

book shape as we have it now; can the Rev J. Dickson controvert this? During that time—and this was the golden age of Christianity—how could people have formed their religion from the reading of the Bible which was not yet published? Yet, millions of persons professed Christianity at that time, although they had never so much as opened a Bible. This is not all. For 1440 years, that is, before the invention of printing, every copy of the Sacred Scriptures had to be made with the pen; it took many years to complete it and a fortune to buy it. During these 1440 years, when the majority of the faithful could not possibly get a complete copy of the Bible, how could they have been saved, if they had had to form their religion from the reading of the Bible? Before the invention of the printing press, if anyone had spoken of forming his religion by the reading of the Holy Scriptures, he would have been taken to a lunatic asylum. During these 1440 years, I challenge my reverend friend to point out one single church in the Christian world, whether in the East or in the West, which believed that Christianity was to be propagated or preserved by the diffusion, reading and private interpretation of the Holy Scriptures? If he cannot do it, then his rule of faith, "The Bible and the Bible only," is a false rule, a thing unknown to all Christian peoples until the so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century. This is not all: from the time of the Apostles until the Reformation, the Church of Rome was the sole custodian, translator, and interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament; if the Rev J. Dickson does not believe in the infallibility of that Church, how can he be sure that, during that time, she may not have corrupted the Scriptures to suit her system? Has he not every reason to suppose so; and, as it is only through the Roman Church the Scriptures have been preserved to us, how can the Rev J. Dickson or any other Protestant be sure that the Bible is the Word of God at all. How can they be certain that it is not the work of the infernal spirit, since it came to them through a Church which they believe to have been steeped in error and superstition? Can the Rev J. Dickson solve this difficulty? Catholics believe in the divinity and infallibility of the Church. The Church tells them the Bible is the Word of God and they accept it as such, but Protestants who deny the divinity and infallibility of the Church have no certainty at all that the Bible which they read is not a falsehood from beginning to end. (2). "The writer of these articles," he says, "dissatisfied with the Bible, and apparently unable to find there sufficient support for his doctrine, appeals to and often takes his text from what is known as the Apocryphal (doubtful) Books. These Books are not written, like the other Old Testament Books, in ancient Hebrew, but suspiciously in modern Greek, are never quoted from by Our Lord and His Apostles, and are ostensibly as full of folly as an egg is full of meat." It is painful in the extreme to see a Christian minister use such impious, blasphemous language of the Divine Word, for, bear it in mind, the authority, integrity and inspiration of the Books, which the Rev J. Dickson and the Reformers call "Apocryphal," is as great as that of the Holy Gospels of St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke or St John, since we have them on the authority of the same Church: The Canon of the Bible, that is, the list of the Books which were to be considered as authentic, veridic and inspired, was fixed by the Church at the Council of Hippo, 393, the third Council of Carthage, 397, and confirmed by the sixth Council of Carthage, 419, at which 200 bishops and two apostolic legates, sent by the Pope were present. Were not those holy pontiffs and doctors in a better position to judge which Scriptures were genuine and really inspired than the innovators of the sixteenth century? Yet, because those Books which have since been acknowledged by all the Churches of the East and of the West, were rejected by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, the Rev J. Dickson styles them as being "as full of folly as an egg is full of meat." Munscher, Berthold, Bretschneider, etc. acknowledge that it was through party spirit that the Reformers rejected the Deuterocanonical Books, which have the same authority as the other Books of the Bible (see Munscher, *Hanbuch der Christ. Dog.* 1802, Berthold *Hist. Kritik*, T. II. 1812, Bretschneider T. I.). If there is not an infallible tribunal, how can we be sure which are the true Scriptures at all? This can be known only by tradition, which the Rev J. Dickson repudiates, for he says (3), speaking of me, "He resorts for support to tradition and the decrees of Councils and the writings of the early Fathers . . . which, being uninspired, all Protestants consider of small importance." The Rev J. Dickson is calumniating even some of the most enlightened Protestants who admit the authority of the first four Ecumenical Councils, namely, that of Nice, 325, which condemned the heresy of Arius; First of Constantinople, 381, which condemned the heresy of Macedonius; of Ephesus, 431, which condemned the heresy of Nestorius, and the Council of Chalcedon, 451 which condemned the heresy of Eutiches. Many learned divines of the Anglican Church admit also the authority of the Fathers of the four first centuries, and, therefore, he calumniates thousands, nay, millions of honest Protestants who do not, like the Rev J. Dickson, consider ecumenical councils and the testimony of the early Fathers as of small importance. Admitting each Father is fallible, yet if all the Fathers of the early ages agree about any particular matter, although they lived in different countries, spoke different languages

and did not communicate with each other, there being no railway, no telegraphs, no steamers in those days, their joint testimony is simply unanswerable, because each was a witness of the faith and customs of the country he lived in. If their universal testimony can be traced back to the time of the Apostles, it shows apostolicity of origin for that particular thing, which is of the utmost importance no matter what Rev J. Dickson may say to the contrary. Wherefore, I am perfectly right to quote the early Fathers and counsels which knew apostolic truths much more accurately than my reverend friend. (3) He goes on "More than this, the Bible itself, though founded on reason and addressed to reason and bearing the internal injunction 'Search the Scriptures,' must not according to this writer be interpreted by each man privately, but by the so called 'Infallible Church.'" Where does the Reverend J. Dickson find in the Bible that that it is to be interpreted by private reason? Why did not our Blessed Lord write a Bible? Why did he not say to His Apostles: "Go and distribute this book everywhere, I will give men intellect to read it and understand it, it is the only guide they want to secure heavenly bliss? Instead of that, He said to them: (1) "To preach to all nations" (Matthew xxviii, 29), even to the utmost parts of the world" (Acts, i, 8) and that this ministry was to be continued by their successors until all be united in faith (Ephes. iv, 2). (2) He promised to preserve them and their successors from error by the assistance of His holy spirit till the end of the world (3) He commanded all to hear them and be guided by them "He that heareth you, heareth Me, he that despiseth you despiseth Me," (Luke, x, 16). What was the utility of the preaching of the Apostles, if every one was to believe what he liked and to do what he pleased? If all were commanded to hear the Apostles, as Christ Himself, therefore the doctrine of private judgment is unscriptural, misleading and false. When again Jesus said to His Apostles: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth, going, therefore, teach ye all nations whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew xxviii, 19, 20), that is, to preach and explain to the people His doctrine. Is not this a clear proof that he did not want the Scriptures privately interpreted to be our only rule of faith, but the living authority of his Church; Private interpretation is the floodgate of error and immorality; for how can you convince of error or of wrong-doing a man who believes that his private reason is to be his only guide and that he is to believe and practice only what suits his reason? Will you claim for everyone the infallibility which you deny to the Church and to the Pope in matters of faith and morals? The contradictions of the various sects which all quote the Scriptures in support of their opinions, show the fallacy of this assumption. The text, "Search ye the Scriptures," is not an injunction to interpret the Scriptures by private reason as the Rev J. Dickson does pretend. These words were addressed by our blessed Lord to the Pharisees, whose duty it was to study the Scriptures and explain them to the people; neither did He allow them to put their private interpretation on them, but interpreting them Himself, He declared that they gave testimony of Him. He refers them to the Bible as proof of His divinity, not as to the source from which they were to form their religious belief. Is it not a great perversion of this text, on the part of my rev opponent, to say that in it there is an injunction to read and interpret privately the Bible? If the Rev J. Dickson believes, as he pretends he does, that every one is to form his belief from the private reading of the Scriptures, why, Sunday after Sunday, does he inculcate his Presbyterian principles to his congregation, instead of leaving them to read the Bible privately and put any construction they please upon it? Why does he write pamphlets to propagate his opinions? Why does he teach little children his private views, as if they were infallible definitions? This shows that, in theory, he believes in private judgment, but, in practice, he acts by authority—that is, he contradicts himself. A Catholic does nothing of the kind; he believes he is to receive the explanation of the doctrine of Jesus Christ from the Church, and that the Church is guided by the Holy Ghost to explain it to him with infallible accuracy. A Catholic is logical, the Rev J. Dickson is not. All Catholic priests preach the same doctrine everywhere; every non-Catholic minister, like the Rev J. Dickson, has a system of his own, and tries to persuade people his system is the best of any and the most approved by God; this is how people are permitted to practice private judgment. With the doctrine of private judgment, how can the unity of faith be kept? "Be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit, one faith"—(Ephes iv, 3). How could we speak the same thing, be of the same mind and of the same judgment? "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, that you be perfect in the same mind, and the same judgment"—(I. Cor. i, 10). Do the advocates of private judgment speak the same thing, be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment? Can God be indifferent if we follow truth or embrace error, do good or evil? Yet He must be, if the doctrine of private judgment be true. Let the Rev J. Dickson know that all Catholics believe the same things, are perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment in matters of faith and morals; it is a wicked calumny on his part to suppose that I or any other Catholic priest do not believe what we preach; we believe it, and we are ready to die for our faith any day. Would the Rev J. Dickson be willing to do the