

17 But there is another sign, still by which you may distinguish the Church from all other societies,—it is Universal or Catholic. It is not Universal in the sense of its being necessarily in all places of the world, at all times. This was not the purpose of our Redeemer. But it is Catholic, because, 1st, the truth on which it is built is, by its own nature, essentially universal.—The doctrines which our Saviour revealed, and taught the Church, being true when He uttered them, were, and are, and will be, true in all places, as well as in Jerusalem,—will be true thro' all time, and all eternity. 2d, Because his commission to his Church was to make it known to "all nations," through "all days, until the end of the world." 3, Because under the commission, its promulgation was not to be successfully impeded either by the rage of the Gentiles, the vain deliberations of the people, nor the fruitless and combining assemblies of kings and princes against the Lord and against his Christ. "All nations" were the field of his operations. Its missionaries were not effectually arrested in carrying the knowledge and means of redemption to our fallen race by any barrier,—neither the expanse of the ocean, nor the height of mountains, nor the dangers of travel, nor the rigors of climate, nor the barbarism of savages, nor the cruelty of tyrants, could deter them from preaching the Gospel to "every creature." 4, The Church is called Catholic because, as a matter of fact, she is spread through the entire world. As an outward visible society, she is Apostolic in origin, One in faith, Catholic in extension.

18. At all times she was, and now is Holy.—Nor do the bad lives or scandalous morals of her individual members, or even sometimes of her eminent Pastors, destroy or diminish her rightful claim to the attribute of sanctity. The reason is obvious. God does not apply the coercive force of Almighty Power either to bring men into the communion of the Church, or to make them personally holy when they have entered. To those who are without He offers the grace of vocation and of faith that they may believe and come in; for those who are within Christ has provided all the grace and means of sanctification. But in neither case does He impart grace in such a manner as to destroy the exercise of man's voluntary concurrence and free co-operation. Hence, therefore, the sanctity of the Church is by no means involved by the want of sanctity in some of its members. For she is called Holy because 1st Infinite Holiness is the essential attribute of her Blessed Founder. 2d, Because the doctrines which she received from Him, and which she preaches, are holy. 3d, Because Baptism, by which all men can enter her communion, cleanseth the soul of those who receive it with proper dispositions from all that is opposed to Holiness. 4th, Because all her moral teachings are conducive to the same end. 5th, Because the efficacy of her Sacraments, and above all the divine character of the Sacrifice, which is her highest act of public worship, were instituted as means of applying the merits of Our Saviour's death for the sanctification of her children. 6th, Because, in fine, whatever appears as evidence of eminent holiness—the constancy of martyrs—the courage of confessors—the purity of virgins—the love of God—a spirit of self-immolation to promote the welfare of man, have distinguished, and still distinguish, millions of her members, and indicate, even in the practical exhibition of it, her claim to be called Holy.

19 I might enlarge, dear Reader, on this subject, but what I have here said is perhaps sufficient for the present. I would only remark before I proceed to other considerations, that so far as it has been accomplished, the Catholic Church alone has realised the objects for which Christianity was instituted. She alone converted Pagan nations to the faith of Christ. For you will remember that large portions both of Asia and Africa were made vocal by the preaching of her messengers and the canticles of her Saints, ages before the impostor of Mecca had raised the Crescent of dominion or unsheathed the sword of extermination against her children. She had converted those countries from Paganism to Christianity. You will remember that all the Christian nations that have been converted, in Europe or America, from Paganism to Christianity, were converted by the efficacy of her Apostleship alone. You will remember that no other Christian association has ever been blessed of God with a power to convert so much as one single nation, to the light of Divine truth. It may be said that the Sandwich Islands are at the present moment an exception to the truth of what has just been asserted. But the exception here referred to is so

incomplete that it cannot be adduced as being any exception. For, unless travellers of unexceptionable character misrepresent the facts, the population of those islands is rapidly wasting away, whilst the wretched remains are said to have imbibed more of the vices, than of the virtues of the Christians who have gone among them. So that, as a general proposition, history attests the truth of what I have just said.

20 Read over then, and reflect seriously upon the subject that has been treated, and the reasoning that have been adduced in the preceding paragraphs of this letter. There is here presented to you a brief outline not only of the Church, but of those peculiar attributes by which God originally and through all time constituted her a distinct, united, universal Society, easily distinguishable from all other associations calling themselves by her name. If these outward tokens of her Divine identity through all ages should not at first impress your mind as strongly as they will do when you shall have reflected more upon them, it may not be amiss for you to bring any other religious association to the test of comparison by the same standard. Did it receive its outward organization and visible form from Christ and his Apostles when they were visible on the earth? If not, who had a right to usurp the functions of the Redeemer? What was its origin? Again, is it united, even during the period of its brief existence, as a religious society, in the belief of its own original doctrines? Are its members now united in believing all the doctrines which the Society professes even at this day? Are the principles calculated to hold its members in the spontaneous unity of truth? Or rather, are they not calculated to divide them into multiplicity of opinions, without its venturing to claim for itself, even the consciousness of "what is truth?" Has it, either by its doctrine or its extension, any claim to call itself "Catholic," or "Universal?" Has it converted nations? Has it furnished martyrs? Or it it does claim such, were they martyrs (that is witnesses) for the faith of Christ, or were they martyrs simply for their own opinions? As to the other test—Holiness, it is almost unnecessary that I should make any remark.—Sanctity, out of the Church is judged by a very fallacious and a very arbitrary standard. Nor would I feel authorised to urge an unobtainable scrutiny into the lives and conduct of individuals, for the purpose of eliciting an answer to this question.

21. Neither is this necessary. Examine any one of these humanly organized societies, which calls itself the Church, or a Church, or a branch of the Church. Examine it, in the date of its origin, in the principle of its constitution; in the character of its founders, in the mode of its propagation, in the disputations among its members concerning its doctrine, in their divisions and subdivisions, in its dependence on human support, in the vagueness, and ambiguity, and fluctuations of its creed, in the general sterility of its efforts to discharge the functions, and accomplish the purposes for which the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church was instituted, and it will be no difficult matter for you to distinguish between the human imitation and the Divine reality. The very names of these societies sufficiently determine their character. They are sometimes called after the individuals who founded them—sometimes after the civil State, the government of which created or adopted them. Again, you will find them designated by some minor point of practice among early Christians, to which they attach peculiar and paramount importance—or by some peculiarity in their ceremonies or mode of worship. Now, if you will take the pains to trace back the historical thread of these societies to their origin, you will find that in all cases, and without one solitary exception, they were built on the mere opinion of their respective founders. This statement may appear to you startling, at first sight, but examine it strictly, and you will find it to be indisputably true.

22. They claimed no new revelation from God, Nor were they connected with their origin, either a new Christ, or new miracles, or new Apostles. What then was the basis of credibility on which their new doctrines were founded?—Simply the opinion of the individual who discovered a new reading of the Holy Scriptures, and succeeded in inducing others to strengthen that opinion by the endorsement of their own. When these opinions became strengthened still more, by the approbation of a large number of persons, the next thing was to systematise them in a code, and reduce them to a conventional formula, called a creed, articles of belief, confession

of Faith, are no longer heard of, except when some unfortunate minister is under trial for heresy, or in those countries where the civil government has made the Creed a portion of the laws of the land—it may be said, indeed, that the opinions of the Creed, as expressed in the formularies, have lost all authority, and that each individual is governed by his own views and not by theirs. This is decidedly consistent—for it would have been absurd to have rejected the authority of the Catholic Church,—to have emancipated human reason from the yoke of faith in her teachings merely to bring into slavish subjection to the religious opinion of unauthorised men. Out of the Church, there is no consistency, under the principle alleged to justify the separation, viz. that every one has the right to read the scriptures and judge for himself—except in the conduct of him who puts away all human authority from between him and the sacred text, reads it as as often as he will, forms his opinions from day to day, with the well understood privilege of altering or abrogating them, as old light fades away, or new light breaks in.

This process, dear Reader, necessarily destroys what is most essential in the belief of Christ's teaching—viz its certainty. His revelations are not matters of opinion, but matters of fact. His doctrines are presented to you in His Church as facts and not as speculations. And out of His Church you cannot by possibility have them guaranteed as facts, but you must receive them as speculations alone. Is not this an uneasy and unnatural state of the human mind? Do you not feel that your spirit yearns after some permanent anchorage of Divine faith? That it longs for some solid and secure resting place?—That it cannot be thus always on the wing, sustaining its solitary flight in searching after truth through the boundless regions of opinion? Will it not at least be vain, like the dove of old, to return with weary pinions, and drooping plumage, to the Ark from which it went forth—enjoying liberty indeed, but finding no repose?

23.—But you say you have the Bible to fall back upon. That there, at least, you may drink from the living fountain. Alas, dear Reader, in your present situation you cannot derive from the perusal of the Scriptures the benefit you anticipate. The true sense of the Scriptures is one thing—your interpretation of that sense is quite another. If you build your faith in Christ and your hopes of salvation on your unaided interpretation of the Scriptures, you are still building not on the Saviour's teaching, but on your own fallible opinions. Of this, however, I will treat in my next letter.

From the Freeman's Journal

WATERFORD, Trinity Without,  
Dec 23, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR—The people are every where starving, absolutely dying of want. They have neither food nor clothing. The Roman Catholic clergy, night and day, are incessant in their labours to console, and comfort, and reconcile them to their unhappy fate—to keep them peaceable and obedient to the laws and, under the circumstances, their efforts have been crowned with success almost incredible.

Yet, there is no misrepresentation, however gross, that is not readily believed of us. No action, however savage, that we are not supposed, even by honest Englishmen, capable either of encouraging or committing. In parliament, and out of parliament, hideous slanders have been unsparingly heaped upon our order, and you know that four-and-twenty hours' currency is quite enough to make these slanders English facts where Ireland and her priests are concerned. What are we to do? Contradictions clear and unequivocal, even from individuals of our order specially named, are worse than useless. The columns are repeated by members of parliament and in the English press with renewed virulence. A war of words is of no avail. Individuals who make these charges should prove them home, and let the priest who so far forgot his ministry be at once degraded and disgraced. But no such course is likely to be pursued. The reason is obvious—no priest was guilty of the conduct imputed.

Is not the newspaper giving publicity to such abominable falsehoods liable to an action at law for libel? If such be the fact, let the precise and Catholic people of Ireland at once rally—collect funds—get a first-rate legal opinion, and let this hellish accusation be souled at once and for ever by a jury of twelve honest Gentlemen and an upright judge. The time appears to me to have

arrived for some decisive step, and having given the matter consideration, I am of opinion that this is the only course open to us that can possibly bring the base and lying slanders so audaciously circulated against the Irish priests and people, and so greedily swallowed at the other side of the channel, to a truthful issue. For if such a line of conduct be at all feasible, and properly carried out, our enemies must either justify the libel, and thus put the saddle on the right horse, or plead guilty, as I am sure they must, to the falsehood, and thus the sting for future mischief will be extracted.

Leaving the affair now in your hands, for the consideration of my own order and the Catholic public.

I am, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,  
P. KENT.  
Catholic Curate.

MAYO.—The Catholic Clergy.—Mr. J. Denis Browne, in a letter to the Mayo Constitution, speaks thus of the value of the Irish Catholic Clergy, whom formerly he regarded with such hostility that it caused him the loss of his seat.—"It is, no doubt, difficult not to be full of gloom, seeing every day before one a lost population, who now evidently, on the plea of alleged individual indiscretions, are threatened with a hunting down of that body of men who have hitherto fearlessly, faithfully, and zealously stood by their sorrows, in their sickness, and in the multitude of their afflictions. I am well aware that it is not my duty to take up the defence of the Roman Catholic Clergy, but I am not to be deterred from doing that body an act of justice, from a fear of my motives being misunderstood. I can safely appeal to those who, like myself, have been travelling through the miseries of the last eighteen months, as to whether the Roman Catholic Clergy, as a body, have not been the untiring, the practical and efficient agents, not only in administering the national relief to their famishing flocks, but also in energetically and successfully instilling into their minds the solemn duty on them of a resignation to the Divine Will, by a strict obedience to the law of the land. In this part of the country, I can bear testimony to the fact, that even from the most prejudiced I never heard a whisper to the contrary, or a denial that their conduct as a body was not worthy of the highest commendation and respect."

THE BISHOPRIC OF MAITLAND.—The friends of the Rev. R. Burchall, O. S. B., Prior of the English College of Douay, will be happy to learn that his Holiness has been pleased to cancel his nomination to the dignity of Bishop of Maitland, and Coadjutor to the Most Rev. Dr. Polding, Archbishop of Sydney, in Australia, he is in consequence to remain Superior of St. Edmund's, to the very great satisfaction of the inmates of the establishment, and also of his numerous friends in France and England. We learn that the Rev. C. Davis, O. S. B., of Downside near Bath, is appointed to fill the important functions of Bishop, which the Rev. R. Burchall has declined.—Correspondent.

Advers from Malta of the 15th ult report the arrival on the 18th ult of the Right Hon. R. More O'Ferrall, the civil Governor of that island. A deputation, headed by the most respectable residents in the colony, escorted him to the Government House. On the following morning Mr. O'Ferrall, with his family, attended the Church of St. John, where High Mass was celebrated—his Excellency assisting to the usual procession, bearing a lighted taper. On the same evening (Sunday) the town was very generally illuminated in honour of his Excellency's arrival.

MALLOW.—On December 24th, Miss Susan Creagh, daughter of James Creagh, Esq., of Mallow, received the religious habit in the Convent of Mercy at that place.—Southern Reporter.

WED.

On the 5th inst, Enas Augustino, infant son of Capt Enas Daly, aged 9 months. 4th.—Patrick Son of James, and Johanna Whelan, aged 3 years. 7th.—William, Son of William and Mary Braslow, aged 9 months. 8th.—William Doyle, Son of the late James Doyle, aged 16 years.

THE CROSS,

Published by RITCHIE & NUGENT, No. 2, Upper Water Street, Halifax. Terms—Five shillings in advance, exclusive of postage.

All communications for the Editors of the Cross are to be addressed (if by letter post paid) to No. 2, Upper Water Street, Halifax.