

the Lord Jesus, (Romans 9, 1). The decision of the Church teaching in council is infallible. If Christ promised to be in the midst of two or three meeting in His name, directing and blessing them, He has promised in a special manner to be with His Church, "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world," and "the gates of Hell, that is of error, shall not prevail against it." He that said, "He that will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and a publican," would not have given such an order if that Church could lead any one into error. St. Paul calls the Church "The pillar and ground of truth." As the Jews were directed in their course to the Promised Land by a pillar of a cloud during the day, and a pillar of fire by night, so the traveller in search of the heavenly land is guided by the pillar of truth, which is the Church, to his eternal abode. It is the one which is founded on that rock upon which Christ built His Church.

The Church, from its infancy, continues the work of Christ. It preaches the doctrine he preached, it administers the sacraments which he instituted, and it corrects the abuses which he corrected; consequently, it has to suffer as he suffered, calumny, persecution, and opprobrium. The world hates the Church, as it hated Christ; makes war upon it, and crucifies it, as it did Christ. When we speak of the world, we do not mean the natural world, the world created for our temporary home and pleasure. Nor do we mean persons, who though living in the world, acknowledge Christ as their head, and love Him and His doctrine. And, though surrounded with human frailty, sin through weakness and inadvertence, yet rise again and make use of the healing sacraments, which He has instituted for our fallen humanity; and who repair their faults by acts of mortification, penance, and liberality to the poor. But we speak of the world—that is of persons who war against Christ and His Church; who endeavour to set up their private reason and judgment against His divine word; who make a God of their bellies, who persecute the saints, who declare that there is no difference between right and wrong, no punishment for the wicked nor reward for the good in the next life, who wish to subject the Church of Christ to the empire of Satan; who proclaim the feebleness of man superior to the power of God; those who wish to sap the foundation of society by proclaiming its keystone, matrimony—blessed and instituted by Christ, as a permanent and holy state—to be a mere civil contract, to be broken by the whims and fancies of the licentious and ungodly, who wish to make the Church as a mere human institution in the hands of civil governments, and to make the ministers of that Church mere tools of despotism; to amuse and keep the people quiet, without any reference to the superior order of heaven and the interests of immortal souls. Witness the degraded condition, spiritually speaking, of the so-called Churches of England, Russia, Denmark, and other Protestant states, where religion is the handmaid of worldliness, and of the stupid sons of worldly men, where the heads of state chime to be the divinely commissioned heads of the Church. St. Chrysostom cries out against this state of things, when he says, "Christ did not build His Church upon kings and emperors, but upon Peter, the fisherman." The Church, too, has to legislate on a modern, but an