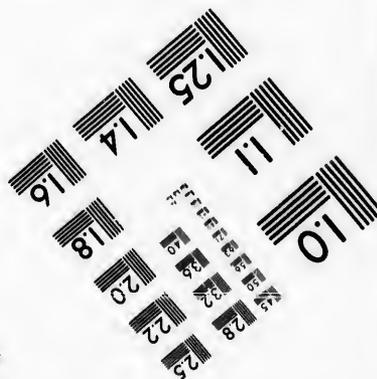
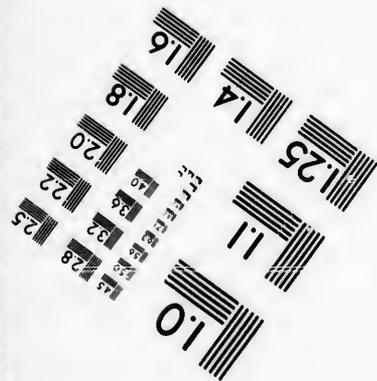
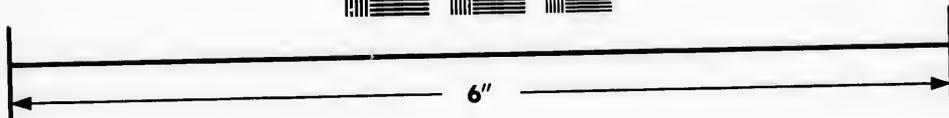
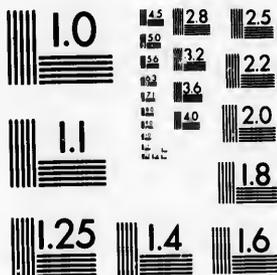


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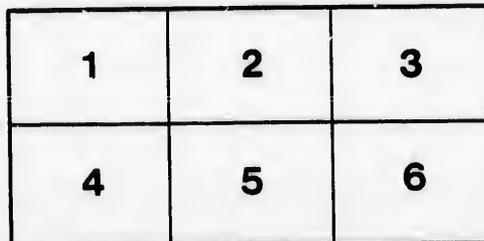
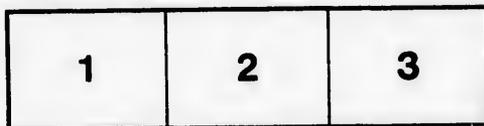
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A  
LETTER  
TO THE  
LORD BISHOP OF FREDERICTON,  
IN REPLY  
TO SOME STATEMENTS  
IN HIS  
RECENT CHARGE.



BY EDMUND MATURIN, A. M.,

Professor of Classics and Mathematics in St. Mary's College.  
Late Curate of St. Paul's, Halifax, N. S.  
And Scholar of Trinity College, Dublin,

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## A LETTER, &c.

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MY LORD—

My attention has been directed to two Numbers of the "Church Witness", of the 9th and 16th of November, which contain a portion of the Charge lately delivered to your Clergy, under the title of the "Bishop of Fredericton on Mr. Maturin's Pamphlets". As you have thus thought proper to bring this subject before public notice, on such an occasion as the Visitation of your Diocese, I feel it my duty to make some remarks on your Lordship's strictures, with the view of correcting some important mistakes into which you have fallen, in the course of your observations. At the same time, however, I beg to assure you, that I entertain the most sincere respect for your Lordship, both in your personal and official character, as I believe you to be an earnest and conscientious advocate of the Church of England, and utterly incapable of employing any argument in her defence, which you do not conceive to be strictly founded on truth. I wish, therefore, to avoid every expression which is not perfectly consistent with Christian charity, though I regret to say that your own tone of discussion is not entirely free from objections of this nature; and indeed I am persuaded that the use of harsh, and offensive language, on either side, can only tend to cherish a spirit of mutual irritation, as well as to produce a feeling of sympathy with the injured party in every ingenuous mind.

You profess that "it is not your intention to enter fully into the controversy", and therefore I shall confine myself to a brief examination of certain passages in your

Lordship's Charge, in order to point out some instances of inaccuracy of statement, or inconclusiveness of reasoning, with reference to the principles of the Catholic Church. I do not think it necessary to dwell at any length on your reflections with regard to the narrative of my own mental conflicts; for, however incorrect they may be in point of fact, it is not my object to defend my own conduct, but to vindicate "the Church of the living God" against the attacks of calumny and misrepresentation. It is sufficient to state that, at the period of my Ordination, to which you refer, I was fully satisfied with the validity of the claims of the Church of England; though I must remind your Lordship, that I never promised "that I stood in no doubt whatever", nor does the Church of England require such a promise, much less does she exact any vows of perpetual obedience to her authority for all time to come; and consequently there is no pledge violated, when any of her Ministers, under conviction of her errors, renounces his allegiance, and withdraws from her communion. Such an obligation, indeed, would be contrary to all Protestant principles, which do not pretend to hold the necessity of absolute certainty, in believing all the doctrines of any one Church; and therefore the position which you imagine, however unsatisfactory to the individual, is perfectly compatible with the spirit of cordial attachment to the Church of England. But it is not correct to say that I was "summoned by the Laity of the Church in Halifax, to be their special champion against the Church of Rome"—as I never made such an engagement under any circumstances, having been appointed as a Christian Minister, and not as a Protestant champion. And further, there is no truth in the statement, that I "resorted for secret help to its professed

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enemies, and never to its many learned defenders"; nor did I say, as your Lordship asserts, that "my conversion was owing to my witnessing the Funeral of the late Archbishop of Halifax". Indeed, this whole argument tends merely to show, that every one is bound to continue in that religious profession in which he was educated, however erroneous it may be—a plea which would equally justify "all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics" in rejecting the claims of Christianity. I do not suppose, indeed, that your Lordship is seriously prepared to maintain such a view, but really I do not understand how you can avoid this conclusion.

I agree with you in regarding Bishop Gibson's "Preservative against Popery" as a "most valuable work", as it furnishes an almost inexhaustible supply of materials to the Protestant controversialist, and indeed contains nearly all that can be said on that side of the question, "by the most eminent Divines of the Church of England". And, however highly I admire Dryden's controversial Poem on "the Hind and the Panther", to which you refer, as setting forth the substance of my own Pamphlet, "with all the elegance of graceful verse", I cannot acknowledge my obligations to that author, nor do I think that the language of poetry is the most suitable vehicle for the exposition of a theological argument. And, as to any change that has taken place in the general state of the controversy since 1688, I rejoice with you, that "the Church of England has exhibited so many and striking evidences of internal life and holiness" which have safely conducted so many of her most devoted children into the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church; while her "external development and progress" merely tend to illustrate her distinguishing feature, as a national Church, whose very existence is only

commensurate with the extent of the British dominions, while she is totally deficient in the aspect of Universality, which forms an indispensable characteristic of the true Church of Christ on earth.

I confess, my Lord, that I am quite unable to detect any traces of that intolerant spirit, which you think you have discovered in my Pamphlet; and indeed even a Protestant may freely admit the truth of the remark which you quote, that "there is no real alternative between the *principle* of Infallibility, and the *principle* of Infidelity", as it cannot be denied that there must be Infallibility *somewhere*, whether in the Bible or in the Church, in order to constitute the very nature of faith. I need scarcely add, that Catholics hold *both* these sources of divine revelation to be equally infallible, while Protestants virtually reject the authority of the *latter*. You adopt, however, the title of one of Bishop Hall's Works, "No peace with Rome"—while you suppose that the motto of Rome herself is, "Delenda est Carthago"—with reference to the destruction of all Protestant communities. Now this is very true, as far as regards the essential principles of Protestantism, though still there may be cases in which it cannot properly be extended to every Reformed Church in Europe. And I may be allowed to say, that, for my own part, I should deeply regret the overthrow of the present Established Church in England, unless her place could be supplied by a better and a purer Church, which can only be done by a return to the ancient faith of Christendom. Had the Established Church been destroyed in the middle of the last Century, I fear that, however corrupt and degenerate she was, nothing but a system of avowed infidelity would have been substituted in her stead. This, indeed, is stated to have been the reason assigned by Bishop Butler for declining the Arch-

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bishopric of Canterbury, when, with his gloomy apprehensions of her future prospects, he is said to have exclaimed that "it was too late for him to try to support a falling Church". Yet the Protestant Church of England has survived the shock, and still continues after the lapse of 300 years from her foundation, and we cannot doubt that her prolonged existence is intended to be subservient to some important purposes of Providence in the preservation of true religion in the country.

Following, then, the order of your remarks, you proceed to lay down the position, in illustration of the intolerance of the Roman Catholic Church, that she denies the validity of Protestant Baptism—"she allows neither the validity of our Baptism, nor of our Orders, nor even of our Faith; we are treated simply as heathens". Now, my Lord, I confess that I am perfectly amazed at this statement. Are you really ignorant of the notorious fact, that the Catholic Church acknowledges the validity of Baptism duly administered, with the proper intention, by *any person whatever*—Catholic or Protestant—Clergyman or Layman—man or woman? Indeed, this principle is expressly asserted in the 1st Canon of the 4th Lateran Council, held in 1215, in which it is declared—"Sacramentum vero Baptismi . . . a quocumque rite collatum, proficit ad salutem."\* And again, the Council of Trent itself has enacted the following Canon—"Si quis dixerit, Baptismum, qui etiam datur ab hæreticis, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, cum intentione faciendi quod facit Ecclesia, non esse verum Baptismum: anathema sit."† But, my Lord, you seem to think that the Catholic Church has adopted the error of St. Cyprian and the African Bishops on this point, though it was rejected at

\* Catalani SS. Concilia Œcum. Tom. III. p. 239.

† Concil. Trid. Sess. VII. (De Bapt.) Can. iv.

that time, and ever since, by the See of Rome, which on this and every other doctrine, is always consistent with herself. She never allows the practice of repeating the Sacrament of Baptism under any circumstances whatever, as she teaches that it cannot be attempted without sacrilege. It is true that Baptism is usually administered under the *conditional* form, on the occasion of the reception of converts into the Church; but this is not founded on the opinion of the *invalidity* of their former Baptism, but simply on the doubts which generally exist as to whether it has been previously received *at all*, in its essential requisites, as to *form, matter, and intention*; and accordingly this precaution is not required, when there is unquestionable evidence that these conditions have already been fulfilled. We hold that Baptism is the divinely appointed act of admission, not into any religious Sect, or human Society, but into the communion of the One Universal Church of Christ; and therefore the Church regards all baptized persons as members of her own body, and partakers of all her spiritual privileges, until they are formally excluded from her communion, either by public excommunication, or by their own act of rebellion against her authority, though they are still considered amenable to her jurisdiction, whether this right be recognised by themselves or not. So far, then, from "treating them simply as heathens," the Catholic Church acknowledges all baptized Christians as members of her visible communion, in the sense just explained, while she holds that their baptized infants are, equally with those of Catholic parents, members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of heaven, and that they can never forfeit these blessings, except by their own wilful rejection of the grace of God.

You refer, my Lord, to the *novelty* of the Roman Creed

as compared with the Nicene Creed, which you describe as "that ancient Creed, to which an Œcumenical Council forbid anything to be added". You insinuate that I have now virtually abandoned "that ancient Creed", though it is the only one which is recited, to this day, in the public Service of the Catholic Church, and though it is only in my present position that I can profess my full agreement with it, when I declare that "I believe One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church"—an article which no member of the Church of England can consistently acknowledge. But, my Lord, you must excuse me for saying that you are totally mistaken in asserting that the Œcumenical Council of Ephesus (to which you allude) "forbids anything to be added" to the Nicene Creed. The 7th Canon of that Council merely prohibited the adoption of a new Creed, proposed by the heretics of that time, under the name of "a *different Faith*, *contrary* to that defined by the holy Fathers, who were assembled at Nice, with the assistance of the Holy Ghost."\* And accordingly we find that the following Œcumenical Council of Chalcedon formally sanctioned the *additions* made to the Nicene Creed by the Second Œcumenical Council of Constantinople, together with the *new definition* of faith, which had been subsequently decreed in opposition to the Nestorian and Eutyehian heresies, while at the same time the assembled Fathers repeated the language of the Council of Ephesus, in condemnation of "any other Faith", and by these Acts directly recognised the principle of the progressive development of the articles of the Creed, in opposition to the various heresies of each successive age.

But, my Lord, if you are right in your interpretation of this Canon, let me ask you, how will you justify the

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\* Beveridge's Pand. Can. Tom. I. p. 103.

Church of England for the addition of the Thirty-nine Articles to the ancient Creed of the Nicene Church? These were certainly not added by way of *explanation* of the faith of former times, like the Creed of Pope Pius IV., but in direct *contradiction* to that faith, and in assertion of the new doctrines of the 16th Century. Nay more—how will you vindicate the English Church for admitting an important addition to the Nicene Creed, on an article of faith which forms the only difference (besides the Supremacy) between the Greek and Latin Churches at the present day? I refer, of course, to the word “Filioque”, which asserts the doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father *and the Son*. It is well known that this article was not originally a part of the Nicene Creed, and that it was adopted by authority of Pope Nicholas I. in the 9th Century, confirmed by Pope Gregory X. and the Second General Council of Lyons in 1274—a period included within the term of “eight hundred years and more”, during which it is affirmed in one of the Homilies of the English Church, that “the whole of Christendom was drowned in abominable Idolatry”. And yet the Church of England, with strange inconsistency, receives an article of faith, relating to the Blessed Trinity, on the sole authority of the Church of Rome during the long “dark ages” of her existence! I cannot see, then, on what ground you can properly object to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, defined by the same authority. You refer to this point, as the clearest proof of the innovations of the Roman Church, and certainly it appears to be the most plausible objection which can be urged on that side. You affirm that it is a doctrine which “the ancient Doctors and Martyrs expressly disavow”, and which “the most eminent Romish writers of later date steadfastly deny”. These assertions, how-

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ever, have no real foundation in fact. It is true that there was no controversy on the subject till the 12th Century; though, even in the earlier ages, we meet with some remarkable intimations, which plainly show what was the ultimate tendency of the mind of the Church, guided by the illuminating wisdom of the Holy Ghost. Thus St. Ambrose, quite incidentally, speaks of Mary as "a Virgin, through grace, *free from every stain of sin.*"\* In like manner, St. Augustine includes all under sin, "*except the holy Virgin Mary, of whom, for the honor of our Lord, I wish no question at all to be raised, when the subject relates to sin.*"† In later times, however, we find an overwhelming preponderance of evidence in favor of the general reception of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The principal Universities of Europe (including those of Oxford and Cambridge) bound their members by a solemn oath to defend it. The most celebrated religious Orders were unanimous in maintaining the same view, though there was a partial exception with respect to the Dominicans, among whom some individual Divines formerly entertained doubts on the subject. Even the scruples of St. Bernard, and St. Thomas, appear to have been rather of a *physical* than of a *theological* nature, while both of them entirely submitted their opinions to the judgment of the Roman Church. The doctrine itself was defined by the Council of Basil in 1439, but this decree was not regarded as binding on the Church, owing to the absence of the Pope and his Legates from that Session. Indeed, it is a curious fact, that Luther himself, even after his separation from the Church, clearly held and taught the doctrine, as appears from one of his Sermons, preached on the Feast of the Con-

\* S. Ambros. in Psal. cxviii. Opp. Tom. I. p. 1255. (Ed. Ben.)

† S. August. De Natura et Gratia, c. 42. Opp. Tom. X. p. 144. (Ed. Ben.)

ception of the Blessed Virgin\*. When, therefore, this pious belief of the Church was finally promulgated as an article of faith, in the year 1854, it is evident that there was no new doctrine introduced into the Creed by this dogmatical Decree, as it had been previously held by the general concurrence of so many ages, and with the unanimous consent of all the Catholic Bishops in the world. In reply to the Pope's Encyclical Letter on the subject, issued nearly five years previously, answers were received from upwards of Six Hundred Bishops, every one of whom expressed his firm belief in the doctrine, while only *four* of them made any objection to its definition as an article of faith, and *fifty-two* others merely suggested the expediency of deferring the final decision of the Church to a future time.† It may be admitted, indeed, that, up to that period, the doctrine was, to a certain extent, an open question—its *abstract truth* was not affected by the definition of the Church—it was equally true *before*, as well as *after* it; but the *obligation to believe it* was not the same in both cases, because it had not previously been authoritatively proposed to the faithful, as an article of divine revelation. In pronouncing judgment on this, and all other questions of doctrine, the Catholic Church merely exercised the spiritual prerogative which is claimed by the Church of England, in the 20th Article, which declares that “the Church hath authority in controversies of faith”. And it is evident that this principle may be applied to several other articles of faith, which are generally held by Protestants as well as by Catholics. Take, for instance, the Canon of the New Testament. It is certain that, during the first four Centuries, there was no obligation on Christians to believe in the divine Inspiration

\* Lutheri Pestillæ, p. 360. (Ed. Argent. 1530.)

† Bp. Ullathorne on the Immaculate Conception, p. 165. (Ed. Balt. 1855.)

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

Church of England, even in the beginning of the reign of Edward VI., as appears from the Office of the Visitation of the Sick in the first Book of Common Prayer, and from the exposition of the passage in the Paraphrase of Erasmus\*, which was received by public authority in the English Church at that time. Indeed, if this view of the passage be strictly adopted, it is not easy to understand why any Christians should *ever die at all*, with such an unlimited promise of miraculous restoration to health under every sickness, as the language of the Apostle is of universal application to these cases. But St. James himself does not intimate that the practice had any peculiar reference to miraculous powers, or to temporary circumstances. Indeed, it is evident that this meaning of the text was not *notorious* to the Primitive Church. And so we find that St. Chrysostom, in the latter part of the 4th Century, quotes the whole passage of St. James, and applies it to the ordinary functions of the Christian Priesthood, in connexion with Baptism, thus plainly implying that they were both equally understood to be of perpetual obligation in the Church†. I must confess, then, my Lord, that I cannot see any proof of such "amazing recklessness" as that which you impute to me, in preferring the old interpretation and practice of the Church to the new, though ingenious, views of modern expositors on this subject.

But, my Lord, there is another charge, of a more serious nature, which you advance against me under this head, into which it will be necessary to enter at some length, as it relates to the true meaning of a very important passage in the Works of St. Irenæus, with reference to the Supremacy of the Church of Rome. You refer to my Lec-

Erasmus' Paraphrase on the New Testament. Vol. II. fol. xl. (Ed. 1549.)

† S. Chrysost. De Sacerd. Lib. III. Opp. Tom. I. p. 394. (Ed. Ben.)

ture on "the Origin of Christianity in England", and you pronounce that, on this point, my "errors are of a graver kind", and that, while I quote this passage as the "splendid testimony of St. Irenæus to the Primacy of the See of Rome", I am guilty of doing so "in perfect reliance on the ignorance of my readers". In order, however, to judge fairly on this subject, we must consider the passage more particularly by comparing the Latin and English Versions. St. Irenæus, having referred to "the Church of Rome, the greatest, and most ancient, and most universally known, founded and constituted by the most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul", adds these remarkable words, which form the subject of the present discussion—"Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam, propter potentiorē principalitatem, necesse est omnem convenire Ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quæ est ab Apostolis Traditio."\* "For with this Church, on account of her more powerful principality, it is necessary that every Church, that is, the faithful who are on all sides, should agree, in which the Apostolical Tradition has been always preserved by those who are on all sides". You remark, my Lord, that "the translation is not very clear". I presume that you mean the *English* translation, and I admit that your remark is perfectly correct; but the want of clearness applies equally to the *Latin* translation, which is the only form in which we now possess the Works of this Father, with the exception of a few detached Fragments of the Greek original, which have been chiefly preserved by Eusebius. The English translation, however, is a faithful representation of the Latin, though I may be allowed to remark, that another Version, still more exactly literal, will be found in my "Defence

\* S. Iren. contra Hæc. Lib. III. Cap. iii. 2. p. 175. (Ed. Ben.)

of the Claims of the Catholic Church", (p. 190.) It has been well observed by the learned Benedictine Editor of St. Irenæus, that "Protestants agree as little among themselves in explaining this passage, as they do in the dogmas of the faith". You propose to translate the words in the following paraphrase—"For to this Church, by reason of its pre-eminence and power, the faithful must flock from every quarter, as the mother Church of all who reside in that part of the world, where the principal records are kept, by which the question may be decided". You understand, then, that the passage merely relates to the necessity by which all other Churches in the neighborhood of Rome were obliged to resort, or undertake a journey, to that city, in a local or geographical sense, and that it does not imply the necessity of agreement in doctrine, on the part of all other Churches in the world, with the Church of Rome, in a spiritual or theological sense. And accordingly you remark that I have "fallen into the grievous error of translating *convenire ad Ecclesiam*, as if it had been *consentire cum Ecclesia*, which is the more unpardonable, because it is simply transferring into the text of S. Irenæus the vain efforts of his Commentator, Fevardentius, to make *convenire* signify the same with *consentire*". Now, my Lord, I cannot but express my astonishment at the decisive tone of this language, which implies that your own view of the passage is quite a settled point among classical scholars; and yet this "grievous, unpardonable error", to which you allude, is held by many of the most learned Protestant Critics and Divines to be the only legitimate interpretation of the words, while they regard your view as totally inadmissible, on the principle of grammatical construction as well as theological reasoning. Thus Salmasius, the learned Calvinist, strongly maintained that the words

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will admit of no other sense than that of union with the Roman Church in matters of faith, and he expresses their meaning by saying—"necesse est omnem Ecclesiam convenire et *concordare in rebus fidei ac doctrina cum Romana Ecclesia.*"\* In like manner, it is remarked by Stieren, the latest Editor of St. Irenæus—"Recte Thierschius explicat, *concordare cum ea*, concinere reddendo testimonio de Traditione."† I need scarcely add, that all Catholic Commentators are fully agreed in this view. And I may remark, that your Lordship is mistaken in supposing that Fevardentius explains *convenire* by *consentire*, in which you were probably misled by Grabe; but the fact is, that this Commentator does not use the latter term at all, and his paraphrase is—"ut membra cum capite convenire, nec latum unguem ab ejus communione discedere".‡

Now it is certain that the word itself *may* refer, either to *intellectual* agreement, or to a *local* assembly. Indeed, the common Latin Dictionaries explain it as meaning—"1. To come together, to assemble. 2. To agree, harmonize in sentiment, be unanimous"—while the choice of these senses must depend chiefly on the context and general argument, and it appears to me that this point is clearly decided by the following considerations.

In the first place, then, it is evident that the centre of unity, to which St. Irenæus refers, is not the *city* of Rome, but the *Church* of Rome; for he is not speaking of the political importance of the Roman city, as a place of concourse, but of the spiritual pre-eminence of the Roman Church, as a standard of reference in matters of faith. Indeed there is not the slightest allusion to any local circumstances in the whole passage, as this ancient

\* Salmas. De Prim. Pap. p. 65. (Ed. Lug. Bat. 1645.)

† S. Iren. Tom. I. p. 430. (Ed. Lips. 1853.)

‡ Ibid. Tom. II. p. 358.

writer dwells entirely on the Apostolical origin, Ecclesiastical Supremacy, and continued succession of Bishops of the Church of Rome, as the subject of his discourse. And surely the very idea of every Church being obliged to resort to this Church, as a spiritual body, cannot be understood merely of their *assembling* at Rome, to consult the records of that Church, but must include the principle of their *submission* to her spiritual authority. But, to evade the force of this statement, Protestant writers have generally endeavored to apply this language to the dignity of the Imperial City of Rome though this is a mere hypothesis, and contrary to the whole train of reasoning employed by St. Irenæus. This view appears to have been first proposed by Chamier\*, in the early part of the 17th Century; and it was also maintained by Archbishop Laud†, though he seems rather inclined to apply it to the *Patriarchal* jurisdiction of the Church of Rome, and to admit the necessity of agreement in faith, within those limits. However, the *political* sense was afterwards defended by Bp. Stillingfleet‡, and by Barrow§, and subsequently by Grabe¶, who explained it as referring to a supposed Assembly of Delegates of the various Churches, sent to Rome to plead the cause of Christianity before the Emperors, and the same view has since been adopted by Neander¶¶ in our own times.

Again, the Catholic interpretation is confirmed by the *necessity* of resorting to the Roman Church, as stated by S. Irenæus. What is the *nature* of this necessity? Surely it cannot be a *physical*, but a *moral* one. It cannot be sup-

\* Chamieri Panstratiæ Catholicæ, Tom. II. Lib. xiii. c. 23, n. 12. (Ed. Gen. 1626.)

† Laud's Conference with Fisher.—Works, Vol. II. p. 202. (Ed. Oxf. 1843.)

‡ Stillingfleet's Vindication of Laud, Vol. II. p. 242. (Ed. Oxf. 1841.)

§ Barrow's Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy—Works, Vol. I. p. 657. (Ed. Lond. 1741.)

¶ S. Iren. Opp. p. 201. (Fol. Oxon. 1702.)

¶¶ Neander's Church History, Vol. I. p. 284. (Ed. Iond. 1853.)

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posed that St. Irenæus means, that all the faithful in every part of the world are obliged to make a pilgrimage to Rome, or to go there in person, in order to know what is the Apostolical tradition of Christian doctrine. But, my Lord, you remark that “the *undique fideles* is not the faithful on all sides, *ubique*, but those who flock to Rome from every quarter”. You thus intimate that *undique* is not to be confounded with *ubique*, though they are both translated by the term *every where* in the Latin Dictionaries, and it is observed by Thiersch, that the two terms were of equivalent force.—“*Vereor ne superfluum videatur monuisse, undique ea etate, quæ est interpretis, valere i. q. ubique.*”<sup>\*</sup> And it must be observed, that your translation is obviously incorrect, as the word “*undique*” in the text is connected with “*fideles*”, and not with “*convenire*”, and there is not the slightest allusion to the idea of “flocking to Rome from every quarter”.

Further, it is of great importance to consider the reasons for this necessity of conformity to the Church of Rome, assigned by St. Irenæus. One of them is, “*poter potentioorem*”, or (according to the Benedictine Edition) “*potioorem principalitatem*”, “on account of her more powerful principality”, or “superior headship”. On this expression you observe, that “in order to establish Mr. Maturin’s case, S. Irenæus should have said, that it was necessary to agree with the Roman Church on account of her *Infallibility*, not on account of her *more powerful principality*”. But surely, my Lord, this is little better than a mere quibble about words, which might be equally employed to subvert every doctrine of Christianity, on the ground of the omission of the technical language of modern Theology, though the same doctrine is conveyed under another form of expression. Thus it is well known that the *Infallibility* of the Church is strongly

<sup>\*</sup> Stieren’s Irenæus, Tom. I. p. 439.

held by all Roman Catholics in the present day; and yet, I am not aware that the *term itself* is ever employed in any of the authoritative declarations of the Church. Will any one seriously contend that the Catholic Church does not profess to be infallible, merely because she never adopts this term in her own public documents? But, as to the precise idea intended to be conveyed by St. Irenæus, it is now impossible to determine with certainty, in the absence of the original words. It is sufficient to remark that, in the opinion of Salmasius, Massuet, Thiersch, and Stieren, these words were most probably such as to express the idea of "Primacy" or "Supremacy", and indeed this sense is conveyed in the old meaning of the Latin word "principalitas", and is fully admitted by Grabe, though he applies it, without the slightest authority, to the temporal Supremacy of the Roman Emperors. As this theory, however, is utterly untenable, the expression must refer entirely to the pre-eminence of spiritual power, as the Roman Church had no temporal superiority whatever, in the times of the heathen Emperors.

But there is another reason assigned for the necessity of referring to the Church of Rome—because "the Tradition, which is from the Apostles, has been always preserved in it". I agree with you in the opinion that the words, "in qua", are to be applied to Rome, (that is, to the Church of Rome,) and not to "every Church", as some have supposed; and indeed Neander has shown that the *relative* must here refer to the *remote* and not to the *immediate antecedent*. But your explanation of this last clause, as importing that the faithful of other Churches preserved the Apostolic Tradition "even in Rome itself", appears to *reverse* the order of the connexion between the Church of Rome and other Churches, as laid down in the text, and indeed it scarcely conveys any intelligible mean-

ing. However, it must be admitted that the words, "ab his," are equally obscure on any other construction; and there seems to be much probability in the conjecture of Gieseler, who supposes that the translator was mistaken in rendering the Greek dative by these words. In this case the clause would mean—"in which Church [of Rome] the Apostolic Tradition has ever been preserved for the Christians of all countries in the world". Even Neander inclines to this view of the passage, though he thinks it necessary to add—"not the slightest danger can accrue to the interests of Protestantism, which I profess, by recognising a high antiquity of the Roman Catholic element, both in general and in particular."\*

And finally, my Lord, if your interpretation be admitted, it is evident that the reasoning of St. Irenæus would be totally inconclusive; for he states in the beginning of the Chapter, that his *object* is to prove that the Apostolical Tradition of the Faith was the same in all Churches in the whole world; and his *argument* is, the necessity of their universal recourse to the Church of Rome, which therefore may be said to comprehend them all, not only by way of example, but as the centre and representative of all others—whereas the mere circumstance of their "flocking to Rome" (even if that were possible) would not be sufficient to prove the unity of the faith in all Churches; and yet St. Irenæus himself regards his statement as perfectly conclusive; for, having given a Catalogue of all the Bishops of Rome down to his own time, he ends this part of the Chapter by saying—"by this order and this succession, the Apostolic Tradition in the Church, and the preaching of the truth, has come down to us. And this is the fullest proof, that it is one and the same vivifying

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\* Neander's Church Hist. Vol. I. p. 286.

faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the Apostles until now, and delivered in truth."†

On the whole, then, I think we may safely come to the conclusion, that, whatever degree of obscurity there may be in particular expressions in this celebrated passage, which has reached us only through the medium of a barbarous Latin Translation, it is a most remarkable testimony to the Primacy of Rome in the Second Century, which can only admit of a satisfactory explanation, when interpreted by the facts of Church history, and viewed in the light of Catholic doctrine. And, indeed, the whole passage bears a striking resemblance to the language of St. Cyprian, in the following Century, in which, writing to Pope Cornelius, at a time when (to use your Lordship's expression) "Christianity was scarcely tolerated in Rome", he refers to that See, as "the Chair of Peter, and the *principal Church*, from whence the sacerdotal unity derived its beginning"‡—expressions which could only be applied to spiritual Supremacy, and not to temporal power in any sense.

But you assert that "the Roman Bishop is not even mentioned" in this account of the Roman Church. Now this objection might properly be made by a Presbyterian, but is certainly very inconsistent, coming from your Lordship, with whom the ideas of a Church and a Bishop are supposed to be inseparably connected. But the assertion itself is totally incorrect, as the "Supremacy of the Roman Bishop" forms the very foundation of the argument of St. Irenæus; for, immediately before the words on which you have commented, he dwells particularly on the fact, that the Church of Rome was founded by SS. Peter and Paul, and on the succession of the Bishops

† S. Iren. contra Hær. Lib. III. cap. lii. 3. p. 176.  
Cyp. Epist. iv.—Opp. Tom. I. p. 153. (Ed. Wirecob. 1782.)

from their time; and immediately after it, he gives a Catalogue of the names of all the Bishops of Rome (in a passage which has fortunately been preserved in the original Greek) from Linus to Eleutherius, who held the See of Rome in his own time, and was the 12th in succession from the Apostles.

Indeed, the very objection which you urge against the Pope's Supremacy, derived from the persecuted condition of the Church in primitive times, tends to prove the very reverse. You justly remark, "that the Roman Bishop, when S. Irenæus wrote, could not possibly have had any *potentior principatus*, anything that could be called a dominion", during the reign of the heathen Emperors. But this circumstance still more clearly illustrates the argument in favor of the Church, as it shows that the Primacy, which St. Irenæus ascribes to the Church of Rome, could have had no reference to *secular* power; but entirely to *spiritual* authority, which was altogether independent of all temporal sovereignty, while the several appeals that were made to the Bishop of Rome in the early ages, from the most remote parts of the world, on various questions of doctrine and discipline, furnish a striking incidental proof of the peculiar reverence which was always paid to the Apostolic See from the most ancient times.

You remark, my Lord, on "the extreme confusion that seems to pervade my mind on the subject of Inspiration and Infallibility". I confess I am not aware of it; and though I make no pretensions to any peculiar clearness of intellectual vision, I must say that this is precisely the defect which I observe in your own remarks on this subject. You appear to have fallen into the common error of confounding *Infallibility of doctrine* with *Impeccability of life*, with reference to the inspired

instruments of divine revelation. You admit "that St. Peter was not always infallible" and that "St. Paul himself says so". But this statement, surely, requires correction. St. Paul says that "he was to be *blamed*" for his *conduct* at Antioch. (Gal. ii. 11.) But to what does this censure apply? Was there any difference of *teaching* between the two Apostles? Not the slightest. There was the most perfect harmony on every point of doctrine. The only apparent difference was on a matter of practical prudence, in which St. Peter seemed to act inconsistently with his own teaching, and therefore he was justly reprov'd by St. Paul, who "withstood him *to the face*"—an expression implying a certain degree of *boldness* in this act of an *inferior*, and thus indirectly referring to his *superior* authority; but there is nothing whatever in this passage at variance with the perpetual Infallibility or the Ecclesiastical Supremacy of St. Peter. You refer also to our Saviour's rebuke of St. Peter, (Matt. xvi. 23), as proving the same thing. But you forget that this incident took place before the day of Pentecost, when he was "filled with the Holy Ghost", and surely no one holds that the Apostles were inspired or infallible at an earlier date. But if St. Peter was not always infallible after that day, how are we to *distinguish* the occasions when he *was* or was *not*? Was he infallible only in *writing* his Epistles, and not in *teaching* the doctrines of the Gospel? If so, what ground is there for this distinction? It is certainly never drawn by himself, or by any other of the Apostles. His claim to divine inspiration, in both characters, rests upon the general promises of Christ; and the particular instrument, whether written or unwritten, by which that inspiration was communicated and transmitted to us, rests upon the authority of the Church. And in like manner, you refer to

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the examples of Moses, David, Jonah, and Balaam, and you pronounce that each of them was fallible, because he was guilty of some sin or neglect of duty, which has surely no reference to the question of Infallibility, either as to themselves, or the Apostles, or the spiritual rulers of the Church at the present day.

You repeat also the usual charges which have been advanced against the Popes, the most serious of which are, that "these several infallible heads have notoriously differed from each other", and that "some of them have denounced as heresy what others of them have proclaimed as Christianity". Had your Lordship substantiated these general charges by referring to some particular instances in proof, there might have been some weight in this accusation; but, as we utterly deny the truth of the statement, it cannot be expected that any impression should be produced on our minds, without an appeal to the authentic records of Ecclesiastical History.

You refer to the supposed necessity for an infallible interpreter of divine revelation, as "arising from the weakness and ignorance of mankind, or from the obscurity of the Scriptures", and you argue that the same philological difficulties equally apply to the interpretation of all other ancient documents. But, my Lord, it must be remembered that the Scriptures themselves were not the documents in which the Christian revelation was originally communicated to the world, nor do they profess to contain a complete account of the doctrines of that revelation. They pre-suppose a certain amount of knowledge of Christianity, on the part of their readers, as already acquired from another source of instruction, and indeed, without this, their language is frequently unintelligible. Besides, they require to have their own inspiration fully established by divine authority, which can only be

done by the Infallibility of the Church, which has delivered them to us, as the Word of God. Thus the necessity of an infallible interpreter is not merely the result of any *a priori* reasoning on the subject, but is the simple consequence of the fact of a divine revelation having been given to man. What, then, was the rule of faith to the primitive Christians before the New Testament was committed to writing? and before the Canon of Scripture was finally settled? Was it not the doctrine or the tradition of the Apostles, committed to the Church? And is not the same rule of faith still sufficient for us, transmitted in all its integrity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and quite independent of any different interpretations of particular texts of Scripture? Surely the object of divine faith, from its very nature, must be definite and certain, and not founded on mere probabilities and deductions, which ultimately terminate in human opinion and private judgment. It is evident, indeed, that we have no knowledge of the way of salvation, except from the revelation of God; and it is equally true, that we have no certainty of the particular doctrines of that revelation, except from the Church of God, to whom the revelation was originally entrusted by our Divine Redeemer, to be transmitted, in perpetual succession, to all future ages. Without this, it follows that there is now no divine Teacher in the world at all—the office of the Holy Ghost has ceased in the Church—every one is left to find it out for himself—every doctrine of Christianity is thus an open question—and consequently there is no real distinction between religious truth and error.

But, my Lord, you refer to the analogy of the Jewish Church, as sufficient to justify the want of infallible authority at the present day. But, even granting that the Jewish Church was not infallible before the coming

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of Christ (which is only supposed, not conceded), is there no difference between the two Dispensations? between the type and the anti-type, the shadow and the substance—the one declared to be but local and temporary, the other universal and everlasting? What mean the prophecies of the “New Covenant”—the “better Covenant, which was established upon better promises”, as explained by St. Paul, (Heb. viii. 6–13)? What mean the promises of our blessed Lord?—“I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”. (Matt. xvi. 18) —“I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”. (Matt. xxviii. 20)—“I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever”. (John xiv. 16.) Were there any such promises given to the Church of the Old Testament? And if such promises may be applied to individuals, surely much more to the universal Church of Christ, as they have been always understood in that sense. Why then should we expect to find the gift of Infallibility referred to in the Epistles, in more “plain and unambiguous terms”, when these Epistles do not refer to any other standard of faith than the constant teaching of the Pastors of the Church in each successive age, and not to any collection of writings under the title of the New Testament, as a separate and independent rule of faith?

Your next statement refers to the *perpetuity* of St. Peter's prerogatives, as transmitted to his successors in the See of Rome. You intimate that the charge given by our Saviour to St. Peter is unfairly “distorted into the claim of a prerogative”. I presume that you refer to the threefold charge to feed the flock of Christ, as recorded in John xxi. 15–17. I would ask, then, even on the ground of verbal criticism, what reason is there to doubt that our Lord thus intended to confer an important

prerogative upon St. Peter? or by what other form of words do you suppose that such a prerogative could be conferred? You are aware that *right* and *duty* are correlative terms; and if an *obligation* was thus imposed by our Lord upon St. Peter to feed His lambs and His sheep, what is this but the act of conferring upon him a most sacred *prerogative*, which was granted to none other of the Apostles? Certainly no argument against this interpretation can be founded on the use of the *present imperative*, instead of the *future indicative*, when we find that a similar mode of address is adopted by our Lord on other most solemn occasions, when He invested the Apostles with peculiar spiritual functions, as at the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, "*Do this* in remembrance of Me", (Luke xxii. 19)—of the Sacrament of Penance, "*Receive ye* the Holy Ghost" (John xx. 22)—or in giving His great commission "*Go ye* into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). It is scarcely necessary to remark, that this charge has been constantly interpreted, by the voice of Catholic Tradition, as committing the pastoral care of the Universal Church to St. Peter. Thus St. Cyprian, in discoursing on the Unity of the Church, quotes the promise in Matt. xvi. 18, 19, as the foundation of St. Peter's prerogatives, after which he proceeds—"And again He says to him, after His resurrection, *Feed My sheep*. He builds His Church upon him alone, and *commits to him the feeding of His sheep*".\* St. Ambrose, too, after quoting our Lord's words to St. Peter in Luke xxii. 31, 32, adds this remark—"Peter is appointed over the Church, after he was tempted by the Devil. And thus our Lord signifies beforehand what was meant by the circumstance, that *He afterwards chose him to*

\* S. Cyp. Opp. Tom. 1. p. 349.

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be *Pastor of the Lord's Flock*".\* In like manner, St. Chrysostom asks the question—"For what purpose did Christ shed His blood? That He might purchase *the sheep which He committed to the care of Peter and his successors*".† St. Augustine, among other motives of his attachment to the Catholic Church, mentions the uninterrupted succession of the Roman Pontiffs—"the succession of Bishops in the See of the Apostle Peter, to whom the Lord, after His Resurrection, committed the feeding of His sheep".‡ It must be remembered, too, that our blessed Lord had previously referred to His Universal Church, as composed of Jews and Gentiles, when He promised that "there shall be one Fold, and one Shepherd". (John x. 16.) It is evident that this passage relates to the Unity of the visible Church of Christ on earth, and the very idea of a visible Fold implies that of a visible Shepherd; yet it is certain that this promise was not fulfilled till after His Ascension, and as He was Himself personally absent from His Church, it could only be accomplished by the appointment of that Apostle, to whom He gave the charge to "feed His sheep", as His substitute and representative.

But, my Lord, you inform us that this prerogative "was never claimed by the Apostle". I suppose that the assertion rests on the ground, that we do not read of any such claim formally advanced by the Apostle, and directly recorded in the sacred history. But this surely proves nothing. We do not find any mention of any claim formally made by St. Peter to the other promises of our Lord, (Matt. xvi. 18, 19. Luke xxii. 31, 32) which will be admitted to confer some peculiar preroga-

\* S. Ambros. Opp. Tom. I. p. 904.

† S. Chrysost. Opp. Tom. I. p. 372.

‡ S. August. Opp. Tom. VIII. p. 152.

tives upon him. It was surely unnecessary for the Apostle to make such claims, as these promises were given to him in the presence of the other Apostles, and it was unnecessary for the Evangelist to record such claims if made, as they had already been included in the Gospel narrative. We do not find that any of the Twelve Apostles ever formally claimed the divine commission which they had received, as far as we can collect from the Acts of the Apostles, though it appears that St. Paul frequently did so, as his own case was of a peculiar and extraordinary nature, his Apostolical authority having been received, not from Christ on earth, but after His Ascension into heaven. But, in the case of the other Apostles, it is evident that their commission was claimed rather by *acts* than by *words*, and so we find St. Peter constantly taking his place as the chief of the Apostles, on every occasion, from the day of Pentecost till the Council of Jerusalem, so that the first half of St. Luke's narrative might more properly be entitled the "Acts of St. Peter", rather than the "Acts of the Apostles".

You state, however, that I have "added to this a claim which the text does not give, the continuance of that power in the hands of the Bishops of Rome". You seem, then, to suppose, that this power was merely *personal*, and that it expired with the death of St. Peter himself. But, surely, on this principle, *all* spiritual power must have ceased in the Church at the death of the Apostles; and consequently the whole doctrine of Apostolical Succession falls to the ground at once, as there is no express promise given to the successors of the Apostles, and therefore Protestant Dissenters are fully justified, on the private interpretation of Scripture, in rejecting the Anglican claims of Episcopacy. The same

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rule of interpretation must be applied to both. If the Primacy of St. Peter be merely *personal*, then the Apostolical office must be merely personal too; but if the latter be *perpetual* so must the former. And certainly the perpetual, continuance of the Primacy of St. Peter and his successors is evidently included in the very terms of the great promise, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church" which was built upon the Apostle, as this expression plainly implies the perpetuity of the *foundation*, as well as the *building* itself, with which it is inseparably connected, as one of the inherent rights belonging, by divine promise, to the See of Rome, which was founded by St. Peter. Indeed, the very metaphor of a solid foundation includes the ideas of *unity* and *durability*, as its distinguishing characteristics—it affords a guarantee that the foundation can never fail, and must continue for ever—that the *Rock* is as permanent as the *Church* itself—and consequently it follows that the spiritual jurisdiction, granted to St. Peter, descends in regular succession, to all his legitimate representatives, to the end of the world. Such was the view of the promise held by the Fathers and Councils of the Church in every age; and it must surely be admitted, even on the ordinary principles of historical evidence, that they possessed opportunities for understanding the true meaning of Our Saviour's words, of an infinitely higher nature than any interpreters of Scripture in the present day, however plausibly they may argue from the apparent silence of the New Testament, and from the possibility of affixing some other meaning to the words of our blessed Lord—arguments which may be equally applied, and which are constantly applied, by Arians and Socinians, to subvert every other doctrine of Christianity.

You state, however, my Lord, that "the whole suppe-

sition is grounded on two fallacies; first, the confounding Inspiration (which is a special and particular grace vouchsafed not to Apostles alone, but to certain persons chosen by God to communicate his will to mankind) with a general Infallibility given to a certain Church; and secondly, the confounding of St. Peter's possession of this gift, *at certain periods of his life, when it pleased God to communicate to him a revelation of divine truth*, with the claim of the Bishops of Rome, to be the successive infallible interpreters of the original revelation made known by all the Apostles, of which there is not the faintest trace in Scripture". Now, it does not appear what the question of inspiration has to do with the argument, if this expression refers to the divine assistance granted to the authors of the Books of the New Testament. It is certain that our blessed Lord never gave any promise on this subject, nor did He ever give any directions to His Apostles, or any other persons, to write any books at all, so far as we have any information recorded by themselves, The supernatural guidance of the Holy Ghost, promised to the Apostles, had no particular reference to their *writings*, but to their *teachings*, nor was it promised to themselves alone, but to their successors for ever. And further, we do not hold, that there "was a general Infallibility given to a certain Church", but to the One Universal Church, in communion with St. Peter and the other Apostles and their successors to the end of time. But why, my Lord, do you include "certain persons" with the Apostles, as possessed of the same gift of Inspiration? What reason have you to suppose that St. Mark and St. Luke were divinely inspired, as well as St. Peter and St. Paul? They do not advance any claim for the inspiration of their own Writings, and there is no internal

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\* Leslie

evidence by which their narratives may be distinguished from those of other pious Christian authors of those times. It is difficult to understand on what grounds their Works are admitted into the Canon of Scripture, by those who deny the Infallibility of the Church, by whose authority they have been pronounced to be written under the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The second fallacy to which you refer has already been considered, and the argument shown to rest upon an arbitrary division of St. Peter's life into "certain periods" after the day of Pentecost, when he is supposed to have been occasionally under the influence of inspiration, while the objection is entirely founded upon a modern interpretation of the divine promises made to him.

I am surprised, my Lord, that you are under the necessity of having recourse to the sophistical argument of Leslie\*, that "even if the power be itself infallible, unless it can make us so too, it cannot guard us from errors incident to all mankind". I suppose this means that we must be infallible ourselves, in order to be sure that we rightly understand the meaning of an infallible exposition of Christian doctrine. But it is evident, from the nature of the case, that an infallible person has no need of an infallible expositor at all. Is it possible that you can be serious in using such an argument, in which the word "infallible" is used in two totally different senses—the one relating to *divine inspiration*, the other to *human certainty*? Can there be no such thing as an infallible faith, without the infallibility of the individual believer? If this be the case, then it follows that no Protestant can possess an infallible faith, on their own principles, for both Protestants and Catholics alike disclaim all preten-

\* Leslie's Case Stated.—Works, Vol. I. p. 497. (Ed. 1721.)

sions to individual infallibility on the part of private Christians, while both appeal to an infallible standard of divine revelation. Every objection of this kind may be fairly retorted on the Protestant rule of faith, and indeed it is applicable to it alone; for it is obvious, on your own showing, that we have at least the important advantage of a living, speaking authority, to explain the true doctrines of the Church, if any doubt should possibly arise; and surely every written law, divine or human, becomes a dead letter without the authoritative decision of a living interpreter—whereas it is impossible to resolve any doubt, or terminate any dispute, on any article of faith, among those who reject the authority of an infallible Judge of controversy.

But, my Lord, you attempt to prove the complete sufficiency of Holy Scripture from the testimony of St. Peter, taken in connexion with the declaration of St. Paul, in his Second Epistle to Timothy. Now, it is certain that St. Paul's language applies only to the Old Testament, as there were no other Scriptures in existence at the time to which he refers. No part of the New Testament was written when Timothy was a child; and consequently, if this language were understood in the Protestant sense, as asserting the sufficiency of the Scriptures alone, it would evidently prove that the Old Testament is fully sufficient without the New, which must therefore be an unnecessary addition, though St. Paul makes no such statement, as he only asserts, with the Catholic Church, that "all Scripture is *profitable*", *not sufficient*, for all the purposes there described. Nor has St. Peter's testimony any direct bearing on the subject. It is well known that there is some ambiguity in the meaning of the passage (2 Pet. ïii. 16); as the words, "in which", do not relate to

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the *Epistles* of St. Paul (as the English Translation would seem to imply), but to the *things* referred to by the Apostle, as is evident from the different genders in the Greek words, according to the received text. Nor is it certain that St. Paul's Epistles are expressly included among "the other Scriptures" here mentioned; and it is remarked by a learned Biblical Critic, that, in this passage, "*some think* the Writings of Paul and other Apostles are meant".\* Besides, there is no enumeration here given of St. Paul's Epistles, though you state that they were "fourteen in number", because these are all that we *now* possess. And yet we find that St. Paul himself refers to three of his Epistles which have, most probably, long since been lost, (1 Cor. v. 9. Eph. iii. 3. Col. iv. 16), though these must have been included among "all his Epistles" referred to by St. Peter. Further, it must not be forgotten, that St. Peter's Second Epistle itself was one of the last admitted into the Canon of the New Testament, as there were considerable doubts as to its authenticity in the primitive Church; and, indeed, Origen is the only one of all the Fathers of the first three Centuries, who expressly refers to it, though with some doubtful marks of approbation. When, therefore, you refer to St. Peter's authority relative to St. Paul's Epistles, and "by parity of reasoning, to the other parts of the New Testament", you forget the important fact, that the Canon of the New Testament was not settled for several Centuries after the time of St. Peter; while there is nothing whatever in their own language to justify the assertion that "it is evident, from the testimony of these two Apostles, that all that was known as Holy Scripture, contained suffi-

\* Robinson's Greek Lexicon to New Test. p. 157. (Ed. Edin. 1838) Vid. Schleusner Lexicon in Nov. Test. Vol. I. p. 420. (Ed. Lond. 1829.)

ciently all things necessary to salvation, and that we are referred to no other source". You admit, indeed, "that the teaching of St. Paul, by word of mouth, was also able to make Timothy wise unto salvation"; but then you assert that "such oral instructions no longer exist"—which is merely assuming the whole question, in opposition to the uniform doctrine of the Church in all ages, and the language of St. Paul to Timothy himself (2 Tim. i. 13, 14 and ii. 2) as well as to other Churches (1 Cor. xi. 2. 2 Thess. ii. 14, and iii. 6.)

However, you assert, as before, that "the possessors of this supposed infallibility of interpretation do not themselves agree", and you prove it by referring to the fact, that there have been various rival candidates for the Papal office, which has surely no connexion with any article of faith; while you further state that "that which one Pope solemnly and repeatedly declares to be a mark of Antichrist, another as unhesitatingly declares to be necessary to everlasting salvation". This allusion is, no doubt, to the case of Pope Gregory the Great, and his remarks on the title of "Universal Bishop"; and it is certainly surprising to find such an extraordinary misrepresentation of an historical fact. Are you aware that Pope Gregory though he objected to this title in the sense in which it was assumed by the Patriarch of Constantinople, yet asserted and exercised, as strongly as any of his predecessors or successors, supreme spiritual jurisdiction, as the successor of St. Peter, over the Universal Church of Christ? Indeed we have the clearest evidence on this point, even from his own Epistles, in which we find him settling the affairs of the Church in every part of the world, in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and particularly in England, to which he sent the first Missionary Bishop

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among the Anglo-Saxons, and constituted him the first Archbishop of Canterbury, committing all the British Bishops to his government, and dividing the country into new Dioceses, so that he is justly regarded as the Founder of the Church of England in Catholic times. He thought, however, that the title of "Universal Bishop" appeared to savour of pride, and to interfere with the ordinary jurisdiction of Bishops, though, at the same time, he asserts that every Bishop is subject to the Apostolic See\* ; and thus he explains his own meaning, when he says that "the care of the whole Church was committed to Peter, and yet he is not styled the Universal Apostle".† It is perfectly clear, then, that while the expression admits of different senses, it was virtually admitted by this Pope in its usual signification, and thus there is not the slightest real foundation for this objection, which you regard as the strongest that can be brought in opposition to the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. I need not dwell upon your remark as to the "precise seat of the infallible power", as all Catholics are fully agreed that its *source* is the perpetual teaching of the Holy Ghost in the Church, according to the promises of Christ, and its *channel* is the voice of Peter and his successors in the See of Rome, whether acting with, or without, the assistance of a General Council.

Still, however, you consider the modern Church of England as approximating most nearly to the standard of the primitive Church, and challenge us to "name one ancient Creed of the three first Centuries, which contains the doctrines now set forth by us as necessary to salvation." Now, my Lord, you are surely fully aware,

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\* S. Gregorii M. Opp. Tom. II. pp. 941, 976. (Ed. Ben.)

† Ibid. Tom. II. p. 748.

that the ancient Creeds of the Church did not profess to contain a list of all the Articles of the Christian Faith ; and therefore their silence on any particular points of doctrine cannot be alleged as a proof that such doctrine was unknown to the Church in those times. The Creeds contained a concise summary of Christian doctrine, expressing the *general principles* rather than the *particular dogmas* of the Faith, and were enlarged, from time to time, in opposition to the various heresies which arose in the Church. Indeed, almost the only "Creed of the first three Centuries" is the Apostles' Creed; and we there find an explicit profession of faith in "the Holy Catholic Church", equally clear and definite with that of faith in the Holy Ghost, with which it is immediately connected, as the *visible* organ of the *invisible* agency of the Spirit of God. This general profession, then, includes all particular articles of faith proposed by the authority of the Holy Catholic Church, and therefore the Apostles' Creed virtually asserts the same principle with that now held by the Roman Catholic Church. But where will you find any of the ancient Creeds, not only in the three first Centuries, but in the whole range of Christian antiquity, which contains any of the *peculiar* doctrines or principles held by the Protestant Church of England at the present day? Still further, where will you find any of these Creeds, which contains all the doctrines which are held *in common* by Catholics and by Protestants? The Apostles' Creed contains no allusion whatever to the existence of the Holy Scriptures, or to the doctrines of the Holy Trinity—the Divinity of Christ—the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; or to the doctrines of Original Sin—Divine Grace—Justification—Regeneration, or to any of the Sacraments of the Gospel. If, then, the mere circum-

stance of the *omission* of these doctrines in the Creed is not sufficient to overthrow their truth, surely it must be allowed, that the same omission forms no valid objection to other doctrines, which have been always held in the Catholic Church, though not explicitly enumerated in the Apostles' Creed.

With respect to the peculiar veneration and devotion paid by Catholics to the Blessed Virgin, a few remarks will be sufficient, though I have already alluded to the subject of the Immaculate Conception, in a former part of this Letter. You profess to regard this practice, and the whole system of "modern Romanism" involved in it, as "thoroughly uncatholic and unscriptural". Your only objection is the *silence* of the Epistles of the New Testament on this point. But this silence really proves nothing, whether we regard the New Testament as an historical record, or as a divine revelation. No one, surely, will assert that the New Testament professes to give a complete account of all the details of Christian worship, or to exhibit a systematic view of Christian doctrine and practice. Every existing denomination of Protestants, who hold that the Bible is the only rule of faith, must admit that they have some difficulty to get over, in order to reconcile every part of their own system with the statements of the Bible, and they have each some conjectural theory, by which they endeavor to account for the omissions, apparent inconsistencies, and other peculiarities in the structure and contents of the New Testament. These are, indeed, insurmountable objections to the Protestant principles; but they are no objections at all to the Catholic principles, according to which the Bible is regarded as only one part of divine revelation, and to be interpreted by the authority of the

Church. If, then, it can be clearly shown, what religious system the Bible does positively teach, it may then be admitted that there is some real force in the argument drawn from the silence of Scripture. We fully admit, indeed, that the Bible does not contain a systematic Exposition of Catholic Doctrine, and we maintain that it was never intended for such a purpose, as it consists, chiefly, of various occasional pieces, written for the direction of Christians who were already instructed in the truths of the Gospel, to which there are frequent incidental allusions, though very few of a formal or dogmatical character, as the sacred writers invariably suppose their readers to be well acquainted with these subjects from other sources of information. In fact, the evidence on this point is precisely similar to that relating to other important points of Christian practice, as received by the Church of England. Such, for instance, is the example of Infant Baptism. Your own remarks on the Veneration of the Blessed Virgin may be fully applied to this subject. There is certainly no direct authority for it in Scripture, and scarcely any historical evidence in its favor during the first four Centuries. It is not till the 5th Century, that we have a full recognition of the practice, as well as of the doctrine of Original Sin, on which it is founded, in the Writings of St. Augustine. The two cases are precisely analogous to each other, and it is certain that the objections of the Baptists against this practice of the Church of England, are quite as strong as the objections of the Protestants against the practice of the Catholic Church. The truth is that these objections are generally connected with unsound views of the doctrine of the Incarnation; and accordingly we find that it was in this connexion that

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the third General Council of Ephesus, in 431, pronounced anathema against those who deny that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God, which was the beginning of the heresy of Nestorius\*. Although, in the scanty remains of the primitive ages, we meet only with such brief notices on this point, as may be considered to form the germ of the Catholic practice; yet when we come to the 4th Century, we find in the Works of the Fathers (and particularly of St. Ephraim Syrus) the language of direct Invocation of the Mother of God, and confidence in her Intercession, quite as strong as any expressions which occur at this day in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, or in the "*Salve Regina*", or even in the devotions of St. Liguori, to which you particularly refer. It is true that we do not meet with such language in the New Testament, nor do we ever meet with a single instance of the direct Invocation of the Holy Spirit, and scarcely ever, of our Blessed Lord, in the Sacred Volume. The silence of the Scriptures is surely no conclusive argument in the one case, and why should it be in the other? Both practices were but the legitimate development of the respective offices sustained by the Persons of the adorable Trinity, and by the Virgin Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ in the economy of redemption, and both of them rest on the same divine authority of the Church, which forms the only true foundation of all the other doctrines and practices of Christianity.

I have thus ventured, my Lord, to offer the preceding observations on this portion of your Charge, though I am aware that I have but slightly touched on some important topics to which you have adverted, as I have entered more fully into these subjects in my former publications. I need scarcely remark, that I have long since attentively considered the various objections which you

\* Catalani SS. Concil. Œcum Tom. I. p. 195.

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-

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land. They were written by me, as they occurred to my own mind, with a view to further inquiry, more than a year ago, and are entered among my private papers under the title of the "Difficulties of Protestantism".

1. To vindicate the Reformed Churches from the charge of heresy and schism, in separating from the Church of Rome.

2. To prove that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation.

3. To prove, on Protestant principles, the divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, and of each particular book contained in them.

4. To reconcile the certainty of faith with the right of private judgment.

5. To prove that the Church of Rome in the 19th Century, is essentially different, in doctrine, from the Church of Rome in the 1st Century.

6. To reconcile the supposed general corruption of Christianity, during several Centuries, with the promises of Christ's perpetual presence with His Church to the end of the world.

7. To account for the general reception of Roman Catholic doctrines in the ancient Church, on the supposition of their human origin.

8. To decide at what period of history the Church of Rome departed from the Primitive Faith, and introduced new doctrines into her system, so as to justify a separation from her Communion.

9. To decide at what period of history the Reformed Church of England is to be considered the true Church of Christ in that country.

10. To reconcile the principle of the obligation of the English Prayer Book in the reign of Elizabeth, with the fact of its rejection by all the representatives of the English Clergy.

11. To refute the objection, that the English Reformation was established by the authority of the State, in opposition to that of the Church.

12. To prove that the Royal Supremacy, in the Church of England, is consistent with the divine authority of the Church of Christ.

13. To prove, from Scripture alone, the perpetual obligation of the Christian Sacraments, Ministry, and public worship.

14. To prove the temporary continuance of various practices recorded in the New Testament, viz., Extreme Unction, Washing one another's feet, miraculous powers, community of goods, prohibition of oaths, prohibition of blood, &c.

15. To prove the Scriptural authority for Episcopacy, Infant Baptism, and the Christian Sabbath.

16. To prove that the Eucharist, as well as Baptism, is not to be administered to Infants.

17. To distinguish between doctrines essential and non-essential to salvation.

18. To refute the objection, that the inevitable tendency of the Protestant principles, both in theory and in practice, is to Socinianism and Infidelity.

19. To account for the fact, that the Protestant system of doctrine is rejected by all other Churches in the world, both in the East and West, in ancient and modern times.

20. To prove that the Church of England has any religious claims, which do not equally belong to any other Protestant denomination.

21. To reconcile the divided state of the Protestant Churches with the belief in "One, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."

On the other hand I drew up a paper, which I need not here insert, containing a similar statement of

the "difficulties of Romanism," for the purpose of comparing them together, and weighing them against each other, in the balance of the Sanctuary; and having solemnly resolved to decide for eternity, according to my sincere convictions, and in view of the judgment seat of Christ, I cannot entertain the slightest doubt that I was acting under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, in embracing the communion of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church.

In conclusion, I am deeply convinced that all the efforts of human reasoning, on the subject of religion, are but preparatory to the work of divine grace in the soul. All that we can do is, to assist in removing the intellectual difficulties which obstruct the entrance of truth into the understanding, but it belongs to God alone to enlighten the mind with the precious gift of faith, and to produce such a degree of supernatural conviction on the heart as may lead to a public profession of the Catholic Faith, and a full appreciation of the inestimable blessings which are to be enjoyed in union with that one mysterious Society, which has ever continued the faithful representative of Christ's Holy Catholic Church on earth.

I pray that God would grant us, by the light of His Holy Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things,—and I remain, my Lord, with much esteem,

Yours very faithfully,

EDMUND MATURIN.

Halifax, Nova Scotia,  
December 10, 1859.

