

on contradictory doctrines, so it tells us, of course, that numbers of doctrines, preached pretendedly from Scripture, must be false, as they stand in contradiction to other doctrines drawn from the same Scripture.

We believe that true faith is indispensably necessary for salvation.

"He that believeth not, shall be condemned." Mark xvi. 16. and, "without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6.

We believe that Jesus Christ, requiring faith as necessary for salvation, must have provided us with adequate means to obtain faith, that is, to believe, without doubting, all those things which he has taught and instituted as necessary for salvation. If Jesus Christ has not provided us with such means, he must be a tyrant indeed, as he would require of us what we could not otherwise possibly perform.

We believe that Jesus Christ has established the holy Catholic Church for the above purpose; to wit, as the supreme tribunal to regulate our faith, or in other words, to keep the precious deposit of revelation unaltered, to explain to us (without any possibility of error) the meaning of every part of holy writ necessary for salvation, and likewise to preserve and transmit to posterity undefiled, all that part of Christ's divine doctrine which was only delivered by word of mouth, either by Christ or by his apostles, according to these words of St. Paul, "therefore, brethren, stand firm; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistles." 2 Thess. ii. 14. We believe that the word of God, transmitted to us by tradition, is entitled to the very same respect as the written word.

We think it absurd to assert, that Jesus Christ has taught or preached nothing essential, but what is written in a few pages of the gospel. We do not find in the gospel the instructions which Jesus Christ gave his apostles, during the forty days that he appeared to them after his resurrection; and yet it is beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ during these forty days, the last days he spent with his apostles, instructed them particularly in all the mysteries of his kingdom, or of his Church. Acts of Apostles, i. 3.

These last instructions which Jesus Christ gave his apostles, before parting, and when they were about entering on the arduous duties of the ministry; these last instructions, I say, are not lost, although not recorded in the gospel; they form a part of that precious deposit entrusted to the Church, and have, by an uninterrupted succession of pastors, been transmitted undefiled to our present days, and will be thus transmitted to the most remote generations, even to the consummation of time.

We believe, then, that the holy Catholic Church is the supreme judge in matters of faith, both to determine the true sense of Scripture, and to settle our belief with regard to that part of Christ's doctrine delivered by word of mouth.

Whenever the Church has pronounced, the controversy is settled, doubts vanish, and we are as certain as if Jesus Christ himself had spoken.

This unerring authority of the Church we discover, 1st. In the positive and most unequivocal promises of Jesus Christ. 2nd. In the dictates of common sense.

1st. In the positive dictates of Christ: "Upon this rock I will build my Church, & the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18.

If the Church could possibly teach damnable errors, then the gates of hell could prevail against her, contrary to the above promise. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, 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 all days, even to the consummation of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19-20. Christ addressing his twelve apostles on the present occasion, evidently speaks to all his ministers, successors of the apostles, to the end of time, which, I think, needs no proof. Now, sir, upon that subject I form the following argument, which sound logic will find correct. Christ promises that he himself will be with his apostles, baptizing, preaching, and teaching all nations, until the consummation of time: now Christ cannot tell a lie; therefore it is evident that Christ has fulfilled his promise, and that during these 1820 years past, Christ has always been with his ministers, the pastors of the holy Catholic Church, and that he will continue to be with them to the end of time; that he will accompany and guide them when they preach his word, and administer his sacraments.

"And I will ask the Father, & he shall give you another paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth." John xiv. 16, 17. It appears that Christ asked his heavenly Father to bless his ministers, the pastors of his Church, with the spirit of truth for ever: pray, sir, did Christ offer up any prayer in vain? And if his prayer was heard, how could the pastors of the Church ever preach false doctrine?

"But when he, the Spirit of Truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth." John xvi. 13.—"the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. iii. 15. If the church itself, as it comes out of the hands of God, is the very ground and pillar of truth, it will hardly want the reforming hand of corrupted man to put it right; it will always teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and instead of attempting to reform this the most precious of all the works and institutions of God, you and I must be reformed by it. To quote all the texts that prove the holy Church of Jesus Christ to be infallible, or invested by Christ with a supreme and unerring authority in matters of faith, would be endless, I said, that we discover this unerring authority even in the dictates of common sense. Yes, sir; common sense tells us, that the works of God are perfect in their kind. Now the Church being most emphatically the work of God, it most assuredly must be perfect: the Church however must be very imperfect indeed, if it wants the main perfection, which as our guide and director to Heaven, it must have; that of always teaching truth, that of always supplying the wants

of our limited and corrupted reason, that of always carrying before our eyes the bright and divine light of revelation.

Show us a church which is not infallible which owns itself fallible, wanting of course the main perfection which the Church of Christ must have, and you show us a church of corrupted man, not the Church of Christ. Common sense tells us, that without an infallible tribunal, unanimity in faith is a thing impossible. Without a centre of unity, a fixed standard, an absolute and infallible tribunal, a living oracle to determine the mind, it is absolutely impossible, that men, framed as they are, should ever come to one and the same way of thinking; whoever renounces this infallible authority of the Church, has no longer any sure means to secure him against uncertainties, and to settle his doubts; he is in a sad and perplexed situation, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

We are confirmed in the above suggestions of common sense, by our observations. Unity in faith we find no where but in the Catholic Church, above one hundred millions of Catholics, scattered over the face of the earth, are perfectly one in matters of faith. We meet from the most distant parts of the globe, ignorant of one another's language, manners, customs, &c. yet our thoughts and principles about religion and its mysteries are exactly alike. Pray, sir, is that unity to be found among those who have shaken off the authority of the Church? Since they have presumed to reform (as they call it) the Catholic Church, what do we see but one reformation on another, hundreds and hundreds of different Churches, one rising on the ruins of another, all widely different from one another, each styling itself the Church of Christ, each appealing to the gospel for the orthodoxy of her doctrine each calling her ministers, ministers of Christ, each calling the sermons of her ministers, the word of God, &c. &c.

Common sense tells us, that the gospel, the written word, could not have been intended as the supreme judge to fix our belief in matters of faith.

1st. Because it may be misunderstood.

The many contradictory doctrines drawn from Scripture, prove that it is often misunderstood, and even in matters which Christ declares a *condition sine qua non* of salvation. Witness the following:

"Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5.

"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you, John vi. 54.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6.

You will readily acknowledge that these several texts, although directing us to do certain things as a *sine qua non* of salvation, are interpreted in contradictory ways, and of course misunderstood.

Some find in the gospel, the necessity of Baptism for salvation — others find in it, salvation without baptism.