

withstanding the diversity of place, of clime, of tongue, of customs and of time.

Therefore, when not otherwise prevented, the supreme Pontiff, to whom alone it belongs to convoke, and preside over, those august assemblies, did not fail to call together the Bishops of the whole world.

Pius IX, in spite of obstacles apparently insurmountable, has convoked a general council which met, on the eighth of December, 1869, at the tomb of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, in the Vatican Basilica, the largest and richest temple in the world.

To the monstrous errors which are the most destructive to society, the Holy Council has opposed the light of revealed doctrine, contained in Scripture and in Tradition. Rash men, puffed up with the pride of empty science, dared to affirm that, apart from matter, nothing exists, that there is but one and the same substance or essence of God and of things finite; that created things are but an emanation of the divine substance; that God is a Being Universal and Undefined. The Church, through the Holy Council, has branded these aberrations of pantheism and materialism, by upholding the doctrine of one God, the independent Creator of all things visible and invisible; a Being distinct from created matter which He drew forth from nothing; a Being eternal, intelligent, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in every perfection, and who governs the universe by His almighty and merciful Providence.

Others, disregarding the powers of reason, taught that God cannot be known, with certainty, by the natural light of human reason, through created things. The Holy Council has anathematized those who deny man this noble privilege.

Certain philosophers, falling into the opposite extreme, would have vainly discarded revelation, proclaiming the independence of human reason, rejecting divine faith, denying the existence of miracles, or at least the possibility of discerning their divine origin, garbling the Holy Scriptures, or explaining the word of God according to their own fancy, without any regard to tradition or to the teachings of the Church, submitting faith to reason, confounding one