

of several books now included in the Canon (among which were the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation), and we find that, in point of fact, some of the most eminent Fathers were divided on their claims. But since that time they have been universally received in the Catholic Church, not on the ground of any new *evidence* as to their genuineness, but on the *divine authority* of the Church, which has for ever settled the question by her final decision. Now, it is fully admitted that this decision did not *make* these books inspired, if they were not so before—it only *declared*, with infallible certainty, that they were so; and in like manner, the recent decision of the Church, on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, did not alter the nature of the fact, but simply pronounced final judgment on a controversy which, though long since settled by tacit consent, had never before been formally decided by the Church; and, indeed, if the silence of Scripture on this point be considered a sufficient argument against it, the same argument would be equally valid against the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lord Himself, which is never expressly declared in the New Testament.

You are pleased, my Lord, to observe that “converts to Rome commonly indulge in an amazing recklessness of statement”, and you point out a remarkable example of this in my own case, in which I refer to the authority of St. James as a Scriptural warrant for the practice of Extreme Unction. You say that “it is *notorious* that the Unction to which St. James refers was connected with the miraculous healing of the sick”. But I would ask, *to whom* is this notorious? It is, indeed, *notorious* that this is the Protestant interpretation of the passage, but it is equally *notorious* that this interpretation is rejected by all other Commentators; nor was it adopted by the