

THE
INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

A COURSE OF LECTURES

DELIVERED IN THE
Divinity School of the University of Dublin

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II.

THE CARDINAL IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION OF INFALLIBILITY.

YOU will easily understand that it would be absolutely impossible for me, in the course of these lectures, to go through all the details of the Roman Catholic controversy. You have in your hands text-books which will give you information on all the most important points. But the truth is, that the issues of the controversy mainly turn on one great question, which is the only one that I expect to be able to discuss with you—I mean the question of the Infallibility of the Church. If that be decided against us, our whole case is gone, and victories on the details of the controversy would profit us as little as, to use a favourite illustration of Archbishop Whately's, it profits a chess-player to win some pieces and pawns if he gets his king check-mated. In fact, suppose we make what seems to ourselves a quite convincing proof that some doctrine of the Roman Church is not contained in Scripture, what does that avail if we are forced to own that that Church has access to other sources of information besides Scripture as to the doctrine taught by our Lord and His Apostles? Suppose we even consider that we have proved a Roman doctrine to be contrary to Scripture, what does that avail if we are compelled to acknowledge that we are quite incompetent to decide what is Scripture or what is the meaning of it, and if it belongs to the Church of Rome alone to give us the book and to teach us its true interpretation? In like manner, if our study of history should lead us to the conclusion that the teaching of the present Church is at variance with the teaching of the Church of former days, we are forced to surrender this ill-grounded suspicion of ours if we are made to believe that the Church cannot err, and, as a necessary consequence, that her teaching must be at all times the same.

One can scarcely open any book that attempts to deal with controversy by such a Roman Catholic as, for instance, Cardinal Manning, without being forced to observe how his faith in the infallibility of the present Church makes him impenetrable to all arguments. Suppose, for example, the question in dispute is the Pope's personal infallibility, and that you object to him the case of Honorius: he replies, At most you could make out that it is *doubtful* whether Honorius was orthodox; but it is *certain* that a Pope could not be a heretic. Well, you reply, at least the case of Honorius shows that the Church of the time supposed that a Pope could be a heretic. Not so, he answers, for the Church now holds that a Pope speaking *ex cathedra* cannot err, and the Church *could* not have taught differently at any other time.

Thus, as long as anyone really believes in the infallibility of his Church, he is proof against any argument you can ply him with. Conversely, when

faith in this principle is shaken, belief in some other Roman Catholic doctrine is sure also to be disturbed; for there are some of these doctrines in respect of which nothing but a very strong belief that the Roman Church cannot decide wrongly will prevent a candid inquirer from coming to the conclusion that she has decided wrongly. This simplification, then, of the controversy realizes for us the wish of the Roman tyrant that all his enemies had but one neck. If we can but strike one blow, the whole battle is won.

If the vital importance of this question of Infallibility had not been sufficiently evident from *a priori* considerations, I should have been convinced of it from the history of the Roman Catholic controversy as it has been conducted in my own lifetime. When I first came to an age to take lively interest in the subject Dr. Newman and his coadjutors were publishing, in the *Tracts for the Times*, excellent refutations of the Roman doctrine on Purgatory and on some other important points. A very few years afterwards, without making the smallest attempt to answer their own arguments, these men went over to Rome, and bound themselves to believe and teach as true things which they had themselves proved to be false. The accounts which those who went over in that movement gave of their reasons for the change show surprising indifference to the ordinary topics of the controversy, and in some cases leave us only obscurely to discern why they went at all. It was natural that many who witnessed the sudden collapse of the resistance which had been offered to Roman Catholic teaching should conclude that it had been a sham fight all along; but this was unjust. It rather resembled what not unfrequently occurs in the annals of warfare when, after entrenchments have been long and obstinately assaulted without success, some great general has taken up a position which has caused them to be evacuated without a struggle.

While the writers of the *Tracts* were assailing with success different points of Roman teaching, they allowed themselves to be persuaded that Christ must have provided His people with some infallible guide to truth; and they accepted the Church of Rome as that guide, with scarcely an attempt to make a careful scrutiny of the grounds of her pretensions, and merely because, if she were not that guide, they knew not where else to find it. Thus, when they were beaten on the one question of Infallibility, their victories on other points availed them nothing.

Perhaps those who then submitted to the Church of Rome scarcely realized all that was meant in their profession of faith in their new guide. They may have thought it meant no more than belief that everything the Church of Rome then taught was infallibly true. Events soon taught them that it meant besides that they must believe everything that that Church might afterwards teach; and her subsequent teaching put so great a strain on the

faith of the new converts, that in a few cases it was more than it could bear.

The idea that the doctrine of the Church of Rome is always the same is one which no one of the present day can hold without putting an enormous strain on his understanding. It used to be the boast of Romish advocates that the teaching of their Church was unchangeable. Heretics, they used to say, show by their perpetual alterations that they never have had hold of the truth. They move the ancient landmarks without themselves foreseeing whither their new principles will lead them; and so after a while, discovering their position to be untenable, they vainly try by constant changes to reduce their system to some semblance of consistency. Our Church, on the contrary, they said, ever teaches the same doctrine which has been handed down from the Apostles, and has since been taught 'everywhere, always, and by all.' Divines of our Church used to expose the falsity of this boast by comparing the doctrine now taught in the Church of Rome with that taught in the Church of early times, and thus established by historical proof that a change had occurred. But now the matter has been much simplified; for no laborious proof is necessary to show that that is not unchangeable which has changed under our very eyes. The rate of change is not like that of the hour-hand of a watch, which you must note at some considerable intervals of time in order to see that there has been a movement, but rather like that of the second-hand, which you can actually see moving.

The first trial of the faith of the new converts was the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, in 1854, when a doctrine was declared to be the universal ancient tradition of the Church, on which eminent divines had notoriously held different opinions, so much so, that this diversity had been accounted for by Bishop Milner and other controversialists by the assertion that neither Scripture nor tradition contained anything on the subject.

The manner of that decree, intended to bind the universal Church, was remarkable. It was not a vote of a council. Bishops, indeed, had been previously consulted, and bishops were assembled to hear the decision; but the decision rested on the authority of the Pope alone. It was correctly foreseen that what was then done was intended to establish a precedent. I remember then how the news came that the Pope proposed to assemble a council, and how those who had the best right to know predicted that this council was to terminate the long controversy as to the relative superiority of Popes and councils, by owning the personal infallibility of the Pope, and so making it unnecessary that any future council should be held. This announcement created the greatest ferment in the Roman Catholic Church; and those who passed for the men of highest learning in that communion, and who had been wont to be most relied on, when learned Protestants were to be combated, opposed with all their might the contemplated definition, as an entire

innovation on the traditional teaching of the Church, and as absolutely contradicted by the facts of history. These views were shared by Dr. Newman. His own inclinations had not favoured any extravagant cult of the Virgin Mary, and he was too well acquainted with Church History not to know that the doctrine of her Immaculate Conception was a complete novelty, unknown to early times, and, when first put forward, condemned by some of the most esteemed teachers of the Church. But when the Pope formally promulgated that doctrine as part of the essential faith of the Church, he had submitted in silence. When, however, it was proposed to declare the Pope's personal infallibility, this was a doctrine so directly in the teeth of history, that Newman made no secret of his persuasion that the authoritative adoption of it would be attended with ruinous consequences to his Church, by placing what seemed an insuperable obstacle to any man of learning entering her fold. He wrote in passionate alarm to an English Roman Catholic bishop (Ullathorne): 'Why,' he said, 'should an aggressive insolent faction be allowed "to make the heart of the just sad, whom the Lord hath not made sorrowful"? Why cannot we be let alone when we have pursued peace and thought no evil? I assure you, my Lord, some of the truest minds are driven one way and another, and do not know where to rest their feet—one day determining to give up all theology as a bad job, and recklessly to believe henceforth almost that the Pope is impeccable, at another tempted to believe all the worst which a book like Janus says: . . . Then, again, think of the store of Pontifical scandals in the history of eighteen centuries, which have partly been poured forth and partly are still to come. . . And then, again, the blight which is falling upon the multitude of Anglican ritualists, &c., who themselves perhaps—at least their leaders—may never become Catholics, but who are leavening the various English denominations and parties far beyond their own range, with principles and sentiments tending towards their ultimate absorption with the Catholic Church. With these thoughts ever before me, I am continually asking myself whether I ought not to make my feelings public: but all I do is to pray those early doctors of the Church, whose intercession would decide the matter (Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Basil), to avert this great calamity. If it is God's will that the Pope's infallibility be defined, then it is God's will to throw back the "times and moments" of that triumph which He has destined' for His kingdom; and I shall feel that I have but to bow my head to His adorable inscrutable Providence.'*

* Letter published 'by permission' in the *Standard*, April 7, 1870. See *Letters of Quirinus*, authorized translation, p. 356.

I have been reminded that Newman, in his letter to the Duke of Norfolk, written five years later, speaks of himself as 'accepting as a dogma what he had ever held as a truth';

Abundant proof that the new dogma had, until then, been no part of the faith of the Church, was furnished by von Dollinger at the time deservedly reputed to be the most learned man in the Roman communion, and amongst others by two Munich professors, who, under the name of Janus, published a work containing a mass of historical proofs of the novelty of the proposed decree. These arguments were urged by able bishops at the Vatican Council itself. But the Pope carried out his project in the teeth of historical demonstration. A few of the most learned of the protesters against the new dogma refused to recognize the doctrine thus defined as that of the Catholic Church, and formed a schism, calling themselves 'Old Catholics'. But the bulk of the people had no inclination to trouble themselves with historical investigations, and accepted, without inquiry, what their rulers were pleased to offer them; and a number of the eminent men, who had not only denied the truth of the new dogma, but had proved its falsity to the satisfaction of every reasoning man, finding no other choice open to them, unless they abandoned every theory as to the infallibility of the Church which they had previously maintained, and unless they joined a schism which, as was foreseen at the time, and as the event proved, would be insignificant in numbers, preferred to eat their words, and to profess faith in what it is difficult to understand how they could in their hearts have had any real belief.

and I suppose that this word 'ever', if not to be understood quite literally, at least means that at the time he wrote his letter to Bishop Ullathorne, he believed the doctrine of the Pope's Infallibility to be a truth. But a reader of that letter may be pardoned for not suspecting this. Who could imagine that such panic apprehensions as the letter exhibits was caused by alarm at the intelligence that the writer was about to receive the highest assurance that what he had ever believed to be true really was true, and that this truth was about to be published to the world with such authority that thenceforth it would be inexcusable to doubt it? It was natural to attach significance to the fact that the words of Ezekiel should rise to Newman's mind: '*With lies* ye have made the heart of the righteous sad,' and natural to suppose that it was only politeness which withheld him from quoting them in full. No one who has read my lecture with any attention will need to be told that I never meant to impute to Newman insincerity in his professions of belief. What I have been speaking of all through is the effect of the reception of the doctrine of Infallibility—not on men's profession, but on their beliefs. External force may frighten a man into altering his outward profession, but has no effect on his inward belief. But if he comes to persuade himself of the existence of a guide incapable of leading him wrong, he is ready to surrender his previous beliefs in deference to that authority, to accept as true what he had before proved to be false, and to renounce as false what he had before proved to be true: even though he can point out no flaw in his previous demonstrations, and though he might find it hard to explain why he was not as liable to error in the process by which he persuaded himself of the infallibility of his guide as in his earlier reasonings.

Newman's letter to Ullathorne, however, serves to illustrate what a different thing is the belief into which a man persuades himself in deference to authority from that which is the result of his own investigations. The former we have seen to be a thing which winces when it is pressed too hard, and which the holder shrinks from pressing upon others. This, in my opinion, does not deserve to be called real belief, though, no doubt, it may grow into it, when in process of time the opposing arguments come to be forgotten.

I own, the first impression produced by this history is one of discouragement. It seems hopeless to waste research or argument on men who have shown themselves determined not to be convinced. What hope is there that argument of mine can convince men who are not convinced by their own arguments? As long as there was a chance of saving their Church from committing herself to a decision in the teeth of history, they struggled to avert the calamity; showing by irrefragable arguments that the early Church never regarded the Pope to be infallible, and that different Popes had made decisions glaringly false. But having clearly shown that black was not white, no sooner had authority declared that it was, than they professed themselves ready to believe it.

But though it is, on the first view, disappointing that our adversaries should withdraw themselves into a position seemingly inaccessible to argument, it is really, as I shall presently show, a mark of our success that they have been driven from the open field, and forced to betake themselves into this fortress. And we have every encouragement to follow them, and assault their citadel, which is now their last refuge.

In other words, it has now become more clear than ever that the whole Roman Catholic controversy turns on the decision of the one question—the Infallibility of the Church. We have just seen how the admission of this principle can force men to surrender their most deep-rooted beliefs, which they had maintained with the greatest heat, and to the assertion of which they had committed themselves most strongly. They surrendered these beliefs solely in deference to external authority, though themselves unable to see any flaw in the arguments which had persuaded them of the truth of them. And I must say that, in making this surrender, they were better and more consistent Roman Catholics than von Döllinger and his friends, who refused to eat their words and turn their back on their own arguments. For all their lives long they had condemned the exercise of private judgment, and had insisted on the necessity of submitting to the authority of the Church. Now, if you accept the Church's teaching just so long as it agrees with what you, on other grounds, persuade yourselves to be true, and reject it as soon as it differs from your own judgment, that is not real submission to the authority of the Church. You do not take a man as a guide, though you may be travelling along a road in his company, if you are willing to part company if he should make a turn of which you disapprove. It matters not what Romish doctrines the German Old Catholic party may continue to hold. They may believe Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, and more. But from the moment they ventured to use their reason, and reject a dogma propounded to them by their Church, they were really Protestants; they had adopted the great principle of Protestantism. And so, at the time of the formation of the Old Catholic party, I expressed my fears

in a lecture here that its members would be able to find no home in the Roman Church. My fears, I say, for I count it a thing to be regretted that that Church, by casting out her most learned and most enlightened members, should lose all chance of recovering the truth by reform from within.

If, however, there could ever be a case where men should be constrained by a *reductio ad absurdum*. to abandon a principle they had held, but which had been shown to lead to consequences certainly false, it was when the men of the Old Catholic party found that if they were to go on maintaining the infallibility of their Church, they must also assert that she never had changed her doctrine. If, previous to the Vatican Council, the Church of Rome had known the doctrine of the Pope's personal infallibility to be true, she had, somehow or another, so neglected to teach it, that though it is a doctrine relating to the very foundation of her religious system, her priests and bishops had been ignorant that it was any part of her teaching. The Infallibilist party at Rome had been obliged, at an early stage of their exertions, to get placed on the Prohibitory Index, Bailly's work on Theology, which had been used as a text-book at Maynooth. Would not any Roman Catholic say that the Church of Ireland had changed her doctrine if the text-books which you use here were not only removed from your course, but if the Irish bishops published a declaration that these books, in which their predecessors had been wont to examine candidates for orders, contained erroneous doctrine, and were on that account unfit to be read by our people?

Again, the effect of the Vatican Council was to necessitate great changes in controversial catechisms. One might think that the clergymen who might be supposed best acquainted with the doctrines of their Church are those who are selected to conduct controversy with opponents. In our Church, indeed, anyone may engage in controversy at his own discretion, and need not necessarily be the most learned or wisest of our body; but the controversial catechisms of the Roman Church are only issued with the permission of the writer's superiors, and therefore their statements as to Roman Catholic doctrine may be supposed to tell what the best informed members of the communion believe that she teaches. Now, it had been a common practice with Roman Catholic controversial writers, when pressed with objections against the doctrine of the personal infallibility of the Pope, to repudiate that doctrine altogether, and to declare it to be a Protestant misrepresentation to assert that it was taught by their Church.

I may afterwards have occasion to say something about books which circulated in America, but will now mention one to which my own attention happened to be specially drawn. The controversial book which, thirty years ago, was most relied on in this country was 'Keenan's Catechism,' a book published with the *imprimatur* of Scotch Roman Catholic bishops,

and recommended also by Irish prelates. This book contained the following question and answer:—

‘Q. Must not Catholics believe the Pope in himself to be infallible?

‘A. This is a Protestant invention: it is no article of the Catholic faith: no decision of his can oblige, under pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching body; that is, by the bishops of the Church.’

About 1869 or 1870 I had a visit from an English clergyman, who, for reasons of health, resided chiefly on the Continent, and, mixing much with Roman Catholics, took great interest in the controversy which was then agitating their Church. I showed him the question and answer in ‘Keenan’s Catechism’; and he was so much interested by them, that he bought some copies of the book to present to his friends abroad. A couple of years later he visited Ireland again, and purchased some more copies of ‘Keenan’; but this question and answer had then disappeared. He presented me then with the two copies I have here. To all appearance they are identical in their contents. From the title-page, as it appears on the paper cover of each, the two books appear to be both of the twenty-first thousand; but when we open the books, we find them further agreeing in the singular feature, that there is another title-page which describes each .as of the twenty-fourth thousand. But at page 112 the question and answer which I have quoted are to be found in the one book, and are absent from the other. It is, therefore, impossible now to maintain that the faith of the Church of Rome never changes, when it is notorious that there is something which is now part of her faith which those who had a good right to know declared was no part of her faith twenty years ago.*

I will not delay to speak of many changes in Roman teaching consequent on the definition of Papal Infallibility; but you can easily understand that there are a great many statements officially made by several Popes which, inasmuch .as they rested on papal authority alone, learned Roman Catholics had formerly thought themselves at liberty to reject, but which

* In reply to the above it has been said that it has been customary with heretics to accuse the Church of changing her doctrine whenever she finds it necessary, for the first time, to pass condemnation on some newly invented heresy; and that if the Church of Rome can fairly be accused of having changed her doctrine at the Vatican Council, the Church of the fourth century may, with equal fairness, be accused of having changed her doctrine at the Council of Nicaea. But in order to make the parallel a just one, it would be necessary to show that all through the first three centuries it had been a permissible opinion in the Christian Church to hold that our Blessed Lord was not truly and properly God: and further that, when heathen assailants had accused the Church of worshipping Christ as God, it had been customary with Christian apologists to answer, ‘this is a heathen invention; the Christian Church has never regarded Christ as God in the highest sense of the word.’ If such a defence had been made by the ablest of the Christian advocates, and if their apologies had been circulated with the approbation of all the leading bishops, then it would have been impossible to resist the Arian allegation that the Council of Nicaea had innovated on the ancient faith of the Church.

must now be accepted as articles of faith. But what I wish now to speak of is, that the forced confession of change, at least by way of addition, in Roman teaching has necessitated a surrender of the principles on which her system had formerly been defended; and this was what I had specially in mind when I spoke of the fortress of Infallibility as the last refuge of a beaten army, who, when driven from this, must fall into total rout.

The first revolt against Romanism took place when the Bible was made easily accessible. When, by means of translations printed in the vulgar languages of Europe, a knowledge of the New Testament became general, men could not help taking notice that the Christianity then taught by the Church was a very different thing from that which was preached by the Apostles, and that a host of doctrines were taught as necessary to salvation by the modern Church, of which, as far as we could learn from the Bible, the early Church knew nothing. Whether the doctrines of Romanism can be proved from the Bible is a matter which you can judge for yourselves; but if there is any doubt about it, that doubt is removed by watching the next stage of the controversy. The Roman Catholic advocates ceased to insist that the doctrines of the Church could be deduced from Scripture; but the theory of some early heretics, refuted by Irenæus* was revived, namely, that the Bible does not contain the whole of God's revelation, and that a body of traditional doctrine existed in the Church equally deserving of veneration.

At this time, however, all parties were agreed that through our Lord and His Apostles a revelation unique in the history of the world had been made to mankind. All parties imagined that it was the truths then made known, neither more nor less, that the Church was to preserve and teach. All parties agreed that the Holy Scriptures might be implicitly depended on as an inspired record of these truths. The main difference was as to how far the Bible record of them could be regarded as complete. Things were taught and practised in the Roman Church for which the Bible furnished no adequate justification; and the Roman advocates insisted that, though the Bible contained truth, it did not contain the whole truth, and that the Church was able, by her traditions, to supplement the deficiencies of Scripture, having in those traditions a secure record of apostolic teaching on many points on

* 'When they [the Valentinian heretics] are confuted from the Scriptures they turn round and accuse these same Scriptures as if they were not correct, nor of authority, for that they are ambiguously worded, and that the truth cannot be discovered from them by those who are ignorant of tradition. For they say that the truth was not delivered in writing but *viva voce*; wherefore Paul also declared "We speak wisdom among them, that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world"' (Irenæus iii. c. 2.) And to make the analogy complete, Irenæus goes on to complain that when the Church met these heretics on their own ground of tradition, then they had recourse to a theory of development claiming to be then in possession of purer doctrine than that which the Apostles had been content to teach.

which the Bible contained only obscure indications, or even gave no information at all.

This Roman assertion might be met in two ways. Many, probably the majority, of the Protestants refused to listen at all to doctrines said to be binding on their faith, and not asserted to be taught in Scripture; and we shall afterwards see that they had the sanction of several of the most eminent Fathers for thinking that what was asserted without the authority of Holy Scripture might be ‘despised as freely as approved.’* But there were champions of our Church who met the Roman case in another way. They declared that, as they had been convinced by historical proof that the books of the New Testament were written by Apostles or apostolical men, so they had no objection to examine whether similar historic proof could be given of the apostolic origin of any of the peculiar doctrines of Romanism.

Bellarmino, indeed, had given as one of his rules for knowing whether or not the proof of a Church doctrine rested on tradition,† that a doctrine taught by the Church could not be proved by Scripture, it must be proved by tradition; for the Church could not teach wrong; and so the doctrine must be proved either in the one way or the other. But it would be too much to expect from us that we should admit a failure of Scripture proof to constitute in itself a proof by tradition. We have a right to ask, If the Church learned that doctrine by tradition, where has that tradition been recorded? Who are the ancient authors that mention it? If the thing has been handed down from the Apostles the Church of the first centuries must have believed or practised it: let us inquire, as we should in the case of any other historical question, whether she did or not.

Bishop Jewel, in his celebrated challenge, enumerated twenty-seven points of the Roman Catholic teaching of his day, and declared that if any learned man of our adversaries or all the learned men that be alive, were able to bring any one sufficient sentence out of any old Catholic Doctor or Father, or General Council, or Holy Scripture, or any one example in the Primitive Church, whereby it might be clearly and plainly proved that any of them was taught for the first 600 years, then he would be content to yield and subscribe. Not, of course, that Jewel meant that a single instance of a doctrine being taught during the first six centuries was enough to establish its truth, but he meant to express his strong conviction that in the case of the twenty-seven doctrines he enumerated no such instance could be produced.

I do not wonder that many Protestants looked on this historic method as a very perilous way of meeting the claims of Romanism. In the first place,

* Hieron. *in Matt.* xxiii.

† *De verbo Dei*, iv. 9.

it deserted the ground of Scripture, on which they felt sure of victory, for that of history, on which success might be doubtful; and, in the second place, it needed no learned apparatus to embark on the Scripture controversy. Any intelligent layman might satisfy himself what amount of recognition was given to a doctrine in the Bible; but the battle on the field of history could only be fought by learned men, and would go on out of sight of ordinary members of the Church, who would be quite incompetent to tell which way the victory had gone.

When two opposing generals meet in battle, and both send home bulletins of victory, and *Te Deums* are sung in churches on both sides, we, who sit at home, may find it hard to understand which way the battle has gone. But if we look at the map, and see where the next battle is fought, and if we find that one general is making 'for strategic reasons' a constant succession of movements towards the rear, and that he ends by completely evacuating the country he at first undertook to defend, then we may suspect that his glorious victories were perhaps not quite so brilliant as he had represented them to be. And so, when the Church of England champions left the plain ground of Scripture, and proceeded to interchange quotations from the Fathers, plain men, out of whose sight the battle now went, might be excused for apprehension as to the result, themselves being scarcely competent to judge of the force of the passages quoted on each side. But when they find that the heads of the Roman Catholic Church now think it as great a heresy to appeal to antiquity, as to appeal to Scripture, they have cause for surmising which way the victory has gone.

The first strategic movement towards the rear was the doctrine of development, which has seriously modified the old theory of tradition. When Dr. Newman became a Roman Catholic, it was necessary for him in some way to reconcile this step with the proofs he had previously given that certain distinctive Romish doctrines were unknown to the early Church. The historical arguments he had advanced in his Anglican days were incapable of refutation even by himself. But it being hopeless to maintain that the present teaching of Roman Catholics is identical with the doctrine held in the primitive Church, he set himself to show that though not the same, it was a great deal better. This is the object of the celebrated Essay on the *Development of Christian Doctrine*, which he published simultaneously with his submission to the Roman Church. The theory expounded in it in substance is, that Christ had but committed to His Church certain seeds and germs of truth, destined afterwards to expand to definite forms; consequently, that our Lord did not intend that the teaching of His Church should be always the same; but ordained that it should go on continually improving under the guidance of His Holy Spirit. This theory was not altogether new. Not to speak of earlier anticipations of it, it had been maintained, not

many years previously, by the German divine, Möhler, in his work called *Symbolik*; and this mode of defending the Roman system had been adopted in the theological lectures of Perrone, Professor in the Jesuit College at Rome. But Newman's book had the effect of making the theory popular to an extent it had never been before, and of causing its general adoption by Romish advocates, who are now content to exchange tradition, which their predecessors had made the basis of their system, for this new foundation of development. You will find them now making shameless confession of the novelty of articles of their creed, and even taunting us Anglicans with the unprogressive character of our faith, because we are content to believe as the early Church believed, and as our fathers believed before us.

In a subsequent lecture I mean to discuss this theory of development: I only mention it now because the starting of this theory exhibits plainly the total rout which the champions of the Roman Church experienced in the battle they attempted to fight on the field of history. The theory of development is, in short, an attempt to enable men, beaten off the platform of history, to hang on to it by the eyelids. Suppose, for instance, we have made a strong proof that some doctrine or practice of modern Romanism was unknown to the primitive Church, we might still find it difficult to show that this general proposition of ours admitted of absolutely no exception. Did no one *ever* in the first centuries teach or practise the thing in dispute? or, if not absolutely the same thing, something like it? something only to be defended on the same principles, or which, if pushed to its logical consequences, might justify the present state of things? Then the argument is applied, Any practice which was tolerated in the first age of the Church cannot be absolutely wrong, and though it may have been in those days exceptional, still the Church may, for reason that seems to her good, make it her general rule now. And a doctrinal principle once acknowledged, though it may be without its full import being known, must now be accepted with all the logical consequences that can be shown to be involved in it.

Thus, to take an example of a practice: it is not denied that the refusal of the cup to the laity is absolutely opposed to the custom of the Church for centuries; but it is thought to be sufficient justification of Roman usage if we are unable to prove that in the early ages absolutely no such thing ever occurred as communion in one element without the other. Or, to take an example of a doctrine, we inquire whether the Church of the first three centuries thought it necessary to seek for the intercession of the Virgin Mary, or thought it right to pay her the extravagant honours which Roman Catholics have now no scruple in bestowing on her. There is no pretence of answering these questions in the affirmative. It is thought reply enough to ask in return, Did not the ancient Church teach the fact of the intimate relation that existed between the Blessed Virgin and the human nature of our Lord?

Surely yes, we confess, we acknowledge that ourselves. Then, it is urged, the later Church is entitled to draw out by legitimate inference all that it can discover as to the privileges which that intimate relation must needs have conferred, even though the earlier Church had been blind to them.

When Dr. Newman's book appeared, I looked with much curiosity to see whether the heads of the Church to which he was joining himself would accept the defence made by their new convert, the book having been written before he had yet joined them. For, however great the ingenuity of this defence, and whatever important elements of truth it might contain, it seemed to be plainly a complete abandonment of the old traditional theory of the advocates of Rome.

The old theory was that the teaching of the Church had never varied. Scripture proof of the identity of her present teaching with that of the Apostles might fail; but tradition could not fail to prove that what the Church teaches now she had also taught from the beginning. Thus, for example, the Council of Trent, in the celebrated decree passed in its fourth Session, in which it laid the foundation of its whole method of proceeding, clearly taught that all saving truth and moral discipline had been delivered either by the mouth of Christ Himself, or by His inspired Apostles, and had since been handed down either in the Scriptures, or in continuous unwritten tradition; and the Council, in particular decrees passed subsequently, claimed for its teaching to have been what the Church had always taught.* No phrase has been more often on the lips of Roman controversialists than that which described the faith of the Church as what was held 'everywhere, always, and by all'.† Bishop Milner, in his well-known work, of which I shall have more to say in another lecture, *The End of Religious Controversy*, writes: 'It is a fundamental maxim never to admit any tenet but such as is believed by all the bishops, and was believed by their predecessors *up to the Apostles themselves*.' 'The constant language of the Church is *nil innovetur, nil nisi quod traditum est*. Such and such is the sense of Scripture, such and such is the doctrine of her predecessors, the Pastors of the Church, since the time of the Apostles.' Dr. Wiseman said: 'We believe that no new doctrine can be introduced into the Church, but that every doctrine which we hold has existed and been taught in it ever since the time of the Apostles, having been handed down by them to their successors.'‡

It is worth while to call attention to another point in the decree of the Council of Trent to which I referred just now, namely, the value it attached to the consent of the Fathers as a decisive authority in the interpretation of

* So for example in the decree concerning matrimony (Sess. xxiv.), 'Sancti patres nostri, et concilia, et universalis ecclesiae traditio *semper* docuerunt.'

† Vincent. Lirin. *Commonitorium*, c. 3.

‡ Wiseman, *Moorfield Lectures*, i. 60. London: 1847.

Scripture. The veneration for the Fathers so solemnly expressed at Trent has been handed down as an essential part of popular Romanism. Let the most unlearned Romanist and an equally unlearned Protestant get into a discussion, and let the Fathers be mentioned, and you may probably hear their authority treated with contempt by the Protestant, but assuredly it will be treated as decisive by the Romanist. Now, this making the authority of the Fathers the rule and measure of our judgment is absolutely inconsistent with the theory of Development. In every progressive science the latest authority is the best. Take mathematics, which is in its nature as immutable as any theory can represent theology to be, and in which what has once been proved to be true can never afterwards come into question; yet even there the older authors are only looked into as a matter of curiosity, to illustrate the history of the progress of the science, but have no weight as authorities. We study the science from modern books, which contain everything of value that the older writers discovered—possibly may correct some mistakes of theirs, but certainly will contain much of which they were ignorant. And, in like manner, anyone who holds the theory of Development ought, in consistency, to put the writings of the Fathers on the shelf as antiquated and obsolete. Their teaching, judged by the standard of the present day, must certainly be defective, and might even be erroneous. In point of fact, there is scarcely one of the Fathers who does not occasionally come into collision with modern Roman teaching, and for whom it is not necessary to find apologies. A good deal of controversial triumph took place when, by the publication of certain expurgatorial indices, it was brought to light that the Roman authorities regarded certain genuine *dicta* of early Fathers as erroneous, and as needing correction. But if the Development theory be true, it is only proper that the inaccuracies of the time when Church teaching was immature should be corrected by the light of fuller knowledge. It follows that the traditional veneration of the Fathers in the Roman Church is a witness of the novelty of the theory of Development.

But, more than a century before Dr. Newman's time, the theory of Development had played its part in the Roman Catholic controversy; only then it was the Protestant combatant who brought that theory forward, and the Roman Catholic who repudiated it. I shall have occasion in another lecture to speak of the controversial work published by Bossuet, who was accounted the most formidable champion of the Church of Rome towards the end of the seventeenth century. The thesis of his book called *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches* was that the doctrine of the true Church is always the same, whereas Protestants are at variance with each other and with themselves. Bossuet was replied to by a Calvinist minister named Jurieu. The line Jurieu took was to dispute the assertion that the doctrine of the true Church is always the same. He maintained the doctrine of Devel-

opment in its full extent, asserting that the truth of God was only known by instalments (*par parcelles*), that the theology of the Fathers was imperfect and fluctuating, and that Christian theology has been constantly going on towards perfection. He illustrated his theory by examples of important doctrines, concerning which he alleged the teaching of the early Church to have been defective or uncertain, of which it is enough here to quote that he declared that the mystery of the Trinity, though of the last importance, and essential to Christianity, remained, 'as everyone knows,' undeveloped (*informe*) down to the first Council of Nicaea, and even down to that of Constantinople. Bossuet, in replying, had the embarrassment, if he felt it as such, that a learned divine of his own Church and nation—the Jesuit Petau, whose name is better known under its Latinized form, Petavius—had, in his zeal to make Church authority the basis of all religious knowledge, made very similar assertions concerning the immaturity of the teaching of the early Fathers. Plainly, if Jurieu could establish his case, the whole foundation of Bossuet's great controversial work would be swept away. It would be impossible to taunt Protestants because their teaching had not been always the same, if it must be confessed that the same thing must be said of the Church in every age. But it would be unjust to imagine that Bossuet was actuated merely by controversial ardour in the indignant and passionate outcry which he raised against Jurieu's theory, or to doubt that that theory was deeply painful and shocking to him on account of its aspersion on the faith of the early Church. He declared the statement that the mystery of the Trinity remained undeveloped down to the Council of Nicaea to be a horrible libel (*flétrissure*) on Christianity, to be language which could only have been expected from the mouth of a Socinian. He appealed to the contemporary work of our own divine, Bishop Bull (*Defensio Fidei Nicenae*), in which the doctrine of Nicaea was established by the testimony of ante-Nicene Fathers, a work for which Bossuet had communicated the thanks of himself and his clergy. He declared it to be the greatest of errors to imagine that the faith of the Church only developed itself as heresies arose, and as she made explicit decisions concerning them. And he reiterated his own thesis, that the faith of the Church, as being a Divine work, had its perfection from the first, and had never varied; and that the Church never pronounced any judgments, except by way of propounding the faith of the past.* The name of Bossuet is, for reasons of which I shall speak on another day, not popular with the Ultramontane party now dominant in the Roman Church; but there is no doubt that, in his day, he was not only the accredited champion of that Church, but the most successful in gaining con-

* The statements in the text are taken from Bosquet's *Prémier avertissement aux Protestants*.

verts from Protestantism. It seems, then, a very serious matter if the leading authorities in the Roman Church have now to own that, in the main point at issue between Bossuet and Jurieu, the Calvinist minister was in the right, and their own champion in the wrong.

Now, in Newman's *Essay on Development*, everything that had been said by Jurieu or by Petavius as to the immaturity of the teaching of the early Fathers is said again, and said more strongly. He begins by owning the unserviceableness of St. Vincent's maxim: 'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus'. He confesses that it is impossible by means of that maxim (unless, indeed, a very forced interpretation be put upon it) to establish the articles of Pope Pius's creed; in other words, impossible to show that these articles were any part of the faith of the early Church. But he urges that the same thing may be said of the Athanasian Creed, and he proceeds to try to pick holes in the proofs Bishop Bull had given of the orthodoxy of the ante-Nicene Fathers. So he declares that we need some new hypothesis for the defence of the Athanasian Creed, for which purpose he offers his theory of Development; and then he says that we must not complain if the same defence proves to be equally good for the creed of Pope Pius.

I can remember my own astonishment at this line of defence, and my wonder how it would be accepted by Roman Catholic authorities. There appeared to be signs that it would be received with disfavour; for Brownson's *Quarterly Review*, the leading organ of American Romanism, published a series of articles severely criticizing the book, as abandoning the ground on which Roman doctrine had previously been defended, giving up, as it did, the principles that the Church taught nothing but what had been revealed, and that the revelation committed to the Church had been perfect from the first.

But when I was simple enough to expect that Roman Catholic divines generally would thus repudiate a work inconsistent with what their teachers had constantly maintained, I failed to notice what a temptation Newman offered by freeing the defenders of Romanism at once from a multitude of controversies in which they felt they were getting the worst. He evacuated all the difficult posts which they had been struggling to maintain, and promised that the captors should gain nothing by taking them, for that he had built inside them an impregnable wall of defence. Just imagine what a comfort it must have been to a poor Roman Catholic divine who had been making a despairing struggle to refute, let us say, the Protestant assertion that the Church of the first three centuries knew nothing of the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin, to be told that he need have no scruple in granting all that his opponents had asserted. Dr. Newman himself, disclaiming the doctrine that the Invocation of the Virgin is necessary to salvation, says (*Letter to Pusey*, p. 111): * If it were so, there would be grave reasons for doubting

of the salvation of St. Chrysostom or St. Athanasius, or of the primitive martyrs. Nay, I should like to know whether St. Augustine, in all his voluminous writings invokes her once.' But he holds (p. 63) that, though 'we have no proof that Athanasius himself had any special devotion to the Blessed Virgin', yet, by teaching the doctrine of our Lord's Incarnation, 'he laid the foundations on which that devotion was to rest'.

Similarly, if perplexed by troublesome proofs that early Fathers were ignorant of the doctrine of purgatorial fire, or of the religious use of images, or of the supremacy of the Pope, what a comfort to be told, You may safely answer, 'Quite true: these doctrines had not been revealed to the consciousness of the Church of that age';—nay, to be told that he need not quarrel with Arian representations of the doctrine of the ante-Nicene Fathers, but might say, 'Quite true: the Church did not learn to speak accurately on this subject until after the Council of Nicaea.' The enlightened Roman Catholic of the new school may take the same view that a dispassionate infidel might have taken about the controversy which Anglicans and old-school Roman Catholics had been waging as to which of them held the doctrines originally revealed by Christ and taught by his Apostles. An infidel might say, 'Neither of you. The doctrines taught by Jesus of Nazareth have been since incorporated with a number of elements derived from different sources, and the Christianity of the first century is not like what is taught by anyone in the nineteenth.'

Thus, you will see that the doctrine of Development concedes not only all that a Protestant, but even all that an infidel might ask. I purpose, in a subsequent lecture, to say something more in reference to this doctrine. At present my main object has been to show the primary importance of the question of Infallibility, which has really swallowed up all other controversies. It is inevitable, indeed, that other branches of the controversy should have a tendency to die out when a candid Roman Catholic is forced to concede what his opponents assert. An unlearned Protestant perceives that the doctrine of Rome is not the doctrine of the Bible. A learned Protestant adds that neither is it the doctrine of the primitive Church. These assertions are no longer denied, as in former days. Putting the concessions made us at the lowest, it is at least owned that the doctrine of Rome is as unlike that of early times as an oak is unlike an acorn, or a butterfly unlike a caterpillar. The unlikeness is admitted: and the only question remaining is whether that unlikeness is absolutely inconsistent with substantial identity. In other words, it is owned that there has been a change, and the question is whether we are to call it development or corruption.

But you must carefully observe that the doctrine of Development would be fatal to the Roman Catholic cause if separated from the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church. Without the latter doctrine the former, as I have

already pointed out, leads to Protestantism or to infidelity rather than Romanism. In fact, the motto of the doctrine of Development is *πατέρων μέγ' ἀμύνοντες εὐχομῖθ' εἶναι*—‘We are much wiser men than our fathers’. Well, surely, in many respects that is the case. Why, then, may not Protestants claim a right to revise erroneous decisions made in days when learning was asleep and science did not exist? Submission to the supremacy of Rome in Europe was mainly brought about by the circulation of documents which no one now pretends to be genuine. Why should not an age learned enough to detect these forgeries reject also the doctrine which was founded on them? Or, take another Roman doctrine, that of Transubstantiation. It was built up in the middle ages, and founded on a scholastic theory of substance and accidents which modern philosophy rejects. Why is the building to remain, when its foundation is discovered to be rotten? So much for the doctrine of Development in Protestant hands; while, in infidel it leads to the improving away of religion altogether. We, being wiser men than our fathers, can dispense with superstitions that amused them.

And against Protestants, at least, Romanists gain nothing by appealing to God’s promises to be ever with His Church, and to give His Spirit to guide it into truth, and thence inferring that such as His Church is, such her Founder intended it to become. But this principle, ‘Whatever is is right,’ has to encounter the difficulty that Protestantism *is*; Why should not it be right? Was it only in Rome that Christianity was to develop itself? Was it not also to do so in Germany and England? Has God’s Holy Spirit only a local operation, and is it to be supposed that He had no influence in bringing about the form in which Christ’s religion has shaped itself here? May it not be supposed, for example, that He wisely ordained that the constitution of His Church should receive modifications to adapt it to the changing exigencies of society; that, in times when no form of government but monarchy was to be seen anywhere, it was necessary, if His Church was to make head successfully against the prevalent reign of brute force, that all its powers should be concentrated in a single hand; but that when, with the general spread of knowledge, men refused to give unreasoning submission to authority, and claimed the right to exercise some judgment of their own in the conduct of their affairs, the constitution of the Church needed to be altered in order to bring it into harmony with the political structure of modern society?

The fact is, that the doctrine of Development has to encounter a great historical difficulty, which it can only remove by an enormous assumption. The doctrine is, that Christ’s original revelation contained seeds and germs of truths destined, under the Divine guidance, to expand to a certain definite form. If this be true, that expansion would take place wherever these germs were planted. It does not depend on where a tree is planted, whether

it springs up a cedar or a bramble-bush, or whether it brings forth figs or grapes. How is it, then, that all over the East that doctrine which is the cardinal one of modern Romanism—the necessity of union with the Chair of Peter—never made its appearance; nay, that the direct opposite was held? And what reason can be given for excluding from the list of divinely-intended developments those which we Protestants have made—as, for instance, the importance which we attach to the exercise of private judgment, to the individual study of Holy Scripture, to the right of each to approach the Throne of Grace without any earthly mediator? May it not be said that it was the vitality which the teaching of the Holy Spirit gave to the last doctrine, which has rescued Christianity from assuming the form of some heathen superstitions, in which a certain caste of men was imagined to understand the art of conciliating the favour of the gods; to whose mediation, therefore, the ordinary worshipper was to address himself, religion being a matter which only his priests understood, and which required no intellectual co-operation of his own?

If we compare Protestant with Roman Catholic developments, we find, further, that Protestant developments are of such a nature as to be made only in the fulness of time, as the human intellect developed itself, and as science and learning grew. There is no shame in a Church acknowledging herself to grow wiser with years, in such matters as these. If the Church of Rome, for instance, were now wise enough to expel the text of the Three heavenly Witnesses from her Vulgate, she could say in her defence that the science of Biblical criticism was more advanced now than in the days when this text was admitted. But, by what means are we to suppose that the Roman Church acquired a knowledge of historical facts concerning which there is no historical tradition? How has she come to be wiser now than the Church of former ages, concerning the way in which the Blessed Virgin was conceived 1900 years ago, or concerning the removal of her body to heaven? If there had been any historical tradition on these subjects, the Church would always have known it. And is it likely that God has interfered to make any special revelation on these subjects now, if He saw there was no inconvenience in leaving His Church for so many centuries without authentic information on such points?

However, without further arguing the point whether Protestant or Roman developments are the best, it is evident that the doctrine of Development is a many-edged weapon. There are Eastern developments and Western ones, Protestant and Romish, even infidel developments: which is the right one? The Romanist answers, The Church of Rome is infallible; she alone has been commissioned to develop doctrine the right way; all other developments are wrong. Let the Romanist prove that, and he may use the doctrine of Development, if he then cares to do so; but it is quite plain that

without the doctrine of Roman Infallibility, the doctrine of Development is perfectly useless to a Romish advocate.

But with the doctrine of Infallibility once proved, or supposed to be so, the doctrine of Development becomes needless; and Cardinal Manning, in particular, has quite got beyond it. In my own time the aspect of Romanism has changed so rapidly that this theory of Development, so fashionable thirty years ago, has now dropped into the background. It was wanted while the Roman Catholic divines were attempting to make some kind of battle on the field of history. In those days it was still attempted to be maintained that the teaching of the Church of the present day agrees with that of the Church of early times: not indeed in form, but at least in suchwise that the former contains the germ of the latter. Now, the idea of testing the teaching of the Church of the present day, by comparison either with Scripture or antiquity, is completely abandoned. Cardinal Manning has profited by Plutarch's story, that when Pericles was puzzling himself what account of his expenditure he should give the Athenian people, he got the advice from Alcibiades that it would be wiser of him to study how he could avoid giving any account at all. The most thoroughgoing and most ignorant Protestant cannot show greater indifference to the opinions of the Fathers than does Cardinal Manning. If Dr. Manning were asked whether St. Cyprian held the doctrine of the Pope's Supremacy, he might answer much in the same way that, as the story goes, Mr. Spurgeon answered, when asked whether St. Cyprian held the doctrine of Justification by Faith. Either might say, 'I don't know, and I don't much care; but, for his own sake, I hope he did; for if he didn't, so much the worse for him.' According to Manning, it is a matter of unimportance *how* the Church is to be reconciled with Scripture or antiquity, when once you understand that the Church is the living voice of the same Being who inspired Scripture, and who taught the ancient Church. To look for one's creed in Scripture and antiquity is, to Manning, as great a heresy as to look for it in Scripture alone. Either course makes the individual the judge or critic of Revelation. The appeal to antiquity, says Manning, is both a treason and a heresy. It is a treason, because it rejects the Divine voice of the Church *at this hour*; and a heresy, because it denies that voice to be divine.* According to Manning's theory, it is our duty to accept implicitly whatever the *present* Church teaches, and to be sure that, however opposed this may seem to what we find in Scripture or antiquity, we need not trouble ourselves about the matter, and that the opposition can only be apparent. According to this theory, then, all the prerogatives of Scripture are annulled: the dicta of Pius IX. and Leo XIII. are as truly inspired by

* *Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, p. 226: see also pp. 28, 203.

God's Spirit, and are to be received with as much reverence, as the utterances of Peter and Paul. Thus the function of the Church, in the latest form of Romanism, is made to be not so much to guard and hand down securely an original revelation as to be a perpetual organ for making new revelations.* Whenever a new controversy arises, the Pope is divinely inspired to discern its true solution, and to pronounce which of the parties is in the right, and how far. In this way Manning's party have now got beyond the old Ultramontane doctrine of the inerrancy of the Pope. This doctrine has been changed into that of his divine perpetual inspiration,† giving him a power of disclosing new truths as infallibly as Peter and Paul. Dr. Pusey called this theory a kind of Llamaism, implying as it does a kind of hypostatic union of the Holy Ghost with each successive Pope.

I think I have made good my assertion, that the present Roman Catholic position is one taken up in desperation by men who have been driven from every other. And I will add that they have taken it up with immense loss; for the few whom they have gained from us do not make up for the larger numbers, both in our communion and their own, whom they have driven into infidelity. In their assaults on Protestantism they have freely made use of infidel arguments. Their method has been that of some so-called Professors of biology: first to bewilder and stupefy their patients, that they may be ready to believe anything, and do anything, their mesmerizer tells them. And it has happened that men who have been thus driven to the verge of infidelity, when they saw that abyss yawning before them, have eagerly clutched at the only hand which they believed had power to save them from it. But for one convert made in this way, many have been spoiled in the making; many, when offered the choice— Ultramontanism or Infidelity— have taken the latter alternative. It is a very short way from the doctrine that Pius IX. and Leo XIII. were as much inspired as Peter and Paul, to the doctrine that Peter and Paul were no more inspired than Pius or Leo.

According to the theory of our Church, the appearance of Christ, and the founding of His Church, of which He made the Apostles the first earthly heads, were unique events in the world's history. No argument can be drawn from the uniformity of nature against the possibility that miracles

* In theory the power of making new revelations is disclaimed, but in practice there is no scruple about calling on the Church to believe new truths: that is, to accept as true things previously disputed or unknown; and the claims of theory are supposed to be satisfied by asserting, often in direct opposition to evidence, that the revelation was not new, for that the Church had always believed in accordance with the new ruling.

† A Roman Catholic critic accuses me of forgetting here that 'the Catholic claim' is not inspiration but *only* inerrancy. I consider the latter far the stronger word. In popular language the word 'inspired' is sometimes used in speaking of the works of a great genius who is not supposed to be exempt from error, but no one can imagine the utterances of a naturally fallible man to be guaranteed against possibility of error, unless he believe that man to be speaking, not of his own mind, but as the inspired organ of the Holy Spirit.

may have attended these events, because the uniformity of nature only assures us that in like circumstances like results will take place; and here the circumstances are asserted to be wholly unlike what has occurred at any other time. But the case is otherwise if it is implicitly denied that there was anything exceptional in the mission of the Apostles. If their divine commission was the same in kind as that which the Pope enjoys now, we must measure what is told of them by what our experience tells us of the Pope now. And, conversely, if we believe that they really did authenticate the message which they delivered, by exhibitions of miraculous power, we have a right to demand that the Pope, if he claims to be the organ of divine revelations, as they were, should heal the sick, and raise the dead, as they did.

It would be too late now to commence the discussion of the question of the Infallibility of the Church. I content myself for to-day with having shown that this is, in fact, the pivot of the whole controversy, on which everything turns, defeat on which would make all other victories useless; and, conversely, that a man who ceases to hold it ceases to be really a Roman Catholic.

In conclusion, I have to warn you that, although the reasons I have given justify me in devoting this Term's Lectures to the question of Infallibility, to the exclusion of several important subjects, yet you cannot safely neglect these other subjects; for, though the controversy has been simplified for the Roman Catholic, it is not so for you. The Romish champions, beaten out of the open field, have shut themselves up in this fortress of Infallibility, where, as long as their citadel remains untaken, they can defy all assaults. Confute them by any arguments you please, and they can still reply, 'The Church has said otherwise,' and there is an end of the matter. But, though the Roman Catholic has thus shut himself up in a fortress, he can at any moment sally out on you, if he thinks he can do it with success. He will for the moment waive the question whether the Pope *could* decide wrongly, and will undertake to show that decisions of his which had been controverted were, in point of fact, right. Every victory a Roman Catholic can gain over you on particular points of controversy strengthens his faith in the attribute of Infallibility, his Church's claim to which seems to be verified by fact. On the other hand, if he is beaten back into his fortress every sally he makes, if he finds it a task of ever-increasing difficulty to reconcile with Scripture and with history the actual decisions of this guide who is warranted never to go wrong, so heavy a strain is put on his faith in the reality of this gift, that this faith is not unlikely to give way. The almost invariable history of conversions or re-conversions from Romanism is that doubt has arisen as to the truth of some particular point of Roman Catholic doctrine (very often not by any means the most important point), and then,

as the evidence of the falsity of this particular doctrine becomes more and more clear, the inquirer goes on to examine whether the arguments for Infallibility are strong enough to bear the strain laid on them. In fact, a tract on any point of Roman teaching may be regarded as an argument on the question of Infallibility. Clearly, there could be no more decisive proof that the Church of Rome *can* err, than if you could show that she *has* erred. If a Roman Catholic will discuss any point of doctrine with you, he is really putting the Infallibility of his Church on its trial. And, consequently, a thoroughgoing Infallibilist, like Manning, is consistently a foe to all candid historical investigation, as being really irreconcilable with faith in the Church's authority.