



A Letter

ON THE

SECESSION TO THE ROMISH CHURCH.

BY

THE REV. G. S. FABER, B.D.

(Extracted from the "Christian's Monthly Magazine").

WE are very happy to be able to lay before our readers a letter from one long tried in the cause of truth, the Rev. G. Stanley Faber, whose high standing and his perfect acquaintance with the Romish controversy make his opinion so exceedingly valuable in the midst of Tractarian defection to Rome. It would be impertinent in us to add one word of comment. The letter has been forwarded to us by the gentleman to whom it was addressed, together with a copy of the reasons which were alleged for the meditated secession*.—ED.

MY DEAR SIR,

Sherburn-house, Nov. 12, 1845.

Though it is somewhat arduous for me, at seventy-two, and only just emerging from an indisposition of nine months' duration, to enter upon the painful topic of your letter; yet, in hopes that, through God's mercy, your nephew may be stayed in his fatal career, I will readily take up my pen to meet his paper.

* *Copy of the original transmitted to the Rev. G. S. Faber.*

"I have resolved to quit the Established Church, because I believe it to be a schismatical body, destitute of the notes of the true Church (which all holders of the creeds admit); so far from being one, that it is not united with any part of Christendom, nor yet within itself; so far from being holy, that during its existence it has not produced one saint or (apart from politics) one martyr; so far from being Catholic, that it does not extend over the sister kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland; so far from being apostolic, that it derives the mission of its bishops, at highest, from Queen Elizabeth.

"I have resolved to seek admittance into the Roman Church mainly upon this ground. Believing the Gospel, I believe the promises of our Lord to be undoubtedly true. I believe, therefore, that He always has been and is with the Church, leading her into all truth by the Spirit of truth, whereby she always has been,

The perusal of it fully convinces me, that it never could have been written by any honest man, who had carefully studied the subject on *both* sides. Now, as I acquit your nephew of all intentional dishonesty, if the paper be *really* his production, it *must* have been written by him purely on a one-sided view, and in consequence of his having implicitly swallowed all that his Tractarian or Popish instructors have thought fit to tell him; for any other supposition involves a charge of deliberate dishonesty, which I should be sorry to make against him. But, whoever may have indited the paper, your nephew has plainly never read more than on one side of the question; and, from long and repeated experience, I am sorry to say, that, where the interests of their Church are concerned, the priesthood of Rome are so entirely the reverse of being scrupulous in regard to truth, that I have made it a rule never to receive any startling assertion of theirs without testing it; and, certainly, wherever their assertion was of an extraordinary nature, I have invariably, upon examination, found them falsifying.

“and is, the pillar and ground of truth. The Church, therefore, is infallible. Now it seems absurd to maintain that this infallibility resides in divided bodies mutually anathematising one another; because the Spirit of truth, through whom the Church is infallible, is the Spirit likewise of unity, who maketh men to be of one mind in a house; and a house divided against itself shall surely fall, but against the Church the gates of hell shall never prevail. The Church, being thus certainly one and absolutely infallible, and having always been so, it follows both, that the old unreformed Church is the true Church, and that all that the true Church holds is truth. Now, that the Roman Church is the old, and therefore the true Church, we know not more surely from history than from the notes of the Church, which she as clearly possesses, as every other religious body is evidently without, through which notes she has been and is a City set upon a Hill, a Candle giving light to all that are in the House. Now, this Church declares unhesitatingly, that it is essential to the salvation of such as see and recognise her, to be united to her communion. This, since I do see and recognise her, it is my resolve to do. Again, a man left without an infallible guide must, being rational, choose his way for himself. Unless, therefore, he follows the true Church, he must walk by the light of his private judgment. Now I, if I take the latter alternative—no less than if I take the former—shall go without doubt to Rome; since I judge the doctrines of Rome to be more rational and verisimilar than any other doctrines whatever. Nor can any member of the Established Church, which rests upon private judgment only, nor yet the whole establishment, if it had any opinions, (which it has not, for as many ministers as it has, so many voices has it), have any right in the world to pronounce a man wrong who in his conscience believes it necessary for his salvation to join the Church.”

“This is my conviction, and I do not see how any member of the Established Church can question my right and my duty to follow it.”

‘November, 1845.’”

In my "*Difficulties of Romanism*," I have carefully, in the way of historical testimony, examined *both* sides of the question. Has your nephew read that work? and, if not, will he *refuse* to read it? Should such be the case, it is vain to argue with him; for a shallow and yet *determined* one-side reader puts himself out of the pale of all legitimate discussion; and I repeat it, had your nephew honestly studied the subject, instead of building upon the unscrupulous assertions of the Romish priesthood, he never could either have written the paper himself, or have been at all influenced by it, if received from another person.

It is a mingled tissue of gratuitous assumptions and daring misrepresentations, or rather, indeed, absolute falsehoods.

I. The real foundation upon which the entire paper rests is, the claim of INFALLIBILITY on the part of the Church of Rome. If this claim be valid, the discussion is obviously at an end. Your nephew, therefore, as preparatory to his other statements, ought, assuredly, not alone to have boldly asserted the infallibility of the Church of Rome, but to have substantiated his assertion by some distinct and tangible evidence.

1. Now he brings no proof whatever, either from Scripture or from history, that *the Church of Rome* is infallible.

He does nothing more than loosely intimate, that "*the Church* is "infallible through the Spirit of truth."

Now, even if *this* unproved assertion were admitted, for the sake of argument, it would not follow that *the Church of Rome* was infallible, any more than the several Churches of Greece, and Antioch, and Jerusalem, and Alexandria, and Armenia.

But this is the usual sophism of Romish writers. They assume, that *the Church* and *the Church of Rome* are synonymous terms; and then, as if this mere assumption could not be doubted, they boldly argue from it as a point altogether incontrovertible:

2. Is there any proof from Scripture of the infallibility of the Church of Rome?

Not a syllable. If anywhere, we might expect to find it in the Epistle to the Romans. But St. Paul, so far from saying a single syllable about this pretended infallibility, actually cautions the Romans against falling away from the faith. (Rom. xi, 18—22).

3. Is there any proof from history?

Nothing of the sort. History exhibits Pope against Pope, Council against Council, the Roman Church of one age against the Roman Church of another age.

Where was infallibility, when, at one single time, there were three.

Popes, each claiming to be infallible, and each cursing the other as an undoubted limb of Antichrist?

Where was infallibility, when the present Pope, and a long line of his predecessors, severally claimed to be universal bishops and the centre of unity, while Pope Gregory I had actually declared, that the person, who, in the elation of his heart, should call himself, or even desire to be called *Universal Bishop*, was the forerunner of Antichrist? If Gregory was right, what are we to think of his successors? if wrong, what becomes of infallibility?

4. But not only does this infallible Church contradict itself; it likewise, again and again, contradicts and opposes and sets aside Scripture. Now, Scripture we *know* to be infallible. Therefore, it is a palpable contradiction in terms to assert, that this barefaced contradiction of Scripture is *also* infallible.

5. Furthermore, if the Roman Church were infallible, it would be easy to point out the organ by which the decrees of this infallibility are communicated. Some declare it to be the Pope speaking *ex cathedrâ*; others, a general Council, concurrently with the Pope; others, a General Council, such as that of Constance, independently of the Pope, and even opposed to him. Has your nephew ascertained the *locality* of that infallibility, respecting which he speaks so confidently; or, if he thinks he has, why are we to prefer *his* alleged locality to the alleged locality of *another* speculatist, unless he be *himself* personally infallible?

6. This brings me to the last difficulty with which this ridiculous absurdity is hampered.

Even if the Roman Church *were* infallible, and even if the organ of its infallibility could be infallibly determined by some infallible investigator, still when we had it, not the slightest *use* could we derive from it in the way of what Dr. Milner very amusingly calls *the end of controversy*, unless every Romish individual were *himself* infallible likewise. Without this necessary personal infallibility, how can your nephew be infallibly certain that he attaches its true sense to an infallible decision of the infallible Church?

Both respecting transubstantiation and the invocation of saints, and the use of images, *Roma locuta est*; but not, therefore, *causa finita est*.

Can your nephew, or any Romanist, infallibly tell me, whether, in the process of transubstantiation, the elements are *annihilated*, and the body and blood, and divinity and soul, of Christ *are substituted in their place?* or whether, in the same process, the elements are *transmuted* into the body and blood, and divinity and soul, of Christ? Unless he can be infallibly certain how on this point he ought to understand the

infallible decision, he may, notwithstanding the great benefit of ecclesiastical infallibility, be himself a damnable heretic*.

Again, can he be infallibly certain, that he understands the infallible decision touching the invocation and veneration and relics of saints and sacred images, as given in the 25th Session of the infallible Council of Trent? Can he define infallibly the precise *intended* amount of the *legitimate use of images*, or the precise *intended* extent of the *due honour and veneration* which the infallible Council charges all good Christians to pay to images? Unless he can do this, he can never be infallibly certain that he is not a heretic; for, if he depart one tittle or one poor scruple from the sense of the infallible Council, he falls into heresy. The varying *practice* of Romanists themselves shews, that they are not unanimous in their understanding the true import of the Council's decision. Such being the case, how are they the wiser for the infallibility of their Church? Clearly, they cannot benefit from it, unless every single individual of them be himself personally infallible.

7. Your nephew may peradventure say, that we may be morally certain of the true sense of an infallible decision, just as we may be morally certain of the true sense of Scripture.

If he says this, he at once cuts up Popery by the roots, and falls himself into a flat paralogism.

The constant language of Rome is, that we cannot be even morally certain of the true sense of Scripture; and, THEREFORE, that we need the infallible interpretation of that infallible Church. And this is plainly the drift of your nephew's language. Yet here lies his gross paralogism.

We *cannot*, forsooth, be morally certain of the true sense of Scripture; but we *may* be morally certain of the true sense of an infallible decision or interpretation!

Nor is even this the whole amount of the paralogism. *Moral* certainty is not *infallible* certainty; and, unless your nephew be infallible, he can never be more than morally certain as to the true sense of a Romish decision. In other words, he can claim no higher certainty as to the true sense of a pretended infallible decision, than we of the English Church claim as to the true sense of a really infallible text of Scripture. Under such circumstances, how does he profit more from the pretended infallibility of the Romish Church, than from the real infallibility of the Bible; and how, in going over to Popery, will he gain a single

* The language of the Council of Trent bids the most fair for the latter theory: but still it may be doubted, whether the alleged conversion of one substance into another is effected by the process of annihilation, or the process of transmutation; nor do I see how this knotty point can be *infallibly* settled, save by an *infallibly* understood *infallible* definition of the QUOMODO.

advantage as to infallible certainty, which he does not equally possess already?

Can your nephew explain intelligibly, either to himself or to anybody else, what he proposes to gain, by going over to the Church of Rome, in the way of *infallible*, as contra-distinguished from *moral*, certainty, unless he *himself* be also personally endowed with infallibility?

II. The utter absurdity of the Romish claim of infallibility being thus sufficiently shewn, the remainder of the task will be not very difficult.

1. Your nephew builds upon the necessity of his going over to the Roman Church *in particular*, because, in his opinion, the Church Catholic *collectively* is declared to be the pillar and ground of faith.

Here, again, we have the old stock assumption, that *the Church collectively* and *the Church of Rome* are synonymous. Now, even if it were declared that *the Church collectively* is the pillar and ground, this would no more make *the Roman Church exclusively* that pillar than the Churches of Constantinople or Antioch or Alexandria or Armenia, all of which, by the judgment of Rome herself, have lost the character of pillars. But if your nephew will consult so very common a book as Griesbach's New Testament, he will find, that, by the proper punctuation of the passage, not **THE CHURCH even collectively**, but, agreeably to the whole analogy of the Christian faith, **THE GREAT MYSTERY OF GODLINESS**, is declared to be the pillar and foundation of the truth. Yet, even if **THE COLLECTIVE CHURCH** were intended, we should have no proof of infallibility in the Romish sense of the word; and, accordingly, Rome herself being judge, *facts* have shewn, that **THE CHURCH COLLECTIVELY** is *not* infallible.

2. Still, however, under the travestied name of *the Church*, your nephew contends; that the Church of Rome is infallible; and that, as such, all she holds is truth; and, consequently, that she has never varied in doctrine.

Doubtless, she *herself* declares, that the faith propounded by the Council of Trent was **ALWAYS** in the Church. *Semper hæc fides in Ecclesiâ Dei fuit.* But, in making this bold assertion, she asserts a **FACT**, and the documentary evidence of history shews the alleged **FACT** to be a rank **FALSEHOOD**. Take only, as a single instance, her doctrine of justification, defined, for the first time, by the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century. *Her* doctrine is, by anticipation, directly condemned by Clement of Rome, who maintains, as indeed the whole succession of Fathers do, from Clement down to Bernard, that precise doctrine, which Luther revived, after it had been smothered by the schoolmen toward the close of the twelfth century, and which the blundering Tridentines, with most disgraceful ignorance, have actually anathematised. Indeed, what is curious enough in an infallible Church, which professes to have never varied in doctrine, in the very days of

the Council of Trent, many Romanists, such as Cardinal Pole, Conarini, and others, maintained a doctrine, so essentially identical with the old doctrine revived by Luther, that, if Luther were a heretic, then were they also heretics, as likewise Clement of Rome, Athanasius, Bernard, and, in short, the whole succession of what are called *Fathers*.

3. But your nephew thinks, and thinks truly, that infallibility cannot reside “in divided bodies mutually anathematising one another.”

I never heard of Protestant Churches “mutually anathematising one another;” because, while (as their published confessions shew) they fully agree in essentials, they may differ in subordinates; but I have heard much of the anathemas employed by the Romish Church, and I have some recollection, that, when Rome was split into three divisions under three rival popes, the heads of these three divisions “mutually anathematised one another,” with abundance both of bitterness and perseverance; so that, if it be “absurd to maintain that infallibility resides in divided bodies mutually anathematising one another,” wherein, *par paranthèse*, I quite agree with your nephew, then, on his own declared principle, it is “absurd” to look for infallibility in the Church of Rome.

Nor is this all. Look at the differences between the Franciscans and the Dominicans, between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, between the Ultramontanes and the Cismontanes, and then determine how infallibility can reside in these “divided bodies.”

Your nephew may say, that they differ only upon *open questions*. I might retort, if I pleased, that, notwithstanding Bossuet’s hyperbolical *Variations*, the *same* also is the difference among Protestant Churches, though I never heard of their anathematising one another. But here I may justly raise a question against Popery, which he cannot raise against Protestantism. If the Church of Rome be infallible, why does she not beneficially use her infallibility, by turning, through an infallible decision, these *open questions* into *close questions*? If she *cannot* give a decision, she confessedly is *not* infallible; and, if she *will not* give a decision, she at once dissolves her boasted pretence of unity, by a deliberate encouragement of disunion among her jarring members.

4. He asserts, that we know from history, that “the Roman Church is the old and therefore the true Church.”

If, by *old*, he means, comparatively to all other Churches, the *oldest*, history teaches us the very opposite. And, if by *old* he means simply *reaching back to the Apostolic age*, history teaches us, that many other Churches have a distinct pedigree quite as long. In either case, *oldness* is no more a proof that Rome is “therefore the true Church,” than that Antioch, or Jerusalem, or Alexandria are severally “the true Church.”

The simple fact is, that Rome, without a shadow of claim, arrogating

to herself exclusively the character of the Catholic Church, thence compendiously pronounces, to the entire satisfaction of your unhesitating nephew, that "every other religious body is evidently without;" whence he rapidly jumps to the conclusion, as quite indisputable, that, since "this Church declares unhesitatingly, that it is essential to salvation to "be united to her communion," THEREFORE, without a shadow of proof, we must devoutly believe the *truth* of such declaration.

That every other religious body is evidently without *the Church of Rome*, is a mere truism; but, before we can admit your nephew's hasty conclusion, that THEREFORE every other religious body is without *the Catholic Church of Christ*, we must have proof, which (so far as my own reading extends) has never yet been given, that *the Catholic Church of Christ* is confined within the limits of the *particular Church of Rome*. The Romanists, as we all know, *assert* this; and your nephew, apparently without a vestige of inquiry, *admits* their assertion, and absolutely professes his resolution to *act* upon it; yet, I believe, most sober persons doubt, whether *bold assertion* and *clear proof* be precisely identical.

5. I conclude, that your nephew, if he has at all sought for proof, will fancy that he has found it in that declaration of our Lord, which the Romanists confidently interpret to mean, that the Church is built upon the rock Peter and his alleged successors in the paramount bishopric of Rome.

In this case, he must be ignorant, that no such interpretation of our Lord's assertion occurs in any of the writers antecedently to the Council of Nice, nor yet (*I believe*) in any writer even considerably posterior to that famous council. The ROCK is variously understood to mean, *Peter's confession*, or *the divinity of Christ declared in that confession*, or *the individual Peter himself as having made such a confession*; but NEVER, *Peter and the succession of Roman bishops**. Some such claim was first preferred by the then Roman bishop at the end of the second century; but Tertullian, who mentions it, mentions it only to laugh at its mingled impudence and absurdity.

Accordingly, the first Council of Nice, which sat in the year 325, when confirming the independent jurisdiction of the four great patriarchates, merely gives to Rome a barren precedency; and *that*, not on the score of the Roman bishop being the inheritor of a pretended authoritative primacy of St. Peter, but purely on the secular basis of Rome

* It has, I think, been abundantly shewn, that no such sense can be legitimately extracted from the often-cited language of Cyprian. He speaks of the Church being built upon *Peter*, but not upon *Peter and Peter's alleged successors conjointly*. The oldest interpretation is that preserved by Justin, about A.D. 150; and he makes the foundation of Christ's Church to be, not *Peter himself*, but *Peter's confession*.

being the ancient metropolis of the empire, all grounds of doubt being effectually removed by the adjudication of the second place to the Patriarch of Constantinople, on the parallel basis of Constantinople being new Rome and the existing capital *. Nothing, therefore, (even to pretermitt the stubborn fact, that, according to Irenæus, Peter never *was* Bishop of Rome), nothing can be more absurdly idle, than the claim set up through an interested, and comparatively modern gloss upon Matt. xvi, 18, 19.

6. Your nephew, by asserting that the Church of England is destitute of the notes of the true Church, of course asserts also, that the Church, which he purposes to join, *does* possess them.

He alludes, I suppose, to the four notes of UNITY, SANCTITY, CATHOLICITY, and APOSTOLICITY, as given by Dr. Milner. Now, I will venture to say, that the English Church possesses all these four notes in *at least* as high a degree as the Roman Church.

(1). If, by UNITY, he means *Unity within itself*, the English Church is quite as much internally united as the Roman Church. As for the Tractarians, they are mere Papists under a different name, dishonestly holding English preferment, when they can get it, with Romish doctrines. They, consequently, as not belonging legitimately to the English Church, must obviously be thrown out of the reckoning. Rome is heartily welcome to such tamperers with Mammon; and, the sooner the whole set go out from among us, for they are not of us, the better. This being premised, any subordinate differences among *ourselves* are not a jot greater than those which notoriously exist in the Roman Church; consequently, in *this* sense of the word, we possess UNITY as much as Rome.

If, on the other hand, by UNITY, he means *communion with other independent Churches*, England has quite as much of this sort of unity as Rome. And well she may; for Rome, notoriously, has *no* communion out of her own pale; and, so far from possessing Catholic unity, she is a complete theological Ishmael, her hand against every man, and every man's hand against her. As for asserting that she herself *exclusively* constitutes the Universal Church, this is a pure begging of the question. She is a member, indeed, though a wofully diseased member of the Church Universal; but to call her on *that* account the Catholic Church is the same as to call a diseased leg the whole body.

(2). Next comes the note of SANCTITY. How this note belongs

* The same is repeated in the 28th canon of the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451. It adjudges to the two Patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople *equal* jurisdictions. τὰ ἴσα πρεσβεῖα.

specially to Rome, and does *not* belong to England, your nephew would do well to inquire. Does he rest the claim for Rome on the abominations of the Confessional, or on the principles of the Jesuits, so admirably exposed by Pascal, and now open to the whole world in the published *Secreta Monita*?

But the English Church, it seems, “so far from being holy, has not, “during its existence, produced one saint.”

If, by *saint*, your nephew means *one who has been dubbed a saint by the silly process of a Romish canonisation*, it is true enough, that not a single saint of *that* very ambiguous stamp has been produced by our Reformed Church. But we have yet to learn, that no saints exist, save those of the Pope’s somewhat questionable manufactory.

Neither again, says your nephew, has the English Church produced a single martyr, “apart from politics;” Μακαρίζω ἀπλότητα, as old Thucydides would say. Where *can* he have studied the familiar History of England?

(3). Next we have CATHOLICITY. This your nephew claims for Rome, and denies to England; remarking, that, so far from being Catholic, the English “Church does not extend over the sister kingdoms “of Scotland and Ireland.”

If this be sound reasoning, then neither can the Roman Church claim Catholicity; for, to adopt the gentleman’s own illustrative phraseology, the Roman Church, “so far from being Catholic, does not “extend over more, at the *very* most, than a moiety of Christendom.” But, in truth, some Romish priest, or some discontented Tractarian, has evidently gulled him by the ambiguity of the word *Catholic*. In the sense of *THE Catholic Church*, neither the Church of Rome, nor any other provincial Church, is *Catholic*. But, in the sense of *A Catholic Church*, the Church of England, as a *sound* branch of Christ’s Universal Church, is, at the least, *as Catholic* as a palpably *unsound* branch, like Rome. Before your nephew decides so peremptorily, he would do well to give definitions, and study precision of language.

(4). But our unfortunate England cannot claim the note of APOSTOLICITY, because your nephew has learned from history, that “she derives the mission of her bishops, at the highest, from Queen Elizabeth.”

I would advise him to read Father Courayer’s Work on the English Orders; and I would refer him to the plain explanatory declaration of our 37th Article; which, if he has read it at all, he cannot have read with even moderate attention.

Meanwhile, I would remind him, that the best Apostolicity is a sound following of the doctrine of the Apostles, which the English Church

possesses, and which the Romish Church undoubtedly does *not* possess ; and I would tell him, which probably he and sundry other Tractarians do not know, that Archbishop Laud answers Fisher, the Jesuit, on this very point, by denying the least value to Apostolical succession of orders without the concomitance of a possession of Apostolical succession of doctrine. Hence, I venture to think, that the Church of England possesses true Apostolicity, while, with Laud, I deny it to the Church of Rome.

7. Your nephew, finally, is sure, that all who decline walking by the infallibility of Rome must “walk by the light of their own private judgment.”

In the first place, I would ask him, how a man is to walk by an infallibility which *itself* has no existence ?

And, in the next place, I would ask him, where he learned that the Church of England teaches all her members to walk by the light of their own private judgment ? Certainly, I read it not in the book. The Church of England, as in many of my works I have repeatedly quoted the statements of that Church and her friends, *explicitly disavows* all walking by insulated private judgment ; but then she very rationally refers us, *instead of* our insulated private judgment, *not* to the day-dream of ever-shifting Romish infallibility, *but* to the historical testimony of the ancient fathers and doctors of the really primitive and early Church. Nay, that very Elizabeth, to whom he idly ascribes the mission of our bishops, will set him right touching his egregious mistake on the point of private judgment. I shall give her own words, in reply to the Emperor and other Popish sovereigns of the day, as they are preserved by Camden.

“ Nec causam subesse ullam cur concederet, cùm Anglia non novam aut alienam amplectatur religionem ; sed eam, quam Christus jussit, prima et Catholica Ecclesia coluit, et vetustissimi Patres unâ voce et mente comprobârunt.” Camden. Rerum Anglican. Annal. par. i. p. 28.

Your nephew, without any due examination, has implicitly swallowed, and simply retailed, the old stock falsehood of the Popish controversialists.

I believe I have now noticed the whole of his paper. You are at perfect liberty to make whatever use you please of this letter, either private or public ; and, as I am not in the habit of writing anonymously, I shall subscribe myself, for all whom it may concern,

Yours, very truly,

G. S. FABER.

Letter to the Editor of the "Christian's Monthly Magazine."

THE ROMANIST APPEAL TO ECCLESIASTICAL ANTIQUITY.

SIR,

I am inclined to think, that a peculiarity, respecting the **PROFESSED GROUND** on which the decisions of the Council of Trent have been made to repose, has not, either generally or sufficiently, been noticed.

The common idea seems to be, that the decisions of that Council are *purely dogmatical*, resting upon nothing save a gratuitously assumed infallibility. Whence it would follow: that, while the Papists receive them on the score of their being nakedly infallible declarations, from which lies no appeal, Protestants reject all those which disagree with their own creed, on the broad ground that infallibility is (what, indeed, abstractedly is true enough) a mere impudently ridiculous figment.

But this idea is altogether incorrect. By a sort of what really seems like a judicial infatuation, the individuals, who constituted the Council of Trent, do not rest their decisions upon the **GROUND** of *an asserted Conciliar or Papal Infallibility*, but upon the entirely different **GROUND** of *a confident appeal to Ecclesiastical Antiquity from the very beginning*, and therefore to an antiquity which commences with and includes the New Testament.

Now such an appeal is plainly a direct assertion of an **HISTORICAL FACT**. Consequently, like the assertion of any other historical fact, it must be tested by an examination of history itself. If history, commencing with the New Testament, substantiates the asserted **FACT**: then, no doubt, we must receive it. But, if history, commencing with the New Testament, either negatively *refuses to substantiate*, or positively and explicitly *contradicts*, the asserted **FACT**: then, according to the simple dictate of merely plain common sense, we must reject it. Unless this be admitted, there is an end to the value of Historical Testimony: and it is quite nugatory to appeal to it, as the Tridentines professedly do, unless the Romanists will be bound by an appeal deliberately made by the strictly official members of their own Communion.

I. After this exordium, it will, of course, be only fair and proper to exhibit some specimens of the appeal: in order that, so, the **PROFESSED GROUND** of the Tridentine Decisions may be indisputably evident even to the most careless inquirer.

1. The Council assures us: that certain traditions, appertaining both

to faith and morals, either *orally delivered by Christ* or *dictated by the Holy Spirit*, have been preserved, *through a continual succession*, in the Catholic Church: whence they are to be received with the same reverence as Scripture itself. Concil. Trident. sess. iv, pp. 7, 8. Edit. Antwerp, A. D. 1644.

Can these assurances be verified by history?

2. The Council professes to deliver that sound doctrine respecting the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Catholic Church, *instructed by Christ and his Apostles and the Holy Spirit*, has ALWAYS [semper] held. Sess. xiii, p. 122.

Does history, sacred and ecclesiastical, substantiate this profession?

3. Respecting the doctrine of Transubstantiation as defined by itself, the Council declares: that *this Faith was ALWAYS in the Church of God*. SEMPER hæc fides in Ecclesiâ Dei fuit. Sess. xiii, c. 3, p. 124.

Can the truth of this declaration be proved by the testimony of history?

4. The Council asserts that: the Universal Church ALWAYS [semper] *understood* complete confession of sins to a priest to have been instituted, as a point of necessity, *by our Lord Himself*. Sess. xiv, c. 5, p. 148.

Can this assertion, respecting the auricular confession of the Romish Church, be verified by history, either scriptural or ecclesiastical?

5. Notwithstanding the full satisfaction made for sin by Christ, the Council declares: that the doctrine of *man's being able and bound to make satisfaction for his own sins* was, *through the whole course of time past* [perpetuo tempore], recommended, to Christian people, by our fathers. Sess. xiv, c. 8, p. 156.

Is this declaration supported by the testimony of history?

6. The Council asserts: that the sacrament of Extreme Unction was instituted *by our most clement Saviour*. Sess. xiv, c. 1, pp. 159, 160.

Is the adduction of the language of St. James (Epist. v. 14, 15) by the Council any valid historical proof of the assertion: seeing that the language of the Apostle, and the Romish doctrine of Extreme Unction, differ, *toto cælo*, from each other?

7. The Council declares: that no Divine command requires either the Laity or the non-officiating Clergy to receive the Eucharist in both kinds: for, although (it goes on to pronounce) Christ established and delivered to his Apostles this sacrament under the *species* of bread and wine; yet *neither that institution, nor the tradition of it*, requires, that all the faithful are bound to receive the Eucharist in both kinds. Sess. xxi, c. 1, p. 203.

only *The Lord's Table* or *The Communion Table*: and, from this usage of the word *Altar* by the venerable primitive Father, he, curiously, on the principle of development, proves, that the Eucharist was ALWAYS (as the Tridentines speak) held to be a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of both the quick and the dead. The proof, no doubt, is very ingenious: but its *satisfactoriness*, I fear, will be considerably abated by this same mischievous Syriac version, from which it appears, that the alleged *Altar* of the primeval Ignatius is nothing more respectable than a mere interpolation. Probably with sundry other extraordinary matters which all turn out to have been interpolated, it was introduced into the Greek text during the fourth or fifth century, when the glaring heresy associated with it had, no doubt, crept into the then rapidly apostatising Church.

G. S. FABER.

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