

of Christ by conquering Peter, the foundation stone—the rock upon which it was built—were foiled by the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ; and His promise, that the gates of hell should not prevail against His Church, is kept and secured.

As this Church is the great ark of salvation launched on the troubled waters of this world, into which all who wish to be saved from the deluge are to enter, it must be protected with all the guarantees and safeguards that Divine and human wisdom thought necessary. The simplicity of the dove was to be united with the prudence of the serpent.

The Church, viewed as a merely human institution, challenges the admiration of the most cultivated of even modern philosophers. It conquers when it is defeated; when it is thought to be dead and buried, behold it rises more glorious than before. Hence, how foolish and absurd the many predictions about the last Pope, and the end of Catholicity, indulged in by persons who have the Bible ever on their lips, but whose hatred of our Holy Religion blinds them to the clear teachings of Holy Writ on this subject.

The Church, according to the prediction of Christ, is to last for ever, though always to be persecuted. Its founder, Jesus Christ the Son of God, was crucified in the vigor of youth, when His Church was in its infancy, and had gained no credit in quarters likely to insure its success. St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred at a time, when, humanly speaking, their preaching and miracles were most needed. St. Stephen, St. James, and many more were put to death to terrify others, and still the Church gained in numbers. For nearly three hundred years the mighty power of the Roman Empire was wielded for its destruction. Its temples were torn down, its sacred books were burned, its faithful children were torn to pieces by wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatre: the Christian blood flowed in torrents, and soddened the very dust and thoroughfares of the seven-hilled city. Those, whom the sword or the fangs of the wild beast spared, were driven into exile, or had to bury themselves away in the sepulchral gloom of the Catacombs; yet the Church passed through this fiery ordeal as gold through the crucible.

Scarcely had persecution by the sword ceased, when another grievous trial awaited her, in the shape of the smiles and blandishments of the world, and in the favors and patronage of the Cæsars; but as she had come out unscathed from the fiery furnace of persecution, so over this trial also, she won a most glorious victory. In fact, suffering seems to be her