





Caricature

ESSAYS

ON

ROMANISM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF ESSAYS ON THE CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION.

THE compiler of the present volume cannot venture to offer it to the Christian public without a few words of explanation, expressive both of his sense of its many deficiencies, and of some of the causes which have occasioned them.

These deficiencies might be divided into two classes:—those which have been intentional, and those which are involuntary.

Probably, however, the chief among them may be reckoned to belong to both. The references to what is called “antiquity,” will be found to be few. In this respect there was an equal want of leisure for research, and of disposition to make such research, even had time been more attainable.

An opinion is now very industriously circulated, that it is only by an appeal to “antiquity,”

or "tradition," that Romanism can be effectually refuted.

The compiler has good reason for believing that none are more anxious for the spread of such an opinion, than the Romanists themselves. Nor is he at all surprised at this. His own conviction, not hastily formed, is, that the Romish controversialist who can succeed in drawing his opponent away from the inspired oracles, and in resting the discussion chiefly upon the sayings or doings of councils or fathers, has already achieved more than half a victory, and is at least secure against defeat. The worst that can happen to him is, the closing the discussion by a drawn battle.

From this conviction, the compiler of the present volume has generally declined to make any other use of the writers of the earlier centuries, than to show, by brief references to their writings, that it was as easy to quote them on one side as on the other. Such he believes to be the case; and he believes, also, that this latter "confusion of tongues" has been as wisely ordered as was that of Babel. The descendants of Noah proposed to themselves to make such

a provision, as should render them, in any future deluge, independent of divine assistance. Exactly similar is the attempt now making, to raise such a pile of human authorities, as may enable its architects to dispense with the word of God, as completely as they of old proposed to dispense with any future ark. The attempt is equally presumptuous, and its result will equally frustrate the expectations of its authors.

In this respect, therefore, whatever may be the short-comings of the present volume, its compiler will not attempt to shelter himself under the plea of want of leisure. His neglect has been as much a matter of choice as of necessity. In many other respects the case is different. The distraction of a variety of dissimilar and conflicting engagements and avocations, besides personal and innate disqualifications of which no one can be better aware than himself, will have left their traces in many errors, weaknesses, and failures. Of all these, the puny and faultful instrument must, without repining, bear the blame. But amidst the whole, he is yet conscious that it is in the power of the All-wise to use even such an effort as this

to some good purpose. And he would most of all desire, that should such be the case, the praise and glory may be ascribed to HIM alone, to whose gracious operation all such results will be solely attributable.

ESSAYS ON ROMANISM.

I.—ON THE RULE OF FAITH.

THE NECESSITY OF AN INFALLIBLE GUIDE, IN OUR SEARCH
AFTER DIVINE TRUTH.

THERE is one remark which seems to Dr. Milner, the Romish controversialist, to be of such weight, that in his work entitled, "*The End of Religious Controversy*," he introduces it again and again, even to the extent of three or four repetitions. It is this:—

"There are, I believe, few of our Catholic priests in an extensive ministry, who have not frequently been called in to receive dying Protestants into the Catholic church, while not a single instance can be produced, of a Catholic wishing to die in any other communion than his own. O death, thou great enlightener! O truth-telling death, how powerful art thou in confuting the blasphemies, and dissipating the prejudices of the enemies of God's church!"

Now though in this statement there is a degree of exaggeration, since individual cases have assuredly occurred, of persons forsaking the Romish faith on their dying beds, still, in the main, it is probably correct. In fact, at first sight, one hardly understands why the Papists should make it a matter of boasting, that while those who have left their communion for the Protestant faith, generally did it in the full possession of their health and faculties, deliberately, and in no haste or alarm; those, on the other hand, who have abandoned Protestantism for their more conve-

nient creed, have for the most part taken that step in the confusion, alarm, and perhaps delirium of a dying hour. But the closing exclamation shows us the ground of the Papist's exultation. Death, he says, is the great *enlightener*, the great *truth-teller*, and *his* verdict shows that the Protestant faith is often felt to be one on which it is unsafe to venture into the presence of the Eternal Judge. The conclusion which it is intended every Protestant should apply to his own case, would evidently suggest a doubt, whether *he himself* will find it, in his last hour, a sound and satisfactory support.

Yet is there not something in this Romish exultation, which may remind us of the opening chapters of the book of Job? Might not Satan, were he now allowed "to present himself" at intervals before the Lord, often venture on a similar attempt at self-gratulation?

Were the Prince of Darkness thus permitted to address the Lord of life and glory, he might proceed in just such a line of observation: "How much more natural, how much more voluntarily paid, is the homage and obedience rendered me by my subjects, than that accorded to you by yours. Not only does the far larger portion of the earth still acknowledge my supremacy, but the service of the myriads of my worshippers, is a willing and ready service. On the other hand, among those who *profess* to yield you obedience, at least four-fifths, in their hearts, would prefer my rule. What multitudes are there, who spend their lives in feigned adherence to your power, but who, on their death-beds, are clearly seen to have been, in fact, my subjects rather than yours, and to belong, as such, to my countless muster-roll below."

Such might be Satan's boast; and a boast, too, quite as well founded as that just quoted from the Romish divine. But although the fact alluded to by Dr. Milner is of too fearful a cast to seem well adapted for a controversial tract, still, as it is adduced, and adduced with more than usual emphasis, it may be as well not to rest content with showing how it might be

paralleled, but rather to give also what appears to be the only true explanation.

It will doubtless not unseldom occur, in a country like this, with twelve or fourteen millions of people, brought up in a nominal profession of Protestantism, myriads of whom, however, never hear even the slightest attempt at an explanation of the name,—that individuals drawing near to death, without any previous expectation of, or preparation for it, and overwhelmed with an alarm which makes them fly in turn to every conceivable refuge or resource,—shall sometimes, among other expedients, fall upon that of a sudden conversion to Popery. These persons may, for the most part, be classed under two heads, as to their previous circumstances and cases; but their motive for embracing Romanism is one and the same; to wit, a direful certainty to which they have just awakened, that the sort of religion they have heretofore followed will not yield them peace in a dying hour; and an eager flying to Popery, as a creed which holds out strong and positive assurances, that a certainty of safety belongs to all who truly profess it.

The two classes alluded to, are, 1. The *Careless*, and, 2. the *Pharisaical*. The first have been following, all their days, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;” and now death seizes upon them unawares, and they are filled with terror. The second have been aiming to live a religious life, and have been expecting that that religious life, consisting of sundry prayers, and fastings, and church-goings, and alms-givings, would bring them peace at the last, although He who is the only Peace-maker between God and man, has scarcely filled even a secondary place in their devotions. But now eternity opens to their view; their religious life begins to weigh lighter and lighter in their estimation, when balanced against the demands of God’s pure and holy law; and they too, as well as the careless, are filled with alarm.

To either class the message of the Protestant min-

ister is the same. He has no passport to heaven to give or to sell them. He stands by their bed-side a poor helpless sinner like themselves, and he has but one word suited to their case. That word is, "*Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world!*"

But constant experience proves that there is *no* refuge which human nature, even in its greatest alarm, will not prefer to this. And if, in this moment of doubt and dismay, Popery comes in with her vast pretensions, and tells the frightened sinner, "*Behold the TRUE CHURCH, out of which you cannot be saved, and in which you cannot be lost; here is extreme unction for your body; a new sacrifice of Christ's actual body to be again, this very moment, offered up for your soul; here is an infinite treasury of merit in the possession of the church, part of which, by almsgiving, you may procure to be set to your account; and here are prayers both of saints above and saints below, all which the church can apply for your rescue from the purifying fires of purgatory,*"—we say, who shall wonder that with all these magnificent offers pressed upon her acceptance, poor human nature, except omnipotent grace commands a rescue, turns from the simple call to faith in a Saviour, and eagerly embraces the tempting offers of the universal deceiver?*

The clenching argument, however, with the hesitating mind, in such a case as this, is that which we are now about to consider. The Protestant minister pretends to no infallibility, either in himself or in his church. He offers, as the alone guide, the word of God—the Bible. But the poor creature before him has, perhaps, and knows that he has, but a few hours to live, and despairs of understanding such a volume in that short space; while to receive the wonderful message, "*Believe and thy sins shall be blotted out,*" seems impossible without some stronger assurance of its truth.

* Rev. xviii. 23.

The Romish priest, on the other hand, if he claims not infallibility for *himself*, boldly and strenuously asserts it as the attribute of his church. In the words of Dr. Milner, he declares that "the Catholic church is the divinely commissioned guardian and interpreter of the word of God; and that, therefore, the method appointed by Christ for learning what he has taught, on the various articles of his religion, is to *hear the church* propounding them." "This method," he proceeds, "is the only one which leads to the peace and unity of the Christian church, and the only one which affords tranquillity and security to individual Christians during life, and at the trying hour of their dissolution."* "Thus *you have only to hear what the church teaches* upon the several articles of her faith, in order to *know with certainty* what God has revealed concerning them."†

It is this conclusive assumption, this assertion of a fact which the poor man has neither time nor strength to dispute, and which, *if true*, makes all safe, and assures him of salvation, that mainly tends to these death-bed conversions, as it does, also, to most of those which occur in health, and after calmer consideration. And, as it evidently lies at the very foundation of the whole argument, cutting the ground itself, if it be true, from under Protestantism, it seems both expedient, and in fact necessary, to commence any discussion on the doctrines and pretensions of Romanism, at this preliminary point.

But in what way shall the inquiry be conducted? It seems to us that the most intelligible and practical course will be to *individualize*, if we may so call it, the investigation; by imagining, not an abstract argument, but a real inquirer.

Our readers and writers on Popery, in this country, are too often either vehement opponents from their very birth, or else men who, from their ultra views of churchmanship, are favourably disposed towards Popery. In either of these cases the cause has been

* End of Controv. p. 536.

† Ibid p. 173.

virtually decided before a word of the argument has been heard. But the more honest seeker after truth will not contend for victory, but will look for satisfaction. We can have no difficulty in picturing to ourselves such an one. Take the man whose life has been spent in various parts of the world, whether in commercial pursuits, or in the service of his country. He has lived among all religions, and yet has, from that very circumstance, attached himself to none. Various warnings suggest to him the shortness and uncertainty of life, and he feels that, as yet, all beyond the present scene is a matter of dread uncertainty. He therefore begins to inquire, in earnest, which is the way of salvation. But here he is beset by the various claims of the various churches and sects, and feels bewildered amidst the different schemes which are presented to his notice.

Thus far, however, he has advanced, and *that* so carefully as 'to be thoroughly settled in the conviction,—That it is wholly absurd and irrational to suppose that the world or its inhabitants came into existence by chance, or that the human race originated itself: That the Creator of the visible universe must be a being of inconceivable power, wisdom, and benevolence, and that it is most improbable that, having made mankind, he would cast them loose to follow their own devices, without any further care about their fate or their conduct: That something within warns him of the existence of a principle, which the sleep of the body does not cause to slumber, and which it is not conceivable that the dissolution of the body will destroy: That a secret consciousness of the difference between good and evil, and an impression of a future retribution, connected with the previous observations, convince him of the great probability, at least, of an hereafter; in which he will have to know the Author of his being, and, what is still more important, will be called to account by him for all the actions of his life.

But this train of thought carries him forward, at once, to the most interesting question which can

possibly present itself to the human mind, namely, on the supposition that there is an *hereafter*, and possibly a *judgment* at the very commencement of that hereafter; how shall a human being prepare himself for that awful scrutiny? By what rule, according to what directory shall he regulate his conduct, or frame his plea? How shall he learn the character and requirements of his judge, and the best mode in which to approach his presence and propitiate his favour? Nothing can exceed the essential importance of these questions, or the interest which they are calculated to awaken in the mind of the serious and earnest seeker after truth.

Now the answer of a Protestant to these inquiries will be both simple and straightforward. He will say,—

“For my own part, I must confess myself a poor, fallible, erring human creature like yourself; and when I speak to you of the concerns of God and eternity, I dare not give you any surmises or notions of my own, or any views or principles learnt of other human beings. But I am able to refer you to a guide which cannot mislead or misinform you, to a book, in short, which has been given to man by that very God before whose judgment-seat we must all stand, as the guide and directory, both of his belief and of his practice. Knowing it to be his gift, and bestowed upon man for this very object, I dare not direct your view to any inferior source of knowledge.

“Nor is it necessary. For in the Bible, and there alone, we find ‘shallows in which a lamb may wade, and yet at the same time, depths in which an elephant may swim.’ There alone, we find ‘*truth* without any mixture of error,’ and ‘*certainty* without any alloy of doubt.’”

But the moment this reply is given, we may assure ourselves of the instant and total oppositon of the Romish party. An open and unshackled Bible, exalted, too, to be the *sole judge* and arbiter in all matters relating to our faith,—cannot co-exist with Romanism. And thus it happens, that in one shape

or other, either open or covert warfare is constantly waged against the Bible by the votaries of Rome.

In the palmy days of the apostate church, her mandates against the use of the Scriptures were issued without the least disguise or qualification. "We strictly forbid," says the council of Toulouse, "the laity to have the books of the Old and New Testament in the vulgar tongue." "If any one shall presume to read or possess them," says the council of Trent, "without permission of his priest or confessor, in writing, he shall not receive absolution of his sins, except he first deliver them up."* And in like manner, at the present day, in Spain, Italy, or other Popish countries, copies of the Scriptures, if discovered by the police, are seized and destroyed, as contraband or unlawful articles.

In the midst of a Protestant population, however, and in a land where pretensions of this kind would be instantly spurned, Popery alters its tone. *Here* no objection is offered *to the use* of the Scriptures, but only to their *paramount* authority. "The Catholic rule of faith," says Dr. Milner, "is not merely the *written word of God*, but *the whole word of God, both written or unwritten*; in other words, scripture and tradition, and these propounded and explained by the Catholic church. This implies that we have a two-fold rule or law, and that we have an interpreter or judge to explain it, and to decide upon it in all doubtful points."†

This device, however, only differs from open warfare with the Bible, in its greater insidiousness. To put Scripture wholly out of sight, is, perhaps, the simplest and most effectual course; but, when this cannot be attempted, it answers nearly the same purpose to reduce the written word into subjection to the church's decisions. Chillingworth has well said, that "He that would usurp an absolute lordship and tyranny over any people, need not put himself to the

* De libris prohibitis. reg. iv.

† Milner's End of Controversy, page 116.

trouble and difficulty of abrogating and disannulling the laws made to maintain the common liberty; for he may frustrate their intent, and compass his own design as well, if he can get the power and authority to interpret them as he pleases, and to have his interpretations and additions stand for laws; if he can rule his people by his laws, and his laws by his lawyers. So the church of Rome, to establish her tyranny over men's consciences, needed not either to abolish or corrupt the Holy Scriptures, the pillars and supporters of Christian liberty. But the more expedite way, and therefore the more likely to be the successful, was to gain the opinion and esteem of being the public and authorized *interpreter* of them, and the authority of *adding* to them what doctrine she pleased, under the title of *traditions* or *definitions*. For by this means, she might both serve herself of all those clauses of Scripture which might be drawn to cast a favourable countenance upon her ambitious pretences,—which, had the Scriptures been abolished, she could not have done; and yet be secure enough of having neither her power limited, nor her corruptions and abuses reformed by them; this being once settled in the minds of men, that unwritten doctrines, if proposed by her, were to be received with equal reverence to those that were written; and that the sense of Scripture was not that which it seemed to reason and understanding to be, but that which the church of Rome should declare it, though it seem never so unreasonable and incongruous.”*

But we are often met, in this stage of the argument, by assertions of the expediency and even the absolute necessity of some authoritative interpreter. A very fallacious analogy is introduced, between divine and human legislation. Dr. Milner remarks that “in this kingdom we have the *common* or *unwritten law*, and the *statute* or *written law*, both of them binding, but the former necessarily preceding the latter.”†

Nothing, however, can be more irrational, or more

* Chillingworths' Works, fol. p. 40.

† End of Controversy, p. 117.

presumptuous, than this method of prescribing a certain course as a fit and necessary one to be taken by the all-wise Creator, merely because some of his short-sighted creatures have found it needful under their perpetual errors and imperfections. Two reasons may be adduced for the existence and validity of our common or unwritten law ;—1. The imperfection attending all man's works, which makes it impossible for any parliament to construct a perfect code, and thus renders the rectifying hand of the judges often needful. 2. The fact, that we had judges in England centuries before we had parliaments, from which it naturally followed that their decisions, recorded and handed down, became a sort of code, long before acts of parliament came into use among us. But neither of these reasons applies in the least to the dealings of God with his creatures; nor can any rational ground be assigned, why that divine Being who has vouchsafed us a revelation of His mind and will in the Scriptures, should have left it in such obscurity as to need the perpetual interpretations of a number of human creatures like ourselves; still less, that He should have purposely kept back half of that revelation, in order to entrust it to a mere *vivâ voce* preservation, under the name of *tradition*.

The next objection waxes bolder, and adopts a tone which is almost profane. It runs thus, "Jesus Christ wrote no part of the New Testament himself, and gave no orders to his apostles to write it, nor did he intend it to be, together with the Old Testament, the sole rule of religion."* "The Almighty did not send a book, the New Testament, to Christians, and without so much as establishing the authority of that book, leave them to interpret it, till the end of time, each one according to his own opinions or prejudices. But our blessed Master and Legislator, Jesus Christ, having first established his own divine legation from his heavenly Father by undeniable miracles, commissioned his chosen apostles, *by word of mouth*, to

* End of Controversy, p. 97.

proclaim and explain, *by word of mouth*, his doctrines and precepts unto all nations, promising to be with them even to the end of the world.”*

Now, not to dwell upon the indecency of this language, its assertions are essentially untrue. If Christ “*gave no orders* to his apostles to write the new Testament,” he did more; he sent down the Holy Spirit, who in discharge of his office, of bearing witness of the Saviour, inspired the apostles and evangelists to write these books. And by divers signs and wonders, wrought before all the people, he did most fully establish the authority of those writings and of their authors. It is little short, then, of playing the infidel,—to make light of the only book which God has given us, to teach us the knowledge of himself, and to describe it as scarcely more than a fortuitous collection of ancient writings.

An appeal to the Fathers, which generally follows, is less objectionable on the score of presumption. Dr. Milner, to establish the equality of tradition with scripture, quotes Basil and Epiphanius. The former says—“There are many doctrines preserved and preached in the church, derived partly from written documents, partly from apostolical tradition, *which have equally the same force* in religion, and which no one contradicts who has the least knowledge of the Christian laws.” And the last, “We must make use of tradition; for all things are not to be found in scripture.”†

But he who seeks to establish any great principle by a reference to the fathers, “seeks for the living among the dead.” There is scarcely any position in theology, whether true or false, which may not easily be supported by quotations from some one or more of their number. But the folly of relying on them consists in this, that it is just as easy to find passages which make for one side of a question as for the other. And by this we may learn the uncertainty and contrariety of what is called tradition, and the im-

* End of Controversy, p. 118.

† End of Controversy, p. 127.

possibility of finding any sure resting place, save in the word of God. Against the words of Basil and Epiphanius, we may place those of Justin Martyr and Jerome. Justin says, "If we will be safe in all things we must fly to the Scriptures, we must believe God only, and rest solely on his institutions, and *not on men's traditions.*"* Jerome says, "Whereas Paul will have his own things to be kept, he will have no strange things *added to them.*"† Thus it is quickly seen, that if we refer any question to the judgment of the fathers, we are likely to get into a chaos of differing opinions, but with little chance of arriving at a final verdict. On the real value of what is called "Tradition," a late Romanist author, the Rev. D. O'Croly, lately parish priest of Ovens, near Cork, has written very sensibly. He says:

"Tradition, about which so much has been said and written, is a mere nonentity in religion. It is called the unwritten word, and may be denominated a sort of supplement to the New Testament. It is supposed to be a portion of revelation, which was not committed to writing, but continues to be delivered orally as at first; and has been transmitted in this manner from age to age, down to the present time. Now the great point to ascertain is, what this traditionary revelation contains, what dogmata it teaches; what precepts it inculcates; what particular maxims it recommends in contradistinction to the written word, or to the writings of the evangelists and apostles in the New Testament? Has the church, at any time during the eighteen centuries of her existence, placed before the world in a tangible shape, or in due form, this grand section of the revealed word? Has she ever ventured to define it either in whole or in part? She has done nothing of the kind. The apostles and evangelists did not mark it down; the first fathers followed the example of the apostles and evangelists, they slurred it over; their successors in like manner, passed it heedlessly by; councils that were as-

* Dial. cum. Trypho.

† On 2 Thessalonians.

sembled of every description, general and particular, took no notice of it, and thus has it travelled down to our days without shape or form,—a sort of spiritual essence, unheeded, unperceived, untouched, undefined, and undefinable; and this is to form an essential part of religion! Tradition is a mere figment, an empty name.”*

Let us now, however, try to get a little closer to the practical question, and to ascertain, if possible, how the Romish rule of faith can be made actually available.

The Protestant offers something which is at least intelligible. He presents the written word of God, and avows his belief, that in that volume is contained all that is “necessary to salvation,” so that “whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith.”

The Romanist, not daring, in this Protestant country, to repudiate the Holy Scriptures, admits their authority and their value, but declares that an authoritative interpreter of their meaning is absolutely necessary, and that *that* interpreter, properly commissioned, is only to be found in his church. *His* rule of faith, therefore, is, Scripture and tradition conjointly; or, Scripture as interpreted by the church.

Instantly, then, the question suggests itself to a plain man, honestly seeking after truth;—“Where is this Scripture and tradition conjoined” to be found? or where is that authoritative interpretation of the Scripture, which the church is said to be divinely commissioned to give?

Dr. Milner’s main direction, to all seekers after salvation, is, to “*hear the church*, the divinely commissioned *guardian and interpreter* of the word of God.” † “No sooner,” says he, “will you have sacrificed your own wavering judgment, and have submitted to follow the guide whom your heavenly Father has provided for you, than you will feel a deep

* O’Croly’s Inquiry, p. 41.

† End of Controversy, p. 536.

conviction that you are in the right and secure way.”*

The question, then, is, How is the inquirer to “hear the church,” and to submit to the guide thus divinely provided? We shall not be told, that by merely joining the communion of the church, and submitting ourselves to her authority, we thereby become perfectly safe for time and eternity. This will hardly be insisted on, for every one must have become acquainted with persons who were devout and even servile followers of the religious ceremonies and requirements of the Romish church, and who were yet far from leading such lives as to encourage any one to consider them secure of heaven.

Hence it is clear, that to become a Roman Catholic does not of itself give the inquirer that which he needs, perfect security, and an assurance that he is secure. Thus he is driven once more to ask, Which is the safe, the unerring way, to the discovery of religious truth? If he is not to rely upon the Scriptures—and these he is told will mislead him—on what is he to rely? He is told that he must “hear the church;” but where, he begs to know, is he to hear her? Does she speak through her ministers, and can he be sure that each of these ministers is so far divinely preserved from error, as to be actually *incapable* of misleading him? Only assure him of this, and he will feel that a great point is gained. He will then have reached a height from which all the important truths connected with salvation will be clearly discernible.

No such pretension, however, will be put forward. If every individual minister of the church were divinely preserved from error, then it would follow that they must all maintain the same doctrines, and differences and discords must be unknown. But this is notoriously not the case, nor ever has been. One of their saints, Hilary, *anathematizes*, in his epistles now extant, Pope Liberius, the then “successor of St. Peter.” At a later period, Platina, one of their own

* End of Controversy, p. 170.

writers, says, that "towards the close of the tenth, and beginning of the eleventh centuries, the chief object of the popes seemed to be, to reverse the decrees of their predecessors." The disputes of the Jesuits and Jansenists are matter of history, as well as the ecclesiastical censures incurred by Fenelon and Pascal, men of whose virtues they now are very ready to boast, but who, when living, were treated by the church of Rome as almost heretics. And, to come down to the present time, in the volume already quoted, lately published by Mr. O'Croly, he charges one of his brethren, another Roman Catholic priest, with having put forward "*a disgusting farrago of falsehood, superstition, and blasphemy.*" Clearly, then, it is impossible that it should be seriously contended, now-a-days, that each individual priest is, of himself, a vessel of infallibility, and divinely preserved from holding or teaching error.

It was only a short time back that a resolution was advertised in various newspapers, which had been adopted at a public meeting of Roman Catholics, held at Birmingham, and which ran as follows:—"That although the Theology of Dens has been recently published in Ireland, and adopted by certain of the Irish prelates, as a *guide* to the ecclesiastical conferences held in their dioceses; yet the mere opinions of Dens, or any other individual theologian, form *no part* of Catholic faith." The same resolution further added, that certain sentiments put forth by Dens had been distinctly *disclaimed* by the Romish archbishop of Dublin. It would seem then, that we cannot even resort to a system of theology which has been put forth under the sanction of a conclave of Roman bishops, without falling in the way of errors which an archbishop is obliged to disclaim!

It will not, then, we apprehend, be questioned that, the priests, individually, are liable to err. In fact, it is never denied that some priests, some bishops, and even some popes, have actually preached and published dangerous heresies. Still, however, we shall be told, that the promise of God remains unshaken,

and that in the church as a whole, and with the great body of her pastors, the Holy Spirit constantly remains as a safeguard and a defence; and with them, consequently, error can find no abiding home.

The obvious rejoinder is, that it is still left in doubt, where the inquirer is to find this unerring rule. It is admitted, that it is not a mere adherence to the church that will confer on him this vast immunity. It is admitted, also, that with each individual priest, error may be found, for that other priests, and even bishops, nay, even popes themselves, have already erred. Where, then, is he to go to find this "church," this "great body of her ministers," with whom actual infallibility abides? Does the church exercise this divine gift for the benefit of her children, or not? and if she does, in what assembly, or in what record shall he find it? She is the divinely-empowered expounder of the Holy Scriptures, it is said;—has she then, during the fifteen hundred years of her existence, given her children an infallible commentary on the word of God? If so, surely that guide which the inquirer needs, and which, he is told, the mere books of the Old and New Testaments, uninterpreted, can never supply, is already provided.

But no!—this great work is still a desideratum. There is no comment which bears even the seal of the church's authoritative recommendation—much less is there any interpretation pretending to the least share of the church's collective infallibility.

Where, then, is the seeker after salvation to turn? Does any collective body exist, with whom Christ's presence, which the Romish writers claim, operates perceptibly and undeniably in purifying away every tendency to error?

Here the difficulty rather increases than diminishes. Many of the general councils of the Romish church have occupied themselves in denying and refuting the decisions of former councils, and in anathematizing the "infallibles" of the preceding age. And as to the pope himself, *his* infallibility is the very point which has for centuries been disputed with the great-

est heat among Roman Catholics themselves. In England and in France, good Romanists openly question the pope's personal infallibility. In Italy, and some other Catholic countries, to deny the sovereign pontiff this attribute is looked upon as little better than deadly heresy !

To what point, then, has our inquirer been conducted? What progress has he made? The Holy Scriptures are denied to be any guide whatever, for, we are told that—"Jesus Christ wrote no part of the New Testament himself, and gave no orders to his apostles to write it, nor did he intend it to be, together with the Old Testament, the sole rule of religion."* We then ask for some other rule, and are referred to "the church," as the body in which Christ always dwells, and with whom error finds no lodgement; but beyond this general and vague direction we cannot advance one step. The priests of this church are not, it is confessed, gifted with personal and individual infallibility. They have no infallible comment to put into the inquirer's hands, nor can they direct him to any person or body of persons, on whose directions he may rely, without the possibility of error. Is he not, then, altogether mocked by these pretenders to infallibility? an infallibility which is ever in existence, but never to be approached, or heard, or rendered tangible;—an infallibility which answers admirably the purpose of maintaining the authority of the priesthood, but vanishes into air the moment it is invoked for any useful purpose.

What remains, then, but to retreat, disappointed, from this bootless search after an *ignis fatuus* of infallibility; and to resort to the intelligible principle of Protestantism? "This book, which I hold, and which I can read, is God's own revealed word: That is my rule, my guide; I can have no better, and I want no other."

A strange objection is the next that is offered. We have no right, it is said, to the use of the Holy

Scriptures, while we are separated from the Romish church. It is insisted, by Dr. Milner, "that the whole right to the Scriptures belongs to the church. She has preserved them; she vouches for them; and she alone, by comparing the several passages with each other, *and with tradition*, authoritatively explains them. Hence it is impossible that the real sense of Scripture should ever be against her and her doctrine; and hence, of course, I might quash every objection which you can draw from every passage in it, by this short reply: *The church understands the passage differently from you, therefore you mistake its meaning.*"*

This is, assuredly, spiritual despotism of the simplest and most decided character. And we see here, how the assumption of an infallibility seated in some unnamed spot, is turned to good account in the course of the controversy. A modest objector is put down in a moment. "I might quash every objection from Scripture," says Dr. Milner, "with this short reply, *The church understands that passage differently from you, therefore you mistake its meaning.*" Could any thing be imagined more perfectly gratuitous in its assumption? "I quash your objection," says Dr. Milner, "by the short reply, the church understands that passage differently," &c. Thus, if Dr. Milner does not, in express words, claim infallibility as his own personal attribute, he acts as if no one could doubt his possession of it. "*I tell you, that the church understands that passage differently, and that ends the question.*" The Doctor's simple assertion is to close the argument. He could never *prove* that "*the church*" held this or that, but his sole declaration was to amount to the same thing. He could not produce her interpretation from an authorized commentary, for she has given none. He could not prove it by individual fathers, for one set of fathers had contradicted all that another set had said; nor could he prove it by the decrees of councils, for other

* End of Controversy, p. 157.

councils had decreed in an adverse way. Still, "when *I* tell you that *the church* understands that passage differently, that is to end the argument." A most exact picture this of the way in which this abstract infallibility, which can no where be pointed out or described, is brought into practical use by the Romish priesthood!

But it is fearful to contemplate this usurpation of divine authority, whether we consider the abstract crime, merely, or its practical results. God, in great mercy, speaks to man in his written word; and therein tells him how to escape everlasting woe, and attain to everlasting happiness. To imagine for a moment, what many most arrogantly and profanely assert,—that this message from God is not intelligible without the interpretation of certain poor creatures like ourselves, is as far removed from true rationality as it is from true wisdom and piety. Yet this audacious assertion is now boldly and perpetually made, and men exalt themselves as the real possessors, for every practical purpose, of that infallibility and immunity from error which belongs to God alone!

Let us, however, lift up our hearts to God in grateful adoration, for that he has vouchsafed unto us this most invaluable guide and directory, in our darkness and difficulties, while passing through the wilderness of this world.

"What," says Bishop Jewell, shall I say more of **THE SCRIPTURES**? how profitable and comfortable they are in all cases and parts of our life! In adversity, in prosperity; in life, and in death; they are our especial comfort. If we must fight, they are a sword; if we hunger, they are meat; if we thirst, they are drink; if we have no dwelling-place, they are a house; if we be naked, they are a garment; if we be in darkness, they are light unto our going.

"They are comfortable in peace, in war; in heaviness, in joy; in health and sickness; in abundance, in poverty; in the day time, in the night season; in the town, in the wilderness; in company, and when thou art alone. For they teach faith, hope, patience,

charity, sobriety, humility, righteousness, and all godliness. **THEY TEACH US TO LIVE, AND THEY TEACH US TO DIE.**"

Let us consider, too, the fearful consequences of that sore judgment of God, "a famine of hearing the word of the Lord." "When the Scriptures are not opened," continues Bishop Jewell, "when there is none that can edify, and exhort, and comfort the people by the word of God, they must needs perish. For they know not the way in which they should walk; they know not whom to honor, nor upon whose name they should call: they know neither what to believe, nor what to do. Hell hath enlarged itself, and hath opened his mouth without measure; and they that are wilful and ignorant, and the children of darkness, go down into it.

"They become thrall and captives unto Satan; their heart is bound up, they understand nothing; their eyes are shut up, they can see nothing; their ears are stopped up, they can hear nothing; they are carried away as a prey into hell, because they have not the knowledge of God."

From such an awful state and condition, may the Lord deliver us! But let us ever be on our guard against the attempts of those who would, on one pretext or another, remove our feet from the rock of God's word, and place them on the sands of human inventions or interpretations. Many are the devices of this description which surround the inquirer's path at the present day. But let him ever remember, that God has given to man only one book, **THE BIBLE**, and let him hold fast that one document, the charter of his salvation; constantly refusing to permit any human work, whether the decrees of councils or the writings of the fathers, or the alleged conclusions of the church in general, to be for an instant associated or raised to an equality with **THE WORD OF GOD**. No such association can be tolerated, even for an instant, without the greatest dishonour to God, and the utmost peril to our own souls.

II.—ON THE RULE OF FAITH.

THE ROMISH CHURCH NOT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

IN our first essay we seemed to have ascertained two things:—that some Rule of Faith, or infallible guide to truth, is absolutely necessary; and that, practically, the Romish church furnishes its disciples with no such rule, either in the form of an authentic record of tradition; an infallible commentary on the Scriptures; or a ministry divinely preserved from error. We argued, therefore, that the sort of infallibility which she assumed, being no where to be laid hold of, or brought to any sinner's aid, was a mere empty name, a downright soul-deceiving delusion. For, after tracking the Romish controversialists hither and thither, from popes to councils, from councils to fathers, from fathers to unwritten, indefinite, and undefinable tradition, we found at last, that the only rule of faith which could be distinctly described or laid down, on any competent Romish authority, was that which Dr. Milner himself thus describes: “All Catholics, if properly interrogated, will confess their belief in one comprehensive article, namely this:—*I believe whatever the holy Catholic church believes and teaches!*”*

The Doctor, however, had not fully described even this simple rule; for when a Romanist *was* so interrogated, and had given, as Dr. Milner said he would, this general reply, he was next asked, “and *what* does the Catholic church believe?” His reply was, “the Catholic church believes what I believe.” Once more it was demanded—“and what do both you and the Catholic church believe?” To which his final an-

* End of Controversy, 18mo. p. 192.

swer was, "the Catholic church and I both believe the same thing!"

However, leaving this first objection, namely—that the Romish church, while it professes to be empowered to prescribe an infallible rule of faith, does, in fact, give *no other* rule of faith than that of a blind submission to any thing and every thing which may be taught by any and by all her ministers,—leaving this, let us proceed to consider that fundamental principle, or rather assumption, upon which this exorbitant demand on the credulity of men is based. That assumption is, that the whole Christian faith, and all the records of it, of every sort and description, are her exclusive property. That Protestants should have *any* rule of faith is declared to be impossible, for the very simple reason, that they do not rightfully possess even the Scriptures. A passage from Tertullian is quoted against them, which runs thus :

"If you live near Italy, you see before your eyes the Roman church; happy church! to which the apostles have left the inheritance of their doctrine with their blood! It is plain, as we have said, that heretics are not to be allowed to appeal to Scripture, since they have no claim to it. Hence it is proper to address them as follows: Who are you? Whence do you come? What business have you with my property? The estate is mine; I have the ancient, the prior possession of it. I have the title deeds, delivered to me by the apostles; they have made their will in my favour; while they disinherited and cast you off, as strangers and enemies."*

Now to this passage we might justly object, that it contains much of the intolerant assumption of later days, and that the Bible, which is God's gift to man, is improperly described when it is called the gift of the apostles to the church. But we shall not dwell on these minor points; preferring to come to the main question, which is, What right has the church of Rome to assume to herself the exclusive posses-

* End of Controversy, p. 126.

sion of the title of *the Holy Catholic Church,—the Church,—the spouse of Christ,—the successor of the apostles,—*that body to which alone belongs the Saviour's promise, *Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*

It is upon *this* basis that her claim to be the only infallible guide rests; it is on *this* assumption that she grounds the dictum, that a true Catholic has nothing to do but "to believe whatever the church believes and teaches."

We ourselves admit,—all Christians, we believe, admit,—that to be a true member of the Catholic church, of that church which is Christ's body, and which is to God himself as "the apple of his eye," is to be absolutely safe. To be within the pale of *this* church is indeed salvation; to be beyond or without that pale is the extremest danger. And, although the Scriptures ought to be placed before every man, yet we are willing to admit that the true and Catholic church has that peculiar property in them which a child may be supposed to have in his father's will,—an heir, in the title deeds of his estate. But the question for our present discussion is, What right has the bishop of Rome, with those that follow him, to declare, that the people of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Austria, France, and three or four other countries, conjointly with some scattered adherents in other places, constitute this Catholic Church,—that they and they alone, are truly Christ's people;—and that the Christians of England, Scotland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, America, and all the east, are nothing but outcasts, rebels, heretics, and opposers of Christ's authority! History affords no instance of arrogance more extraordinary, or pretensions more unfounded; and it is certainly worth while to inquire, with seriousness, upon what grounds so extraordinary a claim can be rested.

Dr. Milner has, indeed, a very short and easy way of resolving this question. He says, "In treating of this third mark of the true church, as expressed in our common creed, I feel my spirits sink within me,

and I am almost tempted to throw away my pen in despair. For what chance is there of opening the eyes of candid Protestants to the other marks of the church, if they are capable of keeping them shut to this! Every time they address the God of truth, either in solemn worship or in private devotion, they are forced, each of them, to repeat: '*I believe in THE CATHOLIC Church,*' and yet if I ask any of them the question: '*Are you a CATHOLIC?*' he is sure to answer me, '*No, I am a PROTESTANT!*' Was there ever a more glaring instance of inconsistency and self-condemnation among rational beings?"*

This miserable piece of trickery, for it would be injustice to give it any better name, has never been so plainly brought to view, as by Dr. Milner. Most other controversialists, even among the Papists, would have feared to use so palpable a piece of sophistry. For what is it, but a mere play upon words? His church has been accustomed, for centuries, to call herself "the Roman Catholic church." Another body of religionists denominates itself "the Methodists;" and a third, "the Unitarians." To each we give, in common conversation, that title by which they choose to distinguish themselves, neither admitting nor denying thereby, the correctness of the claim thus made. If we give to one sect the name of *Methodists*, we mean not in so doing to record our admission that they, and they alone, have any *method* or order in their religion. If we call another body "the *Unitarians*," we do not at all acknowledge, by that term, that they are a whit more firm or more orthodox than we, in the great fundamental doctrine of the unity of the Godhead. And so, when, in common parlance, we call the adherents of the pope what they choose to call themselves, *Roman Catholics*, or, for brevity, *Catholics*, we no more mean thereby, to acknowledge any peculiar title in them to that appellation, than we do when we indulge the Methodists or the Unitarians with that name to which they happen to have taken

* End of Controversy, 18mo. p. 279.

a fancy. Miserable work, indeed, is it, to build a serious argument in such a controversy as this, upon such a flimsy foundation! And worse than miserable;—for by thus directing our attention to mere words and phrases, we are obliged to retort upon the doctor his own accusation.

For Dr. Milner knew, when he chose to represent the Protestant as replying *No!* to the question, “Are you a *Catholic?*” that that very question as he had phrased it, was nothing more than a trick, a trap set to catch the unwary. He was well aware that any Protestant who was worthy of the name,—i. e. who knew what he protested against,—could not reply “*No,*” to the question “*Are you a Catholic?*” without understanding the question itself to mean, “Are you a *Roman Catholic?*” His negative could only apply to the Romish feature of the case, and that negative would not be uttered, except he fully understood that *such* was the purport of the question. To entrap such an one, therefore, into a reply which meant merely that he was not a *Romanist*, and then to use that answer, as if he had admitted his dissent from that *Catholic* or universal church to which he, in fact, professed to belong, was a manœuvre well worthy of a disciple of Loyola.

But the doctor talks of “self-condemnation.” Is there nothing of “self-condemnation” about his own reasoning? He insists on the absolute necessity of the true church’s being really *Catholic* or *universal*. This point is laboriously argued through a long chapter. And yet, when we turn to the title page of his volume, we find the author there denominating himself “a *Roman Catholic* divine!”

Now if “self-condemnation” was ever to be discerned, it is assuredly here. This is the very contradiction in terms which, by the wondrous providence of God, the Romish church has ever been made to carry about with her. “*Roman Catholic!*” The phrase, as far as *meaning* is concerned, is just as rational as it would be to talk of “the *English* universe.” But enough of this—let us endeavour to find

something more nearly approaching the form of an argument. Dr. Milner proceeds as follows:—

“At the first promulgation of the gospel, its followers were distinguished from the Jews by the name of *Christians*, as we learn from Scripture. Acts xi. 26. Hence the title of Catholic did not occur in the primitive edition of the Apostles’ Creed; but no sooner did heresies and schisms arise, to disturb the peace of the church, than there was found to be a necessity of discriminating the main stock of her faithful children, to whom the promises of Christ belonged, from those self-willed *choosers* of their articles of belief, as the word *heretic* signifies, and from those disobedient *separatists*, as the word *schismatic* means. For this purpose the title of CATHOLIC, or *universal*, was adopted, and applied to the true church and her children. Accordingly, we find it used by the immediate disciples of the apostles, as a distinguishing *mark of the true church*. One of these was the illustrious martyr St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who, writing to the church of Smyrna, expressly says, that “Christ is, where the *Catholic* church is.” In like manner, the same church of Smyrna, giving a relation of the martyrdom of that holy bishop, St. Polycarp, who was equally a disciple of the apostles, addressed it to ‘the *Catholic* churches.’ This characteristic title of the true church continued to be pointed out by the succeeding fathers in their writings, and the acts of their councils. St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, in the fourth century, gives the following direction to his pupils: ‘If you go into any city, do not ask merely, *Where is the church, or house of God?* because the heretics pretend to have this: but ask, *Which is the Catholic Church?* because this title belongs alone to our holy mother.’ ‘We,’ says a father of the fifth century, ‘are called *Catholic* Christians.’ His contemporary St. Pacian, describes himself as follows: ‘*Christian* is my name, *Catholic* is my surname: by the former I am called, by the latter I am distinguished. By the name of *Catholic*, our society is distinguished from all *heretics*.’ But there is not one of the fathers or

doctors of antiquity who enlarges so copiously or so pointedly on this title of the true church, as the great St. Augustine, who died in the early part of the fifth century. 'Many things,' he says, 'detrain me in the bosom of the Catholic church—the very name of CATHOLIC detains me in it, which she has so happily preserved amidst the different heretics; that whereas they are all desirous of being called *Catholics*, yet if any stranger were to ask them, *Which is the assembly of the Catholics?* none of them would dare to point out his own place of worship.' To the same purpose he says elsewhere: 'We must hold fast the communion of that church which is called *Catholic*, not only by her own children, but also by all her enemies. For heretics and schismatics, whether they will or not, when they are speaking of the Catholic church with strangers, or with their own people, call her by the name of *Catholic*; inasmuch as they would not be understood, if they did not call her by the name by which all the world calls her. In proportion to their affection for the glorious name of *Catholic*, is the aversion of these primitive doctors, to every ecclesiastical name or title derived from particular persons, countries, or opinions. 'What new heresy,' says St. Vincent of Lerius, in the sixth century, 'ever sprouted up, without bearing the name of its founder, the date of its origin,' &c. St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, had previously made the same remark in the second century, with respect to the Marcionite, Valentinian, and other heretics of his time. Finally, the nervous St. Jerome lays down the following rule on this subject: 'We must live and die in that church, which, having been founded by the apostles, continues down to the present day. If, then, you should hear of any Christians not deriving their name from Christ, but from some other founder, as the Marcionites, the Valentinians, &c. be persuaded that they are not of Christ's society; but of antichrist's.'

“And are not these observations and arguments of the ancient fathers as strikingly true in this nineteenth century, as they were during the six first

centuries, in which they wrote? Is there not among the rival churches, one exclusively known and distinguished by the name and title of THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, as well in England, Holland, and other countries, which *protest* against this church, as in those which adhere to it? Does not this effulgent mark of the true religion so incontestably belong to us, in spite of every effort to obscure it by the nicknames of *Papist, Romanist, &c.*, that the rule of St. Cyril and St. Augustine is as good and certain now as it was in their times?"*

Such are the reasonings of Dr. Milner. But surely one of his closing arguments recoils with prodigious force upon himself. For what is the chief point on which he dwells? It is this:—"In proportion to their affection for the glorious name of *Catholic*, is the aversion of these primitive doctors to every ecclesiastical name or title *derived from particular persons, countries, or opinions.*" And what, after all, is the main distinction of his own church, but that it is the church of *Rome*?

But the great fault of this argument of Dr. Milner's is, that there is a prodigious hiatus, or gap, in the very middle of it. The doctor shows, that the term "*the Catholic church,*" was one commonly used in the first six centuries, and he quotes many expressions of the fathers in proof of the respect and veneration at that period attached to it. He then comes down at once to the present day, and says, "Here is that *Catholic* church, towards which the fathers expressed such respect and regard; do you now show the same feelings, and pay the like respect."

But the whole gist and weight of the question at issue lies at that very point of the controversy which Dr. Milner has chosen to pass over in perfect silence. There has been a change in words even; but there has been a far greater change in things. It is *not true*, although the Doctor would so represent it, that

* End of Controversy, p. 279—282.

there is a Catholic church visibly discerned, and ordinarily known by that name, now, as there was in the days of Cyril, Augustine, or Jerome. That which now endeavours to palm itself upon us, in the place of the Catholic church of the early ages, is detected by its very name. Even in Dr. Milner's title page it stares forth as "the *Roman Catholic church.*" But that name is not lightly or unmeaningly added: and it just makes this difference, that no one of those glowing expressions of allegiance or attachment which occur in the early fathers towards the *Catholic church*, will bear application to the church of *Rome*.

Dr. Milner is very unhappy in his choice of authorities on this point. He quotes *Cyril* and *Augustine*, and it is true that both these fathers speak with great warmth of the necessity of firm adherence to the *Catholic church*. In all their expressions we go with them. We, too, desire to belong to the *Catholic church*, and never to depart from her communion. But it does not follow that Cyril or Augustine felt themselves at all bound, or that we acknowledge any tie, to the church of *Rome*; and the fallacy lies in taking expressions which are intended for the one, and applying them to the other. We desire to remain in the communion of the *Catholic church*, but against the rule of the *Romish church* we protest. Cyril and Augustine, like us, adhered to the *Catholic church*, but disregarded the claims and pretensions of the see of Rome. The presidency of the third general council was taken by Cyril, then patriarch of Alexandria, which fact of itself proves how little he thought of any claim of the Bishop of Rome to be considered as the head of the church. I believe that the Cyril quoted by Dr. Milner is one of less note than the patriarch of Alexandria; but as he has introduced the name, I must be allowed to refer to that celebrated man. As to Augustine, in his time, a synod of two hundred and twenty-five bishops, at Carthage, absolutely forbade all appeals to Rome; and his signature is affixed to that identical decree! What, then,

becomes of these two authorities, brought forward to establish the right of the church of *Rome* to arrogate to itself the sole possession of *Catholicity*?

The *facts* of the case, however, upon which the whole question turns, are matters of history, accessible to all. Is it true, that when the ancient fathers spoke of union and allegiance to the *Catholic* church, as being an essential thing in a real Christian, they meant thereby to enjoin union and allegiance to the see of Rome? Did they mean to assert that any one who opposed or disobeyed the mandates of the Bishop of Rome was thereby and *ipso facto*, excluded from the pale of the Catholic church? Nothing of the kind: not an idea of the sort ever crossed their thoughts. What are the main outlines of the case, as regards the authority of the Bishop of Rome?

There existed, for the first five or six centuries, a body called "the Catholic church," which consisted of the great body of Christian believers and sound professors, in all parts of the world. This body was called "Catholic" or *universal*, to distinguish it from the various sects and parties which sprang up here and there; and to examine into, and pronounce sentence upon which, the great body of the faithful, by their bishops, were frequently accustomed to meet in general councils. It was so called by common consent, having no legalized existence, but regulating its own internal affairs by its own assemblies, being for several centuries frowned upon by the state.

But this *Catholic* church was not the *Romish* church. The pretensions of the Bishop of Rome to be the visible head of the church, and to have the power of excluding all who refused to pay him homage, were never heard of during all this period.

As the seat of empire, and as a see possessed of great wealth, Rome always claimed for its bishop a post of honour, and a seat of precedency. This was often conceded, but all pretensions to authority over the church was for centuries denied. At the council of Nice, the first great assembly of that kind upon record; summoned, not by the bishop of Rome, but

by the emperor, there was no pope from Rome to claim the first place, but Eustasius, the bishop of Antioch, filled the chair. And by that council the four patriarchs, *viz*: of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, were declared to be of equal authority and rank. Previous to this (A. D. 196), when Victor, bishop of Rome, had endeavoured to impose his mandates on the churches of Asia, they steadily maintained their independence, and the epistle of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, rebuked Victor for the attempt he had made. Again, in the middle of the third century, one of the greatest lights of the church, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, repelled a similar assumption on the part of Rome, and maintained the independence and equality of the churches. Jerome also as explicitly declares, that all bishops are equal. Hilary, another father of great celebrity, so far from admitting the rule of the bishop of Rome, thus addresses him, the then bishop being an Arian: "I anathematize thee, and that the third time, O thou prevaricator, Liberius."

Thus continued affairs, there being a Catholic, or visible and universal church, which by its councils decided all cases of importance, but no pope to assert his sole authority as Christ's vicar upon earth. The council of Ephesus, called the third general council, held A. D. 431, was presided over, as I have already remarked, by Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria. Eighteen years after, another council was held, over which the successor of Cyril was called to preside.

But the two rival sees, of Rome and Constantinople, continued to increase in wealth and power, and to exhibit more and more of mutual rivalry and jealousy. The council of Chalcedon (A. D. 451) placed the two pontiffs on a level in rank and authority, and divided the visible church between them. Still, up to this period, there was no "*Roman Catholic church.*"

More than a century after, the patriarch of Constantinople attempted to assume the title of "Œcumenical," or "*Universal Bishop;*" on which the then bishop of Rome, Pelagius I. wrote as follows:—

“Regard not the name of Universal Bishop which John has unlawfully usurped; for let no one of the patriarchs use so profane an appellation. Consider *what mischief* may be expected rapidly to follow, when even among priests such perverted beginnings break forth; for he is near respecting whom it is written, *He himself is King over all the sons of pride.*” Gregory I. who succeeded to the Roman see, uses even stronger language when speaking of this subject. He says,—“*I faithfully declare, that whosoever in his haughtiness shall call himself, or desire to be called, the Universal Bishop, is the forerunner of Antichrist.*”

At last, about the year A. D. 862, the two patriarchs mutually excommunicated each other, and a division took place which has never since been healed.

Nor was this the mere falling off of a limb, or branch. It is probable that at that moment the Greek patriarch numbered the largest body of adherents. Some time before, the bishops of the west were reckoned to be eight hundred, and those of the east, a thousand. But a large proportion of those formerly reckoned among the western churches fell to the share of the patriarch of Constantinople. There can be little ground to doubt, that a very large proportion of the Christian world, so far as the dominion of either was acknowledged, adhered to the Constantinopolitan head. The Greek empire decayed and waned before the advancing power of Islamism; but even in the eleventh century we find the patriarch of Constantinople presiding over sixty-five metropolitans, and more than six hundred bishops.* In Britain, and other kingdoms of Europe, the authority of neither was implicitly acknowledged. But let us pause here for a moment, and reflect on the absurdity which would justly have been charged upon the Roman bishop, had he, at that moment, viewing the division of the Christian world into two great portions,—declared that *his* division was the Catholic, or *Universal*

* Thomassin, part iv. p. 17.

Church, and that all the rest of the professed followers of Jesus were mere outcasts and heretics.

In fact, nothing of the sort took place. Those high pretensions which Dr. Milner and other Romish controversialists are now so ready to put forth,—to the effect that the church of *Rome* is the *Catholic* church, and that all who are not of her communion are heretics and outcasts,—were then unknown. The zeal and anger of Gregory was excited, not by the refusal of the bishop of Constantinople to submit to *him*, but by John's assumption of the supremacy over the whole church. This pretension, by whomsoever made, he declared to mark the forerunner of Antichrist. Not assuming that title himself, he could not foresee that in a comparatively short period after, his own successors would claim it, and that soon writers would abound, like Dr. Milner, to argue that whoever was not in the church of Rome was not in the Catholic church.

However, let us bear in mind this fact, that on the separation of the eastern from the western churches, the real position of the Romish church, which now assumes the title of "Catholic," was that of the *third* in numerical strength, among the great subdivisions then existing in the church. The Greek patriarch had a greater body of adherents; and the churches of the east—Nestorian, Jacobite, &c.—outnumbered both Greek and Roman taken together.* Nor could the eastern body receive the name of a heresy or a schism, since on fundamental doctrines there was no difference between it and Rome, and their contentions arose mainly on points of precedence and authority, on which, up to that time, no general rule or decision had obtained.

But pass on a few centuries, and behold another great defection. At the Reformation, of that portion of the world which adhered to the Roman pontiff, nearly half revolted at once. England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, Holland, and

* Vitricius, i. 76.

many states of Germany, separated themselves from the Romish church. At the present moment, even as to mere *profession*, it may be questioned whether Romanism reckons a majority or only a minority of the nominally Christian world. But as to the *reality*, except in Ireland, Belgium, and some parts of Spain, she has scarcely any sincere adherents left. France is reckoned to have thirty millions of Roman Catholics, and yet you scarcely ever see a man in her churches; and so entirely has Romanism worn itself out in that kingdom, that a late orator in the Chamber of Deputies at Paris, admitted the obvious “want of *something* to fill up the vacuum caused by the *disappearance of Christianity!*”

Thus it is evidently impossible to admit, for a single instant, the closing assumption of Dr. Milner. He says, in claiming for the Italian church the title of Catholic, “Does not this effulgent mark of the true religion so incontestably belong to us, that the rule of Cyril and Augustine is as good and certain now, as it was in their times?”

We answer, No! for the following reasons:

1. Because the whole face of the Christian world has been entirely changed since the days in which Cyril and Augustine wrote. The faith professed throughout this universal church was the simple and Scriptural creed now received by all Protestants. Unity had not been destroyed by the assumptions and demands of the Roman bishops, nor had the main errors of Popery,—transubstantiation, the mass, the celibacy of the clergy, or the worship of images,—then taken root. The Scriptures were honoured and obeyed; and with internal unity, and general purity of doctrine in fundamental points, it was natural that Cyril and Augustine should enjoin strict adherence to the Catholic church, and avoidance of all schisms and divisions. In their days, there was one Catholic, or Christian church, spread over many parts of the world, but holding one doctrine, adhering to one creed, and deciding all questions by its assemblies or councils.

Now, however, all is changed. We have the Greek churches, which are as ancient as that of Rome. We have also various bodies of equal antiquity; as the Syrian churches, the Maronites, and others. And we have also the inhabitants of eight or ten kingdoms besides, who were formerly attached to Rome, but who have thrown off her yoke, and have protested against her corruptions. And after all these changes, what can be more evident, more undeniable, than this; that the advice of Cyril and Augustine, to cling fast to the Catholic, the *universal* church, can no longer apply? Let any man possessed of common sense, and not already embarked in this controversy, say,—whether there is any one Catholic or universal church *visibly* discernible at the present moment? And still more, whether it is possible, without the greatest violence to reason, and the plain meaning of the words, to declare, that the Romish church is *the* universal church, and that, consequently, the greater part of Christendom is out of the pale of Christian communion? But,

2. We answer, no!—because this change in the state of Christendom, this distraction and disunion of the Christian world, has been produced mainly and almost solely by the misconduct of Rome herself.

The Christian church, which was one and united in the days of Cyril and Augustine, has been split into various communions, chiefly by the intolerable assumptions and unscriptural pretensions of the Romish see.

Had Rome, in the seventh and eighth centuries, maintained Gregory's position, that no one prelate had a right to the title of universal bishop, she might have succeeded in preserving the unity of the church. But she soon began to oppose the claims of the patriarch of Constantinople by advancing still higher claims herself; and the end of this controversy was, the first great division of the visible church into two leading sections.

Again, having now only the west remaining to her, Rome soon made her yoke so heavy, that half of Eu-

rope cast it off. In the ninth century, she had broken off all connexion with the larger half of the Christian world. In the sixteenth, she quarreled with half of that section which remained with her. And yet, after all these secessions,—secessions, too, caused by her own inadmissible pretensions, she coolly anathematizes the seceders, and declares that those who abide by her, and those only, constitute the Christian or Catholic church!

But this position is evidently untenable, except, indeed, she can show that with her, and with her alone, is the truth of Christianity to be found. If Christianity exists in other communions, as we must fain hope it does, then it must be impossible to maintain the claim of the Romish church to be, exclusively and solely, the *catholic* or *universal* church. Historically, as we have already shown, she is not so; geographically or statistically, it is equally clear she is not so; and consequently it can only be by the clearest proof, that the truth is with her, and with her *alone*,—that her right to the title can be established.

III.—ON THE RULE OF FAITH.

THE ROMISH RULE OF FAITH EXAMINED.

WE have seen, then, that the attempt to impose the decisions of the church of Rome upon mankind, as the decisions of the Catholic or Universal church, is wholly unwarranted by the facts of the case. Let us now try to get a little closer to her pretensions, and to see what weight attaches to her claims, when considered on their own intrinsic merits.

We shall no where find a more artful and effective statement of the case, as against the Protestant rule of faith, and in favour of the Romish, than in Dr. Wiseman's Lectures. He thus states the argument:

“The authority of history, or of ecclesiastical tradition, independently of the divine force allowed it by the Catholic, can prove no more than the genuineness or truth of the Scripture narrative; but to be available as a proof of inspiration, must carry us directly to the attestation of the only witnesses capable of certifying the circumstance. It may be true that the church, or body of Christians, in succeeding times, believed the books of the New Testament to be inspired. But if that church and its traditions are not infallible, that belief goes no farther than a mere human or historical testimony; it can verify, therefore, no more than such testimony ever can; that is, outward and visible facts, such as the publication, and consequently the legitimacy of a work. The only way in which it can attest the interior acts which accompanied its compilation, is, by preserving the assurances of those who, besides God, could alone be witnesses to them. Now, ecclesiastical history has not preserved to us this important testimony; for no where have we the record of any of these writers

having asserted his own inspiration. And thus, by rejecting tradition as an authority, is the only basis for the inspiration of Scripture cut away."

"Hitherto, then, my brethren, of what have I been treating? Why of nothing more than the preliminaries requisite to commence the study of the Protestant rule of faith. I have merely shown that the obstacles and difficulties to receiving the Bible, as the word of God, are numerous and complicated; and yet, if it is the duty of every Protestant to believe all that he professes, because he has sought and discovered it in the word of God; if, consequently, it is his duty to be satisfied only on his own evidence, as the divines of his church have stated; if, to attain this conviction, it is necessary for him to go through a long and painful course of learned disquisitions; and if, after all these have been encountered, he cannot come to a satisfactory demonstration of the most important point of inspiration, I ask you, can the rule, in the approach to which you must pass through such a labyrinth of difficulties, be that which God has given as a guide to the poorest, the most illiterate, and simplest of his creatures?"*

And having thus proved, to his own satisfaction at least, the weakness and uncertainty attendant on this course, he next proceeds to develope the Romish system. On this part of the subject he says:

"Let us suppose that, not content with the more compendious method whereby God has brought us, through baptism and our early instruction, into the possession of the faith, we are disposed to investigate the authority of its principles; we begin naturally with Scripture—we take up the gospels, and submit them to examination."†

Here we must pause for an instant, to admire the Proteus-like changes of Romanism, and its wonderful power of adapting itself to existing circumstances. When, till the year 1836, did the Romish church, or any of its advocates, admit that in the investigation

* Wiseman's Second Lecture, p. 43.

† Third Lecture, p. 62.

of our religious principles, we should “begin *naturally* with Scripture?” When, till now, was it ever said, “we take up the gospels, and submit them to examination?” How opposite is the policy and the spirit here manifested, to the tone and temper of the church of Rome in those days, and in those countries, in which she could safely venture to lock up the word of God from the sight of men. Even within the last twenty years, we have on record the vehement opposition of two popes to the use of the Holy Scriptures. In 1816, Pope Pius the Seventh denounced the circulation of the Bible in the following terms:—“It is a crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined. It is a pestilence and defilement of the faith most dangerous to souls.” And Leo XII. in 1824, denounces the Bible Society in equally energetic language. “It strolls with effrontery through the world, contemning the traditions of the holy fathers, and, contrary to the well-known decrees of the council of Trent, labours with all its might, and by every means, to translate, or rather to pervert, the Holy Bible into the vulgar language of all nations.”

This was the tone adopted by the Romish church, when on its own ground; amidst a blind and devoted population, with whom proofs and arguments were unnecessary; with whom it was enough to say, “the church decrees, or declares so and so,” and implicit submission followed of course. But Dr. Wiseman has a very different task in hand. He is addressing a people who have been accustomed to be reasoned with; and he knows full well, that if he were merely to pronounce to his hearers that he and his colleagues were infallible,—the rejoinder would be, “Do you expect us to believe that, merely because you choose to say so?” He feels it absolutely necessary, therefore, to seek for some credentials. And where is he to find those credentials, but in the Bible? Whether he can find them there or not, remains to be seen; but if he fails in that quarter, he is not likely to succeed in any other. Standing, therefore, before an English audi-

tory, and feeling himself obliged to present to them something bearing at least the semblance of an argument,—he is compelled, however unwillingly, to begin with Holy Scripture; and he accordingly says, “being disposed to investigate the authority of its principles (the principles of Romanism) *we begin naturally with Scripture*,—we take up the gospels.”

But it may be said, that Dr. Wiseman does not mean to *recommend* this course of proceeding. Of that we are well aware. He evidently prefers what he calls, “the more compendious method whereby God brought us, through baptism and our early instruction, into the possession of the faith.” In other words he would wish a set of followers who having been baptized into the Romish church in infancy, and having constantly heard, from their early instructors, that the Romish church was the only true church—the only safe church, have ever ranged themselves among her disciples, without a single inquiry as to the validity of her pretensions, or the truth of her doctrinal creed. These, we are aware, would be scholars after Dr. Wiseman’s own heart. But he knows that among his hearers at Moorfields, this sort of blind admission of the most arrogant pretensions cannot be generally expected. He is obliged to deal with them as with reasonable creatures. And he finds it impossible to construct a plausible scheme, on which to rest his system of belief, except by going at once to Scripture, and endeavouring to frame a case out of its testimony. Observe, however, the confession herein implied. If a man is content with “the compendious method,” as Dr. Wiseman calls it, of believing *without investigation*, this he can do in any church and with any creed. But if he is “disposed to investigate the authority of his principles,” if he is desirous of being able to “give a reason of the hope that is in him,” then, even Dr. Wiseman himself can help him to no other course than to “begin naturally with Scripture,”—to “take up the gospels, and submit them to examination.” Thus, after all his horror at the idea of the exercise of “private judgment,” after all his

proofs of the impossibility of a plain unlettered man's being ever able to discover the grounds of his faith in Scripture, he is obliged at last to fall back upon the use of the Bible itself,—of that Bible which the council of Trent, declared to be “likely to do *more harm than good*,” and the reading of which that council declared to be unlawful *even to the regular clergy themselves*, except “with the permission of their prelates.” To a body of several hundreds of laymen, of all classes, rich and poor, learned and ignorant,—to the whole of these, without the least discrimination, does Dr. Wiseman address himself, assuming that they all possess the Bible,—that they are all able and competent to study it,—and to each and all he addresses the same direction, that if they “would investigate the authority of their principles,” they must “begin naturally with Scripture,” they must “take up the gospels, and submit them to examination.” Here, then, we have the Protestant rule unhesitatingly adopted; here we have a simple and absolute appeal to Holy Scripture resorted to; and we feel little hesitation in determining the motive to be, that Dr. W. knew and felt the utter impossibility of taking *any other* course; the impossibility of constructing in such form as to be fit for an English eye, his theological system, until he had found some solid foundation; the impossibility, in short, of finding in the works and words of mere human beings, a basis whereon to build a system which was to reach eternity. He did well, therefore, in at least *attempting* to gain a groundwork from Holy Scripture; but let it be observed that in so doing he has given up the old Romish ground of the unfitness of the Scriptures for the use of the common people;—he has carried his whole audience with him to the word of God; and having so done, he is no longer in a situation to object to the *Protestant Rule of Faith*.

But we have stopped at the very opening of his argument. Not to misrepresent him, we proceed with the whole statement:—

“We take up the gospels, and submit them to ex-

amination. We abstract for a moment from our belief in their inspiration and divine authority—we look at them simply as historical works, and intended for our information; writings from which we are anxious to gather such truths as may be useful to our instruction. We find, in the first place, that to these works, whether considered in their substance or their form, are attached all those motives of human credibility which we can possibly require:—that there is, throughout them, an absence of every element which could suggest the suspicion that there has been either a desire to deceive, or a possibility of having been mistaken. For we find a body of external testimony sufficient to satisfy us, that these are documents produced at the time when they profess to have been written, and that those persons were their authors, whose names they bear. And as these were eye-witnesses of what they relate, and give us, in their lives and characters, the strongest security of their veracity, we conclude all that they have recorded to be certain and true. We thus arrive at the discovery, that besides their mere narrative, they unfold to us a system of religion, preached by one who wrought the most stupendous miracles to establish and confirm the divinity of his mission. In other words, we are led by the simple principle of human investigation to an acknowledgment of the authority of Christ to teach, as one who came from God: and we are thus led to the necessity of yielding implicit credence to whatever we find him to have taught. So far the investigation being one of outward and visible facts, cannot require any thing more than simple, historical, or human evidence.

“Having once thus established the divine authority of Christ, we naturally inquire, what is it that Christ taught? and we find that he was not contented merely with teaching certain general principles of morality,—that he was not satisfied with unfolding to mankind doctrines such as none before him had attempted to teach, and thereby making man acquainted with his own fallen nature and with his future destiny;

but that, moreover, he took means to preserve those doctrinal communications to mankind. We find it obviously his intention that the system he established should be beneficial, not only to those who lived in his own days, and heard his word, but to the entire world, until the end of time; that he intended his religion to be something permanent, something commensurate with the existence of those wants of humanity which he came to relieve: and consequently, we naturally ask, in what way the obligations which he came to enforce, and the truths which he suffered to seal, were to be preserved, and what the place wherein they were to be deposited? If they were to be perpetual, proper provision must have been made for their perpetuation.

“Now, the Catholic falls in with a number of very strong passages in which our blessed Saviour, not content with promising a continuance of his doctrines, that is to say, the continued obligation of faith upon man, also pledges himself for their actual preservation among them. He selects a certain body of men; he invests them, not merely with great authority, but with power, equal to his own; he makes them a promise of remaining with them and teaching among them even to the end of time: and thus, once again, he naturally concludes, that there must have existed for ever a corresponding institution, for the preservation of those doctrines, and the perpetuation of those blessings, which our Saviour came manifestly to communicate.

“Thus then, merely proceeding by historical reasoning, such as would guide an infidel to believe in Christ’s superior mission, he comes, from the word of Christ, whom those historical motives oblige him to believe, to acknowledge the existence of a body, depository of those doctrines which he came to establish among men. This succession of persons constituted to preserve those doctrines of faith, appointed as the successors of the apostles, having within them the guarantee of Christ teaching among them for ever; and this body is what he calls the church. He

is in possession, from that moment, of an assurance of divine authority, and in the whole remaining part of the investigation, he has no need to turn back, by calling in once more the evidence of man. For, from the moment he is satisfied that Christ has appointed a succession of men whose province it is, by aid of a supernatural assistance, to preserve inviolable those doctrines which God has delivered—from that moment, whatever these men teach is invested with that divine authority, which he had found in Christ through the evidence of his miracles. This body, so constituted, immediately takes on itself the office of teaching and informing him that the sacred volume, which he had been hitherto treating as a mere history—that the document which he had been perusing solely with a deep and solemn interest, is a book which commands a much greater degree of respect and attention, than any human motives could possibly bestow. For now the church stands forth with that authority wherewith she is invested by Christ—and proclaims: ‘Under that guarantee of divine assistance, which the words of Christ, in whom you believe have given me, I pronounce that this book contains the revealed word of God, and is inspired by the Holy Spirit; and that it contains all that has a right to enter into the sacred collection.’ And thus the Catholic at length arrives, on the authority of the church, at these two important doctrines of the canon and the inspiration of scripture, which I endeavoured to show, at our last meeting, it was almost, if not quite impossible, to reach by any course of ordinary human investigation.”*

Such is the artfully framed argument, upon which Dr. Wiseman’s main reliance is placed. The late Robert Hall declared the building the infallible authority of the church of Rome upon the Scriptures, and the infallibility of the Scriptures upon the church of Rome, to be “a gross insult upon the understanding.” In the passage just quoted, the utmost art of

* Wiseman’s Third Lecture, p. 62—5.

the sophist is exerted to conceal the real character of this attempt to deceive. For the purpose of his argument, the doctor chooses to assume that the reader is to take up the Scriptures, "simply as historical works, intended for our information." A man may certainly so study them; but let it be remembered, that as long as he views them in this light, he studies them as an infidel, and not as a Christian. The very first step towards the acquisition of the Christian faith, is, the full acknowledgment of Holy Scripture, not as a "simply historical work," but as *the word of God*. Till this point is gained, nothing is done. To read the Scriptures as a mere "historical work," is to read them as the productions of erring and fallible men,—of creatures who, from the essential imperfections of their nature, are actually incapable of narrating circumstances or conversations of any length, without falling into errors, omissions, and misconstructions. Dr. Wiseman's basis, therefore, will not support his superstructure. If a candid inquirer reads the gospels as he reads Thucydides or Robertson, making allowances, as he goes on, for the imperfections of a human author, he will never attach such vast importance to two or three expressions in certain conversations there narrated, as to imagine that upon those expressions,—which may, perhaps, (upon this hypothesis,) have been erroneously given,—such a system as the papacy and the infallibility of the church of Rome could ever be legitimately raised. No! before those few words upon which the Romish church seeks to found her vast pretensions, can ever be imagined capable of sustaining such a weight, they must be fully believed to be the words, not of a mere "historical writer," but of one who spoke or wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.

But here the question assumes a new form. The reader believes the book he is reading to be either the word of God, or the word of man. It is not mixed and alloyed, for in that case none could tell which was the gold, and which the alloy; but it is, *all of it*, either the word of man or the word of God.

If it is the word of man, or the fallible narrations of what the writers saw or heard, or *supposed* that they saw or heard, then it is no sufficient foundation for so vast a superstructure as an infallible church. But if it is *the word of God*, then have we found in it the most important possession of which man ever gained the knowledge;—an unerring guide to his Creator's mind and will—a guide which cannot err and will not deceive—a manual in which all the great doctrines of religion are explicitly set forth with far more prominence and emphasis than is given to any of the passages on which the church of Rome founds her claims.

But it may be objected, that Dr. Wiseman only refers his hearers to the gospel for a single doctrine:—for the establishment of the authority of his church. He says, “When an ambassador presents himself before a sovereign, he is asked, where are his credentials! He presents them, and on the strength of them he is acknowledged as an ambassador.” In like manner, the doctor considers that the Scriptures establish the authority of the church; and that the inquirer is in possession, from that moment, of an assurance of divine authority, and, “in the whole remaining part of the investigation, he has no need to turn back, by calling in once more the evidence of man.” In other words, that the main use of Scripture to Christians in general, is to establish the authority of the church, which being done, the wisest course is, to close up the Bible, and listen only to the priest. But the illustration he uses detects the weakness of his argument. Scripture, he says, furnishes the credentials of his church:—These being presented, and the official character of the bearer thus established, that document may be laid aside, and the functions of the ambassador begin. Now let any one who has ever read a dozen pages of Scripture, say whether this is even a tolerable description of them. The credentials of an ambassador are plain and brief, and concern, solely, that one point which they have especially in view. They describe, and identify, and

empower, the person bearing them, and they do no more. On the other hand, the Bible is a large and extensive document, embracing the most important parts of the history of the world; detailing a series of most important doctrines; setting forth many wondrous prophecies; detailing the whole history of redemption, and enlarging upon all the chief doctrines and duties of Christianity. In the midst of all this immense variety of interesting matter, there occur two or three brief passages which the Romish church chooses to understand as investing her with almost illimitable authority. They consist of very few words, and of those few words the meaning is somewhat obscure, and has always been disputed. Yet, argues Dr. Wiseman, the chief use of the Scripture to the inquirer, lies in these two or three passages. In these, which a student might pass over without imagining that they contained any thing remarkable, is involved the whole authority of the Romish church. These, especially, above all others, ought to command the inquirer's attention. Having found and considered these, he is in possession of the credentials of the church, he is to "take for his guide those texts which appoint the church to teach," and with this guide it is unnecessary for him to waste more time over the written word. "For," says he, "while the authority of Scripture, as a rule of faith, is thus perfectly compatible with the existence of an authority to teach; the existence of an authority to teach *excludes*, not indeed the Scripture, but the *all-sufficiency* of Scripture. For where there is a supreme authority given, and man is commanded to obey it, from that command there is assuredly no retreat. And therefore the Scripture must needs be received, so as to be reconciled, with the existence of a supreme authority in matters of faith, existing in the church." Scripture, therefore, is subjected and declared inferior to, the authority of the church. The church is not bound by the words of Scripture, but the language of Scripture is to be interpreted or modified by the decisions of the church. Little can

it matter, therefore, whether the Scriptures are read or not; and small reason has any one for reading them, since, according to Dr. Wiseman, there is a *higher* authority, to whose decisions it must be much more profitable to direct our attention.

Dr. Wiseman, then, alleges, that “merely proceeding by historical reasoning,” an inquirer must be brought to the conclusion, that the gospels are true and authentic narratives, that Christ was a divine person, possessed of the highest authority, and that he transferred that authority, on leaving this world, to his apostles and their successors. Having thus found a body so constituted, and preserved from error by supernatural aid, he argues that its infallible decisions must be a safer and a more authoritative guide, than the collection of writings called the Bible.

In opposition to which, we may observe:—1. That the Romanist can only arrive at this authoritative guide, this infallible authority, thus professedly drawn from Scripture itself, by the use of the *Protestant rule of faith*; and 2. That when he has so attained it, it is no supreme authority that he has found, but only one attendant on, and ministerial of, the Scriptures themselves.

First, then, in thus building the Romish church and its assumed authority, on a careful investigation of Scripture, the Protestant rule of faith is most fully adopted, and all the objections to it virtually abandoned. For let it be observed, that in previously insisting upon the impossibility of establishing the Scriptures as the only rule of faith, Dr. Wiseman had objected,—

“That before any one could even commence the examination of that rule, he must have satisfied himself, that all these books or writings which are collected together in that volume, are really the genuine works of those whose names they bear.”*

Also, “that no such genuine work has been excluded, so that the rule be perfect and entire.”

* Dr. Wiseman’s Second Lecture, p. 32.

Also, "he must satisfy himself by his own individual examination, that this book is inspired by God."

Also, that if the Scripture is to be the rule of faith, "it must be a rule easy to be procured and to be held. God himself must have made the necessary provision, that all men should have it, and be able to apply it."*

Also, that all men "must surely be able to comprehend it." "Such, therefore," he proceeds, "are the difficulties regarding the application of this rule; a difficulty of procuring and preserving the proper sense of the original by correct translations; a difficulty of bringing this translation within the reach of all; a difficulty, not to say an impossibility, of enabling all to understand it."†

Now, who can overlook this obvious inconsistency in the doctor's argument, in that each and every one of these objections applies with just as much force to his own proof of the church's authority. Finding it necessary, in England, not merely to *assert*, but to *prove*, the boasted authority and infallibility of his church, he tells his hearers that for this purpose, "we begin naturally with Scripture, we take up the gospels, and submit them to examination." But who does not see, that the very instant he adopts this, the Protestant method of arguing, all his own objections, just before urged, return upon him with double force. Before this examination of the gospels can establish any thing, the student must, according to his own showing, have satisfied himself that these writings are really the genuine works of those whose names they bear; that they contain all that these writers left on these subjects; that they were inspired of God, and so on, to the end of his series of objections!

He has, however, still another shift. He endeavours to elude the force of his own objections, inasmuch as he does not rest the same dependence on the Scripture which Protestants do. With them it is every thing; the sole rule of faith, the alone standard

* Dr. Wiseman's Second Lecture, p. 44.

† Ibid, pp. 47, 48.

of morals. Dr. Wiseman's argument goes only to prove that before it can safely be thus relied upon, we ought to have an assurance of this authenticity and inspiration, which, without the testimony of the church, he thinks cannot be obtained. But while he adheres to this argument, he is very ready to use the gospels as a mere historical document, and to prove by them, the mission and authority of the Catholic church! But he takes especial care that it is merely as a human testimony, as an historical document, that he has recourse to their aid. He is most explicit on this point, that up to the moment of the student's discovery of the power of the church, the Scriptures had been nothing more to him, than "a mere history."*

We are, therefore, compelled again to look steadily at this point of the case; and to ask, whether it is possible to establish an infallible authority upon so slender and insufficient a basis?

Before we can determine what weight and value is to be attached to the testimony of any author, especially of an historical writer, it is clearly and absolutely necessary that we should first ascertain his real character. If he be a dishonest and partial witness, then his evidence must be received with suspicion, and only credited where a full corroboration is at hand. If he be a man of honour and integrity, then we shall listen to his testimony with reliance, and give it a general reception into our minds; but still allowing something for human error and misinformation. It is only upon evidence of a higher character still,—of a far higher character indeed, that we can venture to rest with safety and confidence, when the truths which concern our everlasting salvation are the subjects of the investigation.

Yet what is the course of reasoning adopted by Dr. Wiseman? He takes up the gospels, *merely*, he assures us again and again, as historical documents, of fair average credibility; and in one of them he

* Wiseman's Third Lecture, p. 64.

finds these words, said to have been used on a certain occasion, by Christ, "*All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*"

This passage according to Dr. Wiseman's argument, we cannot know,—till we have admitted the authority of the Romish church, and that church has declared it to be inspired of God,—to be any thing more than a common, ordinary narration like those of the sayings of Cæsar or of Socrates. But who will venture to take up the pages of Livy or of Thucydides, or any other mere historian, and to pin his faith on the perfect accuracy with which every sentence of every conversation is noted down? And who, treating St. Matthew's gospel "as a mere history,"—and so, according to Dr. Wiseman it must be treated, (until we have submitted to the church, and the church certifies its inspiration)—who will dare to pledge his faith upon the probability, (for if the gospel be a "mere history," it can be nothing more,) that these words of Christ's, narrated by Matthew *thirty years* after they were spoken, were narrated with perfect accuracy?

Who will assure us that not one word was added, nor one omitted; or that the word so added or omitted was of no material consequence? Will any student of history produce a passage of similar length, from Herodotus or Tacitus, from Hume or Robertson, from any modern or any ancient writer, and aver that he is absolutely certain that the speech so set down in the record, is precisely and accurately the very speech, to the letter, that was uttered? If not,—if it cannot even be imagined that such a thing exists, except by inspiration, as a perfect record, made years after the fact, of a speech actually spoken, in the *very words* which really fell from the speaker,—why should this single passage in Matthew be taken

to be the one solitary exception to the universal rule, of the imperfection of human memories, and of human records? No, if the standing and authority of the church of Rome rests on nothing better than a passage of six or eight lines, occurring in "a mere history,"—then, assuredly, it rests upon the sand, and might challenge the annals of imposition to show a weaker or a narrower foundation.

We, however, believe these verses of Matthew to have been penned under the influence of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and to be, therefore, most accurately and authoritatively recorded. Dr. Wiseman's error is, in adducing them only as the testimony of "a mere history,"—as "human testimony." If they be nothing better,—or, which is the same thing, if they are to be dealt with as if they were nothing better than "a mere history," then might we as well attempt to found a religion on some story found in Xenophon or in Rabin, as to build the lofty pretensions of the Romish church upon a passage of some half dozen lines, occurring in the pages of one who might either have misconceived or half-forgotten what he had heard, if, indeed, he ever heard what he relates. Never was there a more monstrous disproportion apparent, than this attempt to build an universal and infallible church, upon what is alleged to be nothing more than an act of the memory of a single, unsupported, and fallible man.

Had Dr. Wiseman sought a sufficient basis for his argument, he should have dealt with the Scriptures in their proper character of a revelation from God. This, their true character, can be established, and has been established, repeatedly and abundantly, without the aid of the church of Rome. This Dr. Wiseman knew, but he preferred even to risk his cause by resting it upon an insufficient foundation, rather than to declare, at the outset, the divine authority of Holy Scripture, and *to take all the consequences flowing therefrom*. He was well aware that if it should appear that we have in God's word, an infallible guide and standard of doctrine, without the interference of

the church of Rome, it might probably follow that men would perceive that this boasted infallibility of the church was not needed, and was, in fact, of no real use to them. They would be apt to argue that an infallible guide, to be of any utility, must be infallible, not only in the aggregate, but also in all its parts. The Bible was the work of inspiration, as a whole; and each verse in it was equally true and equally divine. But if the church could be called infallible as a whole, was every priest of that church to be treated as infallible also? If not, of what use was this abstract infallibility, since it was with some individual priest that each man had to do. Thus the Bible, if admitted and declared to be an inspired volume, must, in the exercise of common sense, be preferred to that church, which, although claiming infallibility, would not or could not explain how, or through what medium, that attribute was to be exercised.

But we have to remark, in the second place, that even were Dr. Wiseman's argument admitted, and we were to allow the possibility of establishing an infallible authority by the testimony of a fallible witness, we have not thereby got rid of the Bible, but have merely enforced another duty; and one which, as clearly contained in Scripture, is as little objected to by Protestants as it is by Romanists—namely, the duty of *preaching* the gospel; as well as of distributing it in the form of copies of the divine word.

Dr. Wiseman argues very vehemently *against* the use of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, and *in favour* of a settled ministry. We contend in favour of *both*, and *against* neither. The Scriptures require to be heralded and accompanied by the messengers of salvation; on this point there is no difference of opinion:—require, we say, not absolutely, (for the Spirit of God can act by means of the written word alone, or even without any human means whatever) but generally. The command of Christ is two-fold, and one injunction is as binding as the other. To his apostles, and

to those who, after their example, should devote themselves to his cause, his mandate is, *Preach the gospel to every creature*. To mankind generally, who are to hear this gospel, his injunction is, *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me*.

Now Protestants fully receive both these rules. We preach the gospel; and we direct the people to search the Scriptures for a warrant for every word we say. Nor will the Romish church, at least in a Protestant country, venture directly to impugn either of these two instructions. She exalts and extols the ministry, and she dares not openly deny the use of the Scriptures. Where, then, is the main ground of difference between us? It lies in the opposite conclusions to which we come, as to the *ultimate authority* on any question. The written word, and the ministry, being both in operation among the people, the question is, which of the two is the greater? We Protestants say, that the inspired word of God is the only infallible guide and standard, and that the ministers of the gospel are simply to preach what they find therein contained. We make, therefore, the Bible to be the ultimate standard, in case of any difference arising. The Romish church, on the other hand, asserts that the authority of Scripture is subordinate to that of the ministry. In the words of Dr. Wiseman, "the Scripture must needs be received, so as to be reconciled with the existence of *a supreme authority*, in matters of faith, existing *in the church*." To explain this distinction as briefly as possible, Protestants declare that the ministers of the gospel have no right or authority to teach any thing as necessary to salvation, save what may be proved from Holy Scripture. The church of Rome, on the other hand, affirms that neither may the words of holy writ be understood in any other sense than that which she chooses to put upon them, nor is it true that Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation. With us, the Bible is the standard to which the preacher himself and every thing else is to be brought; with the Romanist the Bible may only be understood as the church chooses

to interpret it, and to its contents they add an indefinite mass of further doctrines, under the title of the "*unwritten* traditions of the church." The vast difference between the two systems, and the great superiority of the Protestant doctrine, is clearly apparent. They make the priest every thing, the Bible only subsidiary and attendant. We make the Bible every thing, and the priest, a *minister*, a preacher of God's holy word. Now the Bible, which we thus exalt to the first rank, and take as our highest authority, is wholly and exclusively divine. It contains "truth without any mixture of error," and in being governed by its dictates we cannot possibly err. But the priest, who is placed above the Bible in their scheme, is a mere fallible man, liable to error, and open to temptation. They cannot, in pushing their favourite text, "*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,*" to its utmost limits, venture to imagine, that Christ's constant presence and guidance is bestowed on every priest of their church. To do this would be to aver, that when a priest, afterwards proved to be insane, actually killed an infant with his own hands, in a village in Ireland, a few years back, under pretence of performing a miracle, he then and there acted under the divine guidance and inspiration! Yet this will not be asserted; and if not, then how are we to understand the presence and protection of Christ, and where is the immunity from error which this alleged presence confers?

And, after all the objections that can be made to the Protestant rule of faith, and amidst all the difficulties propounded,—that rule will still possess one immense and decisive advantage over the Romish rule; namely, that it is intelligible and practical; that it can be pointed out and defined. "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith." This statement, being accompanied, as it is, by a list of the books of Holy Scripture, is at least sufficiently clear.

Dr. Wiseman, like most other Romish controversialists, endeavours to alarm us with a long array of difficulties, as to proving the inspiration of Scripture, and as to understanding Scripture, when proved;—but while he thus strives to take away our hope, what does he give us in exchange? He aims to establish the superior and supreme authority of the church; but had he succeeded ever so well here, still the question would return;—*when* and *where* has the church spoken?

The Protestant, on the other hand, puts into the poor man's hands a certain well-known book; and tells him that that book, being the pure and unadulterated word of God, being "truth without any mixture of error," cannot possibly mislead or deceive him. The Romanist dares not deny its divine character, but assures him that, though it be indeed the word of God, it will be impossible for him to understand it without the aid of the church. Obviously, then, supposing this view to be the correct one, the very next thing to be sought, is, that aid of the church which is represented as so essentially necessary.

Now the extent and nature of the Protestant rule was at all events sufficiently clear. The way of salvation was declared by him to be fully and sufficiently revealed within the limits of this single volume; and though not denying the existence of some difficulties, it was still believed that "*the way-faring man, though a fool, should not err therein.*" In striving, then, to weaken the poor man's reliance on this guide, Dr. Wiseman is surely bound to give him in exchange, one equally simple and easy of application. He is told, that "the church has a supreme authority to teach," and that the Scriptures cannot be understood without her teaching. But, in drawing from his grasp that which they do not deny to be the inspired word of God,—that which they admit to be infallibly true, what do the Romanists give him that will bear the least comparison with what they ask him to resign? What do they give him, in fact, except the mere oral instructions of a

poor fallible man? The church, they say, is infallible, and has the promise of being always preserved from error. But they will not venture to tell us that every individual priest is infallible, or that none of their clergy have ever fallen into error. So that while they take away that which is not denied to be infallible, merely on the ground that it cannot be understood,—they propose in its place a guide who is merely human, and who, consequently, may lead us into a thousand errors.

The fact is, that this infallibility of their church, of which they make such boast, and which they press upon mankind as something far superior to the written word, is an *ignis fatuus*, a notion or fancy which is ever fleeting before us, and which can never be found in any definite form. Even their highest authorities are divided as to where it resides; whether in the pope alone, or in a council apart from the pope, or in a pope and council unitedly; and even could this fundamental point be agreed upon, how far would the poor man be from deriving a benefit from either! The church is an infallible teacher, they tell us; but where does the church teach? The Scriptures cannot be understood without her aid, they say; but where is that aid afforded? She gives no infallible exposition or commentary of the Scriptures: the traditions upon which she lays such stress, are still “the unwritten word;” that is, are still floating about in the minds, and memories, and fancies of men. Propound the most important question to this church, and of whom can you expect an answer? In fact, in what form does this “church” present itself to the poor man, but in that of his priest? The priest represents “the church;” speaks the decisions of “the church;” is “the church” in his sole person. All the infallibility which is of any practical utility to the inquirer, is the infallibility of this priest. If he, indeed,—if every individual priest in their church can be supposed to be infallible,—then may the poor man have something whereon to rest. But if they cannot, and assuredly they will not, venture on this mon-

strous assumption, then it follows that the inquirer's guide, he who represents "the church," he who is all "the church" that the poor man can get access to, is a mere erring, fallible man. So that, after all, this device of Satan, for it is nothing else, turns out to be a mere scheme for getting the poor man's Bible out of his hand, under the pretence of giving him something far better; and then deluding him with an empty phrase about the infallibility of the church, which ends at last in laying him tied and bound at the feet of a poor human being like himself!

Again, however, we are sent to the words of Scripture, whether as inspired, or as "a mere history;"—we are required to listen to the words of Christ, and to Dr. Wiseman's comment on them: "*All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" (Matt. xxviii. 18–20.)

The Doctor's comment runs thus:—"I ask you, is not this a commission exactly comprising all that I said we might expect to find? Does it not institute a body of men to whom Christ has given security, that they shall be faithful depositaries of his truth? Does it not constitute the kingdom, whereunto all nations should come? Does it not establish therein his own permanent teaching, in lieu of prophecy, so as to prevent all error from entering into the church? and is not this church to last till the end of time? Now this is precisely all that the Catholic church teaches, all that she claims and holds, as the basis and foundation whereupon to build her rule of faith. The successors of the apostles in the church of Christ have received the security of his own words, and his promise of 'a perpetual teaching,' so that they shall not be allowed to fall into error. It is this promise which assures her she is the depositary of all truth, and is gifted with an exemption from all liability to

err, and has authority to claim from all men, and from all nations, submission to her guidance and instruction.”*

Here we are again treated with that insufferable assumption to which we referred in our last Essay. Throughout the whole we hear of “the church,” and “the Catholic church,” as if it were true that both at the present moment, and in all former times, there had always been a “Catholic or universal church,” in some visible form, to which these expressions of our Saviour might be safely applied. But this is a mere fiction: it is a gross misrepresentation of the case. In the first four or five centuries, no doubt, a really Catholic church existed. But this was not the church of Rome, any more than it was the church of England. The first general council ever held, and that at a period when Christianity had spread over the whole civilized world,—was neither held at Rome, nor summoned by a pope, nor presided over by a bishop of Rome. It was called together by the emperor; held at Nice; and presided over by a Spanish bishop, as the senior member present. The same observation applies to several subsequent councils. In a century or two after, we find the four patriarchs, as they were called, of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, ascending to a rank above the other bishops of the church; and still later the number is reduced to two,—Rome and Constantinople. After a long contest for the rank and authority of *universal* bishop,—the east and west finally separate,—each declaring hostility against the other. Blame may be attached to either side; but one thing is clear, that Rome, with her division of the Catholic church, could have no right or authority to unchristianize or cast off the whole body of the eastern churches. Here, then, was a permanent division of the Catholic church into two great sections. About seven centuries after, six or eight nations of Europe found the exactions of the Papal see so heavy, that they

* Wiseman's Fourth Lecture, p. 109.

also threw off her yoke. And, judging by the rule, "*by their fruits ye shall know them,*"—we do not find England, Scotland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and parts of Germany, less moral, less peaceful, less industrious, or less respected than Italy or Spain, which adhered to Rome. We do not think, therefore, that in abandoning Rome, they abandoned Christianity.

Now, when, after all these divisions and separations, we find *one branch* of the professedly Christian world setting itself up as "*the church,*" "*the Catholic church,*" we cannot look upon it or speak of it, as any thing else than an instance of the most intolerable arrogance, and the most unfounded pretension.

Practically, too, this scheme is fraught with far more difficulties than Dr. W. himself has been able to allege against the Protestant rule.

"Before any one can even commence the examination of the Scriptures," says Dr. W., "he must have satisfied himself that all these books and writings which are collected together in that volume are really the genuine work of those whose names they bear; and also that no such genuine work has been excluded,"* &c. Equally clear is it, that before any one can apply our Lord's words immediately before his ascension, to the church of Rome, he must have it clearly made out to him, that of all the various bodies of Christian ministers in the world, those holding under the bishop of Rome are the only ones who can rightly adopt and claim the promise then given. And, finding a multitude of other Christian churches in the world, with whom the Romish church holds no intercourse, he must see "that no genuine" church "has been excluded," so that the body is really Catholic and entire.

Now to the inhabitants of a Roman Catholic country, or even to such persons, here, as have been long living in quiet submission to the Romish priesthood, and have been inured and accustomed to the high

* Wiseman's Second Lecture, p. 32.

pretensions of that church,—the conclusion may seem natural enough;—but in more than half the countries of the globe, the case would be different.

The Greek Christians might argue thus:—"Time was when Rome and Constantinople were sister patriarchates in the same Catholic and universal church. In the seventh and eighth centuries, each see was filled in turn by men of more ambition and self-will than became their profession. Each alternately claimed the pre-eminence, while the other as firmly resisted the claim. Finally, the breach between these two sections of the general church became irreparable. The greater part of Christendom was divided between the two; the eastern patriarch taking his portion,—the western his; since when the *visible* church has never once acted in concord and union, but each country or section has taken its own course; the greater part of Europe going with the bishop of Rome, and the Asiatic Christians, generally, with the patriarch of Constantinople. But, clearly, neither of these rulers had any right to exclude the other from his place in the visible church; or to say, that *his* followers constituted the *Catholic church*; and that all who are not subjects of his, were rebels to the great Head of the church."

The Armenian would reason in a similar manner. "Our church," he would say, "was formed at the beginning of the fourth century, when Rome advanced no pretensions to the dominion of the Christian church. At that period, at the council of Nice, no one thought of such a thing as any dominion or rule exercised by the see of Rome over all other churches. We, therefore, were no rebels or deserters from the allegiance of Rome, for, at that period, she claimed none. Since then we have heard, indeed, of her increased and exaggerated pretensions; but they concerned us nothing. And are we to be unchristianized and excluded from the visible church, merely because Rome, which is no mother of ours, has chosen to demand homage from the whole Christian world, and we, owing her no such submission have refused to pay it."

Of a similar character would be the remonstrance of a member of the Syrian church at Malabar. "For more than fifteen centuries," he would say, "have we preserved the Christian faith, which we never received from Rome, and which we are not willing to allow Rome to take away from us. The Portuguese, when they first came among us, and found more than a hundred Christian churches, said, "These churches belong to the pope." "Who is the pope?" we answered; "we never heard of him." And was it to be endured that an Italian bishop, of whose name, even, we were wholly ignorant, and to whom we owed nothing of any kind, should send his demands of tribute and allegiance to us, who knew not even so much as his existence?"

Thus would all the easterns agree in declaring this assumption to be wholly unfounded; their faith and doctrine was Christian, they would say; their ordination and succession was apostolic; and they were no rebels to any lawful authority of the pope, for of such authority they had no knowledge. What is the answer to their case? It deeply concerns the present question,—for, if the Romish church be not, indeed, *the* Catholic church, but only a section of it,—then it must clearly follow that in such promises as were just now quoted, she can claim no more than a mere participation.

"*Lo, I am with you always,*" said the Saviour; but with *whom* did he then promise to be present? With his *whole* church; with the *Catholic* church; not with the church of *Rome* exclusively or especially; with his whole church on earth, the representatives of which were then present. But if that promise was not made to the bishop of Rome, or to any other section of the church, then what title has that bishop, or any other, to impose laws on his brethren?

Thus the Romish Rule of Faith is clearly open to two objections: *First*, it removes from its just supremacy, as the sole and sufficient guide, and the ultimate appeal,—God's message to man, as found in Holy Scripture; and hands us over from a definite

and intelligible rule to one which constantly evades the grasp, and affords nothing tangible or satisfactory to the inquirer. And, *secondly*, because, when it refers us to the judgment of the church, the *Catholic* church, as the only true rule of faith, it refers us to that which can no where be found,—inasmuch as the several divisions of the Catholic church are scattered over the face of the whole earth, disunited and contending against each other,—a state which is greatly caused by the unfounded pretensions of the church of Rome. We reject, then, this rule, both because it is dishonouring to God and his word, and because it refers to a “Catholic church,” which partly owing to the divisions and dissensions caused by the claims of Rome, can no where, at least in our day, be discerned or consulted.

IV.—THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

UNITY.

WE have already denied the truth of the church of Rome's favourite assumption,—that she is “the *Catholic* church;” and have combated it on the general ground, that there are other churches in the world besides herself, and that she can show no title to arrogate to herself an exclusive claim to that title. She returns, however, to the charge, and contends for her sole right to that title, inasmuch as she alone, she alleges, can properly answer to the ancient description, in being “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.” This, then, will naturally become the next subject for consideration.

We will begin with Dr. Milner's statement. He says, “The chief marks of the true church, which I shall here assign, are not only conformable to reason, Scripture and tradition, but they are such as the church of England, and most other respectable denominations of Protestants, acknowledge and profess to believe in, no less than Catholics. They are contained in those creeds which you recite in your daily prayers, and proclaim in your solemn worship. In fact, what do you say of the church you believe in, when you repeat the apostles' creed? You say, *I believe in the holy catholic church*. Again, how is this church more particularly described in the Nicene creed? You say, *I believe in one catholic and apostolic church*. Hence it evidently follows, that the church which you, no less than we, profess to believe in, is possessed of these four marks, *unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity*. It is agreed upon then, that all we have to do, by way of discovering the true church, is to find out which of the

rival churches or communions is peculiarly *one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.*”*

Now here the learned doctor is rather hasty. He says, “it is agreed upon,” but this is like many other of his assumptions. It has *never* been “agreed upon” by any Protestants, that Dr. Milner should set about finding, among certain territorial or national churches, whether the Roman, the Greek, the Armenian, or the English,—by divers *visible* signs or “marks,” which of them is “the true church.” This, we repeat, has never been “agreed upon,” as Dr. Milner chooses to assert, but it is a mere fancy of his own. The catholic or universal church, in which Protestants believe, is not a visible but an invisible body—in fact, it is the body of which Christ is the head, and consists of all those, of every nation and from amongst all the visible churches, who have become, by regeneration, living branches of the true vine, and stones of the heavenly temple. But let us admit for a moment, for argument’s sake, Dr. Milner’s supposition, that to find out the true church, it is only necessary to discover, which of the rival churches is peculiarly *one, holy, catholic, and apostolic*, and let us see how he contrives to establish a claim to superiority, on all these heads, in behalf of his own church.

UNITY is the first of these distinguishing features, and the Doctor begins by arguing that it can never be said to belong to the Protestants. He then proceeds to prove that it is a distinguishing characteristic of the church of Rome.

That unity is no feature of Protestantism, he contends, is sufficiently clear from the multitude of churches and sects which have sprung up among them. Bossuet wrote “two considerable volumes on *the Variations of Protestants.*”

To this we reply, that differences and contrarieties of opinion are no more peculiar to Protestantism than to Popery. It is true that Bossuet did exercise his skill in drawing together a great collection of *individual*

*Milner’s End of Controversy, p. 176.

errors and contradictions ; but he never made out half such a case against the Protestants, as Mr. Edgar has since done against the church of Rome, in his *Variations of Popery*. The only fair and honest way of judging of this question, is not by raking up the words of this or that man, or the follies of some little sect or faction, but by taking a just and large view of the main features of each party.

Now on the side of Protestantism it is to be observed, that at the period of the Reformation, the various nations which threw off the yoke of Rome, all felt the necessity of some public document, or confession of faith, and all, acting independently, and without combination, concert, or collusion, proceeded to compose such declaration. Twelve Confessions, namely, the Augustan, Tetrapolitan, Polish, Saxon, Bohemian, Wittembergian, Palatine, Helvetian, French, Dutch, English, and Scottish, appeared within a few years. These were composed by clergy scattered all over Europe, and they represented the views embraced by all the Protestant nations of Europe. And instead of presenting, as Dr. Milner would have us believe, a chaos of contradiction and confusion, "the harmony is truly surprising, and constitutes an extraordinary event in the history of man. The annals of religion and philosophy supply no other example of such unity, agreement, and consistency. All these comprehensive abridgments showed, in varied diction, an astonishing *unity* in the main, on all doctrinal questions, though they might differ in discipline, form, and ceremony."* What trifling, then, is it, to turn away from this extraordinary proof of essential *unity* of doctrine, as shown in *public* documents, and to aim at proving contrariety by a reference to the errors and follies of individual writers.

But does the same unity mark the church of Rome? By no means. How does Dr. Milner attempt to prove it? By her creeds. Well, but most Protestant churches hold the three ancient creeds, as well as the

* Edgar's *Variations of Popery*, p. 32.

church of Rome, and yet Dr. Milner will not allow them to possess unity of doctrine. And the fourth, the *modern* creed of Pope Pius IV., which constitutes the main difference between Romanists and Protestants, as far as creeds are concerned, makes the poor Romanist declare, that he “receives and professes *all things* that are declared by the sacred canons and *general councils!*”

Now, at first sight, assuredly here is a *show* of unity. Every Romanist is pledged to profess the same things that every other Romanist professes.

But if we look a little closer, all this apparent unity and agreement vanishes. The belief so professed, to be real and substantial, must have certain definite objects. Now when we inquire touching these, all show or possibility of unity instantly vanishes.

The believer is to “receive all things which are declared by the sacred canons and general councils.” Now, in the first place, the poor deluded man here promises what, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, is *absolutely impossible*. To “receive and profess” a doctrine, it is at least necessary, we presume, that it should be presented to the mind. Now, how is this wholesale believer to know *what* “the sacred canons and general councils have declared?”

His church gives him no help in this important matter. Not a single effort has she ever made, to place “the general councils” within reach of her followers. It is only, then, in those solitary cases in which a man possessed of great wealth can purchase, —or, possessed of leisure and classical learning, can go to a public library and read,—it is only in these few cases, we repeat, that the disciple of Romanism can even know *what it is* that he has promised implicitly to receive.

But this is only the beginning of perplexities. Suppose the neophyte to succeed in gaining access, by some means or other to the voluminous records of the councils, a fresh difficulty immediately opens upon him. This very united church,—this “centre,” in short “of unity,” is not even agreed within itself,

which councils they are which are to be considered as "general," and which, therefore, are binding on the conscience of the believer!

"Gibert, a leading Romish authority, admits 'the uncertainty of the Western Ecumenical councils.' Moreri grants 'the disagreement of authors in their enumeration. One reckons more and another less; whilst some account these universal and approved, which others regard as provincial, national or condemned.' A full detail of popish variety indeed would, on this topic, fill folios. This, however, is unnecessary. A statement of each individual's peculiar notions, on this, or indeed on any other subject, would be tedious and useless. The opinions entertained on this question, not merely by a few persons, but by influential parties, are worthy of observation; and these only, in the following pages shall be detailed.

"Three jarring and numerous factions have, on the subject of general councils, divided and agitated the Romish communion. One party reckons the general councils at eighteen. A second faction counts the same number; but adopts different councils. These reject the councils of Lyons, Florence, Lateran, and Trent; and adopt, in their stead, those of Pisa, Constance, Basil, and the second of Pisa. A third division omits the whole or a part of the councils, which intervened between the eighth and sixteenth of these general conventions. The whole of these are omitted by Clement, Abrahamus, and Pole, and a part by Sixtus, Carranza, Silvius, and the council of Constance.

"One party in the popish communion reckons the general councils at eighteen. Of these, five met respectively at Ephesus, Chalcedon, Vienna, Florence, and Trent. Two convened at Nicæa, two at Lyons, four at Constantinople, and five at the Lateran. The patrons of this enumeration are, in general, the Italian faction, headed by the pope, and maintaining his temporal, as well as his spiritual authority. Baronius and Bellarmine, in particular, have patronized this

scheme with learning and ability; but with a total disregard of all honour and honesty.

“Bellarmine, besides the eighteen which are approved, reckons eight general councils which are reprobated, and six which are partly admitted and partly rejected. One, which is the Pisan,—strange to tell—is neither adopted nor proscribed. Bellarmine’s distinctions and decisions indeed are badly calculated to establish the authority of councils. His hair-breadth distinctions and arbitrary decisions, on the contrary, tend only to overthrow all confidence in his determinations, and in universal councils.

“All the eighteen, however, were not accounted valid or unerring on their first publication. Six, marked now with the seal of approbation and infallibility, were, for a long series of time, in whole or in part, rejected, by a part or by the whole of Christendom. These are the second, third, fourth, fifth, seventh, and twelfth general councils. The canons of the second, according to Alexander and Thomasin, were not received by the Latins till the Lateran council in 1215, a period of eight hundred and thirty four years after their promulgation. Its faith, indeed, in opposition to Macedonianism, corresponded with that of the westerns, and was, in consequence, admitted by Damasus, Gelasius, and Gregory. Its creed, however, was recognized only on the authority of divine revelation and ancient faith. Leo rejected its canons. Simplicius and Felix, enumerating the councils which they acknowledged, mention only those of Nicæa, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. Gregory the Great declared that the Roman church possessed neither the acts nor canons of the Byzantine assembly, though his Infallibility, in glorious inconsistency, elsewhere affirmed that he esteemed the four ecumenical councils of Nicæa, Ephesus, Constantinople and Chalcedon as the four gospels.”*

Such is the inextricable confusion in which this compulsory “unity without union” is sure to involve

* Edgar’s *Variations of Romanism*, p. 96, 97.

us. The honest and sincere inquirer, we may well suppose, will be almost in despair at the prospect which opens before him.

But suppose him to wade or struggle through this preliminary difficulty, and to adopt some one of the numerous list of councils, with a view of proceeding on his inquiries as to the belief of the church: he now finds, the very instant he moves forward, that he has only yet opened upon a series of perplexities.

The exact position of the pope, in the Romish church; the extent of his supremacy and authority; nay, the very names of the popes of former times,—all these matters offer each their peculiar opening for doubts and difficulties. The conflicting lists of popes, the disputes arising out of the schisms, in which there were sometimes two popes, sometimes three, at the same moment of time,—all these present a perfect chaos of confusion.

But passing over these, the extent of the existing pontiff's power and jurisdiction is equally a matter of strife and contention. "The authority attached to this dignity, remains to the present day undecided. Opinions on this topic have floated at freedom, unfixed by any acknowledged standard, and uncontrolled by any recognized decision. The Romish doctors, in consequence, have, on the pontifical supremacy, roved at random through all the gradations and forms of diversified and conflicting systems.

"These systems are many, and as might be expected, are distinguished in many instances by trifling and evanescent shades of discrimination. A full enumeration would be endless, and, at the same time, is useless. The chief variations on this topic may be reduced to four. One confers a mere presidency, and the second an unlimited sovereignty, on the Roman pontiff. The third makes the pope equal, and the fourth superior, to God!"*

The next step is from one difficulty to another. The infallibility of the church is a primary doctrine

* Variations of Popery, p. 124.

with all the Romish theologians. But the honest inquirer will wish to know what is the real meaning of this phrase; and he will find unity or oneness in sentiment, just as far from Romanism in this point as in the preceding ones.

“All their writers, indeed, seem to agree in ascribing infallibility to the church. But this agreement in words is no proof of unity in opinion. Its advocates differ in the interpretation of the term; and apply to the expression no less than four different significations. Four conflicting factions, in consequence, exist on this subject in the Romish communion. One party place infallibility in the church virtual or the Roman pontiff. A second faction seat inerrability in the church representative or a general council. A third class ascribe this prerogative to a union of the church virtual and representative, or, in other terms, to a general council headed by the Roman pontiff. A fourth division, rejecting the other systems, persist in attributing exemption from error only to the church collective or dispersed, embracing the whole body of professors, clergy and laity.”*

These examples may suffice. It is enough to say, that turn where we will, and inquire into what doctrine we may, the church of Rome, under the name of union, presents a perfect Babel of opposing opinions.

Well has bishop Jewell, in his *Apology*, replied to the objection of the want of unity among Protestants:—

“And whereas they say we are divided into divers sects, and that some of us have taken the name of Lutherans, and others of Zuinglians, and we could never yet agree among ourselves concerning the sum of our doctrines; what would they have said if they had lived in the times of the apostles and holy fathers? when one said, “I am of Paul, another, I am of Cephas; and another, I am of Apollos:” when St. Paul reprehended St. Peter: when, by reason of a

* Variations of Popery, p. 158.

quarrel, Paul and Barnabas separated one from the other, and went several ways. When, as Origen acquaints us, the Christians were divided into so many factions, that they had no name common to them but that of Christian, and they agreed in nothing else but that name, and, as Socrates informs us, they were derided publicly in the theatres by the people for their dissensions and sects; and when, as Constantine the Great said, There, were so many contentions and controversies in the church, that this very single calamity seemed to exceed the miseries of the former times of persecution. When Theophilus, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Augustine, Ruffinus, and Jerome, all of them Christians, all fathers, and all Catholics, contested with each other with most bitter and implacable animosity; when, as Nazianzen saith, ‘The members of the same body consumed one another.’ When the eastern and western churches were divided from each other about leavened bread, and the time of keeping Easter—things of no mighty consequence. When in every council, which were then numerous, there was a new creed, and new and contrary decrees invented. What would these men have then said? to whom would they have applied themselves? from whom would they have fled? in what gospel would they have believed? whom would they have esteemed catholics, and whom heretics? Now there are only two names, Luther and Zuinglius; and what a noise is made about them! But because these two men could not agree about a certain point, shall we therefore think they are both in the wrong, that neither of them has the gospel, and that neither has preached well and truly?

“But who are they that so bitterly reflect on us for our dissensions? Do they, in the mean time, all agree among themselves? Have there never been any dissensions and controversies among them? Why then do the Scotists and Thomists agree no better concerning the merit of congruity and that of condignity; concerning original sin in the Virgin Mary; and about a solemn and simple vow? Why do the canonists

affirm that auricular confession is founded on human and positive laws; and the schoolmen, on the contrary, on divine institution? Why does Albertus Pighius differ from Cajetan; Thomas from Lombard; Scotus from Thomas; Occham from Scotus; Aliacensis from Occham; and the Nominals from the Realists? And that I may not mention the disagreements of the small brotherhoods and monks, some of which place their admired sanctity in eating of fish, others in living upon herbs; some in wearing of shoes, others in sandals; some in linen garments, and others in woollen; some in black, and some in white clothes; some shave their heads broad, and others narrow; some wear shoes, and others go barefoot; some are girded, and some go loose; besides these, they should remember that some of their divines say, that the body of Christ is naturally present in the sacrament, which is again denied by others. There also are some who say, that the body of Christ in the sacrament is torn and ground with our teeth, and again there are others who deny this; there are some who say, that the body in the sacrament hath quantity, others deny it; some say, Christ did consecrate by a certain divine power, others that he did it by his blessing; some, that he did it by conceiving the five words in his mind, others that it was by uttering them. There are some that say, that of these five words the demonstrative pronoun 'this' showed the wheaten bread, others say no; but it relates to a certain 'vagum individuum' (a no man knows what). There are some who say, 'Dogs and mice may truly and really eat the body of Christ:' but then there are others who stoutly deny this. There are some who say the accidents of the bread and wine can nourish, and others say the substance returns again. But why should I add any more? it is a long and troublesome business to count up all their divisions: the whole form of their religion and doctrine is to this day controverted and uncertain, among those who first gave being and entertainment to it: for they scarcely ever

agree, except it be as the pharisees and sadducees, or as Herod and Pilate did of old, against Christ.”*

Unity, then, in the church of Rome, exists in only one shape;—that of “*absolute, unconditional submission* to the teaching of the church.”† Multitudes, doubtless, there are, who say with Dr. Milner, “I believe *whatever* the Holy Catholic church believes and teaches.” But this is not unity of *doctrine*; it is merely uniformity of mental slavery! The man who adopts this system does, in effect, say to his priest, “I put myself into your hands; do you *believe for me* whatever you think best, and I will subscribe it, profess it, swear to it, or any thing else you please.”

An unity of this kind does indeed exist among the adherents of the Romish priesthood; but it is neither more respectable or more safe than the same kind of mental slavery as it exists in Ceylon, in Hindostan, or in Madagascar. It is merely the old device of Satan, by which men’s consciences may be quieted, on the one hand, and religion turned into a gainful trade, on the other: the multitude giving their souls blindfold into the hands of the priests of Buddhu, of Brahma, or of Antichrist; and receiving back, from the sellers of pardons, sundry soul-deceiving delusions. *Such* an unity exists in the Romish church; but it is not an unity of *doctrine*, in any correct sense of the word.

For “*doctrine*” is that which addresses itself to the understanding and to the heart, and to be really embraced, it must first be *understood*. And we have already shown that it is impossible for Rome to offer to her adherents any thing resembling unity of doctrine, in this sense; simply because she does not herself possess it.

There is, there can be, only one source of unity in doctrine; simply because there is but one source of truth. In the divine word that source is opened to us. In it there is no discrepancy, no inconsistency,

* Apologia, cap. v. sec. 1.

† Wiseman, lect. 1. p. 17.

no need of disunion. The nearer, therefore, men keep to it, just so much the nearer will they draw to each other. It is a common centre, where all who will may unite, and it is the only centre where such a genuine and real union can take place.

But as truth is one, and the only source of real union, so error is multifarious, and in itself essentially destructive of unity. Just in proportion as men recede from the only centre of union, do they also recede from each other, but in an endless variety of directions.

Rome refuses, without hesitation and without reserve, to abide by this centre of unity. It is a principle of action with her, to fly from the unerring word of God, to the erring and jarring decisions, interpretations, and opinions of men. And thus it is that by an inevitable consequence she banishes unity of doctrine from her pale. Her fundamental principle actually renders it impossible. It never has existed, and it never can exist, within her communion. Her internal history consists of little else than a series of controversies and dissensions; and it is only externally that she can offer a show of unity; which, however, is nothing more than the necessary credulity of blindness, and the mute acquiescence of mental thralldom.

V.—THE CHURCH.

THE SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

FROM the first mark of the true church, as stated by Dr. Milner, UNITY, we proceed to the second—SANCTITY. On this head, Dr. Milner remarks, that “Reason itself tells us, that the God of purity and sanctity could not institute a religion destitute of this character, and the inspired apostle assures us that *Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle.* Ephes. v. 25, 27. The comparison which I am going to institute between the Catholic church and the leading Protestant societies on the article of *Sanctity* or *Holiness*, will be made on these four heads; 1st. The *Doctrine* of Holiness; 2dly. The *Means* of Holiness; 3dly. The *Fruits* of Holiness; and lastly, The *Divine Testimony* of Holiness.”*

He then proceeds to establish his first point, thus:—“To consider, first, the doctrine of the chief Protestant communions: this is well known to have been originally grounded in the pernicious and impious principles, that God is the author and necessitating cause, as well as the avenging punisher of sin; that man has no free will to avoid it; and that justification and salvation are the effects of an enthusiastic *persuasion*, under the name of *faith*, that a person is actually *justified and saved*, independently of any real belief in the revealed truths, independently of

* End of Controversy, p, 205, 206.

hope, charity, repentance for sin, benevolence to our fellow-creatures, loyalty to our king and country; or any other virtue; all which were censured by the first reformers as they are by the strict Methodists still, under the name of *works*, and by many of them declared to be even hurtful to salvation. It is asserted in the *Harmony of Confessions*, a celebrated work, published in the early times of the Reformation, that "all the confessions of the Protestant churches teach this primary article (of justification) with a holy consent;" which seems to imply, says Archdeacon Blackburn, "that this was the single article in which they all did agree."*

Now one would naturally have expected, that after thus broadly stating those frightful charges against "the chief Protestant communions," and having alluded to the "confessions of the Protestant churches" as teaching the errors he lays to their charge,—one would naturally have expected, we repeat, that so grave an accusation would have been immediately sustained by a reference to these same documents. In any such reasonable expectation, however, the reader will be entirely disappointed. *Not one single line from any one of the Protestant confessions is adduced by the learned Doctor, in support of this grievous charge.* Not an iota of proof, in fact, is furnished, in support of this most extraordinary accusation! What kind of conduct is this in one who professes to receive as the command of God, the precept, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour!"

But by what show of evidence, then, does the Doctor support his accusation? By seven short quotations, of three or four lines each, from Luther; four from Calvin; one from Beza; one from Fuller; one from Strype; one from Brandt; and one from Bosuet. Now of these it may be sufficient to observe, that some are the mere misrepresentations of enemies; others prove nothing whatever to the question;

* End of Controversy, p. 206.

while the remainder are merely the unguarded and strong expressions of two or three good but fallible men, writing in the heat of controversy.

Dr. Milner knows very well, that in the matter of predestination, free will, &c., these Protestant writers agreed entirely with Augustine, one of the greatest of the early fathers, to whose name the church of Rome pays the highest honour. He knows full well that the very passages he quotes from Luther and Calvin might be easily matched by others from the works of this great saint of his own calendar. He knows, too, that if whole churches are to be judged of by single expressions, culled from the writings of individual fathers, the church of Rome may be proved guilty of Montanism by the works of Tertullian, and of Platonism by those of Origen. But he knows also, that all such attempts at crimination are nothing else than the merest folly. He is well aware that a church can only be convicted by its own acts and confessions. He opens his accusation by charging "the chief Protestant communions" with grounding their doctrine "on the pernicious and impious principle, that God is the author and necessitating cause, as well as the avenging punisher of sin;"—he then alludes to "the confessions of the Protestant churches" as containing this doctrine;—but he does not produce a single line from any one of them in support of the charge! The reason is, that he could never find, among them all, a single word bearing any such meaning; in other words, *the whole charge is utterly and entirely false; and this he could not but have known at the time he made it!*

But after thus calumniating the whole body of Protestant churches, and yet failing to establish one iota against them, the doctor naturally comes to speak of his own church. And here we might have expected him to be a little more diffuse, and better prepared with proofs. Instead of which, though he has now to prove the more important part of his case,—that the Romish church is peculiarly the HOLY Catholic church,—he glances over the subject in little

more than two pages! In fact, his whole argument, over and above some general assertions, is confined to this, that "If the doctrine of the Catholic church was once holy, namely, in the apostolic age, it is holy still; because the church never changes her doctrine, nor suffers any person in her communion to change it, or to question any part of it."

A bolder defiance to truth than this never was penned. It supposes the whole history of the past to have been blotted out of men's memories. What were all the doctrinal contests of so many successive councils caused by, if the doctrine of the Catholic church ever remained the same,—unaltered and unimpugned? Look at pope Zozimus and his synod at Rome; see the council of Frankfort in A. D. 794; both approving the heresy of Pelagius; and then behold various other councils, ending with that of Trent, anathematizing that same doctrine, and all who held it. Nay, the yet more fatal error of Arius was first condemned by the council of Nice, then accepted by the council of Sirmium; the synods of Ariminum and Seleucia subsequently confirmed the adhesion of the church to this heresy, and the words of Jerome himself are,—“the whole world groaned to find itself become Arian.” Yet after the lapse of years this error waned and became nearly extinct, and has since been condemned by as many councils as had previously supported it. An equal changeability was exhibited by popes and councils in the cases of the Eutychian and Monothelan heresies. But enough has been said to show that this absurd boast, that “the (Romish) church never changes its doctrine,” is one of the most groundless vaunts that ever came from the pen of a human being.

It may, however, be answered, that these heresies have now long since been subdued, and that the existing doctrine of the Romish church is free from such stains. This may be admitted; but still the argument of Dr. Milner, that “*if* the doctrine of the Catholic church was holy in the apostolic age, it must be so now, *because* it is never permitted to be altered or

impugned," is clearly gone, is entirely destroyed, and we have only to deal with the doctrinal standard of the Romish church as we now find it.

What, then, is the real state of the case, as to the alleged *holiness of doctrine* of the church of Rome?

It is this: in so far as she holds, in common with Protestants, the ancient creeds or professions of faith, called the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian—she possesses the true and orthodox doctrine. But inasmuch as she has added to that faith the whole accumulation of error contained in the creed of pope Pius the IVth, she has thereby alloyed and defiled the true faith with a mixture of many and great errors. And error in religion is never innocuous. It always leads to sin. Every single particle, therefore, of these additions to the ancient faith, is opposed to sanctity or holiness. The words of Christ exactly apply to her: "*Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.*" For instance,

1. The doctrine of Purgatory removes the salutary dread of eternal woe, and encourages men in the false hope of compensating for the sins they may commit in this world, by a merely temporary punishment in the next:

2. The doctrine of Indulgences, and of Masses for the dead, evidently aids this delusion. By this latter figment, a man revelling in sinful pleasures during his whole life-time, may console himself with the hope, that by a sufficient legacy to the priests, for masses to be said after his death, he may escape even the temporary inflictions of purgatory. And the former falsehood teaches the sinner that he may go on in the indulgence of his lusts throughout the year, so that he reserves a sufficient sum to purchase, at Christmas or Easter, an indulgence, or oblivion from the church, for the entire cancelling of his debt of sin.

3. By the erection of the saints and the Virgin into minor mediators, the resort of the sinner to Christ is greatly hindered. But neither the saints nor the Virgin can so much as hear the prayers of their worshippers, much less answer them;—meanwhile

Christ, the only fountain of grace and of holiness, is hidden from the sinner's view, and consequently no aid is obtained in his daily warfare against sin and the devil.

4. The enforced celibacy of the clergy has, in all ages, and to a fearful extent, been productive of the most dreadful immorality.

5. The seclusion of men and women under monastic vows has likewise led to the most revolting crimes.

Under the last two heads we shall merely adduce one or two testimonies, which will indicate the presence of a wide-spread evil.

Erasmus, himself a Romanist, confesses, of his own day, that

“A number of monasteries are so degenerated, that the stews are more chaste, sober, and modest than they.”

Blanco White, himself also formerly a Romish priest, says,

“Crime makes its way into those recesses, in spite of spiked walls and prison gates. This I know, with all the certainty which the self-accusation of the guilty can give.”

6. The practice of confession, as actually carried on under the rules laid down by the highest authorities in the Romish church, inevitably leads to a familiarity with vice, which cannot but produce the most frightful effects.

Mr. Nolan, another Romish priest, has lately borne witness to this fact. He says,

“There is not a Romish priest extant, who has acted in the capacity of a confessor, but must admit the truth of this observation, that each day's confessions had been the continued causes of unchaste excitements in his mind. Oh, my friends, there is no Romish clergyman, no matter how sanctified he may appear in your estimation, but must allow that the first subject of his own confession to another priest, is an acknowledgment of his having indulged in un-

chaste thoughts, on account of the indecent recitals made before him in the confessional.”*

But he goes further, and asks,

“Has not this practice of inquisitorial debasement often exposed the weakness of the penitent, and has it not consequently furnished the lecherous dispositions of many priests with an easier and more appropriate mode of seduction? Has not the innocence of virginity been often despoiled through the confessional, and has not the morality of otherwise virtuous women been frequently corrupted through its lewdness? Yes! hellish instruction has frequently been imparted at this mock tribunal, whilst clerical criminality there has often become the substitute for priestly absolution. Am I asserting what is false, or does not your own knowledge of circumstances bear me out in the truth of my observations? Is there a single diocese in Ireland but furnishes proofs of Romish clergymen who have been suspended for the notorious crime of having converted the tribunal of confession into an apology for wickedness? The very diocese in which I officiated as a Romish clergyman, affords sufficient proofs of the correctness of my statement.”†

These are some of the peculiar inventions and practices of the Romish church, all brought into being in the days of her greatest power, and all protested against alike by the Waldenses and the reformed churches. But, we must further add, that in the exposition of the Moral Law, that church shows herself to be far from holiness or sanctity. It would not be difficult, as we just now remarked, to show that she has abrogated every one of the ten commandments. But we will only now advert to two or three of the more flagrant instances of this perversion.

Her divines teach in the Maynooth class-books, that small thefts, practised by domestics, or by the poor towards the wealthy, are only venial sins:

* Nolan's Third Letter, p. 23.

† Nolan's Third Letter, p. 24.

They teach, that it is lawful, or rather praise-worthy, to violate an oath, if the interests of their church may be served by such violation:

They teach, that it is lawful, and in fact a duty to take away the lives of those who oppose their church.

On these three points we must not here enlarge, as it would be easy to do. On the last two, indeed, we shall have to speak hereafter, when we come to treat of the conduct of the Romish church towards Protestants. The first, however, we must deal with in this place, since nothing can be more obviously and inherently *unholy*, than the whole Romish theory of *venial sin*.

This theory, too, shows how groundless is the boast that their doctrine is still, at this moment, what it was in the days of the apostles. No such fancy as that of *venial sin* was ever heard of in the apostolic times.

The Catechism "approved and recommended by the four Roman Catholic archbishops of Ireland," and published in Dublin in 1833, thus states this doctrine:—

"Does venial sin deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, *and deserve everlasting punishment?*"

"No, but it hurts the soul by lessening its love for God; and by disposing it to mortal sin."

"Where do they go who die in venial sin?"

"To purgatory."

And, in the "Abridgment of the Christian doctrine," revised and prescribed by the Right Reverend James Doyle, Romish bishop of Kildare, &c., we find this question and answer:—

"By what kinds of sin are the commandments broken?"

"*By mortal sins only*; for venial sins are not, strictly speaking, contrary to the end of the commandments, which is charity."

Then we come to the distinction between mortal and venial sins, in the same Catechism, revised and put forth by Dr. Doyle:—

"When is theft a mortal sin?"

“When the thing stolen is of *considerable value, or causeth a considerable hurt to our neighbour.*”

Clearly, then, the servant of a rich man, who should merely abstract a moderate sum from his master's purse, would only be guilty of a *venial sin*; and venial sin, this Catechism tells us, does not amount to a breach of the commandments. But we go on:—

“When is a lie a mortal sin?”

“When it is *any great dishonour to God, or notable prejudice to our neighbour.*”

But in another Catechism, published by the pope's legate, for the use of all the churches in France, we find this question and answer:—

“Repeat the sixth commandment (of the church).”

“Thou shalt eat meat neither Friday nor Saturday.”

“What does this commandment forbid?”

“Eating meat on Fridays or Saturdays, without necessity, under pain of *mortal sin.*”

Thus it is taught by the HOLY Catholic church, that to *rob* is not a breach of God's commandments, except the sum taken is “*considerable*;”—but that to *eat meat* on Fridays is a mortal sin, and is punished by hell-fire to all eternity!

Well may we apply the words of Christ to such teachers: “*Why do ye transgress the commandments of God by your traditions?*” “*Woe unto you, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.*” “*Ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*” And what can be more monstrous than to allege, that a church which teaches to all her people such principles as these, is to be called *holy* in her doctrine?

But it is time we proceeded to Dr. Milner's second head, which concerns the *Means of Sanctity*. This part of his case he rests chiefly on the possession of seven sacraments by his church, while Protestants have only two. Before, however, he can be allowed to assume these things to be *means of sanctity*, he must show them to be the ordinances of Christ; other-

wise they will come under the apostle's indignant denunciation; "*If ye be dead with Christ, why are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men; which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting the body;*" but possess no real value or utility. Now we know that Christ instituted Baptism and the Supper commemorative of his death, and we may be sure, therefore, that these are really "means of sanctity." But what like certainty have we of those other five things which the Romish church chooses to call "sacraments?" That church makes marriage, for instance, a sacrament; and also, orders. Now we maintain the religious nature of marriage, and cherish it far more than the Romanists, who openly and avowedly prefer celibacy; but we find no where in holy writ that it is called a sacrament. We hold that "*marriage is honourable in all,*" as St. Paul instructs us. They, on the other hand, declare it to be, in many cases, criminal and dishonourable. We "*confess our sins one to another,*" as the apostle enjoins; but we do not permit unmarried priests to put interrogatories to our wives and daughters which it "*is a shame even to speak of,*"* for their lewdness and obscenity. We ordain, by the imposition of hands, our clergy; we visit and pray with our sick; we preach repentance to all; but we call none of these things *sacraments*, because they are never so represented in holy Scripture. We have then, we trust, in them, all that Christ intended to confer by them. The Romish church has chosen to swell them out of their Scriptural dimensions, and thus to make "*a show of wisdom in will-worship;*" but we may reasonably doubt if ever the followers of Rome have gained any additional "means of sanctity" thereby. And while it may well be questioned what advantage, in these respects, can belong to the church of Rome, it is sufficiently clear, that in two most material particulars all Protestant churches have a clear and important supe-

* See the chapter on Confession in Dens' Theology.

riority. We allude to the use of the holy Scriptures, and the preaching of the gospel. These were the two great "means of sanctity" instituted by the Saviour, and both of these, in the Romish church, are suppressed or limited. "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,*" saith the Psalmist. "*All Scripture is profitable,*" saith Paul, "*that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.*" But no, says the council of Trent, "the use of the Scriptures is rather *hurtful* than useful." And in the same manner is preaching discountenanced, and whenever used, made only the vehicle of some absurd eulogies on the Virgin, or the saints, instead of a means of spreading the knowledge of that gospel, which is "*the power of God unto salvation.*" In these two important points, then, is the church of Rome far behind all the Protestant churches, in things which are most truly "means of sanctity."

The third point named by Dr. Milner concerns the *Fruits of Sanctity*. On this head he says: "The fruits of sanctity are the virtues practised by those who are possessed of it. Hence the present question is, whether these are to be found, for the most part, among the members of the ancient Catholic church, or among the different innovators, who undertook to reform it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:"* and he adds, "Protestants are accustomed to paint in the most frightful colours, the alleged depravity of the church, when Luther erected his standard, in order to justify him and his followers in their defection from it. But to form a right judgment in the case, let them read the works of the contemporary writers: an A-Kempis, a Gerson, an Antoninus, &c.; or let them peruse the lives of St. Vincent Ferrar, St. Laurence Justinian, St. Francis Paula, St. Philip Neri, St. Cajetan, St. Teresa, St. Francis Xaverius, and of those other saints who illuminated the church about the period in question. Or let them, from the very accounts of Protestant historians, compare, as to

* Milner's End of Controversy, p. 235.

religion and morality, Archbishop Cranmer, with his rival, Bishop Fisher; Protector Seymour with Chancellor More; Ann Boleyn with Catharine of Arragon; Martin Luther and Calvin with Francis Xaverius and Cardinal Pole; Beza with St. Francis of Sales; Queen Elizabeth with Mary Queen of Scots; these contrasted characters having more or less relation with each other. From such a comparison, I have no sort of doubt, what the decision of your friends will be concerning them in point of their respective holiness.”*

But surely this is a miserably narrow view of the question. We are now speaking of *results*; of the general effect of the two systems, Popish and Protestant, upon mankind. And instead of taking an extended retrospect of the facts developed by history, Dr. Milner picks out a dozen names on each side, and invites a comparison between these. Or at furthest, he sends us to “*the Lives of the Saints*,” a book full of the most incredible romances; and supposes that the sanctity of his church is established by such a document as this! Now all such trifling is quite as foolish as the conduct of the man, who, wanting to sell a house, took a brick out of it, and exhibited it in the market. How could any one learn, by merely considering the characters of a few selected saints put forward by Dr. Milner and Alban Butler, whether sanctity were the general condition of the Romish church, or the exception to its general condition? Assuredly, if the assumption is to be gravely maintained, that the church of Rome is distinguished by the fruits of sanctity, we must give to that question a far more extensive and rational consideration.

And to do this we ought to compare, 1st. different periods of the church’s history; and, 2d. the state of different countries at the present time.

Now the history of the Catholic or Universal church may be divided into three stages—1st. before the rise of Popery; 2. during its reign and as-

* Milner’s End of Controversy, p. 237.

cendency; 3. since its decline, up to the present moment.

The first of these periods may be said to consist chiefly of the first four or five centuries. During this period there was no pope, and although during the latter years of it the pretensions of the bishop of Rome began to be magnified, and to put forth a promise of the rising papacy, still, during all this period there was no one ruler or vicegerent over the church. Nor were the doctrines of transubstantiation, purgatory, indulgences, the celibacy of the clergy, or image-worship, then received into the church's creed. It was indeed the *Catholic*, not the Papal or *Romish* church.

Between the fundamental doctrines of the church in those days, and those held by Protestants now, there was no essential difference. And in all this period, Christianity arose and prospered by the inherent brightness which the fruits of the Spirit made to shine around it. The purity of her doctrine, and the general holiness of her members, agreed together. All existing records concur in awarding her the praise of showing forth "*the fruits of sanctity.*" It was in those days that nearly all the men, whom both Protestants and Romanists admit to have been really *saints*, flourished. These were the days of Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, Cyprian, Justin Martyr, Athanasius, Ambrose, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and Augustine, names to which the next thousand years furnish no equal list. The church, in general, enjoyed purity of doctrine, (though towards the end of this period superstitions and corruptions began to creep in), and, as a natural accompaniment of purity of doctrine, she possessed purity of morals, or "*the fruits of sanctity.*"

In the second period, however, from the sixth century to the fifteenth, Rome reigned supreme. The papacy advanced with rapid strides, and soon its fatal shadow began to overspread the whole Christian world. Monkery, will-worship, the setting up new mediators, penances, prayers for the dead, and the worship of the wafer, now came in. All these, Dr.

Milner will tell us, were so many "means of sanctity;" but one thing is very clear, that "the fruits of sanctity" began rapidly to decline and vanish away. This we learn, not by the testimony of Protestants, but by that of members of the church of Rome.

Gregory, called St. Gregory, who flourished at the close of the sixth century, thus writes:—"I think, my beloved brethren, that God suffers greater evil from none than he does from the priests, when he beholds those whom he appointed to correct others, in themselves presenting examples of depravity; when we sin, who ought to restrain sin?" "The gold is obscured, because the life of the priests, formerly distinguished by the glory of virtue, has come through earthly and vile deeds to the ignominy of contempt. The stones of the sanctuary are scattered at the head of all the streets, because those who by their mode of life and prayer ought always to be within, by their wicked manner of life are always abroad."*

Here we have an unexceptionable witness, one acknowledged by the Romanists as the head of the church, and successor of St. Peter, testifying two things, that the priests were "*formerly* distinguished by the glory of virtue," but that they were now falling away and becoming vile.

Passing on still further, we find a Carthusian named *Laerius*, speaking of the ninth century as follows:—

"O worst of times, in which holy men failed, and truth was rendered scarce by the sons of men." "About this time charity waxed very cold in every class of men, and iniquity began unusually to abound."†

The tenth century may be taken to be more especially the purely Romish one, for the whole world had now become thoroughly subjugated to the pope; and Peter Waldo and John Wickliffe had not yet made their appearance. Here, then, undisturbed by schism, and possessing in their fulness, all those

* *Gregory* in *Evang. Let. I. Con. 17.*

† *Laerius, Fascia, temper. ann. 874.*

“means of sanctity” of which Dr. Milner boasts, we might have expected to see the church shine forth, “clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.” Yet what says their own ecclesiastical historian, Cardinal Baronius, of this period? He speaks as follows—“Behold the nine hundredth year of the Redeemer begins, in which a new age commences, which by reason of its asperity and barrenness of good, has been wont to be called the *iron age*; and by the deformity of its exuberant evil, the *leaden age*; and by its poverty of writers, the *dark age*.” “To our shame and grief be it spoken, how many monsters, horrible to behold, were obtruded into that seat (the Papal throne) which is revered by angels! How many evils originated from them; how many tragedies were perpetrated! With what filth it was her fate to be besprinkled who was without spot or wrinkle,—with what stench to be infected, with what impurities to be defiled; and with these things to be blackened with perpetual infamy.”

Again, the same writer says, of A. D. 912, “What was then the face of the holy Roman church! How exceedingly foul was it, when most powerful and sordid and abandoned women ruled at Rome, at whose will the sees were changed, bishops were presented, and what is horrid to hear, and unutterable, false pontiffs, their lovers, were intruded into the chair of St. Peter.” “Thus lust, relying on the secular power, and mad and stimulated with the rage of dominion, claimed every thing for itself.”*

Passing on still further, in A. D. 1075, we find one of the popes, Gregory the VIIth, thus writing to Hugo, Abbot of Clunium—“When I look to the west, the east, or the south, I scarcely discover any bishops who are lawful, either in their entrance, or their mode of life; who govern the people from the love of Christ, and not from secular ambition; and among princes, I know none who prefer God’s honour to their own, or righteousness to gain. Those among whom I

* Baronii Ann. Eccles. An. 900—912.

dwell, I argue to be somewhat worse than Jews or the Pagans, as I often tell them.”*

Of 1079, Genebrard says, “The priests were of most depraved morals, and the sacred things were despised by the people.”†

Pope Innocent III., speaking in the Council of Lateran, says—“Evils have entered among the Christian people. Faith perishes; religion is disfigured; liberty is confounded; justice is trodden under foot; heretics spring up; the wicked rage,” &c.

Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, speaking before the pope in council, A. D. 1250, says, “Bad shepherds, the dearth of good ones, and the multiplication of the bad, are the cause of the corruption of the Christian faith and religion; they are the cause of infidelity, schism, heretical wickedness and vicious manners throughout the world.”‡

Gerson, chancellor of Paris, in A. D. 1409, in a speech delivered in the council of Pisa, thus complains, “But from what roots am I to believe that these things have sprung? Truly from the foul pollutions of the clergy;” who, “by their carnal wisdom and foul vices, destroy and pollute the church.”§

And thus have we proceeded even to the days when Huss and Jerome of Prague actually commenced the Reformation; and through century after century do we find it clearly and strongly stated, by a succession of Roman Catholic historians and divines, that the whole church was corrupt, polluted, and utterly destitute of that sanctity which, according to Dr. Milner, always has dwelt, and always must dwell with her.

Perhaps some Romanist may be ready to exclaim, “Why carry us back into all the mire and gloom of the dark ages, in order to find ground of crimination against our church?”

But we hardly see how the expression—“the *dark*

* Baronii Ann. Eccles. An. 1075.

† Chron. Geneb. lib. iv. An. 1079.

‡ Brown's Fascic. tom. 2, p. 251.

§ Labbe and Cossart. Anno. 1409. p. 414.

ages," can consistently come from the lips of a member of the church of Rome. *We*, indeed, may well so denominate the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, because, on our principles, they were especially so; the Romish church having effectually quenched the two great means of enlightenment—the preaching of the gospel, and the use of those Scriptures which were given to be *a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path*. But with what show of reason can papists call that period “a dark age,” when their church possessed all the advantages in which Dr. Milner now exults, and suffered none of those evils which he laments as arising from the spread of *heresies*? During all these centuries she could glory as fully as at present, in all those four points which Dr. Milner enumerates as establishing her claim to the title of “*holy*.” She had the same *doctrine* which she now holds; the same *sacraments*, penances, masses and missals; the same supposed *saints*; and the same alleged *miracles*. In all respects, then, she stood on the same ground as at present, not excepting her infallibility, with the additional advantage of being unopposed by Lutherans or Protestants of any description. To say that the barbarians had overrun the empire, is saying nothing; for it is of *the church* that we are now speaking, and her light, had it been the pure and holy flame which Dr. Milner describes, would only have shone with the greater apparent brightness amidst the surrounding darkness. Instead of which, it is of the corruption of *the church itself* that we are now speaking. And the one point on which we are anxious to fix attention is this,—that that very period of time at which the Romish church enjoyed the most perfect ascendancy, and in which “heresy” or Protestantism was scarcely heard of, is just that period which all their *own historians* describe as the most corrupt, the most wicked, the most appalling. Protestants can account for this with ease; it is perfectly consistent with their views, that without the preaching of the gospel, or the use of the written word, the world should fall into utter apos-

tasy and heathenism; but how Romanists can reconcile this state of the church with the full possession of those *four* things which, to their eyes, prove the church to be *holy*—viz. sanctity of doctrine,—the means of sanctity,—the fruits of sanctity, and the attestation of sanctity,—it is not easy to see. Our first remark, however, may now perhaps be admitted to be well founded; that on a view of ecclesiastical history, it appears that the days of the greatest ascendancy of the church of Rome were also the days of the greatest corruption and unholiness, and that the spread of Protestantism has been at least accompanied by a very great improvement in morals, both in the church and in the world. Our second observation is, that the two opposing systems ought to be tried, not only by a review of different periods of the church's history, but also by a comparison of the various countries of the world, as they now stand.

In doing this, it will be quite sufficient to advert to facts which are of general notoriety, and which no one will venture to dispute:—such as, the general character of Protestant nations throughout the world, compared with that of those countries which still acknowledge the sway of Rome; and, the active “fruits of sanctity,” or efforts of benevolence which are seen in each.

We ask, then, whether a great and remarkable difference does not exist, a difference which strikes every impartial and indifferent observer, in the morals, habits, liberty, and consequent peace and happiness of the Protestant and Roman Catholic states of Europe. Does any one think of questioning the fact, for instance, that the morals of the two neighbouring states of Denmark and Sweden are of a far higher cast than those of Spain and Portugal; the first two being almost exclusively Protestant; the latter two as exclusively popish? Or, to compare two countries closely adjoining, will it be denied that between Holland and Belgium, an equally perceptible difference exists, and as decidedly in favour of the Protestant state?

But let us take a general glance over Europe at the

present instant, and remark the striking contrast it presents. Popery furnishes to its followers, according to Dr. Milner, a holy doctrine, means of holiness, the fruits of holiness, and a divine attestation of holiness; in all which things Protestants are deficient. Is it not extraordinary, then, that with all these vast advantages, and with the presence of Christ as papists tell us, always with their church, it should so happen that at this moment every Protestant state in Europe should be enjoying peace, and safety, and internal prosperity; while every Popish state is, more or less, torn with intestine divisions, harassed with revolutionary agitators, or filled with alarms of some such description. So clearly does this rule hold, in every case, that could a stranger to this globe be suddenly made acquainted with the state and prospects of all the nations of Europe, he could not fail to exclaim, without meddling with the religious question at all; "One thing I can see with a certainty, which admits of no doubt; that the chief evil to be avoided among nations, is Popery; since, wherever it exists, there is misery and discord, and wherever it has no footing, there is usually peace and prosperity."

But there is another circumstance which, under this head, may justly claim our attention; we mean, those "fruits of sanctity" which manifest the love of our neighbour, and are called by men in general, acts of benevolence.

We are aware, indeed, that the Romish church, having received of the wealthy in various ages, large endowments and estates for the use of the poor and destitute, does, in all parts of the world, ostentatiously assume the office of the general almoner. But we are not, either in this or the former points, confining our view to the clergy only. We look for "the fruits of sanctity" among the people at large. And we say, in the first place, that in Protestant countries the care of the poor and needy, of the widow and fatherless, is always a matter which attracts more attention than in Roman Catholic states. "Let the traveller," says one who had himself witnessed what he described,

“start from the Rock of Lisbon, and proceed through every part of Spain, Italy and France, and the wretchedness and beggary which prevails in every town, village, &c. can only be appreciated by those who have witnessed such scenes.”* On the other hand, in Denmark, Sweden, Holland, England, and Protestant Germany, and the United States of North America, the sacred duty of providing for the poor and destitute is sedulously attended to. Of Holland, indeed, it is recorded that when one of the courtiers of Charles II. jestingly anticipated the destruction of Amsterdam, then threatened by the French, and basely betrayed by Charles,—the king, for once, checked his mirth, by the remark, “I am of opinion that God will preserve Amsterdam from being destroyed, if it were only for the great charity they have for their poor.”†

But the same remark applies to the religious benevolence of Romanists and Protestants; we mean, to their respective exertions to Christianize the world. The church of Rome has, indeed, done much; and at this moment there is a sort of college, *de propaganda fide*, in operation among them. But where are the “fruits of sanctity,” in this particular, among the Roman Catholics generally. Protestant England alone raises more than £500,000 every year,—for this noblest of all purposes.‡ Does Roman Catholic Europe, with its vast empires of France and Spain, Italy and Austria,—does it raise even a tenth of this sum for the conversion of heathen nations? We trow not. The Protestant churches have at this moment many hundreds of labourers employed among the heathen in every quarter of the globe: have the Romanists as many scores?

In these remarks we are not forgetting the great

* Mitford's Tour, vol. ii. p. 76.

† Kerr's Remarks on Holland, part iii. p. 34.

‡ A single association in the U. S. A., viz. the American Board of Commissioners for foreign missions, expended for the same purpose, \$265,774 during the year 1839; to say nothing of the Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist missions. [Am. Edit.]

expenditure which is evidently going on in England, and the United States, in the erection of Romish chapels, colleges, &c. This peculiar effort is easily accounted for, both in its object and in its sources. The priests begin to entertain a hope of re-conquering England for the holy see, and of bringing the United States under papal sway. Their exertions, consequently, are redoubled. And the doctrines of their church, as to the descent of even real Christians into purgatory, and as to the power of the priesthood to draw them out of that place, are obviously well calculated to give them vast power over the purses of the frightened and the dying. But there is nothing in all this in the least resembling the spontaneous contributions of Protestants, to send the gospel to the Hottentots, to the Esquimaux, and to the South Sea Islands.

Surely, then, it must be admitted that with respect to the *fruits of sanctity*, or the evidences of practical holiness among the people, the balance inclines very greatly to our side. On a comparison of *periods*, we find that the most purely Popish times have been also times of the greatest corruption, vice, and moral darkness; and on a comparison of *countries*, we find that Protestantism and morality, Romanism and immorality seem to be always closely connected. Then passing from the general condition of the people to the acts and doings which might be traced and compared, we find the temporal interests of the poor always better attended to, and the eternal interests of the heathen exciting far greater exertions, among Protestants than among Papists. On the whole, then, we consider, that Dr. Milner, in passing over this subject, as he does, in a very brief notice of two or three pages, shows that he was aware of being on unsafe ground; and that in that feeling he was quite correct. There remains, therefore, now only his fourth point, that of the *Attestation of Sanctity*, to be considered.

On this point the Dr. says, "The learned Protestant advocates of revelation, such as Grotius, Abbadie, Paley, Watson, &c. in defending this common

cause against infidels, all agree in the sentiment of the last named, that 'miracles are the criterion of truth.' Accordingly they observe, that both Moses, Exod. iv. xiv., Numb. xvi. 29, and Jesus Christ, John x. 37, 38. xiv. 12. xv. 24, constantly appealed to the prodigies they wrought, in attestation of their divine mission and doctrine. Indeed the whole history of God's people, from the beginning of the world down to the time of our blessed Saviour, was nearly a continued series of miracles. The latter, so far from confining the power of working them to his own person or time, expressly promised the same, and even a greater power of this nature, to his disciples, Mark xvi. 17. John xiv. 12. For both the reasons here mentioned, namely, that the Almighty was pleased to illustrate the society of his chosen servants, both under the law of nature and the written law, with frequent miracles, and that Christ promised a continuance of them to his disciples under the new law, we are led to expect, that the true church should be distinguished by miracles, wrought in her, and in proof of her divine origin. Accordingly, the fathers and doctors of the Catholic church, amongst other proofs in her favour, have constantly appealed to the miracles by which she is illustrated, and reproached their contemporary heretics and schismatics with the want of them."*

Dr. Milner, then, gravely claims for his church the possession of miraculous powers through the whole of the middle ages, and even down to the present time. He recounts especially the miracles of Augustine of Canterbury in the sixth century, of Bernard in the twelfth, and of Francis Xaverius, and Philip Neri in the sixteenth; and he asks, "Will you say that all the holy fathers, up to the apostolic age, and that all the ecclesiastical writers down to the Reformation, and since that period, that all the Catholic authors, prelates, and officials, have been in a league to deceive mankind?"

* Milner's End of Controversy, p. 246, 247.

Now we answer that question without the least hesitation. We know, on the surest possible evidence, that by Christ and his apostles "*the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were raised up.*" We know also on sufficient testimony, that these powers of healing, did not instantaneously cease, but were continued for some considerable period after the departure of the apostles. But we see, too, that no such powers are possessed by any church whatever in the present day. If the Romish church could give sight to "*one born blind,*" or raise on his feet one "*who had never walked,*" or call from the tomb one who had "*been dead four days*"—then indeed the controversy between herself and the Protestant churches would assume a different character. But she has done no such thing. For the last three hundred years, during which the prevalence of Protestantism has made it most desirable for her, if possible, to show some such "*attestation of sanctity,*"—during all this period God would seem, even on her own showing, to have deserted her; for those wonders which her chroniclers record, through all the middle ages, entirely cease when we come into the light of Protestant days. And as to the question, "*Whether all the Catholic authors, prelates, and officials have been in a league to deceive mankind?*"—we merely remark, that when *Genebrard*, one of their own chroniclers, declares that "*for nearly one hundred and fifty years, about fifty popes deserted wholly the virtue of their predecessors, being apostate rather than apostolical,*" and that "*the priests were of most depraved morals;*"* and when *Baronius*, another of their historians, and a cardinal, tells us that the government of the church was in the hands of "*horrible monsters;*"—when, we repeat, we find this testimony given by their own historians, and then meet with the most marvellous and often the most absurd stories of miracles performed, even at periods when it is thus uni-

* *Genebrard, Chron. l. iv. An. 1079.*

versally admitted that the foulest corruptions overspread the church,—what conclusion can we come to, but that which Dr. M. suggests, that the legend-writers and their officials were “in a league to deceive mankind?” Nor can we forget that most of these miracle-workers had an end in view,—since by such stories the credit of their shrines and relics was raised, and gifts and offerings flowed in upon them, in exact proportion to the wonders said to be wrought. At the period of the Reformation, many of these things were searched into, and their fraud made manifest. But we must proceed to inquire, what says Dr. Milner on the point of this “attestation of sanctity,” as possessed by his church at the present moment.

He says, “the church never possessed miraculous powers, in the sense of most Protestant writers, so as to be able to effect cures or other supernatural events at her mere pleasure: for even the apostles could not do this: as we learn from the history of the lunatic child, Matt, xvii. 16. But this I say, that the Catholic church, being always the beloved *spouse of Christ*, Rev. xxi. 9, and continuing at all times to bring forth children of heroic sanctity, God fails not in this, any more than in past ages, to illustrate her and them by unquestionable miracles.”*

In support of this assumption, he narrates, 1. The case of Joseph Lamb, who having fallen from a hayrick, on the 12th of August, 1814, at Eccles, in Lancashire, so hurt himself that he could neither walk nor stand without crutches, till the 2d of October, when he was taken to Garswood, and signed on his back with the sign of the cross, by the dead hand of F. Arrowsmith, who was executed at Lancaster in the time of Charles the First. On which being done, feeling a particular sensation and total change in himself, he exclaimed to his wife, “*Mary, I can walk!*” which he forthwith did, and has continued to do ever since.

2. Mary Wood, who on the 15th of March, 1809,

* End of Controversy, p. 260.

cut her arm so seriously by a broken pane of glass, as to injure the tendons, and to deprive her of the use of it. But on applying a piece of moss from St. Winefrid's well, on the 6th of August, she found, the next morning, that she could dress herself, having regained the full use of her limb.

3. Winefrid White, who had suffered from a curvature of the spine, and a hemiplegia, or a paralytic affection, and who, on the 28th of June, 1805, on bathing in St. Winefrid's well, found herself free from all her pains and disabilities, and able to run or walk like any other young person.

Such is the whole array of evidence which Dr. M. can muster up, as of modern times, and within our own reach;—but he also refers, at some length, to the miracles wrought by Xaverius in India, and Lewis Bertrand in South America.

These latter, however, belong to the sixteenth century; and we must be excused, at this time of day, from going into a very minute examination of legends imported from countries ten or twelve thousand miles distant, and of the date of two or three centuries back. It will be enough for us to examine Dr. Milner's evidence of the "divine attestation," as applying to our own times. And the facts he adduces, it seems, are merely these;—a man had fallen from a hay-rick, and hurt his back, and being weak and lame, was restored to health and strength by the application of a dead man's hand: A girl had cut her arm, and felt a difficulty or disability in using it; but by the application of a piece of moss was enabled to use it as before: Another girl suffering under a diseased spine, was so strengthened by once plunging into St. Winefrid's fountain, as to be "able to walk, run, or jump, like any other young person."

Now such stories as these hardly seem to require a word of comment; for our readers will for the most part be well aware that several supposed miracles of the very same description as these, were wrought by the disciples of Mr. Irving about four years since. And the exact similarity of the cases proves the

identity of the delusion in both instances. The Irvingite miracles exactly resembled the Romish ones. In all of them, there was a patient labouring under a supposed disability to walk, to stand, to move her arm, &c.; and in each of them some mighty supernatural agency is ostentatiously set to work, to remove this disability. The disability is removed; the patient walks, or stretches forth his arm, and cries of a miracle resound on every side.

In all this, two things are overlooked: 1. The power of fancy; and 2dly, the character of the miracles recorded in Holy Scripture. On the first point, we shall merely allude to one fact, perfectly well known to the medical profession, which casts a strong light on the subject.

A few years since, a new invention was greatly trumpeted about in England, for the cure of persons who from various causes had become crippled in their limbs; it was called "the metallic tractors;" and far more miracles were wrought by it, in the course of a year or two, than Dr. Milner has been able to muster in support of the Romish church, on a review of a quarter of a century. So great was the excitement caused by this new discovery, that in one important city, much frequented by persons suffering from such ailments, the medical practitioners were on all hands beset by applications, either to adopt the new invention, or to give some sufficient reason for rejecting it.

Thus called upon, the physicians decided upon giving to "the metallic tractors" a full and fair trial. They proceeded, on a given day, to meet in the principal infirmary or hospital of the place, in order then and there to apply these "tractors" to all the sick and lame there lying, who were afflicted with any of the disorders which the said "tractors" were understood to be able to cure. The diseased persons were made betimes acquainted with the new remedy to be applied, and looked forward with hope to their probable cure. The result of the trial, however, exceeded all expectation. Men incurably lame for half their lives;

cripples who had been bed-ridden for many years; helpless objects who had dragged on a miserable existence for a quarter of a century, were seen pacing and almost leaping about, in transports of joy and gratitude. Never was there so complete a triumph!

Unhappily, however, for the fame and profit of the inventor, it turned out the next day, that the physicians had rightly appreciated the whole matter, and had shown that the real virtue of these wonderful "tractors" was no secret to them. It was frankly explained, that in the preceding day's trial, the things actually employed, were nothing more than some pieces of painted wood, ingeniously contrived to imitate the original invention, and that not a single "tractor," nor instrument, nor any medical or surgical means whatever were employed; nor was any one thing concerned in the matter, but all-powerful *fancy!*

And thus has it been with other quackeries, beside "the metallic tractors," and "St. Winefrid's well." Only take a person suffering from paralytic or nervous affections, and who has gradually become, or fancied that he has become, unable to move this or that limb; and tell him that by some extraordinary means he is to be suddenly cured; and in all probability, if you gain his implicit credence, something very much like a sudden and miraculous cure will follow. The mind acting in conjunction with the will, powerfully influences the whole machine. The nervous system still remains an unsolved problem, but its intimate connection with the hopes and fears, the alarms and determinations of the mind, is so far discernible as to render the things we are now considering no longer matter of wonder. And observe, that throughout the whole, whether in the affair of the Irvingite miracles, or those warranted by Dr. Milner, or those performed by "the metallic tractors," it is always a lame person, one suffering from a contracted limb, or from some disordered functions, that is thus suddenly cured. A clear and indisputable miracle—one which no power but a divine and super-

natural power could work, has never been produced by any of these pretenders. Let us see a man "*born blind*," endowed with sight, or one who "never had walked," gifted with the power to move like other men; or one who "had been dead four days," raised from the tomb, and then we shall be dumb with awe, or only vocal in admiration. But stiffened arms restored by a piece of holy moss, or a crick in the back cured by a dead man's hand, and all the other stories of a similar kind, only awaken feelings of pity for the understandings of the deluded, or of disgust at those who thus practise on their weakness. We therefore cannot admit Dr. Milner's miracles to the rank which he claims for them, but must deny that in this assumed "attestation of sanctity," the Dr. has established the least particle of his case.

Thus, then, have we concluded this branch of the subject,—the claim of the church of Rome to the title of HOLY. We have been obliged to deny each one of the four particulars into which this claim is divided. We believe that her *doctrines* are not *holy*—but, in those points especially in which they differ from the Scriptures and the Protestant faith, exceedingly *unholy*: we consider that the *means of attaining holiness*, through Latin prayers perpetually repeated, bodily inflictions, and indulgences purchased by money, are far inferior to the Protestant means, of hearing the gospel and reading God's holy word. We must maintain also, that both the history of the *past*, and an impartial view of the *present*, equally show that the *fruits of holiness* abound more among Protestants than among Catholics: and as to the alleged divine *attestation* of her *holiness*, conveyed by miracles, we deny that the least ground for such an assumption can be shown to exist. In the article of *holiness*, then, as well as in that of *unity*, we feel that Dr. Milner has wholly failed to make out his case.

VI.—THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

CATHOLICITY.

THE course of the argument brings us necessarily back to a part of the subject with which we have already dealt; but this is hardly to be regretted, inasmuch as every point in this great controversy admits of being viewed in a variety of lights. The “mark” of CATHOLICITY, as belonging exclusively to the church of Rome, is better stated by Dr. Wiseman than by Dr. Milner.

The former, Dr. Milner, says, “The true church is Catholic, or Universal, in three several respects; as to *persons*—as to *places*—and as to *time*. 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 days of the apostles.”*

But this must be admitted to be reasoning of the weakest order. “*The most numerous body!*” What! is truth to be discovered, then, by a mere appeal to numbers? If so, why not embrace the theology of Confucius, who, in one single empire, has more followers than popery can reckon all over the globe? And does Dr. M. seriously mean us to understand, that if Protestantism were to prevail in one or two more kingdoms than at present, and thereby throw the balance openly and decidedly (as it now is in truth and fact) against popery, it would then have become in his eyes the Catholic faith? Yet if he does not mean this,—what does he mean, when he

* Milner’s Eud of Controversy, 18mo. p. 284.

asserts that the church of Rome is the *Catholic* church, *because* she has "the most numerous body" of followers?

But the very fact itself is more easily assumed than proved. How is it made out that Rome has "the greatest number" of adherents? By putting down half a dozen of the chief kingdoms of Europe, as France, 30,000,000; Spain, 20,000,000; Italy, 18,000,000, and thus soon running up an account, on paper, of a hundred millions of Romanists. But what does the Romanism of France amount to? To nothing better than a tolerant, indifferent sort of Atheism. And what of Spain? Did not Blanco White confess, a dozen years since, that the bulk of the Spanish priests were merely concealed infidels; and is not the fruit of their infidelity now showing itself, by the animosity of the popular party to the priests, the monks, and, in fact, to all religion? And yet it is only by calculating the populations of these great nations as wholly "Catholic," that the Romish controversialists are able to give some colour to their assumption, that the adherents to Rome are still "the most numerous body of Christians."

But Dr. Milner's proposition has another feature. He proves the "Catholicism" of his church's system by the fact, that her faith "is more or less diffused wherever Christianity prevails?"

Now no one will deny, that as Rome has still six or eight European nations in her communion, and as several of these have colonies, and carry on commercial transactions with every country on the globe, it must very naturally follow that some sort of Romanism is to be heard of wherever any kind of civilization, or any profession of Christianity exists. But this no more makes the church of Rome the Catholic or Universal Church, than the fact that English ships and English merchants are found in every port in the known world, makes England the head of a fifth universal empire. The circumstance is easily accounted for, and proves nothing. The English tongue, and the Protestant English church, is now

known in all parts of the world; but who ever thinks of calling the church of England "*the Catholic church*" on that account?

But Dr. Wiseman seems to be aware of the weakness of his predecessor's arguments on this head, and he certainly supplies their place by reasonings of a far more artful and effective character. He thus defends the position:—"Upon what grounds does the Catholic church arrogate to itself to be this one church? Why should not these prerogatives reside in the church of England? Has not it also a claim to this authority? Why not in the Greek church, or in various other oriental churches? Why not in the collection of all churches together? On a former occasion, I showed you, likewise, (and I quoted even the authority of a learned divine of the church of England, to prove it acknowledged) that even up to a late period, the Catholic church was, as we believe it now, essentially the true church of Christ,—that it was impossible to fix the period when it lost that title, other than about the period of the Reformation—that is, at the celebration of the Council of Trent. Others, however, put the period of its supposed defection much farther back. But at present, this matters not: for both parties concede the important fact, that we have prior existence; for both consider us as essentially connected with the foregoing and well-entitled state of the church of Christ; and the only question is, *when* we lost our right to that title. If we seek an illustration in the Greeks and their church, we find a manifest connexion and communion with us up to a certain time: they then, by a formal act, throw off their allegiance, and erect themselves into an independent church; and while all this happens, we move not, we remain in the same position afterwards as we did before they left us. In that act, did they acquire new claims, or did we, by it, forfeit those which we had before? Coming down to a later period, it is acknowledged that the church of England separated from that of Rome; various reasons have been brought to prove that the separa-

tion was lawful, and to justify the grounds on which it took place. There is, consequently, an acknowledgment that a change of state occurred in her, while we remain still in possession of whatever rights we previously held; and strong positive arguments must be brought to prove that we are not still what we were acknowledged to be previously—the church of Christ. We cannot be called upon for reasons why we are to be reckoned still the same. We stand upon our rights; as the successor to a dynasty claims the crown of his ancestors, or as any member of the aristocracy in this country holds the lands of his ancestors legally given to them, from whom he inherits them: whatever branches of the family may have separated from it, or accepted other claims or prospects, that cannot shake the right line of succession of which he is the representative.”*

This is a higher tone, and a more imposing plea, than that of Dr. Milner:—but though it is not quite so obviously vain and childish, it will be found of little weight, when seriously examined.

We are asked, If the church which is now the church of Rome, once was rightly called “*the Catholic (or Universal) Church;*” when did it lose its claim to that title? We answer, when it ceased to be the Catholic or universal church; when it no longer comprehended in its circle the whole Christian world; when, in short, it *became* “*the church of Rome;*” a title which is wholly incompatible with that of “*Catholic;*” inasmuch as what is *particular* and *limited*, is in its very nature opposed to what is *general* and *without limits*.

The simple facts of the case are these: During the earlier ages of the Christian church, the followers of Christ, in all countries, preserved a feeling of brotherhood and common connexion, founded on the Scriptural basis of “*calling no man master on earth.*” The bishops of Africa could meet, and discuss and regulate their own affairs; the bishops of Gaul could

* Dr. Wiseman’s Ninth Lecture, pp. 314—316.

assemble and do the same; and each of these national synods claimed the common right of differing from, or assenting to, the opinions of Rome, or of Antioch, or of any other part of the church, as seemed to them needful and right. Of this independence the acts and the writings of Irenæus, Cyprian, Hilary, and many others of the fathers might be adduced in proof. And during its continuance, the Universal or Catholic church continued indeed *One*; no part thereof tyrannizing over and assuming "*dominion over the faith*" of any other part. The only distinction, therefore, which could be made, during all this period, was, between the One Catholic or Universal church, whose faith was built on Holy Scripture,—and the various sects of heretics, who ever and anon broke forth, all refusing obedience to the written word, and broaching fancies which the church at large knew nothing of, and which, when heard by it, were by common consent rejected.

But after a while, the encroachments of the Roman bishops brought on a division. "*Exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped,*" as has been foretold by the Apostle Paul, the bishop of Rome demanded the absolute obedience of the churches, not only of Italy, but of Asia and the whole world. This claim, wholly unknown and unimagined during the first five centuries, and which by Gregory I. (a former bishop of Rome), had been vehemently denounced, and declared to be a sign and mark of antichrist—this claim at once divided and split up into divisions the Catholic church. The heads of the eastern and western divisions anathematized each other. Both of these reckoned among their followers many hundreds of bishops, and whole nations of professors of Christianity. The bishop of Rome then severed himself from one half of the Christian world; made his church from that time forward "*the church of Rome,*" and thus ceased to be in communion with any thing more than a section, a division, of the Catholic or universal church. In reply to Dr. Wiseman's demand, therefore, "When his church ceased

to be the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church?" we answer, without hesitation, There was a time when the church was one, visibly one, and when no division or section of it asserted a right to rule over the rest. After this, another state of things succeeded, in which, by the assertion of such a claim, put forward by Rome, the visible church was split into parts. The church of Rome was one of these parts, and so soon as it became visibly a part, a section, just so soon did every individual member of it lose all right to say, "*My church is the Catholic church.*"

Let us observe also the insidious manner in which Dr. Wiseman assumes the whole point in question, in speaking of the separation which took place, of the eastern from the western churches. He says, "If we seek an illustration in the Greeks and their church, we find a manifest connexion and communion with us (Rome) up to a certain time; they then, by a formal act, throw off their allegiance, and erect themselves into an independent church; and while all this happens, we move not, we remain in the same position afterwards as we did before." Now this we must observe, is any thing but an ingenuous and honest statement. The facts of the case are notorious. During several centuries the more ambitious prelates, both of Rome and Constantinople, aimed at assuming a supremacy over the universal church. The first open attempt was made by the eastern patriarch. In A. D. 588, John, surnamed the Faster, then primate of the east, assumed the title of Œcumenical or Universal bishop. Gregory, called the Great, then bishop of Rome, resisted this assumption. In one of his letters these words occur,—“I confidently say, that whosoever calls himself universal bishop, or desires to be called so, in his pride is the forerunner of Antichrist.” And both in this passage and in the whole controversy, it is abundantly apparent that Gregory claims for himself no authority or supremacy over the easterns, but merely protests against the patriarch of Constantinople, or any other bishop, eastern or wes-

tern, setting himself up as a visible head and ruler of the whole church.

In two or three centuries after, however, the easterns had grown weaker and less capable of maintaining the warfare, and the bishops of Rome more powerful and more ambitious. That very claim which Gregory had put from him as impious, in A. D. 590, one of his successors, in A. D. 862, openly asserted, setting aside the election of a patriarch of Constantinople, and excommunicating him and his abettors. This claim was never afterwards in the slightest degree relaxed, and after two centuries more of contention, in A. D. 1054, a mutual and final anathema concluded the struggle. When, therefore, Dr. Wiseman chooses to say, that "the Greeks threw off their allegiance and erected themselves into an independent church, while we (of Rome) remained just in the same position as we did before they left us,"—he wilfully overlooks three material points. 1. That in the time of Gregory and John the Faster, the Greeks evidently were as *independent* of Rome as Rome was of Constantinople. 2. That no *allegiance* could then be imagined to be due to Rome, when Gregory claims none, but merely protests that he owes no subjection to the Greek patriarch. 3. That, therefore, the Greeks could not afterwards "*erect* themselves into an independent church," having been independent of Rome from the very first; nor could they "throw off an allegiance" which they had never known; still less could the Romish bishops of the ninth century, who assumed the title of "universal bishop," be said to "remain in the same position" as Gregory, who declared that any one pretending to that title was "a forerunner of antichrist." All the colouring, therefore, with which Dr. W. aims to tinge this transaction must be washed away: and then we come to the plain matter of fact, that the ecclesiastical heads of the eastern and western churches, after long contentions for superiority, at last irreconcilably quarrelled, and divided the visible church. But then it must be

borne in mind, that neither the one nor the other had the least right to say, "*we*, and we alone, are *the church*, and all those people who refuse to submit to us, are heathens and reprobates."

But we must not overlook the last clause in Dr. Wiseman's argument. He says, "We stand upon our rights; as the successor to a dynasty claims the crown of his ancestors, or as any member of the aristocracy in this country holds the lands of his ancestors legally given to them, from whom he inherits them; whatever branches of the family may have separated from it, or accepted other claims or prospects, that cannot shake the right line of succession, of which he is the representative."

Now here the Dr. mixes up two arguments, one of which belongs to a later stage of our inquiry. When he talks of hereditary rights, of a crown descending in succession, and the like, we must bear in mind that he is assuming that which will shortly come under discussion, namely, the claim of the alleged successors of Peter to rule over the whole Christian church. While this point remains open for future consideration, we cannot allow the whole matter in dispute to be taken for granted; or admit, without protest, the claim put in by Dr. Wiseman.

But with regard to the rest of the above statement, we may ask, How does Dr. W. contrive to apply his own supposed case to the matter now before us? He says, "Whatever branches of the family may have separated from it, or accepted other claims or prospects, that cannot shake the right line of succession, of which he is the representative." Now no one wishes to shake "the right line of succession" of the pope, or to deny—for the purpose of this question—that he sits in the chair founded by Peter. We Protestants set up no rival claim—no pretender to the popedom. We dispute not *the succession*, but we object to the assumption of an authority which Peter himself never thought of claiming. Dr. Wiseman misses his point. The question is not as to the pope's succession; but as to the attempted excommunication

by the see of Rome, of all who do not humbly submit to its dominion. Therefore, when Dr. W. says, "Whatever branches of the family may have separated from it, that cannot shake the right line of succession,"—we reply, No! nor does their separation from the elder branch (even *if it be* the elder) deprive them of their blood, or their natural rights. What "separation" or other circumstance can entitle one branch of a family to set itself up as the *whole* family, and to declare all the rest *ipso facto* alienated and cut off? The elder branch of the royal family of France, for instance, may have a better title to the throne than that member who now occupies it; but how could the senior line acquire the right or the power to say to the younger, "You are for ever cut off and destroyed. You are no longer a part of the Bourbon family. *We alone* are the Bourbons, and the blood royal in future shall be held to run in our veins exclusively."

No! Dr. Wiseman's illustration is a most unfortunate one. The great Head of the church has, in every land and in every Christian community, some sincere followers; who constitute unitedly the invisible "Catholic church." The visible church Catholic, if such a body can be supposed to exist, must be formed of all existing churches "in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered." And even were Dr. Wiseman to succeed in establishing the right of the supposed successor of Peter to a primacy over all Christian churches, even that would not warrant an "anathema" on such bodies of Christians as were not convinced of the justness of his claim. "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation,*" saith the Scripture; and while this word remains true, it cannot be possible for any ruler of the visible church to cancel the promise of Christ, and to make submission to *him*, essential to salvation! Dr. Wiseman has no more right to say, "*Ours* is the Catholic church; and all who are not with us, are out of that church,—in other words, are heathens and

publicans," than any one member of a family, whether the elder or the younger, would have to cancel his father's will, and of his own sole pleasure, to disinherit all those of his brethren who refused to render him the most entire obedience.

After all, then, the subtle reasonings of Dr. Wiseman succeed no better than the blunt demands of Dr. Milner. The alleged "mark" of *Catholicity*, as borne by the Romish church, comes at last to nothing more than this,—as Dr. Milner had in the first instance stated,—that "it consists of the *most numerous body* of Christians."

Externally, perhaps, and judging by outward show alone, this fact may be admitted, but between *universality* and a mere *majority*, or *plurality*, there is a wide distinction. And let the Romanist remember, too, that there is one very awkward consequence connected with the resting their case on this single circumstance. If the Romish church is to be declared the *Catholic* church,—and Dr. Milner so argues,—on the ground of her having "*the most numerous body*" of adherents,—then what are we to say of that period when she unquestionably had not so numerous a body as the rival church? The Greek church in its first strength unquestionably outnumbered the Italian section. Was, then, the eastern body, as "the most numerous," the *Catholic* church of that day? And if not—why not? Or was the Romish church then the *Catholic* church; though it numbered only a portion, and the smaller portion, of the great body of Christians?

These difficulties, and others which will naturally suggest themselves, must show, to any impartial inquirer, that the claim of *Catholicity*, or *universality*, as an attribute or "mark," exclusively belonging to the church of Rome, is utterly groundless and unsupported by fact.

VII.—THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

APOSTOLICITY.

WE now proceed to the fourth “mark,” alleged by the Romish writers to belong to the true church,—namely, “APOSTOLICITY.” But we find that the moment the question is opened, a dispute commences touching the meaning of the term! Dr. Wiseman shall speak for himself in this matter. He says,—“Once more, who are Apostolical? Is it meant by this term, that the doctrines taught in the church are those of the apostles? Most assuredly not. That the apostolic doctrines will be taught in the church of Christ is certain; but that the teaching of true doctrines is the definition of apostolicity, is manifestly erroneous. For apostolicity of doctrine is identical with truth in doctrine; and the discovery of one is the discovery of the other. One cannot be a means for finding out the other. It, consequently, must consist in some outward mark, which may lead to the discovery of where the apostolic doctrines are. It is in the Apostolic Succession that this principle resides,—in having the line of descent distinctly traced from the present holder of the apostolical see, through those who preceded him, to the blessed Peter, who first sat therein. This is what was meant of old by the Apostolic church; and this is the sense in which the fathers applied it. I satisfied you, in my last discourse, how Eusebius, Optatus, Irenæus, and others, proved their faith to be the true one, by showing that they were in communion with the church of Rome, and could trace their pedigree, through it, from

the apostles. Thus, therefore, did they understand Apostolicity to be given as an outward mark, in the continued and unaltered succession from the time of the apostles. Here, again, although the matter is manifest, I do not wish to take the question as one of fact, but to establish it on principle. We are the only church which claims this succession; others do not; at least the only way they can, is by proving their episcopal line back to the time they separated from us, and then claim as theirs that succession which forms the chain of our uninterrupted hierarchy. Such a course is at once oblique, and necessarily goes not to the root. They wish to be engrafted on us, rather than pretend to any root in the earth itself. Yet the Catholic church considers them as separatists from it, and consequently, they have no right to the succession which rests on her line.”*

Now our first remark here must be, that this passage contains some of the boldest perversions and misrepresentations of historic fact that ever were crowded into a single argument.

“Apostolicity” is said to consist “in the continued and unaltered succession, from the time of the apostles.” And then it is immediately added, “*We* are the only church which claims this succession; others do not; at least, the only way they can, is by proving their episcopal line back to the time they separated from us,” &c.

Now this is really too indecent, especially in a man like Dr. Wiseman, who cannot plead entire ignorance of all ecclesiastical history.

He speaks of Rome as though she were the mother and root of all the churches, and as though it followed necessarily that every other church must trace their succession from her. But what is the fact?

The church of Jerusalem was constituted on the day of Pentecost, A. D. 29, and we find from Scripture (Acts xv. 22.) that it acted and ruled, as head and mother of all the churches, with James as its pre-

* Dr. Wiseman's Ninth Lecture, p. 320.

sident, long before the gospel was even so much as known at Rome.

The church of Antioch was formed about the year A. D. 40, by Paul and Barnabas, and enjoyed full Christian privileges and a regular government, long before any church of Rome was heard of.

The churches of Asia, especially that of Ephesus, were visited and set in order by Paul, many years before he was carried to Rome as a prisoner. The same may be said of Corinth, Philippi, and other churches in Greece, Macedonia, &c.

The church of Alexandria is stated by Eusebius to have been founded by Mark.

Here, then, are some eight or ten important churches, most of which, if not all, were founded ten, twenty, or even thirty years before the least trace of any body of Christians could be discovered at Rome.

With these facts before us, what are we to say to such an assertion as Dr. Wiseman's,—that “we, (Rome) are the only church that claims the succession; others do not; at least, the only way they can, is by proving their episcopal line back to the time they separated from us,” &c. Was there ever a more flagrant outrage on the truth of history?

But the fact that most of the great eastern churches were in existence long before the church of Rome, is only a part of the case. Most of these churches sent out missions, from whose labours there arose various churches in the oriental regions, some of which remain until this day, having enjoyed an uninterrupted succession of bishops for sixteen or seventeen centuries, without the least contact with Rome.

At the present moment we find the Greek church, with its sixty or seventy millions of disciples, and ruled by bishops, none of whom would condescend to trace their succession to the see of Rome:—the Armenian church, reckoning some millions, and also holding itself entirely aloof from Rome: the Nestorians, also very numerous, and who take their orders from Constantinople and Antioch, and not

from Rome: the Syrian churches of Malabar, who, until the arrival of the Portuguese on their coasts, had never even heard of the pope, but derived their orders from Antioch: besides which ought to be added, the Copts, the Jacobites, and other eastern bodies, none of whom know or care any thing as to the Italian hierarchy. Again, therefore, we ask, How could Dr. Wiseman venture such an assertion as that Rome is "the only church which claims Apostolic succession;" or, at least, that such others as may do so, claim it only through her line, and by virtue of her ordination?

The truth is, that the whole hypothesis of Dr. Wiseman is utterly untenable. The *Apostolicity*, which is indeed a mark of a true church, relates not to the mere *succession*, but to the *doctrines* set forth. Such was the view of the Apostles themselves. They ordained and sent forth divers, who afterwards fell into error. Among their own number there was a Judas; and among their followers a Demas, a Diotrophes, an Hymeneus, and a Philetus. Never, therefore, do the Apostles instruct us to receive every one upon whom Apostolic hands have been laid, irrespective of all regard to his life and doctrine. On the contrary, their injunctions always are, to "*try the spirits, whether they are of God.*" John adds, "*If there come any unto you, and bring not THIS DOCTRINE, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.*" But Paul goes still further, and subjects even the Apostles themselves to the same test. "*But though WE, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached, let him be accursed.*" (Galatians i. 8.) Words cannot go beyond the strength or explicitness of this injunction. Apostles themselves might err; Peter had already erred; (Gal. ii. 14.) but the unerring test to which even they themselves desired to be brought, was the "Apostolic doctrine," which they knew to be already recorded in the sacred books by God's own inspiration, and in which no particle or taint of error could possibly be found.

Dr. Wiseman, and all the writers of his church, dislike this view of the question, and cling to the notion, that Apostolicity concerns succession and nothing else. But were we even to give way to them on this point, they would find it impossible to proceed upon their own hypothesis. Let us try it in a single instance.

Regular succession from the days of the Apostles, according to Dr. Wiseman, makes a church an Apostolic church. Take, then, the case of Antioch. Here were the disciples first called Christians. This city possessed a regular church and bishop, at least twenty years before either was found in Rome. It is called by Chrysostom, "The Mother of the Faith." And in the fifth century, Innocent, bishop of Rome, addresses the patriarch of Antioch, as "our school-fellow of the *Apostolic see*."

How, then, is Dr. Wiseman to deny *succession*,—if *that* be the only test, to the church of Antioch? And if granted to Antioch, it must flow from her to many other churches in the east, her legitimate daughters. Thus the notion of succession, and that alone, being the only test, evidently fails; unless Dr. Wiseman is prepared to admit that there are other Apostolic churches in the world besides the church of Rome; which, however, he will hardly do.

We must come back, then, to the only practicable and reasonable plan; and must seek to discover an apostolical *church* by its apostolical *doctrine*. So reasons Gregory Nazianzen, who, in his eulogy on Athanasius, says, "He was elevated to the chair of Mark, not less the successor of his piety than of his seat. In point of time very distant from him, but in piety, *which* indeed is *properly* called *succession*, directly after him. For he that holds *the same doctrine* is of the same chair; but he who is an enemy to the doctrine is an enemy to the chair."*

Nothing, however, will ever induce the Romanists

* 21st Orat. In Laudibus Athanas.

willingly to abide this test. And for their reluctance they have two very natural and sufficient reasons.

1. The first is, that in submitting the doctrines of their church to the test of the apostolic records, they would, in fact, be virtually surrendering the whole question of the rule of faith. For, if the inquirer be permitted to use his own reasoning faculties in discovering from Scripture, whether or not the doctrines of the Romish church are, as they profess to be, apostolic,—by what means shall he afterwards be brought to surrender the use of these faculties in the still greater matter of his own salvation? If you admit that he is able to understand Scripture,—to judge of its meaning,—and to try the church by its rules, you have, in fact, let in a principle, which, if once admitted, can never again be excluded. Hence it is, as we may easily perceive, that the church of Rome will never willingly concede this point,—that the apostolicity of her doctrine is to be judged of by the inquirer, by a reference to the writings of the apostles themselves.

2. The remaining reason is still more cogent. The church of Rome will never come to this test, because she well knows that she could not abide it for a single instant. Even at the very first step,—of a willingness to be judged by the divine records, she is utterly opposed to the views and principles of the apostles. Their injunctions were “*Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*” Rome, on the other hand, to use Dr. Wiseman’s own words, demands “*absolute, unconditional submission* to the teaching of the church,” and declares that any man who goes to the Bible to search for doctrines, is a Protestant already, and has given up Romanism by the very act of beginning to read the Bible for himself!* And she herein acts at least consistently. She knows that all the errors which she maintains, and against which we protest, have no support whatever in God’s word, and that, consequently, he who opens that word, in order to ascertain their truth or falsehood, is already

* Wiseman’s First Lecture, p. 17, 19.

lost to her, and gained to Protestantism. Wisely, therefore, after this world's wisdom, does she direct her main effort to induce him to "shut up the book that is leading him astray;"* knowing that if this cannot be done, there is little hope of her retaining her hold upon his mind. A full and faithful investigation of her doctrines, in the light of God's word, is what she will never consent to. She denies, therefore, that apostolicity has any reference to *doctrine*; because she knows well enough that her doctrines *are not apostolic*.

Let us look, however, a little further into Dr. Wiseman's argument, and see if there be any remaining validity in it. He says,—

"Once more, who are apostolical? Is it meant by this term, that the doctrines taught in the church are those of the apostles? Most assuredly not. That the apostolic doctrines will be taught in the church of Christ is certain; but that the teaching of true doctrines is the definition of apostolicity, is manifestly erroneous. For apostolicity of doctrine is identical with truth in doctrine; and the discovery of one is the discovery of the other. One cannot be a means for finding out the other. It consequently must consist in some outward mark, which may lead to the discovery of where the apostolic doctrines are."

Now any one who will steadily consider this passage for a few moments, will see that it is a mere show of an argument,—an external imitation of a piece of reasoning,—without any reality or solidity about it. "Apostolicity of doctrine is identical with truth in doctrine;" and "one cannot be a means for finding out the other." This looks like an argument, when in reality it is none, but merely an adroit play upon words.

We believe that there is, and always will be, an apostolical church upon earth. How, then, shall it be known? We say, by its holding the true or apostolic doctrine. Dr. Wiseman says that this can-

* Wiseman's First Lecture, p. 19.

not be its distinguishing mark, because the true doctrine and the apostolic doctrine are one and the same, and therefore the one cannot be a means of finding out the other. This is a sort of shadow, which it is almost impossible to lay hold of;—it has no body or reality about it. It is “words, and nothing else.”

It is asked, How shall the apostolic church be discerned? The answer is, By the possession of the true doctrine, or the apostolic doctrine,—whichever term is preferred. To say that “the true doctrine” and “the apostolic doctrine” are the same, is nothing but what is admitted. Use whichever term is preferred, the argument remains the same.

And this kind of mark or test is quite preferable to that of an alleged descent or succession; inasmuch as a mark of the true church ought to be something generally discernible. Now it is easy for any one to possess himself of a copy of God’s word, and to compare the doctrines of his church with the doctrines of the apostles: but it is not at all easy, nor even possible for one man out of a thousand to satisfy himself that Gregory XVI., now said to be living at Rome, is verily and truly the lineal successor, by a regular series of ordinations, of Linus, the first bishop of that see. True, he may receive this fact, if he chooses, on the assurances of others; but what shall be said, then, of “a mark” of the true church which is not discernible, but is obliged to be taken upon trust?

This “external mark” hypothesis, then, will not bear the least examination. *There is no external mark.* Gregory the XVI. possesses no insignia or credentials bearing the visible impress of heaven: he has no other proof to offer, of his succession from Linus, than the mere assertions of himself and a number of other interested persons. For many years together, in a former age (A. D. 1378—1417) there were two or three popes at the same time; each claiming to be *the* successor of the apostles; and while all this was going on, there were divers patriarchs in the east, at Constantinople, Antioch, &c., all of whom had far clearer proofs of their descent from

the apostles, than any of the rival popes. How, then, could it have been possible, in the midst of all this confusion, to discern THE Apostolic Church by the mere fact of continued succession? Nothing can be clearer than the absurdity of such an attempt.

Thus, then, have we been forced to deny the claims of Rome, to be admitted to be "the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." To no one of these four characteristics can she establish any valid title. Yet there is such a church, though Rome be unable to substantiate her claim. There is such a church, but it is not local; nor governed by any human conclave; nor united by any visible or political system. It is "*the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven;*" it is the church that is "*redeemed unto God, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*" It is the church which Christ will, at the consummation of all things, present unto His Father, in the glory of his own righteousness, "*not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*" To this church it behooves every man to see that he belongs; but nothing can be more absurd or unreasonable, than to attempt to identify this chosen, redeemed, and sanctified community, with those disturbing, demoralizing and defiling conspiracies of priests and Jesuits, which at present carry on a remorseless warfare against the peace and happiness of mankind, under the banner of the Roman see.

VIII.—THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.

WE are now to enter upon a question, upon which, as upon a hinge, the present controversy will be found greatly to turn. We have seen that up to this point the church of Rome has failed to make good its ground. Its Rule of Faith, "the Church," resolves itself either into a vague nonentity, entirely unavalaible; or else is identical with the infallibility of every individual priest. Its claim to "Catholicity," or the possession of the whole or universal church, seems very much to resemble the assumption of the Chinese, that theirs is the "Celestial Empire;" the only proof of which is, that *they choose to call it so*. While, in arrogating to itself the qualities of Unity, Apostolicity, and Holiness, we discern nothing more than a great display of pride, self-conceit, and contempt of others; since, assuredly, other churches can exhibit greater harmony; a more implicit submission to the apostolic decisions; and fruits of holiness, quite as pure and as abundant, as are to be found in the church of Rome. But we are now to inquire what can be said in proof of the allegation, that Christ gave to Peter, and to all his successors in the see of Rome, a seat of authority, a delegation of power, for the regulation and government of the Christian church, in all succeeding ages. For it is sufficiently clear, that if this point can be satisfactorily made out, it will be difficult for any body of Christians throwing off this yoke, and refusing submission to the supremacy of Peter's successors, to clear itself from the guilt of schism. If the right of the bishop of Rome to a paramount authority over the whole body of Christians throughout the world can be established, then their state, who cast off a yoke imposed by

Christ himself, must assuredly be a doubtful, if not a perilous one. But if, on the other hand, no such power was delegated to Peter, still less to his successors, by the Redeemer himself,—then is the Papal authority, as now attempted to be exercised, a gross and unscriptural usurpation, and one marking him who assumes it, with a leading characteristic of Antichrist.

We shall probably gain the most satisfactory and complete view of the whole question, if we follow out the train of reasoning indicated in Dr. Wiseman's eighth lecture. It is not easy to find a more condensed or a more plausible statement, of the argument in favour of the Papal authority, than is furnished in that lecture. But it may tend to simplify the present discussion, if we take up the points in the following order: inquiring, 1. Was Peter elevated by his Lord to a supreme authority over his brethren the apostles, and by consequence, over the whole church? 2. Was there any intimation given that such supremacy was to be continued after his death, in any line of succession? and, 3. What are the claims of the bishops of Rome to be considered Peter's rightful successors?

We will commence, then, with the first point:—Was Peter elevated by Christ to a supreme authority over his brethren and the church in general? Now the argument in the affirmative from Scripture is thus set forth by Dr. Wiseman:—

“It is singular, that the moment Simon was introduced to our blessed Redeemer, he received a promise that a similar distinction of name should be given to him, ‘Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter.’

“It was on occasion of his confessing the divine mission of the Son of God, that the promise was fulfilled. At the commencement of our Saviour's reply, he still calls him by his former appellation. ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven.’ He then proceeds to the inauguration of his

new name. 'And I say to thee that thou art Peter.' According to the analogy of the instances above given, we must expect some allusion in the name, to the reward and distinction with which it was accompanied. And such is really the case. The name Peter signifies a *rock*; for in the language spoken upon this occasion by our Saviour, not the slightest difference exists, even at this day, between the name whereby this apostle, or any one bearing his name, is known, and the most ordinary word which indicates a rock or stone. Thus the phrase of our Redeemer would sound as follows, to the ears of his audience: 'And I say to thee that thou art *a rock*.' Now see how the remaining part of the sentence would run in connexion with the preamble: 'and upon *this rock* I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Such is the *first* prerogative bestowed upon Peter; he is declared to be the rock whereon the impregnable church is to be founded.

"2. Our Saviour goes on to say, 'And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.' The second prerogative is the holding of the keys, and the power of making decrees, which shall be necessarily ratified in heaven.

"3. To the two ample powers given here, we must add a third distinguished commission, conferred upon him after the resurrection, when Jesus three times asked him for a pledge of a love superior to that of the other apostles, and three times gave him a charge to feed his entire flock,—his lambs and his sheep.

"On the strength of these passages, principally, the Catholic church has ever maintained, that Peter received a spiritual pre-eminence and supremacy. And, indeed, if in these various commissions a power and jurisdiction was given to Peter, which was proper to him alone, and superior to that conferred upon all the other apostles, it will be readily acknowledged,

that such supremacy as we believe was really bestowed upon him by God.”*

Here, then, we have the last and most carefully revised view of the whole argument from Scripture in favour of the Papal supremacy. Now the first remark we shall make upon it, is, how impracticable and vain is that Romish standard of faith, called the Creed of Pope Pius the Fourth, to which every priest of the Romish church is sworn, but which no priest ever yet did, or ever will, faithfully believe and maintain.

Dr. Wiseman has adduced several passages of Scripture, and has affixed certain definite meanings to them, as the sense in which they are taken by the church of Rome. He admits, indeed, that some objectors and opponents have read these passages in a different way, but throughout his whole statement we are left to suppose that it is only the Protestants and the “opponents” that have thus perverted these passages, while to the Romish church they have ever conveyed the meaning he has himself ascribed to them. He tells us,—

“I allude to the attempt made many years ago, and lately renewed, to prove that the rock upon which Christ promises that he will build the church, was not Peter, but Himself.” “This interpretation, you will perceive, my brethren, can boast more of its ingenuity than of its plausibility; it seems rather calculated to *betray the shifts to which our opponents* feel themselves obliged to resort,” &c. &c.

Now Dr. Wiseman has promised, in the creed of Pius IV. “never to take and interpret Holy Scripture otherwise than *according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.*”

Yet he here, in this insidious manner, and charging the interpretation he chooses to deny, wholly upon “the opponents,” actually attacks the decision of a considerable proportion of the most eminent fathers: For instance,—

* Wiseman, Lecture VIII. p. 265—267.

Jerome says "The Catholic church is founded with a firm root upon the rock Christ."—(*Ad Princ. Virg.* tom. III. p. 173.)

Cyprian says, "Christ himself is the rock."—(Epis. 63.)

Chrysostom:—"He did not say, upon Peter,—for he did not found his church upon a man, but upon faith. What therefore means, Upon this rock?—Upon the confession contained in his words."—(*Sermon on Pentecost*, vol. vi. p. 233.)

Origen:—"But if you think that the whole church is built by God upon Peter only, what will you say of John, and of each of the apostles? Shall we dare to say that the gates of hell were not to prevail against Peter in particular, and that they should prevail against the rest of the apostles."—(*Comm. on Matt. xvi.*)

Cyril of Alexandria:—"When Christ said this, he called, I think, the immovable and firm faith of the disciple, the rock, upon which the church of Christ was founded without the possibility of falling."—(*Dial. 4. on Holy Trin.* vol. 5. p. 509.)

Ambrose:—"Faith, therefore, is the foundation of the church, for it was not said of the flesh of Peter, but of his faith, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it."—(*On the Incarnat.* ch. v. p. 711.)

Hilary:—"The building of the church, therefore, is upon this rock of his confession. This faith is the foundation of the church."—(*On the Trin.* book 6.)

Augustine:—"Jesus said not, Thou art the rock, but, Thou art Peter. The rock was Christ, whom Peter confessed."—(*Aug. Ret. I. 21.*)

Where, then, is *the unanimous consent of the fathers*; and where is Dr. Wiseman's candour and fair dealing, in representing as "the shifts of the opponents," the deliberate judgment of all these eminent fathers?

But it may be replied that these fathers do not themselves agree, nor do they generally adopt the interpretation which Dr. Wiseman was combating, viz. that the *rock* spoken of was *Christ*.

We readily admit this, but they all reject that view which the doctor himself puts forward as the interpretation of "the church." They all oppose and deny the assumption upon which Dr. W. rests his main argument for the papal supremacy, viz. that *Peter* was the *rock* upon which the church was to be built. And here we may observe the difference between the practical use of the respective *rules of faith* adopted by the church of Rome and by Protestants. We are told by the Romanists that the plain written word of God, with the use of common sense, and with prayer for divine assistance, is no guide whatever; and that in this way it is impossible that men should ever arrive at a right understanding of God's word and will. And we are assured that our only course is to submit to the judgment of "the church," that is, the Romish church, in order to learn from her what is really contained in Holy Scripture. Now the church, to us, practically, means the priests of that church, for we can never read the hundreds of folio volumes of the fathers and the councils; and a commentary on Holy Scripture the church of Rome has not provided. Suppose, then, that we propose to consult "the church" on the meaning of Holy Scripture,—we go to Dr. Wiseman, perhaps one of the most learned and acute priests of that church now living,—and what does he do? Notwithstanding his vow, "never to take and interpret Holy Scripture otherwise than according to the *unanimous consent* of the Fathers, he quietly gives us a sense directly opposed to the interpretations of Hilary, Chrysostom, Origen, Cyril, Ambrose, Cyprian, Augustine, and Jerome; and never tells us a word of their contrary opinion, but describes it as a "device" and subterfuge of "the opponents," i. e. the Protestants! Now we would ask any reasonable man, is it not far better to maintain the right of reading the Bible for ourselves, with prayer to God for guidance, than to put ourselves, blindfold, in the hands of men who thus assume to declare to us "the judgment of the church,"

and who give us that judgment after such a fashion as this!

But to resume;—We cannot now go through all the mass of papal authorities on this point, but the truth is, that there is no one topic on which the Fathers, the councils, and even the popes themselves, are more divided than on the interpretation of this text. A very general view has been, that the *rock* on which Christ promised to build his church, was the faith or confession made by Peter. Launoy and Du Pin reckon forty-four fathers and popish authors who maintain this opinion, among whom are Augustine, Chrysostom, Cyril, Gregory, Ambrose, and Hilary; and the same interpretation was decreed in the general councils of Nicea, Constantinople, Constance, and Basil. Another sense given to the words, is that which Dr. Wiseman describes as one of the “*shifts* to which our *opponents* are obliged to resort.” How can Dr. Wiseman, without shame, use this language, knowing, as he does, that this very interpretation is defended by Cyprian, Jerome, Origen, Eusebius, Theodoret, Anselm, Theophylact, and many others; and that in divers general councils the same view was asserted without any disclaimer?

But enough of the Fathers. We shall not tax the patience of our readers by going through the other points, or we might show, in like manner, that the majority of the ancient fathers and commentators understand the donation of the keys to have been made to the college of apostles, and to the church in general, not to the individual Peter; and that the third passage, *Feed my sheep*, is also a general commission, and not any special authority given to one person. Let us, however, go to the record itself, and, leaving fathers and councils, look “to the word and to the testimony,” for light on this as on all other subjects.

Let us compare the language applied to Peter with that applied to the other apostles, and we shall thus be enabled to judge whether any thing like *supre-*

macy was conveyed or implied in the former class of passages. The two series may be thus arranged:—

“I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”—Matt. xvi. 18.

“And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”—Matt. xvi. 19.

“He saith unto him,—Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”

“Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”—Eph. ii. 20.

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations; and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”—Rev. xxi. 14.

“Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”—Matt. xviii. 18.

“Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”—Acts xx. 28.

Now here it is as evident as possible, that just the very same powers, privileges, and functions, which are ascribed to, or conferred on, Peter, in some passages, are equally applied to his brethren in others. The evidence, therefore, of any supremacy, or even of any primacy or superiority, utterly fails.

But we do not wish to overlook the reasoning of Dr. Wiseman on this part of the argument. He says, “From the instances I have given, it is evident I may draw this canon or rule of interpretation in Scripture: that when a call, a prerogative, a commission is bestowed upon one person singly, though the very same may have been bestowed upon others collectively, and himself together with them, he must thereby be supposed to have received a distinct and superior degree of it from the rest. Thus, therefore, it must be with Peter.” And he adduces two or three passages in support of this view.

He says, “Our blessed Saviour constantly inculcated to all his disciples, and indeed to all his

hearers, the necessity of *following* him. Only 'he who *followeth*, walketh not in darkness;' all must 'take up their cross and *follow* him;' all his sheep must know his voice and *follow* the shepherd. When, therefore, he addressed individually to Peter and Andrew, to Matthew and the sons of Zebedee, the very same invitation, 'Follow me,' did it ever occur to you to reason, that, because the very same invitation was repeated, on other occasions, to all the Jews in common with themselves, therefore, they were not meant to follow Jesus in a distinct and more peculiar manner? Again, our blessed Redeemer is repeatedly said to have tenderly loved all his apostles; he called them not servants but friends—yea, no one could have greater love for another than he manifested to them by laying down his life for them. When, therefore, John is by himself simply called the *beloved* disciple, as all the other disciples are also said to have been beloved, did you ever think of arguing, that as no more is predicated of him singly in one instance than is of all the twelve in others, therefore, the love of Jesus for John, was nothing distinctive and preeminent? Once more. To all the apostles was given a commission to teach all nations, to preach the gospel to every creature, beginning with Jerusalem and Samaria, unto the uttermost bounds of the earth. When, therefore, the Spirit of God told them to separate Saul and Barnabas for the ministry of the Gentiles; or when Paul individually calls himself their apostle, did you ever think of concluding that, as this individual commission was included and comprehended in the general one given to all; therefore Paul was never invested with any personal mission, received no more here than the other apostles, and only groundlessly arrogated to himself the apostleship of the Gentiles as his peculiar office? If in these instances you would not allow such conclusions, how can they be admitted in the case of Peter? Why are his special powers alone to be invalidated, by those which he received in common with the rest?''*

* Wiseman, Lect. VIII. p. 276.

These instances, however, do not suffice to establish the doctor's rule. In the first case, our Lord calls upon all his disciples, as a general rule, to *follow* his steps. He then, at a particular time, calls two or three individuals to *follow him*, as personal attendants and apostles. Here the different sense in which the words were used, is obvious. But when our Lord tells one of his disciples, on one occasion "*Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;*" and then, on another occasion, repeats the same promise to the other disciples, the whole twelve being, it is admitted, at that time on an equal footing; it is by no means obvious that the words are used in a different sense in the first case, to what they were in the second. On the contrary, to take them in a higher sense, as applied to Peter, than when applied to the rest, is a mere assumption, resting upon nothing.

2. John is called *THE beloved disciple*. Here is a plain and unequivocal proof, that in a particular personal affection, this apostle was very dear to our Lord, and the proof of it is seen in his dying bequest. Now if any such explicit avowal of supremacy, bestowed on Peter, can be adduced, we shall be silent at once. But no such has ever been shown.

3. A general charge was given to all the apostles, to preach the gospel; but separate and particular charges were also laid upon certain of the apostles, at various times, to preach in particular places appointed to them. All this is very intelligible, but how does it prove that the same words, addressed to the whole of the apostles, and to one apostle, and clearly of general, not local or temporary application, must necessarily have more force and value in one case, than in the other?

But "there is another passage," Dr. Wiseman proceeds, "which I have not included in those before rehearsed; because there is no express collation of authority conveyed in it; although it clearly draws a distinction between the prerogatives of Peter and those of the other apostles, and shows how he was to be the object of a special care and protection. 'And the Lord said Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desir-

ed to have *you*, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith may not fail; and *thou*, being once converted, confirm *thy* brethren.' In this passage, Christ seems to draw a marked distinction between the designs of Satan against *all* the apostles, and his interest in regard of Peter. The prayer of our Saviour is offered for him specifically, that *his* faith may not fail, and that, when he shall have risen from his fall, he may be the strengthener of that virtue among his fellow-apostles. In him, then, there was to be a larger measure of this virtue; and wherefore, if he was not to be in any respect superior to the other members of that body? Nay, does not the very commission to strengthen their faith imply his being placed in a more elevated and commanding situation?"*

Now, instead of confirming, as Dr. W. imagines, his former arguments, this passage appears to us to clear away whatever doubt might remain on the subject. It reveals to us the exact position of Peter, and the reason why he, his actions, and his sayings, occupy so prominent a place in the New Testament history. This reason consists in his peculiar character. Instead of being, himself, that rock, that stable, solid character upon whom, as his worshippers would tell us, the whole fabric of the church might with safety be reposed,—he was at once the most forward, the most rash, and the most unstable of the apostles. His peculiarity was a hasty and forward zeal. He is ever foremost, ever the first to speak. He is ready to cast himself into the sea, ready to die for Christ's sake. But he is also the most unstable. When he has cast himself into the sea, in a fervour of confidence, immediately his faith fails, and he begins to sink. When he has vowed to "go to prison and death for Christ's sake," in a few hours he is afraid of a servant girl. Even when he has drawn his sword in defence of his Master, in another moment he flies from the field. Still, however, this forward-

* Wiseman, Lect. VIII. p. 277.

ness naturally brings him always into the fore-ground and makes him a leading character in the whole history.

In looking, then, both at the passage we have just quoted "*When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren,*" and at our Lord's thrice-repeated question, "*Lovest thou me?*" we must remember the apostle's peculiar situation—we must bear in mind that Peter had just before, in the most distinct and emphatic manner, cut off and excommunicated himself. He had publicly and repeatedly denied that he belonged to Christ, or had any part or lot in him. Without some such public restoration as this, then, how natural would it have been for the other apostles, or at least for the disciples at large, to have refused the fallen apostle his place and rank among them. Might not we ourselves, and the whole Christian church, have stood in doubt of Peter at this moment, and hesitated in what light to view him, or whether any other than the lowest and meanest place in the church could ever be his? Granting his recovery,—still, how naturally might it have been said, that if the door of mercy were still open, and as a restored backslider, room might still be found for him,—yet, as to his former rank and standing, the sentence must be "*his bishopric let another take.*" All this, however, the Lord clears away. His weak and frail servant had thrice denied all knowledge of him; he therefore thrice calls upon him for a declaration of his renewed attachment; and thoroughly to reinstate him in his office, he thrice gives him the pastoral charge, "*Feed my sheep.*" And yet now, so apt are men, and so adroit is Satan, in twisting Scripture out of its most obvious meaning,—this mercy shown to Peter, in restoring the poor backslider, is exaggerated into some special reward or privilege bestowed upon him; and because he had trebly fallen, and received a thrice-repeated pardon, it is gravely argued that this, the most unstable of the apostles, is deliberately placed over the rest, as their head and their lord, and decla-

red to be the rock, the foundation, on which the whole church should be erected!

And very similar is the misconstruction of the other passage. No one doubts that Peter's fall, his repentance, his bitter grief and his gracious recovery, would give him an insight into the depths of the sinfulness of his own heart, into the snares and devices of Satan, and into the ocean of the love of Christ, which would enable him to "*strengthen his brethren*" under temptation, and to comfort and upraise those that had fallen, in a peculiar manner. But there is nothing in all this to lead us to suppose that Christ meant by this exhortation to give him any *rule* or *authority* over his brethren. The recovered prodigal in the parable is specially rejoiced over; but he is not rewarded for his recreancy, by being put in authority over his brother. On the contrary, while the father justifies his joy at his return, he says to the son who had not fallen, "*Lo, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*" And so Peter might be an object of great interest to Christ, and might be enabled, by his sinning and suffering experience, to administer to the cases of others, without being at all entitled, by his falls and his recoveries, to assume any supremacy over those who had never fallen after his example, or been renewed by his recovery.

But having now examined all the direct evidence from Scripture, such as it is, we must proceed, in the next place, to the indirect or collateral evidence which may be found in the Acts of the Apostles, and in their epistolary writings.

And here the Romanist immediately suggests, that we find, immediately after the ascension of our Lord, the apostle Peter assuming the place of the leader and director of the whole college of Apostles: (Acts i. 15.) That the same apostle, immediately afterwards, is especially blest by the conversion of three thousand souls by a single sermon, on the day of Pentecost! (Acts ii. 44.) And when the Samaritans receive the gospel, Peter is the individual commissioned to form and constitute the church in that city:

(Acts viii. 14—17.) So is the word first preached to the Gentiles by this same apostle: (Acts x. 34—43.) From these circumstances he draws a considerable further support to his claim on behalf of the successors of Peter. Now it may be admitted, that much may be gained, as to the real meaning of a doubtful or disputed passage, by observing how the apostles themselves, and their immediate disciples, received and understood the words in question. With this view, therefore, it is most important to watch and observe, in the closest manner, all the words and actions of the apostles and other rulers of the church in the first ages, in order to gather from those words and actions an answer to this one question,—Whether they knew any thing of this alleged supreme authority, lodged by Christ in the person of one of their body, the apostle Peter? Now on this point let us observe—

1. That it is generally agreed that Mark, the friend and follower of Peter, wrote his gospel at Rome, about thirty years after our Lord's ascension. The church then had already existed one whole generation without a visible head, except, indeed, Peter had been that head. Now, no one can doubt that the question of his supremacy, if any one at that time ever thought of asserting such a claim on his behalf, must have been asserted, and either established or negatived, long before the lapse of an entire generation. Yet Mark, Peter's own friend, writes his gospel at the end of these thirty years, and never once alludes to any such appointment or ordinance of Christ! Even those passages of our Lord's conversations, upon which the Romanists now rest their claim, are wholly omitted in Mark's gospel, as matters of minor consequence; as points not demanding any particular mention. What can be more inevitable than the conclusion, that Mark, the personal follower of Peter, never thought of asserting any such claim on his behalf? Had he regarded his friend and spiritual father* in this light; had he looked upon him as the apostle

* 1 Peter v. 13.

specially appointed by Christ to rule his church after his departure, is it conceivable that he could ever have omitted, in writing his gospel, all kind of allusion to so important a fact? But he is wholly silent! What more decisive evidence of a negative character, could we possibly have, to show that even at a distance of thirty years from our Lord's ascension, this supposed supremacy, vested in Peter, was entirely unknown?

2. The same silence is observable, too, in Peter's own epistles. Not one syllable is there of *supremacy* throughout the whole. His assertion of authority is far less explicit than that of either Paul, John, or James. It is, in fact, a beautiful specimen of humility, altogether free from the least assumption.—“*The elders which are among you,*” he says, “*I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God,*” &c. “*And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*” (1 Peter v. 1, 2, 4.) Here the apostle *exhorts*, not *commands*; and he exhorts not as a *superior*, but as one of *themselves*, “*I who am also an elder.*” He also goes on to adduce other characters, which he fills in common with the other apostles and disciples,—“*and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory:*” in all which there is the very opposite to any claim of a *peculiar* rank, or privilege, or authority. And he concludes by adverting to “*the chief shepherd,*” the one only chief shepherd, not himself, but CHRIST JESUS. Now these epistles were written about thirty-six years after our Lord's ascension. All this time,—the third part of a century,—then, must Peter, according to the supposition of the Romanists, have been filling the office of pope, and ruling the whole Christian church, and yet, when he writes two epistles to the churches, there is not the least trace to be discerned in either, of his supposed papal supremacy! Here is a second strong negative proof, in the absence of direct evidence where we

might have most rationally expected it. Which of the popes of Rome, for the last thousand years, have addressed a document of this kind to the Christian churches, without so much as once alluding to their own authority?

3. Another instance of the same entire silence, is visible in the writings of Paul. We cannot imagine—indeed it is never even supposed by any of Peter's advocates, that Paul exhibited any signs of contumacy or rebellion towards him. We might be quite sure that the entire submission to which his mind and spirit was brought by the vision which appeared to him near Damascus, would have shown itself in the most unqualified veneration of any representative or successor of Christ,—of any delegated head of his church.

Yet we may search throughout his various epistles, and never meet with the least allusion to either the pope or papal authority! He writes to the Romans themselves,—the date of this epistle, according to the best authorities, being about A. D. 58. At this time, according to all the historians and advocates of the Romish church, Peter had been several years bishop of that city. Yet his "beloved brother Paul,"* writing to that church, opens his epistle without the least allusion to the apostle who is said to have been at its head, and closes it in the same silence. Nay, more,—he devotes a considerable space at its close, to the most affectionate remembrance of a great number of persons (nearly thirty), but entirely overlooks his brother apostle! Surely this circumstance must be admitted to be altogether opposed to the supposition that Peter was at that time at Rome; nor can we believe that one apostle would have addressed a pastoral letter to a church which had, at that very time, another apostle presiding over it. But be that as it may, is not the supposition a most inconceivable one, that Paul, writing to the Romans, and sending his affectionate greetings to a great number of per-

* 2 Peter iii. 15.

sons, could have altogether omitted Peter, had the latter really been, at that time, the bishop of that church?

But further:—Paul, a few years after, was himself a resident in the Roman capital: and, while there, a prisoner, but still remembering the “care of all the churches,” he writes, successively, to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, to Timothy and to Philemon. In these epistles, too, the names of many brethren are introduced, and many greetings conveyed, but still not a word of the supposed bishop of Rome, and first pope, Peter; who, at that time, according to the maintainers of his supremacy, must have been in the full exercise of the plenitude of his power at Rome. And in these epistles of Paul, Luke sends his greetings to the churches, and so does Mark, and also Timothy,* but Peter is wholly silent. Nay more, not only does his brother apostle wholly omit all reference to him, but on one memorable occasion he speaks still more plainly: “*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.*”† Now Protestants find in this fact no impeachment of the character of Peter, inasmuch as they do not even believe that he was in Rome at the time. But the Romanist is in a different position. All his authorities insist upon it, that Peter was not only a resident in Rome at that period, but that he was actually the bishop of the church of Rome at that very time! They also insist upon it, that Christ had constituted him the Rock, firm and immovable, on which his whole church should be built: and yet we here find him, according to their own view of the matter, the head and leader of the infant church in Rome, basely deserting a brother apostle, and flying from the post of duty in the hour of peril! “*No man stood with me,*” says Paul, “*but all forsook me; I pray God it may not be laid to their charge.*”

This strange fact is inseparable from the Romish statement. All their leading authorities, Jerome,

* Col. iv. 10, 14. Phil. i. 1.

† 2 Tim. iv. 16.

Binius, Labbeus, Petavius, Spondanus, Bede, Bruys, and Baronius, agree in asserting Peter to have arrived at Rome in the reign of Claudius, and to have continued there, as the first pope, till his death under Nero. And they all equally agree, that his death and that of Paul took place at nearly the same period; but while we hear of Paul's imprisonment, on two occasions, and on the first for more than two years, nothing is said of any imprisonment of Peter. Had Peter been a fellow-prisoner of his brother apostle, it is quite inconceivable that Paul should never once have mentioned him. Had he been free, and the bishop of the church at Rome, and fulfilling his office in supporting and comforting Paul, it is equally impossible that no allusion to the subject should have been made. And that he should have been there, and at liberty, and yet should have been one of those whom Paul describes as "forsaking" him,—is certainly the greatest disgrace that we can attach to his name, and the most incompatible with the character of THE ROCK, which the Romanists claim for him.

Our conclusion, then, is simply this,—That the mere tradition, for it is nothing more,—upon which the church of Rome builds the assumption that Peter was her first bishop, is utterly at variance with the whole tenor of the apostolic writings; and that the probability is,—supposing Peter ever to have been at Rome at all,—that he came there, perhaps to meet Paul, about the time of the latter's return, (all accounts agreeing that Paul took a journey between his first and second imprisonment) and that both meeting at Rome, constituted the church at that place, appointing *Linus* the first bishop, and were soon afterwards seized by the tyrant Nero, and involved in the general massacre of the Christians to which he resorted, immediately after his own flagitious attempt to burn the city. This is the most tenable hypothesis we are able to discover, admitting as it does, the testimony of tradition so far as not absolutely to deny Peter's visit to Rome, and his martyrdom there; but refusing to admit it when wholly inconsistent, as we

have shown it to be, with every record we have, of the movements, and thoughts, and impressions of both these apostles.

But it may be asked, whether we can adduce nothing of a more positive nature, in proof of the non-admission of this authority on the part of the early Christians?

We shall, therefore, proceed to remark on one or two circumstances of this kind; as for instance,—

4. There are several passages in the Acts of the Apostles, in which Peter is seen,—as he is, in fact, throughout our Lord's own ministry,—as one of the most forward of the apostles. The passage in Acts i. 15, is just one of these, (*“Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples,”* &c.) and there are several others. All these passages clearly show the apostle to have been a zealous and energetic man; but there is no trace whatever of the least claim to supremacy throughout any of them. And the third passage relied on by the Romanists seems not only to be wholly unsusceptible of such a meaning, but it negatives the very claim they would set up: for it runs thus,—

“When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, THEY SENT unto them PETER and John.” Acts ix. 14.

This is surely quite irreconcilable with the idea of Peter's being at this time the first Pope. Only imagine, for an instant, the college of cardinals now meeting, to consider the state of their churches in Canada, and determining “to send unto them Gregory and Paoli.” Would not a Romanist be shocked at the presumption of the college, in thinking themselves empowered to *send* the Holy Father at *their* discretion? And would they not wonder how any second name could be associated with *his*, as if on an apparent equality? Surely this verse is one of the least favourable to their cause that could possibly have been brought forward. But,

5. Observe, that as in the days of our Saviour,

Peter, this supposed *rock*, showed himself in fact, the most unstable of all the apostles; and he whom, we are told, the Lord intended to place over his church, received at his hand more frequent and severe reproofs than any other,—so, when Christ had ascended, and upon the Romish hypothesis, the supremacy with all its attendant infallibility must have been actually held by Peter, we still find him vacillating and unstable, “dissimulating” and denying the truth: and receiving a reprimand at the hands of Paul, who was not even called to the faith until years after Peter had been an apostle. “*When Peter was come unto Antioch,*” says Paul, “*I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation: But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*”—Gal. ii. 11—14.

Now all this takes place, it is important to remember, some twenty years after our Lord’s ascension, and at a period when, if Peter’s supremacy was *ever* to be known and acknowledged, it must have been fully admitted and established. Yet we here see the last-called of all the apostles, not submitting to his decisions, but boldly and rightfully protesting against his unfaithfulness! Nothing can show more distinctly than this, that the popedom of Peter was, at this time, utterly unknown.

6. But not only is there no trace whatever, during all these years, of the existence of this authority in the person of Peter; but we have abundant evidence, that, as far as any degree of primacy or precedence

was conceded to any one, that precedence was enjoyed by another.

We are not about to set up a rival pope, or to claim for any other of the apostles that authority which we deny to Peter; but we shall have no difficulty in showing, that a sort of precedence, whether arising from age, solidity of judgment, or whatever other cause, was constantly conceded to one of the apostles, which apostle was not Peter. Take the following instances:—

“Peter said, Go, show these things unto JAMES, and to the brethren.” (Acts xii. 17.)

“And after they had held their peace, JAMES answered saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: MY SENTENCE IS, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.” (Acts xv. 13, 19.)

“And when we were come to Jerusalem, the day following, Paul went in with us unto JAMES, and all the elders were present.” (Acts xxi. 17, 18.)

“And when JAMES, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship: that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” (Gal. ii. 9.)

“For before that certain came from JAMES, he did eat with the Gentiles.” (Gal. ii. 12.)

Here we have, again and again, a sort of honourable precedency given to James, which exceeds any of the like sort ascribed to Peter. We repeat that we claim no popedom for James; but that it seems perfectly clear, that James could never have held this sort of place or rank among the apostles, had Peter been the divinely appointed ruler and governor of the whole church.

The result of the whole inquiry, then, is as follows:—First, we ascertain that the claim advanced by the church of Rome on behalf of Peter, rests merely, as far as direct Scripture evidence is concerned, upon three short passages from the gospels; which

passages are very brief and general, and, as they run quite parallel with other passages of the New Testament which speak of similar rights and privileges being granted to *all* the disciples, cannot be admitted to be conclusive on the point. Other and collateral evidence, therefore, must be called in. If Peter ever assumed this office, said by the church of Rome to have been conferred on him by Christ, we must surely find some traces of it, in the subsequent writings of the apostles, and in the book which records their leading words and actions. Now we have a book expressly devoted to their Acts, and we have the writings of Paul, John, Jude, and James, as well as of Peter himself. And these writings were produced by their respective authors at different periods, from about twenty years after our Lord's ascension to about the sixtieth year. Now, would all these leaders and governors in the church so contrive their writings, as of set purpose to exclude all mention of the apostle Peter's supremacy? Or would Peter himself, if he knew such a trust to be reposed in him, write two letters to the churches immediately before his martyrdom, and never make the least allusion to his pontifical dignity or authority, or provide or suggest any course to be taken immediately after his removal? Can any one say that this is a probable story? Or rather, would not any one, struck with this strange circumstance, be ready to exclaim, "It is impossible! surely I can find some proof, from the apostles' writings, that they knew and consented to the dominion of Peter?" To any such, we would say, Search and look, and if you can find one single passage indicative of an established papacy, throughout all the apostolic writings, we will at once admit that you have made out one very important point in favour of the church of Rome. But you will search in vain. No such passage do the apostolic writings contain; and the absence of it,—as it is altogether incredible, if the papacy were then actually established, that not a word should be found of the fact, in all these

writings,—the absence of it, we repeat, does seem to us to be altogether decisive against the claim.

Having now reviewed, both the direct and the collateral evidence from holy writ, in support of the alleged primacy of Peter, we might fairly claim an immediate verdict; for it is impossible that any merely human testimony or opinion (and such is all that remains), can suffice to establish so momentous a doctrine as that of the supreme authority of one bishop over the whole Catholic church. But we shall not object to go on with the consideration of the case; descending, now, from the conclusive authority of inspired apostles and evangelists, to the more doubtful testimony of fallible human historians. Let us ask, then, what historical evidence the Romanists rely on, for the establishment of the two facts,—that Peter was the first bishop of Rome,—and that he bequeathed his full supremacy, whatever it might be, to his successors in that chair?

Romish controversialists are very fond of treating these as points universally conceded. But so far from such being the case, long and learned arguments have been constructed to show that the greater probability is, that Peter *never was at Rome at all!* But we do not wish to urge a point which cannot now be positively decided, and which matters little to the main question. We are willing to admit, from the general tenor of those fragments of the history of the early Christian church which remain to us,—that it was most generally believed, in the second and third centuries, that Peter as well as Paul had visited Rome towards the end of his life, and had been martyred there. But having conceded that point, we have next to ask, What proof exists, from any authentic ecclesiastical record, that the apostle was ever *bishop* of Rome, or that he delegated any of his supposed plenary authority to those who might be bishops of that see after his decease?

It is replied, that *Jerome* distinctly states, that “Peter, having preached to the Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, proceeded

to Rome in the second year of Claudius, and held the episcopal chair twenty-five years."

Now Jerome wrote about the year A. D. 400, or more than three hundred years after Peter's death. Of course his evidence is worth very little, except so far as we are able to discern that his statements rest upon earlier and authentic records. Should an historian of the year A. D. 3500, for instance, find it asserted, in some writer of the year 1837, that Luther came to London and resided there ten years, and should he be quite unable to find the least mention of this fact in any of the records made in Luther's own life-time, or for three hundred years after, he would certainly set the whole story down as a fiction. And Jerome's story runs clearly counter, in this case, to various facts indubitably laid down both in the Acts and in the Epistles.

"Peter," says Jerome, "came to Rome and assumed the episcopal office, in the *second* year of Claudius." Now in disproof of this, observe

That Herod's death (Acts xii.) immediately before which Peter's imprisonment at *Jerusalem* had taken place, was in the *fourth* year of Claudius:

That in the *ninth* of Claudius, all Jews were commanded to depart from Rome:

That Paul went up to Jerusalem and found Peter there (Acts xv. 7), in the *twelfth* year of Claudius:

That in the next reign, that of Nero, Paul arrived in Rome, and found the Jews of that city quite uninformed as to the faith of Christ (Acts xxviii. 22), which, had Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, been resident there for several years, certainly could not have been the case. Jerome's story, therefore, dating above three hundred years after, can possess no value whatever, in the face of these authentic contradictions.

But we have next offered us, the evidence of Papias, or rather what is *called* the evidence of Papias; for there is no work of his extant. We have nothing from him except a few scraps, scattered up and down in Eusebius, &c. at second hand. But why not take

up Eusebius himself, and Irenæus, the best writers of that period, and honestly consult them, whatever their evidence may be?

This the Romanists are not very ready to do,—and for the obvious reason, that there is not a tittle in either that will serve their purpose. But if we are to inquire what these fathers inform us as to Peter's episcopacy at Rome, we must first consider a previous objection;—that no apostle ever assumed the limited and lower office of a diocesan bishop.

The mission of the apostles was, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” And, in obedience to this injunction, the apostles, and especially Peter and Paul, travelled extensively, and planted the gospel wherever they went, *appointing bishops*, but not settling themselves down permanently, in this or that place, as the overseers of a single city or district. “A bishop's authority,” says Chrysostom, and Giannon, “is limited to a city or nation; but an apostle's commission extends to the whole world.”* And so confesses Du Pin—“The apostles perambulated the principal parts of the earth, and were confined to no place or city.”† And Ruffinus, who lived in the fourth century, is quoted in the Clementine Recognitions, edited by Cotelerius, as saying distinctly, that “Linus and Cletus were bishops in Rome before Clement, during Peter's life; they performing the duties of bishops, and he fulfilling the office apostolical.”‡ This view of the matter, as it appears to us, seems entirely to negative the idea of Peter's having been the first bishop of Rome. He had much to do in the foundation of the church of Antioch, doubtless; possibly some connection with that of Rome, and also with that of Alexandria; but he never was bishop of either place, any more than Paul was bishop of Corinth, or of Ephesus, or of Crete. And any one who takes the trouble to turn over the pages of Eusebius, the earliest ecclesiastical

* Chrysostom, 11. 8. Giannon. i. 2.

† Du Pin. 15.

‡ Cotel. i. 492.

historian now extant, will see how fully this view is borne out by his account of the primitive church. The Romish hypothesis is, that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, establishing there the supreme headship of the church, and the seat of infallibility, and bequeathing all his power and influence to his successors. Had this been the case,—and had the see of Rome been so regarded by the early Christians, could so important a circumstance have escaped the notice of the first Christian historian, or could Eusebius, writing in the time of Constantine, two hundred and fifty years after, have so treated of the state of the church during the first three centuries, as to keep the supremacy of the Roman see wholly out of view, if it were, in fact, really known and acknowledged in those days? Surely not.

But what is the view that Eusebius gives, of the state and standing of the Romish church in the earliest times?

We will endeavour to state it. He gives us, first, in his 2d book, ch. iv. v. an old tradition or story of Papias, of Simon Magus having visited Rome, and of Peter's following him there, to oppose him; but he gives no date as to this fact. And we must bear always in mind, that Peter's message was, by agreement with Paul, (Gal. ii. 9,) especially to the circumcision, and yet that when Paul was brought to Rome, A. D. 62, or the eighth of Nero, he found the Jews of that city wholly ignorant of the gospel of Christ; a proof indubitable, one would think, that Peter had not then been there. A few years before that, Paul had addressed his epistle to the *Gentiles* at Rome, but only to them as to isolated "saints," and not, as in Corinth, a "church." We must maintain, therefore, that up to the time of Paul's imprisonment at Rome, Peter was not there, nor was a church established. In fact, Jerome's account is at once negatived by the statement of Eusebius, book 3, chap. i. "Peter is reported to have preached to the Jews dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and

Asia, and *about the end of his days*, tarrying at Rome, was crucified."

However, Eusebius in another place tells us, (book 2, ch. xxv.) that at last both Paul and Peter were martyred by Nero, and about the same time. But he adds not one word of either of them having been bishop of that city, or of his having bequeathed his pre-eminence to his successor. But in his 3d book, c. ii. he tells us that "Linus was the first bishop of Rome, which he repeats c. iv. And at c. xix. of the same book he says, "At that time Clement ruled the church of Rome, being the third bishop *after Paul and Peter*. The first was Linus; the second Anaclethus." In all this, therefore, the general idea presented is, that Paul and Peter formed and constituted the church at Rome, shortly before their martyrdom, and that Linus was the first bishop,—Linus, named by Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, but not named by Peter in either of his epistles.

And precisely hereunto agrees the account given by Irenæus, who wrote about a century before Eusebius, and who gives exactly the same view. He speaks of the "universally known church, founded and constituted at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul," who, he adds, "delivered to Linus the bishopric to govern the church."

Now here, surely, we have the best evidence that we can hope to obtain; for Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp, who was himself taught by the apostles, and appointed by them bishop of Smyrna. When, therefore, we are informed by him, not that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and that he endowed that chair with supremacy and infallibility to the end of time, but that Peter and Paul founded the church at Rome, and appointed Linus its first bishop, we seem to have arrived at a full knowledge of the real fact.

If it is made out then, as this passage from Irenæus seems to us to make it out, that Linus was in no sense *successor* to Peter; that Peter only founded the see, and that not singly, but in conjunction with Paul,

just as he founded that of Antioch, and probably many others; then, let Peter possess in his own person, what powers and prerogatives he might, still the Papists have established no *succession*—no transmission of those rights and powers to the bishop of Rome. Just as well might they be claimed for the bishop of Antioch, or for Mark, Peter's disciple, and his successors at Alexandria.

But we are reminded of the strong language of Irenæus touching the see of Rome, and also the particular care taken by Eusebius to record its succession.

Now Eusebius does not particularize the bishops of one church solely, but of all the leading churches. In book 3, c. xix. for instance, he gives us the succession in three churches—Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria; in other chapters of many more. But both he and Irenæus naturally speak of Rome with the greatest interest and emphasis, that city being the capital and centre of the civilized world, and its church and bishop necessarily enjoying great celebrity and influence from that single circumstance.

The question, however is, what is his general language, with reference to the bishop of Rome, his precedence, or his authority?

This will best be ascertained by turning over his pages with a view to ascertain when and on what points controversies first arose in the church; and in what light the authority of the bishop of Rome was then considered;—whether as the legal arbiter or not. Now the first circumstance of this kind which is recorded in Eusebius, occurs in book 5, c. xxi. xxii. xxiii. It there appears that about the end of the second century, a difference had sprung up, as to the right period for the celebration of Easter; the Asiatic churches calculating it in one way, the western another. Here, then, if a central authority, a supreme head, had been then understood to exist in the person of the Roman bishop, we should have seen the whole matter submitted to his decision, and either a bull of the pope, or a decree of the pope and a council,

would have decided the whole question. Instead of which, what does Eusebius tell us? He says, "a synod for this cause assembled in Palestine, of whom Theophilus, bishop of Cæsarea, and Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, were chief. At Rome, there was a synod also gathered together for the same cause, whereof Victor their bishop was president. Again, there was another of the bishops of Pontus, where Paulinus as the senior presided; and another of the bishops of Gaul, which Irenæus superintended. Book 5, c. xxi.

Here nothing is more clear than that Rome and its bishop are only mentioned as on an equality with Jerusalem or with Gaul. There is not a word of any peculiar value attaching to the decision of Victor of Rome, or of the synod over which he presided.

But we must go further. Victor himself, the difference still subsisting, proceeded to censure the Asian churches, and to break off communion with them, on this account. To a modern Romanist, this seems quite natural. The decision of a pope, and especially of a pope with the support of a synod, would be held final with a modern Romanist. But nothing of the kind seems to have occurred either to Irenæus or to Eusebius. On the contrary, Eusebius speaks with approval of several bishops who "sharply reprehended" Victor for this step, of which reprovers Irenæus is one. Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was appointed to the see of Smyrna by the apostles themselves;—Irenæus not only disapproves of the act and sentence of the bishop of Rome, but he writes a letter to him, to rebuke him for causing a schism in the church. Is it possible, in the view of these facts, to imagine that either Irenæus or Eusebius believed in the supremacy of the Roman see? There is not the least trace of such an idea, in the whole account of this transaction.

The next controversy that arises, is that of the baptizing of heretics. Here Cyprian, the most celebrated bishop (afterwards a martyr) of Africa, differed

from the opinion of the Roman bishop. Each excommunicated the other, and for many years, Carthage and Rome were at mutual enmity. But there was no symptom throughout the quarrel, of any claim to infallibility on the part of Rome, or of the least concession of such a claim, on the other.

Again, in book 7, c. xxix. we find a synod held upon the case of Paul of Samosata. But we do not find the bishop of Rome, nor any representative of his, either presiding over that synod, or even present at it. The sentence having been passed, it was communicated by letter, equally to the bishop of Rome and the bishop of Alexandria. There is nothing here to evince the least belief in the supremacy of Rome. In fact, any stranger to the controversy, carefully perusing Eusebius and Irenæus, would close both of them without ever having had a single idea tending towards papal supremacy presented to his mind.

The Romanists, however, are fond of quoting the description of the see of Rome, given by Irenæus.

This is a natural and just description of what must have been the rank and estimation, and circumstantial importance of the see of Rome, quite apart from any claim of supremacy.

It only remains, then, to ask, what says the general current of history, as to the precedence, or power of the see of Rome?

This is best answered by the single fact, that when Constantine summoned the first general Christian council,—the council of Nice,—the bishop of Rome, so far from being considered the natural president, as he must have been, on the supposition that the claims of the papacy were then well known and admitted,—was actually not present;—and so far as we can see, the precedence was given to Hosius, bishop of Cordoba, out of respect to his great age. Nothing, surely, can be more decisive than this, of the question whether the supremacy of the see of Rome was then known and acknowledged.

When, however, we descend to later periods of ecclesiastical history, we perceive a change.

As the papal supremacy had, of course, a beginning, and as each succeeding year of the history, both of the church and of the empire, grows darker and more forlorn, after the days of Constantine, we might naturally expect, in tracing the annals of the following reigns, to come to the traces of the rising Papacy. And so, in fact, we do. The prediction of Paul, (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8.) that "when he who now letteth be taken out of the way, then shall *that wicked one* be revealed," was exactly fulfilled. Constantine removed the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople, and though it was afterwards for a time restored, yet soon the *imperial* power, which had kept the *episcopal* in subjection, was finally taken from Rome, and the bishop became the first authority in that city. *He* that had *let* or hindered the rise of the Papal power, was now taken out of the way, and that power rapidly grew and increased to its present dimensions. But there is no difficulty in tracing its rise, or in understanding its origin.

The conclusion, then, of the whole matter, is this: Let the Romanist take the Acts of the Apostles, and all the epistles, and show us, if he can, the least trace of any primacy conceded either by the apostles themselves, or by any of their immediate followers, to Peter. Then let us proceed onwards, and consult every fragment of church history that is extant, and we shall have to pass over several centuries before a shadow of Papal supremacy appears. On these grounds, then, we come to the conclusion, that no authority is to be found for this alleged supremacy, and that the whole assumption is like all the other pretensions of Popery, the offspring of later and more corrupt ages. Our conclusion, therefore, is, 1. That Scripture shows no supremacy, or authority, conferred on Peter, more than on the other apostles: 2. That even if a doubt remained on this point, on that of a permanence of such authority, vested in some

alleged successors of the apostle, it cannot be denied that Scripture is wholly silent: 3. That the bishops of Rome have no more claim to be considered the successors of the apostle, than the bishops of Antioch or Alexandria: and, 4. That the voice of all antiquity witnesses, that the supremacy of the Romish see was wholly unknown for the first three or four centuries, and only sprang up on the decline of the imperial power.

IX.—THE RULE OF FAITH.

RECAPITULATION OF THE ARGUMENT.

IT will be admitted to be evidently expedient, at this stage of our discussion, to pause for a short time, in order to review the course of reasoning through which we have passed, and to recapitulate the leading arguments bearing upon the grand question of the RULE OF FAITH.

The Protestant rule has been often referred to, though briefly, as consisting of HOLY SCRIPTURE alone: but our chief attention has been given to the consideration of that opposed to it by the adherents of Rome, which rule, if simply and honestly stated, is nothing else than THE CHURCH. We have been occupied in discussing the claims of the bishop and clergy of Rome, both to assume to themselves the title of "The Catholic Church," and, under that title, to claim the attribute of Infallibility. And we will now endeavour to review, in a very few words, the line of argument through which we have travelled in the preceding essays.

Our first glance at the subject brought before our view the two opposing principles as to the Rule of Faith; when it appeared that the favourite position taken up by the Romish controversialists, was, that their church was "The Holy Catholic Church," and *therefore* infallible; a position which we at once proceeded to controvert; and to show that the assumption of Catholicity on the part of the church of Rome, —the assertion that the whole church of Christ is comprehended within its communion,—is not only most arrogant and intolerable, but is also altogether at

variance with historical facts. We observed, that on more than one occasion, the general or Catholic Church, consisting of all bodies of Christians adhering to the faith of Scripture, had been split and divided by the misconduct of the see of Rome:—That in A. D. 862, half the Christian world was forced to withdraw from all connexion with that see, by the novel and inadmissible assumption of absolute power, by its then bishop; and that seven centuries after, six or eight kingdoms were simultaneously roused, by the corruptions and exactions which Rome had introduced, to cast off at once all subjection to her. Now all these churches, whether eastern or western, consisted of baptized persons, ministered to by bishops, priests, and deacons, as regularly ordained as any that Rome could offer. Standing, therefore, exactly on a footing with the Italian church, in all respects, as these churches did, it was clearly a groundless and intolerable assumption on the part of the bishops of Rome, to assert that all Christian communities not submitting themselves to their authority, were thereby excluded from the pale of the Catholic or Universal Church.

The Romanist, then, being driven to his second line of defence, we had next to consider in what way he asserted the title of his church to exalt herself to this position of supremacy, and to assume that all who were not of her communion were without the pale of the Christian church. This claim appeared to be rested upon two facts; 1. The character of the Romish church, as the *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church*; and, 2. The authority vested by Christ in Peter and his successors. We therefore proceeded, in the next place, to investigate these pretensions of the church of Rome. And we considered them in their natural order.

The *Unity* of the church of Rome we found to be a mere assumption; for, taking its popes, we found one pope controverting and excommunicating another; looking at its councils, we found no two of them in perfect agreement; and examining its theologians,

we found as many varying sects and opinions, as are to be found in the freest forms of Protestantism itself.

Its *Holiness* was refuted by the least inquiry into the facts of that church's history. Its representatives and rulers, the popes, bearing, as they did, the title of "Holiness," were frequently, as their own historians have testified, "*monsters of wickedness.*" Its periods of the most undisturbed tranquillity and unresisted rule, have been periods of the most awful iniquity that the annals of Christendom can exhibit. And, at the present day, the comparative morality of any people may usually be gauged by this rule;—if Popery be predominant, there is assuredly great wickedness; but if Popery have but a slight hold upon the community, and Protestantism more generally prevails, then there is a proportionate degree of virtue, morals, and happiness among the people.

Its *Catholicity*, or universality, had been already denied, inasmuch as there were notoriously whole kingdoms, and not one or two, but ten or twelve, which possessed a regularly ordained Christian ministry, and the sacraments of the gospel, and which numbered, altogether, above a hundred millions of professing Christians, and which yet acknowledged no sort of connection with the church of Rome.

Its *Apostolicity* yielded as little advantage. If by this term was merely meant, the descent of its ministers, by continued succession of ordinations, then the like descent could just as easily be proved by the bishops of the Greek, the English, and many other churches. Or, if the term described, as it ought, the doctrines derived by its clergy from apostolic authority, then a greater respect for apostolic doctrines could be pleaded on the part of the Protestant churches, than on that of Rome.

In all these four pretensions, therefore, the proof failed, and neither the *Unity*, the *Holiness*, the *Catholicity*, or the *Apostolicity* of Romanism was found to be effectually established.

We proceeded, therefore, next, to the investigation

of the important statement, that a peculiar authority was vested in Peter and his successors, to rule and govern the church; an authority which, if established, would have condemned as contumacious, all who ventured to assert their entire independence of Peter's chair.

But here also the proof fell utterly short. The commission given to Peter was merely a parallel one with that given to the other apostles; repeated, indeed, with emphasis, lest that apostle's fall should have been thought to have deposed him from his office. Of its descent to any of his followers, either in Rome or in any other see, not the least proof could be adduced. That Peter was ever bishop of Rome, is not only doubtful, but the strongest reason exists to believe that he never filled that chair; that no apostle, in fact, ever became a diocesan bishop; but that Peter and Paul, meeting at Rome shortly before their martyrdom, constituted the church in that place, and appointed Linus its first bishop. No trace of any universal bishopric, or of any supremacy over the whole church, either in Rome or elsewhere, appears for centuries after: on the contrary, the decrees and decisions of that see were freely canvassed and resisted by Irenæus, Cyprian, and many other of the early fathers. The supremacy of Peter, then, over the whole church, is neither found in Scripture nor in church history; and the supremacy of the bishop of Rome was never so much as mentioned for several centuries. Nor is there the least reason adduced, why the latter should follow from the former. Even could we discern any tokens of a primacy in Peter,—still it would remain to be proved that those who presided over the Romish church after his removal, and who possessed neither his divine inspiration nor his miraculous powers, were nevertheless to succeed to the possession of his place and prerogatives. This may be *assumed*; but not a tittle of proof has been offered, in establishment of so extravagant an assumption. But that both Peter, and the bishops of Rome,

did often err, and were resisted and overruled, is abundantly proved, both from the writings of the apostles, and from the records of the early church.

There remains, therefore, not the least ground for any pretension, on the part of the church of Rome, to demand the credence or the submission of any human being, either because she is the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, or because she wields the authority of Peter. She is nothing more than a church among other churches; her bishop merely one among others, and her right to claim the prostration of the mind to her decisions, is clearly seen to be an assumption altogether unfounded.

There is, however, one feature of the case repeatedly urged by Dr. Wiseman, which we have up to this period forborne to remark upon. It is, the analogy which is alleged to exist between God's dealings with his church under the Old Testament dispensation, and under the New. It is observed, that under the Mosaical law he instituted a fixed and perpetual priesthood, confined to one family, presided over by a single head, and ruling over the whole ecclesiastical community, in such sort that any person refusing submission and adherence to this body and its legally appointed head, was, *ipso facto*, "cut off from his people." And hence it is argued, that some such plan or system of organization might be expected under the new dispensation. Accordingly, says Dr. Wiseman,—“It is on this form of argumentation that I have endeavoured to proceed. First of all, I considered the outward form and inward constitution of the church of Christ, to which he confided his religion, as a state foreshown, constituted, and actually existing. As a state foreshown; inasmuch as I explained to you, how God had ever worked in a certain course or order of his providence for the preservation of truth among mankind; how a certain provision was made of old, whereby doctrines and hopes revealed to mankind, but lost to most of the world, in the corruption which ensued, were preserved, in the constitution of a certain establishment dedicated to that purpose. I

showed you that this system was merely figurative of that which is to come: that all the figures, all the imagery and reasoning, and the very phrases which applied to it, were also applied to that which has succeeded it, as though this were to be nothing more than the perfecting and fulfilling thereof. I endeavoured, at the same time, to explain how it was the natural order of God's providence that the course once commenced should go on in a persevering ordinance, until the end; and how, although we might expect a more perfect developement, and brighter manifestations, it would be expecting a violation of his plan of action among men, if we anticipated any sudden change, or complete interruption, in that course which he had once commenced."*

And in another place the doctor similarly argues:

"From this it would appear, that the means taken by God's wisdom for preserving those doctrines of hope which he had communicated unto mankind, was to institute a visible and compact society, within which he, virtually, guaranteed their perseverance, and over which he watched with tender solicitude: and we see that his action upon this body was not detailed upon each individual, but through a more select order of men, constituting a graduated hierarchy, whose duty it was to edify by example, to purify by sacrifice, to instruct by explanations of the law, to stand, in fine, between God and his people, ministering unto both, as his chosen servants, and their appointed teachers. The object of this internal organization could only be the preservation of essential unity of worship and of heart. Reuben was obliged yearly to come from beyond the Jordan, and Zebulon from over the mountains, and both to worship with their brethren at one altar in Jerusalem, lest new opinions or rites should creep in among them, and that communion which is the essence of religion be even slightly broken.

"Now, looking for the application of this beautiful

* Wiseman. Lecture ix. p. 299, 300.

constitution, to the dispensation whereof it was a shadow, the first thing that must strike us is, how completely the New Testament links the one unto the other, by applying to the new state all the imagery and phraseology employed in prophecy, as descriptive of the peculiar characteristics of the old. The church, or dispensation of faith, is now the kingdom which was to be restored with its worship by the Son of David; there is a priesthood and an altar, there is authority and subordination, there is union and unity all as before; and indeed in the later prophecies of the old law, the church is never otherwise described than as the revival, extension, and perfection of the former state. Now this is all explained only by two reflections. First, that the former constitution was not abolished but exchanged, and by that change perfected; and in this manner did Jesus say, that he came not to abolish, but to complete or accomplish: secondly, that the former was a type, and merged into its reality, not so much dying as passing into a second existence, where a true sacrifice covered a typical oblation, where redemption given passed before redemption expected, where uncertainty had ripened into knowledge, and hope yielded its kingdom to faith.”*

Such is Dr. Wiseman’s argument, and it both deserves and invites a reply. Two objections to the conclusion which Dr. Wiseman seeks to draw from the premises he lays down, naturally present themselves:—These are as follows:

1. A certain well defined order of priesthood existed in the Jewish church, and it had a single, divinely appointed head. But nothing can possibly be more distinct, or positive, or beyond the reach of mistake or doubt, than the divine appointment of the family of Levi to the priesthood, and of the family of Aaron to the pontificate. We have, therefore, a right to argue in our turn, that if God had really intended to constitute a second primacy over his whole

* Wiseman, Lecture iv. p. 93, 94.

church, under the New Testament, he would have been as explicit in his commands as he was in the Old. And it is because we find not the least trace of any such appointment, that we demur to the allegation, that the see of Rome was intended to occupy the same place, under the new dispensation, that the high priest occupied under the old. Show us even a tenth part of the evidence in favour of the supposed successors of Peter, that any descendant of Aaron, occupying the office of high priest, could have adduced, and we are loyal subjects of "the holy see" from that moment.

But instead of any such evidence, all we find in the New Testament tends in an exactly opposite direction. The epistle to the Hebrews, for instance, is devoted to a comparison of the Mosaical dispensation with that which was to follow it. Most unquestionably, therefore, had it been the divine will that the Jewish church and its ecclesiastical system should be followed by a similar constitution, modelled, in all its visible features, upon the first, we should here have found it delineated. Instead of which, we find just the contrary. We find the sacrificing priesthood for ever abolished: "*And every priest (under the Levitical priesthood) standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God: From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*" Heb. x. 11—14.

And the high priesthood and headship of the church is again and again declared to be permanently centered, not in the bishops of Rome, but in Christ. "*We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.*" (iv. 14.) "*THEY truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but THIS MAN, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*" (vii. 23, 24.) Dr. Wiseman tells us that

we have "a priesthood and an altar," in the pope and the mass, of which Aaron and his sacrifices were only typical. But Paul not only does not say this,—which, if true, he certainly would have said,—but he plainly tells us that *our* high priest, the head of the gospel dispensation, "is passed into the heavens;" and that we are not now to look for a succession of priests, as in Aaron and his race, who "were not suffered to continue by reason of death," but to ONE; "*We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*" (viii. 1.) Nothing, then, can be more complete than the opposition between the apostle Paul and Dr. Wiseman. But we pass on to observe,

2. That we must not forget, when the demand made is of implicit submission—that the priests under the Mosaical dispensation, indisputable as was their divine appointment, were frequently found to be but "blind leaders of the blind;" nay, were, especially in our Saviour's own times, the most decided and bitter opponents of the truth.

Now the demand made upon us by Dr. Wiseman and Dr. Milner, on behalf of him who they tell us now occupies the place of the High Priest, is of nothing less than implicit submission. The church of Rome, says Dr. Wiseman, "is the depository of all truth, and is gifted with an exemption from all liability to err, and has *authority to claim* from all men, and from all nations, *submission* to her guidance and instruction."* And this is said, we must again repeat, of a church whose alleged commission bears not the least comparison with that which was indisputably given to Aaron and his successors.

Now if even the successors of Aaron, invested in the clearest manner with the pontificate and all its plenary authority,—if even these fell into the most fearful errors,—what could be expected of those who act under the far less distinct and emphatic authority conveyed in the Saviour's parting words? If the

* Wiseman. Lecture iv. p. 109.

High Priests were not "gifted with an exemption from all liability to err," how can we assume that the popes are so preserved? If that pontiff who received his mitre and his vestments in the immediate presence, and almost by the very hands, so to speak, of God himself, was so far from being thus exempted from error, that even within sight of Mount Sinai he was found assisting the people in an act of idolatry,—what ground can there be for assuming that a greater "exemption" from error is promised to the priesthood or the pontiff of our own times?

If it is objected that Christ left a special promise to his disciples, just before his ascension, that he would be with them always, even to the end of the world, we reply, that this circumstance constitutes no distinction between the cases, nor does it secure "exemption from error." We know that God himself was visibly present, in a pillar of a cloud and of fire, with the Israelites in the wilderness, and yet both the priests and the people were continually transgressing against him.

Dr. Wiseman, however, notices this objection, of the errors and transgressions of the Jewish priesthood and people thus: "But you will say, with all the precautions which his providence took to secure the safe transmission of his promises, see how fearfully they of old did fall from him, and forget all that he had taught them; and shall he then be supposed to have retained the same imperfect institutions now, which failed him so sadly then? Now far from there being any objection in this to what I have hitherto said, it seems to me rather a confirmation thereof. Much falling off there often was—a total loss never."

What the Dr. means by saying "a total loss never," we cannot divine. Our Lord's own words to the Jews were, "The kingdom of God *shall be taken from you*, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. xxi. 43. And so it was in the end. But the point we wish to insist upon is this:—To establish the decisions of the Romish church as the rule of faith, it is necessary that its advocates

should assume, as Dr. Wiseman, we have seen, does assume,—that that church “is the depository of all truth, and is gifted with an exemption from all liability to err.” Now, will any one say, that the two or three sentences in the gospels, on which Dr. Wiseman affects to rely, confer on the successors of Peter and of the apostles, greater honours, immunities, and privileges than were bestowed upon Aaron and his successors in the priesthood? Surely not! The Jew, then, under his dispensation, eighteen hundred years ago, might as reasonably believe and contend, that his spiritual guides, who “sat in Moses’ seat,” were “exempted from all liability to err,” as the Papists can now claim the same exemption for the pope or the clergy of Rome: This is clear.

We ask, then, where was their “exemption from error,” when they became “the betrayers and murderers of the Just One,”—when they “killed the prince of Life,”—when they “rejected the stone which God appointed as the head of the corner,”—when they “slew and hanged on a tree, him whom God had exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins?”

This question must be answered or Dr. Wiseman’s argument recoils upon himself, with tremendous force. The analogy is selected and insisted on by himself. He alleges the case of the Jews as exhibiting an outline and leading scheme of God’s plan with the Christian church; and the authority and commission of the High Priest and his assistants are especially adduced as typifying the intended platform of the coming Christian church. We then naturally inquire, whether, seeing that the commission, ordination, and investiture of Aaron and the high priesthood, were certainly more explicitly detailed, and apparently more emphatic, than that of the apostles,—it must not be naturally concluded, that the same degree of infallibility or exemption from error, which is claimed for the Christian priesthood, belonged also to the preceding order? This must be admitted to be a reasonable

conclusion. We then observe, that the high priests showed their "liability to err" in an hundred instances, and especially in their condemnation of the Son of God. Dr. Wiseman's own case of analogy, therefore, on which he lays so much stress, evidently becomes a broken reed, and pierces his own hand. The pope succeeds the High Priest; stands in his place; succeeds to his primacy and rule; at least, so says Dr. Wiseman. Well, the High Priest crucified the Lord of glory; what security have we that the pope may not, in the person of his servants, again persecute and put to death the Son of God? The question is naturally suggested by Dr. Wiseman's own argument; but it is impossible to find a satisfactory reply to it.

But the reader will be almost tired of these negative conclusions. Shall we never, he will be apt to inquire, arrive at any thing more satisfactory? If the Romish *Rule of Faith* proves to be nothing worth, can you, for the Protestant churches, establish any thing more satisfactory? Or are we left, in point of fact, without a guide, on this ocean of life, to direct our course by mere baseless speculation?

We can reply with confidence, God be thanked! that we are not so left. There is a guide, the most unerring and infallible; a rule, perfect as eternal justice and truth could construct; and this guide, this rule, is so accessible, so simple, so intelligible, that among us, at least, every man will be left wholly without excuse, who either neglects or refuses to be regulated by its directions. This rule is nothing else than the HOLY SCRIPTURE, the written word of God, revealed by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity, to divers of his servants, in different ages of the church, and preserved under his providential care, to be, in all ages, the guide of his people, in their journey through this wilderness, towards their eternal rest.

Many, however, will be inclined to doubt, whether there is sufficient ground for supposing that the Scriptures were really intended for this purpose; that they

were meant for universal perusal; and made level to the general understanding of mankind, so as to answer the purpose of an universal rule?

But if such persons are not unbelievers,—if they accept the Bible as the word of God, having no doubt whatever of its divine character, they will be necessarily compelled to believe its own testimony as to its purport and intent. Now this testimony is most full, clear, and explicit. It no where describes itself after Dr. Wiseman's fashion, as furnishing merely "credentials to the church;" which church is then to be the great teacher. On the contrary, while it constantly represents *the priesthood* as an erring and fallible body, often negligent, often heretical, often idolatrous, often misleading and seducing the people; it ever asserts its own purity, sufficiency, and unerring truth, as constituting the only safe and divinely appointed guide for all mankind.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."—(Psalm xix. 7—11.) "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation." "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."—(Psalm cxix. 9, 98, 99, 105, 130.) "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—(Isaiah viii. 20.) "And

Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?"—(Mark xii. 20.) "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."—(Acts xvii. 11.) "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."—(Rom. xv. 4.) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

Now, in all these passages we cannot but perceive that the attributes ascribed to the Scriptures partake of the divinity of their author. Perfection is constantly asserted to be their character. They are unerring, and they are of universal utility. Every recommendation of them is *to all*; every assertion of their object and aim clearly assigns their value and their use, not to the church only, but to *all mankind*. They are to, "*give understanding to the simple*:" they are to enable "*the young man to cleanse his way*." They are to be the universal test, insomuch that whatever is not in agreement with them, is at once, and *ipso facto*, condemned.

And let it be remembered, that all these excellences are ascribed to the Scriptures, *without reserve*. It is admitted, indeed, that "the unlearned and unstable" may "wrest" "the Scriptures to their own destruction," just as a man may poison himself with that which was prescribed to him as a medicine; but it is never for a moment conceded that, in themselves, the Scriptures are any thing but what is perfectly wise, and excellent, and holy. But a very different language is held with regard to the priesthood, which Dr. Wiseman would have us to believe to have been God's special "provision" for the "preservation of his truth among mankind."

In Jeremiah ii. 8. God says, "*The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew me not.*" In Lament. iv. 13. the miseries of Jerusalem are declared to be "*for the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her.*" Ezekiel xxii. 26. bears the same testimony—"Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things." Hosea vi. 9, says, "*the company of priests murder in the way.*" Zephaniah iii. 4. "*her priests have polluted the sanctuary and have done violence to the law.*" And Malachi ii. 8. addresses the priests in these words, "*Ye have departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.*"

But what is Dr. Wiseman's answer to all this. It is merely that "much falling off there often was,—a total loss never." Now even if we were to admit this,—which, however, is not true,—still, what is the admission obviously implied, as regards a *rule of faith*? To say that there was "a frequent falling off" is to confess, in so many words, that the priesthood was *not infallible*,—that it often fell into error. Such, therefore, as guided themselves solely by the counsels and instructions of the priests, would be, of necessary consequence, liable to be led astray. They would be following a rule which was *not infallible*; whereas those who preferred that rule to which Protestants adhere, would be secure of infallible guidance. "*The law of his God is in his heart; NONE OF HIS STEPS SHALL SLIDE.*" (Psalm xxxvii. 31.) Here is the great practical distinction between the two *rules of faith* about which we are contending; and here is irrefragable proof of the superiority of the Protestant rule. But we must not open, in the present essay, a question so large as that which is now presenting itself before us, and the consideration of which will naturally come under our view, on the next occasion.

X.—THE RULE OF FAITH.

“HOLY SCRIPTURE,” OR “THE CHURCH.”

WE are now to return to the main question, and once more to compare the two opposing principles,—that of the Protestants, that SCRIPTURE is the only rule of faith; and that of the Romanists, that “God has appointed his CHURCH *the infallible and unfailing depository of all truth.*”*

The Protestant rule having been briefly explained at the close of the last Essay, it will be advisable here to examine closely the difficulties pointed out, especially by Dr. Wiseman, in the practical application of that rule.

We may begin with an observation of the Doctor’s, that Protestantism, from its very fundamental principle, demands of its disciples a course of study and investigation, which, to by far the larger proportion of mankind is absolutely impossible. He observes—

“The fundamental principle of Protestantism is this, that THE WORD OF GOD ALONE IS THE TRUE STANDARD AND RULE OF FAITH. But, to arrive at this, there is a long course of complicated and severe inquiry. You must, step by step, have satisfied yourselves, not merely of the existence of a revelation; but, that such revelation is really confided to man in these very books; that they have been transmitted to you in such a state, that the originals have been so preserved, and the translations so made, as that you are confident, that in reading them you are reading those words which the Spirit of God dictated to the prophets and apostles; and, still more, that you

* Wiseman’s First Lecture, p. 10.

have acquired, or that you possess, the lights necessary for you to understand them. You must not only be satisfied that the Bible has been given as the word of God, but you must be ready to meet the innumerable and complicated difficulties which are brought by others against the inspiration of particular books, or individual passages; so that you may be able to say, that from your own knowledge and experience, you are internally convinced, that you have in that book the inspired word of God, in the first place; and, in the second, that you are not only authorized, but competent, to understand it. How few, my brethren, are there who can say, that they have gone through this important course; and, yet, it is the essential ground of Protestantism, that each one is to be considered responsible to God for every particular doctrine which he professes—that each one must have studied the word of God, and must have drawn from it the faith which he holds. Unless he does all this, he has not complied with those conditions which his religion imposes upon him; and, whatever reasons or motives he may feel or quote for being a Protestant, it is manifest that they noways lead him essentially to the practical adoption of the ground-work of his religion.”*

Now the learned doctor has here availed himself of his rhetorical skill to conjure up difficulties and obstacles which have no real existence, or which, at least, have no peculiar existence in the Protestant system. For what does this objection amount to, when closely scrutinized? As applied to the present question, the point laboured at by the Doctor, seems to be this, that no one *can be* a sound Protestant, without a long and painful course of study?—that this is a necessary condition of our system, and that as this is plainly impossible to the great bulk of mankind, therefore Protestantism cannot be that religion which God has given for the comfort and support of all. Now this may be answered by a simple recurrence to expe-

* Wiseman's First Lecture, p. 8, 9.

rience. There is no practical difference in this respect between the two systems. The bulk of mankind must, and in fact always do, receive the first principles of their religion, implicitly, or upon credence. The Protestant teachers and theologians present to the people a book, the Bible, and tell them, what they themselves believe, that it is the inspired word of God, and the only foundation upon which their religious belief can be safely built. Thousands and millions accept their assurance; repose their faith in this book; either omitting or being incapable of the preliminary inquiry, How this book can be proved to be God's word; but finding it to be, in their own experience, "the power of God to their salvation," they thankfully accept it, cordially attach themselves to it, refuse all other rules, and all additions to this rule, and finally die, trusting in the testimony which this book gives to Christ, and resting their souls with confidence on Him. Now these are genuine Protestants, inasmuch as they receive and adopt the great Protestant principle, as Dr. Wiseman himself expresses it, of "THE WORD OF GOD ALONE, THE TRUE STANDARD AND RULE OF FAITH." And, in the implicit or unphilosophical mode of their adherence to their religious belief, they are obviously on a par, and really far more justifiable than the multitudes who adopt the Romish rule;—the CHURCH,—without any more investigation into the real grounds of their reliance than the aforesaid Protestants. The one class receive "the bread of life," not always rationally or on philosophical data; but experience soon sets them fully right. They are soon in the predicament of the Samaritans, who told their towns woman, "*now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*" John iv. 42. The gospel comes to them "*in power and in much assurance;*" and they know with the best sort of certainty, that it is bread indeed that they have received, by the spiritual sustentation which their souls have derived from it. Nor is their reception of God's word

altogether implicit and unreasoning. Few Protestant pastors entirely omit occasional explanations of the external evidences for the Scriptures. They frequently appeal to the common sense of their people, by proofs which are level to all orders of intellect. And, amidst all, there is the inherent glory of the word itself, declaring, as plainly and undeniably as the sun itself, that it is none other than the work of God.

The followers of Rome, on the other hand, adopt just as implicitly the faith proposed to them, and rest their all upon the foundation of “THE CHURCH;” not knowing, in fact, what “the church” is in which they believe; while, instead of after-assurance, derived from the experience of their-own souls, they find nothing better than the false repose of delusion.

This it may be said, is an assumption of that which has yet to be proved. But we were led into this by Dr. Wiseman’s own equally illegitimate claim. He denies the right of any one to the name of Protestant, until he has first investigated the whole system of external evidence. We maintain, on the other hand, that the poor man who merely *accepts* the Bible as it is presented to him, clinging to it alone for his spiritual hopes, and refusing any other rule or guide, is, in so doing, a genuine Protestant. We further add, that the great bulk, both of Protestants and Papists, must of necessity take their religious system very much on the testimony of others; the great difference, however, consisting in this, that the Protestant, resting upon the simple WORD OF GOD, cannot be mistaken or misled in the security of his foundation, while the Romanist not only takes his system quite as much upon trust as the most ignorant Protestant, but falls into the fatal error of resting his hopes on a merely human, and therefore unsafe foundation. This, however, is the chief point which we shall have to establish in the course of the present argument. Let us now consider the reasons assigned by Dr. Wiseman for refusing the Holy Scriptures as a sole and sufficient rule of faith.

Dr. Wiseman objects, that the Scriptures could never be intended as the rule of faith to all men, for the following reasons:—

1. “In the first place, before any one can even commence the examination of that rule, which his church proposes to him, he must have satisfied himself that all these books or writings, which are collected together in that volume, are really the genuine works of those whose names they bear; and that no such genuine work has been excluded, so that the rule be perfect and entire; and, in the second place, he must satisfy himself by his own individual examination, that this book is inspired by God.” Whereas, “the majority of Protestants live and remain Protestants without ever having gone through this course of conviction.”*

The Doctor then proceeds to observe—

2. That “all this inquiry is but secondary or preliminary, when compared with the great investigation into the inspiration of the Scriptures. These Scriptures are inspired; that is the general, and doubtless the true, belief. But on what grounds does it rest? Is it a matter of very simple demonstration, or which proves itself almost intuitively?†

“The authority of history, or of ecclesiastical tradition, independently of the divine force allowed it by the Catholic, can prove no more than the genuineness or truth of the Scripture narrative; but to be available as a proof of inspiration, must carry us directly to the attestation of the only witnesses capable of certifying the circumstance. It may be true, that the church or body of Christians, in succeeding times, believed the books of the New Testament to be inspired. But if that church and its traditions are not infallible, that belief goes no further than a mere human or historical testimony ever can, that is, outward and visible facts, such as the publication, and consequently, the legitimacy, of a work. The only way in which it can attest the interior acts which

* Wiseman’s Second Lecture, p. 32, 36.

† Ibid, p. 37.

accompanied its compilation is, by preserving the assurances of those who, besides God, could alone be witnesses to them. Now, ecclesiastical history has not preserved to us this important testimony, for nowhere have we the record of any of these writers having attested his own inspiration. And thus, by rejecting tradition as an authority, is the only basis for the inspiration of Scripture cut away.”

Now from these two statements, the following consequence arises:—

“I have shown that the obstacles and difficulties to receiving the Bible as the word of God, are numerous and complicated; and yet it is the duty of every Protestant to believe all that he professes, because he has sought and discovered it in the word of God; if consequently, it is his duty to be satisfied only on his own evidence, as the divines of his church have stated; if, to attain this conviction, it is necessary for him to go through a long and painful course of learned disquisitions; and if, after all these have been encountered, he cannot come to a satisfactory demonstration of the most important point of inspiration, I ask you can the rule, in the approach to which you must pass through such a labyrinth of difficulties, be that which God has given us as a guide to the poorest, the most illiterate, and simplest of his creatures?”

But, 3. “If we are to suppose that God gave his holy word to be the only rule of faith to all men; it must be a rule, therefore, easy to be procured, and to be held. God himself must have made the necessary provision, that all men should have it, and be able to apply it. What, then, does he do? He gives us a large volume written in two languages, the chief portion in one known to a small and limited country of the world. He allows that speech to become a dead language, so that countless difficulties and obscurities should spring up regarding the meaning of innumerable passages. The other portion he gives in a language spoken by a large body of mankind, but still by a very small proportion, considering the extent of those to whom the blessings of Christianity were in-

tended to be communicated; and he gives this book as a satisfactory and sufficient rule.

“ In the first place, then, he expects it to be translated into every language, that all men may have access to it. In the second place, it must be so distributed, that all men may have possession of it; and, in the third place, it must be so easy that all men may use it. Are these the characteristics of this rule? Suppose it to be the only rule of all who believe in Christ, are you aware of the difficulty of undertaking a translation of it? Whenever the attempt has been made, in modern times, in the first instance it has generally failed; and even after many repeated attempts, it has proved unsatisfactory. Had I time, or were it necessary, I could show you from various reports of the Bible Society, and from the acknowledgment of its members, that many versions, after having been diffused among the natives of countries to be converted, have been necessarily withdrawn, on account of the absurdities, impieties, and innumerable errors which they contained. And this is the rule that has been put into the hands of men! But look to the history of even more celebrated translations, such as are put forth by authority. I speak not of those early versions, which were made when the knowledge of the facts and circumstances was fresh, and when those who wrote better understood the language. But look at any modern version, such as that authorized in these realms. Read the account of how often it was corrected, what combinations of able and learned men it required to bring it to a tolerable degree of perfection. Then its worth, as a rule, must depend upon the skill and fitness of individuals for the task of translating; and we cannot suppose that the providence of God would stake the whole usefulness and value of his rule upon the private or particular abilities of man. And this is the first difficulty to its being considered the ordinary rule appointed of God.

4. “ The gospel’s being the rule of faith, can have no connection with the circumstance, that the press,

by the aid of the strongest mechanical power applied to it, has now produced the Bible in measureless abundance. God could not mean, that for fourteen hundred years man was to be without a guide; and that mankind should have to wait until human genius had given efficacy to it by its discoveries and inventions. Such cannot be the qualities or conditions of the rule. We must look for it as one for all times, and for all places; as something coming into operation as soon as delivered, and destined to last until the end of time. We cannot, therefore, admit as the only necessary rule of faith, that which depends for its adoption on the accidental instrumentality of man, and requires essentially his unprescribed co-operation.”

Again, 5. “This difficulty of disseminating the supposed rule of faith is much exceeded by that of understanding it: for to be the rule of faith, it cannot be sufficient that men should possess and read it, but they must surely be able to comprehend it. In fact, who ever heard of the propriety or wisdom of placing in men’s hands a code, or rule, which it was impossible for the greater portion of them to comprehend?”

And the Doctor thus sums up his statement:—“Such, therefore, are the difficulties regarding the application of this rule: a difficulty of procuring and preserving the proper sense of the original by correct translations; a difficulty of bringing this translation within the reach of all; a difficulty, not to say an impossibility, of enabling all to understand it.”*

These, then, are Dr. Wiseman’s objections to the admission of Holy Scripture as the sole rule of faith. Our reply naturally divides itself into three allegations. The *first* is, that these difficulties suggested by the Doctor, if they be real and insuperable, must terminate, not in Romanism, but in infidelity: The *second*, that these difficulties, however, are not insuperable, but will be found to disappear on a closer examination of the subject: The *third*, that the Doc-

* Wiseman’s Second Lecture, p. 45—47.

tor's own system is beset with not only the same, but ten times greater difficulties, and difficulties which neither sophistry nor solid reasoning can remove.

The first of these objections,—that the Doctor's arguments lead, not to Popery, but to infidelity, may offend or startle a sincere Romanist. But why should he express surprise or indignation at such a charge? One of the Romish clergy, the Rev. Blanco White, testifies to this practical result. He tells us, of himself, that while yet a priest,—“The confession is painful, indeed, yet it is due to religion—I was *bordering on atheism.*” If my case were singular, if my knowledge of the *most enlightened classes of Spain* did not furnish me with a multitude of sudden transitions from the most secure faith and piety *to the most outrageous infidelity*, I would submit to the humbling conviction, that either weakness of judgment or fickleness of character had been the only source of my errors. But though I am not at liberty to mention individual cases, I do attest, from the most certain knowledge, that the history of my own mind is, with little variation, that of *a great portion of the Spanish clergy.*”*

But why recur to words or written confessions? Have we not the striking fact upon record, that on the 11th of November, 1793, the Romish archbishop of Paris, with a body of his clergy, appeared at the bar of the National Assembly, and there renounced Christianity, acknowledging that they had for many years been teaching *what they believed to be a lie!* And might we not multiply cases of this sort till a volume should be occupied in narrating them? Our object, however, is to show, that Dr. Wiseman's own principles necessarily lead to infidelity: and we only allude to historical facts in corroboration of this allegation.

Our argument is this: Faith, which is the essence and life of all real religion, must have some basis on which to rest. Now Protestants offer to the inquirer

* White's Evidence, p. 7, 8.

a sure and safe foundation. They say, “ This is the word of the Almighty God; upon this you may reasonably trust your eternal interests.” And they maintain that the evidence which is accessible to every inquiring mind, is sufficient to establish this fact, of the Divine Inspiration of the Bible. On the other hand, the Romanist denies, with the infidel, the sufficiency of this evidence, and plainly affirms that only by the authoritative decision of his church, can we learn with any certainty that the Scriptures are indeed inspired writings, and therefore infallibly true. Instead, therefore, of first establishing the Scriptures as our infallible and all-sufficient rule, Dr. Wiseman’s course is as follows:

“ Let us therefore suppose, that, not content with the more compendious method whereby God brought us, through baptism and our early instruction, into the possession of the faith, we are disposed to investigate the authority of its principles; we begin naturally with Scripture—we take up the gospels, and submit them to examination. We abstract, for a moment, from our belief in their inspiration and divine authority—we look at them simply as historical works, intended for our information, writings from which we are anxious to gather such truths as may be useful to our instruction. We find, in the first place, that to these works, whether considered in their substance or their form, are attached all those motives of human credibility which we can possibly require:—that there is, throughout them, an absence of every element which could suggest the suspicion, that there has been either a desire to deceive, or a possibility of having been mistaken. For, we find a body of external testimony sufficient to satisfy us, that these are documents produced at the time when they profess to have been written, and that those persons who were their authors, whose names they bear. And as these were eye-witnesses of what they relate, and give us, in their lives and characters, the strongest security of their veracity, we conclude all that they have recorded to be certain and true. We thus arrive at the dis-

covery, that besides their mere narrative, they unfold to us a system of religion, preached by one who wrought the most stupendous miracles to establish and confirm the divinity of his mission. In other words, we are led by the simple principle of human investigation, to an acknowledgment of the authority of Christ to teach, as one who came from God: and we are thus led to the necessity of yielding implicit credence to whatever we find him to have taught. So far, the investigation being one of outward and visible facts, cannot require any thing more than simple, historical, or human evidence.

“Having once thus established the divine authority of Christ, we naturally inquire, What is it that Christ taught? And we find that he was not contented merely with teaching certain general principles of morality, that he was not satisfied with unfolding to mankind doctrines such as none before him had attempted to teach, and thereby making man acquainted with his own fallen nature and with his future destiny; but that, moreover, he took means to preserve those doctrinal communications to mankind. We find it obviously his intention that the system he established should be beneficial, not only to those who lived in his own days, and heard his word, but to the entire world, until the end of time; that he intended his religion to be something permanent, something commensurate with the existence of those wants of humanity which he came to relieve; and consequently, we naturally ask, in what way the obligations which he came to enforce, and the truths which he suffered to seal, were to be preserved, and what the place wherein they were to be deposited? If they were to be perpetual, proper provision must have been made for their perpetuation.

“Now, the Catholic falls in with a number of very strong passages, in which our blessed Saviour, not content with promising a continuance of his doctrines, that is to say, the continued obligation of faith upon man, also pledges himself for their actual preservation among them. He selects a certain body of men:

he invests them, not merely with great authority, but with power equal to his own; he makes them a promise of remaining with them, and teaching among them, even to the end of time; and thus, once again, he naturally concludes that there must have existed for ever a corresponding institution, for the preservation of those doctrines, and the perpetuation of those blessings which our Saviour came manifestly to communicate.

“Thus then, *merely proceeding by historical reasoning*, such as would guide an infidel to believe in Christ’s superior mission, he comes, from the word of Christ, whom those historical motives oblige him to believe, to acknowledge the existence of a body, depository of those doctrines which he came to establish among men. This succession of persons constituted to preserve those doctrines of faith, appointed as the successors of the apostles, having within them the guarantee of Christ teaching among them for ever; and this body is what he calls the Church. He is in possession, from that moment, of an assurance of divine authority, and, in the whole remaining part of the investigation, he has no need to turn back, by calling in once more the evidence of man. For, from the moment he is satisfied that Christ has appointed a succession of men whose province it is, by aid of a supernatural assistance, to preserve inviolable those doctrines which God has delivered—from that moment, whatever these men teach is invested with that divine authority, which he had found in Christ through the evidence of his miracles. This body, so constituted, immediately takes on itself the office of teaching and informing him that the sacred volume, which he had been hitherto treating as a *mere history*—that the document which he had been perusing solely with a deep and solemn interest, is a book which commands a much greater degree of respect and attention, than any human motives could possibly bestow. For now the church stands forth with that authority wherewith she is invested by Christ—and proclaims, “Under the guarantee of divine assistance which the

words of Christ, in whom you believe, have given me, I pronounce that this book contains the revealed word of God, and is inspired by the Holy Spirit; and that it contains all that has a right to enter into the sacred collection." And thus the Catholic at length arrives, on the authority of the church, at these two important doctrines of the canon and the inspiration of Scripture, which I endeavoured to show, at our last meeting, it was almost, if not quite impossible, to reach by any course of ordinary human investigation."*

We find then, that Dr. Wiseman treats the Scriptures as mere human writings, ordinary though authentic histories, until he has established the authority of the church; and then the church, by her infallible authority, teaches him the inspired character of these books. And here we detect the untenable nature of his argument: and discern how it naturally follows, that when men have rested their belief in holy Scripture on this insufficient foundation, they are very likely to come, on a more mature consideration, to doubt both the one and the other.

Dr. Wiseman sets out, we must bear in mind, with the supposition, that the gospels, in which he is about to seek for the church's authority, are to be considered "simply as historical works," and as "a mere history."

Now out of this "mere history," he is to draw proofs sufficient to establish,—not any light matter, but the institution of an infallible body of spiritual teachers and rulers, and the consequent duty, incumbent on every human being, *of absolute, unconditional submission to the teaching of the church.*"† It will surely be admitted, that to place this immense demand upon a clear and unquestionable foundation, must require a weight of evidence altogether overwhelming.

But what are the proofs Dr. W. adduces, for the

* Wiseman's Third Lecture, pp. 62—65.

† Wiseman's First Lecture, p. 17.

establishment of this, the one fundamental point in his whole system? We quote his own words.

“Now (in reading the gospels) the Catholic falls in with *a number of very strong passages*, in which our blessed Saviour, not content with procuring a continuance of his doctrine, that is to say, the continued obligation of faith upon man, also pledges himself for their actual preservation among them. He selects a certain body of men; he invests them not merely with great authority, but with power equal to his own; he makes them a promise of remaining with them, and teaching among them, even to the end of time,”* &c.

Here, however, we have nothing but Dr. Wiseman’s own assertion, that in the gospels he finds “a number of very strong passages” establishing his infallible church. We still require to have those passages pointed out. And, accordingly in his next lecture (the fourth) the Dr. proceeds to quote,—

1. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”—Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

2. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”—John xiv. 16, 17.

3. “But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”—John xvi. 3.

4. “Upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matt. xvi. 18.

5. “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto

* Wiseman’s Third Lecture, pp. 63, 64.

you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." John xx. 21.

6. "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Luke x. 16.

Now these six texts are all that we find adduced by Dr. Wiseman in support of his assertion, that in the gospels he meets with "a number of very strong passages," "in which Christ invests 'the church' with *power equal to his own*." Let us then, in the next place, carefully consider whether, on any reasonable view of the case, the infallible authority and dominion of Dr. Wiseman's church can be admitted to be proved by these six passages.

But we do not propose to enter upon a critical examination of these texts. Our inquiry is rather a preliminary one. It concerns merely the *external*, rather than the *internal* value of this evidence. It is not what these passages declare?—but with what force and authority are their declarations accompanied? For we must bear in mind that it is only as "mere histories" that we are to receive these records. That the gospels are inspired we cannot know, according to Dr. Wiseman's argument, until we first submit to the church's teaching, and receive her assurance that they are so. Up to that point they can be admitted merely and "simply as historical works:" as "human testimony;" as "the evidence of man."*

Well, then, we are to take up the book of Matthew, or of John, precisely as we take up Josephus, or Bede. Such is Dr. Wiseman's injunction, and we are now endeavouring to follow out *his* reasonings to their practical results.

But no mere human historian ever yet produced a narrative on which, in all its points, and in every particular, we could wholly and satisfactorily rely. The utmost merit that the highest of such writers has ever yet reached, is that of honesty,—of faithfulness,

* Wiseman's Third Lecture, 62, 64, 67.

—of not intending to deceive. No man living will venture to declare his perfect belief in every word set down in either Livy or Tacitus, Josephus or Eusebius. General accuracy, and an evident desire to narrate things as they really occurred, is the very utmost praise that can be awarded to any “mere human historian.”

Take up, then, these three writers, Matthew and Luke and John, and see what is the amount and weight of their testimony, considered under all these qualifications.

The matter in question concerns certain brief expressions of Christ, uttered by him about A. D. 28 and 29. Now the first question is, *when* were these words of Christ recorded? At *what time* were the books in which they are set down written?

The answer to this inquiry is, that Matthew, according to Irenæus, wrote his gospel about A. D. 61: Luke composed his about A. D. 63 or 64; and John, his, not much before his death, in A. D. 100. So that many years, as far as we know, passed away, before these few sentences of Christ’s utterings were *so much as written down*.

Now, we would desire, at every step we take, to have it distinctly understood, that it is *Dr. Wiseman’s view of the case*, and not *our own*, that we are endeavouring to follow out to its legitimate results. Our own course would be *first* to ascertain the inspiration of the holy Scriptures, and then to submit to their decisions on all points; but this would not answer Dr. Wiseman’s purpose. It is necessary for his end, (which is to force us to submit to the authority of his church,) to persuade us that until we do so submit ourselves, there can be no rest for the soles of our feet; and accordingly he would have us believe that without receiving her decisions we can never know whether the Scriptures are inspired or not. But we must contend, on the other hand, that by this course of proceeding, we shall reach no end, except that of believing *nothing at all*. For the “mere human testimony” of two or three ordinary “historians,”

can never establish so momentous a fact as the institution of an infallible church. And this we shall presently see.

Matthew and Luke appear to have set down, about thirty years after they were uttered, certain words of Christ;—and John, about forty years after this, certain other words. Now if we had *first* ascertained the point, that these writers were guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we should admit without hesitation, *as we ought to do*, that these few sentences are recorded with perfect accuracy. But if Dr. Wiseman insists on our taking these records as “mere human testimonies,” and as the “evidence of man,” then we are obliged to tell him that no mere man, unassisted by a higher power, could ever set down the actual words of a conversation, thirty, forty, or sixty years after it occurred, without considerable variations from the words actually used. Conducting, then, the inquiry on Dr. Wiseman’s own plan, taking the concluding words of the history penned by Matthew, and considering it “simply as an historical record,” a mere “human testimony,” we can only receive it as we would receive all other “historical works” of good character; and observing that the conversation alluded to was not recorded until about thirty years after it had taken place, we come to the conclusion which every one would adopt in a similar case,—*putting inspiration out of the question*—and suppose that something of the general tenor of what is there set down, did actually occur. We might even go further than this, and say, that had the narratives of the evangelists been penned at the very time when the events took place, it would still be unreasonable to rest so vast a question as this on the accuracy with which a “mere historian” had reported a few words of a conversation. A well known anecdote will illustrate this point.

After one of the battles of Frederick the Great, king of Prussia, that monarch desired to inform himself, on the same afternoon, as to some circumstance which had occurred in a part of the field from which

he himself had been absent. He called round him all the principal officers who had been on the spot, and required a distinct account of the affair. But instead of receiving at once a clear and consistent narrative of the transaction, he found every one of the witnesses differing from the other on some important point, so that it was almost impossible to arrive at any clear understanding, even on a matter which had occurred only a few hours before. Perplexed by this confusion and contradiction, the king turned to one of his friends, and exclaimed, “And this then *is history!*”

We might add another instance of the state of doubt into which we necessarily fall, when we come to deal with “mere histories.” Take the case of Fox’s Book of Martyrs. Here is a work which was produced at the very time when the most interesting facts narrated in it, occurred. Protestants generally believe the narratives contained in it to be true and faithful. They rely upon it as a correct account of real facts. But Dr. Milner, in his “End of Controversy,” can find no better term for it than “Fox’s lying book of Martyrs,”—“Fox’s ponderous folio of falsehoods.” Thus we get into the region of dispute and controversy, the moment we attempt to rely upon the credit of any “mere history.”

We desire, however, not to be mistaken. We are not disputing the credibility of the Evangelists. We believe that we are bound by the strongest reasons to accept their narratives as most literally and exactly true and faithful. But we arrive at this conclusion *only by first ascertaining their* INSPIRATION. Dr. Wiseman, in opposition to this view, persists in arguing that their inspiration can only be gathered from the infallible decision of the Romish church. Then, if we ask him how he proves the infallibility of the said church? he adduces five or six passages from the gospels, which gospels we are to take, he says, as “mere human histories.” And it is here that our objection comes in. We maintain that his whole argument fails, inasmuch as it is wholly irrational,—look-

ing at the evangelists as "mere human historians,"—to suppose that they were capable of setting down, with perfect accuracy, in the year 61, or 64, or 100, the very words of a conversation which took place A. D. 29. If we are to look upon them in this light, we must necessarily receive their account of these transactions with some doubt and abatement. We cannot profess to believe that the words reported by them, were the very identical words spoken by Christ; and thus the degree of authority conferred on the apostles, and the fact of infallibility itself, said to reside in the church, come to be altogether a matter of doubt. We say that this is the only reasonable way of considering the matter; and we tell Dr. Wiseman, in the plainest terms, that it is wholly impossible to establish an infallible church upon the "mere human testimony" of a fallible historian. We can never submit to so immense an authority, we can never realize so awful, so momentous a fact, as that of the establishment of an unerring tribunal among men, on any mandate lower than that of God himself. He himself must speak, who alone could establish and empower such a tribunal, and we must know, without the possibility of a doubt, that it is He that speaks, and that we have His very words before us. Mere human testimony,—the evidence of a "simple history" cannot suffice, for no mere history was ever produced by man in which a thousand errors were not discernible, and if error can have taken place *here*, our ground of confidence is gone. Nothing, in fact, but the voice of inspiration will suffice in this case. But Dr. Wiseman plainly tells us that "the only basis for the inspiration of the Scriptures," is, the church's infallibility; that we must, in short admit the infallibility of the church, and then receive her decision that Scripture is inspired, or we can never arrive at any certainty of its inspiration at all. We on the other hand, have made it clear, we trust, that nothing but God's own word, nothing less than the voice of inspiration clearly ascertained, can suffice to establish an infallible authority; and thus are we inevita-

bly brought, on Dr. Wiseman's views, to the fearful conclusion of believing neither the Scriptures nor the church; of believing, in short, *nothing!*

But it may perhaps, be objected, that both parties admit the inspiration of the Scriptures, and should not, therefore, quarrel so much about the mode in which this inspiration is proved; the result appearing to be the same.

But it is not the same. We, the Protestants, contend that the inspiration of the Scriptures is capable of clear and irrefragable proof, on the most sufficient grounds, admitted among men in ordinary cases. We assert that the evidence of their divine character is such, that men are left without excuse, if they refuse to listen to them as to the word of God. This is one of our chief controversies with the infidel. Now Dr. Wiseman and the Romish controversialists come in here, and first side with the infidel. They tell us that it is impossible to establish our case, in the way, and by the reasonings which we bring forward. They add, indeed, that the Scriptures are really inspired, but they go on to say, that the only way by which they have arrived at the knowledge of this fact, and the only way by which it can be established at all, is by the authoritative decision of the church. The church, that is the Romish church, “stands forth,” to use Dr. Wiseman's own words,—“with that authority wherewith she is invested by Christ”—and proclaims, “Under that guarantee of divine assistance which the words of Christ, in whom you believe, have given me, I pronounce that this book contains the revealed word of God, and is inspired by the Holy Spirit; and that it contains all that has a right to enter into the sacred collection.”

Thus the Romanist first takes part with the infidel, and declares it to be useless to attempt to prove the inspiration of the Scriptures by any ordinary course of proofs or arguments. And having thus deprived us, as far as it is in his power, of every valid and sufficient argument, he offers us instead, one wholly illogical and untenable, one which no astute and

clear headed infidel will ever be satisfied with. "The Scriptures are inspired," he says, "though this cannot be proved by fair argument:"—"The Scriptures are inspired, and you ought to believe it, because the church declares it." Now nothing more palpably illogical than this was ever proposed to the reasoning faculties of men. The Romanist is arguing with the unbeliever, with one as yet unsatisfied either with the divine authority of the Scriptures, or the divine commission of the church. And he tells him, "You must receive the Scriptures as inspired, for such is the decision of the church." The infidel naturally rejoins, "But why am I to submit to the decision of the church that they are so?" The answer is, "Because the Scriptures assure us of the church's inability to err." "So that," the infidel would reply, "I am to receive as divine, a book which I take to be a mere device of priestcraft, merely because those priests tell me that it is divine. And if I ask why I am to submit to their decision, and believe what is contrary to common sense, the answer is, that this book, which I rather imagine they manufactured themselves, declares them to be infallible! But this is too gross an imposition to pass with me. Just as reasonably might I become a Mahometan at once. For did not Mahomet declare the Koran to be the inspired word of God, given by him, and did not the Koran in return assert Mahomet to be the chosen prophet of God? Here is just the same sort of false reasoning. In fact, what should prevent any set of religious impostors, in any age of the world, from concocting a pretended revelation, describing them as the anointed messengers of God, and then assuming to themselves this infallible authority, and insisting upon the reception of these writings upon their authoritative decision that they were inspired. Or, to take a more familiar case. Two unknown persons enter my house, and propose to me to entrust some important matter to them. I have doubts as to both of them. But the first assures me of the honour and integrity of the second, and the second vouches for the character of the first. Have

I any real guarantee in this, their mutual recommendation? Is there any thing more in it than two impostors might offer with the utmost ease?”

Dr. Wiseman, however, has attempted to reply to this objection. He says, “But some, perhaps, will say ‘these are mutual and consequently insufficient testimonies; you believe that the Scripture first teaches you the church, and then that the church teaches you the Scripture.’”

“To this I might reply, that there is a fallacy in the very reasoning. When an ambassador presents himself before a sovereign, he is asked, where are his credentials? He presents them, and on the strength of them he is acknowledged as an ambassador; so that he himself first presents that document, whereby alone his mission and authority are subsequently established.”

“But in fact the argument is falsely stated. We do not believe the church on the authority of Scripture, properly so called; we believe it on the authority of *Christ*; and if his commands in her regard, were recorded in any other book which we felt ourselves bound to believe, although uninspired, we should receive them and consequently the authority of the church, equally as now.”*

This reply virtually concedes the point for which we are contending. It consists of two parts—First, the illustration of an ambassador, of which the Romish controversialists are very fond. He says, “When an ambassador presents himself before a sovereign, he is asked, where are his credentials? He presents them, and on the strength of them, he is acknowledged as an ambassador; so that he himself first presents the documents whereby his mission and authority are established.” Now here it is plainly implied, that the ambassador has with him credentials, of the real character of which there is no doubt. A person presenting himself at court, whose person was wholly unknown, and whose real character and mission was

* Wiseman’s Third Lecture, p. 65.

doubtful, would not find the difficulty cleared up by presenting papers respecting which there was the same doubt as concerning himself. His credentials might, indeed, establish his credit, but only if their own character was perfectly indubitable. And just so we contend, that the church can never establish such a claim as that of infallibility, on less than inspired authority. She must *first of all* commence with this. Mere human testimony, which may be full of error, will not suffice.

A word misplaced, a phrase omitted, things which constantly occur in every human author, may entirely change the sense of any passage. And so, when Dr. Wiseman says, in his second observation, that "we do not believe the church upon the authority of Scripture, properly so called; we believe it on the authority of Christ; and if his commands in her regard, were recorded in any other book which we felt ourselves bound to believe, although uninspired, we should receive them and consequently the authority of the church, equally as now;" it is again clear that he is obliged to assume the inspiration of the gospels, to make his argument a valid one. Our only certainty that we have "the authority of Christ" in the gospels, rests on their inspiration. Without this all is doubtful and uncertain. And thus we see that it is absolutely impossible for the Romish church ever to construct a single argument of even apparent consistency, without somehow or other assuming this necessary point. And yet she persists in denying the possibility of knowing the inspiration of Scripture without her aid, and thus leaves herself, at last, without any solid defence against the infidel.

Let us now endeavour to bring the view we have been taking, into the compass of a few sentences. The point we have endeavoured to establish is this—that the objections brought against the Protestant rule of faith by Dr. Wiseman and others, tend, if followed to their just and logical consequences, to settle the reasoner's mind, not in Romanism, but in infidelity. This we prove as follows:

The Protestant, feeling the want of a rule of faith, a sure and infallible guide, to conduct him safely towards the unseen world, examines the evidences in favour of the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. These evidences he finds to be amply sufficient; and he is thus brought to see that the Bible is, in very deed, the WORD OF GOD. From this instant it becomes his *Infallible Guide*, the guide of his steps, the safeguard of his way.

But the Romanist, seeing that if the Bible is thus enthroned in its rightful dominion, there will be little chance of establishing the authority of his church, denies, not only that the Scriptures were ever intended to occupy this place, but he denies also that their inspiration and divine character can thus be ascertained without the interference or aid of his church. He boldly takes the infidel line of argument, arrays in opposition all the difficulties and discrepancies that he can muster; and finally concludes that it is only by first admitting the authority of his church that we can come to know that the Scriptures are inspired.

But imagine for a moment that this point is conceded to the Romanist, and that we are thus deprived of the rule which we fancied we possessed—namely, the unerring word of God. We now pause for a moment, and look around for some guide in this wilderness—some friendly pilot, by which we may reach the haven of eternal rest. And what is proffered to us? The church? Well, then, of course we ask whether the evidence in favour of the church is clearer, stronger, and more unembarrassed with difficulties than that in favour of the Bible. If we were not to take the inspiration of the Scriptures for granted, of course we must not be asked to take the divine authority of the church for granted either. What, then, are the credentials of the church? what is the evidence of her divine commission,—evidence so clear, so indisputable, that all that can be adduced in favour of the inspiration of the Scriptures shrinks from comparison with it?

The evidence by which this church of Rome estab-

lishes her divine commission, is stated by Dr. Wiseman to be nothing more than five or six passages in certain old books, written by Matthew, and Luke, and John, about eighteen hundred years since. These old books Dr. Wiseman will not permit us to look upon as inspired,—for until we have *first* ascertained the church's commission, and received her decision as to their inspiration, we must only consider them as “mere historians.” But in these old writings we find five or six passages, not designating Rome, any more than Constantinople; not pointing to the pope, any more than to the archbishop of Canterbury; but promising a general presence and blessing to the disciples of Christ in all ages.

And upon these five or six passages, Dr. Wiseman builds the assumption, that Christ appointed the pope and the college of cardinals at Rome to govern the church in all ages, making their decisions infallible and without appeal; and that the duty of all mankind is neither more nor less than that of “*absolute, unconditional submission to the teaching of the church.*” This church then becomes our infallible RULE, and we now receive the Scriptures at her hands, and believe them to be the word of God, merely because she declares them to be so!

But this scheme is not logically tenable. We will not now discuss the passages cited; their bearing and import may be more or less absolute and distinct. But we will merely observe, that if we are to take them as ordinary “human historians,” and to accept their narratives just as we should those of other parties, writing, like them, many years after the occurrences related took place, we must necessarily look upon every sentence, every word, in fact, of these five or six passages, as being more or less uncertain. *The inspiration of the writers being put out of view*, there is not a word of these few brief passages, of the accuracy of which we can feel positively assured. What really occurred may have been, by the omission or addition of a word or two, materially altered. Upon such a basis as this, therefore, it is idle to think of

resting so vast an edifice as an infallible tribunal. As well might we attempt to erect St. Peter's on a quicksand. The attempt utterly fails.

The result, then, is as follows: The Romanist first takes part with the sceptic in denying the possibility of establishing the divine inspiration of the Scriptures: He then endeavours to rear up an infallible and divinely commissioned authority in the room of the Scriptures,—but upon no better foundation than a few brief sentences of two or three “mere historians,” who, of course, might err, might be misinformed, or might misconstrue what they heard. This attempt necessarily fails; and having previously declared it impossible to ascertain the inspiration of the Scriptures without the aid of the Church, the poor Romanist is necessarily left, if he conducts the inquiry with logical precision, without any escape from the gulf of infidelity.

XI.—THE PROTESTANT RULE OF FAITH.

THE GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PROCEEDING with the consideration of Dr. Wiseman's objections to the Scriptures as a Rule of Faith, we are now to enter upon the second point,—that the difficulties raised by Dr. W. in the way of an ordinary and unlearned person, are not of that serious or insurmountable character which he would have us to suppose. And perhaps it will be the most satisfactory method, if we follow, step by step, Dr. W.'s own argument.

His first difficulty, as he himself states it, is this: that "before any one can even commence the examination of that rule, which his church proposes to him, he must have satisfied himself, that all those books or writings, which are gathered together in that volume, are really the genuine works of those whose names they bear; and that no such genuine work has been excluded, so that the rule be perfect and entire."* In other words, he must be convinced that the Scriptures are authentic documents, and that the canon has been so settled as to be clear and indisputable. Now we trust that there will be little difficulty in showing, that the proofs and evidences on these points are so clear, so abundant, and so accessible, as to offer to every candid inquirer absolute demonstration, and *that*, by means of an investigation, which need be neither laborious nor prolonged.

This investigation, however, concerns two distinct

* Wiseman's Second Lecture, p. 32.

questions. We have the Hebrew Scriptures, or the books of Moses and the prophets, which were entrusted to the Jewish church, and which, under God's providence, were kept entire and pure from error by that church. And we have also the Greek Scriptures, or the books of the New Testament, of which the Jewish people never had charge, but which were deposited with the Christian church, and which that church, like the Jewish, has preserved whole and unconfounded with any spurious productions. This point, indeed, is worthy of remark, and ought to call for our grateful admiration. Both the Jewish church and the Christian have fallen into great sins and backslidings; but still that one peculiar duty which God put upon them, he took care that they should accurately fulfil. To the Jews "were committed the oracles of God," so far as the Hebrew prophets had declared those oracles; and to the Christian church, the like records concerning the gospel. The Jewish church even denied and crucified the Lord of glory, and was driven into exile and slavery for that crime;—but still this especial duty of bearing witness to the "holy oracles" was never forgotten, and to this hour that witness is borne, and those oracles are preserved, even in the midst of total apostasy and rejection of the gospel. The ancient Christian churches, too, as first planted at Jerusalem, at Antioch, and at Rome, have fallen into fearful error and apostasy; but still the duty of bearing witness to the oracles committed to them is in force, and that witness they do accordingly bear. Thus the Jewish church is perfectly clear and unfaltering in her testimony to the Jewish Scriptures; and the Christian churches, including even Rome herself, bear equally unhesitating witness to the Christian records. Each, in its own department, fully discharges the duty laid upon it. And thus it comes to pass, that the only apocryphal or doubtful writings which at all interfere with the clearness of this testimony, are those which Rome has endeavoured to add, not to her own sacred deposit, the Christian records, but to those of the Jews,

—to those with which, as keeper, she had no concern. In her own department,—the care of the books of the New Testament,—even Rome herself was not permitted to go astray; but in that in which she had no office or function, the care of the Hebrew Scriptures, she was left to follow her own devices, and to do what mischief she could. But let it be always remembered, that the Jews, the keepers of the Hebrew Scriptures, are perfectly decided in their evidence as to what those Scriptures comprehend; and the Christian churches, which have the charge of the New Testament, are equally agreed on the canon of that part of holy writ. The only dispute has arisen from the church of Rome having gone out of its own province, and assumed the right of adding to the canon of *the Jewish Scriptures*, with the settlement of which she had nothing whatever to do.

Having made this remark in passing, we will now come to the main subject. Probably it will be the best course to take each of these two series by itself, and to begin with the Greek Scriptures, the books of the New Testament. Dr. Wiseman's objection is,—that great difficulties meet the inquirer who wishes to ascertain, 1st. that all these books or writings are really the genuine works of those whose names they bear; and, 2d. that nothing has been omitted or excluded which ought by right to form part of the series.

To this question we will now address ourselves. And first, let us bear in mind the universal experience of mankind, as to the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of gaining credence and establishment for a forged work, especially if the matter contained in that work be of any importance or interest to mankind generally. We are told that David Hume, about a century ago, wrote and published a History of England. There is no one, of course, now living, who can at all attest the fact, from his own knowledge, that this very man Hume did write that identical book; and yet the man who refuses to believe that fact would be justly considered as little better

than a fool. And why? *First*, because the book has been universally received, in our own time, and in that of our fathers, as that of the author whose name it bears; and, *secondly*, because an immense body of corroborative evidence is accessible, consisting of the testimonies of various persons of that and succeeding periods, all testifying to the fact, that such a man did actually live at the time in question, and that he did write and publish that book.

But may not the public of that day have been deceived into the reception of a spurious work; and may not the writers in question have been involved in the same error? Such questions are best answered by inquiring, whether it would be easy, at the present instant, to gain credit for a forgery, purporting to be two additional volumes of the same history?

Every one at all acquainted with such matters, knows in an instant that the thing would be impossible. The imposture would be instantly detected, and the forgery, if it were remembered at all at a distance of fifty years hence, would only be remembered *as a forgery*.

General reception, then, is the strongest possible evidence for the authenticity of any work. Why do we entirely believe that Thucydides and Herodotus wrote the histories which bear their names, or that Virgil produced a poem called "the *Æneid*," or Milton one entitled "Paradise Lost?" Because we know by abundant experience, that an imposition upon the whole body of intelligent and educated men who are living at any one time, is, in any matter of moment, absolutely impossible; and that consequently, if a whole generation of such men have admitted a fact of this kind, the evidence of its truth is little short of that of our own senses.

Upon these principles we receive the works of various celebrated heathens, who lived in the same age with the evangelists and apostles,—such as Livy, Cæsar, and Seneca,—although we have not, for any one of their works, evidence of the hundredth part of the strength of that which confirms the authenticity

of the Greek Scriptures. We receive them without a doubt. Not a dissentient voice, among all the philosophers and learned men, whether Christian or infidel, ventures to suggest the least ground for hesitation. And, in fact, any man who plainly declared his disbelief in the genuineness of Cæsar's Commentaries, would be instantly set down, by all competent judges as an irrational person, or in other words, as all but an idiot.

But it may be said, that this is all very well in the case of mere human works, the truth and authenticity of which may be of small importance; but that we must require, in a case of this vast and momentous kind, some higher evidence than mere human testimony?

Let us, however, reflect for a moment, what it is that we are asking. God has given to mankind a book, which is intended to be "a light unto their steps, and a lamp unto their path." We are not now to enter on that part of the subject, or we should urge, in the first place, that the intrinsic character of such a work must be its strongest evidence of authenticity. The book of God must be such a book as no human being could indite. *And the Bible is such a book.* But we must not open this part of the question. We keep to external evidence, and remark, in the first place, that it were wholly unreasonable to expect that God, having given such a book to man, should set aside the laws of nature, and should himself, by a personal manifestation, or by an angelic messenger, place it in each individual's hand, as his immediate gift, supernaturally conveyed. Abundantly sufficient is it, if this book be not only found, when examined, to be such as God alone could have dictated; but if its authenticity and genuineness, as the true and real production of certain inspired prophets and apostles, whose names are thereunto affixed, and whose histories are fully known, be made not only as clear as the genuineness of other works, but a hundred times more so. And this has been done, as we shall now proceed to show.

Confining ourselves, at present, to the point of the genuineness and authenticity of these books, we first propose this view of the case:

Suppose the inquirer to have been born about the year of our Lord, 110, or shortly after the death of John, he would then have found, when he came to man's estate, a certain book, preserved among the Christian churches, which was called John's gospel, or the history of Christ written by him. This book he would have found every where held, by these Christians, in high esteem, being copied, read, and preserved among them as a document of the highest value.

Of John himself, his labours, his character, and the certainty of his having really written the book in question, he would have found many who could testify of their own personal knowledge. Enemies, too, there would be, but not one of these ever thought of questioning the fact, that the apostle was in truth the author of the said book.

Now, under these circumstances, what could he do but fully admit and believe this fact, that the book in question was really produced by John? And having thus received it, he would naturally teach the same thing to the generation which succeeded him, and they, in their turn, to that which followed. It is thus that we know that David Hume wrote a history of England, and John Bunyan, "The Pilgrim's Progress." And if we begin to object to this sort of testimony, we shall very soon come to deny that there ever was such a person as Bonaparte, or such an event as the battle of Waterloo.

We have thus placed ourselves in imagination in the second century. But may we not as well deal with the fact as it is, and show how we now, in the nineteenth century, assure ourselves of the authenticity of these books? Let us ask, first, how do we satisfy ourselves of similar matters concerning other documents. For instance, as a late writer asks, "How do we know that the survey of England, called Domesday Book, was written in the eleventh century? I

apply the like arguments. We received by distinct transmission the historical fact. It was matter of record. It has been referred to by contemporary and all succeeding historians. It has been appealed to in our courts of law, from A. D. 1100 to the present time. I am, therefore, just as certain of the authenticity of this celebrated document, as if I had lived at the period when it was first compiled.”*

Or, to go back to the very period of our own sacred books; how do we ascertain the genuineness of any of the great Roman authors of the Augustan age—of the writings of Seneca, for instance, who was put to death by Nero, about A. D. 68, or very near the time of the martyrdom of Paul? “I answer, on the same principle as before, because I can trace up the book from the present age, in successive reference or quotation, through each preceding age to the very time in which he lived. I turn to Tacitus, the celebrated contemporary historian, whose writings have been in every one’s hand ever since, and there I read the account of Seneca. I turn to Quintilian, who flourished within twenty years of Seneca’s death, and there I find a criticism on his works. From that day to the present I see those works referred to, quoted, commended, blamed, by men of different classes, ages, nations, and opinions, in opposition to each other in almost every other respect, but all agreeing as to the authenticity of these books, I have here all the evidence I could desire. I am as certain of the historical fact concerning the writings of Seneca, as I should have been if I had lived at the time.”†

But we assert something more than this. We assert that the evidence in favour of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, is far stronger than that in favour of any other ancient books whatever. And it is so, to a degree which sets all comparison at defiance. We may particularize:

1. The testimonies borne to them by indepen-

* Wilson’s Evidences, vol. i. p. 71.

† Wilson’s Evidences, vol. i. p. 72.

dent writers, both friendly and unfriendly to their contents.

2. The immense number of ancient manuscript copies, which are found in every part of the world.

3. The evidence of facts which are open to our own observation, and which confirm the statements therein made.

Let us begin with the testimony borne to them by authors of every age.

We receive the writings of Seneca, as has just been observed, because we find his history recorded in Tacitus, an historian of that day; because we find Quintilian, a writer immediately following him, criticising his works as known and authentic productions, and because we find those writings preserved, referred to, quoted, and handed down to us, through each successive age from that in which he lived to the present. Now let us try the New Testament by a similar rule.

The first disciples of the apostles, like the apostles themselves, were not selected from the wise or learned of the earth, nor could we expect to find many remains of their writings. Yet there are fragments now extant of no less than six of the fellow-labourers of the apostles; *Clement, Hermas, Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papias*, all of whom were personally acquainted with the apostles, and who, even in the short pieces of their production which still remain, cite the books of the New Testament as works universally known and admitted as of authority among Christians, not fewer than *two hundred and twenty times*.

In the next century this testimony becomes still more extensive. We have thirty-six writers, whose works, in whole or in part, have come down to us, and so numerous are their citations, that a large part of the New Testament might be collected from their writings. *Justin Martyr*, for instance,—who was born A. D. 89, and died A. D. 164, gives us nearly two hundred quotations. We also find abundant evidence in these writers, that the Scriptures were at this time

customarily read in the churches, that they were collected into volumes, and that translations of them into other languages were then carrying on.

In the third and fourth centuries, the evidence of this kind becomes too voluminous to be even described. More than a hundred authors remain, all whose works bear testimony to the same leading fact, that the books which we call the New Testament were then universally received throughout the Christian church. Quotations become so numerous, that in one single father, Athanasius, they exceed twelve hundred. And now we find, as we might expect, great attention given to the settlement of the canon. Spurious books had appeared. Councils are therefore held, and the most careful inquiries gone into, as to the genuineness of every book; and those only are admitted into the sacred collection, whose title is established by sufficient and concurrent testimony. Thus, the very inquiry through which we are now passing, was gone into at a period when the best possible evidence was attainable—when, in all probability, the very autographs of the apostles themselves were still extant; when the disciples of those who had seen and conversed with them were still living; and when the churches which they had formed still existed in the very form and order in which they had themselves constituted them.

It cannot be necessary to proceed any further with this chain of evidence, for every one who is conversant with ancient writings must know that from the period of the council of Nice, A. D. 313, the whole literature of Europe bears continual and unvarying witness to the fact, that the Scriptures were universally received, and that those Scriptures were the same books which we now possess under that title. We will just allude, however, to the evidence of the adversaries of the Christian faith during these early periods. For instance, we find Celsus, a heathen philosopher, living about A. D. 175, arguing against Christianity with the greatest earnestness and acuteness; but he never attempts to deny either the existence or the genuineness

of the books of the New Testament. On the contrary, he argues upon them as authentic works, and as generally received. So also does Porphyry, another heathen opponent, in the next century. He too, like Celsus, opposes the Christian faith, but he does not think of denying the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures. Julian, again, the emperor, argues against Christianity with all the zeal and bitterness of an apostate, but he deals with the gospels as the unquestionable writings of the apostles and disciples of Christ, and as generally admitted and acknowledged to be such.

This is but a slight sketch of the immense body of evidence which is extant, establishing the fact, that the books of the New Testament, were generally received, at the time of their production, and at every subsequent period, as the true and genuine works of the disciples and apostles of our Lord. But we proceed

Secondly, to remark on the further proof afforded by the circumstance of the vast number of ancient copies of these books which have come down to us.

The standard works of ancient classics or historians have been generally preserved by a few remaining manuscripts. Of some we have ten or twelve; of others two or three, of many only one. Yet, when the internal character of the work is consistent with that of the author, and we have the collateral proof derived from the allusions and criticisms of contemporary writers, we do not hesitate to adopt even a single manuscript as a valuable and genuine relic of an established author.

But instead of ten or twelve, or even of fifty or an hundred, the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament are numbered by thousands. Every ancient library throughout Christendom abounds with them. Nor are these manuscripts the production of any particular age, but of all, even from the days of the apostles, down to the invention of printing. No possible proof can be imagined, more conclusive than this, of

the fact, that in all these ages they were known, and in all of them highly prized and honoured.

About five hundred different manuscripts of the New Testament are known to have been collated, and by these collations or comparisons another fact has been established, namely, that so carefully has the watchful eye of God's providence guarded the sacred text, that not one of all these hundreds of transcribers, in all ages and all countries of the world, has been permitted to introduce a single fundamental alteration, or even a doubt tending to weaken any one doctrine of the Christian faith.

We will mention a few of these ancient copies, in order to show the extraordinary completeness of the proof arising from this branch of evidence.

In the British Museum, among a multitude of ancient copies, we find especially the *Codex Alexandrinus*, or Alexandrian copy, which was presented in 1628, by the patriarch of Constantinople, to King Charles I. That patriarch stated, in a schedule thereunto annexed, that the traditional history of it described it as having been written by Thecla, a noble Egyptian lady, about 1300 years before that time, (A. D. 1628) or about the period of the council of Nice, in the beginning of the fourth century.

In the Vatican at Rome we find the *Codex Vaticanus*, a manuscript which is assigned by antiquaries to the fourth century, and which contains not only the books of the New Testament, but also the Greek Version of the Septuagint.

At Cambridge is deposited the *Codex Bezae*, or copy of Beza, who presented it to that university in 1581. It contains the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, in Greek, with the Latin version in use before the time of Jerome. This manuscript is assigned by Dr. Kipling to the second century, though other learned men contend for a date somewhat later.

In the Royal Library at Paris is the *Codex Ephræmi*, a very ancient manuscript, containing the whole of the Greek Bible, though the earlier part is some-

what defaced. The same library also possesses the *Codex Cleromontanus*, a manuscript of Paul's epistles in Greek, with the ancient Latin version. It was found in the monastery of Clermont, and is believed to be of the date of the sixth or seventh century.

We may add, that lately a splendid manuscript of the whole Bible, written by one of the chief scholars of the court of Charlemagne, was publicly exhibited in London. But of that period, and of later dates, manuscripts abound in every part of Europe.

We might extend this series of proofs by referring to the various translations which are known to have been made, such as that of Jerome, into Latin, in A. D. 384—that of Ulphilas, into Gothic, about the same period—that of Frumentius, into Ethiopic, also in the fourth century; that of Miesrob, into Armenian, of the fifth century; with the Anglo-Saxon, of the eighth, and the Slavonian, of the ninth centuries,—but we must desist: The difficulty, in truth, that chiefly perplexes us here, is, how to select from the abundant and overwhelming proofs which press upon us on every side. But we must hasten onwards, and shall advert next, very briefly, to the *evidence of facts*.

What we mean by this expression, will be seen by simply referring to the standing evidence afforded by the Lord's Supper. This rite, or rather sacrament, is now, and has been for eighteen centuries, in universal use among all Christian churches. Christians can satisfactorily explain its origin and intent, by referring to the account of its institution in the gospels and epistles. The narrative and the fact present a perfect agreement. But if we reject this account of the matter, then we find ourselves in this difficulty, that a practice exists among all the Christian nations of the earth, of the origin and meaning of which no satisfactory account can be given. For no other account than that which the gospels furnish, has ever been produced by any of the opponents of Christianity.

A like evidence is furnished by the other sacrament, that of baptism. Perhaps it may be said that the admission of converts into the profession of a religion has generally taken place by some kind of baptism. But Christian baptism is a baptism into the names and worship of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These ancient books, for the authenticity of which we are now contending, tell us that this rite was instituted by Christ himself in this very form, above eighteen hundred years ago. And we can prove without difficulty, by a great number of ancient writers, that such a rite has been observed, throughout all those centuries, by such as professed to believe and obey Christ. And to close the chain of evidence, we see with our own eyes the fact now in existence around us; a fact of the origin of which we find no other rational account than that which the gospels supply.

Again, Christians observe, with religious worship, the first day of the week, differing therein, not only from the heathen, but also from the Jews. Whence arises this distinction? The gospels explain it. It was on the first day of the week that the Saviour rose from the dead; and his disciples, from that time forward, hallowed that day as their Sabbath, and met together to break bread, to hear and read the Scriptures, and to exhort one another to faith, and to works of charity.

We ought, perhaps, to have given a fourth class of proofs, namely, the corroborations of Scripture which abound in the works of the adversaries of Christianity: such as Tacitus and Pliny, two learned heathen writers, each of whom bears witness to the fact of the existence of the Christian religion and the worship of Christ; the one, about the year A. D. 60, the other, about A. D. 170; and both of whom confirm the leading facts as to the death of Christ and the character of his religion. In Josephus, too, a Jewish writer, decidedly hostile to Christianity, we have various confirmations of all the leading facts of the gospel history; as we have also in the Mishna, a collec-

tion of Jewish traditions, published about A. D. 180, and in the Talmud, compiled between A. D. 300 and 500. And lastly, Mahomet himself, when founding a rival faith, expressly alludes to our Lord, and to John the Baptist, and speaks of Christ's miracles and his ascension as indubitable facts. But we almost fear overwhelming the question with such variety of proofs, and therefore shall only add, in closing this part of the subject, that there is not a fact in all ancient history which is established by evidence of one hundredth part of the strength which combines to prove the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament. We might deny the existence of Julius Cæsar, or of Charlemagne, or even of Bonaparte himself, with much more show of rationality, than we can question the existence of the apostle Paul, or the fact of his having bequeathed to the church his invaluable epistles.

The foregoing remarks, however, are confined to the question of the authenticity of the New Testament; and we have still to speak of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The one question, however, is included in the other. If we arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to the New Testament,—that it is an authentic collection, written, unquestionably, by the authors whose names it bears,—and if its doctrines and averments be not only *generally* true, but in all cases infallibly so, being inspired by the Holy Spirit,—then we shall find the whole question as to the Old Testament already disposed of. For, throughout the New Testament are the Hebrew Scriptures constantly appealed to, their statements confirmed, or taken to be altogether indubitable, and their whole contents to be “given by inspiration of God,” “for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.”

We may, therefore, next proceed to the question of the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, which, indeed, is the point on which Dr. Wiseman predicted that we should find the greatest difficulty.

But we must first remark, that another important point,—the credibility or truth of the books of the New Testament, is, in effect, involved in their authenticity or genuineness. I mean, that having arrived at a certainty that the books in question are not forgeries, but that they were actually written at the times, and by the persons whose names they bear, we shall find it impossible to avoid the next conclusion,—namely, that they were *true records* of things which really occurred.

These books relate, not a series of ordinary or immaterial occurrences only, but a course of the most extraordinary and supernatural events that ever took place on the earth. The authors either witnessed and knew the truth of the things which they relate, or they were a company of the greatest liars and deceivers that the world ever saw.

That they were liars and impostors is in the last degree *improbable*, inasmuch as the system of morals which they preached, was the highest and purest ever inculcated upon man. It included perfect holiness, in thought, word, and deed, and especially forbade falsehood, under the penalty of eternal misery in hell.

The declaration of the gospel of Christ, and the inculcation of this system of pure and holy living, offered to them no prospects of earthly gains, or honours, or power; but the very contrary. They preached this faith and morality throughout whole lives of suffering, contempt, and hardship, and died, for the most part in cruel torments, without any one of them abandoning his Christian profession.

The supposition, therefore, that a set of men, of irreproachable lives, and preaching a system of the highest and purest morality, would persist, through a long series of years, in a tissue of the grossest falsehoods, and all this without any one human motive, without a hope of gaining any thing but scorn and suffering for their pains, is about the most extravagant specimen of *improbability* that ever was imagined. And when we remember that during a period

of sixty or seventy years, not one of their number ever gave way—not one, amidst all their sufferings, ever threw off the disguise and acknowledged the whole to be an imposture, we must certainly admit that, on the hypothesis that the system was based in falsehood, the so long endurance of so great a number of persons, without any imaginable motive, in braving the severest persecution in its assertion, was the most stupendous *moral miracle* that the world ever beheld!

But that the gospel history is a falsehood, is more than improbable: it is *impossible*.

The general reception of the gospels, upon which we have already dwelt, as proving their genuineness and authenticity, proves this also.

We have seen that these books, the gospels and epistles, were, from the very beginning of Christianity, received and preserved with honour, as sacred books. We have seen that in the age immediately succeeding the apostles, they were universally admitted as *authorities*, and were quoted as such by every Christian writer. This evidence grows and increases with the spread of Christianity, and we soon see the canon formed, catalogues of the sacred books authoritatively settled, and translations of the now completed New Testament commenced.

Now all this establishes in the most irrefragable manner, the fact, that from the very beginning of Christianity, these books were admitted and recognized as true.

These books, however, abound with narratives of the most extraordinary facts. The times and places of those events are always given, and multitudes of witnesses are appealed to, as knowing the truth of the facts so stated. Now that such narratives as these, if they were altogether false, should have been universally received as true, is nothing less than utterly *impossible*.

True, it might possibly be asked, Did not Mahomet, in the Koran, pretend to have been the subject of divers miracles; and has it not been shown, in one

of our former essays, that many miracles, generally received in the Romish church, were, in fact, no miracles at all?

These remarks, however, only go to strengthen our position. Mahomet, asserting a divine mission, and therefore standing in great need of miracles to establish his claim, yet never ventured to assert that he had publicly performed a single such act. True, he relates marvellous stories of being carried up to heaven on a mule, and the like, but such narratives as these prove nothing. Any impostor may narrate dreams, and visions, and spiritual revelations, concerning which not a single person besides himself knows any thing, and he is beyond the reach of contradiction. But to raise the dead, or to give sight to the incurably blind, is a more difficult task. The common sense of mankind will not submit to imposition in such matters as these; and accordingly Mahomet never ventured even to profess his power to perform acts of this description.

And just the same is the case with the Romish church. Their miracles are generally done in a corner; in some secluded nunnery, or private apartment, and they consist in restoring a lame hand, or giving strength to a weakened back, or some other dubious sort of proceeding, which fancy or medicine might have effected, without calling in supernatural aid.

And here it is that the truth of the New Testament writers is manifested in such resplendent clearness. Take the case of Luke. He, like Matthew and Mark, records the remarkable fact, that during the hours of Jesus' agony on the cross, there was a supernatural gloom, the sun itself being darkened: and that at the moment of his death, there was an earthquake which rent the solid marble veil of the temple; and that these manifestations so struck the centurion and the multitude, that they openly expressed their conviction of the divine character of Christ!

Luke then goes on to assert that shortly after our Lord's departure, a supernatural gift of tongues was

conferred on the disciples, whereby they, being previously ignorant Galileans, were instantaneously enabled to speak with fluency, the tongues of all the various foreigners who visited Jerusalem. He adds, that on the same occasion, a single sermon of Peter's produced so astonishing an effect on the people at Jerusalem, as to convert about three thousand souls!

He next tells us that a certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb, and who was well known by all the frequenters of the temple, was, in that great resort, and at the hour when it was most thronged, publicly and instantaneously cured of his lameness, by a single word from Peter!

Not to particularize each of the supernatural events recorded by him, we will merely add that he distinctly asserts that at Joppa, Peter, restored to life a woman who had lain some hours dead, and that this "was known throughout all Joppa." He tells us that the same apostle, being confined with most extraordinary care in the prison at Jerusalem, was released by an angel in so miraculous a manner, as to leave the keepers without any reasonable account to give, of his escape; another fact which must have been matter of perfect notoriety, if true. And of Paul he narrates many equally miraculous circumstances.

Now these narratives, be it remembered, were published, in the face of all, whether friends or opposers, in the very theatre of all these mighty deeds. If all these strange facts were mere inventions, what but shame and confusion of face could have been the lot of the author and his book? Let any one, in the present day, publish a story, that on a certain calamitous day, all England was covered with a supernatural darkness, not atmospheric merely, but arising from a visible loss of the sun's brightness. Let him add, that at the same moment the earth shook, and an immense chasm opened in the dome of St. Paul's cathedral. What would be said of such an historian? Would there be a single voice raised in his defence?

Would it be possible that at the end of five or ten years, his narrative could be quoted as possessing the least authority? Most assuredly not. The book might be remembered, it is true; but it would only be mentioned by contemporaries either as the work of a madman, or a most audacious collection of falsehoods.

But what was the fate of Luke's narrative? Do we find in any of the writings of the heathens and Jews of that day, any reproach directed against the evangelists or apostles, as publishing a series of the most monstrous fictions? Not a word—on the contrary, every allusion that we find is a confirmation of the truth of these records. Josephus confirms many of the principal facts narrated in the gospels. So does Tacitus;—and the early Christian writers, such as Justin Martyr, in appealing to the emperors for justice, constantly refer to the archives of the empire, in which, as they assert, there was deposited under Pilate's own hand, a full confirmation of all the chief facts of their case. Tertullian boldly says, "Search your own public records; at the moment of Christ's death, the light departed from the sun, and the land was darkened at noon-day, which wonder is related in your own annals, and is preserved in your archives."*

The main feature of the case, however, is, that these books, the gospels and other portions of the New Testaments, were universally received and honoured in the highest degree. They stated facts of the most extraordinary character, and the truth or falsehood of those statements must have been universally known. To suppose that the whole body of the Christians, knowing them to be filled with the most notorious falsehoods,—asserting miracles which never took place, and gifts of tongues and wonderful conversions of which no one ever heard, would nevertheless have exalted them to divine honours, would be beyond all credibility. To suppose, too, that, if

* Apology, c. 21.

they were so filled with falsehoods, and were generally known to be fabulous, none of the opposers of the gospel, such as Celsus, Porphyry, or Julian, should ever have poured contempt upon them; nay should even have admitted their statements to be generally correct, is equally out of all reasonable belief. The fact is, that their general reception, and their unimpeached admission even by the enemies of the gospel, fully establish the fact of their substantial TRUTH.

XII.—THE PROTESTANT RULE OF FAITH.

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

OUR last essay closed the argument on the *genuineness* and *authenticity* of the Holy Scriptures, and we now come to speak of their *Divine Inspiration*.

Such, at least, is the natural course; though, indeed, if their genuineness and authenticity be conceded, their inspiration seems to follow as a necessary consequence.

Not that we would assert, that if a narrative is shown to be authentic and generally credible, it is therefore to be admitted as of divine authority; but that, considering the things declared in the books in question, and the authority continually assumed therein, we must come to one of two conclusions,—either that the apostles and evangelists were liars and impostors; or that they really wrote under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. Now we have already come to the conclusion that it was *impossible* that they could be liars and impostors, and yet be received as true witnesses by all the myriads of the early Christian church: consequently there is only the other conclusion remaining to us.

But it will certainly be advisable to state this argument somewhat more fully and explicitly. We begin, then, by observing that the apostles themselves lay claim, without hesitation, to divine authority and direction. They do this both *impliedly*, in speaking of the Old Testament writers and comparing themselves with them; and *expressly*, by asserting, in plain terms, their own inspiration.

I. *Impliedly*: 'The Old Testament is repeatedly spoken of, both by Christ, and by his apostles, as a divine revelation. It is said—"The HOLY GHOST by the mouth of David spake;"—"How doth David in SPIRIT call him Lord;"—"WHO by the mouth of thy servant David hast said,"—"Well spake the HOLY GHOST by Esaius the prophet, saying," &c.—"Searching what or what manner of time the SPIRIT OF CHRIST which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved BY THE HOLY GHOST." "Unto them (the Jews) were committed THE ORACLES OF GOD."

Now this divine character, which is constantly assigned to the Old Testament Scriptures by the writers of the New Testament, is at other times equally claimed for both. This is seen by such expressions as, "*Built upon the foundation of the APOSTLES AND PROPHETS.*" "*That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, AND of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.*" *ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,*" &c. "*Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom GIVEN UNTO HIM, hath written unto you; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, unto their own destruction.*"

Thus we find the apostles distinctly speaking of the Inspiration of the books of the Old Testament, as a matter respecting which no one entertained any doubt, and then equalling their own writings with them. But,

II. They expressly asserted their own Inspiration. And here we must unhesitatingly contradict Dr. Wiseman, who, in one of his most intrepid assertions, says, "Nowhere have we the record of any of these writers

having asserted his own inspiration.”* Let the untruth of this representation be seen in the following passages.

The evangelists record the direct and explicit promise of Christ, that the Holy Ghost should, after his ascension, descend upon them, and dwell in them, as an infallible guide.

“*When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*” and “*he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.*” (John xv. 26; xvi. 13, 14.)

“*I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* (John xiv. 16, 17.)

“*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*” (John xiv. 26.)

“*And when they shall bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and unto powers, take ye no thought how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*” (Luke xii. 11, 12.)

“*Take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*” (Matt. x. 19, 20.)

* Wiseman's Second Lecture, p. 43.

And the apostles claim this character, for their deliberate and official communications to the church. When James and the church at Jerusalem wrote to the churches of the Gentiles, by the hands of Barnabas and Paul, they say, without any hesitation, "*It seemed good to the HOLY GHOST, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.*" (Acts xv. 28.)

Paul closes his epistle to the Romans in this manner: "*Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began; but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.*" (Rom. xvi 25, 26.)

In his first epistle to the Corinthians, he tells that church, "*My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*" "*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but WHICH THE HOLY GHOST TEACHETH; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judg-*

eth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, 9-16.)

And subsequently, in the same epistle, he says, "*If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD.*" (1 Cor. xiv. 37.)

To the Galatians he says, "*I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.*" (Gal. i. 11, 12.)

And another apostle, John, the writer of one of the gospels, three epistles, and the Apocalypse, commences the latter book in these words, "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.*" "*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest write in a book.*" (Rev. i. 10, 11.)

Dr. Wiseman's assertion, therefore, is most unjustifiable. The distinct claim of the writers both of the Old and New Testaments, is, that they were the mouth of God—that God spake by them—and that the books so given to the church were to be separated and kept sacred above all other writings, as being THE HOLY SCRIPTURES—THE ORACLES OF GOD.

But it may be said, that, admitting that Dr. Wiseman went rather too far in this assertion, and conceding that the writers of these books did in fact claim for themselves the attribute of inspiration; still this does not, surely, establish that claim. We are not to admit their inspiration merely because they assert it.

Certainly;—not simply because they assert it; that would, indeed, be too much like the assumptions of the church of Rome. But let us consider the whole

facts of the case, and try the claim thus set up by the most exact and rigid rules of reasoning that can be devised.

Here are a number of persons, known by history to have been apostles of Christ, (for Mark's gospel was written under the direction of Peter, and Luke's under that of Paul;) and who are therefore participants in whatever divine influence may have been shed on those apostles. These persons write various books, in which they distinctly assert, as we have just seen, the fact of their inspiration. They present themselves, in short, as messengers from God, speaking and writing under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. This claim, as we have abundant proof, was universally admitted by the Christians of that day. The books in question were received into all the churches, as the undoubted oracles of God. It was in this light that they were regarded by all the chief guides of the early church. *Clement*, who was bishop of Rome during the lives of some of the apostles, says, "Look into the Holy Scriptures, which are the true words of the Holy Ghost. Take the epistle of the blessed Paul, the apostle, into your hand; verily he did by the Spirit admonish you." *Justin Martyr* says, "the gospels were written by men full of the Holy Ghost." *Irenæus* says, "the Scriptures were dictated by the Spirit of God, and therefore it is wickedness to contradict them, and sacrilege to alter them." "The gospel," he adds, "was first preached, and afterwards by the will of God committed to writing, that it might be for time to come the foundation of our faith." This was the universal belief of the early churches, and it was a discerning and discriminating belief. They did not blindly accept as Scriptures whatever might be offered. Various forgeries and imitations of the apostolic writings were put forth, but all such were rejected. Those which were admitted to this high rank were only such books as were satisfactorily known to have been of apostolical origin.

But,—it may be asked,—are we sure that in thus

accepting the books now called the New Testament, the early Christians acted reasonably and upon good grounds; and are their reasons accessible to us, or must we receive these books as inspired, merely because the first Christian churches received them?

We reply,—that every kind of evidence is offered to us. Our belief does not rest upon one or two facts only; but all possible circumstances which could be imagined, as tending to aid and strengthen our belief, are offered to our mind. It is much to find that the sacred books are handed down to us with the unanimous concurrence of all Christian churches of all ages and countries, as "*the true sayings of God.*" But we have even more than their acceptance to guide us; we have the grounds and reasons of that acceptance, as open and as clear as they were to the early Christians themselves.

Reflect now, for a moment, what evidence we should require, were a preacher or messenger to come to us, declaring that he had a commission from on high—a direct communication from God to ourselves and others. Of course we should demand some proof of the reality of his mission. We should say to him, "It is easy for any one—whether he has deceived himself or means to deceive us—to say that he is clothed with divine authority, and bears a divine commission; but the test which we must apply to you is, What can you *do*? A messenger from on high will have power from on high, whereby men may know him to be indeed sent of Him, who alone can bestow such power."

Now the two chief credentials which it has pleased God to place in the hands of his messengers to man, are, *Miracles and Prophecy*; the power of suspending the laws of nature; and the power of foretelling future events. Whoever can satisfactorily show himself possessed of these two signs of apostleship, or of either of them, has an unquestionable claim upon the attention of mankind. These two signs or credentials are distinctly pointed out in Scripture as evidencing the presence of divine power. The fore-

knowledge of future events is distinctly claimed in the Old Testament as a divine prerogative: "*I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things which are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them.*" "Thus saith the Lord, ask me of the things to come, concerning my sons:" "who hath declared this from ancient times? who hath told it from that time? have not I, the Lord? and there is no God beside me."—(Isaiah xlv. 6, 7; xlv. 11, 21.)

The other credential of divine authority was naturally called for by the Jews, who asked, "*What sign showest thou, that we may see and believe thee? what dost thou work?*"—(John vi. 30.) And Christ himself recognized the justice of this demand, when he said, "*The works that I do, they bear witness of me.*" And, when appealed to, not in infidel scorn, but in the spirit of sincere inquiry, he produced these credentials to the inquirer. It is said,—

"*And John, calling two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or do we look for another?*" "*And in the same hour, Jesus cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. And said unto them, Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard.*" (Luke vii. 19, 21, 23.)

Thus our Lord distinctly showed that he considered it perfectly unnecessary to add a single word in confirmation of a proof so irrefragable of divine authority. Nicodemus, also, plainly admitted both the fact and the inference, when he said, "*We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*"—(John iii. 2.)

Nor can any thing be more entirely consistent with right reason, than this view of the case. The laws of nature, as they are called, are nothing more than the settled regulations which God has himself im-

posed upon the visible creation. These regulations he allows none of the creatures of his hand to transgress or change without his direct authority. Consequently, when any man is able, openly, and in the face of day, to divide the sea, and make a way through the great deep—to cause the shadow on the sun-dial to go back a considerable portion of the day—to open the eyes of one born blind, or to restore life to one from whom the spirit has departed—it at once becomes a matter admitting of no rational doubt, that he is clothed with divine power and authority;—that he is a special ambassador from God himself.

And equally clear is the other point. A view of the future is, beyond all question, open to none but God himself. Not the highest archangel—not Satan himself can fathom the mind and will of God as to future events; and upon that mind and will all future events turn. The man, therefore, who is able to foretell with truth the events of a future time, gives the clearest possible proof that he may say with David, "*The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*"—(2 Sam. xxiii. 2.)

Now each of these credentials was possessed in the greatest fulness and clearness, both by Christ himself and by his apostles. The miracles wrought and prophecies uttered by our Lord himself we need not now consider, as the point we are discussing is rather that of the divine mission of his apostles than of his own. But the fact is equally beyond dispute, that those sent out by Christ, to proclaim his gospel, and from whose hands we have received the New Testament, did possess, as certainly, if not to the same extent, these two supernatural powers, of working miracles, and of foretelling future events, as did Christ himself.

The mission of the apostles may be said to have commenced on the Mount of Ascension, when their final instructions were given to them, in terms differing greatly from any previous message. These instructions ran thus: "*Go ye into ALL THE WORLD, and preach the gospel to EVERY CREATURE.*" (Mark xvi. 15.) And the evangelist adds, that "*they went*

forth and preached every where; the Lord working with them, and CONFIRMING THE WORD WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING." (v. 20.)

Now the details of this their preaching, and of these accompanying, "*signs,*" we find in the Acts of the Apostles. We there learn that, immediately after our Lord's ascension, the disciples assembled at Jerusalem, "*to wait for the promise of the Father,*" "*the Holy Ghost.*" This baptism of the Holy Ghost was given to them ten days after their Lord's ascension, and it was accompanied with signs of an extraordinary character. The power of understanding and speaking all languages was suddenly bestowed on these poor and illiterate men, so that "*men out of every nation under heaven*" heard them speak, "*every man in his own tongue wherein he was born.*" And immediately followed another wonder, of no less magnitude. Three thousand men, who had themselves "*with wicked hands crucified and slain*" the Lord Jesus were "*pricked to the heart*" by a single sermon from the lips of Peter, and at once joined the despised and persecuted church.

Immediately after this commencement, Peter and John, going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, were enabled in the name of Jesus, to restore to strength and soundness, a man who had been "*lame from his mother's womb.*" This deed was done in the presence of multitudes, and of its entirely supernatural character there could be no doubt.

Closely following this upon the mere rebuke of Peter, two persons, Ananias and Sapphira, fell down dead, as a punishment for their hypocrisy and false profession; and it is added, in the very same chapter, "*And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with*

unclean spirits: and they were healed every one." (Acts v. 12—16.)

In the next chapter we are told that "*Stephen full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*" (Acts vi. 8.)

In the viiith, that "*Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city.*" (Acts viii. 5—8.)

In the ixth, the raising of Dorcas to life by the hands of Peter, after she had been sometime dead, is narrated.

In the xiiith, we observe the infliction of blindness on Elymas the sorcerer, at the word of Paul, in punishment for his opposition to the truth.

In the xivth, a man at Lystra, "*impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: the same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.*" (Acts xiv. 8.)

In the xixth, we read that "*God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*" (Acts xix. 11, 12.)

Thus, in addition to the authority derived from being sent by one who was known to all men as a doer of "mighty works," (Matt. xiv. 2.) the apostles were themselves fully furnished with this unquestionable credential of heaven. Nor was the evi-

dence of Prophecy wanting, though the full development of its power and value, as a proof of inspiration, can only be seen in the lapse of ages, while that of Miracles is instant and perfect on the spot.

The gift of foretelling future events was occasionally exhibited by the apostles, in cases wherein the speedy accomplishment of the prediction rendered this proof of their divine authority as available as that of a miracle itself. Such instances are seen in Acts xi. 27—30, and xxvii. 22. But the real value and weight of this branch of evidence can only be properly appreciated by looking at the Bible as a whole, as indeed it is treated by Peter and Paul; (2 Peter iii. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 16.) and taking in, at one view, the long series of prophecies therein contained nearly the whole of which have already been fulfilled, and the remainder are now in course of fulfilment.

We find, for instance, the grand prediction, embracing the whole of the nations of the earth, that "God should enlarge Japhet," and that he should "dwell in the tents of Shem;" and that the descendants of Ham should be the "servants of servants," (Genesis ix. 25, 27.) *exactly fulfilled*. We find the prediction to Ishmael, that he should become "a great nation," and that his hand should be against "every man, and every man's hand against him," (Gen. xvi. 12; xvii. 20.) also *exactly fulfilled*.

Esau, or Edom, according to several predictions, (Jer. xlix. 17. Ezek. xxv. 12. Joel iii. 19. Amos i. 11. Obad. x. 18.) we find "cut off for ever," and made a "perpetual desolation." Nineveh has been so completely destroyed, that the place thereof cannot be known. (Nahum i. 3.) Babylon has been "swept with the besom of destruction," and is made "a desolation for ever, a possession for the bittern, and pools of water." (Isaiah xiii. xiv.) Tyre has become "like the top of a rock, a place for fishers to spread their nets upon;" (Ezek. xxvi. 4, 5.) while Egypt is "a base kingdom, the basest of kingdoms," no more able "to exalt itself above the nations."

(Ezek. xxix. 14, 15.) We then open another immense prophecy, whose publication *many centuries* before the event is as certain as any thing can be, that after the three universal empires, of Assyria, Persia, and Greece, there should arise a fourth, more powerful and more terrible than either; that that empire should be broken up into ten kingdoms; and that another power, diverse from the rest, should arise among them, and should subdue and absorb three of these kingdoms; all of which, without entering upon the question of the papacy, we have seen literally accomplished in the history of the Roman empire. Next we turn to the predictions concerning the Jews; and here we find our Lord's prophecy, that the city and temple at Jerusalem should be so entirely destroyed, that "there should not be left one stone upon another," that "the people should fall by the edge of the sword, and be carried away captive into all nations;" and that "Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," (Luke xxi.) accomplished to the very letter. We find also divers other remarkable predictions, many of them of a thousand years back, such as that "the sceptre should depart from Judah, and a law-giver from between his feet," when Shiloh, or Messiah came; (Gen. xlix. 10.) that "the people should dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations," (Numb. xxiii. 9,) that, in their apostasy, the Lord should "scatter them among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other," and that "among these nations should they find no ease, neither should the soles of their feet find rest;" that they should be "sifted among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet should not a grain fall to the earth," (Amos ix. 9.) and that they should "abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice;" (Hosea iii. 5.) and every word of these various and minute predictions we have seen exactly accomplished. Lastly, we come to the latest writers in the sacred canon, and it is impossible to ascribe to any thing else than the spirit of prophecy,

the portraiture drawn by Paul of "the Man of Sin," that should be revealed; who should "exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God;" whose immediate appearance was only prevented by the existence of the Roman Imperial power, but that he should be "revealed" when that power should be "taken out of the way," and that among his characteristics should be those of "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats." (2 Thess. ii. 4. 1 Tim. iv. 3.) Or what but the same spirit of prophecy could have enabled John to pourtray as he does, by the common consent of all commentators, the then unknown powers of the Saracens and the Turks, who were not to arise, till after the lapse of centuries? (Rev. ix. 1—21.) Thus we see that these two great signs or credentials of their mission were abundantly possessed by the writers of the sacred Scriptures, and we must never forget, that they have not even been claimed by the preachers or priests of any other faith.

We are aware that we shall be asked whether neither the heathen priests nor he who called himself "the prophet of God," Mahomet, ever laid claim to these credentials? What, it will be demanded, were the oracles of the ancient heathen?—and on what was Mahomet's claim to the prophetic character founded?

The ancient oracles were either the devices of crafty priests, or the working of evil spirits, or both. But there is nothing recorded of them which is not perfectly conceivable of a cunning and far-sighted human being. For instance, when Cræsus consulted the Delphic oracle, touching his intention of attacking the Persians, he obtained this reply,—“Cræsus, crossing the Halys, shall destroy a great empire.” Now this answer encouraged him to proceed; yet on his overthrow, and the destruction of his own empire, the oracle was made to appear to have spoken exactly the truth. And after all, what was the reply, but an artful, double meaning, contrived so as to suit either of the two most probable results?

As to the other sign, that of miracles, we may search in vain the whole annals of Paganism and Mahometanism, for a single fact, to parallel the case of the lame man healed in the temple, as recorded in Acts iii. 6, 7. Mahomet, indeed, expressly disclaims all pretensions of this kind in the Koran. He thus speaks: *They say, unless a sign be sent down unto him from his Lord, we will not believe: Answer, signs are in the power of God alone, and I am no more than a public preacher.* No, the Scriptures abound in the most wonderful predictions, most of which are already fulfilled before our eyes; and they contain the records of hundreds of miracles, each of which would have stamped the word accompanying it as a revelation from heaven; and besides these Scriptures there is no other book, no other religion in the world, which can show either prophecy or miracle.

The serious, but undecided inquirer, may, however, have two more questions to put: the first is, Can I be sure that these predictions were pronounced and recorded before the events, and not afterwards? The second: Granting that a miracle, if I saw it performed in my own presence, must compel my submission to him who worked it, as a divine messenger, still, am I equally bound to bend to this credential, when I only hear the report of it, after a lapse of centuries?

On the first point nothing can possibly be better established than the fact, that all the books which we now call the Old Testament, were in existence, were preserved as holy oracles by the Jews, and were translated from Hebrew into Greek, in Egypt, at least two hundred years before Christ. The inquirer, in fact, may as well begin to doubt the existence of Julius Cæsar, or of Charlemagne, or of the Duke of Marlborough, as to question that a man named Moses lived about fifteen hundred years before Christ, and wrote the books which are ascribed to him. Here, therefore, not to go into the like particulars as to David, Isaiah, or others, we have a great number of the chief prophecies, especially those concerning

Christ, the dispersion of the Jews, and the fate of many other nations, unquestionably in existence many centuries before the event. And equally certain is it, that the writings of Paul and John, which foretel the rise of the Papacy, the ravages of the Saracens and Turks, and other important events, were current in the church several centuries before the fulfilment of those predictions.

And as to the second question, we would observe, that a certain degree and amount of testimony is fully equal to the evidence of our own senses; and that when that testimony is made matter of public record, its force and value loses nothing by time. For instance, we never saw Bonaparte, nor did we ever speak with any one who had seen him. And yet, from the vast amount of evidence extant, we arrive at such a conviction of the fact, that we could as soon doubt our own existence, as we could question the fact that Bonaparte lived and reigned in France, from 1803 to 1814—15.

Now this general testimony to the fact will establish it just as fully to the minds of the men of the next century, though none of them can have any *personal* knowledge of its truth.

And, in like manner, the abundant written testimonies to the miracles wrought by the apostles; the admission of their enemies, the general belief of the facts by the whole Christian church of that day, and the entire absence of a single word in denial of the truth of these statements, all go to establish the whole narrative on such a basis, that the question of one century, or ten, or twenty, is perfectly immaterial to the whole question.

What, then, is the sum of the whole matter? It is this: Mankind stands in need of a revelation from heaven. This every man's conscience witnesseth. A dark and gloomy eternity rises before his view, on which nothing but divine illumination can shed the least ray of light.

There is but one document which so much as pretends to this character. Search throughout the world,

whether Mahometan or heathen, there is not even a vestige of any writing which professes to be the WORD OF GOD, except the book whose character we are now considering.

That book is an *ancient* collection of writings: of this there can be no doubt, since scarcely an heathen author exists, who does not in some way or other attest its antiquity, or confirm its statements.

These writings have ever been *received* and valued, by those who possessed them, as the ORACLES OF GOD. And their existence and their pretensions, having been at all times known, no refutation of those pretensions has ever been furnished by those, who, if they knew their falsehood, assuredly would have made it known to others.

These writings uniformly assert the divine inspiration of their authors. They bear mutual witness to each other, and they appeal also to miraculous proofs of divine authority;—which appeal, though made in the face of multitudes of opposers, has never yet been met. They also appeal to a second evidence,—that of prophecy, with which it is undeniable that their pages are filled, and which of itself furnishes a proof which is altogether irrefragable.

Lastly, they are consistent with themselves, and with the character they claim. They present to us views of God, so sublime and so befitting, that none but God himself could have afforded them. They offer us also a code of morals altogether casting shame upon the highest efforts of human moralists and philosophers, and the adoption of which by mankind at large would of itself establish heaven upon the earth,—a code, too, which could no more have been invented or promulgated by a set of impostors and cheats, than devout aspirations could arise from a fallen spirit. And, finally, they depict man himself as he really is, a task which the experience of six thousand years has abundantly shown to be wholly beyond man's own power. They show him his true character and condition; explain his malady; point out the only remedy, and then place within his reach

the means of obtaining the best of all evidence, that of his own heart, and soul, and affections. They elevate man, wherever they are received and obeyed, to the highest degree of virtue and happiness which his nature will admit; while their rejection involves a correlative degree of misery and debasement.

Every proof, therefore, and every evidence, short of a visible or audible miracle, worked for every individual man, is already afforded to us. More distinct or positive assurance, except God should himself speak from heaven to each sinner personally, we could not have. If God has spoken to man, assuredly he has spoken to some purpose. Knowing the wants of the human race, he would not stoop from heaven to address them, without applying to those wants exactly the remedy that was most suitable.

Take, then, this book to your own closet, remembering that every possible *external* proof of its divine origin has been already afforded; and see if you do not find all these proofs abundantly reinforced, by the admirable adaptation of its contents to your own personal wants and desires. No one ever entered upon a candid examination of the Scriptures, in this point of view, and with prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance, without arriving at a sure conviction, and that upon the best grounds, of their *Divine Inspiration*.

XIII.—THE TWO RULES OF FAITH COMPARED.

THE SCRIPTURES, OR “THE CHURCH.”

WE have now considered, each in its turn, the Romish and the Protestant rules of faith. We have endeavoured to show, that an opposition to the reception of the Scriptures as the sole rule, leads to infidelity;—and that the difficulties suggested by Dr. Wiseman are not insuperable. But we are now to propose a third objection,—to wit, that the Romish principle, “that God has appointed HIS CHURCH the infallible and unfailing depository of all truth,”* is beset with not only the same, but ten times greater difficulties than those which have been pointed out in the Protestant rule.

This evidently involves a comparison of the two rules of faith; and to conduct this impartially it will be necessary to pass again in review all Dr. Wiseman’s objections to the use of Holy Scripture as a rule.

But it may be as well to ask, at starting, what is the particular point concerning which the two systems are to be especially compared? It is that of *inapplicability*. Dr. Wiseman asserts that the Protestant rule is “fraught with so many difficulties, as absolutely to render it in practice inapplicable, and void of fruit.” And we shall now endeavor to show that this objection attaches in a much greater degree to the Romish rule, than to the Protestant. But this we must do by passing in review all the alleged “difficulties,” arrayed by Dr. Wiseman against the use of

* Wiseman’s First Lecture, p. 20.

Scripture, and inquiring whether they do not apply far more decidedly to the rule and standard which he himself proposes.

Let us, then, to do full justice to Dr. Wiseman, recapitulate the "difficulties" which he brings forward, and as far as possible in his own words.

Dr. Wiseman contends that the books of Scripture cannot have been intended to constitute the rule of faith, for the following reasons:—

1. That the adoption of such a rule implies a necessity, on the part of every individual receiving it, of a tedious investigation into the genuineness and authenticity of those books:

2. Also, of a further inquiry, as to whether no other books of equal authority have been lost or excluded, so as to leave the rule incomplete:

3. Also, whether it be beyond doubt, that these books were not only the real productions of their alleged authors, but were actually given by divine inspiration.

And, considering that these three points include a vast field of inquiry and laborious investigation, the doctor asks, "Can a rule, in the approach to which you must pass through such a labyrinth of difficulties, be that which God has given us as a guide to the poorest, the most illiterate, and the simplest of his creatures?"

4. But the supposition that "God gave his holy word to be the only rule of faith to all men," leads to another difficulty; it must "be translated into every language, that all men may have access to it." Now, says Dr. Wiseman, "are you aware of the difficulty of undertaking a translation of it? Whenever the attempt has been made in modern times; in the first instance it has generally failed, and even after many repeated attempts, it has proved unsatisfactory." "And we cannot suppose that God would stake the whole usefulness and value of his rule upon the private or particular abilities of man."

5. Again, consider the paucity of copies of the Bible, until modern times. "God could not mean,

that for fourteen hundred years man was to be without a guide; and that mankind should have to wait until human genius had given efficacy to it by its discoveries and inventions. Such cannot be the qualities or conditions of the rule."

6. Lastly: "To be the rule of faith, it cannot be sufficient that men should possess and read it, but they must surely be able to comprehend it. In fact, who ever heard of the propriety and wisdom of placing in men's hands a code, or rule, which it was impossible for the greater portion of them to comprehend?"

"Such, then," says the doctor, "are the difficulties regarding the *application* of this rule: a difficulty of procuring and preserving the proper sense of the original by correct translations; a difficulty of bringing these translations within the reach of all; a difficulty, not to say an impossibility, of enabling all to understand it."*

These being the several points, upon which Dr. Wiseman rests his conclusion, that the Scriptures were not intended as a sole or sufficient rule of faith, we shall now proceed to show, that the same or still greater difficulties attend the adoption of the Romish rule.

But let us first understand, distinctly, what we are to bring into comparison with the Scriptures, as furnishing mankind with a safer and more unerring guide than God's own revealed word.

This may be described in Dr. Wiseman's words, as "the church of Christ, which has been appointed by God to take charge of, and keep safe, those doctrines, committed to her from the beginning, to be taught, at all times, to all nations."†

With this definition of the Romish rule, let us proceed at once to consider Dr. Wiseman's first objection, and to inquire whether his own rule is free from the difficulties which he professes to find in the use of the Holy Scriptures.

* Wiseman's Second Lecture, p. 48.

† Wiseman's Third Lecture, p. 61.

His first objection is, that, "if all men, even the most illiterate, have a right to study the word of God—if it be not only the right, but the duty of even the most ignorant to study that word, and thence to draw his belief:—it is likewise his duty to satisfy himself that it is the word of God." And "in the first place, before any one can even commence the examination of that rule, which the church proposes to him, he must have satisfied himself that all the books and writings which are collected together in that volume, are really the genuine works of those whose names they bear."*

Now let us keep this practical difficulty fixedly in view, and inquire whether the rule which Dr. Wiseman proposes as "a more excellent way," is not far, *very far*, more difficult of application than that to which he himself objects.

The doctor is dealing with the case of one who is in neutral circumstances; that is, of one who has not yet finally received the Scriptures, as the word of God. And he argues that if, instead of first submitting himself to the church, and then receiving the Scriptures on her authority, the inquirer begins by endeavouring to satisfy himself as to the divine authority of the sacred writings, he will find the difficulties so great, and the investigations so tedious, as to make it manifest that this was not the course intended by God; but that the church is to be first submitted to as our guide, and then the Scriptures received on her guarantee and recommendation.

Now let us try this course for a few moments, and see if we have really changed for the better.

The very instant the inquirer sets out, he will find that he has not improved, but considerably deteriorated his prospects of success.

Protestantism proposed to him THE BIBLE as his rule and guide. Now at least there was a remarkable concurrence of testimony in behalf of this book. There is *but one Bible in the world*, and in every

* Wiseman's Second Lecture, p. 32.

corner of the earth this one book is known, and is accepted by all sorts or societies of Christians, as God's own revealed word.

All the visible churches, of every description, concur in this one great point. The Romish church, whether in Italy, in Belgium, in Ireland, in Mexico, or in Malabar, declares this book to be the word of God. The Greek churches, from St. Petersburg to Athens, from Armenia to Alexandria, all unite in the same testimony. The ancient Syrian churches, the Maronites, and the Waldenses, alike agree with all the daughters of the Reformation; and wherever a professing Christian is to be found, no matter of what nation, or of what communion,—there we have a witness to the fact, that all Christendom accepts the holy Scriptures as the revealed word of God.

But mark how wofully the inquirer has darkened his prospect, when he turns away from this proposed rule, on the score of the supposed *difficulty* of ascertaining its genuinness, and takes up, instead, the pretensions of either the Romish, or any other visible church.

We presented to him a Bible;—which he could see, and lay hold upon, and read, and consider. Here was something tangible, and something as to the divine character of which he had the united testimony of all Christians throughout all ages, and in all places. Now what does the Romanist offer to him, as a preferable guide? Let Dr. Wiseman himself state it: “Our rule,” he says, “is the church of Christ, which has been appointed of God to take charge of, and keep safe, the doctrines committed to her from the beginning.”

Here we see at once how materially the inquirer's position is changed for the worse. The rule or guide which Protestantism proposed to him, was one which he could himself consult, peruse, consider; and in the truth of which all Christendom, of all churches, and all nations, were agreed. Instead of which rule he now has one offered him which is an impalpable shadow; a mere ideal thing; which he can neither

see, nor hear, nor in any practical way consult; and respecting the truth and authority of which, Christendom is greatly divided.

We have said that the Romish rule is one which can neither be seen, nor heard, nor consulted. What we mean is this: The Bible is here, and we may at once sit down and study it; but where is "the church," which Dr. Wiseman recommends as a more safe and eligible guide? Where can we see or hear this church; and in what mode or by what channel does she speak? In a word when the opponent tells us of a **RULE**,—a **GUIDE**:—we ask him to put us in possession of it, and to give us a practical example of its use and of its utility? What is it, that, instead of this bible, the church of Rome offers us as a guide to our inquiries?

But here the Romanist will confess that there is a little difficulty,—if we require a document, a book,—to serve as substitute for the Bible. The description given by Dr. Milner of the Romish rule will explain this difficulty. He says, "The Catholic rule of faith is *Scripture* and *Tradition*; and these propounded and explained by the Catholic church." Now Scripture is indeed accessible, but that taken alone the Romanist holds to be an imperfect rule, and its use in this way to be dangerous. And tradition has never been reduced to a system,—a second Bible; nor can he put it into our hands, or direct us to any place in which we can find it.

But Dr. Milner adds, "as propounded and explained by the Catholic church." Now where has the church propounded this rule? By the doctor's language we might almost suppose, that the church had added tradition to Scripture by way of a commentary or appendix, and that thus a perfect rule was obtained.

There is, however, no such work. The church has never put forth any commentary; nor any system or code of faith and morals, on infallible authority; although many individuals, upon their own private

responsibility, and without pretending to infallibility, have written such treatises.

Of course it is useless to refer to mere human productions, as we are now seeking for something better than what is admitted to be the word of God. The question, then, remains, as the church has not spoken, authoritatively, by a written work, where and how we can "hear the church;"—as it is said we must hear her, to be in the safe road to salvation.

The Romish controversialist, however, feels a degree of difficulty here. Some, indeed, have argued, that "He who established his church, has appointed *her pastors* to rule, govern, and teach in his name; and has promised that he will watch over these his ministers, and be ever with them, and that his Spirit shall lead them into all truth. He has therefore commanded all to follow *their guidance* and teaching, without distinction of persons, and without limitation as to time, since he is with his church for ever."* But most of them will feel some difficulty in adopting this language for themselves, and in claiming personally, the attribute of infallibility. It is beyond a doubt that there have been, and still are, wicked priests, wicked bishops, and even wicked popes. It is impossible, therefore, to set up men as infallible guides to others, who cannot keep the right way themselves.

Thus we are still without either a written or a speaking guide. Is "the church" a mere abstraction; or, if we are to listen to her voice, tell us where it is to be heard?

No, answer, however, can be given of a more explicit character than that of Dr. Wiseman, when he says, "The successors of the apostles in the church of Christ have received the security of his own words and his promises of a perpetual teaching, so that they shall not be allowed to fall into error. It is this promise which assures her she is the depository of all

* Third Lecture of Rev. F. Martyn, Romish Priest of Walsall, p. 63.

truth, and is gifted with an exemption from all liability to err, and has authority to claim from all men, and from all nations, *submission to her guidance and direction.*”*

This sounds well, but still it does not advance us one step. Suppose, for a moment, for argument's sake, that we admit or take for granted, all that Dr. W. says about the church's authority, the question still remains unanswered,—if we are to *hear* the church, *where*, or *by whom* does she speak? Our position is, that the Romish rule is more inapplicable and less easy of adoption and use, than the Protestant. So long, then, as Dr. W. does not deny the infallibility of the word of God, but merely wishes to add another infallible authority to it, he clearly gives the advantage to the Protestant, who holds out and tenders his rule of faith in the Bible; inasmuch as he seems unable to point out where his further infallible rule is to be found.

The simple truth, however, is, that if Dr. Wiseman were able to point out the real seat or dwelling-place of his church's boasted infallibility, he would do more than the most learned doctors of his church have ever yet been able to accomplish. For, in fact, the disputes upon this very question have been endless, and the decision of the question impossible. One party contends that the church's infallibility dwells in the pope;—others, that it is found only in a general council; a third class, that it is in a pope and council conjointly; while a fourth describes it as resting in “the living voice of the great body of Roman Catholic pastors.” And surely nothing can be clearer than this, that until they can settle among themselves *where* this infallibility of the church is really lodged, the course dictated by common sense is this, to rest content with *that* infallible rule,—the written word, —whose excellence and divinity even they themselves do not venture to deny; and to leave the reception of a further and better guide, until the doc-

* Wiseman's Fourth Lecture, p. 109.

tors of the Romish church can settle it among themselves, where it is to be found. In the *produceableness*, then,—if we may coin such a word,—of their rule, the Protestants certainly have the advantage. But does not the objection we are considering go further than this?

It certainly does: it demurs to the admission of the Bible as our rule; in that, before any one can be justified in so receiving it, he must go through a long investigation as to the genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of the books of Scripture. Now we are to try Dr. W's rule by his own objections. We ask, therefore, is it a rational course for the inquirer to adopt, to accept any person who calls himself a Roman Catholic priest, as an infallible guide, without any investigation at all?—or can we suppose that *that* investigation, if gone into, would prove more easy or more simple than the former one, to which Dr. W. so strongly objects?

For instance: just as Dr. Wiseman objects, that before any one can rationally receive this book, called the Bible, as the word of God, he must go through a long course of inquiry, as to the history of the book,—who were its authors or compilers, and what is the real nature of its claims; so we now retort upon him, that before he himself, or any other priest, can expect to be received by a sincere inquirer, as the divinely commissioned messenger of God, an exactly similar, and quite as difficult a scrutiny must take place, as to the nature of his claims to be so regarded. Nothing, surely, can be clearer than this. If it is unreasonable to expect an uninquiring and implicit reception of the Bible, even though backed by the universal testimony of all times and of all countries, how much more absurd would it be to demand for any one who happened to be called the Roman Catholic priest of a certain neighbourhood, that same sort of uninquiring and implicit submission. Fallibility, and liability to err, it is obvious, are far more likely to be found in a body of some tens of thousands of human beings, even supposing

them to be divinely sent, than in one single book, which, if divinely inspired, is doubtless free from error. Investigation, then, into their real claims and character, if necessary in the one case, is just as necessary in the other. This will hardly be denied. The only question, therefore, is, which of the two investigations is likely to prove the most troublesome and laborious.

Now there can be no doubt that the inquiry into the claims of the Romish clergy must be far more tedious and complicated than that into the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures; and there is also this important difference between them,—that while the divine character of the Scriptures can be easily *demonstrated*, so as to be placed beyond the reach of a rational doubt, the other inquiry, instead of leading us to any satisfactory issue, lands us in a quagmire of most unprofitable and interminable controversies.

This difference is manifested by all past experience. There has never yet been an instance of a patient and serious inquirer into the character of the holy Scriptures, coming to any other conclusion than that of their authenticity and inspiration. On the other hand, hundreds of the best and greatest men that Christendom has ever seen, have examined into the claims of the church of Rome, and have been unable to admit them. At least, therefore, it cannot be said, that a satisfactory conclusion is as easily to be attained in the one case as in the other. But the point for which we are now contending is this, that an investigation, and a laborious one, is equally necessary in both. This is best seen in the utter failures of those Romish writers who try to escape from this necessity. Take, for instance, Dr. Wiseman's third lecture, and see how ludicrously abrupt is his attempt to leap to a conclusion on this subject, without having laid down any premises.

Dr. W. says: "The Catholic falls in with a number of very strong passages, in which our blessed Saviour, not content with promising a continuance of

his doctrines, that is to say, the continued obligation of faith upon man, also pledges himself for their actual preservation among them. He selects a certain body of men: he invests them, not merely with great authority, but with power equal to his own; he makes them a promise of remaining with them, and teaching among them even to the end of time: and thus, once again, he naturally concludes, that there must have existed for ever a corresponding institution for the preservation of those doctrines, and the perpetuation of those blessings, which our Saviour came manifestly to communicate.

“Thus, then, merely proceeding by historical reasoning, such as would guide an infidel to believe in Christ’s superior mission, he comes, from the word of Christ, whom those historical motives oblige him to believe, to acknowledge the existence of a body, depositary of those doctrines which He came to establish among men. This succession of persons constituted to preserve those doctrines of faith, appointed as the successors of the apostles, having within them the guarantee of Christ teaching among them for ever; and this body is what he calls the church. He is in possession, from that moment, of an assurance of divine authority, and, in the whole remaining part of the investigation, he has no need to turn back, by calling in once more the evidence of man. For, from the moment he is satisfied that Christ has appointed a succession of men, whose province it is, by aid of a supernatural assistance, to preserve inviolable those doctrines which God has delivered—from that moment, whatever these men teach is invested with that divine authority, which he had found in Christ through the evidence of his miracles.”*

Now we would ask any one capable of an impartial judgment, whether any thing pretending to the form of an argument, and yet so preposterously deficient in all the essential parts of one, was ever before seen? For, let it be remembered, the Doctor had just

* Wiseman’s Third Lecture, pp. 63, 64.

been objecting to the Protestant rule, in that it required a long course of investigation. He therefore certainly does not take for granted a similar investigation in his own proposed rule. His argument is to stand just as he had stated it, and it therefore runs thus: Christ selected twelve apostles, conferred on them the Holy Ghost, and promised to be with them and their successors in his church to the end of the world: *therefore*, the Romish church and the Romish clergy are infallible guides, and the only infallible guides! What connection there can be, between the premises and the conclusion, in this proposition, it is wholly impossible to imagine! The proof, all-essential to the validity of the argument, that the pope and the Romish clergy are the rightful successors of the apostles, is *wholly omitted*; and we are desired to leap to the conclusion, that because Christ, on the Mount of Ascension, promised to be with his church to the end of the world, *therefore* we may go and hear Dr. Wiseman at Moorfields, or any other Romish priest at any other chapel, with a certainty, that "whatever these men teach is invested with divine authority;" while all that the other Christian ministers in the world teach, is nothing but their own unauthorized imaginings! May we not ask, whether so outrageous a demand on the credulity and simplicity of his hearers was ever before made by a preacher professing rationality?

But it may be said, that we misunderstand Dr. Wiseman, for that he could not mean to demand an implicit assent to such a statement, without a previous investigation; and that in his subsequent lectures he invites and draws on that very discussion.

We, however, are only dealing with his argument as we find it. We know, indeed, that the Doctor, in in other parts of his series, enters upon the remainder of the discussion. But we believe that he purposely omits it here, and for a very obvious reason. He had just been arguing against the Protestant rule, as one leading to a long and troublesome investigation; and he now presents his own principle, in contrast, in a

far simpler and more succinct form. If he had stated his argument properly, and not in the absurd way in which he has left it, he would have spoiled his own contrast; for he would have shown the Romish rule to involve quite as tedious an investigation as did the Protestant. And that is the point to which we have been endeavouring to come; namely, that as the adoption and reception of the Bible, as our sole Rule of Faith, implies a previous investigation of its claims to be considered a divine revelation, so does that submission of the mind to the dicta of the Romish priesthood, which Dr. Wiseman demands, imply a previous and far more troublesome investigation of the claims of that priesthood, to be admitted as the rightful successors of the apostles. And thus when Dr. Wiseman asks, "Can the rule, on the approach to which you must pass through such a labyrinth of difficulties, be that which God has given to the poorest, the most illiterate, and simplest of his creatures?" we retort upon him his own question, and ask, "Can *your* Rule, in the approach to which the poor man must be dragged through all the controversies and quarrels of all your threescore folio volumes of councils, be that which God intended for the poorest and the simplest of mankind?"

We now pass on to the next difficulty suggested by Dr. Wiseman, which is this:

2. Before any one can accept the Protestant Rule, it is in the next place necessary, that he should have satisfied himself not only that the sacred books are genuine and authentic; "but that no such genuine work has been excluded, so that the rule be perfect and entire."

This is but an amplification of the last objection. But we thank Dr. Wiseman for stating it; since it very naturally suggests a kindred difficulty in his own course.

Let us suppose that some one, in his search after truth, had followed the course which we just now showed to be necessary; had filled up the hiatus in Dr. W's reasoning, and had made out the succession

of the Romish priesthood to the apostles. How clear is it that the next step in the inquiry must be that which this objection of Dr. W's suggests. He must inquire not only whether these persons, claiming to be the successors of the apostles, are really so, but also whether "no other genuine successors have been excluded." The promise made by the Saviour was not to a portion of his church, but to *the whole*; not to the successors of Peter only, but to those of James and Thomas also.

Now it is a fact open to every one's observation, that the church of Rome is not the only Christian church upon earth. We find the Greek church, the Syrian, and other eastern churches, and in Europe the Protestant churches. Of these, most of the eastern churches are of equal antiquity with that of Rome, and among the Protestant churches there are those which can trace their descent from the apostolic times, without relying upon their connection with the papacy. Consequently, when Dr. W. claims for his own church the sole possession of "divine authority," and treats all others as heretics and infidels, he *forces* any one who really wishes to understand what he believes, to plunge into the whole controversy.

There is another church, for instance, in the east, called the Greek church, which is as unquestionably descended from the apostles as that of Rome. She was once in fellowship and communion with Rome; she is now at enmity. How comes this? Is she really a rotten branch—a decayed portion of the church? or was she unlawfully and schismatically excluded by Rome? Who is to understand all these matters without examination? And thus the inquirer is immersed, as we just now remarked, in all the depths of the ancient church controversies. Yet Dr. Wiseman's scheme requires it. He tells us that any one who takes the Bible as his rule, "must satisfy himself that no genuine work has been excluded, so that the rule be perfect and entire." It therefore follows of necessity, that if the church, rather than the Bible, be taken as the rule, the same necessity exists,

of seeing "that no genuine apostolical churches are excluded," "so that the rule be perfect and entire." But whether this will be an easy task, or whether this can be the course marked out by God "for the poorest, the most illiterate, and the simplest of his creatures," let any reasonable man decide. At all events, the Romish rule is not, in this respect, at all more easy of application than that adopted by the Protestants; on the contrary, much and laborious reading is necessary, before we can possibly learn,—as, on Dr. W.'s plan, we *must* learn,—“whether no part of the genuine church has been excluded, so that the rule be perfect and entire.”

Let us proceed, then, to the third point insisted on, which is, that the student is also bound to satisfy himself, “whether it be beyond doubt, that these books were not only the real productions of their alleged authors, but were actually given by Divine inspiration.”

We have so lately reviewed this part of the subject, that it can only be necessary to re-state, as briefly as possible, the argument; which goes to prove, if it be worth any thing, that *until* this point be settled, and *until* the inspiration of the Scriptures be firmly established, it is impossible for the Romish clergy to have any basis for that church authority to which they lay claim.

The mission of the apostles, and the commission and authority conferred on them by Christ, is recorded only in certain passages, not exceeding three or four in number, which occur in the gospels. In these thirty or forty words—for in so small a compass lies the whole proof,—the least error, omission, or misconstruction, would make a vital difference. Now *until* we are satisfied that these books were given by inspiration of God, and are therefore wholly free from error, we cannot possibly feel the least certainty that some mistake may not have crept in,—that some little omission or insertion, trivial in appearance, but making a mighty difference in the tenor of the whole, may not have occurred. Consequently, so long as we

have any doubt whether these records are the works of fallible men, or of the infallible Spirit of God, so long must we hesitate to admit, upon a *doubtful* foundation, so vast a matter as the supreme authority claimed by Rome. And thus we see, that the Romish church itself cannot even find ground whereon to stand, until the inspiration of the Scriptures has first been proved; and thus the very same difficulty which Dr. W. objects to us, belongs quite as much to his own scheme. Rather more, indeed, we ought to say; for Protestants have found and established their Rule of Faith, as soon as the divine inspiration of the Scriptures is proved; whereas that is only the first point in the inquiry with the Romanist; who, when he gains this first position, has in the next place to prove from Scripture, the authority of his church; a task which is certainly not an easy one. But it is time to draw to a close; we will therefore endeavour to state in a few words, the remaining three of Dr. W's alleged difficulties. They are—the difficulty of bringing the Protestant rule of faith, the Bible, into general use, by translating the Scriptures into all languages;—the difficulty of providing, especially before the invention of printing, a sufficient number of copies;—and the difficulty of making the book intelligible to all, even when so dispersed.

Dr. Wiseman seriously alleges these as reasons, why the Scriptures could not have been intended by God to be the Rule of Faith for all mankind. Observe, the *Rule of Faith*; the standard held up; not the chief or the only means of bringing sinners to the knowledge of the truth. We are not arguing against that great institution of Christ, the preaching of the gospel. The question is not, whether preachers as well as Bibles shall be sent throughout the world:—the question is, What is to be the standard—the Rule of Faith—to which these preachers shall appeal!

Now we say, Send the preacher, and with him send the word of God. Let him preach only what he finds in that word, and let him constantly appeal to that word for confirmation of every doctrine he advances.

But the Romish church sends the preacher without his credentials, and without his proper commission. He may preach Jesuitism or Jansenism, the decrees of the Council of Trent, or the decrees of the Council of Ephesus; he may preach, in short, what he will, for no chart or compass will the church of Rome send with her pilots.

But it is said that translations are made with difficulty, and are often erroneous. Is it so much easier, then, to *preach* than to *write*, in a heathen tongue? Do the Romish missionaries address the Hindoos or Japanese in Latin? If not,—if they can preach to them in their own language, without liability to any serious blunders, what should prevent them from providing for them the gospel of Matthew or the New Testament itself? The objection of the difficulty of making translations, when advanced by those who boast of their missions to the heathen, is perfectly frivolous.

And equally absurd is that of the cost and trouble of procuring a sufficient number of copies. It is not seriously proposed by Dr. Wiseman, that men shall be left without any rule, or any instruction in divine things. He would send preachers. Now we are not objecting to the use of living missionaries: but when the point mooted as a serious objection to the use of the Bible as a rule, is, the cost and trouble of procuring copies, the obvious answer is, that a single living preacher must cost from five hundred to fifteen hundred dollars a year; and that for that sum you might supply, *every year, several thousand Bibles!*

The last point mooted is that of the difficulty of understanding the Scriptures. Now no Protestant will attempt to deny that there are deep and holy mysteries in the word of God. We could hardly suppose it to be a Revelation from heaven if it were without them. But we do mean to assert that by far the greater portion of the Scripture is plain and level to every man's capacity, and full of every necessary instruction. Nor, when David declares it to be "*a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his*

path,” is it either decent or comely for Dr. Wiseman to represent it as unintelligible and bewildering.

But the real question is, Is it the Rule prescribed by God himself? The existence of some lofty and still obscure prophecies in its pages is nothing to the purpose in this question. Here is a book, given by inspiration of God, for the use of man. It is, by the admission of all parties, wholly free from error or obliquity. It declares itself, again and again, to be sent to mankind as their infallible guide. And where is there any other? Those who tell us that the Scriptures are not to be understood, ought to show us “the voice of the church;” and let us see if that be more lucid and intelligible. But this “voice of the church” is no where to be found, save in some threescore volumes of records of councils, or writings of fathers, which the great mass of the people could never possess, nor understand, if they were even to obtain them. Dr. Wiseman asks, “Who ever heard of the propriety and wisdom of placing in men’s hands a code or rule, which it was impossible for the greater portion of them to comprehend?” But we demand, in reply, Who ever heard of the propriety or wisdom of placing in men’s hands no code or rule whatever; of leaving them without any other guide or director than a fallible man like themselves; and of taking away from them that which is not denied to be God’s own word, merely because there are *some passages* in it which are too high for man’s comprehension?

We trust, then, that we have succeeded in showing that in every point suggested by Dr. Wiseman, as a ground for disbelieving that God intended the Scriptures as a rule of faith to man,—the rival rule, put forward by Dr. W. himself,—to wit, THE CHURCH, is open to far greater objection. There must be a greater difficulty in *establishing* the authority of such a Rule, and a greater difficulty in *applying* it, if it could be established.

XIV.—INFALLIBILITY.

ON THE ALLEGED NECESSITY FOR AN INFALLIBLE CHURCH.

IT now seems advisable, and, in fact, almost necessary, before proceeding further, to take a brief retrospect of the course of argument through which we have passed, and to gain, as far as may be, a correct idea of our present position.

The discussion has hitherto turned almost exclusively on the rule of faith. We have endeavoured to maintain the Protestant doctrine; that Holy Scripture was the one, sole, and sufficient rule, furnished and set forth by God himself;—and to show the untenable nature of the opposite principle,—that the Catholic church is the true depositary and only authorized expositor of Christian doctrine; dispensing from her ample stores, and with divine authority, both Holy Scripture and Catholic tradition, as in her wisdom she sees fit. In arguing the question we have endeavoured both to establish the Protestant principle, by showing the Scriptures to be incontrovertibly genuine, true, and divinely inspired; and also to overthrow the contrary doctrine, by exhibiting the unfounded character of the pretensions of the Romish church. With the latter view we have investigated the claims of the church of Rome to her assumed title of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church; and also the pretensions of her bishops to be considered the successors and representatives of Peter. Both these assumptions we found to be utterly untenable. And we are now in a position to demand, on behalf of the Protestant churches, a decision in their favour, on this great fundamental point.

In this stage of the argument, however, another view of the question is often raised, and one which it seems necessary here to meet.

It is asked whether we can conceive it possible for the Lord Jesus, when he left for a time this earth, upon which he was shortly to number thousands of faithful followers, to have determined to leave all those followers destitute of guidance, subject to no authority, included within no pale, but wandering about in their isolated and individual characters, free to choose or to form a church for themselves, or to continue in a state of independence of all churches? Can you believe, it is demanded, for an instant, that he did not, most deliberately, fully, and of set purpose, constitute and appoint a CHURCH, in which, and by which, his gospel was to be preserved and preached; and within whose pale all his true disciples were bound to range themselves? This, it is assumed, can hardly be doubted. But if the fact be admitted, then we are asked, where can that church, so founded and constituted, be found, except in that body of which the sovereign pontiff is the head?

In her it is said, you find a clear and unquestionable succession, from the very days of the apostles. You find her also, ever admitted to stand as the alone centre of unity and fountain of authority; while all other churches, or rather pseudo-churches, are nothing else than so many irregular off-shoots, or run-away children, who claim to share in, or to vie with the authority, although they lose every vestige of right to assume such a position, the moment they rebel against her unquestionable rule. We ask, therefore,—it is said,—where, admitting, as you must, that Christ founded a visible church—where can that church be discerned, except in the communion of which the successors of Peter are the head? A church of Christ, established by himself, there surely must be; and where, except here, can it be found?

This is a favourite position with the Romish advocates in the present day, and we shall not attempt to

evade or shrink from its force; but will endeavour carefully and deliberately to weigh its value.

We remark, then, first, that as we have an inspired record of the words and actions of the Lord Jesus, we have no occasion to imagine for ourselves what it was "likely" that he would do, or leave undone. His commands, as they are recorded by his apostles and evangelists, we are to observe; his institutions we are to reverence; but the greatest regard and reverence we can possibly show to his memory and his injunctions, will be exhibited by a careful guarding of those injunctions from all admixture and alloy; and a determination to allow no "commandments of men" to be placed on a level with his own provisions, or to rank with the institutions established by himself.

Instead, therefore, of arguing that he *must* have established a visible church: and that *that* church *must* be the church of Rome; it will be far wiser and better to go at once to the record, and to ascertain beyond the possibility of mistake, what kind or description of body it was that he actually *did* constitute, and by what course of reasoning it is that Rome assumes to occupy this place.

Now such a reference as this will satisfy us at once, that not a single word did Christ ever utter touching the Roman see; or the successors of Peter; nor a syllable pointing at the supremacy of any one church or any portion of the church, whether a larger or a smaller section. His latest injunctions and delegation of authority were given at Jerusalem, where unquestionably the first Christian church was founded. As for the church and see of Rome, we have the best ground for asserting that neither the one nor the other had any existence for at least thirty years after. If, consequently, it was intended by Christ that his authority should devolve, on his departure, on the see of Rome, it was most wonderful that he should have left Rome without any church or any bishop for more than a quarter of a century. One thing, however, is clear, that if, at any time during thirty

years after the Saviour's death, any one had asked, Where the church established by Christ was to be met with?—it would have been instantly replied, At Jerusalem, where the twelve apostles generally meet, and from whence all decrees touching the government of the church do issue. (Acts xvi. 4.)

But how, then, let us ask, did it ever come to pass, that the church of Rome assumed to herself this rank and character?

Unquestionably the basis of the power and authority of Rome must be sought for, not in divine, but in human decrees. Not a syllable is found in holy writ, having even the least tendency that way. Nor had the Roman bishop, while the days of persecution lasted, any such rank or authority in the church at large. But, when the empire became Christian, and emperors began to bow down before the prelates of the church, then it soon, and very naturally occurred, that the bishop of the imperial city assumed a perpetually augmenting power. And this assumption falling in with popular fancies and prejudices, the Roman bishop, when the imperial throne itself was removed from that city, became the leading person in that great metropolis. Then were the pretensions of that see daily enlarged, and as a basis for its vast assumptions, the fiction of Peter's primacy was invented, a fiction of which the Christian world, during the first three centuries after Christ's ascension, had never heard a syllable. Such are the simple facts of the case. And if the question is again put, whether Christ did not himself constitute and establish a visible church? we must of necessity reply, that if he did so, it must have been the church of Jerusalem, for, unquestionably, of the church of Rome he never uttered a single word.

The Romanist, however, will perhaps tell us that we have not grappled with the main feature of the case. The locality, the seat of authority and of unity, —he will say,—may never have been denoted or fixed by Christ; but can it be denied that he left behind him, as his representative on earth, a CHURCH, a body of

men having authority both to teach and to decide doubtful points, and around which body it was the duty of all his faithful followers to collect themselves?

Again, then, let us rather refer to the facts of the case, than to a theory constructed by our own imaginations. It is unquestionably true, that when Christ left this earth, he did bequeath a certain authority, to a body of men whom he had himself selected and sent forth to preach his gospel, and whom he had also endowed with supernatural gifts and powers.

At this crisis, too, of the church, the existence of such a living and speaking authority, evidently clothed with a divine power and commission, was indispensably necessary, for this obvious reason—that *the books of the New Testament were not then written*. Not possessing, therefore, that rule of faith, by which the church is now safely guided and governed,—the Christians of those incipient days would have been, without some living and applicable source of authority, evidently open to every temptation of false doctrine that could be brought to bear upon them. We see, therefore, at once, why the existence of a body of men divinely commissioned, and bearing the visible tokens of such authority, was absolutely essential to the church's establishment.

But the lapse of thirty or forty years worked a vast alteration. These divinely inspired and immediately commissioned servants of Christ were taught by the Spirit to commit to writing the wisdom which they had received from above. It was as much a part of their mission to form a fixed code and rule of faith for future ages, as it was to govern the churches which they themselves had gathered and constituted. They wrote, therefore, the New Testament, and then departed to their rest, leaving, as is by universal consent admitted, no *successors* invested with equal powers or equal authority.

It follows, then, that if we would hear the apostles actually speaking, not through the clouded medium or in the doubtful and diluted language of tradition,

or of erring human interpreters, but in their own written works; we must take up the New Testament itself, and govern our faith and conduct by its decisions. And may we not ask, which of the two classes are really paying the most genuine respect to the mission and the appointment of Christ;—we, who, acknowledging his authority, speaking through his own selected servants, accept their writings as our rule; or they who prefer to lay aside or overrule these inspired records, in favour of certain fallible human beings, bishops and cardinals, and the like, merely because these men claim to be lineally in succession to the apostles, although wholly destitute of all these qualifications which commanded our reverence in Christ's own selected messengers.

Try this by an illustration. The writings of the apostles are called, "The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Now let us ask, what, in common usage, is the power of a will or testament, and what the power of the executors of that will? Does not every one know that the *rule* in every such case must be the will itself, not the notions of the executors. And if any question arises, that question can only concern this one point, What says the will—what is its intent and meaning? Nor is such question left to the executors themselves, but is always referred to a third party. The office of the executor is merely ministerial; he is not to add to, or take from, the original testament, even in the least point or fraction. The *will itself* is the rule, which governs and decides every thing. Just so is it in the present case. The ministers of the *New Testament* have no power to alter or amend that document: they are to take it as it stands, without cavil or exception.

But,—the Romanist will say,—you admit that when any passage or direction appears doubtful, the appointed court must be resorted to for an authoritative interpretation. Now that is all that we claim in the case of the sacred Scriptures. We say that the church

is that court, and that it was founded and empowered to act in that capacity by Christ himself.

This, however, is not a correct representation of the claims of the Romish priesthood. They claim more than a mere power to interpret: they claim a further, and much greater power, namely, *to add* to the document itself. This is a power never yet granted to any executor, and it is a power which, if conceded, necessarily makes the testament itself just what the executor chooses.

But the assumption of a right to interpret authoritatively is in itself objectionable. And the objection lies here—that the same party claims to be both executor and judge. The church of Rome assumes that the Testament of Christ gives her very great powers and privileges. This, to many eyes, is not apparent on the face of the document. Aye, but, says this same church of Rome, *I* am appointed by that same Testament, the authoritative interpreter of its own meaning, and *I* pronounce that such is the true intent of the passages in question.

What should we say of a judge in equity, who first claimed a certain property under a will, which will, to other people's eyes, made no such bequest; and then sat in his court to decide this very question, and to give judgment in his own favour?

But it will probably next be asked, where we would propose to lodge this power of interpretation, supposing questions of difficulty to arise in the perusal of the document?

We can only reply to this by marking the distinction between the two cases, and the impossibility of reaching, by any human illustration, the height and depth of divine things.

Human beings, men and women, make wills and testaments. They are all of them poor fallible creatures, often unfit for the duty, and not unseldom attempting it when disabled by disease. It follows of necessity that such documents are frequently found to be full of errors and faults; and thus a court of

appeal becomes necessary, in order to instruct and authorize executors how to proceed.

But the New Testament is the work of an omniscient mind: and it was designed, as we are plainly told, for the instruction of all mankind. It approaches to blasphemy, therefore, to compare it with human and fallible productions, or to speak of it as not intelligible to those for whose use it is written. A ministerial duty, it is true, there is; but that duty consists in the large and liberal publication of its contents, and the explanation of its meaning by the studied comparison of one part with another; never by fastening upon it meanings of an arbitrary and foreign character, imported into it, and not belonging to it. Never must it be forgotten, that *perfection* is its attribute, and that all *addition* to it is expressly, and under the highest penalties, forbidden.

But let us return to the question. It was demanded of us, whether Christ did not establish a visible church, to which perpetuity was to belong; and where that church was to be found, if not in the Roman communion?

We may, perhaps, have seemed to digress, but our argument was to this purport; that Christ did indeed give to his apostles certain extraordinary powers; a special commission; and supernatural gifts, as a sign of that commission: that during their lifetime these men wrote and spoke with divine authority, manifestly appearing in their works; and by virtue of that authority they founded many churches, and wrote certain books, which collectively, form the New Testament.

Our reasonings then went to this point—that as it is admitted on all hands that their miraculous powers ceased with them; and as no successors, manifesting a similar commission by similar gifts, have ever appeared, it follows that the unerring guidance which they were enabled to give, during their lives, by their personal instructions, must now be sought in their inspired writings;—writings, in fact, which we know to have been intended for this very purpose. “*I will*

endeavour;” says Peter, “*that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.*”—2 Peter, i. 15. Thus we have, in these writings, an infallible guide, especially provided for our use; while in the mere fallible human beings, who, whether at Rome or elsewhere, stand where the apostles have stood before them, we have, as we well know, nothing but weak and erring men, often misled and misleading; sometimes even wicked and hating God and his church.

But probably the question may be repeated in its shortest form—Did Christ constitute a church or not?

We will reply with equal explicitness. He ordained and sent forth his apostles to preach the gospel in all lands, and to form churches in various kingdoms; which are so spoken of in the epistles, as “the church at Corinth;”—“the churches of Galatia;”—“the church of the Thessalonians;” and sundry others. These were all *visible* churches, known by territorial designations, and including within themselves all sorts of characters, genuine and counterfeit. There is, however, a general and universal church spoken of in various places in the New Testament, as the “*body*” of Christ, (Ephes. i. 22.) as that for which Christ “*gave himself;*” (Ephes. v. 25.) and as “*a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing;*” (Ephes. v. 27.) a description which certainly has never belonged to any visible church that the world has yet seen, least of all to that of which Cardinal Baroni- us, referring to A. D. 912, says, “What was then the face of the holy Roman church? How exceedingly foul was it, when most powerful, and sordid, and abandoned women ruled at Rome,” &c. It is clear, therefore, that those expressions in Scripture which refer to a general or universal church, the spouse of Christ, speak of an invisible church, consisting of all those who sincerely believe in him, and cling to him, whether in Tartary, in Britain, in Tahiti, or in any other part of the world.

But lastly we shall be referred to the *xvth* of Acts, in which, we shall be told, there is most clearly a

central body, an admitted and acknowledged authority, knitting together in union and oneness of feeling and principle, all the various scattered provincial churches of the apostolic days.

That chapter, however, is perfectly consistent with the view we have already given. The company of apostles being then at Jerusalem (*not at Rome*), and there being no New Testament to guide the infant churches, those churches naturally and necessarily sent up to Jerusalem, to the apostles, whenever any doubt arose. But the apostles died, and left no successors in their apostolic authority; but they left the New Testament in their stead. Consequently the churches ceased to send to Jerusalem for decisions; as for sending to *Rome*, such a course was never thought of for at least a century after this.

As to one, sole, visible church, then, we see it nowhere in the New Testament; and we find it nowhere in ecclesiastical history. In the apostolical writings, we merely meet with a great number of churches in various lands and kingdoms, and we find also that to the decrees and orders of the *apostles*, all these churches were obedient. But we hear nothing of their subjection even to the church of Jerusalem, much less to that of *Rome*, which was not so much as founded until many years after. And in ecclesiastical history, we find, indeed, that about the year 193, Victor, then bishop of *Rome*, assumed to himself the power of fixing the period of Easter, but instead of any such authority being conceded to him, he was sharply reprehended by the brightest light of that time, Irenæus; and his decree set at nought through the greater part of Christendom. Not in Scripture then, nor yet in what is called "Antiquity," in its purest and best days, do we find any trace of this one, universal, and visible church.

We shall probably, however, be told that this hypothesis leaves the church at large in a hapless and forlorn predicament. How unlikely, it will be said, that Christ should have deliberately left his disciples, in all after ages, destitute of authoritative guidance

and direction; when it was so easy, as in the Romish church has been shown, to establish a centre of unity and authority in that apostolic college of which we find such clear traces in the Acts of the Apostles.

We have before observed, that it is useless, and therefore idle and almost criminal, to indulge in speculations of this kind, when we have both God's own word, and the records of antiquity to boot, to instruct us as to what he *was* actually pleased to decide upon doing in this matter. Let us again glance at these two sources of truth, not so much for what we shall there find, as for the fullest evidence of the want of all support for the Romish hypothesis. Our opponents must certainly admit, that if one visible church, ruled over by one central authority, had been established by Christ, there must have been some distinct and visible traces of it, both in the writings of the apostles, and in the records of their Acts; and also in the history of the church during the first two centuries. And it is on the utter silence of both these sources of information that we rely, as establishing our conclusion, that this visible church, and this central authority, are nothing better than mere human inventions, constructed in some later period.

Had we, indeed, a college of apostles, or any other body of men who could raise the dead to life, or give sight to the blind,—sitting on earth at the present moment, we should not for an instant hesitate to admit their authority. But between a company of inspired men, selected and sent forth by Christ himself, and evidencing their divine commission by their miraculous power; and a college of cardinals, named by court intrigues, characterized by every shade of folly and of crime, and possessing neither infallibility in their decisions, nor power in their actions, there is a difference as wide as between heaven and earth.

But we must protest against being supposed to admit the church of Christ to be left in a desolate and helpless condition. We are not arguing *against* the authority of the apostles of Christ, but *for* it. All that they were inspired to teach men, they have left

us in the New Testament; and in the study of that unerring guide, we have also the promise of the Holy Spirit's teaching. What we protest against is the desertion of this, the only really *apostolic authority*, for human decisions and opinions, whether of fathers, or councils, or popes, or bishops. We cling to that apostolic code, touching the character of which there is no doubt, and refuse to admit the jarring and controverted claims of men, to be placed in any kind of competition with it.

XV.—THE IDOLATRY OF ROMANISM.

THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

THUS far have we gone, without being able to get beyond the first, grand, fundamental question, of the RULE OF FAITH. Our time, however, has not been wasted, nor has our progress been tardy; for that single point comprises more than one half the controversy. In fact, it involves the whole. The enmity so generally exhibited by the leaders of the Romish church towards the Holy Scriptures, sufficiently proves that, in their view, the admission of the word of God, as the rule of Christian faith and practice, must be fatal to their cause. And we are equally ready to admit, on the part of Protestants, that if the Bible be *not* our sole and sufficient rule—if we are under the necessity of having recourse to tradition, or the writings of the fathers, or the decisions of the church, in any matter essentially connected with the soul's salvation,—then there is little prospect of our being able to resist the establishment of the greater part of popery.

The Romanist, however, assures us that we *must* have recourse, at last, to the traditions of the church, for many doctrines and practices which are generally held among Protestants. How, he asks, can we possibly establish the doctrine of the Trinity, or the sacredness of the Sabbath, or the lawfulness of infant baptism, without having recourse to the writings of the fathers, and the decisions of the church?

We answer:—The doctrine of the Trinity, in our view, can be abundantly established by the words of

Scripture; and, in fact, so high and vast is its dignity and its weight, that if it were not found in God's own word, we could never venture to press it upon any one's belief, on the mere ground that some ancient fathers held such a view. 2. The divine institution of the Sabbath is upheld throughout the whole Bible; and in the New Testament we have the clearest proofs that the day set apart, as the Sabbath, by the earliest Christians, under the sanction of the apostles, was the *first* day of the week, to which we now adhere. 3. Infant baptism is not essential to salvation; though it is clearly deducible, by way of inference, from the tenor of the Old and New Testaments, gathering from the first the practice relative to circumcision; and from the second, the substitution, in the Christian church, of baptism in its room. But neither in the case of infant baptism, nor in any other, do we wish to throw the history of the early church out of view. We admit the value and importance of such records as remain to us: we can even ascribe much, though not infallible, authority to them, when they harmonize with Scripture; but we cannot accept such records as of equal authority with the word of God; nor can we consent to be absolutely bound by the opinions and practices of men who were as fallible and erring as ourselves. However, let us now briefly review our former arguments, and endeavour to take up the question at the point at which we last left it.

It has been our chief object, in all our past discussions, to ascertain the true standard or rule of faith, by which all questions of doctrine and practice were to be tried. On the Protestant side, we asserted the Bible to be this rule; the Romanist arguing that the Bible formed, at most, only a part of the rule, and that the teaching of the church was a necessary adjunct; or rather, that the latter was the practical rule, or standard for daily use; while the Scriptures were rather to be looked upon as the fountain or source from whence the church drew her instructions.

After a large and rather discursive review of the whole argument, we came, at last, to this conclusion: that the Protestant rule, the written word of God, was abundantly established, as to its authority; and was both available and sufficient, in its intrinsic character. On the other hand, the main objection to the rule of the Romish church was not answered; to wit, that it was not *available*; that it could not be taken hold of and applied by a hesitating inquirer. For, on a close investigation, the matter was brought to this,—either that such an inquirer must accept “the teaching of the church” at the hands of an individual priest, whom he knew to be fallible and liable to error, and in whom he therefore could not, with any satisfaction of mind, repose such implicit confidence; or else, if he hesitated to take such an individual’s declaration as to what the church decided or held, he was left to wander in almost utter darkness, amidst a maze of church controversies, to find out, first, where the Catholic church was really to be seen and heard; and then, what she had said and done on all the controverted points. In this difficulty, then, we contended that the Protestant rule was, beyond all comparison, the preferable one; for here, in the Bible, we possess it, and we can consult it, with perfect ease, whenever we need its guidance; and with a feeling of perfect security that what we are reading is, truly and certainly, the unerring word of the most high God.

The Romanist, however, asks if we can really feel, without having first submitted ourselves to the judgment and instruction of the church, that we have any sufficient grounds for our certainty that that book is really what we suppose it to be, a collection of the writings of the inspired apostles and prophets, containing the whole of such inspired writings, and containing none other?

In answer to this, we demand in return, what is to be done with the full and satisfactory arguments of Bossuet, Bellarmine, Huet, La Mennais, and divers

others of the Romish communion, in proof of the genuineness, authenticity, and divine inspiration of Scripture, against infidels and sceptical objectors?

These controversialists and theologians must not hold one language at one time, and a totally different tone at another. They have satisfactorily shown, while combating the infidels and sceptics, that the right use of our reason, without submitting it to the arbitrary dictation of any human being, or human authority, conducts us inevitably to the conclusion, that the book called the Bible is a divine revelation; or a collection of writings inspired by the Holy Spirit. Consequently, having thus argued, and having successfully established this point, they are not now at liberty to turn round and espouse the contrary view; namely, that it is only by the authority of the church that we can learn the divine character of the books of Scripture.

For nothing can be more clear than that if they adhere to this assertion,—that it is only by the testimony of the church that we can know the Scriptures to be inspired,—then, with an infidel, who takes their church to be nothing else than a system of fraud and priestcraft, they have not even a word to say. They cannot even begin an argument; for if they admit the external evidences of the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures to be insufficient, the question between them and the sceptic is wholly at an end. They retire, defeated, even before the combat has well begun.

But let us now endeavour to advance another step. Let us assume, as we are entitled to do, that the divine inspiration of Scripture is abundantly established. In the Bible, therefore, we have a standard, and it is clear that the Romish church can offer us no further or better rule. Let us proceed, then, on this basis, that the Bible is to be judge and arbiter of this controversy. And let us now proceed to take up in succession, the various points of difference between the Romish and Protestant churches. That which will first

demand our attention, is the main accusation brought against the Romish church, namely, that she is an *Idolatrous church*: or a community which having once been a true church of Christ, has apostatized, and fallen into the practice of worshipping and serving other gods. This is the view presented of her by the apostle John, in the book of Revelation, chap. xvii. xviii. and though it may not be expedient, at present, to open the discussion as to the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, there can be no impropriety in our gravely and calmly bringing the same accusation against the Romish church, upon the evidence of facts, which is here stated, in figurative language, by the inspired apostle. We charge, therefore, the church of Rome with the practice of open, flagrant, and unblushing IDOLATRY.

But Dr. Wiseman starts back with indignation, and exclaims, "Idolators! know ye, my brethren, the import of this name? That it is the most frightful charge that can be laid to the score of any Christian? Then, gracious God! what must it be, when flung as an accusation upon those who have been baptized in the name of Christ, who have tasted the sacred gift of his body, and received the Holy Ghost?"*

Now we are quite aware that the charge we make is a most serious one, and one which ought not to be lightly hazarded. But when Dr. Wiseman affects to recoil back with surprise and indignation at so "frightful" an accusation, he should remember the real nature of the separation which exists between the church of Rome and the Protestant churches. Those who, in the sixteenth century, at the hazard of their lives and of all they held dear, separated from Rome, never thought of treating the differences which existed, as matters of light and trifling moment. If they had not believed the grounds of their protest to be both solid and of the most vital nature, they would not have caused a *separation*, which if made without sufficient ground, must have been a *schism*. They jeopardized

* Wiseman's Thirteenth Lecture, p. 93.

every thing that life could offer. Hundreds, even in England, and thousands in France and Germany, paid the forfeit of their decision with their lives; and is it now to be made matter of surprise that the charges brought by them and by us against Rome, and their belief in the truth of which they sealed with their blood—should be serious and weighty? If the grounds of that separation were not of a deep and fearful nature, would not the Romanists themselves be justified in asking, “Wherefore, for such light and trifling causes, have ye broken the unity of the church?” We admit, then, that the charge we bring against the Romish church is a most fearful one. We admit that we charge that church with depriving God of his honour, and transferring the worship and adoration which should be paid to Him alone, to divers of his creatures, who were and are nothing but poor human beings like ourselves.

We commence the inquiry, then, by first lodging our formal accusation, that the church of Rome, by her worship and adoration of the Virgin Mary, and of sundry dead men and women, called “saints,” does, in effect, rob Christ of his peculiar glory; affront the God and Father of our Lord, who hath “given him for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles,” and set at nought the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to glorify Christ, and to shed abroad his love in our hearts. In short, that another worship, distinct from, and opposed to, the worship of the blessed Trinity, is set up; a worship as entirely distinct from, and opposed to, the worship of the only true God, as was the worship of the heroes and demigods of ancient Greece and Rome. But having thus opened our accusation, let us at once hear Dr. Wiseman’s defence; feeling assured that that lucid writer has, in his well-considered argument, done more justice to the cause of his church, than we should be likely to do by any imaginings of our own. The Doctor says:—

“What is the Catholic belief on the subject of giving worship or veneration to the saints or their em-

blems? You will not open a single Catholic work, from the folio decrees of councils, down to the smallest catechism placed in the hands of the youngest children, in which you will not find it expressly taught;—that it is sinful to pay the same homage or worship to the saints, or the greatest of the saints, or the highest of the angels in heaven, which we pay to God; that supreme honour and worship are reserved exclusively to him; that from him alone can any blessing possibly come; that he is the sole fountain of salvation and grace, and all spiritual, or even earthly gifts,—and that no one created being can have any power, energy, or influence of its own, in carrying into effect our wishes or desires. No one surely will say, that there is no distinction between one species of homage and reverence, and another; no one will assert that when we honour the king or his representatives, or our parents, or others in lawful authority over us, we are hereby derogating from the supreme honour due to God. Would not any one smile, if he did not give way to a harsher feeling, were he taxed with defrauding God of his true honour, because he paid reverence or esteem to others, or sought their intercession or assistance? It is wasting time to prove that there may be honour and worship,—for, as I will show you presently, this word is ambiguous,—that there may be reverence or esteem demonstrated, so subservient to God, as in no way to interfere with what is due to him.

“What I have cursorily stated, is precisely the Catholic belief regarding the saints: that they have no power of themselves, and that they are not to be honoured and respected as though they possessed it; but at the same time that they are intercessors for us with God, praying for us to him, and that it is right to address ourselves to them, and obtain the co-operation of this, their powerful intercession, in our behalf. The very distinction here made excludes the odious charge to which I have alluded with considerable pain. For the very idea that you call on any being to pray to God, is surely making an abyss, a gulf be-

tween him and God; it is making him a suppliant, a dependant on the will of the Almighty: and surely these terms and these ideas are in exact contradiction to all we can possibly conceive of the attributes and qualities of God.

“But I go further still. Instead of taking any thing from God, it is adding immensely to his glory: by thus calling on the saints to pray for us, instead of robbing him of a particle of the honour which belongs to him, we believe him to be served in a much nobler way than any other. For we thereby raise ourselves in imagination to heaven; we see the saints prostrate before him in our behalf, offering their golden crowns and palms before his footstool, pouring out before him the odours of their golden vials, which are the prayers of their brethren on earth, and interceding through the death and the passion of his Son. And surely, if this be so, we are paying to God the highest homage, which his apostle describes as paid in heaven; for we give occasion, by every prayer, for this prostration of his saints, and this outpouring of the fragrance of their supplications. Such being the Catholic belief regarding the saints, we must be further convinced that it is, and can be, no way displeasing to God, that we should show a respect and honour to their remains on earth, or to those images and representations which recall them to our remembrance. Nay, we believe more than this: for we believe that God is pleased with this respect we show them, insomuch as it is all ultimately directed to honour him in them. We doubt not that he may be pleased to make use of such outward and visible instruments, to excite the faith of his people, and to bring them to a disposition of fervour, which may produce salutary effects.”*

Such is the doctor's statement of the doctrine. Let us now turn to his proofs from Scripture:—

“In the book of Daniel, for instance, we read of angels sent to instruct him, and we have mention made of the princes, meaning the angels of different

* Wiseman's Thirteenth Lecture, p. 93—95.

kingdoms. In the book of Tobias, which, whatever any one present may think of its canonicity, as I said on a former occasion of the book of Maccabees, must be considered at least as a strong testimonial of the belief of the Jews,—we find these words expressly put into the mouth of an angel: ‘When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayers to the Lord.’ In the book of Maccabees we have the same doctrine repeated. It is there said, that Onias, who had been high priest, appeared to Judas Maccabeus, ‘holding up his arms, and praying for the people of the Jews.’ After this, there appeared also another man, admirable for age and glory, and environed with great beauty and majesty. Then Onias said, ‘This is a lover of his brethren, and of the people of Israel: this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city, Jeremias the prophet of God.’ Such then was the belief of the Jews, and such it is at the present day.

“But is there any thing in the New Testament to contradict it, and give reason to suspect for a moment that our blessed Saviour rejected and reprobated this conviction? Does he not, on the contrary, speak of it as a thing well understood, and in terms which, so far from reproving, must have gone far to confirm his hearers in this belief? ‘Even so,’ says our Saviour, ‘there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just that need not penance.’ What is here signified, but that communion of which I spoke, whereby a sinner’s repenting here below is matter of joy and gladness to the angels? And we are elsewhere taught that the saints of God shall be like his angels. We have also the angels of individuals spoken of: and we are told not to offend any of Christ’s little ones, or make them fall, because their angels always see the face of their Father who is in heaven. Why, this to all appearance goes as much as the Catholic belief, and more, to affect the superintendence and guidance, and

general providence of God. That we are to take care to avoid sin, because it offends the angels—that we are to avoid being the cause of these little ones' fall, because *their* angels see the face of God! What does this mean, but that they have an influence with God, and will use it to bring down judgment on the offender? For, in fact, wherefore is the connexion between the angels and men alluded to, except to show that the former, enjoying the divine presence, have a powerful advantage over us, which they will use to bring signal judgment down on the heads of the offenders? And what is that but establishing a communion and connexion between them and their little charge in the way of intercession?

“But in the Apocalypse we have still stronger authority, for we there read of our prayers being as perfumes in the hands of angels and saints. One blessed spirit stood before a mystical altar in heaven, ‘having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel.’ And not only the angels, but the twenty-four elders, cast themselves before the throne of God, and, as I before remarked, pour out vials of sweet odours, which are the prayers of the saints. What does all this signify, but that they do present our prayers to God, and become intercessors with him?”*

Such, then, is the whole that the learned Doctor can offer, in the way of proof from Scripture. So signal a failure ought of itself to decide the whole question. Prayer is the one grand topic of the Bible. Every saint therein described was eminently a man of prayer. Not less than *five hundred* times do we find prayer, and the act of praying, distinctly spoken of. And yet, with all Dr. Wiseman's research and ingenuity, he is only able to find four passages in the

* Wiseman's Thirteenth Lecture, p. 101–103.

Old Testament, and four in the New, from which he can possibly draw an inference suited to his views! And on even a very cursory examination, we shall find that not one of these lends the least countenance to the practice of the Romish church.

Besides these, indeed, the Doctor quotes two verses from the Apocryphal books, but they can have no authority in the matter. The care of the books of the Old Testament was committed by God to the Jewish church: "*Unto them,*" says Paul, "*were committed the oracles of God.*" (Rom. iii. 2.) Now the Jewish church never acknowledged the books of Tobit or the Maccabees as inspired writings. We can have nothing, therefore, to do with them in this matter. And, in fact, it is sufficient to observe, that the council of Laodicea, held in A. D. 367, and that of Chalcedon, held in A. D. 451, and attended by six hundred and thirty bishops, while settling the canon of Scripture as then held, say nothing of these books of Tobit and Maccabees. Equally unknown were they to Origen, to Eusebius, to Athanasius and to Hilary. It was reserved for the Romish church of a later age,—finding that a few passages like those which Dr. Wiseman has quoted, told in favour of their awful fictions of purgatory and prayer to the saints,—to gather up and adopt these forgeries which had lain unheeded and disregarded for many hundred years.

Dr. Wiseman, however, feeling the weakness of this part of his case, proposes to use them "as a strong testimonial of the belief of the Jews."

Nothing can be more irrational. Here are two old books, one of which, Tobit, is a mass of childish absurdities. And of the other, it is sufficient to say, that it approves and lauds an act of suicide! Neither of these books was ever admitted by the Jews into the canon of the Scriptures, nor yet by the early Christian church. What are they, then? Simply two old books, representing the opinions of none but their writers. How can books that were *rejected* from the first, by the whole body of Jewish rabbis, furnish

any "testimonial of the belief of the Jews?" Perhaps, however, it is but consistent, that the worship of false and spurious mediators should be supported by the authority of false and spurious books of Scripture!

Let us pass on, then, to the other eight passages, which Dr. Wiseman quotes from the sacred writings. These will occupy us but a very short time. The first four are taken from Daniel, and are as follows:

"I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." (chap. viii. 16.)

"Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." (chap. ix. 21.)

"Then he said unto me, Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words." (chap. x. 12.)

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people." (chap. xii. 1.)

Now we beg to ask, what more does any one of these texts tell us, than what is declared of the angels in Heb. i. 14. *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"*

But on this point there is no controversy. No Protestant denies the ministry of angels. The question is, who is to be addressed in prayer, the angels or saints, or their Lord and master? Now on this point we have Scripture examples. In 2 Kings, vi. 17, Elisha prays, *"O Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."* Here, then, were the ministering spirits. But with them close at hand, Elisha thinks

not of them, addresses them not, but thrice within four verses, "PRAYS UNTO THE LORD." In like manner said Jesus himself, "*Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*" (Matt. xxvi. 53.) All these four passages from Daniel, then, which merely speak of the angels as "ministering spirits," prove nothing whatever in this question, except perhaps that Dr. Wiseman was sadly at a loss for a few authorities from Scripture.

But are the other four texts which he cites of any higher value? Let us see.

The first is from Luke xv. 7, 10. "*Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*" This goes no further than the passages in Daniel. That the angels are "ministering spirits," we admit. They must often be spectators of the recovery of a sinner unto God, and must spread the intelligence among their companions. And that intelligence, we are told, produces universal joy among these bright spirits. But what is there in all this, to justify or encourage our addressing prayers to them? Clearly nothing.

The next passage (Matt. xxii. 30.) merely asserts, that the saints shall be as the angels. But as we have not yet found a single authority for praying to the angels, of course we have none for praying to the saints. We come next to Matt. xviii. 10. "*Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.*" Still not one word authorizing prayer to them. Last of all, we are referred to Rev. viii. 3, 4. "*And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*" This passage is highly figurative. No one, of course, imagines the existence of a material altar, or a golden censer, or earthly incense. Upon such a passage, unsupported by any other in the whole

Scripture, it is impossible to rest an important doctrine. The very interpretation of it, in the writings of the leading Romish commentators, is wholly inconsistent with Dr. W's view. *Thomas Aquinas* declares the angel to be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ: and the Jesuit *Viegas* says: "All interpreters do confess, that by the angel is meant our Lord Christ, because of *none other* can it be said, that he offers up to the Father, after so glorious and majestic a manner, the incense, that is the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar."* And of the accuracy of this interpretation there can be no doubt; for the golden censer, borne by the angel, pertained only to the High Priest.† And "the High Priest of our profession" is Christ Jesus. Whether, however, the angel be Christ or not, there is nothing said in this place of any prayers *addressed to the angel* by the saints on earth. And that is the only point for which we are in search. Not one of all Dr. Wiseman's texts reaches this point, or even approaches to it.

But there is another passage in the Revelation which the Romanists are accustomed to quote in this argument: it is only adduced, however, by less wary advocates than Dr. Wiseman. It occurs at the tenth verse of the nineteenth chapter. The angel there spoken of had been instructing the apostle in many things, and the apostle adds, "*And I fell at his feet to worship him.*" Thus far is the text usually quoted by Romanists. But Dr. Wiseman was too cautious to meddle with this passage, for he well knew that the very next words are, "*And he said unto me, SEE THOU DO IT NOT, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus, WORSHIP GOD.*" This is, in fact, the only passage in the whole Bible that, taken imperfectly, might seem to lend countenance to the worship of saints and angels. But the Holy Spirit, foreseeing this great evil, instantly adds the most decisive condemnation, and thus leaves no opening whatever for the error to creep in.

* Apoc. chap. viii. sect. 2.

† Hebrews ix. 3, 4, 7.

And now let us review the whole tenor of Scripture as to this question. Dr. Wiseman has ransacked the Bible; he has passed over more than *five hundred* passages in which prayer and worship and supplication is named, and not a single text can he find, which lends the least colour to the worship of saints! This, of itself, ought to decide the whole question.

For remember what is the inevitable inference: We have the annals of the Jewish church through fifteen centuries; that church possessed as eminent saints as any that subsequent ages have seen; Abraham, "the friend of God:" Moses, with whom God "talked face to face, as a man talketh with his friend:" Jacob, who "had power with God, and prevailed:" David, "the man after God's own heart:" Elijah, who only, besides Enoch, "was not, for God took him:" Daniel, the "man greatly beloved." All these we read of in their turn; but not one prayer or invocation do we find, addressed to them by the Jewish church, throughout all these fifteen hundred years!

And then, coming down to the apostles' times, we find John the Baptist; Stephen, the first martyr; and James the brother of John, all sent to their heavenly home by martyrdom in the course of a few years. And we have Paul writing epistles to various churches for more than twenty years, and John for more than fifty years, after the departure of these three martyrs. How, then, let us ask, came it, if the invocation of departed saints was so right, and fit, and proper, as Dr. Wiseman represents it,—that no one of all the prophets, no one among all the apostles, once counsels it, or so much as mentions it, as a usual and laudable practice in the church? Prayer, as we have seen, was among their most constant topics. How, then, is it, that prayer to Abraham, or to Elijah, or to Stephen, is never once mentioned in all their writings? *Negative* proof, stronger than this, it is, we conceive, scarcely possible to imagine.

But Dr. Wiseman goes on to adduce a variety of instances from the writings of Irenæus, Origen, Cy-

prian, Eusebius, Basil, Athanasius, and other fathers, in which the practice of the early church is alluded to, and in which the invocation of the saints is constantly taught.

Not questioning the truth of these quotations, we may yet refuse the inference, that the practice of the church in the second, third, fourth, and subsequent centuries, is at all binding upon us. We reject it, first, because Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, had warned them that "a falling away," or apostasy, was at hand; and that "the mystery of iniquity" was already, in his, the apostle's time, at work. (2 Thess. ii. 3, 7.) It is clear, therefore, that when we find new practices and new doctrines creeping into the church, subsequently to the apostle's days, we ought at least to suspect, that these were some of the manifestations of that "mystery of iniquity" which he had declared to be already at work, and which was to produce a great "falling away."

But, secondly, we refuse to be governed by quotations from Cyprian, Origen, Basil, or Gregory Nazianzen, for another very sufficient reason; that these eminent men, great and honourable as most of them were, were still, like ourselves, fallible and variable; and did, in fact, continually change their opinions, and confess their errors from time to time. And thus it comes to pass, that while the advocate of one view can always replenish his quiver from the armoury of the fathers, with arguments for the affirmative of any question, the opponent finds it equally easy to gather from them reasons on the negative side in the same controversy. And what can be the end of such contention, but either a weariness and disgust at such senseless proceedings, or a sceptical doubt whether such a thing as truth is possibly to be discovered?

In the present case it is just as easy to find passages in the writings of the fathers *against* the worship of the saints, as *in favour* of such a practice. For instance, *Origen* says, "We must pray to *him alone* who is God over all; and we must pray to the only-

begotten Son of God, the first born of every creature; and we must entreat him as our High Priest, to present our prayers when they come to him—to his God and our God, to his Father and ours.”*

Athanasius tells us: “It appertains to *God only* to be worshipped, and the angels themselves are aware of this; for although they surpass others in glory, they are all creatures, and not beings to be worshipped, but beings who worship the Lord. The angel, therefore, admonished Manoah, the father of Sampson, saying, “Offer not to me but to God.”†

Gregory Nazianzen says: “The word of God has ordained that none of those things which have their being by creation shall be worshipped by men. Moses, the law, the prophets, the gospels, and all the apostles, forbid our looking to the creature.”‡

And *Epiphanius* is still more decided, warning us that “Neither Elias is to be worshipped, nor yet John. Nor is Thecla, nor any of the saints to be worshipped. For that ancient error shall not prevail over us, to forsake the living God, and to worship the things that are made by him. For they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, and thus became fools. And if an angel will not be worshipped, how much more will not she who was born of Anna?” “Let Mary be had in honour, but let the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be worshipped. Let no man worship Mary.”§

These few passages, which might be indefinitely increased, show that if we were to go to the fathers for decision of the question, we should merely involve ourselves in an inextricable maze of conflicting opinions. But we have already decided, that the Bible, and the Bible only, is to be the standard to which appeal is to be made. And never, assuredly, did

* Origen against Celsus, lib. viii.

† Athanasius, Third Oration against Arians. Paris, 1627.

‡ Gregory Nazianzen, Fourth Oration against Eunom. tom. ii. p. 144.

§ Epiphanius against Heretics, sec. 79, pp. 448, 449.

advocate more entirely fail, than has Dr. Wiseman, in the attempt to support saint-worship by Scripture authorities.

But we shall probably be told, that we confound two things which Dr. Wiseman justly discriminates, namely, that highest worship which is due only to God, and that minor degree which may blamelessly be paid to his creatures. We shall be reminded, that the words "worship," "worshipful," "your worships," are constantly applied by Protestants to magistrates and other authorities, when invested with the insignia of their office. Our argument, however, does not turn upon the mere use of the word worship, but upon the very nature of the homage and adoration paid by Romanists to the saints, as in itself unlawful and idolatrous. And we will now take up the solemn question, put in such indignant terms by Dr. Wiseman, Why we venture to charge the Romish church with idolatry?—and in answering this interrogation, we shall endeavour to show three things:—

1. That the doctrines and practices of the Romish church, touching the adoration and invocation of the saints, are opposed to the spirit and tenor of the gospel:

2. That they are also opposed to the plain injunctions of Scripture:

3. That they do amount, in the generality of cases, to absolute and very gross idolatry.

First, then, we propose to show that these doctrines and practices oppose and counteract the main object and intent of the gospel. That intent we shall not venture to describe in our own words, but shall adduce the descriptions of the apostles themselves.

Paul tells the Ephesians,

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so

making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you, which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (Eph. ii. 13—18.)

To the Corinthians he writes,

“All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. v. 18—20.)

To the Colossians:

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself: by him, I say, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight.” (Col. i. 19—22.)

And so writes Peter:

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” (1 Peter iii. 18.)

And John,

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John i. 3.)

“Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” (1 John iii. 21, 22.)

“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” (1 John iv. 16—18.)

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us. (1 John v. 13—15.)

These passages, to which many others might be added, will exhibit better than any language of ours could do, the great end and object of the gospel, which is, TO BRING MEN NIGH UNTO GOD. By the fall, a “great gulf was fixed” between man and his Creator. As a sinner, man, until a reconciliation is effected, dares not lift up his eyes to heaven. His mind is always averted with dread, from a view of his angry Judge; and this fear, and dread, and alienation, it is Satan’s chief object to keep up. So long, he well knows, as this alienation exists, man must remain entirely in his power.

But this enmity and distance it was the great object of the gospel to remove. Man could not approach God; God, therefore, by the wonderful contrivance of Redemption, approached man, in order to draw man to Himself. *“Christ,”* says Peter, *“hath once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD.”* (1 Peter iii. 18.) And *“therefore,”* says Paul, *“being justified by faith we have PEACE WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have ACCESS by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* (Rom. v. 1, 2.)

Now all this beautiful plan of the divine wisdom, it is the endeavour of Satan, by every possible device,

to counteract. His constant labour is, to persuade man that there is not this perfect reconciliation; that he must not dare to approach God with filial confidence; that there is some degree of terror and austerity yet remaining, which makes it far wiser and more desirable to use the intercession of others, rather than to throw himself before the divine footstool. And having succeeded in creating this feeling of dread and distance, the next attempt is to throw a similar degree of awfulness and terror around the character of Christ; and to argue that human beings like ourselves, would be more likely to listen with sympathy, and to plead our cause with earnestness, than so great a person as the only begotten Son of God. And in inculcating this false view, he is mainly aided by the church of Rome, whose theologians constantly assert it.

“You lament,” says Dr. Milner, “that your prayers to God are not heard;—continue to pray to him with all the fervour of your soul; but why not engage his friends and courtiers to add the weight of their prayers to your own? Perhaps his Divine Majesty may hear the prayers of the Jobs, *when he will not listen to those of an Eliphaz,*” &c.* “Beg of her, then, (the Virgin) with affection and confidence, to *intercede with Jesus,* for you.”† “The saints,” says Dr. Wiseman, “look down upon us with sympathy, take an interest in all that we do and suffer, and *make use of the influence they necessarily possess with God,* towards assisting their frail and tempted brethren on earth.”‡ “We may turn to them in the confidence of brethren, and ask them to *use their influence* with their Lord and Master, which their charity and goodness necessarily move them to exert.”§

Now what is the drift and inevitable effect of all this;—but to convey an impression to the penitent and praying mind, that there are others in heaven whose ears are more open to his prayers, and whose hearts more readily sympathize with his griefs and

* Milner's End of Controversy, 18mo. p. 370.

† Wiseman's Thirteenth Lecture, p. 98.

‡ Ibid. p. 371.

§ Ibid. p. 98.

necessities, than either the "Father of Mercies," or "the Good Shepherd, who bears the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young." The whole tenor of this system, then, is to augment the distance between Christ and the sinner; to separate and drive apart those whom the gospel was intended to re-unite and make one; and to hinder men from seeking help where alone it is to be found, in their almighty and all-merciful God and Saviour. And thus it is that it shows itself clearly *opposed to the whole tenor and purport of the gospel dispensation.*

But further, or rather as a necessary consequence—*It contradicts the plain declarations of Scripture.*

Most explicitly does Christ declare of himself, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" (John xiv. 6.) "*If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*" (ver. 14.) "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*" (chap. xvi. 23.)

Paul is equally clear on this point: "*It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*" (Rom. viii. 34.)

"*There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" (1 Tim. ii. 5.)

"*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*" (Heb. ii. 17, 18.)

"*We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" (chap. iv. 15, 16.)

"*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the ut-*

termost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (chap. vii. 25.)

"And for this cause he is THE MEDIATOR of the New Testament." (chap. ix. 15.)

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (ch. ix. 24.)

John follows in the same strain:

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 1, 2.)

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John v. 14, 15.)

Now we would boldly ask, whether language could possibly be more distinct and full on this point, that Christ is our ONE MEDIATOR; that he ever heareth the prayer of the penitent; and that by him no one is ever sent empty away? What folly, then, or rather, what satanic delusion is it, to turn away from this great High Priest, the appointed channel of communication between God and man, and to prefer our petitions to Gregory, or Januarius, or Mary, rather than unto him!

But although the apostles chiefly dwell on the *truth* in this matter, and seem not to have had much presage of the *false* doctrine that should arise, they do once or twice allude to this subject, and with the strongest abhorrence. Writing to the Colossians, Paul counsels them:

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." (Col. ii. 8.)

And to Timothy he writes:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving

heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (or demigods.)) (1 Tim. iv. 1.)

Such, then, is the clear and broad testimony of Scripture on this point; and let it be remembered, that on the other side not a word can be found, as we have already seen, which gives the least countenance to the notion of the propriety of seeking other intercessors or mediators, than “the ONE MEDIATOR between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.”

But we must now proceed, in the last place, to show that this practice, a tendency to which we admit to have shown itself in the church as early as the third and fourth centuries, but which was fixed and consolidated by the Romish ecclesiastical power, when carried to the extent to which Rome has carried it, amounts to nothing less than absolute and positive IDOLATRY.

For what is idolatry? It is the setting up a strange god; the giving to some creature of God’s hand, or some invention of our own fancy, the place and the rightful dominion of God himself.

Now this worship of “demons,” or dead men, is chargeable with this guilt, in two particulars:

1. That it ascribes to human beings the incommunicable attributes of God; and,
2. That it devolves upon the same human beings the peculiar offices and honours of Christ.

It ascribes to “demons,” or dead men, the incommunicable attributes of God.

Among these we may chiefly name his *omnipresence* and *omniscience*. These are constantly spoken of in Scripture as God’s own peculiar and distinguishing attributes.

“*Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even THOU ONLY, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.)*” (1 Kings viii. 39.)

“*Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*” (Psalm xliv. 21.)

“*Thou compassest my path and my lying down,*

and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Ps. cxxxix. 3, 4, 7.)

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." (Jer. xxiii. 24.)

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv. 13.)

And it is the persuasion of this peculiar and all-important fact, which draws forth man's faith and prayer. It is because "*in Him we live, and move, and have our being,*" that "*the eyes of all wait upon Him, and He giveth them their meat in due season.*" And, thus it is that the Psalmist addresses God, by an allusion to this attribute, as essentially His own: "**O THOU THAT HEAREST PRAYER, unto thee shall all flesh come.**"

We might proceed to argue, next, upon the absolute impossibility of this attribute being communicated to, or conferred upon, any mere creature. There is nothing irreverent in saying, that there are attributes which God himself could not confer upon another. A creature, for instance, who was formed only yesterday, cannot be made to be eternal, or from before all time. But we forbear urging this point, not to plunge into metaphysical discussions. We prefer to press this plain doctrine,—that to ascribe one of these great and peculiar attributes of God to a mere human being, without the least ground for so doing, either in Scripture or in common sense, is to be guilty of an act in the highest degree dishonourable to God, and partaking largely of blasphemy.

To come to particulars: The church of Rome causes perpetual supplications to be sent up, from every corner of the globe, and from the secret of the heart, as well as by audible voices, to the Virgin Mary: Now, we beg to know what ground any one can have for

supposing that any one of these supplications is really heard by the virgin?

We have a right to ask this question; for he who teaches a worship no where commanded in Scripture, is clearly bound to show that it is grounded on some principle reconcilable with common sense. Whereas, every man's own knowledge and experience is opposed, at first sight, to this theory. We know that a creature, a human soul, cannot be in two places at once. And even if we were to imagine it possible for the soul of the virgin to be conscious of a whispered prayer breathed forth by a nun in Sicily, we should still find it difficult to conceive the possibility of her being also aware, at the same instant of time, of other prayers offered up in Canada or in Tranquebar. Now, we admit, willingly, that all such difficulties as these must be surrendered, the moment the words of inspiration are heard. But we cannot submit to any thing less authoritative. We cannot give up the conclusions of our own reason merely out of deference to the opinions of Bernard or of Hilary. We ask, therefore, is it meant to ascribe to the virgin the language used only by God himself, "*Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.*" Or are we to alter the words of the Psalmist, and say, "*The eyes of Mary are in every place, beholding the evil and the good?*" What, in short, are we to understand to be the actual belief, touching the mode in which these "saints" are made acquainted with the petitions of their worshippers?

This question is answered by Bellarmine in the following terms:—

"Concerning the manner in which they know what is said to them, there are four opinions among the doctors,—

"1. Some say that they know it from the relation of the angels, who at one time ascend to heaven, and at another time descend thence to us.

"2. Others say that the souls of the saints, as also the angels, by a certain wonderful swiftness which is natural to them, are in some measure every

where, and themselves hear the prayers of the supplicants.

“3. Others, that the saints see in God all things, from the beginning of their beatitude, which in any way appertain to themselves; and hence even our prayers which are directed to them.

“4. Others, lastly, that the saints do not see in the Word our prayers from the beginning of their blessedness, but that our prayers are only then revealed to them by God, when we pour them forth.”*

Now if one of their greatest men, as Bellarmine is accounted to have been, could give no more rational account of the matter than this, it looks as if their case were indeed a bad one. Christ says, in one of the texts we heard just now, “*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*” Instead of which, according to the first of these imaginations, the angels are employed in carrying our prayers to the saints, who in their turn carry them either to Christ or to the Father! Is this circuitous course to be preferred to the plain path described by Christ, without the clearest necessity, or the most distinct injunctions? As to the second fancy, quickness of motion is not omnipresence, nor can it ever answer the same end. But the third and fourth are still more preposterous. God, it is supposed, hears our prayers and reveals them to the saints, that they may repeat them to him! Why, a system is self-condemned at once, that is only to be defended by such hypothesis as these!

The simple truth is, that there is no middle course. Either the virgin Mary, and not the virgin only, but all the Ursulas, and Benedicts, and Dunstans, and Gregories in the Romish calendar, are absolutely *omnipresent*, and are, therefore, so many Gods; or else, if they remain creatures, confined to one place at a time, and knowing only what is communicated to them by such channels as are consistent with their finite and created state and character, then there must ever re-

* Bellarmine. De Sanct. Beat. li. i. c. 20.

main the utmost uncertainty, and in fact improbability, as to the safe passage or conveyance of each prayer we offer up to them. In a word, if they hear all the prayers addressed to them, then they are Gods, and not creatures: but if they are not Gods, but finite and imperfect creatures, then they cannot hear all the breathed or whispered aspirations which ascend towards them, from twenty nations of the earth at the same moment of time. If the Romanist embraces the latter supposition, then he should give up saint-worship. But if he will not do this, then must he admit that he makes to himself *new Gods!*

God is dishonoured, then, by our ascribing his essential and incommunicable attributes to divers of his creatures. But still more is his displeasure excited, when His own way of salvation is set at nought, and the offices and honours which He has conferred upon Christ are attributed to some of those poor sinners whom Christ came to save. Now this is constantly done by those who pray to the saints instead of praying to Christ, and ask of them those very blessings which it is his peculiar pleasure and glory to bestow. "*Come unto ME,*" says Jesus himself, "*all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" Rather turn, says Dr. Wiseman, to the saints, and "ask them to use their influence" with Christ. No, says Paul, "*there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" But, rejoins Dr. Wiseman, "it adds immensely to His glory, it is paying him the highest homage, when we thus give occasion for the prostration of the saints before him on our behalf." On the contrary, we reply, what greater disrespect can we show, than by neglecting the course prescribed, and choosing other ways of approach unto God? "*I am the way, the truth, and the life,*" saith Christ, "*no man cometh unto the Father, BUT BY ME.*" "*I am the door; by me if any man enter, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*" And Paul declares, again and again, in the strongest and clearest terms, that he is our great High Priest, our only In-

tercessor, and that he "*has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*" And he therefore argues, "*Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*"

Dr. Wiseman, however, argues that "the saints look down upon us *with sympathy*; and that we may turn to them with the confidence of brethren," and ask them to use their influence with their Master.

This is indeed one of the greatest affronts that can possibly be offered to Christ. "*Greater love,*" said the compassionate Saviour, "*hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" "*I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*"

It is little to say, that no human records have portrayed, nor has the mind of man conceived, a character of such exceeding love and sympathy, as is that of Christ. The truth is, that even the outlines and rapid lineaments of that character which are afforded us in the brief narratives of the evangelists, are beyond the reach of our minds and souls. The tenderness and compassion of that heart, which yearned, even to weeping, over a city whose inhabitants he well knew, were in a few short hours, to raven like wolves for his blood;—nay, which, even when actually suffering intolerable agonies of their infliction, cried out, not for himself, but for them, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*—the unutterable love of that heart, who can attempt to fathom! Yet it is from this compassionate Saviour that we are taught to turn, with doubt and apprehension, and to "beg of Mary to intercede with him on our behalf!" And we are to ask such a being as Dunstan, or Dominic, or Joseph, "to use his influence" with Jesus, to induce him to listen to our petitions! Intolerable insult! horrible blasphemy! God-dishonouring profanity! What words shall we use, rightly to describe this awful system of delusion!

XVI.—THE IDOLATRY OF ROMANISM.

IDOLATROUS WORSHIP.

OUR last essay, though somewhat prolonged, was still necessarily limited to a consideration of the *principle* discussed. Little was said of the *practice* which grows out of that principle. We endeavoured to show that, even as described by the Romish casuists, the doctrine of the INVOCATION OF SAINTS was in theory indefensible, and opposed to the whole spirit of Christianity. But we cannot stop here. We are compelled, if we would do justice to the subject, and to this inquiry, to consider also that doctrine as it is practically known among us. And this will be, in truth, the *test* to which the matter must be brought. We have alleged that the system of worship in the Romish church is idolatrous in its character and tendency. If we are right, we shall be sure to find the manifestation of that tendency, in the worship of those who adhere to that church. This, therefore, will naturally offer itself as the subject for our present consideration; namely, to show that the worship of the church of Rome is not only founded on principles which lead to idolatry; but is actually seen, in the conduct of its adherents, to produce that result.

With this view, we must consider the real nature of the worship which is current in the church of Rome; as a system idolatrous throughout; a system which, from one end to the other, constantly interposes some other object of worship between the creature and the Creator, and thus effectually precludes that intercourse and converse between God and man, which at first existed in Eden,—which Adam lost by

transgression,—and which it is the main object of the gospel to restore.

In Dr. Milner's *xxth* letter, he loudly vaunts the vast advantage possessed by his church, in the greater *means of sanctity* provided, in her sacraments, public services, confession, and prescribed private devotions. But there is one important distinction which he seems to have forgotten; to wit, that between worship of a laborious, costly and splendid character, and worship *rightly offered*. We readily admit that the Romish church furnishes her votaries with many and most elaborate forms; with more sacraments than the apostles ever knew; with penances, and processions, and pilgrimages, which the apostles would have abhorred; but all this is nothing to the purpose, or rather it only the more proves our position. We do not charge the Romish church with abolishing, or discontinuing, or neglecting the services of the sanctuary, but with *perverting* them. And let us remember that the cautions given in Scripture are more frequently directed against superstitious, pharisaical, or ill-directed worship, than against the neglect of worship altogether. The prophets were frequent in such warnings—"To what purpose," says Isaiah, i. 11. "*is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.*"

In the same strain follows Amos: "*I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them:*

neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts." (chap. v. 21.)

But Paul must be our chief authority in this matter, as one who was especially "the apostle of the Gentiles," and who was inspired to write no fewer than fourteen different epistles, filled with instructions and warnings to the early Christian churches. And those instructions and warnings are most full and explicit against every one of those things in which Rome chiefly prides herself. We will just run over a short list of them.

1. Rome lays great stress on her multitude of holidays, most of which she makes positively obligatory. Paul dismisses the matter thus—"*One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.*" (Rom. xiv. 5, 6.)

2. Rome is most particular in forbidding meat on certain days in every week. Paul, on the contrary, leaves every man to his own mind and conscience, "*For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth.*" (Rom. xiv. 2, 3.) And in another place he says—

"*For meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse.*" (1 Cor. viii. 8.)

3. Rome makes celibacy a duty appertaining to the Christian ministry. Paul says—

"*Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?*" (1 Cor. ix. 5.) In another place, he says—

"*A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife.*" (1 Tim. iii. 2.)

And with reference to both this and the last point, he warns Timothy, that "*in the latter times some*

shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." (1 Timothy iv. 1—3.)

4. Rome encourages the practice of following, as devotees, some particular saint, as leader or head; as St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Benedict, and many others. Whereas Paul vehemently contends against this very practice.

"For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 4—7.)

5. And, while Rome prides herself on her "means of sanctity," as she denominates her elaborate ritual, her multitude of holidays, her holy water and consecrated oil, her various fastings and penances, and all the rest of her burdensome observances, Paul sums up the whole in one general condemnation.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind..... Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not, taste not, handle not; which all are to perish with the using:) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship and humility,

and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." (Col. ii. 16—23.)

The great thing to be borne in mind is, that all these forms and modes of worship, which the church of Rome makes all-important, are, after all, mere circumstances; and the essence, the reality of the worship, is in no way identified with any one of them. Our Lord directed the mind of the woman of Samaria to this fact, when she began to demand of him, "Is it *here*, or is it *there*,—is it according to *this* form, or to *that*, that we ought to worship? He instantly turned her mind from places and forms, telling her that the time was at hand when "*ye shall neither at Jerusalem, nor in this mountain, worship the Father;*" for that "*the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*" (John iv. 23, 24.)

Now the main charge we bring against the Romish church is, that it hinders, as far as possible, this spiritual adoration; by interposing visible and present objects of worship; by interposing also invisible and absent, but false mediators; and by elevating the priesthood itself into the Saviour's place. Let us consider these three particulars.

Let us fix the mind on the worship of the early Christian churches, as we find it described in Scripture, and in the earliest records, and on that of the Protestant churches,—and then contrast this simple worship with the ritual and ceremonies of the Romish church. In the writings of the apostles, in the practice of the early church, and in that of the Protestant churches of our own time, we constantly observe but *one* object of worship, the TRIUNE JEHOVAH, who is invisible; who is a Spirit; and who therefore must be approached by an effort of the mind, and soul, and spirit. The business of the worshipper is with HIM alone. This business can only be carried on, really, by the heart and mind, and only to any good purpose,

by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. All other helps will prove only hinderances. Place what you will between the soul and God, as an imaginary ladder or stepping-stone, the heart instantly rests on *that*, and ascends no higher. This Satan well knows, and therefore it is that he has so artfully provided, in the Romish ritual,—

1. A present God to be worshipped and adored, in the form of a wafer:

2. Images of Christ and the saints; in the various representations of the cross, on which our salvation was wrought out; of the Virgin, and of various real or supposed saints:

3. A whole army of mediators and intercessors, in heaven, or in the upper regions of the air, who are to be prayed to, in the belief that they are more accessible, and have a readier sympathy with our wants and miseries, than either Christ or the Father:

4. A priesthood endowed with miraculous powers!—who can create God himself out of a wafer—who can endow water or oil with medicinal or restorative or protective power by a word; and at whose sentence the sins of their votaries depart, and souls spring up out of purgatory into heaven.

Now all these inventions of Popery have a direct tendency to intercept and break off the spiritual intercourse which ought to be carried on between man and God. They all present to man other refuges, other reliances, other Saviours, than HIM “whom God hath exalted;” and therefore they are all, intrinsically and practically, in nature and in effect, positively idolatrous.

But we shall be reminded, that we dwelt on this topic in our last essay. Let us then, pass from our own views and opinions, to the recent confessions of a Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. David O’Croly, of Cork, who in his late work on the differences between Protestantism and Popery, thus laments the weight of superstition which has encumbered the worship of his own church:—

“Nothing can be more complicated than the Ro-

man Catholic ceremonial. Simplicity, the original characteristic of Christianity, has been abandoned. The Roman pontifical, containing the various ceremonies to be performed by bishops, is a volume of considerable bulk, larger by far than the New Testament. Catholic divines admit that this pontifical contains a great quantity of superfluous matter, which, however, is not to be passed over, so long as it remains on the statute-book. The council of Trent has even gone so far as to anathematize all such as should presume, of their own private authority, to retrench or to alter any portion of it. Bishops themselves, much less the clergy of the second order, have no choice or jurisdiction in such things. This law, however, is sometimes disregarded by refractory individuals, who, pressed by time or actuated by carelessness, or for other reasons best known to themselves, skip over many of the prescribed ceremonies, and hasten to the conclusion of their work.

“The ceremonies of the mass, how multifarious! Genuflections and crosses without number; complicated movements; the quarter-wheel, the semicircular, and the circular, as the case may require; the repeated shifting of the book from side to side, and the blaze of candles amid the glare of the meridian sun. Doubtless the generality of priests attach little importance to these matters; not so the congregation, who would be highly scandalized if the mass suffered any defalcation in this respect.

“The devotional exercises of the multitude in general are of a very odd description; scarcely a house without a consecrated bead, a religious piece of furniture supposed to possess extraordinary virtue, particularly if consecrated by the pope. This guides them in the arrangement of their prayers, most of which are addressed to the blessed Virgin, whom the bead-gentry invoke ten times for once they invoke the Almighty. Nor is this mode of praying confined to the vulgar and illiterate. It is prescribed in the common prayer-books, is repeated by priests publicly at the altar, and is practised in all the nun-

neries and religious communities. The costume of a nun is incomplete unless a consecrated bead hangs dangling from her girdle. In the chair of confession, the satisfactory works imposed generally consist of so many rosaries to be repeated on the five decad or fifteen decad bead within a certain limited time. At the mass, especially in country chapels, you will scarcely hear any thing but rosaries—*Ave Maria* ten times, and *Pater Noster* once. This disproportionate alternation is kept up, without intermission, from the beginning to the end of mass, from the ‘*Introibo*’ to the gospel of St. John. If they stay at home from mass on a Sunday or holiday, they repeat a rosary or two on their bead as a set off against the omission. In short, the rosary, which should be called their devotion to the Virgin, forms the sum total of their religious worship. The Virgin is transformed into a divinity, of whom her female votaries constantly crave pardon for their transgressions. The Colliridiani, as we learn from Epiphanius, were condemned as idolaters in the primitive church, for a custom they observed, of offering a cake as a sort of sacrifice in honour of the Virgin. It would not be easy to show that the cake of the Colliridiani was more opposed to the purity of divine worship than this perpetual rosary. It is, indeed, quite certain, that the Virgin never enjoyed higher honours or prerogatives than she does among her female votaries now-a-days, at least in old Ireland. The late Dr. Moylan, Roman Catholic bishop in Cork, ordered the litany of the blessed Virgin, or the litany of our Lady of Loretto, (a place celebrated in the annals of sacrilegious romance,) to be recited always before mass, throughout his diocese; which odd practice is still observed under his enlightened successor. He also instituted monthly processions, at which this litany is chanted in her honour.

“The litany in question is nothing but a formidable series of adulatory epithets bestowed on the Virgin, for the purpose of procuring her favour and intercession. It is of general use, and is reckoned by some

indispensable. It is, however, more common in some places than in others, more used by women than by men, and more by the ignorant than by the well-informed. The priest recites the litany on his bended knees; but, when the mass commences, he stands erect. This is odd enough. He addresses the Virgin on his knees, and he addresses the Almighty in a standing posture! He shows more respect to the creature than to the Creator. Much of the same happens when the hymn, '*Ave maris stella*'—'Hail, star of the sea'—is sung in her honour, or to procure her favour. At the first verse all go on their knees, as is done at the verse, '*O crux ave*'—'Hail! O cross!'—when chanting the hymn, '*Vexilla Regis*,' in honour of the cross—a posture of adoration unheeded when hymns are sung in honour of God.

“What a multitude of odd ceremonies is connected with the use of holy water! It is astonishing what virtue is ascribed to this consecrated element. Nothing can be blessed or hallowed without it; neither candles nor new fruits, nor new-laid eggs, nor ships, nor dwelling houses, nor churches, nor bells, nor sacerdotal vestments. It is used in the administration of all the sacraments, before mass and after mass, and at the churching of women. Nothing, in short, can be done without holy water. Even the butter churn is sprinkled with it before the churning commences, that the cream might work the better. It purifies the air, heals distempers, cleanses the soul, expels Satan and his imps from haunted houses, and introduces the Holy Ghost as an inmate in their stead. It is generally believed that the holy water blessed at Easter and Christmas possesses superior virtue: on which account several tubs or barrels full must be blessed upon these occasions, in order to supply the increased demand. Protestants being quite incredulous as to the miraculous virtues ascribed to holy water, have abolished the use of it, and are of opinion that it bears a strong resemblance to the lustral water that was commonly used in the rites of pagan superstition.

“Salt, in like manner, is pressed into the ceremonial of religion, probably because in the New Testament the apostles were called the salt of the earth. It is blessed for a variety of purposes. After being, first of all, duly exorcised itself, it is made use of in the administration of baptism and in the manufacture of holy water.

“The ceremonial of blessing the oils—the *oleum infirmorum*, the oil for the sick, the *oleum catechumenorum*, the oil of catechumens, and the *chrisma* or *chrism*, is complicated beyond measure, and magnificent withal. On Maundy Thursday it is consecrated by the bishop, robed in his pontificals, in the presence of the diocesan clergy, robed in their vestments; who all, at the appointed times, while it is in progress of consecration, worship it by triple genuflection, salutation, and psalmody! The holy oil is adored on Maundy Thursday, just as the cross is on Good Friday; on which latter occasion also, a multiplicity of odd ceremonies takes place.

“The worship of inanimate things is justified on the score of its being merely relative; that is, referable to something really entitled to our adoration. There may be some reason in this. But what object of this kind is there to which the adoration of the oils may be referred?

“The efficacy of this benediction lasts but for one year; at the expiration of which, it is understood that the holy oil becomes unfit to *communicate grace*, and should be committed for combustion to the devouring element of fire. The solemn consecration by the bishop, backed by a multitude of crosses and insufflations, &c. performed by the body of priests in attendance, proves insufficient to protect it from the injuries of time and the decay of nature; just as happens to the consecrated host, which, when it happens to suffer decomposition, is acknowledged to be nothing more than decayed bread, unfit to nourish either body or soul.

“Nothing can exceed the complication and multitude of the ceremonies observed in the conferring of

holy orders: which, though reckoned one individual sacrament, and of a spiritual nature, is, like matter, divisible *ad infinitum*. You have particular ceremonies for the consecration of a pope, for the consecration of a patriarch, for the consecration of an archbishop, for the consecration of a bishop, for the consecration of an abbot, for the ordination of a priest, for the ordination of a deacon, for the ordination of a sub-deacon, for the collation of the four minor orders of reader, of porter, of acolyte, of exorcist, and, finally, for giving the *prima tonsura*. What a tremendous ceremonial! What a cumbrous machinery of religion! and from such simple beginnings!

“Religion, indeed, was overloaded with extravagancies at an early period. St. Augustine complains of the vast increase of whimsical ceremonies in his time. He says, ‘things in this respect had arrived at such a pitch of absurdity, that Christianity, which was freed from the servitude of the ceremonial law, had become more enslaved than Judaism itself—that, in short, the simplicity of the gospel had been forgotten.’ If this saint were alive at the present day, he would have infinitely more reason to complain on this score. Many Catholic theologians are of the same opinion with the holy father; but have not the same honesty or courage to give publicity to their sentiments. Thus it is that, between the connivance or timidity of some, and the interested imposture of others, the errors of the ignorant are confirmed, and true religion lies buried beneath an accumulated weight of extravagance, absurdity, and superstition.”*

Such is the account of the matter given by a priest of the Romish church. It is true, he is at present under suspension, but not for ill conduct or false doctrine; but merely, or chiefly because, as may be perceived in this extract, his eyes have been partly opened to the errors and superstitions of the Romish church. Let us, however, return to the subject. We take up a little book called “The Daily Companion; or, Little Pocket Manual.” And here, in it, we find

* O’Croly’s Inquiry, 8vo. pp. 139—146.

the rosary, exactly as Mr. O'Croly has described it. It is given as "ordered by his holiness Pope Pius V.;" and it is so contrived as to be suited, by a succession of changes, for every day in the year. Each day's service contains five "mysteries," as they are called; and after every "mystery" follows,

"Our Father," &c. *once*.

"Hail Mary," &c. *ten times*.

So that, in the morning's devotion, the little prayer beginning "Hail Mary," would be repeated no fewer than fifty times. And this is, we have no doubt, actually performed, day by day, by hundreds of miserable devotees.

Fifty prayers to the virgin; and only *ten* to God;—and this is by no means an exaggerated proportion. So ready is the human mind to run to any refuge rather than that salvation which God has provided, and to cling to any intercessor rather than to Him who is "exalted to give repentance and remission of sins;" that it is upon record that in the cathedral of Canterbury, in the days of England's darkness, "Whereas there used to be three offerings made by the people in that church—one to Christ, another to the virgin Mary, and another to Thomas à Becket, the oblations made at the altar of Thomas à Becket did generally amount to eight hundred or a thousand pounds, those to our Lady's to two hundred pounds; while those to Christ's would be *five marks*, and sometimes "*hoc anno nihil!*" this year nothing. So certain is it, that if other intercessors or objects of worship are allowed at all, they will immediately draw away our hearts from Him who ought to be the great object of worship, and thus work our infinite loss and hazard. From which we see at once the wisdom and the necessity of that rule which puts down at once all other or subsidiary worship, and declares, that "*to us there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" (1 Tim. ii. 5.)

The Romanist, however, exclaims loudly that he holds, as firmly as we can do, one sole Mediator of *salvation*; but that this does not prevent his recognizing many mediators of *intercession*.

These subterfuges may delude the more simple. But let any man of common sense judge whether the great mass of mankind,—for whom, as much as for the intelligent and the learned, Christianity is intended,—whether such can be expected to understand these nice distinctions, or the other degrees and gradations, as of worship of *dulia*, and worship of *latria*, and the like. We met with an anecdote the other day, the truth of which is so internally apparent, that we offer no excuse for transcribing it. The narrator says,

“A Protestant clergyman, personally known to the writer, once entered into conversation with a Romish priest in the gaol of Carrick. As religion was the subject, they did not speak much before controversy was introduced. The Priest accused Protestants of want of candour in charging Roman Catholics with praying to the blessed virgin. “We don’t *pray* to her, sir,” said he; “’tis a calumny to assert it; we only *ask her intercession*.” “But,” replied the minister calmly, “the Council of Trent decreed that even the saints, whom it regards as entitled to a degree of worship inferior to that which is due to the blessed virgin, are to be suppliantly invoked (*suppliciter invocari*) and it teaches, too, that this invocation may be mental: now to me it seems that the man who kneels to an invisible being, and presents his supplications to that being, in thought, may, without any abuse of language, be said to *pray* to him: but even were I to admit that the difference which you wish to establish really exists, still I cannot but fear that the common people are incapable of making such nice distinctions.” “I tell you,” rejoined the priest, “it is not the case; they can understand this matter as well as I do.” “I should like,” said the minister, “to be assured of this; however, I shall put it to the proof. Come here, my man,” addressing himself to one of the turnkeys who happened to cross the hall in which they stood. “You are a Roman Catholic?” “I am, your reverence,” said the turnkey respectfully. “And tell me now,” continued the minister, “Do you pray to the blessed virgin?” “Oh, to be

sure I do, please your reverence," replied the man promptly. The priest's countenance and tone expressed any thing but that gentleness with which Paul commanded Timothy to administer reproof, as he vociferated, "You lie, you don't—you rascal!" This ended the controversy; for the poor turn-key sneaked off as fast as he could, observing, in a subdued tone, "Sure your reverence knows best."*

We adduce this anecdote chiefly to illustrate the readiness with which the mind of the ignorant worshipper seizes hold of the object presented to it by the Romish church, and thus avoids the necessity which the Bible lays upon him, of seeking God, who is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, through the alone mediation and intercession of Christ. The Romish controversialist may define what he calls *latria*, and what he calls *dulia*; but the poor mechanic or the simple child knows only one thing, which is *worship*. This worship he pays to a wafer, when uplifted by the priest at what he calls "the altar." He pays it again before the image of the virgin, so soon as the "mass" is over. He then returns home, and before he sleeps, he says his rosary, which includes a vain and senseless repetition of the Lord's Prayer *ten times*; but a still more senseless address to the virgin of *fifty* prayers. All that is really accomplished by this idle ceremony, is the offering an insult to God, by elevating Mary to greater honour than her Creator and Redeemer! But ask this poor deluded votary touching the difference between his prayers to God and to the virgin. What can he tell you, beyond the verbal distinction, that one is *latria* and the other *dulia*? Practically, however, there is no real difference; or if there be any, it consists in a greater degree of faith and hope, exercised with respect to his addresses to Mary, than with reference to those to God or to Christ. He believes, he is *taught to believe*, that Mary's ears are more open to his cry, that her heart more readily

* Protestant Magazine, vol. i. p. 150.

sympathizes with his wants and his sorrows, than does the heart of his Saviour. And therefore it is that this idol-worship is so universally a favourite among these poor people. "The rosary," says Mr. O'Croly, "which should be called their devotion to the virgin, forms the sum total of their religious worship." And, placed in this elevated rank, as hiding the Saviour almost wholly from the sinner's view, it can not be otherwise than dreadfully offensive to God, even were it less sinful and unscriptural in itself. But when we remember that this worship, which, it is thus admitted, absorbs and swallows up the whole soul of devotion among the people, is in itself altogether opposed to the word of God, to reason, and to common sense, and can rank no higher, with any rightly judging man, than the worship of Juno or of Minerva among the ancient heathen, how frightful does the view become! The whole church, falsely called "Catholic," bowing down with one consent before the effigy of a poor human creature! Men and women, called Christians, addressing, from the four quarters of the globe, prayers to one who cannot hear them! Priests and laity, in all parts of the world, calling upon her as "the Queen of heaven," "the Empress of the universe;" their Life, their Hope, "the great Mediator between Christ and sinners!" And as the result of the whole, that result which is Satan's grand aim, the Saviour disregarded; scarcely ever addressed in prayer, or when so addressed, insulted with the petition, that he will do so and so, in respect to the merits of St. Clementina, or St. Carlino, or some other poor creature, whose salvation, if achieved at all, was solely his own work, and the reward of his own sufferings! No! it is impossible for any calm and unbiassed mind, to contemplate seriously the habitual worship of the poor Romanists, without being convinced, that the worship of God has been superseded and pushed aside among them; and that it is replaced by another worship, the worship of dead men and women, which is neither more nor less than IDOLATRY.

XVII.—ROMISH DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

WE have now arrived at the consideration of that grand corruption of the Romish church which closed and completed her career of apostasy; which gave the last and finishing stroke to the work of Satan; and which constituted the chief ground of contest throughout all the struggles of the church's regeneration. The simple rite of the Lord's Supper, the canon and order of which is comprehended, in Scripture, in three or four verses in each gospel, and as many in one of Paul's epistles, is to be considered on the one hand; and on the other, that immense mass of ceremonial, and that alleged awful import and value, which is assigned in the Romish church, to what is termed "the Sacrifice of the Mass."

But as this seems rather a large subject,—in what form or order shall we conduct the inquiry?

Probably the natural order will be this:—first, to deal with the main question of Transubstantiation, or the alleged change in the sacramental elements; and then to pass on to the remaining question, the sacrificial nature of the rite, and its alleged worth and power.

Now in dealing with the first of these questions, it may seem that it is only necessary for any one to take the plain text of either of the evangelists, and if he does but address himself to the investigation with an humble and submissive mind, he cannot be long at a loss as to a doctrine so clearly and so positively stated.

But do not let us anticipate the argument, or imagine that we can dispose of a question in half a sen-

tence, which has occupied the minds of some of our greatest theologians for their whole lives. Let us begin the subject with method and order; and these will be best consulted by comparing authoritative statements of the opposing churches, on both sides of the question.

In the first place, let us notice the solemn decree or canon of the Council of Trent, on this subject. "If any shall deny, that in the sacrament of the holy eucharist, there is contained, truly, really, and substantially, the blood, together with the soul and body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so whole Christ; but shall say that he is only in it *in sign or figure, or power*—let him be ACCURSED."

"If any shall say, that in the holy sacrament of the eucharist there *remains the substance of bread and wine*, together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and shall deny that wonderful and remarkable *conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood*, while only the appearance of bread and wine remain; which conversion the Catholic church most aptly styles transubstantiation; let him be ACCURSED."

Such is the doctrine of the church of Rome on this subject. Now let us look at the decision of the church of England:—

"Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of the bread and wine) in the supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions."

"The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper, is Faith."*

Thus is the issue joined. Now let us inquire into

* Similar is the language of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, vid. Ch. xxix. Of the Lord's Supper.—[AM. ED.]

the grounds on which the church of Rome has adopted her view of the matter.

We have already remarked that the Scriptural proofs on this subject are very limited. The whole number of passages of Scripture which bear on this question are only three or four, and about twenty verses comprehend the whole. The Romanist, however, asserts that his case finds its strength in its simplicity. He rests the whole on the plain words of the Lord himself, "*Take, eat, THIS IS MY BODY. Drink ye all of this, for THIS IS MY BLOOD of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many.*" (Matthew xxvi. 26.)

"To construct an argument on these words," says Dr. Wiseman, "is difficult; simply and solely for this reason, that it is impossible to add strength or clearness to the expressions themselves. It is impossible for me, by any commentary or paraphrase that I can make, to render our Saviour's words more explicit, or reduce them to a form more completely expressing the Catholic doctrine than they do of themselves. 'This is my body—this is my blood.' The Catholic doctrine teaches that it *was* Christ's body and that it *was* his blood. It would consequently appear as though all we had here to do, were simply and exclusively to rest at once on these words, and leave to others to show reason why we should depart from the literal interpretation which we give them."*

Now this is certainly a very simple and easy way of conducting the argument. But it can hardly be imagined that this superficial view of the question will suffice, when addressed to those who have the Bible in their hands. Such will be sure to recollect the frequent use of figurative language in the New Testament, and the consequent uncertainty that must exist, until a careful consideration has been had, whether these words of Christ are to be taken in a literal or in a figurative sense.

Dr. Wiseman had before remarked, that "the

* Wiseman.—Lect. xv. p. 174.

ground-work of all the science of interpretation is exceedingly simple, if we consider the object to be attained. Every one will agree, that when we read any book, or hear any discourse, our object is to understand what was passing in the author's mind when he wrote or spoke those passages,—that is to say, what was the meaning he himself wished to give to the expressions he then wrote or uttered.* Now the best way of ascertaining this point, must be, to examine carefully the other writings or sayings of the same author, and thus to gain an insight into his mode of expressing his thoughts.

With this view let us take the simplest possible course: let us open the New Testament at its very commencement, and pass our eye over the discourses of Christ; and endeavour to learn what were the prominent features of his ordinary style or mode of expression.

We open at Matthew, but we see nothing whatever of our Saviour's words in either of the first four chapters. At the fifth chapter Jesus begins to speak.

In the 13th verse, Christ tells his disciples that they are “the *salt* of the earth.” In the 14th, that they are “the *light* of the world.” And in the 15th and 16th, the same figure is maintained.

In the next chapter, and at the 20th verse, we are there exhorted to “lay up *treasures* in heaven,”—which of course is a figure.

In the 7th chapter, at verse 6, we are taught not to “cast pearls before swine,” which, literally, no man would ever think of doing. At the 13th verse, we are exhorted to “enter in at the *strait gate*,” which is clearly another figure. In the 15th, the false prophets are said to come “in *sheep's clothing*, but inwardly to be *ravening wolves*.” We then pass on to chapter viii. where, at the 23d verse, Christ tells one of his disciples to “let the *dead* bury their dead,” which, taken literally, would be a mere absurdity. In the ninth chapter he calls himself; (verse 15.) a

* Wiseman.—Lect. xiv. p. 137.

“bridegroom,” and his disciples “children of the bridechamber.” And at the 37th and 38th verses, he speaks of the “*harvest*,” and of “labourers in the harvest,” with reference to the preaching of the gospel. In the tenth chapter he sends forth his disciples, and tells them to “go unto the *lost sheep* of the house of Israel.”

But we need scarcely proceed further. It is already sufficiently clear that as Jesus “spake always unto the multitude in parables,” so to his own disciples he constantly used figurative language. So constantly, indeed, that wherever we have found his words, in all these chapters, we have immediately lighted upon a figure. Now let us ask, whether it is a just or reasonable way of treating the subject, to take up an isolated expression of our Lord’s, after seeing that he never speaks without using figurative language, and to demand, as a matter of course, that that isolated expression shall instantly and implicitly be taken in its literal sense?

Assuredly not. The fact being beyond dispute, that our Lord was in the habit of continually using figures, it is surely only reasonable, to suspend our interpretation for a moment, until we can gather, from the chief features of the case, whether the passage in question ought to be taken *literally* or *figuratively*.

We conclude, then, that the common argument of the Romanists, that the bread in the Lord’s Supper must be actually our Lord’s flesh, merely because he himself said, “*This is my body*,” is of no force or value.

We proceed, then, to apply to the passage in question, the usual test of a comparison with like passages. This is, beyond doubt, the surest way of discovering the sense in which our Lord used these words.

Now there is nothing more clear, or better known to a student of the Bible, than the constant use of figurative language implying hunger and thirst, food and water, when nothing else than spiritual wants and spiritual supplies are really intended. The whole

Scripture abounds with such passages. "*Thy words are sweeter than honey and the honey comb.*" (Ps. xviii. 2.) "*Thy words were found and I did eat them.*" (Jer. xv. 16.) "*They shall eat of the fruit of their own way.*" (Prov. i. 31.) "*The soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.*" (Prov. xiii. 2.) "*Come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*" (Isaiah lv. 1.) "*They did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.*" (1 Cor. x. 3.) "*Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures.*" (Psalm xxxvi. 8.) "*Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?*" (Matt. xx. 23.) "*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 thee living water.*" (John iv. 10.) "*I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*" (John vi. 35.) Now with these passages before us, it seems quite impossible to take for granted, as the Romanists require us to do, that when the disciples heard our Lord say, "*This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you,*" (Luke xxii. 20.) they must necessarily have understood him in the naked and literal sense, and must have believed that it was a real stream from his veins that they were drinking! It is, we repeat, impossible to imagine for a moment that such was their impression of the meaning of his words, or that they could believe that it was human blood that they were drinking, without uttering exclamations of horror and astonishment.

But we sometimes hear a protest against any attempt to lower this great mystery to human apprehensions, or any application of arbitrary rules of what *we* may think probable, or possible, or reasonable, as a criterion of the real facts! In answer to which, we observe that we have not proposed any thing of the kind. We are yet on the threshold of the argument,

and have not yet proceeded further than the question, In what sense are our Lord's words, in the institution of the sacrament, to be taken? Dr. Wiseman himself declares the best rule of interpretation to be the ascertaining in what sense the language in question must have been understood by those to whom it was addressed. We have followed this method, and have shown, that the use of figurative language, applying to spiritual things the terms commonly used for hunger and thirst, food and water, was general with the sacred writers, and more especially, was repeatedly adopted by our Lord himself. With this fact before us, and with the certainty, also, that so appalling a command as that of eating, really and literally, human flesh and blood, could not have failed to call forth expressions of horror from the disciples—of which we hear not one syllable,—we feel that Dr. Wiseman's own canon conducts us inevitably to the conclusion, that when the disciples heard these words, they could, and did apply no other meaning to them than that to which they had been accustomed, namely, a figurative and symbolical one.

Thus much of the supposed necessity of accepting our Lord's words in a simple and literal sense. But do the other Scriptures which touch upon this subject, throw no additional light upon the question?

Assuredly they do. The Romanist may select a single passage, and pride himself on his readiness and willingness to submit his mind wholly to its literal sense; but we find no difficulty in adducing a passage of equal clearness, the whole force of which is undeniably on our side. If the words, "*Take, eat, this is my body,*" may seem at first sight to support the view of the church of Rome, the plain declarations of Paul go to establish, with far less doubt, the Protestant doctrine of a spiritual participation only. His words are, "*As oft as ye eat this BREAD and drink this CUP, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.*" (1 Cor. xi. 26.) Here is a distinct declaration that the bread, *when eaten*, is still bread; and yet the Council of Trent, in the face of this plain text, has

dared to decree, that "if any shall say that in the eucharist *there remains the substance of bread* and wine, together with the body and blood, *let him be accursed!*"

Now not only once, but *three* times in as many verses, does Paul expressly call the bread,—not before consecration merely,—but at the time of eating, still BREAD; in what way, then, did the framers of the Trent decree propose to exempt the apostle from their deliberate anathema?

Dr. Wiseman attempts to meet this objection. He refers to the case of the blind man restored to sight, (John ix.) who, after his recovery is still called, "the blind man;" to the rod of Moses, which, after it was changed into a serpent, is still called a rod; and to the water at the marriage feast, which is called "the water that was made wine." From these cases he argues that it is by no means uncommon to find a thing upon which a change has been wrought, still called by its former name. Hence it follows, in his opinion, that no stress ought to be laid upon the trivial circumstance of Paul's calling *that* bread after consecration, which had been bread just before.

But none of these instances will bear out his inference, that things are sometimes called by a false name. The rod of Moses, after it was changed into a serpent, was reconverted into its former condition, and is rightly spoken of as a rod. The changed liquid at the marriage-feast is most accurately called "*the water that was made wine.*" And in like manner the blind man is first called, (John ix. 13.) "*him that aforetime was blind,*" and then, in a few lines after, for brevity, "the blind man." In each case there is nothing doubtful, nothing from which any occasion of mistake can possibly flow. And yet from these instances we are required to infer, that Paul might easily be guilty of calling *that*, repeatedly, *bread*, and without any explanation of reservation,—of which it is declared by the Trentine council, to be the highest heresy to affirm that any substance of bread remains in it. This argument of Dr. Wiseman's

is a most presumptuous and criminal one; for if it could be admitted, the result would be, that the plainest declarations of Scripture would possess no sort of weight or authority, but all would be uncertain and undefined.

Here, then, we may consider the argument from Scripture as concluded. So entirely different a view do the sacred writers take of this subject, from that of the Romanists, that a matter which is almost the sun and centre of the Romish system, the chief glory of their ritual, and the most essential point in their belief, occupies, in all the writings of the apostles and evangelists, merely some twenty or thirty lines. The strength of the Romish argument lies in one short sentence, "*This is my body*," which, though surrounded by figurative expressions, it is insisted must be taken literally. On our side, we adduce Paul's language, "*As often as ye eat this BREAD*;" and here though nothing can be clearer or more explicit, and though thrice repeated, we are immediately told that the words must *not* be taken literally. Thus is Scripture itself twisted and distorted, just as it suits the purpose of the "infallible church."

We may now proceed to say something on the nature and tendency of the doctrine propounded by the church of Rome. We shall not offend the timid mind by starting any doubts as to the possibility or impossibility, the absurdity or reasonableness, of the doctrine of transubstantiation; but there are several theological considerations which may be adduced against its reception, without entering upon arguments which might seem to savour too much of rationalism.

Let us consider, first, then, the prodigious nature of that thing which we are called on to believe. It has been rightly named, if true, "the greatest miracle of omnipotence."

"Our Lord," says one writer, "according to this doctrine, is not only whole in the whole, but also whole in every part. The whole God and man is comprehended in every crumb of the bread, and in every drop of the wine. He is entire in the bread,

and entire in the wine, and in every particle of each element. He is entire without division, in countless hosts and numberless altars. He is entire in heaven, and at the same time entire on the earth. The whole is equal to a part, and a part equal to the whole. The same substance may, at the same time, be in many places, and many substances in the same place." "The species exists without a subject. The substance is transformed into flesh and blood, while the accidents, such as colour, taste, touch, smell, and quantity, still remain. The taste and smell continue without any thing tasted or smelled. Colour remains; but nothing to which it belongs, and, of course, is the external show of nonentity. Quantity is only the hollow shadow of emptiness. But these appearances, notwithstanding their want of substance, can, it seems, be eaten, and afford sustenance to man and nourish the human body.

"Such is the usual outline of transubstantiation. The absurdity resembles the production of some satirist, who wished to ridicule the mystery, or some visionary, who had laboured to bring forth nonsense. A person feels humbled in having to oppose such inconsistency, and scarcely knows whether to weep over the imbecility of his own species, or to vent his bursting indignation against the impostors, who, lost to all sense of shame, obtruded this mass of contradictions on man. History, in all its ample folios, displays, in the deceiving and the deceived, no equal instance of assurance and credulity."*

Observe, too, the enormous power thus assumed to exist in every priest. "The hands of the pontiff," said Urban in a Roman council, "are raised to an eminence granted to none of the angels, of creating God the Creator of all things, and of offering him up for the salvation of the whole world." "He that created me," says Cardinal Biel, "gave me, if it be lawful to tell, power to create himself."

Once more, remark the peculiarity of this alleged

* Edgar's Variations of Popery, p. 346, 347.

miracle, which distinguishes it from all others, that instead of appealing, as they do, to the senses of men, it sets them wholly at nought, and demands our implicit belief of a fact which our own sight and touch assure us to be utterly untrue.

But we shall be told that we are now wandering into the rationalist difficulties, and that if this kind of reasoning is allowed, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and in fact every mystery in the Bible, must be surrendered; for none of these can be brought down to the level of mere human reason, or made evident to the perception of the senses.

This objection, however, will only be made by those who overlook an important distinction. We propose not to require that either this or any other mystery should be brought strictly within the compass of the human understanding. We only wish to discriminate between things that differ, and to guard against the inference, that because in things which are *above* the province of reason, the declarations of Scripture must be humbly received; *therefore* in a case in which the sense of Scripture is disputed and disputable, we are at once to submit to a proposition which is not merely *above*, but clearly *contrary* to our reason and to the evidence of our senses.

This distinction is most important. We find it repeatedly and most explicitly declared in Scripture, that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God; and yet there is but one God. Now we know that three men cannot be one man; but we have no right to argue from that which we do know of finite beings, that which we cannot know of infinite. The matter is *above* our reason's province; but it is not *contrary* to it. To refuse, therefore, to believe God's own testimony as to his own mode of existence, merely because it is too high for our comprehension, would be mere arrogant presumption and ignorant conceit. It would be not a whit more *rational*, whatever we might choose to call it, than the determination of a rustic not to believe that the

earth was round, because he saw a flat surface' before him; nor to admit its motion round the sun; because he supposed he saw the sun, day by day, move round it. In all these cases scepticism is not the right exercise of reason, but the mere ebullition of ignorant pride.

But in the matter of the alleged miracle of transubstantiation, the case is wholly different. "Many subjects," says an acute writer, "such as the Trinity and the Incarnation, are beyond the grasp of our bodily senses, and indeed of human reason. These are to be judged of by the testimony of Revelation. But bread and wine are material substances, and level with the view of our organs of perception. The sacramental elements can be seen, smelled, touched, and tasted. Our external organs, say the advocates of transubstantiation, are in this institution, deceived, in all men, at all times, and on all occasions."*

"The patrons of this dogma," continues the same writer, "driven from all other positions, have recourse to the omnipotence of God. Almighty power is a very convenient resource; but incomprehensibility is to be distinguished from impossibility, and mystery from contradiction. God works many things incomprehensible to man, but nothing which in itself is contradictory. Omnipotence extends only to possibility, and not to inconsistency; to things *above*, not *contrary* to reason."

"Some miracles," says another writer, "are evident to sense; some are not evident to sense; but this is absolutely contrary to sense; and it implies, that our senses may be so far deceived as to destroy all dependence on them." "It would follow, that we could judge of nothing by our senses; and that he who swears to the identity of any object, runs the risk of perjury. Either, then, our senses, aided by each other, are sufficient for the examination of every object of sense, or they are not. If they are sufficient, transubstantiation is false. If they are not sufficient,

* Edgar's Variations, p. 383.

there is an end at once of evidence and of argument."

This alleged miracle, then, is prodigious in its nature, beyond all example: it is still more extraordinary as being performable by all priests, of all description and character, and in thousands of places at the same time; and it is further incredible, as being not merely above the perception of our senses and our reason, but absolutely contrary, and opposed to all such evidence. But we come now to observe, that this most wonderful of all wonders, this most miraculous of all miracles, is actually performed, and that not once, but millions of times, in fact perpetually, *for no imaginable end or object whatever*. This is the most startling feature of the whole affair.

But here the Romanist starts back, and protests that we are going quite too far! It is the next step, he tells us, to blasphemy, to assert that God does any thing in vain. And in this case our allegation is quite in the teeth of our Lord's own words, "*The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*" (John vi. 51.)

But again we are misrepresented. We would not harbour, even for an instant, the thought, that God ever works without necessity or without result. But the question we are now considering is, whether He really does, or has ever promised to do, this thing which the Romanist ascribes to him. It is alleged, that the material substance, bread, is changed, in every Eucharist, into another substance, flesh. We can discern no such change with our bodily eyes; but we are referred to one passage of Scripture, (Matt. xxvi. 26.) while we find a directly opposite sense in another (1 Cor. xi. 26). Our inquiry, therefore, is, which of these two senses is the true one. And into this inquiry we bring the observation, that an actual change of the one substance, bread, into the other substance, flesh, can hardly be meant in any passage of Scripture, inasmuch as this would be a most extraordinary miracle performed without any

end or object whatever. We do not, therefore, suppose that God does any thing in vain; on the contrary, we are contending that no such miracle as is alleged, is in fact wrought, chiefly because if so wrought, it would be altogether in vain, without end, and without utility.

But we are told, that nothing can be more opposed to the truth. So far from being useless or unproductive, this great truth is the very sun and centre of the Catholic system. "You have seen," says Dr. Wiseman, "how this most adorable sacrament contains the real body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is consequently therein present, so as to be the real food of the soul; and necessarily the source and means of conveying to it that grace whereof he is the author." And thus is supplied, "the want felt by the human soul, of some regenerating, invigorating principle, of some living and quickening food, fraught with grace from above, which could bring it into communion with the God that gave it." * How, then, we are asked, can we venture to call this great doctrine a useless and unproductive fancy!

Let us, however, calmly consider this matter. In the passages just quoted from Dr. Wiseman, the real end and object of the sacrament is expressly admitted. It is "to be *the food of the soul; to convey to it grace; to apply to the soul a regenerating, invigorating principle,*" by means of "*living and quickening food, fraught with grace from above.*" Now if we reflect for a moment on the real meaning of these expressions, they must convey to the mind a conviction of the grossness and unsoundness of the Romish theory.

The object is, to feed, to invigorate, to enliven *the soul*. We are compelled, by the gross and unspiritual nature of the dogma, to go into matters on which we would gladly be excused touching. But the theory is, that by the reception of a certain kind of material food into the bodily system, the soul is in some way

* Wiseman, Lecture xvi. p. 235, 236.

fed and invigorated. We must ask, then, when it was discovered that any connection existed between the soul and the stomach; or how it ever occurred to any one to deal with our spiritual part through the medium of our digestive organs?

But we shall be told, that we are now absolutely attacking the sacrament itself! We shall be reminded, that it was our Lord's own command, to take bread as his body, and wine as his blood; and it will be asked, whether we mean to call an ordinance so instituted a vain or useless ceremony?

But we have not uttered one word against the ordinance; and if our expressions offend, we will merely repeat the words of Augustine: "Why do you prepare your teeth and your stomach? Believe only, and you will have eaten."*

It is absolutely necessary, if we would understand this question, to examine it very closely. It is easy enough, we grant, to catch up some glowing passage from one of the early fathers, such as Dr. Wiseman has adduced, from Gregory of Nyssa: "And therefore does the divine word commix itself with the weak nature of man, that, by partaking of the divinity, our humanity may be exalted."† But when such passages as these have been applaudingly quoted, and eagerly received, the question yet remains, Does either he who quotes them or he who receives them, really attach any definite or intelligible meaning to these high sounding phrases?

One grand error pervades all these statements—namely, a supposition that, by some means or other, which no one can understand or explain, a connection exists between the stomach and the soul! Our Lord himself had expressly warned his disciples against this error, telling them that "*The Spirit it is that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing;*" but this caution is wholly disregarded by the Romish writers on this subject. They persevere in contending, equally against our Lord's plain declarations, and against the

* In *Johannis Evang.* c. 6. Tract. 25.

† Wiseman. *Lect.* xvi. p. 227.

dictates of common sense, that it is possible that by some material substance eaten, swallowed, and digested, a man's heart may be cleansed, his soul renewed to holiness, and his spirit quickened in the divine life! Would there be any thing more contrary to reason in believing it possible to teach a youth arithmetic by a lotion poured into his ears, or the art of painting by an eye-water?

If we are asked, whether we mean to go the length of asserting that it is not in God's power, if he so pleases, to act upon the soul through the medium of the internal organs of the body? we answer, that we certainly do not propose to place any limits to the divine power in this matter; but that the question brings us to the very point which we wish now to press upon the attention. It is suggested, that it may be God's will to act upon the soul through this medium. We believe, and imagine that we could easily show, that there is abundant evidence of his intentions being totally different; and that the design of this sacrament was, by periodically and frequently placing before our bodily eyes, signs and emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood, to help our souls to go out towards him in frequent acts of faith in his atonement, and thus to become more and more united to him by the attachments of love and gratitude. But suppose we admit for a moment the supposition, that the very substance swallowed and digested is meant to have, through the bodily organs, a beneficial operation on the soul, it must at least be admitted, that this beneficial operation is altogether supernatural and miraculous.

This being granted, as it must be, we come to the next question, which is this,—Bread, eaten and digested, has no sort of effect upon the soul, in the ordinary course of nature. Flesh, whether of man or of beast, is equally without power in this respect. It will not be supposed that, had Christ's human body been actually resigned to be eaten by the disciples, instead of being rapt into heaven, it cannot be supposed, we repeat, that that human body, irrespective of all

supernatural influence, would have exerted any beneficial influence upon their souls through that eating. In fact, no kind of substance, be it what it may, can operate through the stomach upon the soul, except by a direct miracle. This all must admit.

We proceed, therefore, to contend, that the alleged spiritual influence being wholly miraculous; and the substance eaten being a mere vehicle, having no necessary or natural connection with the miracle to be performed,—it follows plainly that it must be wholly immaterial of what that vehicle consisted; and that whether it were mere bread, used as a symbol of Christ's broken body, or, by some miraculous increase and multiplication, the very body itself, the spiritual benefit, the grand thing to be considered, must remain the same. Hence it clearly follows, that this alleged miraculous transubstantiation, by which thousands of wafers are said to be changed every Sunday, into thousands of Christ's entire body, is wholly unnecessary, without object, and without utility!

To put the argument in another light;—as when Christ, on one occasion, chose to remove blindness by the application of clay, formed by spitting upon the earth; he might, if he had chosen, have transubstantiated that clay into the finest oil. But neither the oil nor the clay could cure the want of eyesight, without the exertion of his almighty power. Each must remain a mere vehicle, an instrument, arbitrarily selected by Him who could work with equal ease by any means he chose, or without the intervention of means at all. In this case he determined, for wise ends, known only to himself, to use the visible medium of clay, a vehicle as simple as the bread in the last supper. And just as the clay and the oil were alike without virtue in themselves, in the one case, so are the bread and the flesh in the other. The whole efficacy, in each case, depends entirely on the virtue supernaturally conveyed. And just as, in the one case, Christ did not change the clay into a medicinal drug, so, in the other, he does not change the bread into the flesh. In one case, the clay was just

as good a vehicle of miraculous power as oil would have been; in the other, bread is as good a vehicle as flesh; and therefore a miracle which, on the one hand, we cannot perceive, and which, on the other, would answer no assignable end, must be rejected by us until some clear scriptural proof can be adduced in its support.

Nor can we be unconscious of the fact, that even the Romish priest himself must be troubled, at times, with doubts on this subject. The anecdote is a well-known one, of a lady who, having some suspicions of the soundness of the Romish creed, addressed a priest one day in the following tenor: "You have now consecrated the bread and the wine; and you are sure that the substance of the bread is converted into our Lord's body, and the substance of the wine into his blood?" "Certainly," was the reply. "Nothing, then, remains, except the appearances of bread and wine; the former substances having been entirely converted into a totally different thing?" "Of that there can be no doubt." "I am glad of that," was her reply, "for before I gave you the wine, I mingled with it an infusion of a tasteless, but most deadly poison." The story goes on to say, that the priest dared not prove his own belief in the doctrine he had enunciated, by drinking that which he had just declared to be nothing else than the blood of Christ.

Now, it matters little whether this story be a fiction or a narrative of a real occurrence. The difficulty which it presents, in the embracing the Romish doctrine, is just the same, and can only be removed by a prompt submission to that test from which the priest is said to have shrunk. Let the same difficulty be stated in another form. Suppose that a priest were to receive information, that one of the journeymen employed in the manufacture of his wafers, harassed with doubts as to this disputed doctrine, had determined, for his own satisfaction, to try the question in this practical way, and had mingled some noxious or poisonous ingredients in the wafers he was about to use. Suppose, too, that this circumstance only came

to the priest's knowledge after he had duly consecrated the wafer, elevated it to God as the actual body of his Son, and was on the point of taking it himself, and of distributing it to the congregation: must we not doubt, whether his own belief in the doctrine of his church would stand this trial? Could he quietly proceed in the service, firmly reposing in the assurance that "the whole substance of the bread had been converted" into a different substance, and that merely the appearance of it remained?

If this question cannot be answered in the affirmative, it is thereby tacitly admitted that the priests do, in fact, demand of their people an universal and entire belief in a miraculous change, the truth of which they find it impossible to realize in their own minds.

There is one other remark which demands consideration: Dr. Wiseman closes his review of the question, by charging upon Protestants "the neglect of a sovereign command, a neglect to which is attached a *fearful* penalty, '*Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*'" Now he here clearly implies, that to take this sacrament rightly, the miracle of transubstantiation having been duly performed, is to "eat the flesh of the Son of man," and thus "to have life;" while to be without it, is to be without Christ.

The Romanist will admit that he does not imagine that Christ condescends to pass into every eucharistic sacrifice, without thereby conveying any certain benefit. He entertains no doubt that he who partakes of that awful sacrifice, is a partaker of Christ, and is mystically joined to him.

Such an one, then, is, at least for the time, in a state of safety, while all who are destitute of this great gift, are in a state of reprobation! Now let us remark, in disproof of this notion, the striking fact, that Judas, the betrayer of Christ, was one of those who took from the Saviour's own hand the first eucharist over which the Lord himself had just pronounced the awful words, "*Take, eat, this is my body.*" Yet Judas, only a few hours before, had

covenanted to betray Christ, and within a few hours after, he actually perpetrated that crime! Nay, he must have actually closed his awful career by an act of desperate suicide, while the body of his Lord was still one with his body,—according to the Romish theory, in actual physical union. What benefit, then, had his soul received by that eating? Again, the dying thief, we know, had never participated in this or any other sacrament; yet he was a saved man, and was removed from the cross to paradise,—into the immediate presence of his Saviour,—unbaptized, unanointed, without having eaten of this bread, or drunk of this cup, which is made, in the Romish church, the very passport of salvation!

The difference must surely have been, that the one merely in form and without any faith, or spiritual intention, ate the bread and drank the cup,—while the other, wanting the external observance, exercised that spiritual affiance which is the essence of the real communion. Faith, clearly, in the one, and the absence of it in the other, constituted the grand difference; as Augustine's words, which we have already quoted, declare. "Why do you prepare," says he, "your teeth and your stomach? *Believe* only, and you will have eaten." And in strict accordance with this statement, are the decisions of the English church. "To such," says the *xxviiiith* Article, "as *rightly*, worthily, and *with faith* receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and the cup of blessing a partaking of the blood of Christ."* But "the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a *heavenly and spiritual* manner. And the mean whereby it is so received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith." Therefore, "such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth, as Augustine saith, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no wise

* To the same purport is the Westminster Confession. See Chap. XXIX. Sec. VII. and VIII.—[Am. Ed.]

are they partakers of Christ, but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the *sign or sacrament* of so great a thing."

Here, then, lies the distinction between the Protestant and the Romish doctrines. We hold, that after a heavenly and spiritual manner, the body and blood of Christ are received by the real Christian in the sacrament, through the medium of faith. But we deny that the ungodly receive Christ in any wise in that sacrament. Consequently we deny that when the consecrated bread and wine lie upon the table, there exists, under the appearance of bread, the actual body and blood of Christ. The Romish church, on the other hand, declares every one "ACCURSED," who denies that a whole and entire Christ is contained in *every particle* of what appears to be bread, and also in *every particle* of what appears to be wine. In this view, both Judas and every other traitor to Christ who has partaken of this sacrament since his time, must have actually received Christ himself, as certainly as the thief on the cross was left without the power of receiving him. We leave this reflection on the reader's mind, and shall now proceed to consider the testimony of the Fathers.

Here the Romanist imagines his great strength to lie. He tells us, that in almost every period of the church, he finds the most illustrious witnesses, who testify that in successive ages this great doctrine was held as firmly by the universal church, as it is now by those who remain in the communion of the sovereign pontiff. Dr. Wiseman refers to the writings of Chrysostom, Justin Martyr, Cyril, Gregory of Nyssa, Irenæus, Augustine, Isaac of Antioch, and Amphilochius, and he might have quoted many others, had his space allowed. We have no desire to deny or evade this fact; for although they make some show upon paper, the least examination shows these quotations to be quite beside the argument. Scarcely any of them do more than merely paraphrase or vary our Lord's own expression, "*Take, eat, this is my body.*" When, therefore, we have satisfied ourselves

that our Lord's own words were merely figurative, what difficulty can we find in classing the glowing language of the Fathers under the same head?

In fact, so overladen with figure and hyperbole did the theology of the Fathers become, that it is almost wonderful that we can at all see our way through the mazes of their exaggerations. A careful examination, however, of their usual modes of expression, will soon remove all danger of a too literal interpretation of their terms.

Cyril, for instance, who is greatly relied upon as a witness for transubstantiation, thus speaks of another rite. He represents "the oil of baptism, after consecration, not as mere oil, but as the grace of Jesus: as the bread is not mere bread, but the body of our Lord."* Thus we have transubstantiated oil, as well as transubstantiated bread and wine!

Many of the Fathers declare the water of baptism to be Christ's blood. Chrysostom describes the baptized as "clothed in purple garments dyed in the Lord's blood."† Jerome describes Christ as saying to all Christians, "Ye are baptized in my blood."‡ Augustine represents the faithful "as participating in our Lord's flesh and blood in baptism."§

A sort of transubstantiation is also described as taking place in men themselves at baptism. "I am changed," says Gregory, "into Christ in baptism."|| "The faithful," says Bede, "are transformed into our Lord's members, and become his body." "Man, in baptism," says Leo, "is made the body of Christ." Now this sort of language, which abounds throughout the writings of the Fathers, should render us cautious how we catch at their exaggerated phrases, and turn them into theological dogmas. Happily, however, in the present case, we have not only reflex and inferential evidence, but the most express declarations, in their own writings, that in calling the con-

* Chrysost. 2, 226, ad illum. Cate. 1.

† Cyril, 292.

‡ Jerom. 3, 16, in Isai. i.

§ August. Tract. 11.

|| Gregory. Orat. 40.

secrated elements "the body and blood of Christ," they meant nothing approaching to transubstantiation. Augustine says, "Christ delivered to his disciples the *figure* of his body and blood." (Enarrat. in Psal. iii.) He adds, that "he who does not abide in Christ, and in whom Christ does not abide, undoubtedly *neither eats his flesh nor drinks his blood.*" (In Joh. Ev. c. vi. Tract. xxvi.) Chrysostom asks, "If Jesus did not die, of what are the things which we perform, *the symbols?*" (Serm. on Matt.) He also says, that the sacrament "is esteemed worthy to be called the Lord's body, although *the nature of the bread remaineth in it.*" Origen asks, "If Christ had neither flesh or blood, as some heretics affirm, of what body and what blood are the bread and cup which he delivered *the images?* By these *symbols* he commended his memory to his disciples." (Dial. iii. cont. Marcion.) Clemens Alexandrinus says, "Such food (for faith) our Lord elsewhere sets forth in the gospel of John by *symbols*, saying, "Eat my flesh, and drink my blood." (Præd. c. 6. l. 1. p. 100.) Cyril of Jerusalem says, "In the *type* of the bread is given to you the body, and in the *type* of the wine the blood." (Cat. Myst. iv. 1. p. 292.) Eusebius of Cesarea, says, "Christ appointed them to use bread as a *symbol* of his own body." (Dem. Evan. lib. 8. c. 1.) Tertullian speaks of "the bread by which Christ *represents* his body." (Adv. Marcion. lib. 1. p. 372.) Ambrose says, "You receive the sacrament as a *similitude*; it is the *figure* of the body and blood of the Lord. You drink the *likeness* of his precious blood." (De Sacram. lib. iv. c. 4.) Cyprian says, "The blood of Christ is *shown* by the wine." (Cecil. patri. epis. 65, p. 153,) and pope Gelasius (A. D. 492,) plainly declares that "the *substance* or nature of the bread and wine *ceases not to exist*, and assuredly the *image and similitude* of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in these mysteries." (Contra Eutychem.)

Here are ten of the leading fathers of the church, and if time permitted we might refer to forty more,

who all explicitly tell us, that in calling the sacramental elements the body and blood of Christ, they mean no more than they apprehend Christ himself to have meant, namely, that the bread and wine were the *types*, the *symbols*, the *figures*, the *representations*, of his body and blood; but that they continued to be bread and wine still. And so much for all the boasted evidence from antiquity, in favour of TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

XVIII. — ROMISH DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES.

THE MASS.

HAVING now considered, at some length, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the subject which comes next in order, in the present discussion, is its twin corruption, THE MASS.

These two great inventions of the church of Rome, may, indeed, be considered rather as two branches of the same subject. Transubstantiation declares that "*the bread which we break*" is not only "*the communion of the body of Christ,*" but is that very material body itself! The Mass goes one step further, and tells us that the same body, thus miraculously and multitudinously and perpetually reproduced, is not so reproduced for our own comfort and edification merely, but for the purpose of being offered up daily, in every communion, to God the Father, *as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin*. Each of these dogmas is alike in plain opposition to the text of Scripture, and to the dictates of common sense. Of the first we have already treated: let us now pass on to the second.

What is called in the Romish church "The Mass," is among all Protestants called "the communion of Christ's body and blood." The institution of this service or celebration is plainly and explicitly described in Scripture;—let us, then, first turn to that narrative.

Matthew, the first evangelist, informs us, that at or after our Lord's passover, "*Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took*

the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (ch. xxvi. 26—28.) Mark repeats the fact in almost the very same words. Luke says, "*And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*" (ch. xxii. 12—20.) John, the beloved disciple, though present at the institution, does not even record the fact in his gospel. But Paul, writing to the Corinthian church, and giving them large instructions as to their religious observances, says, "*I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you: That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.*" (1 Cor. xi. 23—26.)

Such is the whole instruction afforded by the inspired writers in this matter. Now let us see whereunto this short and simple observance, upon which no one of the apostles has dwelt for more than a few lines, let us see to what it has grown. The following is a description of the Roman ritual of the mass:

"The mass, as viewed by a spectator, may be said to consist of five divisions. The first we may call the robing of the bishop in his pontificals, which must afford a highly intellectual and spiritual feast of soul to the spectators, and worshippers—shall I call them? The bishop enters the chapel in a woollen pontifical cope, which has its tail borne up by a chaplain; and going to the altar, he kneels down and says the '*Introibo, I will go in,*' &c. He then goes to the place

where the *paramenta*, or robes and ornaments, are placed, and seats himself, surrounded by the proper quota of chaplains and deacons, one of whom acts as his prompter, to tell him what to say, and to point with his finger to the place in the book where he is to read; near them lie the various paraphernalia and sacred vessels. The attendants having duly put on their sanctified robes and surplices, the bishop rises, and turning towards the altar, says the Lord's prayer secretly; then crossing himself from his brow to his breast, he says, 'God be my helper.' And while the choir responds, he turns towards the altar, between two bearers of wax candles, and says, 'The Lord be with you,' and other prayers. Then gravely laying aside his *pluvial*, or cope, he takes the ornament called his planet, and approaches the altar, and sits down, while the psalm of the hours is being sung. During the singing, the *holy sandals* are brought out, one deacon lifts up the corner of his cope, while another takes off the bishop's shoes; then uttering certain prayers, he at last says, 'Shoe me with the sandals of gladness.' The dutiful deacon then puts on the consecrated sandals; and thus answers his prayer. Then standing up he says, 'O Lord! strip the old man off me.' The scutiferus, or shield-bearer, answers this prayer by stripping him of his flowing cope. Then looking at his hands, he says, 'O Lord, give virtue to my hands.' This prayer is answered by another, bringing a basin of water to wash his hands while he sits. The towel and basin are held by the most honourable and exalted layman, who, throwing himself on his knees, and pouring out a little water into the basin, sips and tastes it. Meanwhile, another of the attendants is taking the consecrated rings off the bishop's fingers; and then the distinguished layman, with the aid of a deacon, washes the bishop's hands, and dries them, and then carries back the basin and towel to the credentia. The bishop's feet being shod with the gospel preparation, by putting on sandals, and the old man being put off by putting off his old woollen cope, and having washed

his hands in virtue and innocence, by getting them washed in water, he approaches the robes, and says, 'O Lord, put on me the helmet of salvation.' At this signal the paramenta, or robes and ornaments, are all brought forward—fifteen in number. The bishop approaches, bows, and kisses five of them, viz. the *amictus*, the *pectoral*, the *cross*, the *stole*, and the *pall*. All these the deacons receive from the chaplains, one by one, and put upon the bishop. And first, with great solemnity, they take the amictus, and having all kissed it, they put it over the bishop's head, and fix it on him. His head being thus armed with the *helmet of salvation*, he stands up and says, 'O Lord, clothe me in white.' Upon this they put on the white surplice. Then he utters another prayer saying, 'O Lord, gird me with the girdle of faith.' On this, in answer to his humble and devout prayer, the ghostly menials take his girdle, and place it round him, and buckle it in front. Then addressing the cross, the bishop thus prays, 'Deign, O Lord, to fortify me.' On this, the deacon, in his sacred functions, takes the cross, and holding it up to the bishop to be kissed, hangs it round his neck, so as to make it rest upon his breast. Next the bishop says to the stole, 'O Lord, give me the robe of immortality.' The deacon, whose office it is to answer this solemn prayer now puts on the robe, nicely adjusting it to his body. Next the prelate prays, as he looks on the tunicella, or little coat, 'Put me in the coat of jocundity, and clothe me, O Lord, with the garment of joy.' This being put on him, he next prays thus: 'O Lord, clothe me with the garments of salvation.' Here they put on him the dalmatic, or episcopal vestment, and he next fixes his eyes on the gloves, and prays, 'Clothe my hands, O Lord, with the purity of the new man.' On this the deacon, whose office it is to answer all these devout prayers, first kisses his right hand, and then puts a glove on it; then kisses the left and puts a glove on it; and so clothes his hands with heavenly purity. This being over, the bishop prays another prayer, saying, 'O Lord, thy yoke is

easy.' On this, the attendants take the bishop's ornament, called the *planet*, and swing it back so as to give his arms full exercise. The pall is next brought; the deacon takes hold of it by the cross on the right side, and the sub-deacon by the cross on the left side, and hold forth the cross in the middle, that the bishop may kiss it. Then they put it round his neck, making that part on his left shoulder to lie double, and the whole is so put round his neck, that his arms are not hindered. Then comes the putting on the three thorns with their jewels. This, none but the initiated can well understand. The first thorn goes into the breast of the pall, the second into the cross on the left shoulder, and the third into the cross behind. And these thorns must not go quite through the cross. After this, the good bishop, speaking to the mitre, says by way of prayer, 'Put on me, O Lord, the mitre and the helmet of salvation.' Here he sits down, and the deacon devoutly puts the mitre on the bishop's head, the sub-dean as devoutly holding up the ribbons that hang from it. The bishop sitting, then prays, 'Decorate with virtue, O Lord, the fingers of my hand and body.' Here the deacons, in consummating his devout prayer, put the rings on his fingers. Next the gremial, a rich piece of silk to be held by two priests between the bishop and the people, when he says mass, is laid on his lap. This done, he prays to the *manipulum*. Then the cloth called by this name is laid across his arm.

"At this stage of the business, the incense is prepared in the proper vessel, with many gesticulations and contortions. Then, with a nicely arranged procession, the bishop comes to the steps of the altar and makes a full halt. Here the deacon takes off his mitre, and combs and smooths down his hair. Then follows the *confession* of each of this holy confraternity. The bishop, bowing reverentially to the altar, begins the confession of his sins. The deacon, kissing the bishop's left hand, goes up to the altar with the *manipulum* and the gospel open in his right hand. The bishop next, with suitable prayers, goes up to the

altar and kisses it with deep solemnity, and also the book of the gospels. Having next approached the *horn of the epistle*, he takes the incense pot, puts incense in it, and causes the cloud of smoke to cover the altar. This holy and edifying service is done thus: having adored with profound reverence the image on the cross, he whirls the pot of incense three times round it, then he whirls the pot twice round the image and sacred relics on the right, and then around those on the left as often. Next he gives three swingings of the pot round the image and relics near the *corner of the epistle*; and as many he gives to the *corner of the gospel*. He then delivers the pot to the deacon, who swings it round the bishop himself, and smokes him effectually. After a number of other edifying gestures and motions, the bishop is helped up by the arms as if he were suddenly become paralytic, and being on his legs, he says, 'Glory to God!' taking care to join his hands on his breast at the word God. While the choir sings a hymn, he has his mitre and gremial brought to him; they are again taken off him as the hymn ends. He is again helped on his legs by the deacons, and he cries out unto the people, '*Peace be unto you,*' and he keeps his hands before his breast, until the edified and devout audience reply, '*and with thy spirit.*' He then says, 'Let us pray;' and then goes on with the prayer in Latin, to the edification of those who do not understand one word of what is so said. After an incredible number of similar gestures, and the burning of incense, and kissing of the bishop's hands, and bowing, and reading what they call the gospel, and after the bishop has been again perfumed with incense smoke, and has stood up without mitre and gremial, he sits down to listen to a sermon. The preacher comes up, and on his knees adores the bishop, kisses his hand and asks a blessing. This he freely gives by making the sign of the cross over him. That finished, with much gesture and bowing the preacher gives the bishop his absolution.

"Second. The bishop, or priest, sings five psalms,

then uncovers, combs down his hair, and washes his hands. Next comes the sprinkling of holy water, and singing of the introtus, as the bishop approaches the altar. After a great many gestures, there is much chanting. A linen cloth, full of pictures, is carried as a canopy over the bishop, by four-ecclesiastics. Here again follow incense and chanting. There is the *gradual* and the *hallelujah*, and the *tractus*, so called from the long drawling tone, and the nasal twanging of the priests, affecting much sorrow as they sing it.

“The third part is the consecration, more properly so called. The gestures, and particularly the bowings and adoration here are not easily recounted. The sub-deacon puts on a long veil, takes the patina with two choice hosts or wafers, and the chalice, and covering them with the veil, goes up with them to the altar, following the bishop. Another brings the wine and water. The bishop now puts on his episcopal ring and mitre, and comes to the altar. At the altar his mitre is taken off, and he adores with lowly bowing to the altar. The deacon now takes one of the hosts, and touching the patina and chalice with it, inside and outside, makes the sub-deacon taste of it. The other host he offers to the bishop, who takes it with both hands, and holding it up before his breast repeats the prayer, ‘O Lord, accept it,’ &c. This is called the *offertory*, from its being offered to God. The priest, before he offers the host, washes his hands a second time. In the interim the deacon throws over the altar a clean linen cloth, called a *corporale*, or *palla*, because they say it covers Christ’s body. The chalice is also covered with another *palla*. The deacon having presented the *patina*, with the host upon it, to the bishop, also presents the chalice, in which the priest mixes wine and water, and consecrates it. In the consecration the water is blessed by the priest when mixed, not the wine, because the wine, they say, represents Christ, who needs no blessing. The priest again perfumes the altar and sacrifice three times in the manner of a cross, bows himself,

and kisses the altar, and repeats very softly the prayer which they call *secreta*. Though this prayer is said in silence, yet the conclusion of it is uttered in a loud voice, '*per omnia secula seculorum.*' Then follows what they call *prefatio*, which begins with thanksgiving and ends with the confession of God's majesty. The minds of the people are prepared with these words, '*Lift up your hearts.*' The answer to which is, 'We lift them up unto the Lord.' Then is sung the hymn, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God,' &c. 'Heaven and earth is full of thy glory.' Then follows the hymn *Hosanna*, and the canon which is also called *actio*, because it is giving of thanks, which is uttered with a loud voice. The canon, besides thanksgiving, consists of various prayers for the pope, cardinals, bishops, kings, all orthodox Christians, Gentiles and Jews. Those also are particularly remembered for whom the sacrifice is to be offered, and their names rehearsed. Prayer is also made for those that be present at the mass, and for the bishop himself. Then mention is made of the virgin, the apostles, the evangelists, and martyrs, and many crossings follow; then the solemnity of the consecration of the host, by pronouncing aloud these words, '*Hoc est corpus meum.*' To this the people answer, '*Amen.*' The priest now falls down on his knees before the consecrated host, and worships it, offers prayers to it, and rising up, he elevates it, that it may be worshipped by all the people. Then, after several crossings of the host and chalice, this part of the mass is concluded with prayers for the dead, and the people's offerings of money to the priest, as a reward for praying in behalf of their dead friends, for their deliverance out of purgatory.

"The fourth part of the mass begins with the *pater noster*, and some other prayers. The sub-deacon delivers the patina, covered, to the deacon, who uncovers it, and delivers it to the priest, and kisses his right hand. The priest kisses the patina, breaks the host over the chalice, and puts a piece of it in the wine, to show that Christ's body is not without blood.

Then the bishop pronounces a solemn benediction. Next is sung the hymn, 'O Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.' Then the kiss of peace is given, according, as they allege, to the apostolic command.

"The fifth and last part of the mass contains their *communion*. The priest, or bishop, communicates first himself. He takes the one-half of the host for himself, the other half he divides into two parts, one for the deacon, and the other for the sub-deacon. Next the clergy and monks communicate, and after them the people, but the latter have only the consecrated wafer (or bread) allowed them, and put in their mouths, the cup being withheld from them, and drunk by the priests or clergy only. The priest holds the chalice (or cup) with both hands, and drinks three times, pretending thereby to signify the Trinity. The whole is concluded with what they call *post-communion*, which consists in thanksgiving and singing of *Antiphonies*. The priest then kisses the altar, and removes again to the right side of it, where, having offered some prayers for the people and blessed them; the deacon with a loud voice cries, 'Go in peace; the host is sent to God the Father, to pacify his anger.' "

Now, after calmly considering these two pictures, the Saviour sitting at table with his disciples, and commanding them, after his death, sometimes to break bread and taste wine "*in REMEMBRANCE of him;*" and on the other side the Romish bishop, with his host of attendant priests, deacons, sub-deacons, acolytes, &c. with his bowings, crossings, kneelings, sittings, standings, incense, bell-ringing, and what not,—let us seriously ask ourselves whether it is possible to find another case of so entire a departure from the whole character, internal and external, of the original institution? The mass instituted in the upper chamber in Jerusalem! Yes, much in the same manner in which the massacre of St. Bartholomew was sanctioned by our Lord's saying to Peter, "*Put up thy sword into its sheath, for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.*"

But we are not left to the bare words of the institution, sufficient as these would be, to decide for us the question, whether the Romish mass, or the Protestant Lord's Supper, is the most faithful observance of our Lord's command. Further light is thrown upon the matter, by the recorded facts as to the main features of this sacrament, as used in the early church.

What was the irregularity rebuked by Paul, in his instruction to the Corinthians. It was just this, that they had confounded the Lord's Supper, with their ordinary meals, and ate merely to satisfy their hunger and thirst, without "discerning" or distinguishing the peculiarities of that observance, as a "*showing forth of the Lord's death.*"

Now this was a circumstance which might easily happen to such as merely took the narratives of the evangelists, and hastily and without proper reverence acted upon the words of the original institution. The sitting round a table, and breaking bread and drinking wine in an evening assembly, might easily be converted, by careless or irreverent disciples, into an ordinary supper. But then the very circumstance of the gradual and easy declension from the sacred feast into a sensual one, shows at once how near the one was, in outward appearance, to the other. How would it have been possible for the Corinthians to have fallen into such an abuse, if what they had been accustomed to, had been, not the Lord's Supper, but the Mass? Had any thing in the least resembling the Romish ceremonial been then in existence, how could the Corinthians ever have given the apostle the least cause for his rebuke? "*For in eating, every one taketh before another his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*" It is impossible even to read these works, without seeing, that *that* which the Corinthians had corrupted, was not the Mass, but the Lord's Supper.

Perhaps the reader may be momentarily tempted to think, "Then surely it would have been better if the Lord had instituted the mass instead of the Lord's Supper; if it be true that the supper was so quickly

corrupted, while the mass could not have been." But the humble believer will instantly recall this thought, when he reflects that the real drift of it is, that sinful men could have contrived better ordinances and observances for Christ's church, than he himself, her Saviour and her God was able to supply!

But we may pass on to an uninspired but most competent witness, Justin Martyr, who lived about half a century after the death of the last of the apostles. He, in writing an apology for the Christians, thus describes the practice of the church in his own time:

"On the day which is called Sunday, there is an assembling together in one place, of those who live in towns, or in the country around; and the histories and writings of the prophets and apostles are read, as time may permit. Then the reader ceasing, the president (or elder) exhorts all to the imitation of those good things. Then we all rise and offer prayers, and when the service is finished, bread and wine and water are offered, and the president again offers prayers and thanksgivings, and the people say, 'Amen.' And the communication and distribution is to each of those who have returned thanks."*

Here again we have the simple communion of the Lord's Supper. Not a word of the gorgeous "mass," or of a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. But this last consideration brings us to the second feature of the case; which is the most important part by far of the whole question.

The church of Rome makes of this simple commemorative feast, not only a gorgeous ceremony, but something far higher:—a sacrifice for the remission of sins. Nay, when once it is admitted, or assumed, that in this celebration there is a real offering up of the actual body and blood of Immanuel, there is no end of the uses to which so great a thing may be applied. A mass removes the sins of the living. A mass relieves, or entirely ends the sufferings of the

* Apologia, ii. p. 97.

unpardoned dead. But these are but a few of the purposes to which so powerful a remedy can be applied. Mr. O'Croly, himself a Romish priest, informs us, that—

“Masses are offered for a variety of purposes, at least in the minds of the multitude—for brute beasts as well as for human beings. A farmer, who happens to have his cattle disordered, the rot among his sheep, or the murrain among his cows, will have masses said for their recovery. The fishermen of Dungarvon, and elsewhere, regularly get masses said that they may hook the more fish. It is quite common among the ignorant to be under the persuasion that worldly calamities result from the agency of evil spirits; which opinion, indeed, receives some countenance from the book of Job. To counteract this malignant influence, they fly to the priest to have masses said. The priest takes no pains to remove the error, but accepts the pecuniary offering. Friars carry this matter to the last extremity. There is a general impression, as we have said elsewhere, that the masses of friars are more efficacious than those of the secular clergy. This impression answers the intended purpose; it brings more money into the coffers of the friars, who, however, are not at a loss to assign a theological reason for the super-excellence of their masses—namely, that their state of life is more perfect than that of seculars—rather a knotty point to establish—as they make vows of poverty, at the same time that, like Dives in the Gospel, they are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. The friars drive a considerable trade in masses. If a habit is to be blessed or consecrated, money must be given for masses in order, of course, to ensure full efficacy to the benediction. These consecrated habits are supposed to be worn in the other world. It would be accounted a great misfortune for a poor person residing in the neighbourhood of a friar to die without one. The blessing of the scapular, of which more hereafter, must have the same accompaniment as the blessing of the habit; and the

ceremony of induction, or reception, or enrolment among the various confraternities and sisterhoods of Carmelites, of St. Francis, of St. Augustine and St. Dominick, ever superinduces a grateful commission for saying masses, which are offered up at once for the benefit of the individuals contributing, and for the confraternities at large, of which they then become members. This they call the communion of saints. The friar is the certain gainer in all these pious transactions.

“The doctrine of purgatory has an intimate connection with the traffic in masses, which, in the church language, are offered up for the quick and for the dead. The piety of the living seeks to mitigate the sufferings of their departed friends. This piety is carefully nurtured by the interested clergy. The feast of All Souls, or the beginning of November, as we have said elsewhere, is the critical period for the performance of this neighbourly and philanthropic duty. Nothing then is left untried to interest the faithful in behalf of the suffering souls in purgatory, who, it is said, can be most efficaciously relieved or extricated altogether, by the aid of masses, which are at once impetratory, propitiatory, and expiatory. This is a portion of the second of November doctrine, which is inculcated by every means that avaricious ingenuity can devise. Money was formerly raised by the sale of indulgences, and it used to be said, that the deposit of the money in the holy box, or on the holy plate, suddenly threw open the gates of purgatory for the enlargement or escape of the poor suffering inmates. It was this and other ridiculous doctrines that first provoked the zeal of Luther, and prepared the way for the Reformation. Substitute for the old indulgences, masses for the dead, and you have the same solemn farce acted over again. So much for the theory and practice of masses.”*

Now all this is very lamentable, as well as very absurd; for it is impossible to imagine that one priest

* O’Croly’s Inquiry, 8vo. p. 107—110.

out of a hundred can be so senseless as to imagine that any of these wonderful effects will really follow from the repeating of a number of Latin prayers,—although the whole hundred are constantly taking money for all these false cures! The whole system, therefore, is from beginning to end, a system of fraud, chicanery, and plunder, and all under the garb of religion.

But let us take the best possible view of the question. Let us only investigate the most plausible point in the papist's case, namely, the supposition that the mass is a real offering up of Christ's body, for the appeasing the wrath of the Father, and that by the application of one of these sacrifices to a believer's own individual case, his sins will be blotted out. This is the least offensive view of the question; and yet, even in this mild and moderated form, we shall be obliged to denounce it—1st, as utterly destitute of all foundation in Scripture; and 2dly, as directly opposed to many plain declarations in the inspired word.

1. We turn over all the statements of the sacred writers, which refer to this observance; and we find not one single word to support the assumption, that our Lord intended herein to institute a perpetual sacrifice for the remission of sins. In the Romish church, this one fact is made, in truth, the very centre of their system. If their representations might be taken, it would almost seem that the whole Bible was written to establish the mass!—that Christ, in fact, died, chiefly to establish the mass;—and that the mass is the very alpha and omega of all true Christianity. And yet, strange to say, you may read the whole New Testament straight through; and neither in prophet, apostle, evangelist, or even in the injunctions of our Lord himself, can a single outline or feature of the mass be found!

“In the divine sacrifice,” says the council of Trent, “which is performed in the mass, that same Christ is contained and offered in an unbloody manner, who, on the altar of the cross offered himself with blood

once for all." And, "the Lord being appeased by the offering of this, and granting grace and the gift of repentance, remits crimes and sins, even great ones."

"I profess likewise," says the creed of Pope Pius IV., "that in the mass there is offered unto God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead."

Now, where is a single word of all this to be found in the Scripture account of the institution of this sacrament? Jesus, sitting at table after supper, "*took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in REMEMBRANCE of me.*" The same words are repeated twice by Paul, who then adds, "*As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, YE DO SHOW THE LORD'S DEATH till he come.*" In the plainest possible language, therefore, the institution is declared to be a "commemorative festival," but not a single syllable is said, of any "sacrifice" being so much as thought of.

2. The idea, however, of a perpetual sacrifice, is not only not countenanced by Scripture, but it is utterly opposed to its plainest declarations.

It has been well observed, that if the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews had been expressly written against the mass, supposing it to have been then invented and palmed upon the church, they could not possibly have been more explicit or emphatic in their language. In fact we cannot doubt that the Divine Author had a double object in view—the denouncing the false doctrine then maintained by the Jewish teachers in the church, and the equally false doctrine which He foreknew would be introduced by the Romish teachers some centuries afterwards.

The assumption of these latter, is, that the work of a sinner's salvation is not completely effected, even by the one offering made on Calvary, the application of that blood to the soul by the Holy Spirit, and the perpetual intercession and mediation of the Saviour

in heaven on its behalf. All this is not enough. The Father yet remains unpropitiated, until *another sacrifice* is offered up on earth, by a priest of the Romish church, who takes a wafer, pronounces some Latin words over it, declares it to be thus changed into Christ's own body and blood, and holds it up to God the Father, at the sight of which that wrath is appeased which not all the pains of Calvary, nor the personal intercessions of the Saviour himself at the right hand of the throne, had been able entirely to abate!

The blasphemy of all this is shocking; but we must not permit our disgust to turn us away from the calm consideration of the truth of the case. It is not the tone of our feelings, but the declarations of Scripture, that must decide the whole question. Now these declarations are such, as to render it scarcely possible to doubt, that they were chiefly intended to apply to this great abomination.

“For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who NEEDED NOT DAILY, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did ONCE, when he offered up himself.” (Heb. vii. 26, 27.)

“Nor yet (was it necessary) that he should offer himself OFTEN, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year 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, but after this the judgment; so Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Heb. ix. 25—28.)

Read also the first ten verses of the 10th chapter, the whole argument of which is, that the Levitical sacrifices were *often* offered, simply because they were shadows, and had no innate value; but that if

any one of them could have *put away* sin, the repetition would at once have "*ceased.*" The apostle then proceeds:

"*And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered ONE SACRIFICE for sins, for ever* sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by ONE OFFERING he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is NO MORE OFFERING FOR SIN.*" (Heb. x. 11—18.

Is it possible for language to go beyond this? Had the mass existed in the apostle's days, and had he wished to denounce it, could he possibly have found language more clear or decisive? In fact, the mass can only be defended at all, by directly denying the truth of all the apostle's statements. The Romanist must assert, plainly, that "by one offering" Christ hath *not* "perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" that "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" does *not* sanctify the believer in him; and that it is necessary that Christ "should offer himself often," for that he hath *not* "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." All this must the defender of the mass affirm, and when he has gone thus far, it is certainly by no means surprising that he

* The words *eis to diuexes* in the original, may be, and perhaps should be translated "for a continuance," or "for perpetuity," and be referred to the preceding clause, thus, "after he had offered for sins one sacrifice for a continuance;" i. e. one sacrifice for all times, *unam pro peccatis offerens in sempiternum hostiam, sedet etc.*, which is the Vulgate, with no other alteration than the transposition of the words *in sempiternum*. Compare this verse with verse 14th of the same chapter.—[Am. Ed.]

should wish to have the Bible put out of sight. It is impossible for him not to be conscious that to a plain honest student of God's word, the opposition between his statements and those of Paul must appear altogether total.

Such, then, is the Scriptural view of this question. In conclusion, we have wished and endeavoured to state as fairly as we could, such proofs and arguments as we could find in any Romish writers, in defence of their view. But in truth, their array is so scanty as to be almost invisible. They quote Malachi i. 11: "*In every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering.*" They also quote the case of Melchizedec, who offered bread and wine, and who is said to be a type of Christ.

Nothing, however, can be clearer, than that the use of these texts in such a case is a reversal of the true laws of interpretation. We ought to interpret figurative and obscure passages by such as are plain and beyond doubt. But in this case the Romanists require us to interpret the plain and explicit language of our Lord, and of Paul, by reference to the figurative language of Malachi, and the typical language applied to Melchizedec! Into such an argument it would be a waste of time to enter.

Their only remaining prop is found in their usual resort to the fathers. Several of these have called the Lord's Supper "a sacrifice." We admit it; but in what sense do they use the term? Clemens Alexandrinus says, "our earthly altar is the assembly of such as join together in prayer, having as it were a common voice and mind. For the *sacrifice* of the church is the word ascending as incense from holy souls, their *sacrifice* and their whole minds being open to God."* And Tertullian interprets the very passage in Malachi, on which the Romanists so greatly rely, thus: "Here spiritual *sacrifices* are meant, and a contrite heart is shown to be an acceptable *sacrifice* to God."†

* Stromata, Lib. vii. p. 717.

† Adversus Judæos, Ch. v. p. 188.

Never, then, surely, was so strong a case on the one side, opposed by so weak an one, on the other. Take the plain narrative of Scripture, and it exhibits to us "the Lord's Supper" of the Protestants; but nothing in the least resembling "the mass" of the Papists. Turn to the records of the early church, and again we find a simple commemorative festival, without the least trace of the gorgeous ceremony in which incense, and bell-ringing, and lighted candles, and genuflections without number, deck out a service, wherein the laity, in place of bread and wine, receive a wafer,—while the priests profess to be offering "a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead." Look, then, to the doctrine of the apostles touching sacrifices, and we find that "*by ONE OFFERING*" Christ "*HATH perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*" No refuge remains, then, for the doctrine of the mass, save in the last resort of the Romanists, the grand magazine of all kinds of opinions, the countless tomes of the fathers, whence sentences of every hue, and proving or disproving, in turn, every doctrine and every practice of the church, may at any time be found. The main argument, however, derived from this source, is that the Supper is often called a sacrifice. We admit this without hesitation; but we show, in reply, that the term "sacrifice" is so vaguely and indiscriminately used in their writings, as to render it absurd to base any doctrine on this single expression. And so ends the discussion, which surely terminates, however imperfectly conducted on our own part, in favour of *that* mode of observing our Lord's last command, which approaches the nearest to his own practice and example.

XIX.—ROMISH DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES.

THE PARDON OF SIN; PURGATORY; AND INDULGENCES.

A FEW subjects yet remain, which demand a careful and patient investigation. One of these is *the Pardon of Sin*, as preached by the church of Rome; with its two branches, *Purgatory* and *Indulgences*. Let us devote a few moments to a serious consideration of these doctrines.

In bringing the mind to these topics, it will be impossible to forget that remarkable circumstance, which stands recorded as giving rise to the Reformation. There is no reason to suppose that in other respects it differed from the usual practice of the Romish see; but as having caused so great a revolution in the state of the visible church, it will ever remain peculiarly distinguished in the page of history.

In the year A. D. 1514, and even under the direction of one of the most acute and intelligent of all the popes, began that particular issue of indulgences, for money, which raised the indignation of Martin Luther, and brought on, ultimately, the Reformation in Germany. Leo X. professed to need funds for the erection of St. Peter's, and for carrying on a war with the Turks. For these ends he issued the papal briefs, proclaiming a general indulgence to all who would *purchase* it,—and immediately the agents and salesmen of these paper-pardons began to publish and offer them for sale throughout Europe. "The money," says Bower, "went to neither purpose, but was lavished in gratifying the luxury of the court of Rome and its dependents." The sale of these indulgences in Saxony, and the produce of such sale, were given

to the pope's sister Magdalen, who employed as her agents, Tetzel, a Dominican monk, of notoriously immoral habits. The form of pardon published by Tetzel, ran thus,—“ May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by his most holy passion; and I, by his authority, and that of his blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee; first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred; and, then, from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be; even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see; and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account, and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism; so that, when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” And his harangues, in pushing the sale of these things, are thus described by Lonicerus: “He impudently preaches up the pope's dignity and power, and the virtue and efficacy of indulgences, bawling out, that there could be no wickedness committed so great, but that might thereby be forgiven; and that those souls which are tormented in purgatory, as soon as the money was flung into the basin, skipped for joy, and, being released from their pains, flew right to heaven.”*

Such was the doctrine, such the practice of the church of Rome, as to the pardon of sin, up to the very moment of the Reformation. Now, however, in the broad face of day, and in countries like this, rejoicing in the free circulation of the word of God, and an open proclamation of pardon by the blood of Christ

* Theatr. Histor. fo. 241.

alone, these monstrous follies and frauds no longer venture to show themselves. The greatest care and ingenuity is used to cloak and cover the doctrine preached; but still that doctrine is essentially the same as in the days when Leo and Tetzal carried it to its full and legitimate results. Let us now see in what cautious and insidious phrases it is cloaked and covered by Dr. Wiseman. The following are his words:—

“The Catholic church teaches, that Christ did establish on earth *a means whereby* forgiveness should be imparted to wretched sinners;—whereby, *on the performance of certain acts*, all who have offended God may obtain authoritative forgiveness.” “The Catholic church believes that the institution thus left by our Saviour was the sacrament of penance.”*

“Sin is forgiven by a sacrament instituted by Christ for that purpose, for which the power of pronouncing judicial sentence of remission was communicated to the pastors of the church.†”

“We believe that upon this forgiveness of sins; that is, after the remission of that eternal debt, which God in his justice awards to transgressions against his law, he has been pleased to reserve a certain degree of inferior or temporary punishment, appropriate to the guilt which had been incurred; and it is *on this part of the punishment alone*, that according to the Catholic doctrine satisfaction can be made to God.”‡

“The doctrine of purgatory follows as a consequence or corollary from that of which I have just treated; so much so, that the Catholic doctrine of satisfaction would be incomplete without it. The idea that God requires satisfaction, and will punish sin, would not go to its fullest and necessary consequence, if we did not believe that the sinner may be so punished in another world, as not to be wholly and eternally cast away from God.”§

“Prayer for the dead is essentially based on the

* Wiseman's Tenth Lecture, p. 8, 9.

† Ibid, p. 41.

‡ Wiseman's Eleventh Lecture, p. 41.

§ Ibid. p. 52.

belief in purgatory, and the principles of both are consequently intimately connected together. Why does the Catholic pray for his departed friend, but that he fears, lest not having died in so pure a state as to have been immediately admitted to the sight of God, he may be enduring that punishment which God has awarded *after the forgiveness* of his sins; and believes, that, through the intercession of his brethren, he may be released from the distressing situation.”*

“What then is an indulgence? It is no more than a remission by the church, in virtue of the keys, or the judicial authority committed to her, of a portion, or the entire, of the temporal punishment due to sin. The infinite merits of Christ form the fund whence this remission is derived; but besides, the church holds, that, by the communion of saints, penitential works performed by the just, beyond what their own sins might exact, are available to other members of Christ’s body.”

“It is evident that if the temporal punishment reserved to sin, was anciently believed to be remitted through the penitential acts which the sinner assumed, any other substitute for them, that the authority imposing or recommending them, received as an equivalent, must have been considered by it truly of equal value, and as acceptable before God. And so it must be now. If the duty of exacting such satisfaction devolves upon the church,—and it must be the same now as it formerly was,—she necessarily possesses at present the same power of substitution, with the same efficacy, and consequently, with the same effects. And such a substitution is what constitutes all that Catholics understand by the name of an *indulgence*.”†

Such then, is the present version of this doctrine, as polished and trimmed and set off to the best advantage, so as to win, if it were possible, even the

* Wiseman’s Eleventh Lecture, p. 54.

† Wiseman’s Twelfth Lecture, p. 71, 72.

affections of intelligent Protestants. Two remarks may be made, in the first place, and we will then pass on to the closer consideration of the opposing views of Protestantism and Popery in this matter.

The first remark is, that an important variation is apparent between the doctrine preached by Tetzel, in A. D. 1516, and that avowed by Dr. Wiseman in 1836. Tetzel says, "By the authority of Christ, and of the blessed apostle Peter and Paul, and of the most holy Pope, I absolve thee from *all thy sins*, transgressions, and excesses, *how enormous soever* they may be." Dr. W. says, "An indulgence is *nothing more* than a remission by the church of a portion, or the whole, of the *temporal punishment* due to sin." This is another proof, if any were needed, of the pliability with which this infallible and unchangeable church adapts her demands to the degree of credulity upon which she can venture to calculate.

The second point which seems to call for observation, is the utter want of Scripture authority for the whole of this system. Here is "a sacrament of penance." Where, in the whole Bible, do we find a single word of, or even an allusion to, any such "sacrament?" The text, John xx. 23, is adduced:—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." But the true and the false application of this passage is sufficiently apparent. Peter retained the sins of Ananias and Sapphira, and remitted those of Cornelius. When any other minister can show the like signs of divine authority, we will believe as readily in the certainty of a remission granted by him. But when those who call themselves "the successors of St. Peter," declare that the sins of Cranmer, Ridley, and all the martyrs are retained, we know of a truth that they speak falsely, and that what *they* retain is *not* retained.

Several texts are adduced, indeed, to prove that God chastises his children for their sins, even when he intends not to take away his love from them;—but no Protestant questions this. The Popish infer-

ence, however,—that the church has power to take off this “temporal punishment” on payment of a certain sum of money,—is not attempted to be proved, save by one passage, 2 Cor. ii. 5—10. But in this passage again, as in the case of Peter, we have an inspired apostle, speaking “with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ:” and yet even there we see nothing more than a mere matter of discipline, a temporary seclusion from the church, such as takes place among all Christian congregations, Romish or Protestant, wherever any thing like discipline is professed to be kept up.

The only remaining appeal to Scripture, is worth extracting, as a specimen of exceeding artfulness. It occurs in Dr. W’s defence of Purgatory. He says,—

“But to begin with *the word of God*,—there is a passage with which, probably, most who have looked into this subject are well acquainted. It is in the second book of Maccabees, (chapter xii.) where we are told how Judas, the valiant commander, made a collection, and ‘sent 12,000 drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice, to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.’ (ver. 43—46.) Many will say that the second book of Maccabees is not part of the Scripture; that it is not included in its canon. I will waive that question for the present, although it would not be difficult to prove that it has the same right to be in the canon as many books in the Old, and still more in the New Testament: for it is quoted by the fathers as Scripture, and enumerated in its canon by councils which have drawn up catalogues of its books. But let us abstract from this consideration, which would lead us into too long a discussion. It is allowed, at any rate, by all, to contain sound edifying doctrines:

for even the church of England allows, and even directs it to be read for instruction; whence one may conclude that she does not suppose it to contain doctrines opposed to the religion of Christ.”*

Dr. Wiseman should have taken care to be correct in such assertions as these. The church of England does, indeed, “allow or even direct” *some* books of the Apocrypha to be read in her *week-day* services, but the books of Maccabees she carefully excludes, and with abundant reason.† In the 12th chapter of the second book stands that verse which Dr. W. quotes, maintaining, in opposition to the whole of God’s word, the expediency and duty of prayer for the dead. In the 14th chapter, we find a narrative of an act of *suicide*, which is given with approbation! And at the close, the author says, “*If I have done well, and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired: but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto.*” Here is a plain admission of his fallible and uninspired character; and we know from the Jews themselves, that these books were not by them received. To elevate them, therefore, as Dr. Wiseman and his church persist in doing, to the rank of “the word of God,” is to expose themselves to the curses denounced in Scripture, upon those who shall add unto, or take from, the inspired word. Most craftily, too, does Dr. W. endeavour to evade this question. He adduces the passage as “the word of God,” and then he avoids the question of its authenticity, upon which its value must entirely depend, as likely to “lead to too long discussion.” But he must remember, that until this book of Maccabees can be proved to be part of the canon of Scripture, *which it never can be*, its value in a controversy of this kind is no more than that of any other old Jewish fable.

But it is time we approached the main question: which is, in what manner sin is dealt with under the

* Wiseman’s Eleventh Lecture, p. 54, 55.

† On the subject of the Apocrypha, see the Westminster Confession, § III. of Chap. I.—[Am. Ed.]

system of the church of Rome. *Some doctrine of Justification that church must needs admit; but it has cunningly contrived, that, while making use of the name, the thing itself should be wholly set aside. These are its definitions—*

“Justification itself is *not only the remission of sins*, but also sanctification, and the renewing of the inner man by the voluntary reception of grace.”

“The instrumental cause of justification is, the sacrament of baptism, the formal cause, the righteousness of God; not that whereby he himself is righteous, but that whereby he maketh us so; with which being endued by him, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and not only accounted, but are truly called, and are, righteous; receiving in ourselves righteousness, according to the measure which the Holy Spirit distributeth to every one as he will, and *according to each man’s disposition and co-operation.*”

“If any shall say, that men are justified only by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, or only by the remission of sins, excluding grace and love, which is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and is inherent in them; or also that the grace wherewith we are justified is only the favour of God; *let him be accursed.*”

If any shall say, that justification which has been received is not preserved, yea also increased before God by good works; but that these works are merely the fruit and signs of justification, which has been obtained, but not the cause of the increase of it; *let him be accursed.*” *Counc. Trent. Sess. vi. c. 7. can. xi. xxiv.*

Here, then, we see that in the church of Rome there is no such thing as a full and free pardon of sin. The justification above described, is, in fact, no justification at all. It is something which is only begun by baptism, and to grow and increase “according to each man’s disposition and co-operation.” It amounts, therefore, to nothing more than a sort of indefinite entrance into “a state of grace,” the abid-

ing in which, or the falling away from it, depends mainly on the individual himself.

But here, of course, there can be no *spirit of Adoption*. The position of the individual is at best no higher than that of a servant. He is not a pardoned, accepted, and beloved member of God's family; he is but on trial, as to whether his exertions may be such as to render him worthy of the favour of God. In other words, he is said to be a justified sinner, and yet is not held to be just in the sight of God. A just man, one who is truly justified, is free from all imputation of guilt. But this is not *his* case. In the church of Rome, in fact, there is no true justification. Not even the purest and holiest member of that church can assure himself, according to her doctrines, that his sins are pardoned and his guilt removed.

Now is this view a Scriptural one? Need we ask the question, at least of any one who has any acquaintance with the word of God?

Paul's description will instantly occur to such an one—"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 5—8.)

And again—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v. 1, 2.) "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." (Rom. v. 11.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 16.)

And, from these transporting motives, the Apostle proceeds to urge those to whom he wrote, to a corresponding work of holiness, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*" (Rom. xii. 1.)

And such, through all the gospels, and all the epistles, is the Scripture system. First, pardon, full and free, by the blood of Christ; then adoption into God's family, as "*heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ:*" then, constant exhortations to "*walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith ye are called.*" It is in this way, and in this way only, that the apostles trained up their people for heaven.

But the Romish system is utterly opposed to this scheme of mercy from its very outset. It rejects the first step of a full and free forgiveness, and proclaims instead a spurious justification, by which a man is not justified. By this false view—by this simulation of the gospel doctrine, a man is offered a justification which consists in "*a renewing of the inner man,*" "*according to each man's own disposition and co-operation:*" and therefore differs little from the heathen principle of "*a gradual advancement in virtue, by means of self-denial, and the constant practice of good works.*"

The main and central doctrine of the Bible, that which constitutes the very essence of the *gospel*, or *good news*, is here silently omitted. Man's natural inability is left to struggle with the impracticable task of saving his own soul; and God's great gift of a Saviour, who became a *substitute* for man, and "*died, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God,*" is dropped wholly out of view.

Justification, then, is left, by the church of Rome, to man's own exertions; and from this fundamental error spring various noxious fancies and mischievous practices.

1. We have, as we have already seen, THE MASS, as a perpetually renewed sacrifice, to make up what was left unfinished by Christ's death upon the cross,

and to appease the wrath of God, supposed to be still burning, even against *justified* and repentant sinners!

2. Next, we have the SACRAMENT OF PENANCE, including CONFESSION; by which the poor Romanist instead of daily flying to the blood of Christ, to be washed and sanctified and strengthened, throws himself at the feet of a priest; receives the false peace which flows from eight or ten words of Latin; and undertakes certain penitential works, as a satisfaction to God, for that part of his sin which neither the blood of the cross, nor even the sacrifice of the mass, could quite wash away.

3. But this course of folly and impiety does not end here. The church having prescribed certain prayers and fastings, to the penitent, for the putting away the last remains of his guilt, assumes to herself, next, the further power of compounding those exactions for *money*. And thus arises the INDULGENCE, that grossest of all the deceits of the "great whore," which is well described as making "merchandize" of the "souls of men." (Rev. xviii. 13.) And, lastly,

4. Not to part with the poor sinner, so long as it is possible to squeeze any more money out of him, the apostate church tells him on his death-bed, and tells his weeping friends after his decease—that there is another place, after death, besides heaven and hell; and that to that third or intermediate state, her power extends. And such is the weakness of the human mind, that for the exertion of this supposed authority over the intermediate state of purgatory, treasures beyond all count have been paid by poor dying sinners, and their deluded relatives.

Yet is this fabrication entirely opposed to Scripture, and not less to common sense. Our Lord's own description of the future state may be found in Luke xvi. 20—31, where one whose only declared offence had been that of luxury and carelessness, lifts up his eyes "in hell," and is told, that between him and heaven there is a great gulf fixed, so that no way from the one to the other could possibly be found. And in

Matt. xviii. 9, Christ with equal plainness intimates that even a wandering eye or an erring foot may lead, not to purgatory, but to hell. Many times, indeed, does Christ set before his hearers the danger of hell-fire; but not once does he tell them of the flames of purgatory. This of itself stamps the whole invention as a fiction and a fraud.

But it is equally opposed to common sense. A place is declared to exist of which nothing whatever is known, either from divine or human testimony. Not one of the prophets or apostles even so much as alludes to it; the early fathers of the church knew nothing of it; nor have the later writers of the church of Rome one fact to offer us in proof of its bare existence. Mr. O'Croly (himself a priest) admits that "The holy fathers say not a word about the fire of purgatory. The fact is, they denied the existence of any such place. John Chrysostom, in his fourteenth homily on Matthew, affirms that after death no mercy, but rigid justice is to be expected. There is no *middle place* (said he) between hell and heaven. This language cannot be misunderstood. Even in the beginning of the sixth century, the doctrine of purgatory was little known. Fulgentius, in answer to a question proposed by Euthemius, namely, whether God remits in this life only?—declared in the affirmative. "After this life, (he says,) there is no intermediate state between punishment and reward; that rigid justice only will be exercised in the world to come." He either rejected the doctrine of purgatory, or he knew nothing of it, for he speaks without qualification or exception."*

The real character, however, of the whole invention is well described by this unexceptionable witness, in the following words:—

"However, the doctrine constantly preached by the priests and friars, is, that the poor souls in purgatory are enveloped in flames, and suffer, like Dives, the most excruciating torture: and that, to relieve them

* O'Croly's Inquiry, p. 162.

from this calamity, masses, for which money is paid, are most efficacious. This is not only to make the doctrine of purgatory an article of faith, but also an article of merchandize; and, contrary to the admonition of Paul, to teach that which is unseemly, for the sake of filthy lucre.”*

Such is the candid admission of one of the Romish priesthood! Nothing, however, can throw such a strong light on this fraudulent system, as a circumstance adverted to by Mr. Nolan, who also was lately a priest of that church, though now escaped from its snares. He says,

“The Rev. Mr. Curran, lately parish priest of Kilmucan, Westmeath, with whom I was personally acquainted, bequeated to the Rev. Dr. Cantwell, of Mullingar, £300, to be expended on masses (at 2s. 6d. each) for such intentions as he (Mr. Curran) had neglected to discharge. From this it appears by arithmetical computation, that the Rev. Mr. Curran died owing two thousand four hundred masses, most of which (as must necessarily be presumed,) were to be offered for the souls in purgatory. Now, gentle reader, allow me to tell you, that had the Rev. Mr. Curran survived, he would require more than twenty years to discharge the last of his intentions; for as priests are allowed to offer only two masses on each Sunday and holiday, and but one on week-days, and as the masses offered by the parish priest on those festival-days must be offered for the general benefit of the congregation, and as the masses at stations (which engross a great portion of the priest’s services throughout the year) must be offered for the particular benefit of the family at whose house the stations are held; it would therefore follow, that the Rev. Mr. Curran would require a period of at least twenty years to discharge his debt of masses. O, abominable notion, to suppose that the Lord Jesus Christ would institute a doctrine whose rigour or relaxation of punishment to a soul,

* O’Croly’s Inquiry, p. 161, 162.

was to depend upon the whim or caprice of the Rev. John Curran!*

Is there any thing in the most senseless follies of the darkest heathenism, to exceed the absurdity and delusion of such hopes as these? A widow carries her little mite to a priest, hoping and believing, that by the power of the intercessions of this holy man, her departed husband may be released from his doleful prison in purgatory, and translated at once into the joys of paradise. But if she had the misfortune to select a priest who has much business in this way, her money may be taken, but the prayers may not be said for some twenty or thirty years. And all this time the poor soul is said to be immersed in boiling oil, or freezing in prisons of ice, in that dreadful place!

What a picture does this present, of the God of the Popish system. "*If I ascend up into heaven,*" says the Psalmist, "*thou art there : if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*" Surely this is a truth which even a Papist will not venture to deny. But will he seriously assure us, that Christ, who, in his omnipresence, must pervade purgatory as well as all other places, will yet calmly witness hundreds or thousands of souls whom he has redeemed, and who are left to be tortured in that frightful place for scores of years, merely because certain priests on earth, who have been paid to say some prayers for their release, have not yet found time to repeat them?

But if this blasphemous doctrine dishonours God, it may also fairly be asked, in what sort of light does it place the priesthood?

"They believe, or at least they teach, that the friends of their flock are lying weltering in a lake of fire, from which they could deliver them, by saying masses for them, and recommending them to the prayers of the congregation; and yet they will not

* Rev. L. J. Nolan's Third Letter, p. 39. The will here alluded to was proved in the Prerogative Court of Dublin, on the 6th of Jan. 1838.

say these masses, nor so recommend them, unless they be regularly paid for it! How can a man represent himself as such a monster, and yet hold up his head in civilized society? What! shall I believe that a single soul is suffering torments so dreadful; that it may continue to suffer them for ages; that I have the means in my power of relieving it; and yet shall I coolly wait till I be paid, before I use these means? By what process of reasoning can men be brought to believe that this is the religion given to us for our salvation, by our kind and merciful Father in heaven? By what arguments can the poor be convinced that a system of extortion, which gives so manifest a preference to the rich, can be that gospel which was to be preached peculiarly to the poor?"

"Survey the whole transaction. A self-elected incorporated body declare, that they alone are commissioned by God, to teach what he chooses should be known respecting eternity and the world of spirits; and that the truth of what they teach, nay, and the reality of their commission, are not to be examined, further than they themselves think fit to submit them to examination. Among many other doctrines equally profitable to themselves, they teach that the souls, even of those who listen to them implicitly, must go to a place of torment for a time, to be purified, before they enter on the infinite rewards of their implicit faith and obedience: that they, by performing certain mystical ceremonies and incantations, which they call 'Mass,' can shorten this torturing purgation, or release the soul from it altogether; that they are warranted, nay, for aught I know, commanded by God, to exact money for performing these masses, which money is to be appropriated to their own use; and they countenance their people in forming societies to raise money for the purpose of purchasing masses from the most necessitous among themselves. I appeal to any man of common discernment, if he ever met with a transaction, that bore fraud and imposture so legibly written on the face of it, as this does!"

But does not the "holy father," as he is impiously called, himself occupy rather an unenviable eminence in this matter? The proclamation of the indulgence granted at the jubilee of 1825, commences thus:

"Leo, bishop, servant of the servants of God, To all the faithful of Christ who shall see these presents, health and apostolical benediction.

"We have resolved in virtue of the authority given to us by heaven, fully to unlock that sacred treasure, composed of the merits, sufferings and virtues of Christ, our Lord, and of his virgin-mother, and of all the saints, which the author of human salvation has intrusted to our dispensation. . . .

"We proclaim that the year of atonement and pardon, of redemption and grace, of remission and indulgences is arrived . . . during which year of the jubilee, we mercifully give and grant in the Lord a plenary indulgence."

Thus does this potentate boldly assume the entire power to open, or to keep closed, the prison-doors of purgatory. It is at his behest alone, (or at least it is assumed to be altogether in his power to grant release,) that so many thousands or millions of wretched beings are there suffering excruciating torments, which one word from him would terminate. Is this a distinction which a good man would covet? Is it not a responsibility from which any man, knowing his own sinfulness would revolt with horror?

But the word of God at once sweeps away all these refuges of lies. "*No man can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.*" Psalm xlix. 7. The salvation proclaimed in the Scriptures is not a scheme devised for the special use and relief of the prosperous and the wealthy. On the contrary, it is again and again offered, and in the most explicit terms, to the poor and the needy. "*Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price.*" (Isaiah lv. 1.) Is it possible for words to be devised

more decidedly condemnatory of the Romish system? "*To the poor the gospel is preached.*" But Rome offers no gospel, for to the poor she has nothing to say. The old proverb which described her rule in her most palmy days, describes her practice still, "NO PENNY, NO PATERNOSTER."

XX.—ROMISH DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES.

PERSECUTION.

THERE is no topic in the whole course of this inquiry, on which the falsehood of the Romish controversialists has been so largely displayed as this; and the reason is sufficiently obvious. The broad and notorious facts of the case are such, as to require the most reckless and unblushing disregard of truth to evade their force. The general voice of history declares, that the believers in Jesus, the adherents to the faith of the Bible, have been persecuted to the death, and destroyed by myriads, alike by Heathens, Mahomedans, Romanists, and Infidels; while on the other hand, with the slight exceptions to which we shall presently allude, these Christians, when themselves possessed of power, have not used the sword or the faggot, either to Pagan, Infidel, Mahomedan, or Romanist. The inference is unavoidable: as cruelty and persecution are from beneath, and not from above, it follows that Heathenism, Mahomedanism, Romanism, and Infidelity are all devices of Satan; and that Bible Christianity, or Protestantism, is that truth of God which all Satan's servants unanimously detest and abhor, and with which alone, true charity and forbearance are indissolubly connected.

But here we are sometimes met by a reference to the "intolerance" of Moses and the prophets under the Old Testament; and by the question of the Romish annotator, "If God gave such power to the church guides of the Old Testament dispensation, can He have given less to the church guides of the New?"

Let us, therefore, meet this difficulty without hesitation.

The main feature in this part of the case, which ought never to be lost sight of, is this:—The Jews, in the times of the Old Testament, lived under a Theocracy. JEHOVAH actually walked among them. The people heard the thunder and saw the lightning which heralded his steps; they heard both the awful trumpet of the archangel, and God's more awful voice; and they felt the everlasting hills quake at his terrible presence. And when, after all this, and after hearing the Almighty's voice expressly forbidding any manner of work to be done on the Sabbath-day, a reckless transgressor was found openly breaking this command, and in God's immediate presence pouring contempt upon His express injunctions; what remained to be done, but to "*stone him with stones that he died?*" So obvious is the fitness and propriety of this proceeding, that one really feels at a loss to imagine what objection can be framed to it. If the supreme Lord and Governor condescends to speak audibly to a body of his creatures, after showing them the most wonderful mercies and kindnesses; and if he prescribe certain rules of living; and they, immediately after, openly violate and pour contempt upon his commands, even within the immediate precincts of his visible throne,—it seems difficult to say what else could be done, but to put the delinquents to that death which they had braved.

And the like may be said of the various acts of idolatry committed by the Israelites. Even within sight of the lightnings of Sinai, and with its thunders echoing in their ears, they rush to disobey one of the most explicit of Jehovah's commands! His forbearance is such, that he does not "*consume them as in a moment,*" as might well have been anticipated: when, however, Moses sends the sons of Levi through the camp, and slays at once three thousand men, who shall say that his wrath is other than a holy and a righteous indignation?

And the same remark applies to the acts of Samuel,

of Elijah, and of others of the prophets. Wherever God is visibly present in his miraculous power, dwelling in one of his commissioned servants, he who despises and opposes that Almighty power, does so at his own most obvious peril; and the consequences are not to be attributed to the mere human agent in the least degree.

But there is a vast change in the dispensation under which we live. God has withdrawn himself from the view of man, except as seen through the medium of his word, his works, and his providence. And by the common feeling of mankind, it will be at once perceived to be far less *openly* insulting, merely to disregard the *message* of a king, than to violate his *personal* commands in his very presence. Both deserve, and will receive, their just punishment; but instant death belongs to the personal insult; to the disobedience of an immediate command.

Still greater difference, however, is there, between a disregard of the commands of God, whether conveyed immediately, or through the medium of one of his servants; and disobedience to what is, after all, nothing more than human assumption, and unwarranted pretension. Not one syllable is there, in any part of God's word, touching obedience due to the bishop of Rome. But that bishop and his followers interpret certain words addressed to Peter by Christ, as conveying to him a supreme authority: they then assume that Peter was bishop of Rome: next, that his authority, whatever it was, descended plenary to his successors in that see; and thus, by three steps, every one of which is disputed, they arrive at the conclusion, that "it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff."* Now nothing can be clearer than that this assumption rests upon a series of inferences and interpretations and historical deductions, the erroneousness of any one of which would destroy the entire fabric. The doctrine is of human, not divine

* Decree of Boniface, A. D. 1294.

origin, for not one word of Scripture can be shown which even alludes to a bishop of Rome. To demand, then, for such an hypothesis, the sanctions which belong only to a law of God, is to confound heaven and earth, things human with things divine. Yet how many myriads of God's sincere worshippers have been immolated, because they could not see in the Bible any command which enjoined upon them, to be "subject to the Roman pontiff!"

Thus much of the difference between the position of men under the Old Testament dispensation, and under the New. But in the next place we shall be treated with an attempt to confuse the question of the claim of the Church of Rome to *exclusive salvation*. Dr. Wiseman's entanglement of this matter is as follows:

"This is considered the harshest, the most intolerable point of the Catholic creed, touching its rule of faith; that we hold ourselves to have so exclusively possession of God's truth, as to consider all others essentially in error, and not to allow that through their belief salvation is to be obtained.

"Upon this matter, allow me to observe, in the first place, that you will find it difficult to analyze, to its extreme consequences, the principle of any church professing to have a code or rule of faith, without finding yourselves led to the implicit maintenance of some such doctrine as this. When a church draws up a confession of faith, and commands all to submit to it, and proclaims that eternal punishment will reach all who refuse, assuredly it supposes that the teaching of such doctrines is essentially necessary to salvation. If not, what constitutes the necessity of doctrine in reference to the revelation from God? Our Saviour comes down from heaven, on purpose to teach mankind; does he propose his doctrines under a penalty or not? Does he say, you may receive or reject these as you please? If not, is there not something incurred by refusing to accept them? Is there not the displeasure and indignation of God? Consequently, a penalty is necessarily affixed to the refusal of those

obligations, which Christ considered essential to faith. And the church proceeds upon the principle, that these doctrines are so essential, that a violation of God's precepts and laws is involved in the rejection of them, and makes every one who culpably—mind, *culpably*—rejects, and does not believe them, guilty of refusing what Christ died to accomplish and propose. This is the necessary consequence to which every formula of faith leads; it is essential to the existence of every confession of faith, unless a different view is expressly and definitively given.”*

Now nothing can be plainer than that it is here attempted to represent the Church of Rome as merely holding the same doctrine of exclusiveness as other churches. But there are two most important differences between the Romish doctrine of exclusive salvation, and the Protestant doctrine.

In the first place, there is no Protestant church which has attempted or desired to say, that salvation is only to be found *within its pale*. Such churches merely account themselves to be visible churches of Christ, constituting portions of that great catholic or universal church which is *invisible*. Just so was it in the times of Irenæus and of Augustine. The French churches or the African, in those days, could break off all communication with Rome, and continue alienated for years, and almost centuries, and yet never entertain the least idea that their salvation in any degree depended upon their union with the Italian see. But Rome plainly declares, that solely within her pale is safety to be found; an assertion which she could only be justified in making, by an express declaration of Scripture to that effect; a declaration which she cannot produce. But,

Secondly, she differs from the Protestant churches in this, that while *they* merely limit salvation to those who listen to God, speaking in his word, and who obey his voice; *she* makes it absolutely essential to believe a multitude of things *which she has added*

* Wiseman's Ninth Lecture, p. 322.

to *God's word*, and which are mere human inventions.

This distinction is most important, and accordingly Dr. Wiseman does his best to confuse the point. He says, "Our Saviour comes down from heaven, on purpose to teach mankind; does he propose his doctrines under a penalty or not? Does he say, You may receive or reject these as you please? If not, is there not something incurred by refusing to accept them?"

Unquestionably there is. But then we must ask another question; namely, When our Saviour came down from heaven, and proposed certain doctrines, under the most awful penalty; did he leave any authority behind him, on his departure *to add other doctrines* under the same penalty? Even were we to concede to Dr. Wiseman as much as this,—more indeed, than he could ever prove,—that Christ left an *executive* authority behind him, deposited with the bishop and church of Rome,—still it would remain to be proved that he left any *legislative* power. Or were we even to go still further, and to suppose a legislative power, vested in the church, in matters of form and discipline, with the right of adding the penalty of excommunication,—there would yet remain to be shown, where or when a right was given, to set forth new doctrines, unheard of by the apostles; and to affix to those doctrines, so invented by men, the awful penalties of death in this world, and eternal fire in the next.

The practical difference, then, between the Protestant and the Romanist, in the matter of *exclusive salvation*, is this; that the Protestant holds just the exclusive salvation which he finds in the Bible, and no more: to wit, that "he that believeth the gospel shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." He does not give way for an instant to the "liberal notions" of modern times, "that the sincere and honest man, whatever his creed may be, will be sure to be safe at last." He knows that it was He who will one day be the Judge of all men, who de-

clared, that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and *few there be that find it.*" And in another place, that "*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.*" (John iii. 36.) The Protestant, therefore, following the only unerring guide, the word of God, holds that salvation is only to be obtained by a belief in the gospel. This is his "exclusive salvation;" and he holds no other. No Protestant imagines that this salvation is only to be found within the external pale of this or that visible church. Such an assumption is the distinguishing mark of Romanism.

The church of Rome, on the other hand, has added to the simple terms of the gospel, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,*" a multitude of other demands. She declares that whosoever does not believe that God is the author of the books of Tobit, Judith, and Maccabees, with all their falsehood and absurdity, is *accursed*. She declares, that whosoever does not believe extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, to be sacraments, is *accursed*. She declares, that any one who shall deny, that the eucharist contains, really and *substantially*, the body and blood, and soul, and divinity, of Christ, is *accursed*. She declares that any one who shall say, that in the eucharist there remains the substance of bread and wine, is *accursed*. She declares, that any one who shall say, that the anointing of the sick does not confer grace, or remit sin, is *accursed*. She declares that any one who shall say, that Christ's faithful people ought to receive both species in the sacrament of the eucharist, is *accursed*. She declares, that any one who shall say, that in the mass there is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice, is *accursed*. She declares, that any one who shall say, that mass ought to be celebrated in the vulgar tone, is *accursed*. She declares, that any one who shall say, that the clergy can lawfully contract marriage, is *accursed*.

These, and a multitude of other matters of greater

or less importance, has the church of Rome chosen to add to its list of essential truths, and so absolutely to insist on implicit belief, as to send men to the stake in this world, and to threaten them with eternal fire in the next, for the slightest failure in the required faith. This, then, is the "exclusive salvation" of the church of Rome. Dr. Wiseman asks very properly, whether Christ did not propose his doctrines under a penalty; and whether that penalty is not incurred by a rejection of those doctrines? But he carefully forgets that all these fearful demands of his church are *not among the doctrines which Christ proposed*; but are human inventions, to which an Italian council has chosen blasphemously to annex the awful sanctions of the Almighty power!

So much for the real position of Protestants and Romanists, on this question of *exclusive salvation*. Both Dr. Milner and Dr. Wiseman would fain make it appear that there is no real difference between the parties, in this matter. But there is a difference, and a very great one. The Protestant system is that of a governor, acting for his sovereign, who, with the laws of the realm in his hand, carefully and strictly administers his trust; not relaxing those laws, not adding to them; but punishing the guilty when necessary, yet always in strict obedience to the laws by which he rules. The Romish church, on the other hand, resembles a very different sort of governor, who, in his sovereign's absence, is not content with the laws of the realm, but makes a number of new, arbitrary, and severe rules, simply on some imaginary power inherent in himself. Now the first of these two would be a constitutional ruler, the second would be a tyrant.

But this brings us to the second part of the subject, which concerns the arbitrary and cruel administration of this illegal authority by Rome. She first fabricates a code of oppressive laws; and then punishes with death all who do not yield to those laws the most implicit submission.

Here, however, we are met by a positive denial on the part of the Romanists. They tell us, without

reserve or hesitation, that persecution was a practice of the middle ages, which has gradually given way before advancing civilization; that in those days Protestants persecuted as well as Papists; Calvin and Cranmer as well as Bonner and Gardiner; and that if Mary put nearly three hundred persons to death for Protestantism, Elizabeth executed almost as many for Popery.

Let us address ourselves to the consideration of these rejoinders, taking each by itself,—and it will probably be the best course to commence with the last.

Elizabeth came to the crown with an evident desire to reign in peace. “She received,” says a late historian, “all who approached her with perfect frankness, and refused her countenance, even among the bishops, to Bonner alone.” So far from establishing, like her predecessor, an inquisition into religious opinions, she would gladly have united, if it had been in her power, both Romanist and Protestant into one harmonious commonwealth. *Her fault lay in too great a desire to conciliate the Papists.*

She began no persecution, but she herself was quickly persecuted from without. She was made the subject of no fewer than four bulls of excommunication,—by Pius V. in 1569; by Gregory XIII. in 1580; by Sixtus V. in 1587; and by Clement VIII. in 1600. And when, so recently as 1712, Pope Pius V. was received to the honour of saintship; the bull of canonization sets forth as one of his chief glories, “his unhesitating zeal in striking with his dread anathema the impious heretic Elizabeth, the pretended queen of England, as a heretic, and the favourer of heretics; *absolving her subjects from their allegiance,* and depriving herself of her pretended right to the throne of England.”

The fruit of these powerful missives was soon seen, in a constant succession of plots against Elizabeth’s throne and against her life. Most of these plots were forged in the Vatican; and nearly all had a priest or priests as their prime agent or agents. One of these

conspiracies swelled into the Invincible Armada; an armament which bore the bull of the pope, and was provided with a plentiful supply of the instruments of torture.

This continual warfare, directed against Elizabeth, the main support of Protestantism, by the court of Rome, fully accounts for the execution, during her long reign of more than forty years, of about two hundred persons for treason, of whom not quite thirty were priests. But the proceedings against them are extant, and it is clear that in every case it was for state crimes, and not for religious opinions, that they were called to an account.

Now turn to her predecessor, Mary. In her short reign of little more than five years, one archbishop, four bishops, twenty-one clergymen, *fifty-five women, four children*, and above two hundred other persons, were burned to death in the face of day, *for their religious opinions*.

This is the grand distinction. The sufferers under Elizabeth were men who went to the gallows as the natural and ordinary punishment, by the laws of God and man, of detected treason. They died for their deeds of wickedness. But the venerable bishops, and poor females and children, who were put to the most cruel of all deaths by Mary, died solely for their religious belief. "What say you to the sacrament of the altar?" was the most usual interrogation. And if a poor woman replied that she believed the bread to be still bread, the instant sentence was, *to be burned to death!*

So much for the parallel attempted to be established, between the executions for treason in the reign of Elizabeth, and the burnings for "heresy" in the reign of Mary. The two series have no more connection or similarity than exists between the laws of England and those of Algiers.

But we are next referred, more at length, to various executions which unquestionably did take place, for religious opinions, in different countries, during

the earlier days of the Reformation. Such occurrences were not frequent, but for the first generation or two, the annals of the Reformation are unquestionably disfigured by them.

Our answer is, briefly, that we do not represent the reformers as faultless or infallible men; and that we freely admit that they often fell into errors; of which the occurrences now adverted to form only one class. In fact, it would have been a stupendous miracle if a great number of leaders, in various countries, and under a great diversity of circumstances, had never committed an error or a crime. And this of persecution for religious opinions, was just one of those into which they were obviously the most liable to fall.

Brought up, as all of them had been, in the bosom of the Romish church, ideas of intolerance had been implanted in their minds during all their earliest years. Quickly, indeed, did these ideas disappear, but not so instantly as to prevent their producing some fruit. Before the true principle of responsibility for religious opinions was generally understood and received, some executions had taken place. But this circumstance is not to make us blind to the fact, that it was to the Reformation, and to the Reformation alone, under God, that the rise and spread of truer views on this matter must be traced. Romanism, for eight or ten centuries, had been uniformly intolerant and persecuting. She was so to the Reformers themselves, and even long after the establishment of the Reformation and the general spread of religious liberty, she continued to persecute. Nay, centuries after the Reformation, she was still a persecuting church, and a persecuting church she remains to this hour; only checked in her motions by the consciousness that the times forbid the open exercise of those principles of intolerance, which, in her cloisters, she still cherishes.

Protestantism has now been rooted in Europe for three centuries. Its real principles and practices are therefore fully known. And it will not be denied,

that wherever the Reformation has planted itself, there penal inflictions for religious opinions have almost entirely vanished away.

On the other hand, Popery, from the first day of her full establishment, has been intolerant: she continued intolerant for ten centuries: and she is, up to this moment, intolerant wherever she can venture with safety to follow her own inclinations.

The Romish see began to wield a positive sovereignty over the Christian world about the sixth or seventh centuries. But it was not till some time after, that her dominion was fully established, and her iron yoke sensibly felt.

Yet her first advance upon Britain was marked by a circumstance which showed very distinctly what kind of rule it was that Augustine and his followers came to establish. The slaughter of the monks of Bangor gave sufficient proof that "unqualified submission" was already demanded, and that the penalty of disobedience would be fearful.

During the darkest ages of all, the ninth and tenth centuries, the records which remain furnish little information as to religious opinions, or their progress, or repression. The Romish see itself being in the lowest state of degradation, when, as Cardinal Baronius tells us, "sordid and abandoned women ruled at Rome, and false pontiffs, their lovers, intruded into the chair of Peter," we can look for little else than mere wickedness and confusion in that quarter. But in the eleventh century Hildebrand restored the popedom to independence and power, and from that period we find it exerting that power in the most terrific persecutions.

That the doctrine and the practice of Papists had previously been that of entire intolerance, may be gathered from such facts as history furnishes. We find a burning of thirteen persons at one time, for their religious opinions at Orleans, in 1017. More than a century previous, for holding the doctrine of predestination, Godeschalcus had been sentenced to public flagellation and imprisonment for life.

In 1140, Evervinus of Steinfeld, writing to Bernard, gives an account of the burning of some heretics at Cologne, whose chief crime was, that "all things observed in the church, which have not been established by Christ himself, they call superstitious. They do not admit of any purgatory after death, and therefore make void all prayers and oblations for the deceased."

In 1160 the council of Oxford condemned more than thirty of the Waldenses, who had emigrated from Gascony, "consigning them," as it was hypocritically termed, "to the secular arm." Henry II. was lenient to them, and only ordered them to be publicly whipped, branded with a red-hot iron, and driven out of the city. As all persons were forbidden to receive or assist them, and it was in the winter, they soon perished with cold and hunger.

About the same time Pierre de Bruys was burnt alive in Languedoc; and Fleury, in the south of France, was imprisoned and died in confinement.

But it was now, about the close of the twelfth century, that, under the blessing of God, the spread of Scriptural truth among the Albigeois, in the south of France, and the Vaudois of Piedmont, became so considerable as to attract the notice of the *holy see*. Councils were held, in 1163, and 1179, which levelled anathemas against this "damnable heresy," and denounced the heretics to the especial hatred and abhorrence of the faithful. And, properly to carry these fulminations into execution, Innocent III. addressed himself to Philip Augustus of France, exhorting him to a crusade of extermination against the heretics. He promised to all who should engage in this religious war, the pardon of all their sins, and, in case of death, the glory of martyrdom, and the immediate possession of heaven.

In this "holy war," which raged for nearly forty years, about a million of human lives were sacrificed, amidst circumstances of greater horror and barbarity than any other annals since the beginning of the world can furnish.

Beziers was taken by storm in 1209. When the doubt occurred to the besiegers, how they should know the papists in the town from the heretics,—Arnold, the papal missionary, exclaimed, “Kill them all; God will know his own.” The council was embraced. Every soul was put to the sword. The blood ran in torrents down the streets. Mezerai estimates the slain at sixty thousand.

Lavour was stormed in 1211. The governor was hanged on a gibbet, his body thrown into a well, and covered with stones. Eighty gentlemen, who had surrendered, were put to death in cold blood. Four hundred of the inhabitants, who had escaped the general carnage, were afterwards burned alive.

Under these inflictions, Languedoc became a desert. Its cities were burned, its inhabitants swept away with fire and sword. An hundred thousand Albigois were computed to have fallen in one massacre.

At a later day the Vaudois shared the same fate. Oppeda ravaged their country with unsparing ferocity. Twenty-four towns were ruined, and the inhabitants massacred. Every variety of cruelty was practised against these unhappy people. Yet Pope Paul IV. conferred on the monster who had perpetrated these atrocities the rank of Count Palatine, and the knighthood of St. John; “reckoning,” says Gaufrid, the papal historian, “the fire and sword well employed which extinguished Waldensianism.”

Spain followed in the same course. The inquisition, in that country, effectually kept down the growth of heresy. Philip II. superintended the burning of as many as twenty-eight of the Spanish nobility at one *auto da fe*. Torquemada, on being made inquisitor-general, signalized his entrance on the office, by burning in one day no less than two thousand persons! And Mr. Blanco White informs us, that “from the most moderate calculations, founded on authentic papers and sure data, it appears that in Spain, between 1481 and 1809, no fewer than *thirty-one thousand nine hundred and twelve* persons had been burned at the stake; while two hundred and ninety-

one thousand four hundred and fifty, having recanted, were condemned to lesser punishments, involving, however, utter ruin and destitution!"

In the Low Countries, the Duke of Alva boasted of having put to death eighteen thousand Protestants, and Grotius reckons the whole number of martyrs at a hundred thousand.

At Paris, in 1572, on St. Bartholomew's day, the tocsin tolled, at midnight, the signal of destruction. The carnage continued seven days. The Seine was covered with dead bodies, floating down its stream. Bossuet reckons the victims at six thousand; Davila at ten thousand. The king and queen personally superintended the massacre with great delight. Special messengers were despatched through the provinces, and forty thousand more were added to the list of the slain. The news was received at Rome with unspeakable joy. The Pope went in procession to the church of St. Louis, to return thanks; and instructed his legate to congratulate the king on the success of a scheme, "so long meditated, and so happily executed, for the good of religion."

In England, in 1605, a considerable body of Papists, of rank and education, acting under the advice of a Jesuit, and in obedience to the Papal bulls, deliberately planned the massacre of the king, the royal family, and the whole of the nobility at one blow. Forty years after, in Ireland, about fifty thousand Protestants were massacred in the course of a few weeks.

Thus we see, that from the first moment of the consolidation of the power of the Roman see, after emerging from the confusion of the dark ages, the apostate church has fully maintained its character, as "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." So horrible a picture of human nature; so dreadful a specimen of something almost resembling demoniacal possession, is not to be found in the whole history of man, as is furnished by the wars termed "religious," instigated by the "*Holy see.*" But we are sometimes told, that

all this has passed away; that religious persecution was merely the common error of a half-enlightened age; and that now, amid the light and moderation of the nineteenth century, no one, whether Protestant or Papist, would ever dream of reviving it.*

This is a deceit; and it can scarcely ever happen that the party offering such an argument, does not know it to be a deceit.

Popery is now checked in her career of persecution by a variety of causes which deprive her of her former power. One of these is the prevalence of infidelity on the continent of Europe. The indifference and scepticism which so generally prevails on the continent, permits popery to exist in a moderated form; but it would not bear the revival of active persecution. Perhaps we might more correctly say, that the terms of agreement between popery and infidelity, for the extirpation of Christianity, are not yet finally agreed upon, and that, till that treaty is concluded, infidelity will not permit religious persecution.

But the main hinderance to the exertion of Papal power in the suppression of *heresy* is, under God, the strength and power with which he has been pleased to endow Protestantism in the world.

In the days of Elizabeth, her life alone seemed to constitute the obstacle to the complete revival of Papal power. Hence the rage shown, and the plots perpetually formed against her.

Yet France and Spain believed that she must soon fall. Hence they delayed not the massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the persecution of the Protestants in France, and the Netherlands, and Spain, on her account. But now the case is entirely altered. England is the greatest power in Europe, and offers a refuge to the persecuted, wherever they may be. To attempt

* The Romish doctrine of infallibility is utterly repugnant to this excuse. Leo X. by his bull, *Exsurge Domine*, condemned Luther for teaching that "it is contrary to the will of the Spirit to burn heretics." Surely an infallible church is always enlightened!!—[Am. Ed.]

another crusade against religious liberty on the continent now, would only be to call forth the Protestant feeling of England, and to drive a body of valuable citizens to her shores. Hence it is that religious persecution is now both inexpedient and impracticable.

But all that Popery can do, it does. Whenever it can venture to do so without fear of consequences, it sheds blood. An *auto da fe*, in which a poor man was burned to death, took place at Valencia, in Spain, no longer back than the 31st of July, 1826. And when Dr. Buchanan was at Goa, about the year 1808, the inquisition in that country was in full activity.

Between Protestantism and Popery, where both are genuine and sincere, there must ever subsist an irreconcilable feud. The only difference is, that the Protestant will mingle his hatred to the idolatry with love to the soul of the deluded idolater, and will not even wish his bodily injury. Whereas the Romanist will combine his bitter detestation of heresy with an equal abhorrence of "the heretic;" and will show that abhorrence, whether by the faggot or the pitch-fork, whenever he can find a convenient opportunity.

XXI.—DESTINY OF ROMANISM.

THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE PAPACY.

WE have heretofore dealt with the Papal system in detail, discussing point by point of the multifarious aggregate, and disproving the unscriptural and unreasonable assumptions of that domineering church. We have reserved to the close one great argument, both because, to have adduced it at the opening of the discussion might have seemed to betoken a wish to close up the question, and to avoid the consideration of the several points therein contained; and also because, from its awful and momentous character, it leaves nothing to be said in addition.

COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, THAT YE BE NOT PARTAKERS OF HER SINS, AND THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES.

SHE SHALL BE UTTERLY BURNED WITH FIRE; FOR STRONG IS THE LORD GOD WHO JUDGETH HER. (Rev. xviii. 4, 8.)

Protestants hold that these words refer to the church of Rome. If they are right in this view, then not another word need be said. But if they are wrong, or even if they have taken up this idea on insufficient grounds, then it is high time that their error should be admitted and repented of. Let us, then, with all seriousness, and looking up for divine direction, enter upon the consideration of this most solemn question.

A most clear and emphatic exhortation is here given to God's people, to come out from some city called "Babylon," and thus to save themselves from the terrible judgments which God purposes to bring

upon her. The main question then is, What is denoted or set forth by this "city," typically called **BABYLON**?

Some superficial or cursory readers of the prophetic parts of God's word, have supposed that the term "Babylon" is synonymous with "the world," against which our Lord often warned his disciples. So that when Christ says, "*If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you;*" (John xv. 19.)—he expresses very nearly the same kind of separation and deadness to temporal things, which is enjoined in the call, "*Come out of her, my people.*"

But the least consideration of the context puts an end to this supposition. The preceding chapter, the *xviiith*, gives a particular description of Babylon, which proves beyond all question, that under this name is described, not the general mass of mankind, but a particular state, or power, either civil or ecclesiastical, which should be situated in a particular part of the earth, and should rule over other and subordinate dominions.

"*I saw a woman sit on a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*" "*And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.*" (Rev. xvii. 3, 9, 10.)

"*And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.*" (Rev. xvii. 12.)

These few passages, selected out of many, at once dispose of the supposition, that "Babylon" in this place means only the same with "the world" in our Lord's own discourses.

BABYLON, then, denotes a power, civil or ecclesiastical; visible in some particular part of the globe, and exercising there, according to the description

given, very great and extraordinary authority. The first question that occurs is, whether there is here described a *civil*, or an *ecclesiastical* power?

The answer to this will immediately occur to all students of prophecy. In the language of the prophetic parts of Holy Scripture, an earthly kingdom is usually typified by a beast; a church, or ecclesiastical dominion, by a woman.

Daniel, in his seventh chapter, sees the rise of the four great universal empires. They appear in the forms of four beasts. In his eighth chapter he has a particular vision of the events concerning Persia and Greece. Two beasts again,—a ram, and a he-goat,—are the symbols presented to his mind. And in like manner, in the chapter now under consideration, the 17th of Revelations, we find a beast, which, upon examination, we find to be the same as Daniel's fourth beast; but it is not this beast that is called "Babylon," but a woman who is seen riding upon it. "*I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast.*"

Now a *woman*, as we just now observed, is the type constantly used to denote a church, or ecclesiastical state. Perhaps it would be more correct to say, that while nations, or bodies of men in their natural state, destitute of the true knowledge of God, are typified under the symbols of brute beasts, or creatures with whom angelic beings, and the Lord of angels, can have no converse, or union, or connection; those communities to whom God has made himself known, and has graciously revealed his character and purposes in the gospel, are described under the form of reasonable beings, human beings, and female beings, because, as a man is the head of his wife, so Christ is the head of his church.

Thus, throughout the prophecies, is this symbol always adopted. Judah, faithful to God under Hezekiah, is called, "*The virgin, the daughter of Zion.*" (Isa. xxxvii. 22.) The church, in her future glories is described as "*Zion travailing.*" And it is said, "*Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her.*" "*I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of*

the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck: ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled on her knees." (Isa. lxvi. 8, 10, 12.) Again it is said, "*Thy maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name. The Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit."* (Isa. liv. 5, 6.)

In strict consistency, when Judah fell into idolatry she is addressed under the figure of an adultress, and God says, "*I will judge thee as women that break wedlock are judged."* (Ezek. xvi. 38.) And this is the figure adopted in the passage before us. Upon the beast, which symbolizes a mere earthly power, there rides a harlot—"the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." The object hereby set forth evidently is, a church, or ecclesiastical body, in a state of apostasy, but governing, or directing, or exercising authority, over the earthly power denoted by the beast.

Having arrived at this conclusion,—from premises which no student of the prophetic parts of God's word will dispute, the next point is to ascertain, what particular ecclesiastical body it is that is thus pointed out?

Now the last verse of the xviiith chapter seems to decide this: for the interpreting angel informs John, that "*the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."*

Now to these words the apostles obviously could attach but one meaning,—namely, that ROME was the city or power spoken of.

So indisputable is this, that even the chief commentators of the church of Rome have all admitted, that the Babylon of the Apocalypse can mean nothing else than *Rome*. This is explicitly conceded by Baronius, Bellarmine, Ribera, Malvenda, Lessius, Cornelius a Lapide, Alcason, and Vega.* Dr. Walmsley, also, the Romish bishop, who wrote a few years back under the name of *Pastorini*, at once admits the same

* Whiston's Essay on Revelation, P. ii. p. 111, 112.

thing. These writers, however, strive to evade the awful conclusion, as it respects their own church, by arguing, that it is Rome *Pagan*, not Rome *Papal*, that is thus pointed out.

Bishop Walmsley (*Pastorini*) says, "Thus fell ancient Rome like Babylon, but with this difference, that Babylon was never to rise again, whereas Rome, when the anger of God was satisfied, was designed to emerge from her ashes. And, though not allowed to recover her former temporal dominion, and splendour, and riches, nor to rise in her outward appearance scarce above the condition of a village, when compared with her former extent and multitude of people; yet, in her depressed state, she is privileged with a higher dignity of another kind; of being not only a Christian city, but the appointed head and centre of spiritual dominion."

Dr. Walmsley's interpretation, then, is,—that the apocalyptic Babylon is Rome Pagan; that the judgments denounced against her were fulfilled by the sacking of Rome by the Goths and Vandals; and that after that infliction she was to rise from her ashes, in the new form of a Christian bishopric, and the head of spiritual dominion.

We accept the Dr.'s admission, that Rome, and nothing but Rome, can be denoted by the "Babylon" of the Revelation; but his supposed fulfilment of the prediction is altogether inadmissible.

Rome Pagan, the Doctor says, was a bloody persecutor of the saints. By this guilt she incurred the judgments of God, and was delivered over to the ravages of the Goths; but afterwards, having passed through this punishment, she rose to greater honour than before, as no longer Pagan but Christian.

Now there never was an hypothesis which more completely disregarded the facts of the case. Rome *Pagan* was not sacked or ravaged by the Goths at all. It was not until nearly a century after she had become Christian, that the foot of the invader traversed her streets; and her final fall took place when

she had been, for nearly *an hundred and fifty years*, a professedly Christian city!

But there is another discrepancy between the fact and this interpretation. The woman is seen sitting on a beast with ten horns. These ten horns, Dr. Walmsley himself admits to be the ten Gothic kingdoms which arose out of the Roman empire. The woman rides upon, or rules over these. How, then, can she be Rome *Pagan*, which ceased to exist when Constantine made the empire Christian, in A. D. 321,—when those ten kingdoms upon which she rides, under the figure of a ten-horned beast, did not even exist until more than two centuries after? Clearly, in riding upon, or ruling over the beast with ten horns, she is shown to be a governing power, directing and animating those ten kingdoms, which arose between the years A. D. 497, and 606, and which have continued to exist up to the present time.

Another fault which we might find with this interpretation is, that the symbol of a harlot is never applied in Scripture to simple Paganism; but always to an apostate church,—to a body which having been united to God by the profession and possession of the true faith, afterwards falls away from him, and becomes an adulteress. This of itself is a fatal objection to Dr. Walmsley's interpretation; but the remaining one is still simpler and plainer, and therefore more convincing.

The Doctor says that "Rome, when the anger of God was satisfied, was designed to emerge from her ashes." Now this is in direct opposition to the very words of the prophecy. The angel distinctly says, "*Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found NO MORE AT ALL.*" These words prove, beyond all possibility of doubt, both that the judgments spoken of in the prophecy were not realized in the sacking of Rome by the Goths, from which infliction that city did in a measure recover; and also that their fulfilment is still future. On the whole, then, while we accept the

admission of Dr. Walmsley and the other commentators of his church, that the "Babylon" of the Apocalypse is unquestionably Rome; we must pronounce his endeavour to show that Rome *Pagan* is intended, to have wholly failed.

We have arrived, then, at these conclusions;—1. That in the figure of a harlot, we must recognize a professing church, lapsed into idolatry. 2. That in the beast upon which she rides, we trace a mere earthly empire, divided into ten different powers, typified by horns, and all ruled and guided alike by the governing harlot. 3. That the marks given denote Rome. And, 4. That in the apostate and idolatrous church of Rome, riding upon and ruling over, the ten kingdoms, (Rome, Ravenna, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Naples, Bavaria, &c.) the full reality of the prophetic picture is seen.

But it will probably be asked, Do you mean to decide a vast controversy like this, by *your* interpretation of a single dark and mysterious prophecy? We answer, certainly not.

What our conclusion might be, were this the only passage of holy writ, which seemed to threaten Rome with the judgments of God, we are not called upon to say, or even to decide for our own consciences. For it is not the only passage which bears this awful meaning, but only one out of several.

The most highly favoured of all the Old Testament prophets, had a parallel view of God's purposes in these latter times. Daniel was warned, that when the ten Gothic kingdoms had been formed out of the Roman empire, another horn (or power) should arise after them, which should absorb three of their portions of territory, and should "*speak great words against the Most High, and should wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws,*" (Dan. vii. 25.) but who should be "*slain, and his body given to the burning flame.*"

Here is a second witness, exactly corroborative of John, and wholly unintelligible, except on the hypo-

thesis, that this power that should arise, was to be that of the Roman see.

But even this is not all. The greatest of all the apostles, the apostle of the Gentiles, with still increasing explicitness confirms the same view. He tells the Thessalonians, (2 Thes. ii.) that a great apostasy, a "falling away" was to be looked for; and the manifestation of some dreadful apostasy, which he designates by the strongest terms of abhorrence and dread,—"the man of sin," "the son of perdition," "that wicked one."

He intimates that as soon as that which then hindered (the imperial power,) was taken out of the way, then "that wicked (one) should be revealed" or manifested. And exactly as it was thus foretold do we find the fact recorded in history, that quickly after the fall of the western empire, did the Romish see begin to assume a predominant power.

And the apostle most explicitly describes the character of this apostate power. It was to be distinctly ecclesiastical. "He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." And we know that the pope is himself bodily exalted, at least once every year, and placed on the high altar in St. Peter's at Rome, for the adoration of the multitude. "His coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." And what imposture was ever more entirely supported than is that of Rome, by "lying wonders?"

The end, however, of this "son of perdition" is described in terms exactly agreeing with Daniel and John. "The Lord shall consume (him) with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy (him) with the brightness of his coming." (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

Daniel had said of Christ, that "a fiery stream issued forth before him;" and "the beast was slain, and his body given to the burning flame."

John describes the Lord, when coming to judge the beast and the false prophets, thus:—"Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword." "And the beast was

taken, and the false prophet that wrought miracles before him. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (Rev. xix. 15, 20.)

Now let us endeavour to draw into our view, all the various prophetic marks or indications relative to the antichrist, the great apostasy of the latter days, and see what is their combined force and bearing.

First, then, we observe, alike in Daniel, Paul, and John, the clear and unequivocal prediction of an antichristian power, which should appear in the latter days.

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand." (Dan. vii. 25.)

"Except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.)

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." (Rev. xiii. 6.)

2. As to the time of its appearance, and its geographic position, we learn that it was to be in the waning or declension of the Roman empire.

"The fourth kingdom shall be divided; as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken." (Dan. ii. 41, 42.)

"The ten horns are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall arise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High." (Dan. vii. 24, 25.)

"The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he (the imperial power,) who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked be revealed." (2 Thess. ii. 7.)

3. As to the character of this enemy. It was not to be that of an open opposer, but of a traitor and deceiver.

“In this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” (Dan. vii. 8.) “So that he is as God sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” “Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders.” (2 Thess. ii. 4, 9.)

4. The spiritual dominion of this anti-christian power.

“He shall think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand.” “With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” “God shall send them strong delusion.” (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.) “The inhabitants of the earth have been drunk with the wine of her fornication.” “The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” (Rev. xvii. 2, 18.)

5. The tyranny of this power over the saints.

“The same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them.” (Dan. vii. 21.) “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.” (Rev. xiii. 7.) “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” (Rev. xvii. 5.)

We find, then, a power rising up in “the latter days,”—i. e. after the breaking up of the fourth kingdom,—Rome; rising up, too, among the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided; a spiritual power sitting in God’s temple, not as an enemy, but in God’s place, as his “vicegerent,” (the very title assumed by the pope)—gaining a prodigious spiritual dominion, by means of “signs and lying wonders;” and using that power to destroy the saints. Now, taking all these marks into our view, what can we possibly fix upon, as answering to this description, but the PAPACY. But if the papacy be really meant,—as the impartial inquirer will be compelled to admit,—then it is for the papacy that this fate is prepared,—

“SHE SHALL BE UTTERLY BURNED WITH FIRE, FOR STRONG IS THE LORD GOD WHO JUDGETH HER.”

In this conviction of the fearful termination to her power and to her crimes, how urgent should be our call upon those who, from the prejudices of education, or any other cause, are still lingering within the precincts of her enchantments, to examine seriously, and with prayer for divine direction, their real state and condition; and to flee, while there is yet time, from the peril which surrounds them. Let them gain a just idea of the true standing and character of the church of Rome, and they will see that it is to those of God's people who are still slumbering in her arms, that the divine call is directed,—

“COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, THAT YE BE NOT PARTAKERS OF HER SINS, AND THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES.”

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