

Papal Supremacy and Infallibility

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I. Papal Supremacy — Can you have Unity without it?

The Church is by divine appointment a visible society with an external organization binding its members together and placing them under the spiritual government of bishops and clergy.

This much is not only clear beyond a doubt from the Holy Scriptures and the history of the primitive Church, but is also common ground between Catholics and the High Church section of Anglicans. Anglicans likewise admit that as there is one Baptism, so it is desirable there should be one Faith everywhere professed, and perfect sacramental intercommunion prevailing between the various portions of the world-wide society. Catholics go further, and believe unity of faith and communion to be not only desirable but essential. However in the present paper we must commence from common ground, and therefore I only postulate as a starting point the desirability of these two attributes. Since they are desirable, it may be assumed that God has made provision to secure their maintenance: also we may be sure that the provision will be of an orderly not a violent character — we cannot believe that God would build up with one hand what He would at once need to destroy with the other. And hence the external organization of the Church must be one of which the natural tendency is to preserve unity — not to excite divisions: for otherwise the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit would be required not to elevate but to destroy such natural tendency. Let us try the Anglican and the Catholic systems by this test.

According to Anglicans each local Church enjoys independence. It is not quite clear whether they attribute the independence to each diocese or province, or only to each national Church; but that is a question of detail which need not detain us. Although the local churches are separately independent, each owes submission to the Church Universal, and therefore to a General Council, which is the Church Universal assembled in the person of representatives from its constituent dioceses. Hence if a General Council is sitting, it has supreme power to inquire into and settle with authority controversies concerning faith. To its definitions, which are infallible, the local churches are then bound to render assent, under penalty of separation from the communion of the faithful, and forfeiture of character as duly-constituted portions of the Church Universal. General Councils however are not always possible. The earliest was not held till two centuries later than the death of the latest Apostle, and the last which any Anglicans acknowledge took place in the ninth century. During the prolonged intervals between successive Councils, the office of determining disputed questions of faith, in default of any common authority, falls to each separate Church. This duty carries with it the further responsibility of deciding whether other local churches have so far corrupted the faith that communion with them can no longer be maintained without sacrifice of the allegiance due to truth: from which it results that if two or more portions of the Church are at variance among themselves as to what is corruption and what is purity of faith, they must interrupt

communion until either one party has changed its mind, or a General Council has supervened and decided.

Here is the Anglican system, and surely it does not stand the test above given. Its tendency is not to preserve unity but to encourage divisions. The active workings of the human mind are ever raising difficulties against received beliefs, and the history of the Church witnesses to a continual succession of disputes concerning the nature of God, of the Incarnation, Predestination, Grace, the Sacraments, — in short, concerning the entire range of Christian dogmas. Each age has had its own controversies. Thus the question of intercommunion must inevitably be soon forced to the front. Let us study the matter in the concrete, and for the purpose make the inconceivable supposition that the Churches which own the Pope's supremacy are prepared so far to surrender to Anglican arguments as to disavow it, retaining at the same time their present belief on all other dogmas. The "branches" desire to restore intercommunion, but agreement must first be obtained, and what likelihood is there of this? Anglicans express great confidence in their arguments, and are sure that if once Catholics gave up the Papacy and disengaged themselves from the bias its acknowledgement involves, it would not be long before they abandoned their other errors as well. We Catholics on the other hand are not so impressed by Anglican arguments. We think our own infinitely superior, and in our turn believe theirs to be the outcome chiefly of misconception and prejudice. This same difference would in all probability continue to exist even after the postulated disavowal of Papal authority, and would last till a General Council could be convoked. How soon would this be? The Anglicans and the Greeks have not yet succeeded in assembling a Council among themselves, although there is no Pope to stand between them. Would it be easier for three "branches" to assemble a Council than it is for two? Governments would be likely to intervene, fearful lest the result should brand beliefs rooted in the hearts of their people and should disturb the tranquillity of their realms. There would be quarrels as to the share of the representation to which the Churches were respectively entitled. Should the inferior clergy be represented? should unattached bishops? should one "branch" be allowed to swamp the rest by undue multiplication of its own episcopate? Here surely are hard facts which would delay the meeting for years and perhaps centuries, the undesirable state of interrupted intercommunion being meanwhile forced to endure.

But let us suppose the difficulties at last overcome by some *deus ex machinâ* and the Council assembled. Let us even pass over any embarrassments that might arise as to the choice of a president. Provided it were arranged that the president should be a mere chairman, with no voting preponderance over his fellows, it is quite possible this preliminary might be arranged without serious dispute. But now we have the parties face to face, each bringing with it a deep-rooted attachment to its own beliefs and a conscientious conviction that its opponents are in the wrong. There would be plenty of hot blood. When the Pan-Anglican Conference meets, although its members are divided among themselves by enormous doctrinal differences, the proceedings nevertheless are consistently decorous and result in resolutions. This however is due to the studious care taken not to touch the raw. Propositions are drawn up, either of a colourless character or else conceived like the Thirty-Nine Articles in ambiguous language, and there is much euphemistic talk about large-minded comprehensiveness. But in a General Council the encounter would be real. Comprehensiveness would be at a discount. Ambiguity would have to give place to the nicest accuracy of expression. And then what chance of an agreement? Imagine a Cardinal Vaughan being won over by the debates, to the language of the Thirty-Nine Articles on Justification by Faith and Works of Supererogation; or a Dr. Ryle of Liverpool to the Tridentine doctrine on Indulgences! Out of the impossibility of reaching general agreement through discussion would grow the further

dispute whether conciliar authority attached to the voice of the majority or only to that of unanimity. The minority would of course be biased strongly in favour of the latter alternative. Each side could offer forcible reasons for its own contention. The one side would trace the authority of Councils to the witness they are able to render to the universal prevalence of the dogmas decreed. Such witness, they could urge, involves general, if not absolute, unanimity among the assembled Fathers. The others would point to the impossibility of securing unanimity in the very cases which most required authoritative settlement, and would contend that either conciliar authority attaches to the voice of the majority or else that General Councils become a farce. One can see no other outlet from the deadlock than the breaking up of the assembly and the return of its members to their dioceses, more full of excitement and recriminations and more confirmed in their previous opinions than ever. So for instance it was at Ephesus. Anglicans may agree with Catholics in thinking that on that occasion the Nestorians were ejected from the Church and the legitimate voice of the Council expressed by the adherents of St. Cyril. But this was not the Nestorian view; and if we estimate the proceedings by the Anglican theory, one does not see why the Nestorian view was untenable.

Let us now suppose in the teeth of all likelihood that our future Council has terminated in complete agreement and the restoration of communion. How long will it last? Is it not morally certain that before long disputes would arise about the interpretation of the conciliar decrees and there would be a recrudescence of the old evil? The causes which produced former differences, continuing to exist and to work, would be ever widening the doctrinal chasm till conscience seemed to compel another breach of communion. In short the Anglican system reveals itself as incapable of maintaining Unity. Its inevitable outcome must be at best a perpetual oscillation between the condition of intercommunion and that of schism, or rather interruption of chronic schism by short intervals of intercommunion. According to this system the state of union is for the Church of God the state of unstable equilibrium.

Now take the Catholic system. This holds that the Bishop of one particular See — that of Rome — is by Divine appointment the Centre of Unity for the entire Church. All are bound to be in communion with him: any Church out of communion with him ceases ipso facto to be a duly constituted member of the whole: it becomes a branch cut off. In pursuance of this radical idea, the Bishop of the Central See has received supreme authority over the whole body, and is further endowed through the special providence of God with the gift of Infallibility, so that the allegiance due to his authority may never be incompatible with the allegiance due to truth. Here is the complete system. Could anything be simpler or more calculated to work with ease? When controversies spring up it lies ultimately with the Supreme Pontiff to decide. The guidance of the Holy Spirit, which secures his decrees from error, is given, not by way of inspiration, but by way of special providence overruling the deliberations which his natural prudence dictates. He is therefore bound to examine and to ponder, to call in the aid of wise counsellors, and, when the crisis demands and the opportunities permit to convoke a General Council of the Church to sit with him in judgement. But there is no longer any difficulty in securing the proper working of such an assembly. Its members, being bred to unity of faith, are not likely to differ so widely and even unanimity is never an improbable issue of their deliberations: but should this fail, there is no uncertainty as to the side from which the authoritative voice comes. It comes from that which can reckon to itself the confirming voice of the Pontiff. So also during the interval between the holding of Councils, there is never any fear or possibility of the Church's Unity being broken. There may indeed be schisms in the sense of portions breaking off from the main body to their own cost. But the Church ever One will always be distinguished from the schismatics, the trunk from the cut-off branch, because the

trunk, the Church, is essentially united with its Supreme Pastor. We have compared the condition of Unity amidst the oscillations essential to the Anglican theory to the condition of unstable equilibrium. To compare this same condition of Unity under the Catholic system to that even of stable equilibrium would be to understate. Unity is not so much a condition to which the oscillating body tends to revert, but rather one from which it is impossible for it to depart.

The comparison we have been considering establishes a presumption in favour of the Catholic doctrine of Papal Supremacy and Infallibility. This by itself is important. It renders the existence of solid arguments in proof of the fact highly probable. It ought also, when biblical or patristic passages by reason of an ambiguity are susceptible of a twofold interpretation, one supporting, the other opposed to the dogma, to tip the scale in its favour. Still presumption is not proof: and it therefore still remains to supply proof.

II. St. Peter's Supremacy — Can it be proved from the Bible?

There are three texts in the Bible for which Anglicans seem unable to assign a satisfactory place in their system, viz., St. Matt. xvi. 13-20, St. Luke xxii. 31, 32, St. John xxi. 15-17. Usually they pass them by unless compelled by a challenge from Catholics to discuss them, and then the discussion is of the most summary kind. It partakes more of the character of explaining what the texts do not mean than what they do mean, and of explaining away rather than explaining.

Let us hear what the first and the chief of these texts (St. Matt. xvi. 13-20) has to say about the Primacy of St. Peter. The time of our Lord's public ministry was drawing to a close, and it was becoming more and more manifest from the persistent rejection of His authority by the leaders of the Jewish people, that He could not hope to engraft the organization of the Church upon that of the Synagogue. The Church must be established on independent lines. He then began to conclude His Galilean preaching. Withdrawing with His disciples to a secluded region far to the north, He gathered them around Him and by an inquiry concerning the nature of the doctrine which lay at the root of the Gospel dispensation, drew from St. Peter a splendid profession of faith in the Divinity of the Messiah. Our Lord pronounced this Apostle blessed, and proceeded to reward his faith by a promise of certain privileges to be conferred upon him. The promise is threefold. He shall be the Rock on which the Church is built, a prerogative already foreshadowed in the change of name given on an earlier occasion (St. John i. 42), for the name Peter means Rock: he shall bear the keys of the kingdom of heaven: he shall receive unlimited power to bind and loose.

These expressions are figurative, and we must ascertain the force of the figures, as received among the Jews, before we can reach the ulterior meaning. The office of a rock in regard to the superimposed building is to sustain it; to impart stability to its structure and preserve it from tottering and tumbling before the blast of the tempest or the inrush of the undermining waters. This is clear from the parable concerning the houses built on the sand and the rock respectively (St. Luke vi. 48,49). Keys are the symbol of rule; or, which comes to much the same, of the power to allow or deny entrance into the city. Compare Apoc. iii. 7, where it is said of our Lord Himself, "Thus saith the Holy and the True One; who hath the key of David; who openeth and no man shutteth; who shutteth and no man openeth" (see also Isaiah xxii. 22). To bind and to loose signifies to remit and retain sins, or else to forbid and allow, that is to legislate. The former is the interpretation usual with the Fathers. The latter is considered by some modern scholars more in accordance with the usage of the Jews. We need not concern ourselves with this difficulty; either sense will do. Peter then received from our Lord (for of course the promise was fulfilled to the letter) the office of imparting

to the Church a stability which should hold its structure firmly together; the power to admit into it and exclude from it; and lastly a most ample legislative right over its members.

It is difficult to see how a plain unprejudiced mind can fail to gather from such language the appointment of St. Peter to the office of Supreme Ruler over the Church. A ruler's office is well described as that of holding together the social organization — remove him and the parts disintegrate into fragments. To a ruler again belongs the power to admit into and to banish from his kingdom, as also that of making laws for those who are admitted. This interpretation is confirmed by St. John xxi. 15-17 where St. Peter is singled out in the same manner from the rest and told to feed the sheep. "To feed his sheep," "to be their pastor," was among Orientals an ordinary description of a king. Our Lord takes the name to Himself. He is the good Shepherd. St. Peter's rule is also according to this passage of St. John a supreme rule. From a Christian ruler, especially an ecclesiastical ruler, there is required above all things devotedness to the service of his master. The higher the authority the greater must be the devotedness. So St. Peter is gently reminded that he must love his Lord "more than these," i.e., more than the other apostles standing by and, if more than these, certainly more than any besides. Thus St. John confirms our interpretation of St. Matthew, by pointing out St. Peter to us as exalted to the post of Supreme Ruler over the Christian Church. The two texts are all in the direction of the Catholic doctrine.

Against so plain an interpretation what have Anglicans to say? We need not trouble to combat those who claim that not Peter, but either Faith, or Christ, is the rock referred to. It is true that some of the Fathers can be quoted in support of such expositions. But in thus expounding, these Fathers have no intention of denying that the text asserted St. Peter's pre-eminence. They differed from the rest merely as to the manner in which this pre-eminence was asserted by the words. It was a discussion about grammar, not theology. Those who took the rock to be faith, meant, not Faith in the abstract, but St. Peter's faith; and they understood his faith to be declared the foundation of the Church in the sense in which a victory is said to be due to the general's skill, instead of to the general himself. It is a mere grammatical figure. The few who took the rock to be Christ, still held the name Peter, in the assertion "Thou art Peter," to imply that he was a foundation intermediate between Christ and the Church. Moreover none are against us as to the signification of the promise of the Keys and of the power to bind and loose. When we have added that no scholar would any longer hesitate to pronounce the exposition which understands the rock of Peter's person to be the only exposition tenable, it will be seen that no successful escape from the Catholic argument can be obtained by this path. Dean Alford (in loc.) says against those who still try to maintain the other theories: "Let us keep to the straightforward sense of Scripture, however that sense may have been misused by Rome:" which is an acknowledgement that up to this point Rome's sense is the only straightforward sense. Nor is it an acknowledgement which reflects upon the ancient Fathers who thought otherwise. We have gained a clearer perception of linguistic processes since their days.

In what then lay the fulfilment, if not in the supremacy of this apostle over the Church, as Catholics understand it? I would here warn the reader to exact a satisfactory answer to this question, and not allow himself to be drawn off to other points till he has received it. Anglican controversialists, having really nothing satisfactory to answer, usually confine themselves to a negative course and amass texts in large quantities from other parts of Scripture which they consider incompatible with the supremacy claimed for the apostle. Blinded by the dust thus raised they are able to satisfy themselves with some sort of off-hand exposition which could otherwise have no chance of acceptance. Catholics have really no difficulty in reconciling these other texts with the asserted

supremacy, provided time and opportunity be given; but they rightly insist that this extraneous matter shall not be used as a blind to withdraw from careful attention the exposition of the text of St. Matthew. This text stands out in the Gospels as one of fundamental importance. Its predictions must then have had a fulfilment correspondingly striking. Where is it if the Catholic exposition is rejected?

The answer which finds most favour maintains the reference to be to the ingathering into the Church of the first fruits of the Jews and of the Gentiles. "The fulfilment of the prediction is to be found in the fact that St. Peter was the chosen agent in laying the foundation of the Christian Church both among the Jews (Acts ii. 41) and among the Gentiles (Acts x. 44-48: or, Acts xv. 7)." The words quoted are those of the Speaker's Commentary and are all it can say on the subject. Had an attempt been made to show that these events correspond to our Lord's language, the theory must have broken down at once.

Notice how in the quotation made St. Peter is said to lay the foundation of the Christian Church. To lay the foundation is to contribute the commencing act towards the erection of the building, and had our Lord said, "Thou shalt lay the foundation of the Church," the fulfilment suggested might not have been deemed insufficient. But our Lord said, "Thou art the Rock on which I will build My Church." St. Peter is the foundation, not the architect; he is not even called the foundation stone, but the rock of foundation. The relation of the founder to the building is transient. With the completion of the act of founding, the dependence of the building on its founder ceases. The relation of the foundation stones to the building is twofold. They sustain the building, but they are also the stones first laid. As sustaining, their relation to it is permanent; as first laid, they involve the transient act of laying. The relation of a rock to the building is permanent. It is not laid, but presupposed. Had St. Peter then been called the Founder, the reference might have been to a transient act such as that of receiving into the Church the first fruits of the Jews and Gentiles. Had he been called the Foundation the reference might have been, though need not have been, to the apostle as the first member, (i.e., one of the first members) of the Church. Since he is called the Rock, the reference is manifestly to some permanent relation which he holds towards the Church as the sustainer of its structure. In view of this, the fulfilment proposed by the Speaker's Commentary is as clearly inadequate, as that expounded above is clearly adequate. The same reasoning leads to the same result when St. Peter's ministry on the two occasions appealed to is compared with the power of the keys and the power to bind and loose. Again the language implies a permanent office not a single act, and is not satisfied by any isolated acts, such as in Acts viii. 21: x. 28, when the apostle admitted or ejected a disciple or when he made a particular law. If it is replied that these particular acts are only cited as instances in illustration of a power which he possessed permanently and could exercise as occasion needed, we assent readily. But the admission is fatal. It concedes all that Catholics ascribe to St. Peter's person and supplies the premisses from which the supremacy of his successors can be deduced with certainty, as I hope to show later.

At other times Anglicans grant that by St. Matt. xvi. 13-20 (together with St. John xxi. 13-20) St. Peter is appointed a ruler over the Church, but add that by St. Matt. xviii. 18 the same office was conferred upon the other apostles: whence they deduce that it involved no personal exaltation of St. Peter over his brethren. In confirmation they quote certain of the Fathers as having taught this. Before going further we may observe how these two expositions destroy each other, and help to prove our case. We may cite the supporters of the first as acknowledging that the promise is personal to St. Peter and meant to elevate him above the rest. We may cite the supporters of the

second as acknowledging that what is promised is the permanent office of a ruler and not any transient achievement such as the reception into the Christian Church of its first members. Out of these two acknowledgements when combined the Catholic interpretation results. But let us examine this second theory. And first as to the support it claims from the Fathers. The theory includes a statement and a deduction drawn from it — a statement that the selfsame office was given likewise to the other apostles, a deduction that therefore St. Peter had no prerogative. It is conceded that certain Fathers, Origen, St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, and others, support the statement. But none of them made the deduction. On the contrary they all take care to point out that the equality was not absolute. Like Peter, they tell us, the rest were all made rulers, but not supreme rulers. Thus St. Jerome, “The strength of the Church is settled equally upon them (on the apostles): yet for this reason one is chosen out of the twelve, that a Head being appointed, the occasion of schism might be removed.”* The principle by which the Fathers are justified in repudiating the deduction, is stated clearly by Bossuet — “Power given to several carries its restriction in its division, whilst power given to one alone, and over all, and without exception, carries with it plenitude, and, not having to be divided with any other, it has no bounds save those which its terms convey.”

In case the reader untrained to exegesis should find this principle too abstract to be intelligible, he may consider its form in the concrete by paraphrasing the words of St. Matthew as they would have to be paraphrased were it true that they conferred on St. Peter no pre-eminence over his fellow-disciples. “Blessed art thou, Simon, inasmuch as thou hast learnt by revelation from My Father, and hast openly confessed that I am the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And I say unto thee: Thou art the man whom I have called Peter. I have not made thee, and do not intend to make thee, what this name signifies, at least not exclusively. For if I build My Church upon anything besides Myself, it shall be either upon My apostles generally, or upon true faith in My Eternal Deity. In no case, most blessed Simon, art thou to have any special function or privilege in the matter. For if I build upon the body of the apostles, as upon one rock, thou shalt be only the twelfth part of it: if I build upon them as upon twelve separate rocks, thou shalt be only one of the twelve: and if I build upon the true faith, then every one of My disciples shall be, equally with thyself, the rock upon which My Church shall stand. But to thee will I give the keys, the emblem of the supreme ruler’s power. Yet again, thou shalt not be the only supreme ruler. These others shall also be supreme rulers as well as thyself, in the one kingdom that I will found on earth. And thou shalt have unlimited judicial and legislative power in My kingdom and all thy laws, all thy orders, all thy judgements shall be ratified by Me in heaven. But I do not, and will not, give the faintest intimation that to thy chair there shall be accorded any special pre-eminence of authority or jurisdiction.’ The thrones of thy fellow apostles shall be set as high as thine. There shall be no distinction or difference of rank among you. To conclude: though every word of this My solemn congratulation is addressed to thee personally, and personally to thee alone, I would have no one think that aught in it applies especially to thee, except the assertion that thy name is Peter. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona.” The quotation is borrowed from a recent writer. No comment is needed to bring out its force.

Against Jovinian, Bk. I. n. 26. p. 45. † Sermon on the Unity of the Church.

I trust the reader will now allow me to conclude that St. Peter was really appointed by our Lord to the Supreme Headship of the Church. In the next chapter it will be shown that the transmission of the Headship to his successors is also deducible from the words of St. Matthew.

III. Papal Supremacy — Can it be proved from the Bible?

In the last chapter it has been shown that the only reasonable interpretation of the impressive words — “Thou art Peter,” etc. (St. Matt. xvi. 13-20), is that which understands them to promise to this apostle the office of supreme visible ruler over the Church. This conclusion is our present starting-point. We have now to carry on the exposition and discover whether the promise was limited to the apostle alone, or included a line of successors who should govern the Church after his death.

Anglicans answer very decidedly that St. Peter alone is the recipient of the gift. “The promise is given to St. Peter individually as the person who, by divine revelation, had uttered his confession. Nothing is said or intimated concerning any successor in such an office. With Bengel... we may fairly say, ‘Quid hæc ad Romam,’ ‘what has this to do with Rome?’” (Speaker's Commentary on St. Matt. xvi, 13-20). I hope to convince the reader that it has a great deal to do with Rome.

I begin with observing that if the office was not to pass on to successors, it is quite inexplicable why it was conferred on St. Peter. If St. Peter was really made supreme ruler of the Church (and that he was has been clearly demonstrated), the Church must have required a ruler of this kind. Our Lord did not confer empty dignities. The idea which He sought to inculcate upon His apostles was that the ruler was for the people, not the people for the ruler (St. Mark x. 42-45). What the service required of a supreme ruler was, we have been assured by St. Jerome among others — “One is chosen out of the twelve, that a head being appointed, the occasion of schism might be removed” — and what the relation between a supreme headship and the prevention of schism is, has been explained in the first chapter “Can you have Unity without it?” Bearing these considerations in mind, we cannot fail to perceive that a supreme ruler has been much more necessary to the Church since the age of the apostles passed away than he was while that age lasted. The apostles from the time of the Resurrection were men of like mind, confirmed in faith and confirmed in grace. They could be trusted to work together in the great cause committed to their charge. In what an amicable way they were prone to settle any differences of opinion which might arise we can read from the Acts of the Apostles (xv. 6-29: xxi. 20-26). There was no danger lest such men should part off and form themselves into the leaders of distinct and warring sects. To the faithful their attitude was that of a single united whole, adherence to which or separation from which involved the possession or forfeiture of Christian status. In the succeeding generations this happy condition of things no longer continued. The bishops and clergy were not all like the apostles. It was possible, it often happened, that one or more of their number raised the standard of schism and sought to draw away adherents from Catholic Unity. It was then that the Primacy became of vital importance, to make it clear which of the opposing sides was in schism, which faithful to its allegiance. If then the appointment to the office of Supreme Ruler was confined to St. Peter's person and was not intended to pass on, it was given for the time when it was less needed, but withheld for the ages when it would be altogether indispensable.

Still there is nothing in the text about successors. The gift is in reward for the confession that had just been made and is confined to the person who made it. So runs the objection. The answer may be introduced thus. Had our Lord intended to confer an office which should be transmitted to a line of successors after the manner claimed by Catholics, the words actually found in the text would have formed a suitable vehicle for His thoughts. The successors could most appropriately be viewed as constituting along with St. Peter a single moral personality, inasmuch as the apostle was to live on in them through their inheritance of his prerogatives and their prosecution of his work. When St. Peter Chrysologus (A.D. 440), writing to Eutyches and referring to the Pope of the day says, “We

exhort you honoured brother, that in all things you obediently attend to those things which have been written by the most blessed Pope (Leo) of the city of Rome, because blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own See, gives to those who seek, the true faith;”* when shortly afterwards the Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon on listening to the letter of the same Pope Leo exclaimed, “Peter has spoken by Leo;” t this phraseology is exemplified, and it sounds quite naturally to our ears. Whence it appears that there would have been nothing repugnant to the nature of language, if our Lord, intending to confer a Primacy destined to last through all time, had chosen to speak of it as conferred upon St. Peter without express mention of others, because under the name of St. Peter He wished to denote, not the Peter who was after a few years to shed his blood for the faith commended, but the Peter who should live on through the ages in the long line of heirs to his name and prerogatives. Our Lord could have meant this. But if so, we are entitled to infer that He did mean it; since it has been shown that it is not only a meaning of which the words are susceptible, but the only meaning which does not involve the absurd supposition that the office was given for the time when it was less wanted, but withheld for the time when it was indispensable. At the same time it is not necessary to suppose that the full force of the words was fathomed by him-to whom they were addressed. As yet it may not have been realized that generations must come and go between the first and second advent. As yet the Resurrection had not taken place. As yet the “minds of the apostles had not been opened so as to understand the Scriptures.” Later, during the forty days of the first Eastertide, many a private instruction may have been added, and in all likelihood was added, to interpret what the hearers had found obscure in the promise, and to indicate the manner in which the establishment of the Primacy should be carried into execution. These instructions did not however require to be recorded. The simple grandeur of the words of promise, unaccompanied by the prosaic details, was more in keeping with the austerity of the Gospel style, and more calculated to impress the reader, who, with the light of fulfilment to aid him, is able to interpret what to the apostles bereft of this light, would have been obscure without the added instructions.

Letter to Eutyches. † Labbe’s Councils, t. iv. p. 1235.

The Primacy of St. Peter descends to his successors. Who are the successors? When once it has been demonstrated that they exist, there can be no further question where they are to be found. There is but one set of claimants in the field; an uninterrupted line going back to the apostolic age, whose oft-repeated claim was responded to with invariable acknowledgement by the Fathers of the earlier centuries, and through all ages by the members of the only communion which has any pretensions to be exclusively regarded as the world-wide Church of Jesus Christ. I have said that the Fathers acknowledged the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff. Those who have not examined for themselves can have no idea how numerous are the passages which can be collected to substantiate this statement. Many have been. collected by Catholic writers, for instance by the Hon. Colin Lindsay in his *Evidence for the Papacy*, and in a more compendious form by Mr. Allnatt in his *Cathedra Petri*. As the limits of a tract do not permit of an array of passages being presented now, it must suffice to appeal to the two quotations made above one of which has peculiar value as coming from the Fathers of the Fourth General Council (A.D. 451), that of Chalcedon, whose authority Anglicans profess to recognize. As, however, the Third General Council, that of Ephesus, which likewise has to be acknowledged by supporters of the Three Branch Theory, yields a passage of a similar kind, it shall be cited. In this council, Philip, presbyter and legate of the Apostolic See when about to depose Nestorius, says: “No one doubts, nay it is known to all ages, that the holy and most blessed Peter, the prince and head of the apostles, who is both the pillar of the faith and the foundation of the Catholic Church, received from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer

of the human race, the keys of the Kingdom and the power to loose and to bind sins was given to Him. And he lives to this day and for ever in his successors, and passes sentence. His lawful successor therefore who holds his place, our holy and most Blessed Pope Celestine, &c.,’* These words were used in the open Council amidst the approbation of all, at the solemn moment when the Council led by the legates was proceeding to depose Nestorius; and they were uttered as exhibiting the authorization which justified the sentence to be passed. What could be more decisive?

Anglicans now-a-days sometimes dispute the historical fact of St. Peter’s relation to the See of Rome. In the light of the argument just used, such an objection is at once convicted of frivolousness. Even were there a complete absence of direct evidence of St. Peter’s sojourn in Rome, overwhelming evidence of an indirect kind is involved in the universal recognition of the Roman Bishops as his successors, of which there is evidence from the second century downwards. This by itself would be quite sufficient. It cannot be expected that everything which has happened should be preserved in the written record of the very age to which it belongs, especially when the written records of that age are most scanty. Still it is not admitted that convincing direct evidence cannot be supplied. Canon Robertson of Canterbury, who was formerly Professor of Ecclesiastical History at King’s College, London, says in his *History of the Church*: “It is not so much a spirit of sound criticism as religious prejudice, which has led some Protestants to deny that the apostle (St. Peter) was ever at Rome, where all ancient testimony represents him to have suffered together with St. Paul in the reign of Nero” (Vol. i. p. 4, ed. 1875). Canon Robertson no doubt testifies here only to the evidence for the presence of St. Peter in the city of Rome, not of his having been bishop of its Church. But the evidence in favour of St. Peter’s Roman episcopate is just as strong as that in favour of his Roman visit. In both cases it is only a religious prejudice which prevents recognition of a fact to which all ancient testimony points.

IV. Papal Infallibility — What does it mean?

This is an age fed on newspapers. It is to newspapers that most of us largely, and many of us entirely, look for information and for opinions. On the other hand the information and the opinions supplied from this source are apt to be crude, inaccurate, and often false. Journalists are men in a hurry. They are obliged to form opinions on the spur of the moment as the hour of publication will not wait, and in consequence they get into the habit of making rash guesses and judging from insufficient evidence. One of the subjects which comes in this way to be much talked of and little understood is Papal Infallibility. The word is on everybody’s lips. Everybody is intensely shocked that the Pope should make so outrageous a claim. Meanwhile how many are there who could tell you what the claim is, how many are there who even understand the meaning of the word?

What is Infallibility? Many seem to think it means sinlessness. To assert that the Pope is infallible is, according to them, to assert that he never sins, and never can sin. Then they ask, Does not the Bible teach that all have sinned, that “there is none that doeth right, no not one” (Rom. iii. 12)? They go further and ask, what about the bad Popes, and they speak as though moral depravity were an admitted characteristic of that illustrious line. Here they greatly exaggerate. There have indeed been Popes, whose histories can only be read with sorrow. They have been to the Apostolic See what Judas was among the Apostles. Nor is this wonderful, seeing how often ambitious princes and nobles endeavoured under threat of arms to impose their worldly-minded candidates on the electors. It is a bad thing for the Church when the State succeeds in over-ruling its counsels. Still the wonder is, not that there have been so many bad Popes, but that there have been so few. Since St. Peter, that

is during eighteen centuries and a half, there have been over two hundred and fifty Pontiffs; and since the Conquest, that is during eight centuries there have been thirty-five Sovereigns of England. Yet if you compare together the two lists, you will find more bad kings during the shorter period than you will find bad Popes during the longer. In fact only four or five Popes have been in any way proved to have been bad. As a whole, the line of Popes has been a line of men quite remarkable for personal holiness. However, Infallibility has nothing to do with holiness of life. When the Pope is said to be infallible, the meaning is, not that he cannot do what is wrong, but that he cannot teach what is false. The word infallible means incapable of deceiving or being deceived.

But is it conceivable that God should grant so high a gift as this of immunity from error in faith to men whose lives are sinful? Yes, it is, and for this reason. The gift is granted to them, not for their own personal advantage, but for the advantage of the Church at large. If the object of Infallibility were the personal benefit of the Popes, it is quite true that God would hardly grant it to men of evil life. But since it is given for the sake of the Church, in order that the faithful throughout the world may always be preserved in the truth, it is quite in accordance with the analogies of God's merciful Providence that it should not be withheld even from the worst of sinners, when once he has been duly elected to the Pontificate. The case is exactly similar to that of the administration of the Sacraments. Baptism and Holy Communion are valid Sacraments and profitable to the receiver when duly administered, even if the minister should unfortunately be guilty in the eyes of God of the most grievous sins. Anglicans admit this as much as Catholics.

Since infallibility is immunity from error in doctrine, it is an attribute of the Popes as teachers, not as rulers. Catholics do indeed believe that God watches over the supreme government of the Church with a very special providence, and they are always loth to admit injustice or even unwisdom in Papal rule. In fact they are sure that in its general character this rule is both wise and holy. They are sure also that laws imposed upon the entire Church cannot be such as it would be wrong to obey. Still it is not claimed that the Popes may not at times impose commands neither wise nor even just. It is even allowed that their commands may at times, though rarely, be clearly wrong: in which case it would be a matter of conscience to refuse obedience. Bishop Grosseteste refused to obey the Pope's order to admit to a benefice in his diocese a certain candidate appointed by the Pope. He said the candidate was unfit and his conscience would not allow him to institute him. Taking the facts to be as Grosseteste affirmed, Catholics would say now, just as much as ever before, that he was right to resist. The Pope himself acknowledged as much when remonstrated with. Many similar instances could be cited. One of recent occurrence, when there was a question not of right or wrong but of desirability, may be mentioned. When the German Catholics showed some reluctance to accept Leo XIII's recommendation, and vote in favour of Prince Bismarck's Army Bill, the Times expressed sarcastic surprise that such faithful sons of the Church should demur to the orders of their Infallible Pope. In reality there was no order, only a suggestion. But even had there been an order, and it had referred to matters more strictly ecclesiastical, the German Catholics might still have felt it to be inadvisable without any disloyalty to the dogma of Infallibility. Of course it does not follow that they could without disloyalty disobey, or without disloyalty be over prone to impute imprudence to the injunctions of authority. Nothing however could have been more loyal than their actual conduct.

Even in regard to teaching there are restrictions to be applied to the general description with which we have hitherto been contented, before an exact notion of the nature of Infallibility can be obtained. First, it refers only to teaching concerning Faith and Morals, it does not refer to teaching concerning secular subjects disconnected with these. The Pope is not infallible on mathematics and

physics. If physics and theology are both involved in the determination of controversy the case is different. The theology would be within the Pope's competence and might fall under his infallibility. Indirectly this would strike any inconsistent views on physics, but not directly. Secondly, the Pope is not always infallible even in regard to Faith and Morals; but only when he is speaking officially. Some of the Popes, Benedict XIV., for instance, have been also theological writers. Infallibility does not attach to their published writings, still less does it attach to their private conversations. In neither of these cases are they speaking officially. Thirdly, the Vatican Council does not claim infallibility even for all their official teaching: only for their *ex cathedrâ* teaching. The phrase *ex cathedrâ* means literally "from the Chair" (i.e. of Truth) and according to the same Vatican definition, the Pope teaches from this Chair "when, discharging his office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith and morals as to be held by the whole Church." Thus he must be addressing, not some individual person nor some particular portion of the Church, but the entire Church: He must be addressing them not anywise, but with the intention of using his supreme authority to oblige them to render assent to his definition. And of course he must make it manifest to them that he has this intention: otherwise the corresponding obligation to believe does not arise.

When these conditions are borne in mind, it is seen that almost all the objections usually urged in disproof of Papal Infallibility are irrelevant. Take for instance the one which is most relied upon, that based on the declaration extorted from Galileo who was bidden by the Inquisition to affirm that "the sun goes round the earth." This was an order imposed, not on the whole Church, but on a single man. It was imposed by a Congregation of Cardinals, not by the Pope: or if it be said that the Pope was much mixed up in the matter and lent his entire sanction to the orders given to Galileo, at all events he neither gave his name to the written documents nor was acting in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority as the teacher of all Christians. Infallibility is a great responsibility. Although knowing well that his deliberations are being over-ruled by God, and that it is to this over-ruling providence not to the perspicacity of his own intellectual powers that the infallibility of the conclusion will be primarily due, still the Pope is bound to use his natural powers to the best of his ability and under a profound sense of responsibility, if he wishes to proceed to a definition of faith. Hence these definitions are only issued after long-continued examinations, consultations and discussions, after much prayer and consideration. They are consequently rare. Now it is obvious that the Pope may often have to act under circumstances which do not require infallibility to be staked upon their issue. He will then give his orders as Pope, but not in virtue of his supreme apostolical authority. So was it in the case of Galileo, Urban VIII. acted as Pope, but not as supreme teacher. The documentary evidence bears out this statement. It offers no ground for imputing to Pope Urban an intention to draw upon his infallibility — quite the contrary. In a similar manner St. Peter's submission to the rebuke of St. Paul yields no ground of attack against this dogma. St. Peter was not addressing the whole Church; he was not teaching at all. His conduct was reprehended: and it was reprehended as being inconsistent with his own undoubted teaching.

V. Papal Infallibility — Is it according to Reason?

On a certain occasion an Anglican Bishop declared it to be evident that "the dogma of Papal Infallibility is the stultification of reason." Such a phrase to knock down an opponent with is all that is required by the unthinking majority. It is admirably adapted for platform and newspaper use, and no doubt was taken down for that purpose with grateful pencils by the listeners. But fortunately

there are some who refuse to be led by phrases until they have submitted them to the test of careful examination. It is to readers of this class that the present paper is addressed. Is Papal Supremacy then the stultification of human reason? A law which assured children that they needed no instructors, and that their highest duty was to follow their own lights would be a stultification of reason; on the other hand a law to compel youth with its want of knowledge and its infirmity of judgement to sit at the feet of age and experience is eminently according to reason. Which of these does the dogma of Papal Infallibility most resemble? Does it set up an incompetent teacher over those who need none, or does it supply with a competent teacher those who without one would be all astray? We see now that the question resolves itself into these two. Does the world need a trustworthy teacher? and does the doctrine of Papal Infallibility supply it with one in a suitable manner? To the first question there can hardly be a doubt what answer should be rendered. There are indeed persons who think that religious truth is a matter of infinitely small importance. "No matter what you believe as long as you do right" they tell you. If truth were really of no consequence, a trustworthy teacher would be a superfluity. But the maxim just given comes to this: "It does not matter whether you know the way as long as you go by it." If you do not know the way, how can you go by it? Evidently our Blessed Lord thought truth to be of importance. "I came to bear witness to the truth," He tells us (St. John xviii. 37), If truth were of no consequence, it is not conceivable that He should have come down from heaven and have taken flesh in order to become our instructor and even to seal His testimony with His Blood. Revealed Truth therefore is of importance, of the highest importance. How then are we to attain to it? In the earlier days of Protestantism a method was proposed which sounds simple enough. All that is necessary is written down in the Bible. Read this reverently and with prayer, and you will find it. But those who try it soon find out that the Bible, although it "does one good to read it," is a very hard book to understand. Those who go to it in this manner for doctrines, relying on their own private judgement for its interpretation, are found to return with results altogether inconsistent and even opposite. Thus it is clear to sensible persons that if the Bible is to be of any use a trustworthy teacher is needed to explain it.

Our first question above propounded is now answered. But where is the teacher to be found? It is natural first to think of ministers of religion. Every denomination, or nearly every denomination, of Christians has found it necessary to appoint ministers to conduct its services and preside over the administration of its religious organization. Such ministers being men who have studied divinity, it might seem that one could consult them with confidence. But here again the same difficulty recurs, These ministers do not agree among themselves. Go and ask Mr. Johnston the Vicar and Mr. Thompson the Dissenting minister, for instance, what is the right means of obtaining forgiveness and although each will claim that the instruction which he gives you is in accordance with the teaching of the Bible, their answers will be different and even opposite. Both cannot be right. Both cannot be trustworthy teachers. Is either of them? and if so by what mark is he to be known as such? Perhaps the Anglican Vicar will tell you that the mark is membership of the Church, that Mr. Thompson being a Dissenter is in schism, that it is not surprising that schismatic ministers should teach you wrong, that if you want sound teaching you must seek it from the ministers of the Church, which goes back to the times of the apostles. Of course by "the Church" he means his so-called Church of England, though whether this institution has any ground for claiming descent from the apostles is again a matter of dispute. If you take the Vicar's advice it will not extricate you from your perplexity. The Vicar of High Hampton says you must get absolution from an episcopally ordained priest: the Vicar of Low Hampton repels this suggestion with indignation and directs you

to pray for saving faith: the Vicar of Broad Hampton pooh-poohs the recommendations of both his brethren and assures you nothing more is required than to strive in future to live according to the commandments. The Vicar of High Hampton lights candles on his altar and bids you fall down in adoration before Christ present in the Sacrament: the Vicar of Low Hampton declares this to be rank idolatry: while the Vicar of Broad Hampton takes a middle course and pronounces it all to be a quarrel about metaphysical subtleties. If now you enter into yourself and ask how comes it that these gentlemen disagree so much, the answer is plain. Each goes by his own judgement as exercised on the text of Holy Scripture and perhaps on the literature of the first Christian centuries. But man's judgement is essentially fallible and the fallibility of his judgements is revealed in the multitudinous differences of opinion, which, when the subject is at all difficult, commend themselves to different minds. These gentlemen are all fallible, and convicted of fallibility by their differences of view. None of them is fit to be my guide. So far I seem to have three times discovered stultification of the reason in the proposals submitted for my acceptance. It is stultification of reason to regard creed as unimportant; it is the very guide of life. It is stultification of reason to set myself up as a trustworthy interpreter of the Bible. It is stultification of reason to submit myself blindly to teachers who disagree among themselves.

What is it then which my reason really demands? Evidently a teacher set up by God and not by man; one rendered absolutely trustworthy, not because he is naturally more wise or more learned than other men, but because he is protected from falling into error when he teaches the Church, by the Holy Spirit of God which watches over him. If there is such an one in the world the need which we all feel to know with accuracy and certainty what our Lord has bidden us to believe and what He has bidden us to do, is at once supplied after a manner suitable to our nature and easy of application. The infallible teacher is placed at the head of a vast body of other teachers appointed under him in various grades. These subordinate teachers need not themselves be infallible. All required is that they shall teach in conformity with their infallible head, and this is sufficiently secured by the solicitude with which the latter watches over them, and with which he corrects and if necessary displaces any whom his watchful eye detects as departing from the doctrine which he himself, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, knows to be alone revealed.

Notice that the effect of this simple and natural arrangement will be to provide the faithful everywhere with living teachers upon whom they can rely, and at the same time to mark these with a character by which they can be securely distinguished from the teachers who go only by their own lights. This character will consist in the complete agreement among themselves which the teachers in communion with the infallible Head exhibit. They will all teach alike. It is a character the nature of which the least instructed can appreciate. It requires no great learning to know that disagreement is the mark of error and uncertainty: agreement on an extensive scale the mark of truth securely possessed. We are dealing in this paper with a scheme in the abstract, not with its concrete realization in the bishops and priests who recognise the Infallibility of the Pope. Still the concrete realization may be suitably appealed to as an illustration of the explanation given. You may indeed be told by Protestants that Catholic priests disagree among themselves as much as any others. Still if instead of listening to such Protestants you make the experiment yourself, you will find that they have misinformed you. Ask any Catholic priest you like what is the appointed means of obtaining the forgiveness of sins, and he will tell you baptism, for those who have not received it, and for the baptized priestly absolution. Ask a friend in Spain or America, or China, to make the same inquiry there; the answer will be the same. Why? Because a priest who should persist in teaching that priestly absolution was not of Divine appointment would at once be removed by his bishop: as in

like manner a bishop who presumed to depart from this doctrine of the Church would be removed by the Pope. As with this one doctrine, so with the whole range of doctrines by which the Christian life is regulated.

It is true there are questions concerning which even the Catholic clergy differ among themselves. But this, so far from destroying the value of the agreement where it lies, stamps it with the further confirmation of contrast. Where the Pope speaks, there they all speak with him and hence agree; where he has not spoken, and they have only their own judgement to go by, they relapse into the condition of other men and disagree. However the area of settled questions is wide, and covers all matters of practical importance. Thus whatever disagreement exist in reference to ulterior points is innocuous. Herein lies the difference between the domestic controversies of Catholics and of Protestants. The former, turning only on minor and mostly purely speculative points, are consistent with uniformity in Christian practice; the latter ranging as they do over the entire field of revealed truth produce the greatest perplexity among the people, who are rendered quite unable to shape their course of conduct in essential matters. This is what is meant by Papal Infallibility. Surely it sounds most reasonable; and yet we are told that such a doctrine is the stultification of reason. In what does the stultification consist? Certainly not in placing a teacher over those who need none; for it has been shown that this is just what men do need. Certainly not in establishing a system which cannot work: for it has been shown how easily and naturally it works. Certainly not in assigning a teacher incompetent for the task: since the teacher assigned is not the Pope as a mere man, but the Pope under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that the real teacher is God. Is it foolish to believe that God can so overrule the reasonings of a human mind as to prevent it from falling into error? This ought not at any rate to be accounted foolish by Anglicans who believe in the Infallibility of General Councils. If God can overrule the deliberations of a Council, that is, of a number of men, still more can he overrule the deliberations of a single man. Nor ought it to be accounted foolish by any of those who believe in the Inspiration of Holy Scripture. Inspiration involves a still more far reaching interposition on the part of God than is required for Infallibility. Is Infallibility too great a burden for a man to bear, so that it is absurd to suppose that God would, even if He could, impose it? If Infallibility attended the Popes in their every utterance, even in those bearing on secular matters and on the daily intercourse of life, perhaps it might lift them too much out of the natural order and above the conditions under which alone human probation is possible. But there is no such impropriety in an Infallibility which is confined to a limited class of official utterances, and this is all which the Vatican Council has claimed for the Popes. It does not appear in what other respect stultification of the reason can be discovered in the dogma, and at all events we may wait till Anglicans have indicated it.

VI. Papal Infallibility — Has it been always believed?

By the Infallibility of the Pope, Catholics mean that immunity from error in his sacred teaching which they claim for the Head of their Church. Its nature and significance has been expounded in the last two chapters, and a strong presumption thereby established for the genuineness of the claim. It remains to convert the presumption into proof. As a principal point relied upon by opponents of the claim is its supposed novelty, while, on the other hand, proof of its genuineness is largely mixed up with proof of its antiquity, it will be desirable to consider these two points simultaneously. Is the claim ancient, and is it original — that is, based on a real grant made by our Blessed Lord?

Before beginning we must endeavour to understand our terms. The charge of novelty rests upon an equivocation which must be exposed. The doctrine is ancient, but its formal definition by an Œcumenical Council is recent, having taken place at the Vatican Council in 1870, as everybody knows. There is no inconsistency between these two statements. It is not by definition alone that the Church teaches. She teaches by her daily instruction — given in sermons, books, catechisms, services, devotions, &c. — which is carried on under her watchful eye and virtual approval; as also under a stimulus and express direction which she has imparted. Definitions are of the nature of judicial decisions. They presuppose a controversy as to what the Church's teaching really is, and their purpose is to terminate the question by a clear declaration calculated to remove the doubt or obscurity, rational or irrational, out of which the controversy grew. If there were no controversies there would be no definitions. To conclude that the teaching of a certain doctrine is new, because the definition which declares it to be a genuine portion of revelation is recent, is as absurd as it would be absurd to conclude that, because a judge's decision on a point of law is recent, the law which it declares is also new.

If we put this same matter in another way, it will serve the better to illustrate the position. The controversy precedent to the definition of Infallibility, although it was ultimately a controversy about the truth of the dogma, was immediately one about its age. Was it novel and therefore false, or was it old and therefore true? The Vatican definition declared it to be old. "We, adhering faithfully to the tradition handed down from the commencement of the Christian faith... teach and define it to be a dogma of divine revelation that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedrâ*, is, through the Divine assistance assured to him in Blessed Peter, possessed of that Infallibility, etc." (Chap. iv.) But, it is urged, before the Vatican Council Infallibility could be denied without danger of anathema, whereas, according to the Catholics a similar denial at the present time would certainly incur that penalty. This is true, but it does not show that previously the doctrine was in fact no part of the Church's teaching: it only shows that in the absence of a judicial decision, that is of a definition, it was possible conscientiously to doubt whether the doctrine was part of her teaching. After the definition, such a doubt can no longer remain in the mind of a loyal Catholic; refusal to accept the dogma is therefore without excuse.

There is still another precaution to be observed before the true value of the historical evidence for the antiquity of the doctrine can be appreciated. Although we claim that the doctrine is old, we are well aware that its formulation as a theological proposition and its designation by this particular name of Infallibility does not go back many centuries. This kind of formulation is the result of the scientific study to which controversy more than anything else gives birth. But under simpler modes of expression essentially the same doctrine was practically held and acted upon from the first. The forms under which it is found are such as these: (1) That the Pope is the Supreme Teacher of the Catholic Church. (2) That no one can reject his teaching without sin and without cutting himself off from the communion of the faithful. (3) That in the See of Rome the sacred doctrine has ever been preserved immaculate. (4) That this prerogative is derived from St. Peter whose own faith was confirmed in order that he might confirm the faith of others. Of these four propositions the third is the assertion of infallibility; the first and second state the purpose for which it is required, the premisses from which it follows as a corollary; the fourth traces it to the origin whence it sprang. If then we find these same propositions asserted in early times by representative men before the face of the whole Church without encountering contradiction, we have all that is needful, although the technical name of Infallibility is one not then devised.

When at last we turn to ecclesiastical history, we discover that it is not the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, but the denial of this doctrine which is wanting in the necessary antiquity. According to the theory of those Catholics who denied the Pope to be infallible, the organ of Infallibility is a General Council without the Pope, or at all events only a General Council with the Pope. Until the fifteenth century no trace of such a theory can be discovered. But at that time an antipope had been set up against the true Pope, and it was not easy to get at the facts so as to ascertain which of them had been properly elected. This caused a great deal of perplexity, and it occurred to a few venturesome persons to start the theory that a Council of the Church as representing the whole Church was superior to the Pope who was but a part of it, so that a Council of this sort could properly sit in judgement on the rival candidates. The theory was at once caught up by courtier ecclesiastics, who saw how readily it could be turned to the advantage of the French sovereigns in their attack upon the liberties of the Church. It was therefore fostered, particularly in France, and sought, though in vain, admission among the legitimate decrees of the Council of Constance. It lived on till the Vatican Council.

While the first appearance of the opposition is discoverable in the fourteenth century, the traces of belief in Papal Infallibility are discernible all down the course of the previous centuries. We must content ourselves with one or two crucial instances.

To the second Council of Lyons, an Œcumenical Council held in A.D. 1274, the Greek Emperor, desirous of restoring to unity the Greeks who had formed a schism some four hundred years earlier, sent an embassy to represent him. They made a profession of faith in which occur the following words; "The Holy Roman Church (i.e. the See of Rome) holds the Primacy and principedom over the entire Catholic Church; and truly and humbly acknowledges that she has received it from the Lord Himself in Blessed Peter the prince and head of the apostles, together with the plenitude of power. And as before the others she is bound to defend the truth of the faith: so also, whatever question concerning faith may arise, ought to be decided by her judgement," &c.,* with much else in recognition of the Primacy. Here we have the substance of propositions one and four out of those above stated. This act of profession is most valuable, because it was made before an approving assemblage of five hundred bishops, seventy abbots, and one thousand prelates and legates of princes (among whom were the prelates of the old Church of England), by men specially sent to represent the Orientals. Letters of adhesion were brought by these Greek legates in the name of the Emperor, twenty-nine Eastern metropolitans with their respective synods, and many other ecclesiastics. It is thus an irrefragable witness to the faith of the Latin Church two hundred years before the opposing doctrine was heard of, and a witness to the faith of that body of Orientals, which Anglicans dignify with the title of Second Branch of the Church Universal. It is true the Orientals soon fell back, but that is to their own disgrace; the letters of adhesion remain to testify against them.

Labbe's Councils, xiv. p. 512.

Two hundred years earlier, the Fourth Council of Constantinople, the Eighth Œcumenical Council, was held (A.D. 869). This was just before the Photian schism, which gave rise to the Greek "Branch," was consummated. Pope Hadrian II. sent over a profession of faith with orders that no one should be admitted to sit in the Council without having first subscribed it. The conditions were accepted. All who sat, about a hundred in number and the pick of the Eastern Church for piety of life, attached their signatures. The document runs thus: "The first condition of salvation (*prima salus*) is to hold the right rule of faith and in no way stray from the decrees of the Fathers. And

because the sentence of our Lord Jesus Christ who said ‘Thou art Peter,’ &c., cannot be passed over, what was there said is proved by the result of events, for in the Apostolic See religion has ever been preserved immaculate. By no means wishing to be separated from the hope and faith of this (See), and following the decrees of the Fathers, and especially of the holy bishops of the Apostolic See in all things, we anathematize all heresies.... Whence as we have said, following the Apostolic See in all things and professing all its decrees, I trust that I may deserve to be with you in the one communion which the Apostolic See enjoins, in which is the entire and true solidity of the Christian religion. Promising also that the names of these who are cut off from the communion of the Catholic Church, that is who are not consentient with the Apostolic See, shall not be recited during the sacred mysteries.”* In this celebrated document we have all the four propositions above given. It is called the Formula of Pope Hormisdas, because three hundred and fifty years earlier (A.D. 519), it was drawn up by that Pope and was subscribed in like manner by the Emperor, the Patriarchs and the Bishops of the East. According to Dr. Döllinger this formula was then signed altogether by about 2,500 Eastern Bishops (Hist. of Church, vol. ii. p. 221). Thus we have three most formal declarations testifying to the belief in Papal Infallibility of both East and West. Of these the first has brought us back to the commencement of the sixth century.

But of the first half of the fifth we may summon St. Peter Chrysologus, the great Bishop of Ravenna, to testify: not because others are wanting, but because of the distinctness of his language. He is writing to Eutyches the Monophysite and says: “Blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own See, gives the true faith to those who seek it. For we, in our solicitude for truth and faith, cannot without the consent of the Roman Church hear cases of faith.”† This doctrine is exactly the same as that enunciated in the Formula of Hormisdas a hundred years later, and yet it has already an air of antiquity. It is not put forward with hesitation, or as an opinion, but rather as a well-known and generally recognized truth. A few years later the same Eutyches whom St. Peter Chrysologus is addressing was to hear the same doctrine proclaimed loudly by the Council of Chalcedon, when after listening to the letter of Pope Leo which was written in his condemnation all the assembled fathers cried out, “Peter has spoken by Leo.” We go back still another century and the great St. Ambrose is our witness, one out of several. The saint’s brother, Satyrus, was a bishop of suspect faith, and this is how Ambrose handles him. “He called the bishop to him and not accounting any grace true which was not of the true faith, he inquired of him whether he agreed with the Catholic Bishops, that is with the Roman Church” (De Excessu Fratris). With St. Ambrose then agreement with the Roman Bishop is the appointed test of orthodoxy; the indispensable condition of communion with the Catholic Church. And the tone is still that of antiquity, of long-established recognition, although we are now not three centuries removed from the last of the apostles, and are in the midst of an age which stands out among the rest as being pre-eminently that of those Fathers who have ever been regarded the most authoritative witnesses to primitive tradition.

Labbe’s Councils, x. p. 498 and v. p. 586. † Letter to Eutyches.

It is noticeable that in the passages adduced this prerogative of Infallibility is always traced back to St. Peter, and to the classical passage in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel whence Catholics derive his authority. From the chapter on the Bible witness to the Supremacy the reader may see how distinctly the first of them (St. Matt. xvi. 16) asserts the Primacy of the Apostle (and his successors). A still more searching examination shows that it is specially in his quality as a teacher that St. Peter is thus regarded. It is his firm faith which is rewarded, the faith by which he was the first to confess the Divinity of his Master. When the reward takes the form of establishing

the apostle in strength in order that he may impart it in his turn to the church, as a rock does to the superstructure, it is most natural to understand the strengthening to be primarily a strengthening of faith. He is a rock to the Church by reason of his faith, inasmuch as its members are established in their own faith by rendering obedient assent to his infallible teaching. This also our Lord Himself, in words free from figure, declares elsewhere; “Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have _you (in the plural) that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee (in the singular) that thy faith may not fail, and do thou in thy turn (this is the more probable rendering) confirm thy brethren” (St. Luke xxii. 31, 32). This is another text to which the Fathers frequently refer, understanding it in the sense asserted. It is true that some see an allusion to the triple denial shortly to follow. But these are not to be understood as wishing to exclude the more direct reference on which Fathers and Councils more often dwell. Indeed it is most probable there is an allusion to St. Peter’s denial, but it is an allusion only, and does not belong to the direct scope of the words, at all events it does not exhaust their meaning. Let those who think otherwise offer some reasonable account of the way in which the Apostle confirmed his brethren.

Conclusion

The conclusions at which we have arrived may be summed up as follows. The doctrines of Papal Supremacy and Infallibility are neither unreasonable nor extravagant. If they are true, a means has been provided of maintaining the Christian people in the bonds of unity, which is simple and easy of application, and at the same time in harmony with the nature of man. If they are not true, the inevitable result must be what we find to be in fact wherever the Pope’s authority is not acknowledged: indifferentism in place of a common faith, innumerable schisms in place of sacramental intercommunion, religious anarchy in place of ecclesiastical order. There is then the strongest presumption that the system which the two doctrines represent is that which our Lord has established, since otherwise He would have made Himself responsible for all these horrors which good people deplore. This is the first conclusion which has been arrived at.

A second is that the evidence yielded by Scripture and Ecclesiastical History, when interpreted according to the laws of right reason, points exactly in the same direction. It shows that our Lord has ordained what we should have expected Him to ordain. These two things, the presumption and the proof, should be considered together. Through their harmony each adds strength to the other. They are like the strands of a rope which gain strength from being intertwined.

But what about the opposing evidence, an Anglican may exclaim? Is only one side to be heard? Would that Anglicans would always make a point of hearing both sides! Too often they only hear what is said against the Papacy, not what is to be said on its behalf. Under such circumstances it might seem excusable to urge only the latter, leaving the former to take care of itself. There is, however, no desire on the part of Catholics to evade a single one of the difficulties which can be brought against the doctrines and institutions they believe to be divine. On the contrary, there is the greatest desire to deal with them all solidly and thoroughly, so that every impediment may be cleared away from the path of those who are anxious to find the truth. Still one thing at a time, and the examination of the proofs has been found quite sufficient matter for this series of papers. It may be added that the difficulties are far from being as serious as is commonly imagined. A satisfactory answer to very many will at once suggest itself, if the doctrinal explanations which have been given are borne carefully in mind.
