

by Protestant well-wishers are countervailed, (1), by the forewarning words of the highest Authority that can be named, to the effect that a perfectly pure state of things will never be attained here; and (2), by the very visible fact, that efforts after the Impossible in this direction tend to break up, rather than knit together, Christian society. Whilst the attractions on the Papal side are wholly neutralized by the careful demonstrations again and again given by competent men, proving to a moral certainty that the theories referred to are no part of the original Deposit entrusted to the keeping of the Christian Church, but comparatively late developments, based on texts absurdly interpreted, and on documents tampered with or forged—the after-thoughts and contrivances of an anti-Christian ambition.

Moreover, my friends, from evidence daily transpiring, I venture to question, if you were transferred at this moment from the ranks in which you are, to the ranks of any one of the bodies that invite your permanent presence amongst them, whether you would find more rest there, more light, more certainty, more helps to Christian living, more encouragements to Christian living, than you find where you are, within the Fold to which legitimately and by blood you belong.

Quit not, therefore, I say—quit not your present company. It is very good company. You are journeying through a brief life, side by side with men as wise, as worthy, and as excellent, as any perhaps that our race has produced. Do not, on a mere venture, abandon the sure fellowship of such associates. Break not, moreover, your family and household connexion. Cut not yourselves off from your proper kindred and ancestry, that large band of estimable characters—many of them confessedly great characters—who in past generations within our Church and Empire, have been content to “walk by the same rule and to mind the same things” as you have been taught and trained to observe.

At the same time, in regard to matters which from their very nature can never receive absolute definition in human speech, one need not be surprised at meeting with many differences of view. And in the growth of every mind, as I suppose, modifications of thought must from time to time be taking place. Reflecting on this, and recalling the misconceptions and perplexities through which, as is probable, you have yourselves, each one of you, fought your way, you will readily understand why I have deemed it becoming to be tender towards my fellow-men's scruples, whenever I was aware of them.