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THE ADVANTAGES,

MENTAL AND MORAL,

OF

A FAITH UNCHANGEABLE, CERTAIN,
AND COMPLETE,

IN A.D. 1876.

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“I had imagined that in submitting to the Catholic Church I had exchanged the uncertainty of private opinion for the certainty of a faith complete and unchangeable ; and now I am compelled to choose again.”—A ROMAN CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

Ex uno disce omnes.

To all who imagine, or who are in danger of imagining, that the uncertainty of individual opinion in matters supernatural, is an evil in itself, or that, being an evil, it can, with mental and moral impunity be exchanged, by one supreme act of volition, for the self-constituted certainty of collective opinion—complete and unchangeable—the following pages are offered, as being worthy of mature consideration.

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PREFACE.

UNIVERSAL—APOSTOLIC—ROMAN.

“What stronger testimony can we have for a bare fact than that it has been ever so believed, so declared, so recorded, so acted upon from the first down to this day, that there is no assignable point of time when it was not believed; no assignable point at which the belief was introduced; that the records of past ages vanish *in* the belief; that in proportion as past ages speak at all, they speak in one way, and only fail to bear witness when they fail to have a voice.

“Now, evidence such as this we have for Catholic doctrines. *They have never and nowhere not been maintained!* This is the great canon of the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, which saves us from the misery of having to find out the truth for ourselves from Scripture on our independent and private judgment.

“Wherefore the Roman Pontiff is possessed of that infallibility which the Divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith and morals, and therefore his definitions are of themselves irreformable, and are not dependent upon the consent of the Church.

“Moreover, we declare, affirm, define, and pronounce, that to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is, for every human creature, necessary to salvation.

“In the case of educated minds, investigation into the argumentative proof of the things *to which they have given their assent*, is an obligation, or rather a necessity. Such processes of investigation certainly—whether

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in religious subjects or secular, often issue in the reversal of the assents which they were originally intended to confirm ; but to incur risk is not to expect reverse.

“ If any one, however, shall say that Catholics may possibly have just cause of suspending their assent to, and questioning the faith which they have already received, under the supreme authority of the Church, until they shall have accomplished a scientific demonstration of the credibility and truth of their faith, *let him be accursed.*”

“ It is hardly necessary to say that the state of mind which we variously denominate faith or belief does not depend for its origin upon a mere act or volition, but upon appropriate sources or grounds of belief. The structure of the mind is such that it does not allow a person to believe merely as he *chooses or wills to believe*, but, on the contrary, requires the belief to be conformed to the evidence appropriate to it.”

“ Truth must be investigated without any side glance to the consequences which that investigation may have upon our hopes. No consequence can destroy any truth ; the sole matter for consideration is, ‘ Are our arguments correct ? ’—not, ‘ Do they lead to a result which is embarrassing and unwelcome ? ’ Our faith is sure to fail us in the hour of trial if we have based it upon fallacious grounds, and maintained it by wilfully closing our eyes to the flaws in its foundations.”

“ The Pope, owing to his infallibility, is undoubtedly the organ on earth of the Divine thought, not only in matters of faith, *but in all other matters, civil and political as well.*”

“ The bishops and the clergy, depositaries of the divine word, participate in the Papal infallibility ; and the faithful who do not yield to them the most complete obedience in all things, commit a grave sin, and cease to belong to the Catholic community.”

“ It is not the place or authority of Church or Bible

to strangle reason, defy criticism, and fetter inquiry ; for reason is a faculty given to man by God for the purpose of criticising and thereby distinguishing error, so that he may reject it ; and of inquiring, so that he may find truth under the veil which ignorance and error has cast on it.

“No error has been more fatal to the simplicity and spirituality of religion than the inveterate confusion of thought which has to so large an extent identified ‘faith’ with ‘opinion.’

“It was this confusion which generated the fierce, intolerant spirit too often exhibited in the controversial writings of even the noblest among the fathers of the Church. It is this which has retarded the progress of inquiry, which has set a ban on science, and for long centuries has committed the keys of knowledge to a stolidly self-sufficient priesthood.

“Contrary to the Scriptures, the doctrines of the Church, and of the holy fathers, men do not hesitate to declare that the best government is that in which the State does not recognise the duty of punishing the violators of the Catholic religion except when the public peace demands it. In consequence of this absolutely false idea, they do not scruple to support that erroneous principle, so fatal to the Catholic Church and the safety of souls, which Gregory the Sixteenth called *an insanity*—viz., *that liberty of conscience and of worship is the right of every man!*

“Man being man on the banks of the Tweed, the Tiber, and the Ganges, we naturally find the Brahman priest, the Roman Catholic priest, and the Scotch minister of the seventeenth century, doing precisely the same things.

“We find them claiming to be sole interpreters of the sacred books and the sole ministers of God upon earth ; and we find them establishing and regulating schools and colleges, and training up men in the groove they think it best for him to work in.”

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“The *Catholic Church* is the true exponent of revelation, science, history, politics, and morals.

“Ignorance and want of thought are so nearly allied, that the one is often mistaken for the other, and in law, carry much the same force.”

“As there is a faculty of speech independent of all the historical forms of language, so there is a faculty of faith in man independent of all historical religions.”

“No simply historical fact can ever fall under the cognizance of Faith.”

“There is but one Catholic Apostolic Church, outside of which there is no salvation and no remission of sins.”

“As long as the doctrine of exclusive salvation was believed and realised, it was necessary for the peace of mankind that they should be absolutely certain of the truth of what they believed; in order to be certain it was necessary to suppress adverse arguments; and, in order to effect this object, it was necessary that there should be no critical or sceptical spirit in existence. A habit of boundless credulity was therefore a natural consequence of the doctrine of exclusive salvation; and not only did this habit necessarily produce a luxuriant crop of falsehood, but it was itself the negation of the spirit of truth. For the man who really loves truth cannot possibly subside into a condition of contented credulity.”

“Belief in eternal retribution has been indeed a powerful engine in shaping the life of nations as of individuals. It has been made the servant of all work of many faiths.

“Priesthoods have used it unscrupulously for their professional ends; to gain wealth and power for their caste; to stop intellectual and social progress beyond the barrier of their own consecrated systems. On the banks of the river of death, a band of priests has stood for ages to bar the passage against all poor souls who cannot satisfy their demand for ceremonies, and formulas, and fees.

“Through the most widely differing religions, the doctrine of eternal torment has been made to further goodness and check wickedness, according to the shifting rules by which men have divided right from wrong.”

“We live in the midst of religious machinery; many mechanics of piety, often only apprentices, and slow to learn, are turning the various ecclesiastical mills, and the croak of the motion is thought to be the voice of God.”

“That which we know is little; that which we know not is immense.”

THE
ADVANTAGES OF FAITH UNCHANGEABLE.

A DETAILED statement of the reasons why a Roman Catholic layman cannot, in his own opinion, accept the decisions of a general council of the church to which he has voluntarily belonged, must be, for many reasons, a document of very general interest.

It is not often that such a statement is allowed to see the light. We have lately seen, among other startling consequences of political expostulation against ecclesiastical claims to authority and supremacy, one of an "Apostate Triumvirate"* of Old English Roman Catholics—by reputation,—when daring to exercise his private opinion publicly, on the decisions of a council of his church, abruptly silenced and effectually restored to orthodoxy, by the simple threat of excommunication by his bishop.

The subject is the more interesting, because the council in question is one which was assembled—not in the dim obscurity of the mediæval past, but in the comparative daylight of the living present; and because—if we may accept the recently published statements of an eminent Father of the Church †—crowds of educated English men and women *are* accepting the decisions of this general council, and adding their numbers to the already claimed two hundred millions of the Roman Catholic Church, here in England every day.

Under these circumstances, it is difficult to imagine

* Lords Camoys and Acton, and Mr Petre,—*The Times*, Nov. 24, 1874.

† M. le Père Hugnet.

a more useful and instructive document than that which has recently been given to the world in the form of a pamphlet, entitled, "Reasons why a Roman Catholic cannot accept the doctrine of Papal Infallibility as defined by the Vatican Council," by a Roman Catholic Layman.*

As might be anticipated, the author's arguments lead him inevitably to issues of much deeper importance than that immediately suggested by the title of his work. Of far nearer interest to all English men and women than the reasons why a Roman Catholic cannot submit himself to any particular manifestation of authority *inside* his church, must be the reasons which can be discovered or adduced from his own confessions, to account for the fact of his complete submission to the infallible authority of that particular church in the first instance. It is, in point of fact, as a rare and valuable contribution to our knowledge of Catholic mental physiology in this particular direction, and as a remarkable illustration of the peculiar effects upon the mind which the Roman Catholic system produces on those who submit their reason to her teaching and authority, and not merely as a fresh addition to the curiosities of theological literature already existing, that the pamphlet in question possesses for us so great an interest.

The author begins by stating that he is a convert to the Roman Catholic Church of more than twenty years' standing. After that period of apparently undisturbed belief in the infallibility of a not inconveniently definable body called the "Church" of Rome, he finds himself suddenly "commanded, under 'penalty of anathema,' to believe in the infallibility of an all *too* clearly defined unit of that body called the 'Pope of Rome,' as set forth by the Vatican Council."

This he affirms positively that he cannot do, "for," as he asserts, "the very reasons which induced him to join the Roman Catholic Church."

* Messrs Rivington & Co.

What he himself believes to have been these "reasons," he proceeds to describe as follows :—" I HAD IMAGINED," he says, " THAT IN SUBMITTING TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH I HAD EXCHANGED THE UNCERTAINTY OF PRIVATE OPINION FOR THE CERTAINTY OF A FAITH COMPLETE AND UNCHANGEABLE."

We have here, undoubtedly, the point in which the whole interest of the writer's subsequent reasons and arguments is centred. There are no grounds for supposing that this "reason," such as it is, differs materially from that which would be put forward by the great majority of those who voluntarily submit their reason to the infallible authority of the self-styled "mother and mistress of all churches." The remarkable fact about the statement is, that while the Roman Catholic Layman proceeds to supplement this simple explanation by ninety-five pages of further "reasons" for not submitting to the infallibility of the Pope, as defined by a council of the church, he says not one word throughout the pamphlet in moral support of that arbitrary exercise of the imagination by virtue of which he *discerned* the inherent infallibility of the Church of Rome in the first instance.

That this original act of voluntary submission to authority in search of "the complete," "the certain," and "the unchangeable," twenty years ago, *must* of necessity have been the result either of a reasoning process of the mind, capable of full explanation, or else of an arbitrary assumption and exercise of personal infallibility on his own part, never seems to strike the Roman Catholic Layman's mind for an instant. This is the most noteworthy and curious feature in the pamphlet.

Although driven to the most extraordinary and palpable contradictions in his efforts to justify himself in his absolute rejection of the infallibility of *the Pope*, he avoids the examination, even for an instant, of the process by which he first came to accept the infallibility of *the Church*.

That "reason" must inevitably precede "faith," as

an inconvenient necessity of human nature,—is a simple fact of which he takes no notice whatever.

This awkward omission of the topmost link, in his chain of reasoning, frustrates naturally all his efforts to prevent his conclusion from falling to the ground, and is, at the same time, the cause of infinite confusion of idea, and bewilderment to the ordinary reader. It is somewhat difficult at the outset, for instance, to apply the “reasons” furnished by the Roman Catholic Layman for his original submission to the Church of Rome, to his present act of non-submission to the authority of the head of that church. The “reasons” seem to adapt themselves most indifferently to their new situation. Applying, however, his own words exactly in accordance with his own statement, it may be assumed that the Roman Catholic layman now imagines that, in *not* submitting to the infallibility of the Pope, as defined by the council of an infallible church, he is still further relinquishing or “exchanging the uncertainty of private opinion for the certainty of faith, complete and unchangeable.”

To understand his position here more clearly, it is necessary, before following him further, to recall to mind certain solemn obligations which devolved upon him by virtue of his original submission to the Church.

In accordance with the Creed of Pius the Fourth, he voluntarily declared, on becoming a Roman Catholic twenty years ago, as follows:—“I acknowledge the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church for the Mother and Mistress of all churches, *and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor to St Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ.*” Also, “I do at this present freely profess and sincerely hold this true Catholic faith, without which no one can be saved; and I promise most constantly to retain and confess the same entire and inviolate, with God’s assistance, to the end of my life.”

Considering the gravity and solemnity of this state-

ment, it will seem strange to the ordinary, non-Catholic mind to find the Roman Catholic Layman, when now commanded by the Bishop of Rome, successor to St Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Christ, to believe, under penalty of anathema, a doctrine set forth by a general council of the church, declaring point blank that he can do nothing of the kind, and that, on the contrary, for reasons good and sufficient to himself, "he utterly rejects it!" It is evident, however, that he has not been reduced to this curiously illogical exercise of that "private opinion" which he imagined that he had finally relinquished twenty years ago, without being sorely pressed.

"My feeling," he previously declares, "has been that of utter dismay at finding that which I have supposed for so many years to be solid rock, melting away under my feet like ice exposed to the burning rays of a July sun."

Utter dismay has no doubt driven many to strange action before now, and certainly nothing can well be stranger than the action which the Roman Catholic Layman proceeds to adopt. Having, it appears, "stated his dilemma privately, and having met with nothing but evasions, or refusals to discuss a matter *already settled*," he has recourse to the *Apologia pro Vita Sua* of Father Newman.

In the appendix to that work he finds laid down, among other important truths, "that the truest expedience is to answer right out when you are asked; that the wisest economy is to have no management; that the best prudence is not to be a coward; that the most damaging folly is *to be found out* shuffling; and that the first of virtues is 'to tell truth and shame the devil.'"

Adopting these Catholic principles as his own, and "determining," as he says, "to act as Dr Newman prescribes," he proceeds forthwith to demonstrate to the world "that the Vatican doctrine of infallibility contradicts the antecedent teaching of the Church; that it

has changed the basis of faith ; that it is, in the fullest sense of the word, a new doctrine ;” and that, consequently, “ he is fully justified in utterly rejecting it.”

Before considering the evidence upon which he essays to establish these several points, and which he himself pronounces to be “ overwhelming,” it is impossible to avoid recalling to mind certain “ antecedent teaching” of the Church of Rome, about two centuries and a half ago, which bears directly on his position.

It was then formally decreed, “ By the grace of God,” on the authority of certain “ cardinals of the Church, inquisitors-general throughout the whole Christian republic, special deputies of the Holy Apostolic Chair against heretical depravity, that the then *new doctrine*, that the earth is not the centre of the universe, nor immoveable, is absurd, philosophically false, and, theologically considered, erroneous in faith.”

Here again, the ordinary and non-Catholic mind would naturally enquire, before going further, whether the Roman Catholic Layman, who so clings to the old and rejects the new, was aware of this “ doctrine” and “ antecedent teaching” of the “ mother and mistress of all churches,” when he sought “ the complete and the unchangeable in her bosom ; and further whether he now believes that the earth *is* indeed the centre of the universe and immoveable ?”

Of all this however he tells us nothing. Certain indirect testimony nevertheless, bearing pertinently on this important question is to be found in a subsequent page of his pamphlet, where, being for the moment concerned in protesting against addition of doctrine, and not its subtraction, he produces the testimony of a Bishop of the Church to prove that :—

“ The doctrines of faith which have been declared, defined, and delivered by the Catholic Church, cannot be added to—*nor subtracted from*,* and can never be changed nor superseded without heresy or schism.

* The italics are *not* as in the original.

In default of any explanation of the Roman Catholic Layman's own views as to his acceptance of the "*Immoveable*" as well as the "unchangeable," on the infallible authority of the church, it will be here not out of place to supplement the Bishop's evidence just given, by that of a Cardinal Archbishop, which furnishes him with a curious and characteristic loophole of escape from obligatory belief in Ptolemaic Astronomy in A.D. 1876. "Enlightened by the teachings of the Church, the Catholic may view in peace, and even with delight the progress of science. If he hears of a contradiction between science and religion it will soon be found only an appearance of contradiction; or if a contradiction really exists, it will be found that the boasted discovery which creates it is but an ephemeral theory and not the truth; or if its truth be beyond gainsay, and the contradiction plain, then the doctrine with which it is in conflict will be found to be but a theological opinion and not a dogma; or if it be a dogma, it has been misunderstood or not explained according to the mind of the Church."*

These two remarkable pieces of Catholic evidence bring us now face to face with the time-honoured and inevitable difficulty which confronts the Roman Catholic Layman from the first, and entangles him—and his readers also—in its folds to the very last, viz., the true definition of "the Church," and the infallible recognition and determination of the organ by means of which she reveals her "mind," and gives utterance to those unchangeable "declarations," "definitions," and "deliverances" which cannot, without heresy, be added to or subtracted from.

Having, in short, twenty years ago voluntarily joined an infallible body, the main power and influence of which lay probably in its mysterious indefinability; and having, as he has told us, "utterly rejected" the

* Pastoral of P. Cullen.

Infallibility of the head of that body, as inconveniently defined by one of its own councils, he has now to determine the locality of such an Infallible mouth-piece of the Church of his adoption as shall protect him from the disagreeable, yet most legitimate results of his own arbitrary action.

The manner in which, according to his own imagination, he succeeds in grasping this veritable Ignis Fatuus of the Pontine Marshes is curious and instructive.

Having, as we have seen, undertaken according to Dr Newman's prescription, the duty, among others, of "shaming the devil," it is not surprising that we should find the Roman Catholic Layman depicting himself in a notably embarrassing dilemma at the very outset of the operation—not only as regards the question of the actual individuality of the spirit of darkness, but also as regards his own immediate position with reference to the "gates of Hell."

"Commanded," as he says, "by the Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Christ on earth, to believe the doctrines set forth by the Vatican Council, under penalty of Anathema;" he has, he affirms, "*been also taught* that he is obliged by Jesus Christ himself to believe what the pastors of the Church teach him under pain of damnation."

"The pastors of the Church," in their turn teach him, he declares, that "that *only* is Catholic doctrine which has been believed everywhere and by all," and that inasmuch as the infallibility of the Pope has not been believed as a doctrine of the church, anywhere by anybody, he is "bound under pain of damnation—not only to refuse his assent to it, as defined by the Vatican Council, but "to believe that it *cannot be turned into a doctrine of the Church even by the Pope and Council united together.*"

It is not at all surprising that in this appalling dilemma—surrounded as it were with a circle of everlasting fire, the Roman Catholic Layman should find

himself eventually driven to the most painful extremities.

The process by which he effects his own moral self-immolation, as a last refuge from the inevitable of his own imagination, is bold and conclusive.

Finding Pope and Pastors in such stupendous antagonism on the vital point at issue, he proceeds to ignore or repudiate both Popes and Councils together, wherever their dogmatic utterances are objectionable or inconvenient at the moment; and to accredit an undefined body under the title of "the Pastors of the Church," alone with infallibility of teaching whenever he is in want of immediate assistance or support.

The method has at least the virtue of simplicity.

Before adopting it, however, he goes through the process of forcing himself up to the resource by suggesting certain arguments against himself which threaten vitally his existence as a Roman Catholic, and which—presenting themselves quite naturally to the ordinary, non-Catholic mind—might also fairly be expected to force themselves upon the Catholic intelligence when stimulated by such maxims as those we have seen adopted from the "Apologia" of Father Newman.

"You have submitted to the teaching of the Catholic Church, and are consequently bound to believe what she *has* taught, *does* teach, or *shall* teach."

To this most pertinent application to his position of the creed of Pius the Fourth, which he has so solemnly adopted and subscribed to as necessary to salvation, the Roman Catholic layman piteously replies: "But, I say, what is to be done if the Church teaches me to-day something which is in contradiction to that which she taught me yesterday, and this I contend, in this matter, she has done."

This "contradiction" of infallible teaching, it is the main purpose of his subsequent argument to establish.

Without reference to its establishment however, he tells us that to this expostulation, it will be replied:

“You are no longer a Catholic since you deny, or at least doubt, the infallibility of the Catholic Church.”

In this strait, the Roman Catholic Layman is evidently forced to save his Catholicity at all hazards. Snatching at a straw, he clings to the circular reasoning that “*he has been taught* that, as a Catholic, he is obliged, by Jesus Christ himself, to believe what the PASTORS OF THE CHURCH teach, under pain of damnation.” Then calling in the assistance of the particular pastor of the Church of his adoption, whose testimony suits him at the moment, he replies: “This by no means follows, as the following quotation from the *Summæ Doctrinæ* of an illustrious saint, the Archbishop Antoninus of Florence, will show. He says: ‘Even the Council can err. For though an Œcumenical Council belongs to the whole church, it is not the whole church, it only represents it.’”

Catholicity is thus saved for the moment, no doubt, but at a heavy sacrifice—moral and mental. It would seem as if the Roman Catholic layman had, in fact, forgotten, for the moment, the maxims of his mentor, and in particular, that which warns him which way “damaging folly” is most surely to be found. For almost the entire evidence subsequently produced in the pamphlet goes to contradict directly the testimony of Saint Antoninus of Florence; and being intent, above all, upon disproving the infallibility of the head pastor of the Church, his arguments are elsewhere brought to prove that certainly on no *one* pastor was the gift of infallible teaching originally bestowed, but on the *body* of the pastors of the Church.

Thus it is that, having proved that an Œcumenical Council *can err* to suit the exigencies of the moment, he elsewhere calls upon Bellarmin to declare that, “*All* Catholic divines constantly teach that general councils, confirmed by the Pope, *cannot err*, either in explaining matters of faith or precepts of morality, wherein the whole Church is concerned.”

Bellarmin he supports by Suarez: "A general council, at which the Pope is present, after it is confirmed by the Pope, *is an infallible rule of faith*. This is an article of faith, wherein all Catholics agree."

Having by this and similar evidence thus invalidated the testimony of Saint Antoninus of Florence, and impeached his credibility as a witness, the Roman Catholic Layman further proceeds to prove that the Saint has neither right nor title to the very gift of teaching—"under pain of damnation,"—with which he himself accredited him, and upon which alone the value of his support depends.

This he effects by an appeal to Bishop Hay, who sets it forth as "a Catholic rule of faith that Jesus Christ was pleased to authorise the pastors (*not one pastor*)," as he remarks himself, "of his Church to be the depositaries of the sacred truths he had revealed to the world, and the interpreters of his word." Further, he maintains, on his own conviction, that "it is a contradiction to affirm that the infallibility of *the Church* resides in one person only when *the Church has distinctly taught* that it resides in the body of the pastors." "Why?" he asks,—anticipating no doubt, future possible decrees of individual infallibilities,—"should not three persons be declared to be only one person, if the body of the pastors can be declared to be only one pastor?"

Levelled at the Pope, this argument strikes Saint Antoninus of Florence a crushing blow, and then recoils upon the Roman Catholic Layman in a fashion which none can probably be blind to but himself.

The position is simply this: Having, by the exercise of his own private judgment, in years gone by, accredited the pastors of the Church of *Rome* with divine authority for infallible teaching, under pain of damnation, he now maintains, as an argument, that he is manifestly obliged to believe, without a doubt, that these same pastors *were* so divinely authorised and commissioned, *because they command him*, under such

tremendous pains and penalties, to do so. Having, after this fashion, established the moral obligation of believing "the pastors" of the Church of his adoption, he passes rapidly, to suit the exigencies of the moment, to assume the consequent obligation of listening to the teaching of one pastor in particular. Producing, then, this chosen pastor as a witness in his defence, he proceeds, when his services are no longer required, not only to impeach his credibility, but to prove that he never was a competent witness in the case at issue. In preserving his Catholicity, in short, at all hazards, he has not chosen to notice the one weak point in his line of defence, which the ordinary and non-Catholic mind will at once remark and seize upon, viz., that *before* he could "have been taught" the necessity of belief in the teachings of the pastors of the Church of Rome, under so severe a penalty as damnation, he must himself have been able, by some inherent infallibility of his own, to pronounce and determine where these particular pastors were to be discovered. The missing link is none the less important,—being top-most,—for being a small one; and that its absence has not been noted in the pamphlet is all-important to its comprehension.

A subsequent argument of his own might, nevertheless, have fairly been expected to lead the Roman Catholic Layman directly to the omission. Intent here again upon discrediting *the Pope's* Infallibility only, he quotes words of Bishop Milner's as follows:—"If Christ had intended that all mankind should learn His religion from a book, namely, the New Testament, He Himself would have written that book, and would have laid down as the first and fundamental principle of His religion, the obligation of learning to read it." On this he comments with undoubted justice. "It must be equally true that if Christ had intended that all mankind should learn His religion from the Pope, He Himself would have said so, and would have laid down as

the first and fundamental principle of his religion, the obligation of hearing the Pope." There can be little doubt that if the Roman Catholic Layman had not been here exclusively intent upon undermining the particular phase of Infallibility which happens to run counter to his judgment, he would have driven these arguments home to their legitimate and just conclusion.

Assuming that both the arguments are true, it must of course be similarly true that, "If Christ had intended that all mankind should learn His religion from the pastors of the *Roman Catholic Church*, He Himself would have distinctly said so, and would have laid down as the first and fundamental principle of His religion the obligation of hearing the pastors of the *Church of Rome*."

And this brings us, before examining the Roman Catholic Layman's further accusations against himself, to the enquiry, what after all constitutes this Church of Rome, in his own opinion and discernment?

This question, so absolutely essential to the approximate comprehension of all Catholic reasoning, he anticipates himself, and answers in a fashion which, to *himself* no doubt, is perfectly satisfactory and conclusive.

"It is necessary," he remarks, "to have a clear idea of what 'the Church' is."

"The Ultramontane idea of the Church seems inextricably confused." The true and clear idea he then conveys by the following quotations:—

"The Church is the congregation of *all* the faithful under Jesus Christ, their invisible head, and his Vicar on earth, the Pope.

"The Church on earth is the visible community of believers founded by Christ.

"The Church of Christ consists of the body of the faithful united with its pastors.

"The Church militant is the society of all the faithful still dwelling on earth.

"The Church is the congregation or society of *all*

true followers of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world, united together in one body under one head.

"In a word, the Church consists of the faithful dispersed throughout the world."

To this summary he adds, "I could easily furnish a hundred more definitions, but as they are all substantially the same it is not necessary."

That these definitions should be considered by the Roman Catholic Layman to unfold a "clear idea" of the Church of Rome, as directly opposed to "an inextricably confusing one," is fully accounted for by the fact that he is at the moment intent, solely and entirely upon proving, as he asserts in the paragraph immediately following, that "it is clear that the Pope does *not* constitute the Church."

For this purpose the definitions are no doubt fully sufficient, as they are also to furnish him with a way of escape from the self-directed home thrust which, as we have seen, Saint Antoninus of Florence has failed to parry, viz., that "since he denies or doubts the Infallibility of the Catholic Church he is no longer a Catholic."

It is only necessary to substitute for "the Church," the meaning to be discovered from the sum total of its definitions, in order to comprehend the nature of the position.

It is easily conceivable, of course, that the Roman Catholic Layman may neither doubt nor deny the Infallibility of "the congregation of *all* the faithful throughout the whole world, united together in one body, under one head—the Pope."

Between "not denying," however, and "believing," there is a great moral and mental gulf, irrevocably fixed, which he cannot, if he would, ignore.

The Catholic Church—this church of the "clear definition"—has laid down, he tells us, as its very principle and ground of faith, that "*all* mankind must *believe* whatever she decides and sanctions with the assistance of the Holy Ghost."

Manifestly, however, before believing "whatever the congregation of all the faithful under one head," "decides and sanctions," "under penalty of anathema," "all mankind" must be in a position to discern beyond all possibility of doubt or error the mechanism by which this corporate body can come to the knowledge of its own mind; the manner in which it has already clearly revealed its "principles and ground of faith;" and the mouth-piece by which it will give future utterance to the teachings of its Infallible authority; those momentous "declarations, definitions, and deliverances, with the non-acceptance of which the eternal punishment of "all mankind" is so inevitably linked, and "which cannot be added to or subtracted from, without heresy or schism."

Now, that all mankind *are* in this position, the Roman Catholic Layman's reasoning does not in any way help to establish. On the contrary, that, both outside and inside of the congregation of all the faithful under one head, "mankind" are in a state of absolute uncertainty or declared contradiction as to the means and method of determining and revealing these infallible decisions, is an awkward and obstinate fact, which every line of his pamphlet but helps to make the more effectually clear and apparent.

It is thus that we come to the second of those supposititious accusations which he propounds so aptly and straightforwardly against himself.

There would seem to be here lurking in his own mind a certain uneasiness as to the satisfactory nature of his escape from the charge of doubting the infallibility of the Church, and consequently being no longer a Catholic, by appeal to *one* of its pastors, under such heavy penalties for disbelief.

He consequently again brings the same objection forward, disguised, however, in somewhat different form of words:—"It will be said to such as myself," he now suggests, "you acknowledge the infallibility of a Gene-

ral Council. Such a Council was that of the Vatican, and it defined the Pope's infallibility ; therefore, if you deny its decisions, you deny infallibility to a General Council."

In making this point blank objection against himself, the Roman Catholic Layman has undoubtedly adhered manfully to the maxims of his special adoption. It cannot be said, however, that in maintaining his defence, their application seems equally clear.

He has, as we have already seen, escaped from a very similar dilemma by establishing, on the authority of a saint and pastor of the Church, that Councils, even though œcumenical, "*can err.*"

Shifting his ground, he now for the moment disregards all pastors altogether, and answers on what appears to be the authority of his own private judgment only :—" To this I reply, that the decision of a Council, to be of force, must be unanimous. Such was not the case with the Vatican Council, as I shall show hereafter."

This bold argument, if it stood alone, might have some possible force in it, and would, at any rate, open up an inconvenient field for almost unlimited discussion. Unfortunately, however, for its proposer, who has renounced "the uncertainty of private opinion," and fortunately for his ordinary readers, who are content to exercise that human attribute with all its drawbacks of non-Catholic uncertainty, this plea is immediately put out of court and disposed of by his own subsequent assertion, and also by the further direct testimony of those fathers and "pastors of the Church" whom he is bound to believe under penalty of damnation. Cardinal Manning, for instance, has declared that "it may truly be affirmed that never was there a greater unanimity than in the Vatican Council."

Appealing also himself to Saint Vincent of Lerins, he quotes conclusively from his authoritative teaching as follows :—" Where *the majority* of the bishops

visibly appears, there, according to both parties, is infallibility to be found,—according to us, who attribute it to this *majority*, and according to them who teach that the Pope can never be separated from it in solemn decisions. We have no difficulty in acknowledging the Pope to be infallible when united to *the majority* of the bishops !”

Not content with this authoritative annihilation of his own line of defence, the Roman Catholic Layman proceeds to show clearly that this “want of unanimity,” even when established as a feature of the Vatican Council, is not in any way required, in his own opinion, as a reason for rejecting the decisions of that Council utterly.

This “utter rejection” has, as we have seen, been already arrived at, upon anterior considerations altogether. These he now strengthens, finally and conclusively, as follows :—“To accept the conclusion that the Pope is infallible “because a Council has defined it, is absurd, because the fact of his infallibility proves that the Council has no authority in the matter. If he is infallible, there can be no infallible authority for believing it but his own word.” This absolute disregard of the authority of General Councils—not when there is “want of unanimity” among their members, but when the doctrines they inculcate seem absurd, or happen to be repugnant altogether to private Catholic opinion—he fully confirms and justifies by reference to another “pastor of the Church.” Calling upon Archbishop Kenrick, he establishes clearly the necessity of believing, under penalty of anathema, that “the dogma of Papal infallibility is *not* of faith, and cannot become so by any definition of a Council !” It is quite evident that the Roman Catholic Layman here fully and completely cuts away the ground from under his own feet, and that the objection which he has just advanced against the Vatican Council, on the score of “want of unanimity,” is in reality irrelevant to his argument

altogether. He now, however, finds himself confronted by the notorious fact—of which the very existence of his pamphlet is merely an additional standing record—that the doctrine of Papal infallibility *has* been pronounced to be of faith by the definition of a Council; and that, further, the main body of the pastors of the Church *have*, either by the most unmistakable outspokenness, or by the here not less conclusive silence of consent, accepted this most momentous “definition, declaration, and deliverance,” as an infallible utterance and dogma of “the Church.”

He has consequently now to face about, in order to meet yet one more accusation against himself, which threatens the existence of his Catholicity more gravely and conclusively than those even which he has hitherto imagined.

He has already proved, by an appeal to the authoritative teaching of Saint Vincent of Lerins—one of the pastors of the Church endowed, according to his own showing, with direct divine authority of teaching—that “it is granted on all sides that infallibility is inseparable from the great number of the pastors.” It is by no means unnatural, therefore, that “it should be,” as he tells us, “often remarked to him,”—“Why do you set yourself up against the great body of the bishops, priests, and laity who accept the doctrine of Papal infallibility, as though you knew better than them all?”

Before noting the manner in which the Roman Catholic Layman meets this simple question, it is necessary to remember that he has virtually already explained, that the reason which *obliges* him to set himself up against the great body of the bishops, priests, and laity, is precisely that which induced him, in the first instance, to join the Roman Catholic Church—viz., the desire of “exchanging the uncertainty of private opinion for the certainty of a faith complete and unchangeable.”

As mere volition, however, is manifestly a "reason" altogether insufficient to meet the logical necessities of the case, he now further attempts to answer the seemingly unanswerable, by saying, "To this I can only reply, that the Bible, which *the Catholic Church teaches me* is the Word of God, tells me, "But though *we* or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which *we* have preached to you, let him be anathema."

In order to estimate and fully appreciate the value of this answer, it must not be forgotten that in exchanging his own uncertainty for the certainty of Roman Catholic faith, unchangeable and complete, the Roman Catholic Layman has most solemnly registered a vow that "he will admit the Holy Scripture according to that sense only which the Church has held, *and does hold* ; to which it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures."

He has, in point of fact, believed that the Bible is the word of God in the first instance, *because* the pastors of the Church of Rome have taught him that it is so ; and he has then believed that the pastors of the Church of Rome are gifted and endowed with divine authority for such supernatural teaching, *because* the Bible—when duly interpreted by themselves—clearly so reveals its sense and meaning to him !

Under these circumstances of circular reasoning, the ordinary mind will doubtless remark at once that the entire weight and value of the reply just given, lies in the peculiar phraseology and resulting obscurity of the text, and that the actual connection of the two nominative pronouns of eighteen hundred years ago, with "the pastors" of the mother and mistress of all churches of to-day, is one which, according to his own assertion, that Church alone has either right or power to determine.

Transposed to meet the inexorable necessities of the

case, the words, from a Roman Catholic layman point of view, can only read, in A.D. 1876, as follows :

“ But though the pastors of the Church of *Rome*, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you, besides that which these same pastors teach as that which we have preached to you—let him be anathema.”

That this transposition of the text is a just and absolutely necessary one, and that its sense and interpretation is not left to the private judgment of the Catholic layman, is made fully evident by testimony which he has himself elsewhere evoked and recorded, though in a connection altogether different.

Giving “ the true sense and interpretation of Scripture ” with that supreme and binding authority, with which the Roman Catholic Layman has himself accredited him, Archbishop Hughes declares as follows : “ The *pastors of the Church* are the witnesses of truth, and *they* are warranted, by a sacred authority, to reject even an angel from heaven, if that angel attempt to preach another doctrine besides that *they* have received. *They all preach the same doctrine !* ”

With the astounding doctrinal contradictions before us, which are published and verified in this pamphlet, the bold effrontery and assurance of this latter teaching—which is printed in italics in the original, and which the Catholic mind evidently accepts gratefully, under penalty of damnation—would seem almost sufficient to incapacitate the ordinary and non-Catholic mind from further Catholic investigation altogether.

It is necessary to remember, however, that with the Roman Catholic Layman, “ the wisest economy is to have no management,” and that “ that other doctrine,” which Archbishop Hughes is brought into court to reject and curse as one he had not then received, is the very doctrine and new gospel of Papal infallibility, the reasons for the “ utter rejection,” of which we are now beholding in progress of justification and establishment by “ overwhelming evidence.”

As one of the main supports of this establishment, Archbishop Hughes has, in fact, just previously been brought to declare, that although "every definition of doctrine and morals by a general council is infallible, a man may be a very good Catholic without enquiring whether the Pope is officially infallible or not, and may even hold it as an opinion *that he is not infallible, and neither Priest, nor Bishop, nor Pope, will frown upon him for his opinion.*" This testimony being exactly in accordance with the Roman Catholic Layman's argumentative necessities of the moment, he naturally accepts it gladly, under penalty of damnation for rejection. The danger, however, of reasoning according to will, instead of willing according to reason, is great; and the ulterior consequences of this acceptance of the illogical and the convenient, closely combined together, is as usual fraught with consequences, both lamentable and embarrassing.

Passing—by grotesque transition—from the divinely authorised teaching of Archbishop Hughes to the decree of a council of the Church, confirmed by the vicar of Christ himself in presence of five hundred bishops, we find the doctrine, which the Roman Catholic Layman "cannot accept," simply and unmistakably summed up and defined as follows:

"Therefore we, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from *the beginning of the Christian faith* to the glory of God our Saviour, the exaltation of the Christian religion, and the salvation of Christian people—the sacred council approving—teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed, that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedrâ*—that is, when discharging the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter—is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed

that his Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith and morals ; and that, therefore, the definitions of the Roman Pontiff are, of themselves, irreformable, and not dependent upon the consent of the Church. But if anyone presume to contradict this, our definition—which, may God avert—let him be accursed.”

To realise fully the position of the Roman Catholic Layman under the shadow of this clearly marked Papal and Episcopal “frown”—from which Archbishop Hughes has just guaranteed him entire immunity—it must be remembered that he has solemnly vowed “most steadfastly to admit and embrace *ecclesiastical traditions*, and all other observances and constitutions of the Church, and to undoubtedly receive and profess all things delivered, defined, and declared by her general councils, as well as to condemn, reject, and anathematise all heresies which the Church has condemned, rejected, and anathematised.”

It is in the teeth of this, his own free confession of Catholic faith, “without which no one can be saved,” that he claims to justify his “utter rejection” of the inconvenient teachings of “ecclesiastical tradition,” which have been so recently defined, delivered, and declared by the General Council of the Vatican.

To establish this justification, he appeals to the “Pastors of the Church ;” and on their own published testimony, he shows that they have taught him the following points.

1. That he is bound to believe their teaching under penalty of Anathema.
2. That Catholic doctrine is that only which has been believed everywhere at all times and by all—and ;
3. That the doctrine of Papal Infallibility has *not*

been thus believed ; is consequently not a doctrine of the Church ; and can never be made so by any definition of a council whatever.

Now, that the Pastors of the Church *have* so taught him is a fact altogether incontrovertible. Their evidence, duly verified and recorded, has set the matter at rest beyond all possibility of doubt. Between proving, however, that he has been taught these propositions, and proving that the propositions themselves are *true*, there is a world-wide difference ; and it is just here that a consideration of the testimony rendered by Archbishop Hughes is so important. This Pastor of the Church has declared, as we have seen, “ that General Councils are Infallible ; that men may hold as an opinion that the Pope is not infallible without thus calling down upon themselves ecclesiastical censure ; and that all the Pastors of the Church teach the same doctrine.” Nothing assuredly can, to the ordinary and non-Catholic mind at least, be clearer than that the Archbishop is here, not only in entire contradiction with himself, but in complete antagonism with existing facts.

For, if General Councils are Infallible, it is an inevitable consequence that the Infallibility of the Pope must be believed as a doctrine of the Church. It cannot therefore be disbelieved as an opinion. Further, the ecclesiastical frown *is* clearly threatened, in the form of anathema against all who shall maintain an opinion on papal infallibility contrary to the decree of the Vatican Council—and lastly, instead of all the pastors of the Church teaching the same doctrine, very many of them—as the Roman Catholic Layman himself clearly demonstrates—teach doctrines, not only altogether different, but clearly contradictory. Upon the credibility of his witnesses, the stability of his position manifestly depends, and to re-establish that of the most important witness he has yet produced, there

would appear to be but one way open to him. This method, however, although it has been urged upon him by those who would apparently have him save his Catholicity at any price, he indignantly rejects.

"But, say my infallibilist friends," he remarks, "when the authors you have quoted wrote, the doctrine was not defined to be a dogma, *and consequently* there was no heresy even if it were approximate heresy to deny it." To this specious explanation which would shield both Archbishop Hughes and himself from the unpleasant consequences embodied in the anathema of a General Council—as well as rehabilitate his most important witnesses, the Roman Catholic Layman replies, in the fullest spirit of all the maxims of his adoption: "Of all the novel and strange doctrines I have heard of, this is the strangest, *and it is as false in fact as the doctrine it is intended to support.* To suppose that the doctrines of Christianity were not of equal force before as well as after a Council, is a most unheard of novelty. They were defined to be dogmas *because* they were of obligation; they did not become of obligation because they were defined.

"This would be putting the cart before the horse. It would be as correct to say that a man was guilty of murder because he was hung, instead of saying that he was hung because he was guilty of murder.

"It would be as correct to say that a law became of force only when a conviction was obtained under its clauses. It would be as correct to say that a spoon became silver when it received the goldsmith's hall mark. In each of these cases the authentication does not make it what it is; it is authenticated because it is what it is. Those who maintain the contrary are alike ignorant of the nature of theology, Church history, law, and silver spoons."

Having thus, with "the wise economy of no management," clearly succeeded in stultifying beyond all possibility of recovery his own main witness

to the all important point at issue, he proceeds, in similar trenchant fashion, to impeach the credibility of the "main body" of those very "pastors of the Church" whose teaching he is bound to receive, according to their own interpretation of the scriptures, under penalty of damnation.

"Infallibilists show a double front," he immediately adds, "for they tell us with one breath that the Vatican Council has made a dogma of what was before only a doctrine, in order to avoid charging with heresy so many distinguished Archbishops and Bishops now dead, but whose works contain the most unmistakable denials of the doctrine. In the next breath they tell us that no change has been made, but that the doctrine has always been believed and taught. *I can only say that this latter statement presents itself to my mind as the most astounding violation of veracity that this earth has been witness of since the serpent said to Eve, 'No, thou shalt not die the death.'*"

That the "Infallibilists" who make this mendacious statement are identical with those whose teaching the Roman Catholic Layman is bound to receive under pain of damnation, viz., the pastors of the Church,—is evident from abundant testimony throughout his pamphlet.

This fact may also be clearly and satisfactorily determined by reference to recent words of Cardinal Manning, whereby he has publicly testified: 1st. "That the Infallibility of the Pope was a *doctrine* of divine faith before the Vatican Council was held. 2nd. That the Vatican Council simply declared an old truth, and made no new dogma." It is manifest therefore that the Roman Catholic Layman has now convicted the very identical teaching body, to whom he has himself specially appealed from the decree of a General Council of the Church—of a "violation of veracity" unequalled in the history of the world since the fall.

All things considered, the impeachment is suffi-

ciently grave. Not content, however, with the extent of it, he proceeds to attain in fashion no less grave the morality of the entire body, by whom, according to his own statement, he has been somehow "taught," that as a Catholic he is obliged by Jesus Christ himself to believe what "the pastors of the Church of Rome" teach, *under penalty of damnation*. This he accomplishes in the following fashion:—

In the course of his arguments directly against the decree of infallibility, he quotes from a Catechism of the Church—*permissu superiorum*—question and answer, as follows:—

Question—"Must not Catholics believe the Pope himself to be infallible?"

Answer—"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." On this he immediately remarks: "This last question and answer have been *surreptitiously* removed in the last edition without a word of explanation. Charges of corrupting the writings of the dead have often been made against the Church of Rome. *We have now an instance before our very eyes!*"

Having then, already charged the main body of the pastors, under the title of infallibilists, with "an astounding violation of veracity," he has now clearly accomplished nothing less than the moral impeachment of "the congregation of all the faithful throughout the whole world under one head," and that on a point of the very deepest and gravest importance which it is possible to imagine.

The object at issue not being to determine and pronounce merely whether it is Saint Antoninus of Florence, Saint Vincent of Lerins, Bellarmin, Arch-

bishop Hughes, Mastai Ferretti, or a Roman Catholic Layman who is gifted with powers of infallible discernment and power of definition, but to sum up and estimate the advantages, moral and mental, of belonging to the Church of Rome, in search of the complete and the unchangeable, it is unnecessary to follow the pamphlet throughout.

When a man is busily intent upon cutting through the very branch of a tree upon which he is himself astride, the ordinary mind scarcely requires to witness the entire operation in order to realise the consequences which must finally result.

The latter portion of the Roman Catholic Layman's argument is sufficiently interesting, however, to make it worth while following him somewhat further.

Having given the "clear definition" of the Church according to his own conviction, it will be well to record also his opinion as to who really constitute the pastors of the Church, whom he is bound to believe under pain of damnation. Quoting, then, St Ignatius to Polycarp, he identifies, first of all, as "the pastors of the Church," the bishops, priests, and deacons: he who obeys them obeys Christ, by whom they were established." Appealing, on the other hand, to a Catechism of the Church, it is stated, in answer to the question, Who are the lawful judges of Christian doctrine? "Only the *bishops* of the true Church who have been appointed by Christ for that purpose. The *bishops* are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to rule and govern the Church; this they could not do unless they were qualified *with the utmost certainty* to distinguish good from bad doctrine."

Again, referring to the catechism of the Council of Trent, he proves that it is "the *ministers* of the church whom the Saviour has authorised to be invested with such authority that he says to them, 'He that hears you hears me.'" Against this general application of these important words, however, it has to be borne in mind that Archbishop Hughes has already laid down

that, according to Catholic interpretation, "it was of the definitions of a general council that Christ said, 'He that hears you hears me.'" Finally, appealing again to this latter authority, the following remarkable teaching is recorded:—"The church is spread through the world, and you have but to apply to the nearest of her *priests or bishops* to learn from him what is her doctrine. He will not, in his reply, give you *his opinion*, but he will give you the attestation of his belief as received from Christ and His apostles, and as held during eighteen hundred years. You may consult other priests and other bishops, and on these points *you will find, no doubt, no discrepancy, but all will speak as with the same voice and give you the same reply*; so that in the attestations of the individual Catholic pastor you have the universal attestation of the whole Catholic Church, the same as if its two hundred millions of witnesses stood by saying, 'Yes; that is the faith which we have all received, which we believe and teach!'"

Whatever may be the clear definition of Priests and Bishops, "Pastors of the Church," in his own imagination, which enables the Roman Catholic Layman to turn this startling statement to account as he subsequently does, it is evident from his pamphlet in general, and from one page in particular, that he divides that body into two distinct portions, viz., those from whom *he* individually has received the faith, and those from whom he has not. It is a very remarkable and suggestive fact that he quotes with special approbation from the teaching of the former, the curious argument in support of the church of his selection and adoption, that "nothing but an over-ruling providence could keep such multitudes united in religion who so widely differ *in everything else!*"

Yet more remarkable and suggestive, however, is the single application which he proceeds triumphantly to claim for the testimony just quoted, of the very pastor of the church who already so erringly promised him immunity from the ecclesiastical frown for holding an opinion in antagonism with Vatican decrees.

“From the above,” he remarks, “I naturally infer that when a Catholic Pastor teaches me that Papal Infallibility is not an article of our faith; is ‘no part of our creed;’ is a ‘Protestant invention,’ and a ‘Protestant forgery;’ I have the universal attestation of the whole Catholic Church the same as if its two hundred millions of witnesses stood by saying, ‘Yes, Papal Infallibility is *not* the faith which we have all received, which we believe and teach!’”

Intent as the Roman Catholic Layman is here—as upon a similar occasion—upon attack only, and not upon defence, it still seems impossible to account for his astounding blindness as to the inevitable consequences of this one-sided inference and its recoil upon himself, except indeed upon the not un-natural supposition that twenty years of disuse of private opinion and of utter dependence upon “a Church,” has so atrophied and weakened the faculty, as to render it, when called upon, incapable of healthy or vigorous action altogether. That pastors of the church *have* taught him that Papal Infallibility is not an article of the Catholic Faith and is no part of the Catholic creed, is unquestionably true beyond all possibility of honest doubt. His own substantiated references and quotations prove the fact to demonstration.

The application, however, which he has made, while thinking solely of his own defence, cannot manifestly be confined within the narrow limits of his own discernment. It is, unfortunately for himself, in no degree

less true that it is a "Catholic Pastor,"* who also teaches him as follows:—"Events which have unhappily become notorious induce us to make known to the faithful, that whosoever does not in his heart receive and believe the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Vicar of Jesus Christ "as they have been defined by the supreme authority of the Church, does by that very fact cease to be a Catholic."

It is only necessary now to push the Roman Catholic Layman's argument one step further than he has brought it himself, in order to discern that he must, in his own words, here also "naturally infer" that when a Catholic Pastor teaches him thus—"He has the universal attestation of the whole Catholic Church the same as if its two hundred million of witnesses stood by saying: 'Yes, Papal Infallibility *is* the faith which we have all received, which we believe and teach, and whosoever does not in his heart accept it, is no Catholic.'"

From this it follows clearly enough that he is, by his own showing, now absolutely obliged to "reject utterly" not only the Infallibility of the Pope as defined by himself, but also the Infallibility of the Pastors of the Church, as defined by *themselves*—each under penalty of damnation.

Having in short, twenty years ago, in his dalliance with "the certain, the complete, and the unchangeable," allowed himself to be shorn of the faculty of private judgment with which nature had endowed him, he appears before us now, making use of such new growth of it as time has furnished him with, in dragging down upon himself and all about him, the two main pillars of the universal structure in which his captivity has been paraded.

In seeking an appropriate simile for the "astounding violation of veracity," which he has now in point of

* Cardinal Manning.

fact made the two hundred million of witnesses constituting "the congregation of all the faithful" responsible for—the Roman Catholic Layman went back as we have seen, in his earlier efforts to "shame the devil," to the narrative of Eve and the Serpent. It may well be called to mind that ancient history furnishes no less suitable comparison for other astounding manifestations also; and that the modern historian of the strange events which are supposed to have "brought death into the world and all our woe," has also depicted for us the scene of "universal" ruin which is most aptly illustrative of the Roman Catholic Layman's own present position :

"He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath ;
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, and priests,
Their choice nobility and flower.

With these immix't inevitably,
The edifice where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads, and on his own he pull'd.
The vulgar only 'scap'd who stood without."

Clearly as the moral points, it is doubtful whether those whom it most concerns will discover in it any application to themselves.

The tree of supernatural knowledge is still "pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired to make one wise," but it now grows within the precincts of "the Church ;" and those who have set their affections upon its "certain and unchangeable" fruit, are just as likely to be persuaded in the direction they want to follow, in the present age, as Eve was when the serpent said, "Thou shalt not die the death."

The wisdom of not listening to *serpents* no doubt is now fully established, but it is unfortunately no longer "the subtlest beast of the field" which captivates humanity with "astounding violations of veracity."

For all practical purposes of instruction and edification the main purport of the Roman Catholic Layman's reasonings may be gathered and determined here.

The mass of duly authenticated testimony which he has put forward, in all the "wise economy of no-management," is by no means easy to follow.

The non-Catholic mind finds itself bewildered by the semi-transparency of the cloud of mystification which is spread around it; while the Catholic mind, intent upon the shifting light which lures it on for the moment, and accustomed to obscurity, vanishes complacently in the dim confusion of ideas which it has itself created.

If the main body of the Roman Catholic Layman's arguments have not been touched upon here, it is not that they are unworthy of full study and attention. They throw, however, no new light upon what has been already referred to.

One point most worthy of remark is, that whatever may be the relative value of the teaching of the Pope, and of the Pastors of the Church, and however flagrantly they contradict each other—as incontestably demonstrated in the pamphlet itself—the writer is under the full impression to the last, that he is himself at least—in truth and honesty—a Roman Catholic Layman.

That he even imagines the possibility of his sitting alone, a Catholic, among the ruins of Catholicism he has made, appears from his own confessions.

Appealing once again to Saint Antoninus of Florence he establishes approvingly that "it is quite possible the entire faith should be preserved *in one single individual*—in which case it might be truly affirmed that the Faith has not failed the Church!"

That the Roman Catholic Layman, however, really differs essentially from the main lay-element of the nominal two hundred millions, who speak with so strangely *identical* a voice,—few who have studied Catholicity in lands called Catholic, and have duly noted the revelations evoked by recent "Protestant expostulation"—are likely to imagine.

On this point his own original testimony, if not conclusive, is at least both interesting and useful.

"As far as my experience goes," he tells us, "I find that while a few accept the new doctrine without any hesitation, a large number doubt or altogether refuse to accept it; the great majority, however, neither know nor care much about it, believing, as they say, that it is not their business to inquire into the doctrines of the Church, but simply *to believe and do as they are told.*"

As regards this "great majority," it may no doubt be said, that if they could only supply that topmost link, which the Roman Catholic Layman has so completely ignored, and could account for the supreme exercise of that initial "private opinion" by which they became aware in the first instance of the divine obligation of believing the teaching of the pastors of the Church of Rome under penalty of damnation—their assertion would be worthy of all attention and respect. In the absence of this momentous explanation, however, our interest lies entirely with the first two classes he has described. And here, the existence of his pamphlet makes one thing at least clear and certain which is in no way affected by the doubtful question of his own claim to Catholicity, viz., that whether men "accept the new doctrine without hesitation," or whether, on the other hand, they "altogether refuse to accept it," *both* have alike to face the inexorable logic of existing facts therein recorded, which not only bars their passage every way across the threshold of the Church of Rome, but proves beyond a doubt that the dearly purchased consolation of "the complete, the certain, and the unchangeable" which she seems to offer, is but a false security after all, and one which in time of trial "melts away under the feet like ice exposed to the burning rays of a July sun."

To those, therefore, who, loving peace of mind and certainty, love truth and reason also, the matter of paramount interest, into which the Roman Catholic Layman's reasonings resolve themselves, must evidently

be the consideration of—how he came to cross this threshold in the first instance, and on what possibly sufficient mental and moral grounds he joined “the Church of Rome.”

It is just here, however, that he gives us no direct information whatever.

He has put it on record nevertheless, in his own words, as follows: “By the creed of Pius the Fourth I am bound to declare, and have actually declared, that I also admit the Scriptures, neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.” (*Sic.*)

Of the *obligations* consequent on his own arbitrary act, he has here at least conveniently made full confession; but, at the same time, of the grounds on which he came to make this most momentous declaration twenty years ago, he tells us further, not one syllable. And yet nothing can be more remarkable than the results of his own researches into the “unanimous consent” of these same so-called “Fathers.”

It is in repudiating the particular Catholic doctrine which happens to be utterly repugnant to his tastes, that he has found himself driven, in self-defence, to the assistance of this time-honoured and adopted testimony.

In the process, however, he discovers, he tells us, among other startling facts, that as to the very nature and consequent stability of the vaunted rock upon which the Mother and Mistress of all Churches claims to have laid her unassailable foundations, the Fathers themselves are by no means agreed!

Asking himself, apparently by a sudden and tardy inspiration: “What then is the unanimous consent of the Fathers in the passage, ‘Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my Church?’” he finds, he declares, on authority duly verified, that: “Forty-four Fathers understand the passage as a declaration that Christ has founded this Church (*i.e.*, the Church of

Rome) on the fundamental doctrine of His divinity, which St Peter so gloriously professed,—while seventeen fathers only, understood Christ's words to the effect that he had founded the Church on St Peter."

The point of interest is here quite apart from the delicate question of original translation and Roman interpretation, upon which the very existence of the Church has been so long supposed to depend.

Whatever may be the value of the distinction between the two interpretations quoted, it is quite evident that to the Roman Catholic Layman at least, this divergence of opinion, in a fundamental matter, and in a quarter where he has solemnly bound himself to judge alone by "unanimity," is of the very deepest moment and importance.

What "the vulgar who yet stand without," then, will naturally at once demand to know is:—"How does it happen that this enquiry into the nature of 'unanimity' among the fathers of the Church was not made *before* instead of *after* its existence was assumed,—before instead of after the abjuration of 'the Uncertain,' and the adoption of the 'Certain and Unchangeable,' by virtue of which, full responsibility was undertaken for the doctrines of the creed of Pius the Fourth, with all their necessary and legitimate results and consequences?" This question is all the more natural, and at the same time more pressing, because the Roman Catholic Layman declares it to have been "*well said*" by an Italian priest "that the main body of the Church have now reduced the Bible to one text: 'Thou art Peter,' and the creed to one article: 'I believe in the Pope.'" "

Also, because we have before us the testimony of many existing pastors of the Church of to-day, who differ probably from the *Fathers* of the Church of bygone ages, only in not yet being regarded through the enchantment of distance, and whom he has directly

accused of inconsistencies and contradictions of undoubted gravity and importance.

Notable among these "fathers" of our Catholics-to-be, are the names of "Cardinal Manning," "Doctor Newman," and "Monsignor Capel."

Of the former, having proved against him, by reference to his own writings, a "most disingenuous suppression" of important facts as to the Vatican Council, he adds: "He has a genuine horror of scientific history, and he undoubtedly practises what he preaches."

Against the mentor of his special adoption, who has assured him that "Catholic doctrines are those only which have never and nowhere not been maintained," and that "the most damaging folly is to be found out shuffling," his accusation is no less grave.

Quoting a letter from Doctor Newman to Doctor Pusey, he shows clearly enough that in the opinion and teaching of the former, the doctrine of the Vatican Council, then at least was *not* maintained; for the writer says: "You consider my principle may be the means of introducing into our creed as portions of the necessary Catholic faith—the infallibility of the Pope. I hope to remove your anxiety as to these consequences before I bring my observations to a close."

Subsequently, Doctor Newman's recorded declaration appears as follows: "*Nothing* shall make me say that a mere majority in a council, as opposed to a moral unanimity, in itself creates an obligation to receive its dogmatic decrees."

The existence of this "mere majority," which Cardinal Manning has been already convicted of ignoring, by a "most disingenuous suppression of facts," Doctor Newman has duly attested by admitting, that when the decree was actually passed, "more than eighty 'fathers' absented themselves from the Council, and would have nothing to do with its acts." Having considerably strengthened this latter assertion, by

quoting from the existing protest signed by nearly "one hundred fathers who refused to be present at the final session," their solemn declaration that "nothing but filial reverence forbade their saying *non placet* in the Pope's presence, and in a matter directly concerning his person," the Roman Catholic Layman proceeds to show that by some strange mental process, to the ordinary and non-Catholic mind probably suggestive of "damaging folly," the author of the "Apologia" subsequently acknowledges, that the obnoxious doctrine has been "introduced as a portion of the necessary Catholic faith," and not only so, but that he himself "adheres to the introduction."

Viewed in connection with his own maxims and principles of action, this most contradictory outspokenness of a father of the Church is sufficiently remarkable. It certainly seems strangely indicative of that universal immutability and unanimity which were among the desirable things upon which the Roman Catholic Layman set his heart when he abandoned uncertainty for the Church of Rome.

Equally grave, and more important to the matter in hand, for reasons subsequently noted, is the suspicion which is cast upon the principles and mode of action of "Monsignor Capel."

This suspicion is effectually imparted to the ordinary mind by simple reference to two existing letters, some time back made public property.

In the first of these, alluding to one of the "Apostate Triumvirate" of quondam Catholics of old prestige already referred to, who dared not only to hold but to publish reasons for not being able to accept Vatican decrees, "Monsignor Capel" writes as follows: "If Lord Camoys seriously and obstinately refuses to accept 'the doctrine of the personal infallibility of the Pope,' then does he make shipwreck of the faith."

Being subsequently brought to task in a matter of phraseology, for which nevertheless he had the full

authority and countenance of Cardinal Manning,* he at once seeks to escape the responsibility of his adopted words—the significance and bearing of which can be in no way affected by any defect of originality—by writing: “I shall feel much obliged if you will allow me to say that the words, ‘the doctrine of the personal infallibility of the Pope,’ are not mine. They were cited from the last sentence of Lord Camoys’ own letter, and were duly printed in inverted commas.”

In this attempted refuge, under the shelter of “inverted commas,” from the consequences of a public declaration made by one gifted with divine authority to teach, under penalty of damnation, the ordinary mind will now again hardly fail to discover palpable traces not only of “damaging folly,” but also of that failure in “prudence,” and “lack of true expediency,” which the maxims of the Roman Catholic Layman’s adoption have so clearly defined, and at the same time so unmistakably connected with certain other aberrations, mental or moral.

It is these curious illustrations of “unanimity” in a triumvirate of English “fathers” of the Church of Rome, to whose utterances distance may some day lend an enchantment they seem to lack at present, which render the following teaching of yet another well-known “Father of the Church,” so à propos and interesting. Writing in a language which must suffer somewhat by translation, “Monsieur le Père Huguet” has recently published the following information to the world.† “The progress of Protestant abjuration is increasing and becoming more marked every day. Whenever *Monsignor Capel, the apostle of the Anglicans*, appears in the pulpit, the largest church becomes at once too small to contain an audience which is composed almost entirely of Protestant ritualists. The

* “The privilege of Infallibility is *personal*.”—Pastoral of Cardinal Manning.

† “Almanach des fidèles amis de Pie IX.” 1876.

illustrious preacher would seem to have a special vocation for this kind of conversion, for he receives numbers of abjurations himself; and these are for the most part among the upper and well-educated classes.

“Ladies of rank, men of fashion, the bar, and the bench, have alike contributed and contribute every day a crowd of converts to the faith; but as it has been thought advisable not to publish names in the Catholic journals, except in striking instances, the world at large little dreams of the increase of Catholicism which is taking place in England, and especially in London, at the present time.”

As if in order that nothing should here fall short of the description of those upon whose heads destruction came — “Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, *and priests*” — this father of the Church goes on to note that “in spite of Mr Gladstone’s campaign,” the Church makes “glorious conquests,” not alone among the laity, but also among the pastors of the Church of England, and in proof of this he adduces what he terms “an eloquent list” of twenty-five.

It is in the face of revelations such as this that the “reasons” why a Roman Catholic Layman cannot accept the doctrines defined by a general council of his church, becomes a document of unusual interest, and one too valuable in the present day to be allowed to pass away without an effort being made to increase its influence and circulation.

In publishing his pamphlet, the Roman Catholic Layman has simply enough explained its *raison d’être*.

“My object is,” he states, “that if the difficulties I and many others feel, in reference to the teaching of the Vatican council, be mere illusions or misconceptions, some one will be induced by solid arguments and sound reasons, to dispel or remove them.”

If the object went no further than this, then much time and evident labour would indeed have been thrown away.

To prevent a moth from burning his wings, when obstinately and unaccountably bent upon exchanging obscurity for the celestial radiance of a flaring gas-light, is not easy.

To remove the difficulties of a man laboriously "straining at gnats," who has already without difficulty "swallowed a camel," is almost an impossibility.

What "solid arguments" and "sound reasons" *can* by any possibility affect the man who has exchanged his birthright of uncertain reason for such a certain catholic compound of unreason, as he has here himself served up for public note and edification?

Never, surely,—since the days when Esau asked himself, "what profit shall this birthright do me?" and exchanged it for a certain, fleeting, satisfaction—have the inevitable consequences of false, faint-hearted, and unnatural action been more surely incurred, and more graphically described.

It is in enabling us to observe and estimate these consequences, that the Roman Catholic Layman has attained an object far beyond his own original intent and purpose.

Confused as may be the argument—to the ordinary mind—by which he claims to have propped up and justified his present position in the Church of Rome, he has at least fully enabled us to discover what it is he has actually gained by laying violent hands upon "the Certain and Unchangeable" within her bosom. The result of that very definition of a Council of the Church of his adoption, which he has been forbidden to contradict under penalty of anathema, "will be," he tells us, "that in the course of a few years we may be required to believe as many doctrines under pain of damnation, as there are stars in the firmament or grains of sand on the sea-shore; and, as a consequence, myriads will be driven into infidelity from the sheer impossibility of ever knowing what they are required to believe."

"In a word, I feel no certainty that any or every

doctrine of the Church may not be radically changed by future definitions ; and *I therefore feel justified in declaring that the effect of the Vatican decree is to raise a doubt whether there is any infallible authority in this world except the Word of God.*

“ I had imagined that in submitting to the Catholic Church I had exchanged the uncertainty of private opinion for the certainty of a faith complete and unchangeable, *and now I am compelled to choose again !*”

Such is the gain, after twenty years of mental and moral “ submission ” to the Church of Rome !

In the plaintive acknowledgement of human fallibility and weakness which has here been made, there is surely a world of teaching—not only for the “ vulgar who still stand without ”—but also for the crowds who have already crossed the forbidden threshold of the so-called “ universal ” edifice, in search of peace and certainty within.

Who can doubt that if the Roman Catholic Layman had vigorously used the talent which has lain decaying in church keeping during twenty years, he would have secured ere now a brighter outlook, and a far different and more firmly founded standpoint, than he evidently holds at present. For, in recording the doubt whether there is any infallible authority on earth *save one*, he has forgotten that in the process of justifying his absolute rejection of the Infallibility of the Vicar of Christ, he has himself confessed, not only that it is the Church itself which teaches him where alone the Word of God is infallibly to be discovered— but also that “ the dead letter of the printed word can never answer as a rule by which men can come to a knowledge of the truth, if it is left to every private reason to interpret in accordance with its fancy.”

He has forgotten, too, that this same church-determined “ Word of God ” has been for centuries of darkness in the hands of those whom he has himself

convicted of "corrupting the writings of the dead;" and further, that one of his own strongest arguments is founded on the accepted reasoning that: "If Christ had intended that all mankind should learn their religion from *a book*, He Himself would have written that book, and would have laid down as the first and fundamental principle of His religion the obligation of learning to read it."

If therefore the testimony of recorded facts here proves it to be unquestionably true, that "the effect of the Vatican Council is to raise a doubt in the Catholic mind whether there is any infallible authority in the world except the "Word of God," it would seem assuredly not one particle *less* true, that the effect of the "overwhelming argument" by which this natural conclusion has been established, must be—in the Catholic mind no less than in the non-Catholic—to raise a similar doubt whether there does indeed exist any infallible authority on earth, whatever.

In overcoming the slavish fear, which high sounding and authoritative denunciations of supernatural and eternal punishments, for lack of faith in history or tradition, causes,—it has in truth been made apparent that, as in other less important matters, it is the first step alone which costs.

The Roman Catholic Layman has found "himself commanded under penalty of anathema to believe the doctrine set forth by the Vatican Council." He "utterly rejects it!"

He has been told by the main body of the pastors of the Church whose teaching he is, according to their own account, obliged by Christ himself to accept under penalty of damnation, that if he does not in his heart receive and believe this same doctrine of the Vatican, he ceases to belong to the Church outside of which there is no salvation.

This double condemnation he rejects as utterly as the other.

It is not, however, in the Roman branch of Christianity that the thunderings of anathema against unbelief alone are to be heard.

It is on a Protestant tombstone and not in Roman Catholic definitions only, that the warning may be read: "Oh that men would know the multitude of those that will be damned!"

It is in the printed record of that *one* Infallible authority to which the Roman Catholic Layman now turns in order to exchange afresh, uncertainty for certainty complete and changeless—that he reads the sweeping condemnation: "Whosoever believeth not, he shall be damned." Having then, as we have seen, already braved, and left behind him, the tremendous ecclesiastical denunciations which this more ancient anathema resembles so strikingly in style, it is difficult to see how he fails to realize the fact that he is forced by all his arguments to push aside, and search for truth behind, this scaring terror also. For if there be one thing which he has himself made clearer than another, it is the simple truth that the entire comfort and advantage of possessing an infallible authority on earth, must depend completely upon the absolute and unerring certainty of the private discernment by which this outward manifestation of "the Certain and Unchangeable" can be seized upon and apprehended in the first instance.

It is, however, unfortunately, just this initial certainty which was manifestly absent when he made his first exchange, in search of peace and safety; and now, when he turns in similar fashion "to choose again elsewhere," it is this same initial certainty which is most clearly absent still. For now, in addition to the insuperable obstacles which render impossible all human recognition of Infallible authority in the record of historical facts which Anathema brings under cognizance of saving "Faith," the awkward difficulty remains to be confronted, that the writings which comprise this record

were originally chosen and determined, and for centuries of darkness, guarded, by the very body corporate against which the damning accusation has been proved—by *Catholic* arguments—not only of “Corrupting the writings of the dead before our very eyes,” but also of “Astounding violation of veracity, almost unequalled in the history of the World.”

That many among the crowds who seek for consolation and security under the spacious shelter offered especially by the self-styled Mother and Mistress of all Churches, are impelled to cross the threshold by terror lest the doubt which the Roman Catholic Layman has expressed should be but one step upon a path they have neither wish nor courage to pursue, seems more than probable. To those who cannot face “Uncertainty” there may no doubt be present peace of mind and consolation in the self-deceptions of imagined “Certainty.” For these the simple course consists in reasoning according to their will, instead of willing in accordance with their reason. By simply ignoring or avoiding all lines of thought which seem to lead them towards conclusions inconvenient or unpalatable, they reach at last the certain and unchangeable mental resting-place of all their wishes. To such as these, however, the Roman Catholic Layman’s “*Apologia pro Vitâ Suâ*” is full of warning and suggestion.

It seems to be the honestly recorded testimony of one who by this very process of will-reasoning, has for twenty years imagined himself to be firmly standing upon solid rock.

Oblivious of the fact that he selected it in the first instance for himself upon his private judgment, and took no adequate pains to examine its composition and foundations—he is astonished and alarmed to-day to find the solid mass of his fond imagination shifting from its place, and melting at the same time beneath

his feet, "like ice in the burning rays of a July sun."

Assuredly to all those who love "to make a silence and call it '*Peace*,'" this Catholic Confession is full of teaching and significance; and, being *Catholic*, it may be truly said of it: *Ex uno disce omnes*.

If there are many, however, who find temporary peace and comfort in the self-deception of imaginary certainty, there are also many who can search out the truth without any fearful side-glance as to the consequences which such investigation may have upon their blindly cherished hopes and wishes. Should these—taking their departure from the point at which the Roman Catholic Layman has only now arrived after twenty years of disuse of private reason,—come to the firm conclusion that it is at least quite as uncertain that there really exists any *one* infallible authority upon earth, among many claiming to be such, as that there can exist *no other*—then, to these also, a careful study of this history of utter rejection of ecclesiastical Anathema may bring much comfort and assurance.

For, however painful it must be to question the character of the household idols of our own first and fondest veneration and respect, the Roman Catholic Layman's pages go to furnish the very strongest additional proof that it cannot be at least "a sin to doubt opinions that were instilled in childhood, before they have been examined; nor yet a virtue to hold them with unreasoning and unwavering credulity."

Whatever may be the loss of fancied certainty hereby resulting as to revelations of eternal recompense, it must not be forgotten that hand in hand with these go revelations of eternal torture also. If, therefore, the conviction should gradually dawn upon the world, that Uncertainty and Ignorance in matters supernatural are fixed by nature as the Universal layman's lot,—it will

at least be found by careful study of these copious "Reasons" why a Roman Catholic Christian cannot accept the natural consequences of his own free act, that after all, such simple knowledge is not without its great and lasting gains and compensations.

