superstition were at their height. What do we see, then, as the result?

Scripture does not say one word of purgatory, but teaches exactly the contrary. We have examined the pretended passages; but when I turn to heathen philosophers and Jews, I find a system of doctrine to which the Romanist doctrine is conformed. Nor is that all. These Jewish doctrines were mixed up with this particular class of heathen ones at Alexandria, as is well known, and all the works of Philo testify. Now all the early learned Fathers who imprinted the character of their doctrines on the church lived at Alexandria. There was the great Christian catechetical school, and the principal of these Fathers were its masters, as Clement and Origen; and through these this mixture of Platonism and Judaism flowed into the church. The fact of the accordance of these doctrines is not my statement alone; you see Dr. Milner admits it, and says it shews how suited it was to human nature, which is quite true: only that the reasonings, of philosophy were added. And Bellarmine, the Jesuit, and one of the highest authorities in Romanist doctrine, refers to Plato and Cicero and Virgil, as holding these views, and seeks to prove it thereby as of the common light of nature (Bell, de Purg., lib. I; Prague, 1721, p. 348). So Dr. Milner, “it is conformable to the dictates of natural religion”; that is, punishment suited to the degrees of guilt is. Now, I do not deny this; moreover, scripture speaks of it (Luke 12:47, 48). Before I answer this, let us recall the doctrines to which I refer.

Plato holds that the flesh is an evil part of the nature, which infects the soul, and that if it has wholly given itself up to vice, it would be given up to punishment for the advantage of others, as an example: if not, but that still any had not kept themselves free, they would be

punished in hades for a certain time, proportioned to their unpurged stains; that there were two instruments for the health of the body, exercise (gymnastics) and medicine, and if the first were not sufficient, the other was to be applied; that the spots of the soul were like the colours after a wound when completely well. The soul, at the end of its purification and punishment, would be rendered splendid and spotless. That is simply purgatory—purgatory from the natural need of the soul without Christ. Virgil enlarges a little on it: besides the torments of hell, he states the same process of punishment and purification, but he does not quite finish them off then; he sends them to elysium, a place of blessedness, and then, after a length of time, the hardened spots are wholly gone, and the ethereal soul is left quite pure. Other fictions were added; the souls quite pure, according to Plato, went off to the stars, according to their qualities, for they held (so Philo, the Jew) the stars to be living beings. All this was much borrowed from the Egyptians and Pythagoras. Hades was placed by them under the earth, and so by Romanists (as Bellarmine). This doctrine of purgatory was connected with the famous mysteries of Eleusis. It was signified in the rites, says Plato, that he who was not initiated and the unper-fected in them would go to hades, and he in mire, but that the purified and perfected person, when he departed, would dwell with the gods. So they held that there were those who answered to the Romish saints—the heroes, who went to heaven at once, and were eternally happy. Here is Virgil's account of purgatory: "Moreover, when at the last ray fife leaves, yet not every sorrow ceases to the unhappy, nor do bodily pains altogether pass, and it is altogether necessary that many things contracted by

long usage should grow in a wonderful way into their very constitution. Therefore they are exercised with penal sufferings, and satisfy by punishment for the inveterate evils." This is not Tartarus, the hell of the condemned, but souls that can be purified, who are not yet fit for elysium. You must not be surprised if we refer Roman Catholic doctrines to heathens, where we find exactly the same doctrine. All the language used of the sacraments by the Fathers is borrowed from heathen mysteries, and that even in the language of the liturgies.

But there was another source historically of this doctrine (I say historically, for it was all the same reasoning of human nature that did not know the gospel of salvation)—the Jewish doctrine. The Jews' notion (and the identity of thought is here also extraordinary) was this: they say (as Cyprian, Ambrose, and hosts of others) that there is no place of repentance after death. This the Fathers repeat continually; so the Jews. It is true; but where redemption is not known the only resource is to keep people from sin by terrifying the mind always by the dread of an avenging God, falsifying His character. But then they make almost all Jews get out of the place of punishment, because God has punished the best for all faults, and, after punishing the wicked, must crown what they have done right. Even if one commandment be kept, a Jew will be blest, so that, between that and Abraham's help and Moses', every child of Israel will see the world to come. God leans to the side of mercy, and it would not be just, they say, that a man suffered eternally for crimes which have often been light ones. Hence they have a purgatory for prevaricators in Israel, those who are not entirely good nor entirely bad. They pray to get souls out of it, and God releases them, and particularly

at great days of expiation. It is even said that they sell indulgences to the people to get out quicker. Their purgatory is a part of hell beneath the earth. They judge that souls who have done both evil and good works will be punished for the evil, and then be rewarded for the good. So exactly says Origen (Horn. 16) on Jeremiah 5:6, "If after you are on the foundation of Jesus Christ, you have gold, etc., and wood, etc., what would you have done to you when your soul quits your body? Would you enter into the holy place for the gold, etc., to pollute God's kingdom, or stay out for the wood, and receive no reward for the gold," etc.? Yet neither is this just. He then quotes, "our God is a consuming fire," and says, there comes always blessing after threats and sorrow. And quoting falsely, I know not how, Isaiah 40, he insists on the word first ("I will first retribute double their iniquities "); first we shall suffer the torment for our iniquities, then be crowned for" our righteousness. This is exactly Jewish.

Jerome, reasoning against Pelagius (who said that in the day of judgment the wicked and sinners are not to be spared, but to be burned), answers, You interdict mercy to God. When He says, sinners shall cease out of the earth, He does not say they shall be burned in eternal fire—sin and iniquity (not impiety, which is not knowing God) according to the quality of the vices, after the wound of sin and iniquity receives health. It is one thing to lose the glory of the resurrection—another to perish everlastingly. This, too, was the Jewish notion. The resurrection is for Moses, the saints, and the righteous. In all this we see, no doubt, what suits nature, and how thoroughly the Fathers have followed the crude imaginations of Jews and heathens; and then Rome has

made a new system out of it, whose first definite traces are to be found in Gregory the Great, at the end of the sixth century. Only some went farther, as Origen, who held, as Bellarmine himself tells us, that there was no punishment but purifying punishment: he thought that souls had existed before, and were then born into this world, and that they would go on purifying gradually till they purely enjoyed God. It is hard to say what place he gave to Christ in this. Gregory of Nyssa held the same views, and speaks of Judas being purified, of whom Peter says, “he went to his own place,” and the Lord, “it had been good for him not to have been born.” And throughout his works this doctrine is taught. Some looked shy at him with good reason; but the great Romanist champion, Bellarmine, eulogises him as admirable, and he was one often whom the Council of Ephesus said they were to decide all by, and one of those sent on a kind of visitation round the churches to see there was no Arian heresy.134 And now see the true character of all this.

Christianity has come finding man lost—justly lost by sin, and departed from God—has brought him salvation when he is in that state—has brought him life, eternal life. Christ is that life—a life holy in its nature, and which loves God and that which is good; he, it tells us, who receives Christ, receives this life. Such is the positive plain declaration of scripture; but that is not all. How can such poor, sinful, guilty, creatures have confidence to come to God; to walk at peace with Him, so as to come to His holy habitation hereafter, even if, quickened by Christ, they desire it? First, the Son of God has become a man, and lived amongst men to prove His love, and that He does not reject the vilest; He is the

friend of publicans and sinners. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Hence we see the very vilest (who could not venture near a decent person) come to Jesus—humbled surely, but received, and told to go in peace. Thus God was revealed amongst men, that sinners, such as we are, might trust Him. But to enter into His presence in heaven we must be cleansed—justified. The same blessed One gives Himself for us; has given Himself for the sins of all who come to God by Him; has borne their sins in His own body on the tree. Thereupon the Holy Ghost declares to us that they which believe are justified from all things; that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses them from all sin, and that God will remember their sins and imquities no more. Hence we are assured of being with Christ directly when we die—absent from the body and present with the Lord—and we are called upon to give thanks to the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. So the poor thief, who talked of being remembered when the kingdom came, was assured that he should be that very day with Christ in paradise. And the Holy Ghost is given to those who believe as the seal of God upon them, and the earnest of their inheritance. And He is in them—a Spirit of adoption—crying Abba, Father. Death they know is a gain to them—resurrection the time of glory. They know that when He comes He will receive all that have believed in Him, and they will appear with Him in glory.

Being justified by faith they have peace with God; holiness is their delight; glory and being like Christ their sure hope. If they fail, Christ is an Advocate with the Father for them, and ever Hveth to make intercession

for them, and hence is able to save utterly and completely. Warnings they need; exhortations too, vigilance, prayer, and every other means, public or private, that God in grace has afforded them. If they carelessly fail, they have every ground to humble themselves in the dust, and confess their fault before God. If they do not own the warnings of the word in grace, God chastens them as a father, that they may be partakers of His holiness; but they do not doubt that they have eternal life in Christ, because God says so, nor that the blood of Christ cleanses them from all sin, nor think that God will remember their sins and iniquities any more.

Instead of that, what do I find? Christ brought in as a foundation to begin with, and a man who is built on Christ as a foundation having still to answer for everything as much as if there was no Christ; he has to pay the penalty of his sins now, or must do so hereafter, for God will have the last farthing. Sacraments there are to cleanse and justify—justified in baptism, not from his actual sins (for as yet he has committed none), but when he has, a sacrament to purify him from guilt without purifying his heart; nay, on the contrary, a sacrament which makes contrition unnecessary, and gives absolution on sorrow from a lower motive, called attrition—a horribly unholy doctrine—forgiveness quieting the conscience without purifying the heart, but the forgiven man having still to satisfy an exacting God for his sins, unless this temporal penalty too be excused by an indulgence. Then, when dying, other sacraments, no less than three, to quiet his conscience again; and then he must go to purgatory to pay and satisfy God still.

And all this if a man is in grace forgiven, sanctified, and justified! It is not Christianity, whatever else it may be.

James. Well, how little one knows what Romanism is! I could never have thought it; but all these Fathers! I thought they were such holy people, all teaching as nobody else could. Why, they only make everything dark, I think: the word of God is clearer and surer too. I see that plainly now, and then one has the words of the apostles and of the blessed Lord Himself, and we are sure they are right. Oh, what a comfort for one's poor soul that is!

Mrs. J. But I do not know, sir, why one should trouble oneself with all these books and mazes of uncertain teaching when one has the word of God. They are beyond poor folks like us, and if knowing the truth depended on reading them, we should be in a bad way, while with my Bible and the words of my blessed Saviour all is simple and full of grace, just suited to simple people: and then they are His own.

N*. Just so, Mrs. J.; they are His own. Oh, what a thought that is! They come with power, they come with authority, and that is what no man's words can do; and then they come in grace to the heart—God's grace.

Mrs. J. They do, sir.

N*. When God has become a man—when He can say, If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given—when the High and Holy One has come so low to be with sinners, the moment I believe it, I can have confidence in Him. I have much to learn; but to learn from one who loves us. If we reject His grace, we have a debt we never can pay at all: but if

we have Him, we have one who— blessed be His name— has paid the last farthing for us. There is not the smallest need of your knowing the Fathers. They may be interesting, as a matter of history, to shew what went on in those days for those who make research, and they are so; and in a very few indeed we see marks of piety and true grace, as in Irenaeus of the more voluminous, and others I need not name here; but it is not in the books of those times you get the highest parts of Christianity. They were almost all corrupted by heathenism and philosophical reasonings. I do not think you would find as much rubbish and false interpretation in any quantity of serious books of the same size nowadays. But men suffered then for Christ, and so did some of these very men. As to their consent in doctrines, it is all a fable. There never was more disputing and confusion about doctrine than in those days. They were holding councils on councils to try and settle it, and often the emperors managed the matter their own way—by their power, by the banishment of those whose opinions they did not like, etc. In one great council they had, the prelates of one party beat the old Archbishop of Constantinople so that he died of it. And some of the other councils were not a great deal better, though not so violent.

Bill M. But I do not want you to read the Fathers, but to hear the church. I cannot answer as to all these Fathers, because I have not read their books: the priest would answer all, I am sure.

James. But you used to talk about the holy Fathers to me, Bill, and how they all agreed from the beginning in one doctrine and one church, and all that.

Bill M. And so they did, I am sure.

N*. You cannot, M., speak of the Fathers, nor do I blame you for that, unless it is speaking of them without examining; but Dr. Milner has read them, and though I own scripture alone for an authority, we agreed to take his book as you had given it, and we were bound, as he had quoted them, to examine what he said. Nor can I acquit Dr. Milner of dishonesty on this subject. As to the scripture (1 Pet. 3:19) there is no preaching in purgatory we well know: Abraham's bosom, Augustine even assures us, cannot mean purgatory. As to 1 Corinthians 3, not only Augustine says it is most difficult, but Bellarmine declares it cannot apply to purgatory, for there all are to go into the fire. But as to the Fathers it is worse, because he knows that prayers for the dead cannot be reconciled with the Romish purgatory, for all were prayed for, even the Virgin Mary. This he must have known; so that to quote the Fathers, who speak of it as proving purgatory, is utterly dishonest, and to say "an intermediate state which we call purgatory" —he knew very well it was not what they call purgatory. His statement as to the Greek church is equally false: it holds neither purgatory nor indulgences. They do hold prayers for the dead, as in the earlier centuries, but reject wholly purgatory. Neither was "from the beginning," and we must have that, or what is false. We have examined these Fathers on the subject of purgatory pretty much at length, and we may leave it. You, I know, would like to take up the question of the church, which you think settles everything.

Bill M. Yes, it is no good arguing; we must get some authority to decide. And the church, the Lord declares, is that authority, and tells us to hear it. What can you say against the Lord's own words?

N*. Well, M., we will take your own subject up next. It is fair you should have your turn; but for the present I think we have had enough. The Lord willing, we will take that up when we meet again; only remember, as far as we have gone, we have had all your friend, Dr. Milner, has to say for your doctrine. It is not taking a person who cannot be expected to know much of the Fathers, and seeking to confound him. I can add, that I have looked into a more famous man still of your party, and that is Bellarmine; but it is the same in substance, and I do not see that he adds anything material. He says St. Chrysostom is quite wrong in his view of 1 Corinthians 3, for on this interpretation all would be saved. I do not know how he manages about the consent of the Fathers. I suppose he was not thinking of it just then, yet this is their pet text on the subject. Bellarmine prefers Gregory, which I have given you. For my own part, what I see is this—the real source of purgatory is heathenism and Judaism, which were associated at Alexandria, where the first great doctors of the church lived. At first it took the shape of purifying all completely in eternal fire. Still this was not generally accepted. It then took the form of prayers for all, because they had not fully the sense of Christ's having so atoned for believers' sins, that they were white as snow for God. They apportioned, therefore, to all some punishment—at the least the punishment of loss, not seeing God; or at any rate were uncertain, and prayed for all, even for the Virgin Mary, with a view to their speedily seeing the face of God; but the idea of the purging process survived through, and in Augustine's time was a question as to which he doubted —Jerome speaking with such uncertainty that he is accused of denying eternal punishment. This was in the fifth century: in the end of the sixth Gregory specifies

the purifying very light sins, but doubts still. With schoolmen it was like other things formed into an elaborate system; but all this last part was only in Western Christendom. Greek or Eastern Christendom has never received the doctrine.

I conclude: scripture is positively and clearly against it, as destructive of Christ's work. The Fathers are one mass of confusion as to it, its true source being heathenism and Judaism; and the oldest half of Christendom rejects it to this day. Yet it is practically the great doctrine of Romanism in connection with the Mass. It is to get people out of it that Masses are constantly said. The poverty of the system is shewn, and the character it gives to God, in that it proceeds on the ground of God's exacting the last farthing (an interpretation denied by Augustine and Jerome), and that after the use of all the means the Roman system has at its disposal—absolution, the viaticum, and extreme unction, which wipes off the remains of sin—so utterly unprofitable are they (by their own confession) that the faithful have to go to purgatory to get these remains burned out by the relentless and exacting hand of God.

Oh, what a difference from that holy grace of God that saves, cleanses, and gives life!

[End of Doctrinal—Volume 5]

86 The words of the catechism are given from J. Donovan's (a Professor at Maynooth) Translation, Dublin, 1839. It is thus translated in his edition published at Rome, and printed, Latin and English, at the Propaganda Press: "But as this is a degree of contrition which very few could reach, the consequence, also, was, that very few could have hoped to obtain

through perfect contrition the pardon of their sins. It therefore became necessary that the Almighty, in His infinite mercy, should provide by some easier means for the common salvation of men: this He did, in His admirable wisdom, when He gave to His church the keys of the kingdom of heaven," etc.—Vol. 1, p. 535, "Confession; its Importance."— Cath. Conc. Trid.

87 It is just this that distinguishes between true ministry and a superstitious priesthood. True ministryj by the power of the Spirit of God, brings God and His word to the soul. A false priesthood gets, and gets as man, between God and the soul. Hence it shuts out the soul from God, while Christ has given Himself to bring us to God.

88 It is singular enough the obscurity and inconsistency of the Catechism of the Council of Trent on this subject. In the article on the descent into hell, besides what I have just quoted, after speaking of purgatory, it is said, "The third kind of abode is that in which were received the souls of the just who died before Christ, and where, without experiencing any kind of pain, supported by the blessed hope of redemption, they enjoyed peaceful repose. These pious souls, then, who in the bosom of Abraham were expecting the Saviour, Christ the Lord liberated, descending into hell." (Vol. I, p. 123, 3.) Shortly after, in the same article, it is said, speaking of the descent of the just: "They all descended, some to endure the most acute torments; others, though exempt from actual pain, yet deprived of the vision of God, and of the glory for which they sighed, and consigned to the torture of suspense in painful captivity." Is being consigned to the torture of suspense in painful captivity peaceful repose in the bosom of Abraham? Were the holy

and the just held in painful captivity in the bosom of Abraham? Is that the picture which scripture gives of it? The fire of purgatory is the second thing. 'Limbus patrum' is the third kind of abode, where there was no pain, but peaceful repose. Yet some were there to endure the most acute torments. In a further passage it is Said, "And the souls of the just, on their departure from this life, were borne to the bosom of Abraham; or, as is still the case with those who require to be freed from the stains of sin or die indebted to the divine justice, were purified in the fire of purgatory" (p. 127, 2.) Hence the souls of the just who were enjoying peaceful repose in the torture of suspense must have been perfect souls. The others were in the fire of purgatory as people are now. The Jews' belief is that Abraham descended from time to time to deliver souls. BeUarmine insists that it is a material fire—a strange thing for souls to suffer from. But what is more important, he declares that the element of sin (the fomes peccati) is gone by death, because sensuality is extinguished—habits not. But they must soon be gone too, nay, at once, though that is not the case in this life, because there will there be no contrary and resisting element as there is here—nor is purgatory for these habits, as adults who die directly after baptism, and martyrs do not go there. Yet neither baptism nor martyrdom destroys them. After reasoning thus, and saying purgatory was for none of these, he adds, "There remain, therefore, the penalties of guilt and venial sins, which may properly be called the remains of sins, on account of which purgatory is. But these remains, it is sometimes certain, are purged in death: sometimes it is certain they are not purged, sometimes it is doubtful which happens, and it is most probable they are partly

purged and partly not purged." (Vol. 2, Bellarm. De Purg. lib. 2, cap. 9, 7 (p. 370): "Restat ergo reatus poena; et peccata venialia, quae proprie did possunt reliquiae peccatorum, ob quas est purgatorium. Has autem reliquias aliquando certum est in morte purgari; aliquando certum est non purgari: aliquando dubium est, quid fiat, et probabilissimum est, partim purgari, partim non purgari ": and preceding and following sections. I cite this because it is thus clear from the highest authority of the Roman Catholic church that it is not inward spiritual purifying, for sensuality is extinguished by death—not even habits, but the penalty of guilt and venial sin. It is strictly penal and satisfactory; and, secondly, it is exactly for that ("the remains of sin," which extreme unction takes away) that men go into purgatory; which is noticed farther on. The pains of purgatory, says BeUarmine, are most horrible (atrocissimas). It cannot be said how long they last—they may diminish gradually. This he proves by visions. He enlarges upon the proofs of the horrible pains compared with anything here. In result, for the slightest faults (if Pope Gregory the Great is to be believed), and with no view to purify from lust or sensuality (for that is extinguished), justified holy souls in a state of grace are kept in torment as a mere penal satisfaction.

One catechism defines it "a place of punishment where souls suffer for a time, before they go to heaven"; but the Council of Trent and the creed of Pope Pius give us no help here.

89 Milner's "End of Con." Letter 42, On Indulgences, "of what it really is "(sec. 4 of second par. of Letter 42.). Bellarm. De Indulg., lib. 1, cap. 12.

90 Concil. Tridentini Sessio 14, De Sacr. Extremae Unction is, Cap. 2 — “Cujus unctio delicta, si quae sint adhuc expianda, ac peccati reliquias abstergit.” This is exactly what Bellarmine says souls go to purgatory for. Again, “it rids the soul of the languor and infirmity brought on it by sin, and of all the other remains of sin.” (Extrema Unct., vol. 1, 5. 6, p. 597, II) — Catechism of the Council of Trent.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 Bellarmine de Indulg. lib. 1, 6, 3. They are “per modum suffragii.” I4, 5, 6, “per suffragia.”

94 Yet the words “expiantur” and “purgantur” are used for clearing the tormented souls from it, because heaven cannot be denied. But it shews the mere external character of the remedy of their idea of sin. It looks like quibbling on the Latin word “pur go,” which means to put away in the way of expiation, and not purging of a soul.

95 See Dr. Pusey’s “Eirenicon,” vol. 1, p. 122, for the Encyclical.

The present pope, in his encyclical letter of 1849, says that the Virgin, “by the foot of Virtue, ‘bruised the serpent’s head,’ and who, being constituted between Christ and His church, and, being wholly sweet and full of graces, hath ever delivered the Christian people from calamities of all sorts.” … “For ye know very well, ven. brethren, that the whole of our confidence is placed in the most holy Virgin, since God has placed in Mary the fulness of all good, that accordingly we may know that, if there is any hope in us, if any grace, if any salvation, it

redounds to us from her, because such is His will who hath willed that we should have everything through Mary."

M. Olier, the founder of the Seminary of S. Sulpice (quoted by Dr. Pusey in his "Eirenicon," vol. 1, p. 104), said," We are very unworthy to draw near unto Jesus; and He has a right to repulse [rebuter] us, because of His justice, since, having entered into all the feelings of His Father from the time of His blessed resurrection, He finds Himself in the same disposition with the Father towards sinners, that is, to reject them; so that the difficulty is to induce Him to exchange the office of judge for that of advocate; and of a judge to make Him a suppliant. Now this is what the saints effect, and especially the most blessed Virgin!"

I will add here, from a prayer-book, "St. John's Manual," recommended (1856) by John, Archbishop of New York, some of the devotions to the Virgin. "I worship thee, O great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces which thou hast hitherto granted me; and especially I thank thee for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved… I place all my hopes in thee, and confide my salvation to thy care."—Saint John's Manual, p. 886 j and in p. 887, "By thee we have been reconciled to our God; Thou art the only advocate of sinners… We have no hope but in thee, O most pure Virgin."

96 It is the common doctrine that the Virgin has more power in heaven than God, that the mother can command her Son. I have had it stated to myself by poor Roman Catholics. Nor is this the ignorance of the poor: Bernardme Senensis teaches, Serm. 61, Artie. I, cap. 6: "All things are subject to the command of the Virgin,

even God himself." (Quoted by Ussher, "Answer to a Jesuit's Challenge," p. 417, where there is a great deal more to the same purpose.) It is expressly founded on a mother's having pre-eminence, and being superior to a son. The words in Latin are, "sequitur quod ips abenedicta Virgo sit superior Deo." It follows that the blessed Virgin herself is superior to God.—De Bust. Marial. Part 9, Serm. 2. And so it is said that God has reserved the supremacy of justice, but given up to the Virgin the supremacy of grace. And such is the tenor of their practical teaching. Thus, in "The Glories of Mary," by Liguori (vol. 1, chap. 3, sec. 2), a sinner, after saying the "Hail Mary" to an image of the Virgin, "saw an infant covered with wounds streaming blood … he began to weep; but he saw the infant turning away from him…. He had recourse to the most holy Virgin, saying, Mother of mercy, thy Son rejects me." The Virgin reproached him with renewing the passion of Jesus. "But because Mary knows not how to send away disconsolate a soul that has recourse to her, she turned to her Son to ask pardon for that miserable sinner. Jesus still appeared unwilling to forgive him; but the holy Virgin, placing the infant in the niche, prostrated herself before him, saying, 'Son, I will not depart from thy feet till thou dost pardon this sinner.' Jesus then said, 'Mother, I can refuse thee nothing; thou dost wish me to pardon him, for thy sake I pardon him; make him come and kiss my wounds.' The sinner came weeping bitterly, and as he kissed the wounds of the infant they were healed. In the end Jesus embraced him in token of his pardon; the sinner changed his conduct, and afterwards led a holy life, enamoured of the most holy Virgin"!

What shall we say to such statements? The images, in the first place, are the living persons; they do not, as falsely alleged, merely recall these. Real idols! Mercy is in Mary, not in Jesus. It is a denial of His own words: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." It is for Mary's sake that Christ pardons the sinner. And what place has His blood-shedding, which is stopped (!) by the sinner's repentance through Mary's grace? Is it possible to have a more complete subversion of all truth? Upon its folly I offer no comment. Their excuse is that "Jesus is the only mediator of justice between men and God,… but because men recognize and fear in Jesus Christ the divine majesty which resides in Him as God, the Lord wished to appoint another advocate, to whom we could have recourse with less fear and with more confidence. This advocate is Mary…" There is need then of a medium with the mediator Himself.—S. Bernard, Serm. in Sign. Magnn., quoted in Liguori, vol., 1, chap. 6. sec. 2. Again she is compared to Abigail with David: "She knows so well how to appease the divine justice by her tender and wise prayers, that God Himself blesses her for it, and, as it were, thanks her for thus keeping Him from abandoning them to the chastisements which they deserve." Note that she is a mediatrix of justice really in these stupid blasphemies; or what does appeasing the divine justice mean?

97 See Con. Trid. Sessio VI, cap. 9.

98 See Cat. Con. Trid., pars 4, cap. 14, sect. 16 (vol. 2, p. 389). Bellarm. De Indulg., lib. I, cap. 3, sect. 3.

99 Animae cruciatae expiantur. Expiantur is a sacrificial word, expressing the removal of what in any way offends the gods, is offensive in their sight.—The Editor of the

Present Testimony adds from Donovan's Latin and English Catechism of Council of Trent the passage in full:—

"Praeterea est purgatorius ignis, quo piorum animae ad definitum tempus cruciatae expiantur, ut eis in aeternam patriam ingressus patere possit." —Catech. Rom. cap. 6, sect. 3.

"There is also the fire of purgatory, in which the souls of just men are purified by a tem porary punishment, to qualify them to be admitted into their —eternal country, into which nothing defiled entereth." — Donovan's Translation, vol. 1, p. 123, 2, Art. 5.

100 The sixth question on this subject in the Roman Catholic Catechism would lead us to conclude that as there were these pious people in purgatory, as well as saints in Abraham's bosom, before Christ descended, the one—though in repose—tortured by suspense, though sustained by hope (a strange kind of repose), the other pious souls not completely saints, tortured horribly in the fire—so when He descended these last got off to heaven as well as the saints, properly speaking. Who finished their satisfaction for them, without which they could not be clean, we are not told. They were better off than those now in purgatory, any way. These, we are told, must pay the last farthing, or they cannot come out thence. Better to have been a Jew, any way, than a Christian. However that may be, it is to be taught that Christ the Lord went down to hell to liberate from prison those holy fathers and the other pious persons, and brought them to heaven. Yet those in purgatory now enjoy the effects of Christ's expiation, are in a state of grace, sure, Bellarmine tells us, of their salvation, no

principle of sin1 in them; but there they must stay till they have made satisfaction for their faults. The happier Jews and Old Testament saints got clear without doing so, though what Christ did was to impart the benefit of His passion to them, of which the Christians who have to stay enjoy the benefit, but only to bring them into purgatory; for otherwise they would have gone into hell. They are strange inventions all, and hence confusion. It must be so when it is denied that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and that by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. But let us remember that the doctrine of purgatory is that, when the guilt of sin is wholly removed, and the principle of sin1 totally gone, men are to be tortured for a definite time in hell-fire to satisfy God; nor did Christ loose the pains of hell for the saints!

1Fomes peccati

101 Ad inferos. Rom. Cat. de Symb. cap. 6, Quaes. 6, vol. 1, 124. Quibus de causis Christus ad inferos descendere voluit.

“Wherefore, before he died and rose again, the gates of heaven were never open to any one; but the souls of the pious, when they departed from this life, either were borne into Abraham’s bosom, or, which also now happens to them who have something to be cleared away (diluendum) and be paid (persolvendum), were purged in the fire of purgatory.”— So 2, 3: “The souls of those pious persons who, in the bosom of Abraham, expected the Saviour, Christ the Lord, descending into hell, set free.”

102 Adv. Marcion, 4, 34: He adds, Abraham’s bosom is a place of refreshment for the souls of the just, till the resurrection.

103 Ps. 85, 18; De Gen. ad Lit 12, 33, 63; De Civ. Dei, 1, 12, 50.

104 Ps. 85:18.

105 Epist. 187, 6 (Ed. Ben.); Ed. Gaume, 2, 1019, 1020.

106 Quaest. Ev. 2, 38; Ben Ed. 3.

107 Epist. 164, 7 (Ed. Ben.) [Gaume fratres ediderunt] 2,860.

108 Aug. makes two hells (inferos; inferna), Ps. 85:18.

109 Alphons. de Castro and the Roman Catholic bishop of Rochester admit that there was nothing about purgatory in the early, especially the Greek, Fathers, and the Greek church denies the doctrine, and passages from Tertullian, Cyprian, Gregory Neocaes., Basil, Dionysius, Quaes, et Resp. ad Orth (ascribed to Justin Martyr), Athanasius (if De Virginitate be his), Hilary, and Ambrose may be quoted, which plainly set aside purgatory, declaring that the righteous go to an eternal home. In the works of Greg. Neocaes. (Horn. 22) Macarius puts the three states: guilty, the devil takes it off; the holy servants of God, angels bring them to the Lord; if between the two, and where a man fights against the evil and loves the Lord with all his soul, He cleanses him in one hour, and takes him unto His bosom and to see light. Thus Athanasius says the just pass out of this world into everlasting rest. Ambrose says wise men desire death as a rest from their labours and an end of their evils; so in other passages. So Macarius; and Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. 32 in Pasch.) says, “nor

beyond this night [of this life] is there any purifying." So the famous Cyril of Alexandria on Joan., lib. 12, c. 36. "For he delivered his own soul into the hands of his own Father, that we taking our point of departure in it, and on account of it, may have splendid hopes, firmly feeling and believing that we, having undergone the death of the flesh, shall be in the hands of God, and shall be in a far better state than we were with flesh: wherefore, also, the wise Paul writes to us that it is better to depart and to be with Christ." So the Q. et Respon. ad Orth., in Justin (2, 60). The narration of the rich man and Lazarus is a form of word having this doctrine, that, after the departure of the soul out of the body, it is not possible that by any care or diligence men can get any profit. "There is no death (says Athanasius, De Virg.) for the just, but a change, for he is changed out of this world into the everlasting rest. And as if any one might come out of prison, so the saints go out of this toilsome life into the good things prepared for them." And Ambrose, De bono mortis (4), "It is a certain haven for those who, cast about on the great sea of this life, seek a roadstead of sure quiet, and it does not make their state worse, but such as it has found it in each, such it reserves it for future judgment, and cherishes by the quiet itself." So again (12), "trusting therefore to these, let us go with full courage to our Redeemer Jesus, with full courage to the council of patriarchs, with full courage to our father Abraham, let us go boldly to the assembly of the saints and gathering of the just." It is plain that he had no idea of going to purgatory here, for those named are not there; he names going to Jesus Himself, and that with entire courage, on our death.

We might quote Jerome too, but of him I will speak, and Augustine, we have seen, had no settled thoughts. He supposed indeed that the day of judgment itself was a kind of purgatory, Enchiridion, 67, De Civ. Dei, 16, 24, Ps. 103 15; Ps. 6. As to Cypr. De Mortalitate—one would have to quote the whole tract. Nothing can be clearer as to the immediate blessedness of all the righteous. The righteous are called to refreshing, the unjust to punishment; it is his pa$ to fear death who is unwilling to go to Christ—proving and insisting that thus there is for the servants of God peace, their free, their tranquil quiet. It is not going out but going elsewhere, and, time's journey finished, you pass to what is eternal. Who does not haste to better things?

"We injure Christ," says Tertullian, "when we do not with undisturbed mind accept others being called away; as if they were to be pitied. They have obtained their desire." (Tert. de Pat. 9, Quaest. et Resp. ad Orth., 75.) The souls of the just go into paradise to meet and see angels and archangels, according to the vision also of the Saviour Christ Himself, and according to what is written, "absent from the body and present with the Lord"; but the souls of the unjust go into the regions of hell (hades), as Nebuchadnezzar. Greg. Thaum. says, the good man will go rejoicing into his own eternal house; but the wicked will fill all things with their complaints.

If De Virginitate be not of Athanasius, as the style and some doxologies would shew, it is later. The writer says, "There is no death for the righteous, but translation, for he is translated out of this world into everlasting rest." There is the same truth in Macar. Horn. 22, but it may be alleged to concern the saints—the holy servants of God. The devils receive the wicked, he says, and drag

them to their own place; choirs of angels the holy servants of God. Of any other place he does not speak. But in Horn. 26 he puts the case of conflict, two persons in the soul, as he says, and where is the soul to go, thus drawn two ways? He replies that the Lord, seeing you strive, and sometimes with all your heart, will separate you from death at once, and receive you into His bosom and light.

Hilary insists on all being settled at death, referring to the rich man and Lazarus, and Abraham's bosom as eternal bliss; but though judgment is to come, still the case is settled in death. There is no putting off or delay, for the day of judgment is the eternal retribution of blessedness or punishment; but the time of death holds each one meanwhile by its own laws, either Abraham or punishment keeps each one for judgment. He then insists on confidence, which is more than hope, and refers to John 5; he that believeth on Me shall not be judged. (End of Tract on Ps. 2.) I do not quote more passages at length.

Basil and Gregory Naz. teach in general the same truths: the orthodoxy of the last may be questioned. We see from these the general faith of the church. The Hypognosticon once attributed to Augustine is equally clear. "As for any third place we utterly know none, neither shall we find in the holy scriptures that there is any such," Lib. 5.

Nor do the Roman Catholics deny that those who go to purgatory are forgiven and justified, and the principle of sin (peccati fomes) is gone. It is penal suffering from God after guilt and sin are wholly gone. I do not give the Fathers as any authority, but as shewing the common

current belief. Alphons. de Castro and John of Rochester I give from Ussher, the rest from the original authors. I will speak farther on of the real origin and history of purgatory, and of Jerome and Augustine more particularly. Bellarmine is not quite honest on the point, as he quotes the use of passages such as 1 Corinthians 3, by old writers, which he himself declares cannot be applied to purgatory, because it embraces all, and others as to praying for saints, which proves nothing, because, whatsoever the ground, for they find it hard to say, they prayed for all saints (even the Virgin Mary), that is, for those whom they held to be in heaven already. It may be for glory (Bell, de Purg., lib. 1 7), and this some said, "for glory given to them among men," for all is darkness and confusion. Indeed Bellarmine's quotations are not to be trusted. He quotes Hilary on Ps. 118 in proof of purgatory (De Purg., lib. 1, io, sec. 38), leaving out the words which precede his quotation, and which wholly set aside the idea of purgatory. He says we have to undergo that unwearied fire; but Hilary says, "the day of judgment in which we are to undergo," etc., and goes on to say that thus the sword is to pierce the blessed Virgin Mary's heart too—and how could we desire it then? Either he borrowed his quotation, or he is wilfully dishonest.

110 Bellarm. de Purg., lib. 2, c. 4.

111 And it was a sin-offering Judas made the collection for, to make expiation for their sin; and the thing praised is, in truth, his belief in the resurrection. Offering for the dead was foolish else, it is said.

112 Part I, Article 5, of Creed, chap. 6, sec. 4.

113 There is this excuse for Dr. Milner, that the Roman Catholic doctrine is confused enough. The hell to which the Saviour descended is said to contain three places: first, hell proper, where the wicked are tormented; secondly, the fire of purgatory; lastly, a third sort of receptacle is that in which were received the souls of the just who died before Christ. These pious souls Christ liberated, for after all they were kept in painful suspense (suspensi torquebantur), and miserable wearisomeness (misera molestia)—a singular kind of Abraham's bosom. But here purgatory is a distinct thing. We have already seen that Christ brought to heaven, according to the Roman Catholic doctrine, the holy fathers, and the other pious souls freed from prison. But then they do hold that some were suffering the most acute torments, as those in purgatory do.

114 The Vulgate reads, adou for thanatou, "hades," for death, but has no support whatever from the Greek text.

115 Epistle to Evodius, where he says, moreover, that they had the beatinc presence of His divinity, which He had never withdrawn from them, and therefore does not understand what He could have conferred on them. (Sec. 8 or iii.)

116 He repeats the same thing in Gen. addit.: "I have not found in scripture—at any rate canonical scripture—that hell is used in a good sense; but that the bosom of Abraham is not to be taken in a good sense, and that rest where the pious poor man was carried by angels, I know not that any one would listen to, and therefore I do not see how we can believe that can be in hell." In the tract, De praesentia Dei, or Epistle 187, he says, that whether the bosom of Abraham be paradise or infernal

places (inferos) he cannot say. If “to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise “is to be taken of Christ’s human soul, paradise is in the infernal places (in inferno), but easier, and free from all the ambiguities.

117 This, however, as we shall see, was pretty much the conclusion that Jerome came to; for agreement between the Fathers is the most ridiculous thing in the world to talk of.

118 As to this, however, Bellarmine says he is all wrong, because this would put the highest saints in purgatory too, as all are tried by fire.

119 Origen, however, is not very consistent. He says, “As I think it is necessary for us all to come into that fire of 1 Corinthians 3, even if we are Paul or Peter.” But then he says we shall not all go through it in the same way. “Some will go through it like the Egyptians, those who have followed the devil (Pharaoh) j some like Israel, if they are quite pure in this life; but if they pass through the fire, it shall not burn them,” Is. 48:2. But then he expressly says it is the penalty of eternal fire; he thought all would go through eternal fire for purification, but none remain there.

120 Nothing is more curious than the way the honest and excellent Tillemont explains how he was a saint for the church, in spite of all this, though better men were not.

121 He speaks, too, of devils, and those who deny God, suffering eternal torments; but wicked Christians will be more mercifully judged. But this refers to Origen holding that all would be saved.

122 It is a curious fact, too, that these very prayers for the saints were turned into prayers to the saints. These prayers are found in all the ancient liturgies. Thus, in that, ascribed to St. James: “Remember, Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, the orthodox whom we have commemorated, and whom we have not commemorated, from righteous Abel unto this day. Give them rest there, in the land of the living in thy kingdom, in the delight of paradise, in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our holy fathers, whence pain, sorrow, and groaning are exiled, where the light of thy countenance looks down,” etc. And St. Chrysostom, “And further, we offer to thee this reasonable service in behalf of those who have departed in the faith, our ancestors, fathers, patriarchs, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and every just spirit made perfect in the faith … especially the most holy, undented, excellently-laudable, glorious lady, the mother of God and ever Virgin Mary.” I recall here what I have noticed elsewhere, that Epiphanius specially remarks, that Christ alone, as testifying to the glory of His Person, was not prayed for. 1 It would only be repeating the same words nearly, to quote all the different liturgies. St. Gregory’s, who formed the Roman one, may suffice: “Remember, O Lord, thy servants (male and female) who have preceded us with the sign of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace. To them, and to all who are at rest (quiescentibus) in Christ, we entreat thou shouldest grant a place of refreshment and light and peace.” Nor is this all. In the Decret.

1 Bellarmine attempts to say it was only commemoration at the Mass; but that is false. Epiphanius speaks distinctly of prayers for them.

Greg. lib. 3, tit. 41, c. 6, Cum Marthae 5 et infra, after a long discussion whether the water as well as the wine in the Mass is changed into blood. Innocent III replies to another question of the Archbishop of Lyons, why, when in the ancient liturgies, in a part of the service called the Secreta (where the name of the person in whose honour the Mass was said was mentioned), it ran thus: “Grant, Lord, that this offering may profit the soul of thy servant, Leo,” it was now said, “Grant us that by the intercession of thy servant, Leo, this oblation may profit us.” Innocent tells him that scripture says that it is injurious to the saints to think they need to be prayed for when they are in life. As to how the change came about, he says nothing; but in looking for glory for the saints, it must be their being honoured among men, and refers to St. Augustine’s statement, calling it scripture; thanksgiving for very good, prayer for middling good, and a solace to middling bad, and tells the archbishop that whether it be so he leaves to him to investigate. The poor pope made a sad blunder in quoting Augustine as scripture, for that word about martyrs is St. Augustine’s. Thus the liturgy was changed: still the prayer for rest for those asleep in Christ remains. The force of this has been felt, and, in a modern Roman Catholic Prayer-Book, approved by the Archbishop of New York, it is said to be for souls in purgatory, though it is expressly for all who rest in Christ (omnibus quiescentibus in Christo).

123 This is an unhappy instance, because the Lord says for every idle word we shall give account in the day of judgment—a plain witness that for any and the smallest sins, if they were not wholly and entirely put away, and we cleansed from them, they remain to be answered for in judgment, and if so, we are condemned. “Enter not

into judgment, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

124 Again, I recall that Bellarmine says this passage cannot apply to purgatory, because all pass through the fire; and, as we shall see, Augustine thought of a fire purifying carnal affections, the wood, hay, and stubble, which Bellarmine does not allow. It is penal, paying the last farthing. Gregory thought the end of the world was close, and if people had lived very well, if they were not purified by tribulation here (to which Augustine also applies it), for some very small failings, they might be purified by a short process, before the judgment actually came. See his Dialogues, lib. 4, 39, and following.

125 Letter 43, sect. 4, "End of Controversy." "Bishop Porteus intimates that the doctrine of a middle state of souls was borrowed from pagan fable and philosophy. In answer to this, I say that if Plato [Plato in Gorgia], Virgil [/Eneid], 1, 6, and other heathens, ancient and modern, as likewise Mahomet [the Koran] and his disciples … have embraced this doctrine, it only shews how conformable it is to the dictates of natural religion."— [Ed. P. T.]

126 Demon, with Plato, is an instrument of divine agency, not bad as such.

127 Plat. Phaed. sea. 118, 119; Eus. Praep. Ev. (553), lib. 11, 27 to 38; from (568) Gorgias, near the end, sections 164, 168.

128 In Dante's Inferno Virgil is made to be the poet's "guardian spirit" through the visit. The English reader may see the account of the whole occurrence in Wilkie's translation of the Inferno, Edinburgh.— [Ed. P. T.]

129 Or evils; but Platonic doctrine makes the text, I doubt not, right.

130 This is also Platonic, and the same is found just before the passage I have quoted from Eusebius.

131 But here, again, there is the Egyptian doctrine of transmigration. This Christianity made them suppress; the rest they retained.

132 This is so universally admitted, that I do not quote the passages. Those who wish may refer to Huet's Orig., lib. 2, Q. 6.

133 There is really no obscurity in it. The apostle is not speaking of man's works, but of ministry. The fruit of bad ministry comes to nothing, but the minister may be in Christ the foundation, and saved. If a real heretic, and corrupter of the temple of God, the workman will be destroyed too. We have three cases (a wise builder; a true Christian, who built badly; and a corrupter) with the consequence to each.

134 The reader who cannot search his works may see a Protestant account in Schroek, 14, 236; or a Roman Catholic in Tillemont, 9. Gregory of Nyaassa, 20, 276.