

SIMPLY this and this only. It is a *Law* in the hands of a *Judge*, excellent when applied : but absolutely incapable of self-application.

GOD, who wills the salvation of man, who would rescue him from sin and death, and raise him to a state of immortal life and glory, has appointed three powers which co-operate in this work of transcendent love and mercy, viz : a *Legislator*, a *Law*, and an *Interpreter*. The *Legislator* is the *Almighty* himself. The *Law*, is the *Traditions* of the Church, whether written or unwritten. The *Interpreter* is the *Church*. In this compound agency, the last (I speak it with awe) is as necessary as the first : and without whose co-operation, the second is absolutely useless.

To render this more clear and incontrovertible, let us suppose a code of laws framed for a country which were to be obeyed without the intervention and coercion of courts of justice. What would be the consequence of this arrangement ? Exactly what we see take place among our Protestant Brethren, with regard to the laws of Scripture. And as men who recognize no common authority to explain and apply these laws, interpret them in their own way, and of course differently : one crying, this is the truth according to Scripture, another that—So in a community where every regulation was to be adjusted by private opinion, without judge or jury, every man offending or offended, sinned against or sinning would interpret the law in his own favor, to the multiplication of crime and the oppression of innocence.

It would not be possible to govern a community, if laws were left to arbitrary interpretation and execution. The Church, founded by our Lord and Saviour, is the grand tribunal, to which her children are to refer in all their spiritual concerns.