

fixed in the See of Peter, is the central power which, by its splendour and influence, gives light and motion to the other subordinate ecclesiastical authorities and holds all the parts of the Church strongly united together as one regular and harmonious system. Every ecclesiastical body that sunders its connexion with this centre of unity ceases to belong to this system; it becomes a *wandering star* (Jude i. 13.), moving in devious tracts, and growing more and more obscure and languid as it recedes further from the central source of light and action.

From the earliest ages the Bishops of Rome, as successors of St. Peter, have been acknowledged as the supreme rulers on earth of the whole Church of Christ. They have in all ages exercised an acknowledged spiritual jurisdiction, as of divine right, in every part of the Church, wherever the state of affairs called for the exercise of their authority, in order to preserve unity in faith and in ecclesiastical government, and to enforce, in all nations, the observance of the law of Christ.

We said that it was a scriptural fact that Christ established a living infallible authority to endure for all time to come. Now this promise of indefectibility in *teaching with inerrancy* must—as Christ was the Son of God and Author of all truth—find its accomplishment in every past age as in the present. No religious body, ostensibly teaching in Christ's name can be the perpetuation of the Church which Christ established if it falters in its claim to infallibility.

It is an undisputed *historical fact* that the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone has always claimed this divine prerogative in virtue of the words of her Founder. Her Holy Doctors and authorized teachers have always pointed to the Pontiff who occupied the See of Peter as the infallible expounder of Christian truth. In our own century, the Vatican Council, that is, the assembled Bishops of the Universal Church, relying on scriptural grounds and the constant tradition of all preceding ages, proclaimed as a dogma of faith the Infallibility of the Pope.