

day by the test of true principles. *What, say some, decree faith, create dogma, institute a truth on such a day of such a year!* Such is the scandal of ignorance arising from the heresy and incredulity of our age. It is, therefore, very necessary to ascertain, in the first place, the part which the Church has to play in dogmatical definition.

All belief dogmatically defined must make part of revelation; must consequently be contained in the divine word, whether written or transmitted; for if the word of the Church is the immediate and living rule of our faith, she herself has in the word of God her supreme and fundamental rule. The Church, by dogmatical decision, does not, then, create the truth; she makes neither the dogma, nor the revelation of the dogma; she merely proclaims its existence with an infallible, indeclinable authority. The dogma which authority proclaims to-day, was yesterday; before the decision, it existed in its substance; after the decision it appears with its formula, and is of obligation. The part of the Church, in dogmatical decision, may then be defined: *The legitimate and infallible declaration of a revealed truth.* But a truth may be many ways contained in revelation. It may be in it in the terms which express it, that is to say, *explicitly*, to speak the language of theology; and in that case, the office of the Church is usually confined to proclaiming the divine inspiration of the books which