

have stated—indeed, they formed some of the principal reasons which prevented me from joining the Catholic Church, for many years ; but I am well convinced, that, though they may still be regarded as speculative or historical difficulties, they are entirely of a *negative* character, and are entitled to no real weight whatever, in opposition to the *positive* proofs of the divine origin and infallible authority of the Catholic Church, and of the whole system of Christian doctrine founded upon her teaching. Indeed, the same mode of reasoning, derived from the silence or apparent contradictions of primitive testimony, might plausibly be employed against the fundamental principles of the Church of England, as well as against every particular doctrine of Christianity ; and thus we should arrive at the conclusion, that universal Scepticism is but the legitimate result of Protestantism. This, indeed, is the inevitable consequence of denying the principle, that the Church of God is the only authorised keeper and interpreter of her own public documents, consisting of the Holy Scriptures and the Works of the Fathers ; and while each separate communion, or private individual, is supposed to be invested with the right of examining and reversing the decisions of the Universal Church, by applying their own views of the evidence of those documents in refutation of her doctrines, it is utterly impossible to establish the truth of Christianity on a solid foundation, unless we are prepared to maintain the proposition, that though God has given us a *revelation* from heaven, He has not revealed to us what are the precise *doctrines* of this revelation, which are therefore to be discovered by personal investigation.

And here, my Lord, I may be allowed to submit to your consideration the following series of questions, which formed the subject of my own anxious deliberations, while I was yet a Minister of the Church of Eng-