

EVANGELICALS & CATHOLICS TOGETHER RESOURCES FOR REFUTATION

by Reg Barrow

SPECIFIC REFUTATION OF ROME

Kevin Reed, of Presbyterian Heritage Publications (P.O. Box 180922, Dallas, TX, 75218 or 214-271-2595), has recently written a faithful response to the *Evangelicals & Catholics Together* (ECT hereafter) document. It is called *Making Shipwreck of the Faith: Evangelicals and Roman Catholics Together* (softcover, \$10.95 - 40% = \$6.57 Canadian funds, from Still Waters Revival Books). This is the best book, critiquing this unholy alliance, to appear yet. It is the *only* book that has gone to the heart of the issues, at the most basic level, and not merely dealt with the obvious external differences with Rome. It convincingly shows, that concerning "critical aspects of doctrine and practice," many "modern evangelicals have become very much like Rome." The two major areas dealt with are the doctrines of salvation (especially regarding justification, predestination, evangelism and the bondage of the will) and worship. Arminianism, in both these areas, has already made such inroads into "evangelicalism," that most Protestant churches would not even be recognized by their own Protestant forefathers. For example, Reed writes, "[i]f you are resting your assurance of salvation upon your 'decision;' if you think that your 'free will' or 'accepting Christ' produced the new birth within you; then you are deceived — you are no better off than a Judaizer or a Romanist. You have made your 'decision' into a work, and subverted the doctrine of salvation by grace." Furthermore, it is perceptively pointed out that "[t]oday, many Roman Catholics and evangelicals decry the sins of abortion and homosexuality as manifestations of our nation's corruptions (which they are); but these same contemporary moralists are generally silent about the heinous sin of corrupt worship" (p. 35). You would think, that for much of "evangelicalism" today, the first table of the law was never a reflection of God's *unchanging moral perfections*, or that the God of the Old Testament has forgotten His own most important moral directions to mankind — at least since the coming of Christ. If you want the biblical reasons for rejecting *man-made gospels* and *man-made worship* (whether they be found in Rome, or among the Charismatics, Baptists, independents, or other so-called "evangelicals") this book tells it like it is. Again as Reed states, "[I]iving in an era of religious pluralism, we are too apt to forget that heresy is a form of moral corruption; it is classed among 'works of the flesh' along with adultery, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft, murder, and drunkenness (Gal, 5:19-21). That is how the Lord views heresy. And thus heresy is dangerous to our souls; there are heresies which are 'damnable' in their nature (2 Pet. 2:1). The issues which fostered the Protestant Reformation are not simply matters for academic debate. They are great and eternal matters respecting the way of salvation and the proper worship of God" (book, p. 12). *Don't miss this important and fiery rebuke against modern apostasy!* For as our author states, "[t]o any evangelicals who have signed or supported the ECT accord, we have but one thing to say: Repent!" Also most pertinent to this renewed debate is PHP's reprint of *True and False Worship: A Vindication of the Doctrine that the Sacrifice of the Mass is Idolatry* by John Knox (from SWRB for \$3.99 Canadian). Written in 1550, it addresses the issue at hand in an uncompromising manner. Moreover, it shows why the Scottish Reformation under Knox was the most God-honoring and thoroughgoing break with 'opery that the world has ever seen. The large hardcover, *Selected Writings of John Knox* (\$29.95 Canadian from SWRB), is now available too! It utterly destroys the false teaching, lies, and heresy of the Roman harlot; as well as containing many of the most influential of Knox's writings — concerning the church, state, and the individuals response to widespread declension and apostasy. It clearly shows why Knox was used of God to build a Reformed nation out of Scotland in his day.

Historical Theology

A review of the principal doctrinal discussions in the Christian Church since the Apostolic Age.

By William Cunningham

VOLUME 1

Special thanks to James A. Dickson of Edtburg for his support and encouragement regarding the reprinting of this set.

Reprint edition March 1991
First edition 1882

A Numbered Collectors Edition

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ISBN 0-921148-19-4

John MacArthur's recent publication entitled *Reckless Faith: When the Church Loses Its Will To Discern* (Crossway Books, 1994) contains two excellent chapters exposing the danger and apostasy found in *ECT*. Chapter 5 is a specific refutation of *ECT* laying out how this document sells out the Protestant Reformation at its most basic and fundamental points. Appendix 1 "Is Roman Catholicism Changing?" is a lucid examination of modern Romanist rhetoric. It demonstrates that despite all the fine sounding words of compromise and unity with Protestants, Rome remains steadfast in her opposition to Christ and His gospel. Both chapters are well documented and well written and form the best answer to *ECT* accessible today. (Available from SWRB for \$19.99 Canadian.)

Christian Renewal, in their August 1994 issue, printed James White's review and response to *ECT* in an article entitled "Whatever Happened to the Gospel." It points out vital doctrinal errors in *ECT* and demonstrates how this document will spiritually harm the unwary. It is a faithful call for repentance (by name) on the part of the singers of *ECT* and has stirred a fair amount of controversy already, especially in eastern Canada. *Christian Renewal* can be contacted at P.O. Box 777, Jordan Station, ON Canada, L0R 1S0 or P.O. Box 770, Lewiston, NY 14092 — phone (905) 562-5719 or fax (905) 562-7828.

Richard Bennett, a former Dominican Catholic priest and compiler of the book *Far From Rome Near To God: The Testimonies of 50 Converted Catholic Priests* (Sovereign Grace Publications, 1994 — \$13.50 Canadian from SWRB) is offering a critique of *ECT* called "We Ought to Obey God Rather Than Men" for \$4 US funds. It includes the *ECT* document, a list of its signatories and a "petition" of reproof against the "evangelicals" who signed it. Insights that could only come from an ex-Romanist priest are found throughout, as Bennett marshals scriptural arguments against Roman Catholic tradition, error, and deception. A one of a kind refutation of this proposed unholy alliance! Available from Berean Beacon, P.O. Box 55353, Portland OR 97238-5353 — phone or fax (503) 257-5995.

GENERAL REFUTATION OF ROME

(All items below are available from SWRB and are listed in Canadian funds. Our full 64 page discount Christian book catalogue will be sent with every order.)

Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (book, \$12.88). Luther called this reply to the Roman Catholic scholar Erasmus his most important book. It focuses on the major issue of the early Reformation, the doctrine of salvation.

John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* (book, \$6.98). One of the most important documents of the Reformation.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (hardcover, \$14.98). The quintessential Protestant statement of belief completed in 1647.

Carlos Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (book, \$19.77). A splendid, edifying, and invigorating historical work that gets directly into the heart of the major issues of the Reformation. Translates portions of Reformation documents, by major Reformers, that have not previously been available in English — proving that concern for purity of worship and the true knowledge of salvation were the central concerns of Reformation theology. Also demonstrates how the worship question became primary as the Reformation gained strength. It is especially thorough (bordering on a masterpiece) concerning Calvin's views and influence.

William Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (2 vol. hardcover, \$69.97). Covers the major doctrinal discussions of church history. Is especially helpful in dealing with Rome in the chapters on Justification, the Sacraments, the Council of Trent, Worship, the Fall, and the Church at the Reformation. Compares the differences in each area between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Greg Bahnsen, *Mass Confusion* (cassette, \$3.50) and *A Protestant Roman Catholic Debate* (3 cassettes, \$10.50). Shows why Bahnsen is in many respects one of the premier theologians of our day. The debate is especially interesting as Dr. Bahnsen takes on two Romanists at once.

Greg Price, *Puritan Worship* (video series, \$11.99 per video — each video contains 2 sermons of approximately 1 hour each.) Sermons 5/44 "You Saw No Form: Overview of the Second Commandment" and 6/44 "Images and Idolatry" are most pertinent to the *ECT* debate and are a good introduction to Reformation worship and preaching. Both these sermons are on one video for \$11.99 Canadian or on two cassettes for \$4.99 Canadian.

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PREFACE.

THE two volumes now issued, under the general title of *Historical Theology*, are made up almost entirely of Lectures prepared by Dr Cunningham, and annually delivered by him to the students attending the Class of Church History over which he presided in the New College. The MS. of the Lectures was left by him in a very perfect state, having undergone, in the course of successive years, no great alterations as to general substance or even particular statements, but having received careful revision from the Author in minor details.

At the time when Dr Cunningham was appointed Professor, it was all but the invariable practice in our Theological Halls, to make the prelections in the Class of Church History, little other, in substance, than a mere narrative of the rise and progress of the Christian Church, with some account of the leading men, and events, and doctrines connected with it. The wide diffusion of the fruits of modern historical research, ecclesiastical as well as civil, and the publication of numerous treatises and text-books devoted to Church History, rendered such a method of conducting the instructions of the class unsatisfactory and undesirable; and this, added to a different and higher view of the object to be aimed at,

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determined Dr Cunningham to adopt another course. Handing over his students to the many and easily accessible books on ecclesiastical history for its substance and details, and making use of one or other of them as the groundwork for oral examinations in his class, but avoiding a narrative so often repeated, he sought to give in his Lectures the lessons to be gathered from Church History, rather than Church History itself.

He held, and often expressed the belief, that the most valuable and important advantage to be derived from a study of the records of the Christian Church, was to be found in the commentary which the great developments of truth and error, in the course of its history, have furnished upon the word of God, through the occasions they presented, or the necessity they imposed, for ascertaining and determining more fully, and bringing out with greater clearness and precision, the leading doctrines of revelation. The heresies in religion, and the controversies as to truth and error, which make up so large a portion of ecclesiastical history, have uniformly resulted, under the blessing of God, in setting forth in more distinct terms, and on a more solid foundation of Scripture evidence, than before, the truth denied or controverted,—in giving to it a better development and a more definite shape,—in leading both to a more accurate and a more thorough understanding of what is to be believed,—in clearing it from misapprehension and ambiguity,—and in reproducing it again in new forms of speech, better adapted than formerly rightly to embody and express the Faith of the Church. Few, perhaps, of the less

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elementary doctrines of Scripture can be said to have been thoroughly apprehended or accurately declared, as regards both their own fulness and their relations to other doctrines, in the Confessions of the Church, until they had passed through the ordeal of controversy, and been both purified from real error, and separated from non-essential truths, by the process. The controversy on the subject of the Trinity in the fourth and fifth centuries, and the discussions on the doctrine of Justification at and after the time of the Reformation, are familiar examples of the fact, to which ecclesiastical history has so often borne testimony, that we are indebted to those conflicts of opinion, which so often broke the peace and endangered the unity of the Church of Christ, for the complete and satisfactory development and establishment of important scriptural truths, which, if some of them were not perverted or denied altogether before, had been only formally and nominally acquiesced in, and therefore, at the best, partially understood or inaccurately expressed.

It was the object of Dr Cunningham, in his Lectures on ecclesiastical history, to give forth the instructions to be thus derived from a study of the records of the Church, in those conjunctures of her history when the leading doctrines of the Faith were put to the test in the strife with men who impugned or misrepresented them; and when, as the result, truth came forth from the furnace all the more pure because of the fire. The examination of these discussions from the apostolic age downwards,—the consideration of the various arguments

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by which the fundamental articles of Christian truth have been both assailed and defended,—the review of that sifting and winnowing process through which not only truth has been separated from error, but what is essential and non-essential in the truth itself has been distinguished and put apart,—furnished him with the opportunity and the means of exhibiting and inculcating those lessons of ecclesiastical history, for the sake of which it is mainly important that it should be taught and studied.

The qualifications that he brought to the task eminently fitted him for the effective treatment of his subject in this manner and with this aim. His living faith in, and devout submission to, the word of God, so strongly marked in every page he wrote,—his profound acquaintance with theology in all its departments,—his extensive and complete mastery over ecclesiastical history,—the grasp and accuracy of an intellect fitted to deal alike with the details and general relations of his subject,—the penetration with which he could seize at once on the salient points of the most involved discussion,—and the judicial calmness, clearness, and comprehensiveness of view with which he could give judgment on the combined effect and bearing of all,—enabled him, within the narrowest possible compass, to set forth distinctly the true results of a lengthened and intricate controversy,—to separate between what was irrelevant and what was essential to an argument,—and to assign with precision to each what was due to it. Although himself a master in dialectics, there is something in his

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treatment of the important questions discussed in these volumes more admirable than the most skilful dialectics: the accuracy of judgment, the soundness of mind, the breadth and comprehensiveness of view, the ripeness of theological knowledge, the fairness and love of truth, so far removed above feelings of partizanship or the artifices of controversy, the profound reverence for the authority of God in His revelation, which he brings to bear upon the subjects handled, are worthy of all praise; and the success with which he disentangles, and the precision with which he sets forth, the merits of the case, and the proper *status quæstionis*, are better than any argument, and, indeed, oftentimes render argument both unnecessary and impossible. The same features of mind that qualified him, with such ready and decisive effect, at once to lay hold upon those ruling points in an argument upon which the whole controversy hinged, has enabled him also to separate the discussions in these volumes from whatever is due merely to the men engaged in them and to the times of their occurrence, and to exhibit the substance and results of each in such a form as to be of permanent value, fitted to interest and instruct the students of the word of God at all times.

The alterations made on Dr Cunningham's MSS., before sending them to the press, have been few, and these dictated chiefly by a regard to the order in which the topics ought to be arranged, and by the necessity of bringing the matter in the hands of the Editors within the compass of the two volumes now published. In the order in which the Lectures were delivered in the

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class-room, some consideration seems to have been given by Dr Cunningham to the expediency or necessity of arranging them so as to suit a course of two years, adapted to the two separate classes under his instructions. The Editors have thought it right to modify this arrangement to some extent, so as to adapt it more to the connection of the topics or the chronological order of the discussions. They have been enabled within the two volumes to give the whole substance of the course, although a few Lectures and portions of Lectures have been omitted, that seemed to be less essential to the general plan, and the insertion of which might have, in some cases, made the connection of the topics more manifest. The minor alterations necessary in changing the Lecture form to that in which the work now appears, in omitting recapitulations and merely academical references,—and in correcting a few verbal inaccuracies, it is unnecessary to advert to, beyond the statement that they in no instance affect the substance of the discussion or the Author's meaning.

As in a former instance, the Editors have to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Rev. John Laing, Librarian, New College, in verifying and correcting the numerous quotations and references contained in these volumes,—a work which, although inferring considerable trouble and sacrifice of time, has been to him a labour of love.

JAMES BUCHANAN.
JAMES BANNERMAN.

NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH, Nov. 1862.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE History of the Church comprehends the whole record of God's supernatural communications to men, and of His dealings with His people, and with the societies which they constituted, or of which they formed a part, ever since man fell, and God began His great work of saving sinners,—of calling them out of their natural condition,—and preparing them for the enjoyment of Himself. The most radical and fundamental idea of the church—the *ἐκκλησία*—is, that it is the company or society of the *κλητοὶ*,—those who are called by God to a knowledge of supernatural truth, and an acquaintance with the way of salvation. They are the church; and the history of the church is the history of God's dealings with them, and of their conduct under His dealings with them. God Himself has recorded in the Old Testament the history of His church for much the largest portion of the time during which it has yet existed; and the record which He has there given of the history of the church, constitutes a very large portion of the authentic and infallible materials which He has provided for communicating to us certain knowledge as to what we are to believe concerning Him, and as to what duty He requires of us.

We are expressly assured, with more immediate reference to the Old Testament, that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness. We are assured that all these things were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the world have come.

The series of God's dealings with the human race since the

fall has been commonly ranked under three great divisions, usually called œconomies, or dispensations—viz., the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. These different dispensations have been characterized at once by features of identity and diversity. The character of God, and the great principles of His moral government, the revelation of which has been one great object of all His dealings with men, have of course been at all times the same in themselves, though the knowledge of them has been communicated to men at sundry times and in divers manners. The way in which fallen men were to be saved, has been at all times the same, as it was necessarily and unchangeably determined in its substance, or fundamental provisions and arrangements, by the attributes of God, and the principles of His moral government. Of course, God's great designs with respect to the fallen race of man have been at all times the same, conducted upon the same principles, and directed to the same objects. The chief differences observable in God's successive dispensations towards the human race, are to be found in the *fulness* and *completeness* of the revelation which, at different times, He gave of His character and plans, and especially of the method of salvation; and in the more temporary objects which at different periods He combined with His one grand terminating purpose. The declaration of God when pronouncing sentence upon the serpent immediately after the fall—"He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"—has been commonly spoken of as the protevangelium,—the first proclamation of the Gospel, the first intimation of the method of salvation. And what an imperfect revelation was this of what it most concerns fallen man to know, compared with the declaration that Jesus Christ died for our sins,—viewed in connection with all the materials we possess for enabling us to understand fully what this latter statement implies, *i.e.*, to understand who and what Jesus Christ was, and what is involved in His dying for our sins!

The patriarchal period, or dispensation, extends from the fall to the giving of the law through Moses; and it derives its name from the series of remarkable men, the heads of families and tribes, who form so striking a feature in its history, and with whom God carried on intercourse of a very remarkable kind in making known His will and accomplishing His purposes. During this primitive period, God—*i.e.* (as can be established by satisfactory evidence), God the Son, who was afterwards to take flesh, and to tabernacle

among men—occasionally held personal intercourse with His chosen servants, made successively fuller discoveries of His character and purposes, and in various ways taught men many important lessons.

This dispensation admits of an obvious division into three principal periods. The first of these extends from the fall to the deluge, which was the result of the first great experimental exhibition of the depravity of human nature, of the true character and naturally insuperable tendencies of fallen man; while, at the same time, it also presented striking manifestations of God's sovereignty in carrying into effect His purposes of mercy.

The second division of this period extends from the deluge to what is commonly known as the calling of Abraham, or God's commanding him to leave his native country, Mesopotamia, and proceed to Canaan, which was afterwards to be given to his descendants. This event, too, illustrated God's sovereign purpose of mercy according to election. It was accompanied with a much fuller development than had been previously vouchsafed, of God's plans and purposes with respect to the salvation of men; so that the apostle could refer to what God had said and done in connection with Abraham, as throwing light upon some of the most important and peculiar principles of the Christian revelation. The calling of Abraham was likewise the commencement of an astonishing series of transactions in the history of a chosen people, descended from him, which have most materially influenced the history of the world down to the present day.

The third division of this period extends from the calling of Abraham to the giving of the law. It includes the history of God's dealings with the father of the faithful and his immediate descendants, and affords some very striking illustrations of God's having the hearts of all men in His hand, of His subordinating the most important events in the general history of the world to His own special designs with regard to His church and people, and of His making all things, great and small, work together for good to those who love Him, and are the called according to His purpose.

The giving of the law was a very important era in the history of God's dealings with men. It introduced what may be properly regarded as a new and different dispensation, characterized by a fuller revelation of God's attributes and government, a fuller

discovery of the way of salvation, and of God's plans and purposes regarding it; and all this in combination with extensive and detailed provision for effecting some important purposes of a more temporary description. An occasion when God had so much intercourse with man, and in circumstances so remarkable, must have been intended to serve very important ends, and must be well worthy of being thoroughly investigated. The Mosaic dispensation, regarded as a great department in the history of the church, likewise divides itself naturally into three periods, marked by the giving of the law as the introduction of the new state of things, the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy (or, according to an arrangement which some authors prefer as affording a suitable resting-place, the building of the temple), and the Babylonish captivity.

Perhaps, however, the most important feature in this dispensation next to the giving of the law and the setting up of the Mosaic economy, is the mission of the prophets, and the records which have been transmitted to us of the way in which this mission was executed. The history of the series of prophets, and the records of their revelations, exhibit an increasingly fuller development of God's eternal counsel of sovereignty and mercy; and especially they throw much light upon the true nature of a supernatural communication from God to men, and upon the way and manner in which the reality and certainty of a truly supernatural communication may be tested and established. These are indeed the most important facts to be kept in view in surveying the whole history of the Old Testament church, both in the patriarchal and the Mosaic dispensations: viz., first, the evidence afforded by them, or in connection with them, of the reality and the certainty of an actual supernatural communication made by God to men, and especially of the divine mission of our Lord and His apostles; and secondly, the light thrown upon the true nature and import of the substance of the divine communication thus supernaturally made. The two most important questions that can call forth men's interest, or exercise their faculties, are these: first, Has God given to men a supernatural revelation of His will? and secondly, If so, what is the substance of the information which this revelation conveys to us? All other subjects of investigation are subordinate to these. The patriarchal and the Mosaic dispensations ought to be studied chiefly in these aspects; and with a view to these objects, and when

studied in this way, they will be found full of instruction and full of interest.

Because, however, of the paramount importance of the two general questions which have just been stated, and of the necessity of making a selection from a wide field, I do not intend to enter upon any portion of the history of the church recorded in the Old Testament, and preceding the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh. I intend to confine myself to the Christian dispensation,—to the history of the Christian Church, more strictly so called, or the visible society established on earth by our Saviour and His apostles, enjoying the completed revelation of His will, and professing to be guided by it. And my reason for selecting this department of the history is, because it affords the largest amount of materials bearing upon theology properly so called, and fitted to furnish assistance in forming clear, correct, and enlarged conceptions of the whole substance of what God has supernaturally communicated to us. The manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh, and the completion of the series of God's supernatural revelations to men through the instrumentality of His immediate followers, form the crown and centre of the whole scheme of God's dealings with mankind, with a reference to which everything else, whether prior or posterior to that great era, ought to be contemplated. God having, in the mission of His Son, and in the inspiration of His apostles and immediate followers, as these have been put on record under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, completed the supernatural revelation of His will to men, the grand object of all men who rightly understand their condition and responsibilities, *must* be to acquire such a knowledge of this revelation as may guide them to salvation and eternal blessedness; and the great end of the gospel ministry is just to aid them in acquiring this knowledge, and in applying it to effect this result. This object, of course, is most directly promoted, and most fully and effectually secured, by the actual study of the revelation which God has given us, and by seeking, from an investigation of the meaning of the statements which it contains, to form definite, accurate, and orderly conceptions of the topics of which it treats. But in dealing with the history of the church, I am persuaded that that department of it which affords the most ample materials for assisting in the understanding of the system of Christian theology, is just the history of the church since the

completed revelation of God's will was put into its hands, and especially the history of the principal discussions which have taken place in regard to its meaning and import. The history of the way in which the church has used this revelation, and of the discussions which have taken place concerning its meaning, are fitted, when rightly used and applied, to afford us important assistance in forming a correct estimate of what it is really adapted and intended to communicate and to effect. I mean, therefore, to attempt to survey the most important discussions on doctrinal subjects which have taken place in the church since God's full and completed revelation was bestowed upon it, for the purpose of making use of the materials which this survey may afford in aiding to ascertain where the truth, the scriptural truth, in the leading controversies which have been carried on really lay; and to discover how the truth upon the particular subject controverted may be most accurately stated, and most successfully defended, and how the opposite error may be most conclusively and effectively refuted. With this view, I mean, after adverting to the discussions which have taken place as to the nature and definition of the church itself, to give some notice of what is commonly called the Council of Jerusalem, as recorded in the book of the Acts, at which the first controversy that arose in the church was taken up and disposed of; and then to proceed to consider the chief controversies which arose and divided the church after the inspired apostles were removed, and the chief subjects of a doctrinal kind which have given rise to controversial discussions in more modern times.

The period of the history of the church from the apostolic age till the present day is usually considered under three great divisions—the ancient, the mediæval, and the modern.

The first of these—the ancient—extends from the apostolic age till the early part of the seventh century,—an era marked by the full establishment of the Pope's supremacy over the Western Church, and the origin of Mohammedanism, and regarded by many as the commencement of the fully developed reign of Antichrist. This period admits of an obvious and important division into the period before, and the period after, the establishment of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine; or, what is very nearly synchronous, the first Œcumenical Council that met at Nice in the year 325.

The second, or mediæval period, reaches from the early part of the seventh century till the Reformation, in the beginning of the sixteenth,—a period of about 900 years. The most important features of this period, so far as our objects as above described are concerned, are the growing corruption of the church in doctrine as well as in character; the full development of the mystery of iniquity, especially the formal establishment of idolatry by the second Council of Nice,—the scholastic theology,—the canon law,—and the efforts made antecedently to Luther and Zwingle, so far as they rested upon a scriptural basis, to oppose Popery and to reform the church.

The third and last, or the modern period, extends from the commencement of the Reformation till the present day.

The most valuable object which the student of historical and polemic theology can aim at is to endeavour to trace, by a survey of controversial discussions, how far God's completed revelation of His will was rightly used by the church for guiding to a correct knowledge and application of divine truth, and how far it was misapplied and perverted. With reference to this object, there can be no doubt that much the most important period in the history of the church is the Reformation from Popery, and the period intervening between that great era and the present day. And the reason of this is, that at and since the Reformation, every topic in Christian theology, and indeed every branch of theological literature, has been discussed and cultivated with much greater ability and learning, or at least in a much more rational, systematic, and satisfactory way, than during the whole previous period of the church's history. There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt, that in point of intrinsic merit as authors, as successful labourers in expounding and establishing Christian truth, in bringing out clearly and intelligently, and in exhausting the various topics which they discussed, the Reformers and the divines who succeeded them are immeasurably superior to the theologians of preceding generations. In the respects to which I have referred,—and they are, beyond all question, the most important, so far as concerns the real value of authors and their writings,—the Fathers and the Schoolmen are mere children, compared with the Reformers and with the great Protestant divines of the seventeenth century. Of the main topics in Christian theology which are still the subjects of occasional con-

troversial discussion, and are, therefore, still of some practical importance, as actually bearing upon the process of the formation of men's opinions, almost the only ones which can be said to have undergone anything like a satisfactory discussion, antecedently to the Reformation, are the Trinity, and some of the leading points involved in the Pelagian controversy; and even these have been much better and more fully discussed, so far as concerns the true bearing of the correctly ascertained meaning of Scripture upon the matter in dispute, in modern than in ancient times,—*i.e.*, in the Socinian and Arminian, than in the Arian and Pelagian controversies. On the ground of this general truth, it is of much greater importance for all the proper ends of historical theology, or the history of doctrines, to survey and investigate the history of theological literature and discussion during the last three, than during the preceding fourteen, centuries. At the same time, there is no period in the history of the church that is entirely unfruitful, or that should be wholly neglected, even in its bearing on Christian theology, and independently of its historical value and importance. The first four centuries after the apostolic age, or the second, third, fourth, and fifth centuries of the Christian era, are invested with no small measure of interest and importance with respect to the history of theology, as well as in other respects: the second and third centuries exhibiting the church in what was indeed, in some respects, its purest state, but exhibiting also the seeds, at least, of almost all the errors and corruptions which afterwards so extensively prevailed; and the fourth and fifth exhibiting a far larger amount of talents and learning among the doctors of the church than ever before, or for many centuries afterwards, she possessed,—applied, too, in defence of some important scriptural truths; but, at the same time, with a growing measure of error, which soon spread darkness over the church,—a darkness dispelled only by the light of the Reformation.

THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH.

Sec. 1.—Nature of the Church.

THE questions as to what the church is,—what is the proper definition of it, and what are its qualities, prerogatives, marks, or distinguishing characters,—have given rise to a good deal of discussion, and are invested with considerable importance. They enter very deeply and influentially into the controversy between the Church of Rome and the Protestant churches, as it has been commonly conducted. Papists are usually anxious, when engaged in controversy with Protestants, to give prominence to the general subject of the church,—and this for two reasons: first, because they think—and they are not wholly mistaken in the opinion—that they have something to say upon the general topic of the church as it is set before us in Scripture, which is somewhat more plausible than anything they find it practicable to adduce in regard to many of the particular doctrines controverted between them and Protestants,—and have found in experience the discussion of this topic more successful than any other in making converts to Popery; and secondly, because, were the views which they generally propound on the general subject of the church, and their application to the Church of Rome, established, this would supersede all further discussion of individual doctrines; for the practical result of them is virtually to put the church in the room of God as the immediate revealer of all truth, as well as the dispenser of all

grace, or at least to put the church in the room of His word as the only standard of faith,—and the conclusion, of course, is, that men should implicitly submit their understandings to whatever the church may promulgate to them.

The substance of the Romish doctrine upon this general subject is, that Christ has established on earth the church as a distinct society, which is not only to continue always indefectible or without ceasing to exist, but to stand out visibly and palpably—distinguished from all other societies, civil or ecclesiastical,—that it is not liable to error, but will always continue to promulgate the truth, and the truth alone. When they have proved this, they *then* try to prove that this one church of Christ, always visible and infallible, must of necessity be in communion with the Church of Rome, the mother and mistress of all churches, and in subjection to the Bishop of Rome, the vicar of Christ and the monarch of His church. Protestants admit that the church, as a distinct society instituted by Christ, considered generally or in its totality, is indefectible;—*i.e.*, they believe that, in point of fact, it will never cease to exist, because Christ has explicitly promised this. They do not admit that there is anything in Scripture predicting, promising, or implying that it is to be always visible in the sense of the Romanists—*i.e.*, that there must be at all times, in unbroken or continuous succession, an organized society publicly and palpably standing out to the eyes of men as the church of Christ; and they utterly deny that there is any good foundation for ascribing infallibility to the church in the Romish sense. They hold that there is no ground, either in scriptural statement or in historical fact, for asserting that there must always be, and has always been upon earth, a society, visible and easily recognisable, which has at all times held and proclaimed the truth of God without any mixture of error; while they further maintain that such a description does certainly not apply *de facto* to the Church of Rome, or to the church in connection with the Papal See.

It is very evident, from the nature of the case, that questions of this sort can be rightly decided only by an appeal to the sacred Scriptures, which both parties admit to be the word of God, and more particularly by investigating what the Scriptures sanction concerning the proper definition or description of the church, and concerning the privileges and prerogatives which Christ has conferred on, or promised to, it. These controversies, indeed, may

be said to turn essentially upon this question, What definition or description of the church does the Scripture warrant or require us to give? It was upon this ground that the investigation of the proper definition or description of the church entered so largely into the controversies between the Reformers and the Church of Rome, and that in most of the confessions of the Reformed churches we find a formal definition or description of the church as an important article of Scripture doctrine.

To show more clearly the importance of settling from Scripture what is the proper definition or description of the church, I may refer to one leading department of the argument carried on between the Reformers and the Romanists. The Romanists were accustomed to employ the following argument:—Where there is not a valid ministry, there is no true church. Protestants have not a valid ministry, and therefore they are not a true church. The Reformers' answer was in substance this:—Wherever there is a true church, there is or may be a valid ministry. Protestants are a true church, or a true branch of the church, and therefore they have or may have—*i.e.*, are entitled, or have a right, to a valid ministry. Now, it is quite manifest that the whole of this argumentation *upon both sides* depends essentially upon the question, What is a true church? or, in other words, what is the scriptural view of the real nature, the essential qualities, and necessary or invariable properties of the church of Christ? and more especially, is the possession of a valid ministry essential to it in all possible circumstances; and if so, what constitutes a valid ministry? Papists, accordingly, usually try to introduce into the definition of the church elements which, if admitted or proved from Scripture, would formally or virtually settle the controversy, and decide in favour of their views. In the common Popish catechisms, the church is defined to be the congregation of all the faithful professing the same faith, partaking in the same sacraments, governed by lawful pastors under one visible head, the vicar of Christ. Cardinal Bellarmine, the great champion of Popery, expresses it thus: “Coetus hominum ejusdem Christianae fidei professione, et eorundem Sacramentorum communione colligatus, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum, ac praecipue unius Christi in terris Vicarii Romani Pontificis;” and he immediately adds, very truly and very simply, “Ex qua definitione facillè colligi potest, qui homines ad Ecclesiam pertineant,

qui vero ad eam non pertineant.”* This definition, if admitted, certainly settles conclusively some important questions. But Protestants do not accept it: they demand, as they are entitled to do, scriptural proof for all the different elements introduced into the definition; and they are very sure that for some of them no such proof can be adduced. This, of course, throws us back upon the question, What view of the church is really given us in Scripture? what ideas does Scripture authorize and require us to introduce into our definition or description of it?

We find in Scripture that the word *ἐκκλησία*, commonly translated church, is applied sometimes to an assembly or collected number of men of any sort; as, for instance, when it is used in describing the tumultuous assembly in the theatre of Ephesus.† It is commonly employed, however, in a more limited or specific sense, as descriptive of a society or collected number of men standing in a certain peculiar relation to Jesus Christ; and even in this more limited sense, we find it used in several different applications. When we read in Scripture that the church is Christ's body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; that He loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; when we read of the general assembly and church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven,—we cannot doubt that *here* the word church is employed as descriptive (to use the language of our Confession) “of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the Head thereof;” and further, that in the passages referred to, none but those who have been chosen by God to salvation through Christ, and also are all in consequence saved, are regarded as comprehended in the church. There is, then, a church spoken of in Scripture which consists of the whole body of the elect, the believing, the saved,—of those who are chosen through Christ to faith and salvation, and who in due time attain to them, and of none others. Moreover, if this be the true meaning of the word in the passages referred to, it is evident from the nature of the case, and from the general scope and object of the passages, that whatever other meanings the word may bear, *this*, if indeed a real meaning of the word, must be its *leading, guiding*

* De Ecclesia, Lib. III. cap. 2.

† Acts xix. 32, 41.

meaning,—that which must to some extent regulate and modify the rest.

Now, the church in this sense has been usually spoken of by Protestant divines as invisible; and the idea which they intend to convey by so designating it, is the very obvious and just one, that as those who are elected to life cannot with certainty be known or recognised individually by men even after they have been brought by God's grace to believe and to enter upon the way of salvation, the company or society so constituted cannot, *as to its particular component members*, be accurately and certainly discerned. The reason which led Protestants to give prominence to this idea of the invisible church as now explained, was, that the Church of Rome maintains visibility, as including external organization, to be an essential property of the Church, and founds important conclusions upon this position. If visibility be an *essential* property of the church, then it would seem to follow that a public and unbroken succession of a continuous society from the time of the apostles must have existed upon earth, and been distinctly traceable as the true church of Christ; and on this position they have always laboured to rest much in establishing the claims of the Church of Rome. Besides, it is chiefly by means of the statements made in Scripture which Protestants think applicable only to the whole number of the elect viewed as one body, or the invisible church, that Papists expect to be able to establish their peculiar views of the dignity, authority, and infallibility of the church as visible. Protestants, finding in the passages of Scripture formerly referred to, clear proof that the word church is used as a general term to describe the whole number of those who are elected and ultimately saved, viewed collectively, conclude that the Scripture does set before us an invisible church; and *hence infer* that visibility, in the sense in which it has been explained, and in which alone it is available for Popish purposes in this argument, is not an essential quality of the church of Christ in at least one of the leading aspects in which the church is presented to us in the Bible.

This, then, is one important topic of discussion,—Does the Scripture speak of a church consisting only of those who are predestinated to life and ultimately saved, and therefore invisible, in the sense formerly explained; or does it not? Protestants affirm this, Papists deny it. The passages formerly referred to

prove this, and the attempts of Bellarmine and of other Popish writers to explain them away are utterly unsuccessful. These men prove indeed that there is a church spoken of in Scripture that is visible, or stands out palpably to the observation of men; but Protestants do not dispute that the Scripture sets before us a visible as well as an invisible church: not meaning, as Papists commonly allege, to represent these as two distinct or separate subjects, two different churches properly so called; but as two different phases or aspects of what is in substance one and the same.

To illustrate this, let us briefly advert to the scriptural evidence of the existence of a catholic or general visible church, and the mode in which the idea arose and was developed. We read frequently in Scripture of the church of a particular place specified, and also of the churches of a particular district named. These churches must have been visible societies, having some outward marks of distinction by which they and their members might be recognised. When it is said,* "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," this plainly implies that there was antecedently existing a visible society to which these additions were made. The kingdom of God or of Christ is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as being virtually identical with the church; and it is set before us by such descriptions and similitudes as plainly imply that, in point of fact, it did contain persons of a different character from those whom the Lord added to the church on the occasion described in the passage quoted from the Acts. But there is no difficulty in reconciling these two things. The *ἐκκλησία*, both etymologically and really, is just the assembly or congregation of the *κλητοὶ*, those who are called out of the world. Christ calls men to come out of the world, to believe in Him, to submit to His authority, and to unite together in an organized society of which He is the head, and which is to be governed exclusively by His laws. We have plain indications in Scripture of a distinction between the outward and the inward call, or the effectual and the ineffectual call; in other words, we have good grounds in Scripture to believe that cases did, in point of fact, occur even in apostolic times, in which men professed to obey Christ's call by outwardly joining the society of the *κλητοὶ*, while they had not

* Acts ii. 47.

really by faith received Him as their Saviour, or in heart submitted to His authority. It was Christ's intention and requirement, that those who were effectually called and enabled by grace to receive Him personally and individually as their Saviour and their Master, should not only individually profess their faith in Him, and their subjection to His authority, but should also unite together in the discharge of certain outward duties which He enjoined, and in the enjoyment of certain privileges which He conferred; and it was *not* His intention to employ any supernatural means of accurately discriminating upon earth between those who made this profession in sincerity and truth, and those who, in making it, were deceiving themselves or others by a profession which did not correspond with the real state of their hearts and characters.

There thus arose, through the preaching of the gospel, and the labours of the apostles, a body or company of men visibly distinguished from the mass of men around them, by their professing, individually and collectively, faith in Christ, and subjection to Him; and though it very soon appeared that, in point of fact, some had been admitted outwardly into this society who were not the genuine followers of Christ, yet it followed naturally, and almost necessarily, that the same names and designations which were properly and strictly applicable only to the true *κλητοὶ*, were applied to the company or society of those who professed to have obeyed the gospel call, and were, in consequence, visibly and outwardly associated with the followers of Christ. Thence arose the reality and the conception of the visible, as distinguished from the invisible church; of the professed followers of Christ, viewed collectively, and characterized by certain outward marks cognizable by men, as distinguished from the true followers of Christ, who were all chosen by God before the foundation of the world, who are all in due time united to Him by faith as members of His body, and who are at length admitted to share in His glory; and this idea of the visible, as distinguished from the invisible church, though not a different church from it, is most explicitly brought out in Scripture when it speaks of the church, or the churches, of particular cities or districts. But as the idea of catholicity or universality is most obviously and most properly applicable to the invisible church, as comprehending all the individuals of the human race, in every age and country, who have been chosen of

God to salvation through Jesus Christ; so the same general idea may, without impropriety, be applied to the visible church, when now, under the gospel, it is not confined to one nation, as before, under the law,—the catholic or universal visible church thus consisting, as our Confession of Faith says, “of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children.” Romanists commonly allege, as we have hinted, that this assertion of a visible and an invisible church is making two churches, whereas the Scriptures ascribe unity to the church, or speak of the church as one. But this allegation rests upon a misstatement of the case. They are not properly two churches, but one church, contemplated in two different aspects—an internal and an external. They do not occupy different spheres, but the same sphere. The visible church includes or contains the invisible, though, in its present imperfect condition, it has also mixed up with it some inferior elements,—some chaff, which will one day be separated from the wheat.

But really the great question is this: Does the Scripture indeed speak of a church—a church catholic or universal—consisting of all those, but of those only, who are elected to life, and ultimately saved, and therefore invisible in the sense above explained? If it does, as is surely evident enough, then this plainly must be the proper, principal sense of the word—the leading idea attached to it—that to which any other notion, to which, from necessity or convenience, the word may have been applied, must be regarded as subordinate. And if this is once proved, then it follows that visibility, including regular external organization, cannot be held to be a necessary or essential property of the church of Christ; and consequently there is no necessity of applying what is said in Scripture about certain of the prerogatives and privileges of the church to any visible society, or to any portion of any visible society. The course, then, of the argumentative discussion upon these points may be summed up in this way:—Romanists say the church is indefectible, or will never cease to exist. Protestants admit this; and hence Bellarmine says,* “notandum est multos ex nostris tempus terere, dum probant absolute Ecclesiam non posse deficere: nam Calvinus, et cæteri hæretici id concedunt: sed dicunt, intelligi debere de Ecclesia invisibili.” It is true that,

* De Ecclesia, Lib. III. cap. 13.

as Bellarmine says, Calvin and other heretics concede this, but say that it is to be understood of the invisible church;—*i.e.*, they contend that the only sense in which the indefectibility of the church can be *proved* from Scripture is this, that from the time when Christ ascended to the right hand of His Father, there have always been, and until He come again there will always be, upon earth, *some* persons who have been chosen to salvation, and who, during their earthly career, are prepared for it. More than this may have, in point of fact, been realized in providence, with respect to the standing and manifestation of the church on earth in every age; but Protestants contend that nothing more than this can be proved to be implied in the statements and promises of Scripture upon this subject,—*i.e.*, that for aught that can be proved, all the statements of Scripture may be true, and all its predictions and promises may have been fulfilled, though nothing more than this had been realized.

The Romanists go on to assert that this indefectible church is visible, and, while it exists, must possess visibility. Protestants, while conceding the existence of visible churches, not composed exclusively of elect or believing persons, and even of “a catholic visible church, consisting of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children,” deny that there is anything in Scripture which guarantees the constant existence at all times, or in any one particular country, of an organized ecclesiastical society standing out visibly and palpably to the eyes of men as the true church of Christ; and, on the contrary, they think that there are pretty plain intimations in Scripture, that in some periods the true church under the New Testament, as happened with the church under the law—when there were still, though the prophet could not discern them, seven thousand men in secret, who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal—might be reduced so low as not to possess anything that could with propriety be called visibility. The Romanists further assert that the church, *i.e.*, the indefectible visible church—for they now assume it to be indefectible, and always visible in their sense—is infallible,—*i.e.*, that she always holds and proclaims the truth of God without any mixture of error; and in endeavouring to establish this position, they rest mainly upon the statements and promises of Scripture, which plainly relate not to any one visible society, not to

the catholic visible church, or to any one branch or section of it, but to the true people of God; while, even in reference to them, the statements and promises referred to do not assure to them perfect freedom from all error, or entire uniformity among themselves in all points of belief, but merely such a knowledge of God's revealed will as may, even though in many of them mixed with some error, be sufficient to guide them to eternal life.

These general considerations, when followed out and applied, and viewed in connection with the scriptural statements which have been referred to, serve to unravel the web of error and plausible sophistry which the Church of Rome has woven around this subject as a general topic of discussion; while it should be remembered, also, that even if we were to concede to them their general positions in their own sense about the indefectibility, visibility, and infallibility of the church, there would still be a gap to be filled up, or rather, an impassable gulf to be crossed, before these principles could be shown to apply to the Church of Rome, so as to establish *her* supremacy and infallibility, as if she were the only true church of Christ, or the mother and mistress of all churches.

These observations serve to explain the meaning and application, and the scriptural ground of the doctrine of our Confession of Faith upon this subject, as expressed in the following words:—"This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less, visible; and particular Churches which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them. The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some of them have so degenerated, as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to His will."*

From the primary etymological meaning of the word *ἐκκλησία*, viz., an assembly, it was quite natural that, even after it was applied to designate the whole body of true believers, or the whole body of professing Christians, it should still continue to be applied to any branch or section of this body or community; and of this we have repeated instances in Scripture, as when we read of the church

* Chap. 25, secs. 4 and 5.

which was at Jerusalem, the churches of Galatia, etc. It has been very confidently asserted, that there is no instance in Scripture of the word *ἐκκλησία*, in the singular number, being ever applied to anything intermediate between a single congregation meeting together for religious worship, and the whole community of believers or professing Christians, viewed collectively as a whole. This is a favourite position of those who support what are called Independent or Congregational views of church government; and it has been conceded to them by some professed Presbyterians, such as Dr Campbell of Aberdeen, who had quite as much of the affectation as of the reality of honesty and candour. There can be no doubt that these are the two senses in which the word church is most commonly used in Scripture. It is undeniable that the word *ἐκκλησία* is applied in Scripture to a single congregation meeting together for the worship of God; and that on many occasions, when the different congregations scattered over a district are spoken of, they are described not as the church, but the churches of that country.

But we are not prepared to admit that this usage is universal in Scripture, so as to form an adequate basis for laying down as a general principle the unwarrantableness of applying the designation of a church to anything but a single congregation, or, what is virtually the same thing, the entire independency of each congregation, as having universally, in ordinary circumstances, entire sufficiency within itself for all the purposes of a church. It is laid down in our Form of Church Government, prepared by the Westminster Assembly, that "the Scripture doth hold forth that many particular congregations may be under one presbyterial government;" and I think this proposition is proved by the evidence and instances adduced in the cases of Jerusalem and Ephesus. Considering the numbers of converts in Jerusalem who professed their faith in Christ through the preaching of the apostles after the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we cannot suppose that they were all accustomed ordinarily to assemble together in one place for public worship—we cannot doubt that they commonly met in different places as distinct congregations. Mosheim,* who on some points has made considerable concessions to the Congregationalists, asserts this Presbyterian

* Commentarii, p. 116.

position very confidently, and indeed staked his whole reputation upon its truth in the following words:—"Aut nihil ego video, aut certum hoc est, amplissimam illam, quam Apostoli Hierosolymis collegerant, Christianorum multitudinem in plures minores familias divisam fuisse, singulisque his familiis suos presbyteros, suos ministros, suos conventuum sacrorum locos fuisse." Yet these distinct congregations are still spoken of repeatedly as the church which was at Jerusalem; and this *church*, consisting of several congregations, is represented as being under the superintendence of one united body of apostles, and presbyters, or elders. In like manner, we cannot doubt, from what we are told of Paul's labours for three years in Ephesus, that there were several congregations in that city, while yet they are described in the Apocalypse as the church in Ephesus, or the Ephesian church (for there are two readings, supported by about an equal amount of critical authority);* and they are represented by Paul, in his address contained in the 20th chapter of the Acts, as a flock under the superintendence of a united body of men, whom he describes as at once presbyters and bishops.

On these grounds, I think there is sufficient evidence in Scripture, that the word church in the singular number is applied to something intermediate between a single congregation on the one hand, and the catholic or universal church on the other,—viz., to a number of congregations united together in external communion and government; and that, of course, such a union of congregations is lawful and warrantable, and that to whatever extent such a union or combination may lawfully go, according as circumstances or providence may admit or require it, the designation of a church, and all the general principles and rules applicable to a church as such, may be warrantably applied to the union or combination.

Sec. II.—Notes of the Church.

The subject of the notes or marks of the true church, which also occupies a prominent place in the controversy between the

* The reading in the textus receptus (Rev. ii. 1) is, της Εφιασινης εκκλησίας, for which Griesbach substitutes, της εν' Εφιασιν εκκλησίας; and is followed in this by Scholz, Lachmann, and Tischendorf. Tregelles alleges that, in Acts ix. 31, we should read εκκλη-

σία, and not εκκλησίαι, "the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria," (Account of the printed text of the Greek New Testament, p. 269); and this reading is adopted by Tischendorf and Lachmann, in loc.

Protestants and the Papists, has respect properly only to the visible church and its different branches or sections. It is not a subject of very great intrinsic importance, except in so far as it is necessary to refute the arguments which Papists found upon this topic in support of the claims of the Church of Rome.

That, of course, is the best and purest branch of the professing visible church, which, in its doctrine, government, worship, and discipline, most fully accords with the views upon all these points that are sanctioned by the word of God; and as the word of God plainly teaches that the principal function of the visible church, as an organized society, is to be a pillar and ground of the truth—i.e., to support and hold up the truth of God before men—we cannot refuse the title of a true or real church of Christ to any society which is organized in professed subjection to His authority, and with a professed submission to His word, and which holds forth to men those great fundamental truths, on the knowledge and belief of which the salvation of sinners depends. These are evidently the true fundamental principles applicable to this matter, and there is no very great difficulty in the application of them. But as Papists dwell very much upon this subject of the notes or marks of the church, and draw from it many important practical conclusions, it may be proper briefly to advert to their leading views upon this point.

When Romanists put forth the claim on behalf of the Church of Rome to be the only true church, out of which there is no salvation; or to be the mother and mistress of all churches, to whom all the followers of Christ, all the members of His visible church, are bound to be in subjection,—they are called upon to produce and establish the grounds of this claim. Legitimate grounds for such a claim can be found only in the statements of Scripture; because, first, from the nature of the case, such a claim can rest upon no other foundation than the direct authority of God Himself; and, secondly, because the sacred Scriptures form the only common ground between the two parties in the discussion—the only common standard which both the advocates and the opposers of this claim admit, and therefore the only legitimate starting-point in an argument that can be honestly carried on between them. But Papists are not fond of attempting to establish this claim directly from the testimony of Scripture,—first, because they have a pretty distinct consciousness,