

forms of worship began to appear. A strong desire prevailed among many of the ministers for rank and power, by and by the title of Bishop was given to moderators of assemblies. These bishops did not assume any exclusive power over their brethren for three centuries. Meanwhile errors were increasing, and the desire for power among the ministers was becoming greater and greater till at length, early in the 5th century, Leo, who was bishop of the Church at Rome, advanced a claim hitherto unknown; many who admired this eloquent and clever man sanctioned the position of power he claimed, and cried with one voice, "Peter speaks in Leo." Here dates the origin of that Church which now claims to be the only true fold of God's people. She grew of errors, and became a withered branch. She sprang up from corruptions, and those who are acquainted with her history, know how these have increased as the ages rolled away, till, at this moment, the pure religion of Jesus is lost amid the accumulating mass of iniquities.

To whom do the members of the Church of Rome look as their head? Is it to Jesus the "One Lord"? No, it is to the Pope. What position does he occupy? Let the titles addressed to Leo X at the Latern Council in 1516 declare, "*Vestra divina majestas*," "*Omnes reges terra*"—it will be better, perhaps, to give you the English, "Your divine Majesty," "All kings of the earth shall fall down before thee, and serve thee," "All power has been given to thee in heaven and on earth." The Pope is elsewhere called, "Vicar of Christ and Successor of Peter appointed by God the judge of the living and the dead," "King of kings, and Lord of Lords," and so on. If he be a Successor of Peter he must have seen the risen Lord. This is absolutely necessary to be on an equality with Peter. But Peter never had a Successor, far less a line of them. More than this, he claims to be Vicar, or Substitute of Christ on earth, invested with power to establish infallible laws, doctrines, and practices. He holds the keys of heaven, and invests his priestly followers with the power of forgiving sins. Whomsoever he blesseth is saved, but he whom he curses is doomed to everlasting ruin. Outside of the Church over which he sits, and rules, and reigns as infallible God there is no salvation. Such assumed supremacy among the followers of Him who was "meek and lowly," is too absurd and blasphemous to require refutation. Neither is the foundation on which they rest their faith, the foundation on which the members of the true Church hold their faith. Faith requires assurance. It must have certainty. Upon what then, does this assurance depend? The members of the Church of Rome tell us, that, it depends upon the authority of the Church. What the Church teaches is true; for she is infallible; she is inspired, and has the spirit of truth. But if she be not infallible, if she be not inspired, if she be wrong, what then? Why, the foundation of their faith is destroyed, and they are left without a prop on which to lean. But is not their faith built upon the word of God? It cannot be, for they are prohibited from the general reading of the Bible, and denied the right of private judgment thereon. Their faith is not the "One Faith," for it depends not upon the authority of any professing Church; nor yet does it take the pure word of God as its ultimate foundation, and ground of certainty. No, it goes beyond the Church—beyond the Bible, rises to heaven and lays hold of Him who is above all, even the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank God for the Church, the training school for heaven. We thank Him for the Bible which reveals Jesus as the way to our