

THE
INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

A COURSE OF LECTURES

DELIVERED IN THE
Divinity School of the University of Dublin

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SECOND EDITION

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET .

1890

XV.

THE GALLICAN THEORY OF INFALLIBILITY.

THE branch of the subject which I will now take up is the discussion of the different theories as to the organ of the Church's infallibility which have been held in the Roman Church. I will not dwell on what I have already said: that if the gift of infallibility had been believed in and exercised from the first, it was impossible that controversy as to its seat should ever arise.

The theory which I shall first consider is the Gallican, which places the infallibility in the Church diffusive. In this theory the Pope is only the leading bishop of Christendom, and is by no means a necessary organ in proclaiming infallible truth. Whatever doctrine the whole Church agrees in is infallibly true. Of course this characteristic cannot be predicated of any doctrine from which the Pope dissents, since such a dissent would deprive the doctrine of that universality of acceptance which the theory imposes as a condition; but if a Pope declares a doctrine, it is nevertheless not guaranteed as infallibly true if a Council dissent; or even though Pope and Council declare it, if it is not received by the bishops throughout the world. The important thing is, the universality of acceptance: the mode of promulgation is immaterial. It may be the Pope who proclaims it, and a Council which assents; it may be a Council whose decrees the Pope confirms, or it may be a number of small local councils which declare the Church's sentiments: only let the consent of the Church be evidenced in whatever way, and the doctrine is infallibly true. I will presently examine whether this be a defensible theory of infallibility; but I wish first to tell you a little of the history of Gallicanism.

Its most flourishing time was at the end of the seventeenth century, in the reign of Louis XIV. That monarch had many points of resemblance with Henry VIII. With regard to their relations with women, Louis was certainly not the purer of the two; but as he did not want, like Henry, to marry the women on whom his caprice fixed, his frailties caused no irreconcilable breach with the Church. He could part with his mistresses in Lent, and then when he had received his Easter Communion take them back again. Meanwhile his zeal for orthodoxy was extreme. He stirred up the slumbering authorities at Rome to fulminate against Jansenism. By bribery and intimidation, by the dragonnades and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he worked so hard for the extirpation of Protestantism from France, that he was hailed by the enthusiastic gratitude of his bishops. 'Impressed by such marvels,' exclaimed Bossuet in one of his

orations, ‘let us raise our acclamations to the skies. Let us say to this second Constantine, this second Theodosius, this second Charlemagne, what the six hundred and thirty bishops said of old at the Council of Chalcedon: “You have confirmed the faith, you have exterminated the heretics; it is a work worthy of your reign. Through your exertions heresy exists no longer. God alone could have wrought this miracle. O King of Heaven, preserve our earthly monarch: this is the prayer of the Church—this is the prayer of the bishops.”’

Unfortunately, Louis, who was quite as imperious as Henry, was as arbitrary in his dealings with the Pope as with his own subjects. Those of you who have read Macaulay’s history of the circumstances which facilitated the English Revolution of 1688 will remember how the Pope’s sympathy for the enterprise of William was gained by the tyrannical behaviour of Louis towards himself. Because the Pope wished to withdraw a privilege which had made his own capital insecure, that, namely, of allowing the French ambassador’s palace to be a sanctuary for brigands and assassins, the King sent his troops to take possession of the Papal territory at Avignon. There had been an earlier controversy, originating in Royal claims, with respect to the appointment and institution to benefices, which the Pope repudiated as a novel aggression; and which led to a conflict between the King and the Pope, and lasted about a dozen years. Though the King had been granted by the Roman See the right of appointment to bishoprics, yet while the controversy lasted the Pope would not institute the King’s nominees; so that before the dispute was over there were thirty-five bishops without institution. The French appealed to a future general Council; they threatened to dispense with the authority of the Pope, and to consecrate their bishops without it, and to stop all sending of money to Rome. The French bishops naturally took the side of their King, whose influence in his own country was overpowering; and it was while the relations between France and Rome were thus strained that what are called the Four Gallican Propositions of 1682, drawn up by the celebrated Bossuet, were formulated.

These are as follows:—I. The first declared that the power possessed by Peter and his successors was in things spiritual, not in things temporal; in accordance with the texts, ‘My kingdom is not of this world’; ‘Render unto Caesar,’ &c.; ‘Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.’ Consequently, kings are not, by the law of God, subject to any ecclesiastical power with respect to their temporal government, nor can their subjects be released from the duty of obeying them, nor absolved from their oath of allegiance. 2. The second defined the power of the Pope in things spiritual, viz. as such that the decrees of the Council of Constance, approved as they are by the Holy See and the practice of the whole Church, remain in full force and perpetual obligation; and it

declared that these decrees must not be depreciated as insufficiently approved or as restricted to a time of schism. —I may remind you that these decrees declared that a general Council, legitimately assembled, derives its authority immediately from Christ [and therefore not from the Pope], and that every person of what dignity soever, *even papal*, is bound to obey it in what relates to the faith, or to the extirpation of schism, or to the reformation of the Church in its head and members. If you remember the circumstances of the Church at the time of the Council of Constance, you will see that these decrees were absolutely necessary at the time. The object was to heal the schism, there being then three claimants for the Popedom; and although the whole Christian world longed for an end to the schism, all the claimants had shown great reluctance to a voluntary resignation. The Council deposed all three, and elected a new Pope; but since each of the candidates had some who believed him to be the real Pope, it is evident the act of the Council could not meet with universal recognition unless it was maintained that the Council had an authority higher than the papal, and was able even to depose a real Pope if the good of the Church required it. 3. The third Gallican decree declared that the exercise of the Apostolic authority must be regulated by the canons enacted by the Spirit of God and consecrated by the reverence of the whole world; in particular that the ancient rules, customs, and institutions of the realm and Church of France must remain inviolable. 4. The fourth, that though the Pope has the principal power in deciding questions of faith, and though his decrees extend to all Churches, nevertheless his judgment is not irreversible until confirmed by the consent of the Church.—Thus you see that these decrees took away altogether the Pope's temporal power over countries of which he was not the civil sovereign; that in spiritual things they limited his disciplinary power by general and local canons that, even in matters of faith, they held that his decisions needed to be ratified by universal consent.

A point has been made by a Roman Catholic controversialist who wrote in answer to Janus, that the French bishops were not unanimous on this occasion. But the fact is, that the chief opposition Bossuet encountered was from those who went further than himself in denying the prerogatives of Rome. His chief opponent, the Bishop of Tournay, held that the Apostolic See was liable to fall into heresy. Bossuet's own opinion was that, though individual Popes might be carried away by some temporary blast of false doctrine, the See would never fall permanently into misbelief, as some Eastern Sees had done, but that by the interposition of right-thinking people either the erring Pope himself or his successors would be brought back to the true faith. In this way the fall of Liberius or the monothelism of Honorius presented no difficulty to his theory.

Though the four Gallican propositions expressed, as I believe, the real opinion of the French Church, yet I believe also that but for Court pressure Bossuet and his colleagues would not have engaged in the controversy with Rome, which the act of formulating these propositions involved. And this was one cause of the want of permanence of Gallicanism, that so much of its strength consisted in the Royal support: or rather that the contest was not so much one between the French nation and a foreign power as between the King and the Pope, which of the two should have the filling up of livings and so forth. It was exactly in the same way that Henry VIII. gave a national character to what may also be represented as a conflict in which only his personal interests were involved. It is evident that in such a conflict, if the King failed to persuade the nation that his interests were theirs:—if, for instance, his appointments to offices were not made to deserving men—then really religious men would be indifferent to a contest which they might look on as one between a self-seeking king and a self-seeking foreign bishop; and they would be on the side of the bishop if they thought his government on the whole likely to be guided by higher aims. On these grounds, much as we are inclined to sympathize with the anti-papalism of the Gallican bishops, I have my doubts whether these hangers-on of the Court of Louis XIV. really carried the religious mind of the nation with them. The doctrine, however, which they taught as to the limits of the papal power was no new invention of theirs: it but stated the tradition of the Gallican Church, which had been expressed on many former occasions.

Ultimately the dispute between Louis and the Pope was settled: the King withdrew measures he had taken for enforcing the Gallican declaration in his dominions, and the bishops seeking consecration were allowed to say that they were sorry it had been made, which did not at all imply that they believed it was not true. A great magazine of arguments in this controversy is the book which Bossuet wrote in defence of the Gallican declaration. It was more than once withheld from publication by the royal authority, lest it should impede the desired reconciliation with Rome, and was not actually published until after Bossuet's death.

The subsequent history of Gallicanism will not take long to state. The fruits of the zeal of Louis in suppressing heresy showed themselves after his death. The Jansenists, whom it had been the work of his life to put down, whatever may have been their doctrinal errors, were some of the holiest and best men in his kingdom. I need not tell you how much of true religion was lost to France by the driving out of the Huguenots: the consequence was that Christianity, represented in that kingdom by its most superstitious form, revolted the philo-

sophic and enlightened. The principle of blind submission to authority was found to be too weak to maintain the hearty faith of the people, and a great wave of infidelity swept over the land. In an early stage of the revolutionary troubles an attempt was made to maintain a national Church in France, though robbed of the greater part of its worldly wealth. A new distribution of sees was made: bishops were to be elected by their flocks, and were to seek for no institution from the Pope, but merely notify to him the fact of their appointment. By a very unwise step on the part of the framers of this new constitution, all the clergy were required to swear their acceptance, and a number of the most respected refused. Thereupon ensued an immediate schism between the constitutional clergy and the non-jurors: and as in the progress of events the leaders of the revolutionary party showed more and more hostility to religion, so the respect of religious men refused to attach itself to the constitutional clergy, who were found in alliance with deists and atheists.

When the first Napoleon discerned the political necessity of coming to terms with Christianity, he saw that an agreement with the Pope afforded him the only practicable means. Even more than Louis XIV., Napoleon sought to make himself absolute over Church and State in France, and he thought that if he could make the Pope absolute over the French clergy he could direct the Pope as he pleased. The Pope proved less flexible than Napoleon had anticipated, but in the first stage of the reconciliation his help was absolutely necessary and was given. The terms of a new Episcopate were arranged into which survivors both of the constitutional clergy and the non-jurors were to be admitted. But however desirable in every way to the cause of the Church in France was this reconciliation, it involved a complete abandonment of Gallican principles. For it was by the Pope's authority that the existing bishops were forced to resign and a new distribution of sees effected. This course of events produced a natural reaction in France in favour of Ultramontanism, all the abominations and impieties of republican fanaticism being imputed, however unjustly, to the opposite system. This reaction found an eloquent representative in the Count Joseph de Maistre, whose writings exercised a prodigious influence in France: so that the dying away of Gallicanism in its birthplace and stronghold seemed to make things easy for its formal condemnation by Pius IX.

We in Ireland are interested in Gallicanism because, before the establishment of Maynooth, Irish priests commonly got their education in Continental schools where Gallican principles predominated, and so imported them into this country. At Maynooth itself French text-books were used. In the agitation for Emancipation a prevalent argument against granting it was that Roman Catholics could not be loyal subjects, since they would serve two masters, or

rather indeed only one, inasmuch, as they must obey the Pope if he forbade them to obey their sovereign. In reply to this, great pains were taken by the advocates for Emancipation to show that Irish Roman Catholics did not believe in the Pope's power to release subjects from their allegiance, and that the Ultramontane doctrine of the Papal power was not recognized as any part of the doctrine of their Church. The Irish Roman Catholic bishops were examined before a Parliamentary Committee, and gave evidence which was afterwards cited by the American bishop Kenrick, himself an Irishman, at the Vatican Council. As a sample of their evidence, I will give you Archbishop Murray's answer to the question whether the Irish bishops had adopted or rejected what are called the Gallican liberties. He said, 'These liberties have not come under their consideration as a body. The Irish Catholic bishops have therefore not either adopted or rejected them. They have adopted, however, and that on their oaths, the leading doctrines which these liberties contain; that is, the doctrines which reject the deposing power of the Popes and their right to interfere with the temporalities of princes. That is distinctly recognized; not as one of the Gallican liberties, but as a doctrine which the Gospel teaches.' Bishop Doyle said that if the Pope were to intermeddle with the temporal rights of the King, they would oppose him even by the exercise of their spiritual authority; that is, as he explained it, by preaching the Gospel to the people, and instructing them, in such a case, to oppose the Pope. Besides this repudiation of the temporal power of the Pope, these bishops declared their opinion that the authority of the Pope in spiritual matters was limited by the Canons and by the Councils, and they swore, as they could then with truth, that the doctrine of the Pope's personal infallibility was no part of the Christian faith. Soon after they gave a practical proof of their independence of the Pope; for when a negotiation between the Pope and the English Government resulted in an agreement that, as a condition of Emancipation, the English Government should be given a veto on the nomination to Irish bishoprics, the Irish bishops remonstrated with the Pope in such strong terms that the project had to be abandoned.

I have dwelt, at a little length, on the history of Gallicanism because the subject is one on which you do not find much information in your text-books; but we must now consider the truth of the doctrine, that whatever the whole Church at any time agrees in may be relied on as infallibly correct. One thing is plain, namely, that if this is the nature of the gift of infallibility Christ has bestowed on His Church, the gift is absolutely useless for the determination of controversies. It is very comfortable to believe with regard to the controversies of former days that the winning side was right, and that whatever has settled down to be the general belief is certainly true: but what guidance does such a

persuasion give us as long as the controversy is going on? It is very comfortable for Roman Catholics now to think that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception must be true because it has ceased to be disputed in their communion. But how could the Dominicans foresee the turn things would take a century after their time, when they knew that the doctrine they opposed was altogether novel, condemned by Aquinas, and unknown to the early Fathers? This theory, then, asserts that Christ has furnished His Church with a lantern which throws no light on the path in front, but only on that which has been already traversed.

Something of the same kind may be said about the oft-quoted phrase of Vincentius Lirinensis, that we believe ‘Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus traditum est.’ It is very pleasant when we can say this; but it is obvious that this rule can give us no help in a controversy; for, clearly, dispute can only arise in the case of a doctrine which is not held ‘ab omnibus,’ and in such a case both parties are sure to say that it is their opinion which has been held ‘semper.’ And so when people go to use the rule they generally explain that of course ‘held by all’ does not mean absolutely and literally all without exception, but leaves out of account heretics and such like; so that ‘all’ means only ‘all right-thinking persons,’ and in this way it is in the power of each side to claim their own view as being held by all, that is to say, all right-thinking persons, for they are the only right-thinking persons.¹

We can see thus that the Gallican method of ascribing infallibility to the Church diffusive does not satisfy any of the *a priori* supposed proofs of the necessity of a judge of controversies, on the strength of which infallibility has been believed in. Yet unquestionably it is this aspect of the theory of infallibility which has most power in gaining adherents. It is certainly a very alluring doctrine that whatever is held by the majority of the Christian world must certainly be true, and that dissentients, if few in number, may be disregarded without any examination of their opinions. It is plain from Dr. Newman’s ac-

¹ On this passage Mr. Gore remarks (Roman Catholic Claims, 2nd edition, pp. x., 43) that Vincent’s maxim, interpreted as its author clearly explains it (Commonit., 2, 3, 17), is not fairly open to my criticisms: ‘Vincent never meant by “ab omnibus” what is held by all men, without exception, or by all who call themselves Christians, but by the Church as a body, as opposed to individual teachers.’ What he intended is ‘the body of Catholic truth, held “ubique,” that is, in all parts, as opposed to any one particular Church; “semper,” always as opposed only in recent ages; “ab omnibus,” by all, i.e. by the general body of the Church, not merely as the private opinion of particular teachers.’ I should be sorry to have done St. Vincent any injustice but the only criticism I made on his maxim remains untouched, namely that it only enables us to hold with more confidence those decisions on the controversies of past times in which we ourselves acquiesce, but gives us little help in a new controversy. In modern Romanism the use of the maxim is abandoned (see p. 43). Pio Nono’s language was not, ‘Receive this because it has been held semper, ubique, ab omnibus,’ but, ‘because it is laid down now, at Rome, by me.’

count of his life that this was the argument which made a convert of him. He compared the numbers which were ranked on the Romish side and on the opposite, and he said, 'What is the English Church that she should set herself in opposition to so much larger a body?' Words of Augustine that he had seen quoted in controversy, 'securus judicat orbis terrarum,' at last so took possession of his imagination, that he was compelled to abandon further resistance.

These words, as used by Augustine, were, I believe, well justified, and are capable of further application. They were employed with reference to the claim of the Donatists of Africa to unchurch the rest of Christendom, because they continued to hold communion with men who, as the Donatists alleged, had been guilty of gross sin. Augustine replied that the whole world was, by reason of distance, incapable of judging of the reality of these alleged offences, but that they could judge safely enough of the blind temerity of those who without provocation separated themselves from the rest of the world.² Taken thus in connexion with their context, Augustine's words are only reasonable; nor would I hesitate to extend them to other cases in which small bodies venture to unchurch and anathematize the whole Christian world: Baptists, for example, excluding from the pale of the visible Church all who have been baptized by effusion, not immersion; Walkerites and Plymouth Brethren reducing their Church to still narrower limits. If things are alleged to be necessary to salvation, or necessary to the being of a Church, which Christ has revealed so indistinctly that the great bulk of the Christian world has for centuries been unable to find them out, then I do say that the claim is one which condemns itself, and that the Christian world 'securus judicat' that such pretensions are unfounded.

But in this matter the Donatist party, not the orthodox, are the true anti-types of the Church of Rome. That Church, like those African schismatics of old, endeavours to cast out of the Church of Christ all who will not bind themselves in close alliance with her and the body, which she would fain exclude is in the number of its adherents, and the extent of territory which they occupy, far more considerable than that to which Augustine gave the title 'orbis terrarum.' If there be weight in the maxim which has been made out of Augustine's words, we may rely on our numbers, and securely smile at the pretension to unchurch us. But certainly we repudiate Augustine's words when severed

² In the notes to an Ordination Sermon published in 1864, Dr. Quarry pointed out that in the passage cited, St. Augustine did not lay down a general maxim, nor assert that the 'orbis terrarum' must always be right in its judgment. The words form part of a sentence in which, after showing that foreign Churches must needs be ill-acquainted with the facts of the African disputes, he concludes, 'securus judicat orbis terrarum' that they are not good who separate themselves from the whole world; where the word 'securus' appears to have its most literal sense, without anxiety.

from their context, and converted into a rule that numbers constitute a trustworthy test of truth, and that a body so large as to be able fairly to call itself 'orbis terrarum' can be guilty of no error. How would such a rule have worked in the days when Athanasius was alone against the world, when the violence of the Arian hurricane carried the Pope Liberius away, when a Council twice as large as the Nicene omitted 'homo ousios' from their creed, and, in the words of Jerome, the whole world groaned in surprise to find itself Arian? 'In gemuit orbis terrarum et Arianum se esse miratus est.' Nay, how would such a rule have worked when the first preachers of Christianity went forth to arraign the superstitions of the whole world, attacking beliefs of immemorial antiquity, and supported by Catholic consent?—for it was generally held that under different names all nations agreed in worshipping the same divinities. Even at the present day can the Christian religion bear to have its truth submitted to the test of numbers, and can it permit its claim to be set aside if it can be proved that the number of its adherents (counting all the different sects into which Christianity is divided) is surpassed by the number of those who either are ignorant of Christianity or reject it? I know no Scripture warrant for asserting that the broad path along which the many go must be the safe one, or that, either in religious matters or in temporal, men can be sure of not going wrong, provided only that, like sheep, they stick together.

Perhaps it may be objected that I am here leaving out of sight Christ's promises to His Church that He would be with her always, and that the gates of Hades should not prevail against her. I grant that Protestant controversialists have often contradicted these texts in the violence of their language against Rome. They have represented her as so wholly corrupt as to have lost the very being of a Church, and so that salvation in her is practically impossible. According to this theory, then, it must be owned that the gates of Hades did prevail against the Church for some centuries before the Reformation; since for so long a time grievous corruptions had infected Christian teaching; and it is sought, with very imperfect success, to trace through some obscure heretics a succession of witnesses to the truth. Overwrought descriptions of the corruptions of the Roman Church not uncommonly produce a reaction in her favour. The historical student, in studying the history of the mediaeval Church, may perhaps discover that the witnesses to Protestant truth are comparatively few and broken, leaving great gaps in the tradition: possibly he may find that some whom he might have been disposed to claim as on his side turn out, on closer acquaintance, not to have been so estimable as he had imagined, and either to have been immoral in their lives, or to have denied some doctrines which he regards as of the essence of the Christian faith. Perhaps it may be possible to

produce on the side of the established Church, at the same date, some men whose writings show their love to Christ, and their firm grasp of some of the fundamental truths of the Gospel, or whose lives prove them to have been animated by the sincerest Christian charity. Then it often happens that the student wheels round and expresses his conviction that it was not the heretics but the established clergy who constituted the true Church at the time, and consequently that it is the latter whose teaching is to be accepted as true.

It is astonishing how, even in the minds of Protestants, infallibility has come to be regarded as an essential attribute of the Church, so that they think that if they acknowledge the Church exists at all, they must acknowledge that all she teaches is true, just as if one might not be a very good and pious man, and yet hold many erroneous opinions; or as if, on the other hand, a man might not get correct hold of certain true and important principles, and yet push them to unwarrantable extremes, and draw erroneous conclusions from them. For my part, as a candid disputant, I have not the least desire to shut my eyes to anything in the Roman Church that is really good. All I say is, that what I own to be good has its roots not in those things which I stigmatize as corruptions, but in those principles which Roman Catholics hold in common with us, especially the great principle of love to our Blessed Lord. When once the acknowledgment has been made that the fact that a man's having errors in his system of doctrine does not prove that he has ceased to retain the essence of the faith, the whole argument breaks down which is founded on God's promises to His Church. Granted that we have the assurance that the being of the Church will not be overthrown, nor her main doctrines lost, nor salvation in her become impossible, where is the assurance that if Christians attempt to determine a number of speculative points, by no means essential to the faith, the majority of them will arrive at infallibly certain conclusions? Nay, where is the assurance that no humanly-devised additions will crust over and obscure the deposit of truth which is retained? According to our view of the progress of Christianity in the world,' we may liken it to a stream first breaking forth in crystal purity from its native source, but as its waters are swelled by many a tributary, and as it flows through many a land, discoloured by taints" derived from the soils through which it passes; yet, even after it has lost its first purity and brightness, still able to confer many blessings on the countries which it fertilizes, while nevertheless they who drink of it at a distance from its source find it not superfluous to filter away its accumulated defilements, and so restore it to its original brightness. Now how is such a view as this affected by any considerations which make it reasonable to believe that the waters of the river will never cease to flow?

When we actually study Church history we see that there were many causes in operation having a tendency to introduce into the stream of Christian teaching the defilements of which I have spoken. There was the influx of heathen into the Church, bringing with them their own systems of philosophy, and applying them to their new faith; there was the desire to conciliate prejudice by the softening of what in Christianity might give offence; and there were, finally, principles of fallen human nature itself, ever seeking to be gratified, and having thus a tendency to corrupt what had been committed to it. No one now ventures to deny that the tone of Church teaching has not been uniformly the same from age to age; doctrines assume importance which in former times were little dwelt on, and in many cases what was at first conjecture or pious opinion passes by degrees into a fixed and unquestioned article of belief. This fact of gradual growth, not to say alteration of doctrine, which was long vainly denied by Roman Catholic advocates, is now generally admitted by them, and a power is claimed for the Church, not indeed of publishing revelations of totally new doctrine, and proposing them for articles of faith, but at least of developing old doctrines, and drawing from them consequences unsuspected by those who held them in former generations.

This theory sets aside completely the old Roman Catholic rule of Scripture and tradition. It gives us tradition; and it must in consistency abandon as completely irrational that respect for the Fathers which even still distinguishes uneducated Romanists from uneducated Protestants. In earthly science Lord Bacon pointed out that the Fathers were the children. If we think an old man likely to be wiser than a young one, it is because he has had so much more experience, and is likely to know many things of which the young man is ignorant. But the world is older now than it ever was. To ask us to defer to the opinion of men who lived two centuries ago, and who consequently were ignorant of all that the world has learned in the last two hundred years, is as absurd as to ask a trained philosopher to defer to the opinion of a youth just commencing his studies. And if the theory of the development of Christian doctrine be true, the same rule exactly ought to hold with regard to religious truth; and a Romanist cannot consistently censure a Protestant if he thinks Luther and Calvin teachers likely to be twelve centuries wiser than Chrysostom and Augustine. But if in the theory of Development the Fathers lose all claims to respect, it is still worse with Scripture: the Fathers may have been but children, but the Apostles were only infants. They lived when the Church had but just come into being, and before it had learned all that the Holy Spirit has taught it in the course of nineteen centuries. If so, it ought to be only for curiosity that we need look into books written in the very infancy of the Church; and to 'seek for our system of

Christian doctrine in the Bible would be as absurd as to try to learn the differential calculus from the writings of Archimedes. In other words, the theory of Development, as taught by Cardinal Newman, substantially abandons the claims of Christianity to be regarded as a supernatural revelation which is likely to be preserved in most purity by those who lived nearest to the times when it was given.

And yet there is such a thing as a real development of Christian doctrine. We acknowledge that all the precious truth of Scripture does not lie on the surface, and that continuous study applied to the Bible, by holy men who have sought for the aid of God's Spirit, does elicit much that might have escaped a hasty reader, but which, when once pointed out, remains for the instruction of future generations. But we draw a distinction between things essential to salvation and things true, but not necessary. The way of salvation does not alter from age to age; those truths which were effectual for the salvation of souls in the second or third century are sufficient for salvation still. We hold that, therefore, a Church takes a step unjustifiable, and which must lead to schism, if she imposes new articles of faith to be held of necessity for salvation which were unknown to the Church of past times.

Again, there is a development of Christian doctrine due to the increase of human philosophy and learning. It is impossible' to prevent these from playing their part in modifying our way of understanding the Bible. For instance, in the case which has already come before us, that of Galileo, we see that the progress of astronomical knowledge not only modified the manner in which texts of Scripture were understood which seemed to teach the immobility of the earth, but also made Christians understand that God, who does not work miracles to do for men what He intended them to learn to do for themselves, did not mean the Bible as a supernatural revelation of the truths of astronomy or other sciences, but left the attainment of knowledge of this kind to stimulate and reward the exercise of men's natural powers.

Well, when it is agreed on all hands that the Church of one age may be on several points wiser than the Church of a preceding age, the Gallican theory of infallibility at once breaks down. According to that theory it is consistent with God's promises to His Church that disputes, and consequently that uncertainty, on several important points of doctrine, should prevail for a considerable time; only it is maintained that when once the majority of Christians have agreed in a conclusion about them, that conclusion must never afterwards be called in question. But why not, if the Church has in the meantime become wiser? If God, without injustice and without danger to men's souls, can leave many of His people for a considerable time imperfectly informed, and even in errone-

ous opinion as to certain doctrines, what improbability is there that He may have left a whole generation imperfectly or erroneously informed on the same subject, and reserved the perception of the complete truth for their successors?

Before concluding this part of the subject I ought to say a few words as to Dr. Pusey's theory of infallibility, which substantially agrees with that I have just examined, which places it in the Church diffusive. Dr. Pusey could find no language too strong to condemn the principle of private judgment, and was heartily willing to submit his own judgment to that of the Church; only it must be the united Church. If the whole Church agree in any statement of doctrine that must be infallibly certain. But unhappily, for the last twelve centuries the Church has been rent by schism, and does not agree with itself in its utterances. All that was decreed before the great schism between East and West is undoubtedly true, and no individual dare re-open these questions; and if now the Roman, Greek, and Anglican communions (for to these Dr. Pusey limited the Church) could be united again, the gift of infallibility would revive; but in the Church's present disunited condition the gift is dormant. I am not prepared to say that this is not a legitimate extension of the Gallican theory, for if universal consent is necessary to the propounding of an infallible decision, how can that condition be said to be satisfied when full half the company of baptized Christians dissent? But Pusey's Roman Catholic critics have seen very clearly that his theory is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the proof of the existence of an infallible guide. Most persons would agree that if God saw it to be necessary to bestow on His Church the gift of infallibility for several hundred years, it is likely she has the gift still; and, conversely, it is easier to believe that the gift was never bestowed than that it was given on such conditions that the exercise of it has proved for more than a thousand years to be practically impossible. One of Dr. Pusey's Roman Catholic critics says, very reasonably from his point of view, 'To say that the Church has practically ceased to be infallible for twelve centuries out of eighteen, is to say that the Holy Ghost has failed of His mission during two-thirds of the lifetime of the Church which He was by Divine promise to lead into all truth.'³

Whatever acceptance Dr. Pusey's theory has gained is due to a desire to find a theory which will justify us in being sure of the truth of the doctrines which the Roman Church and ours hold in common, notwithstanding our rejection of other things set forth by the authority of the Roman Church, I cannot see that any theory is necessary. The evidence for those doctrines which were held in all parts of the Catholic Church in those centuries that were separated

³ Harper, *Peace through the Truth*, I. lxi.

by a comparatively short interval from the Apostolic' times, which have been held continuously in the Church ever since, and are still held by a preponderating majority of the Christians of the present day, is beyond comparison stronger than that for any doctrine that was never authoritatively declared to be part of the Catholic Faith until within the last twelve centuries.

But there are some who imagine that we cannot be certain of anything unless it be guaranteed by an infallible authority, and in order to satisfy a supposed necessity they devise an artificial theory which an adversary might easily represent in the form—the Church is infallible when we agree with her teaching, and not infallible when we do not. But the truth is that, if we are not satisfied with that kind of certainty which God thinks sufficient for our practical guidance in all the affairs of life, it is a delusion to imagine that a supposed infallible authority can give us anything higher. For, as I have argued already, the assent we give to the teaching of such an authority always involves an element of uncertainty, namely, whether we may not possibly be mistaken in our belief that the authority in question is infallible.

It is easy to show that Dr. Pusey's theory removes a solid foundation from our faith, and substitutes a miserably weak one. If we are asked on what grounds we believe in the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity, we certainly would not omit to mention as one very strong one, that in the fourth century this was authoritatively proclaimed to be the doctrine of the Christian Church. What the Christians of that age were almost unanimous in believing has unquestionably strong claims on our acceptance. But it is further in our power to examine the reasons which Christians of the fourth century alleged for their belief, and though we may be disposed to set aside a few of them as not convincing to a modern mind, there remain quite enough to justify us in adopting their conclusions. The theory we are examining requires us to abandon this additional ground of belief, and to rest our faith in the assumption, that the Church in the fourth century was infallible, and therefore we must accept its decisions without examination. But if we are obliged to confess that, though the Church was infallible in the fourth century she ceased to be so a couple of centuries afterwards and never recovered the gift since, so that though we must accept without examination the decisions of the second Council of Nicæa, we are quite free to criticize the decisions of any later council: we seem to have got hold of a theory so clearly dictated to us by the exigencies of our own theological position, that any rational critic would pronounce that we had had a far stronger foundation for our faith if we had let that theory alone.

I may sum up in the words of a writer in the *Quarterly Review* October 1889 (p 384). The root of the matter is, that there is no royal road to certainty,

no organon for the summary extinction of doubts. As much in the sphere of religion, as in the social and political domains, infallibility and perfection are mere dreams of the imagination. Conviction of the truth does not become ours at the command of some external authority. It grows by contributions from many sources: from the testimony of the past, from personal experience, from spiritual intuition, from conscientious following of the light, from the influences exercised on us by our fellow-men who are eminent for goodness. It never ceases to grow so long as we are faithful to what we have attained, and, though in this world it can never attain a logical completeness, the humble and patient will always find it sufficient for their practical need. If Anglicans then of whatever school will only cultivate mutual tolerance, and sincerely endeavour to make the best of the system in which Providence has placed them, they may well leave to ecclesiastical utopians the vain quest for a Church whose voice will silence all disputes, satisfy all doubts, ‘and impose unanimity by an authority beyond contradiction.’