

to testify to their divine inspiration, and to rescue them from the doubt thrown over their identity by lapse of time and by criticism. It was not until the fourth century when the Pope assembled in council with the Bishops of the world and assisted by the spirit of Truth, proclaimed the Gospels, as we Catholics have them now, to be the inspired word of God, that the Christian people could know beyond doubt what was the Gospel and what was not. Now think you that the Heart of Jesus did not love his chosen ones with a deeper love than that which could allow Him to leave them for three centuries in the dark with regard to a book from which alone they were to learn His Religion? Oh, surely, if only the written Gospel had been in His mind the Rule of Faith, He would never have left His people so long in doubt as to which writings did and which did not belong to the inspired Volume.

Let us advance further still, and we will see that not only for three centuries but for one thousand four hundred years the Christian world at large had not to do without the Bible alone as a Rule of Faith. This may seem strange but it is nevertheless true. For remember we have said the Rule of Faith must be within easy reach of every one. Now before the invention of the art of printing, about four hundred years ago, the Bible was an exceedingly rare and costly book. It was not of easy access to all. Nay! men who expert at figures tell us it would have required a respectable fortune to procure oneself a Bible, and that a lifetime would have been necessary to write out a copy. Would not \$8000 be a rather exorbitant price for the Rule of Faith? However if the poor man in those days wished to keep it beneath his roof in the shape of the Bible, and earned the value of a dollar a day, he would have had to work and hoard up his money for more than 20 years before he could comply with the solemn obligation of having the rule of faith, even at that respectable price. But let us suppose that every man, woman and child had a copy of the Bible, although it is sure that not one in ten thousand—not one in twenty thousand—had the Holy Book. Of what use would the thirteen hundred chapters, and the thirty-four thousand verses, of the Bible have been to these people? None at all, because they did not know how to read. Why! in those days reading was an accomplishment that every royalty disdained. If, in this nineteenth century of ours which boasts of its en-