

Yes, the time-honored and pious belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, has been at length solemnly sanctioned and defined an Article of Faith: and it is on the great day already consecrated for the celebration of this glorious and peculiar privilege that this dogma has been publicly proclaimed.

How many generations have fervently desired to see this auspicious day, and have not seen it? This happiness was reserved for us. Yes, we bless God that a solemn decree, emanating from the Apostolic See, has at length disclosed to our anxious gaze this bright star shining in all its effulgence, which ever adorned the diadem of the Queen of Heaven, but whose mild brilliancy was hitherto dimmed and obscured, as it were, by a cloud.

As in times gone by, the Church of God, by virtue of her infallible authority, has declared that the Divine Maternity, the perpetual and inviolate Virginity, and the impeccability of Mary were revealed truths, so in like manner, on this happy day, She has proclaimed the truth of Her Immaculate Conception, which is so admirably united, and so inseparably connected, with the former. After long and fervent prayers, humiliations and fastings offered up to God, after protracted and mature deliberations, consultations and discussion of the question in all its bearings, the Vicar of Jesus-Christ has at last pronounced and defined, from the Chair of Peter, that the doctrine, which teaches the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, is revealed from God, and that, consequently, all the faithful are bound to believe it firmly and constantly.

You are well aware, D. B. B., that, when pronouncing her infallible decision on matters of doctrine which call for her final definition, the Church does nothing more than expose and declare her faith, and merely pronounces that such truth is contained in the deposit of divine revelation. For, unity in her faith ever was, and ever will be, the characteristic mark of the Church; and all the truths she teaches, or ever will teach until the end of the world, these she has received from the beginning, stored up in the treasury of the Sacred Scriptures and divine traditions committed to her safe keeping by the Son of God, and of which He has established her alone the incorruptible guardian and the infallible interpreter. It is, therefore, evident that when the august Head of the Church, in whom live, and ever will live, the authority and ministry of Peter, pronounces a decree defining any article of doctrine, He does not introduce any doctrine novel, or different from those contained in the deposit of faith, but merely and simply settles and determines the true sense of revelation with regard to the mooted question, and declares that it contains a divine truth.

Wherefore the Church of Jesus Christ, ever enlightened and assisted by the Holy Ghost, ever invigorated by the life of her divine founder, who has promised