

## PRESBYTERIANISM AND CATHOLICISM.

(A Reply to the Rev. J. Dickson, Presbyterian Minister, Temuka).

## ANSWER TO LECTURE II.

THE Church—The Catholic Hierarchy—The Pope's Supremacy of Honour and Jurisdiction—The Cardinalate.

## Denial of the Church.

The Oracle of Presbyterianism in Temuka is speaking. Listen: "It needs no Church to establish or guarantee the truth of the present Salvation." Then, My Dear Mr. Dickson, why do you not close your Church, and pack up your things, and leave the Temuka people to save their souls as best they may, without your service? What is the good of your Church, or of any Church at all, since "It needs no Church to establish the truth of the present Salvation offered by Christ?" Notwithstanding your oracular declaration, permit me to disagree with you, and to tell you that a Church is needed to establish the truth of the present salvation offered by Christ. A Church is needed to unite all the faithful with Christ, and with one another. To effect this union, Jesus-Christ has founded His Church on the Episcopate or Prelacy, which you deny, and particularly on St. Peter, who is personally and in his legitimate successors, the permanent principle of Catholic unity. Jesus is the solid rock on which the Christian Church is built. He is the only mediator between God and man. All the benefits we enjoy come from God through Jesus-Christ. By Him all things were made, and by Him alone they subsist. It is for our salvation He came down on earth. His ambition, if I may so speak, is to sanctify and save us. The Eternal Word became Incarnate to make us deiform, or God-like. By the Incarnation, the Eternal World became like unto us, but He was not united to every one of us. It was through His Church this wonderful union was to be realised; through her we were to become acquainted with His heavenly truths, have sanctifying grace communicated to us by the sacraments, and be made worthy of eternal life. Indeed, He could have communicated Himself immediately to every one of us, but He did not deem it expedient. He established a Universal Spiritual Society, united in the same faith, living under the same laws, sharing in the same advantages, hoping the same celestial bliss; this Society is what we call the Church.

## Visibility of the Church.

The first characteristic of the Christian Church is its Visibility. By the Incarnation, Jesus Christ rendered Himself visible. The Church, which He established, is, like Him, a Visible Church. If man were a pure spirit, a Visible Church should not be needed; but being an intelligence dwelling in a material body, his union with Christ must be visible, and the Society, by means of which this union is effected must be a Visible Society. The end of the Visible Society, or Church, is to unite all the followers of Christ all over the world in one Christian family. It is a vine, whose tendrils and branches extend throughout the habitable world. It is a barque in which we cross the ocean of life to be landed on the blessed shores of Paradise. It is a kingdom having one code of laws, one Supreme head and form of government. The twelve Apostles are the foundation of this Visible Church, resting on Christ Himself as on a firm and indestructible rock. Jesus Himself trained His Apostles and instructed them in His heavenly doctrine for the space of about three years. He called them "His little flock." He gave them a Visible Chief, extraordinary powers, and promised to be with them and their successors until the consummation of the world, and that the Spirit of Truth should abide with them for ever. It is for the establishment of this Church that He came down on earth, suffered and died on the cross of Calvary. From the commencement the Church was a Visible Society. After the ascension of their Divine Master the Apostles assembled together in the Upper Chamber, or "Caenaculum"; they met together in Council in Jerusalem; they made up a profession of faith and composed a creed, and in this creed they inserted the words: "I believe the Holy Catholic Church." Yet the Presbyterian Oracle of Temuka, with his usual accuracy, tells us "The word Catholic was used for the first time towards the end of the Second Century." Are we to believe him, or the twelve Apostles chosen by Jesus Christ to establish His Church? Wherever the Apostles went—at Jerusalem, at Antioch, Corinth, Smyrna, Athens, Ephesus, Rome, etc., they established Churches united in faith and government. If those Churches were not needed, why did they establish them? If the Rev. J. Dickson is right, the Apostles made a terrible blunder, for he declares that "It needs no Church to establish or guarantee the truth of the present salvation offered by Christ." Poor Mr. Dickson, it is a pity Jesus and His Apostles did not consult you; things would have been much better organised.

## Denial of the Catholic Hierarchy.

Having, with a stroke of his pen, swept away the Church, the Rev. J. Dickson attacks next the Hierarchy. "In the

Church organised by the Inspired Apostles, there was unfortunately no provision made for a Pope, Cardinal, Bishop, or Priest." I thought you told us just now "there was no need of a Church to establish or guarantee the truth of the present Salvation offered by Christ?" Why do you at present tell us that "The Inspired Apostles organised a Church"? Did they, or did they not, organise a Church? In one place you tell us they did not; in the other you tell us they did. Which are we to believe? Let us take for granted your last statement that they did organise a Church, and I will show you that "in the Church organised by the Inspired Apostles there was provision made for a Pope, Bishop, and Priest. As to Cardinals, I will explain to you what they are; for your notion of them must be very obscure. In every army you have a General-in-Chief, in order to maintain military discipline and unite the different regiments under one supreme head. In every fleet there is an Admiral, whose authority is recognised by all the captains of other vessels, officers, and sailors. In every country you have a Supreme Tribunal and a Supreme Judge, whose sentence is final, decisive, and without appeal. The Church of Christ being the work of an Infinite Wisdom, must be admirably organised; otherwise it could not be Divine. Organisation supposes order. Order supposes harmony or judicious disposition of parts with subordination of one to another, of inferiors to superiors, and of all to a first organiser, the mainspring of this visible harmony. The Church established by Jesus-Christ displays to our view a wonderful harmony and a beautiful diversity. Christ Himself is the Majestic Head of the Church, the Pope is His Prime Minister, the Bishops are the Generals of the various regiments, fighting under His banner; priests are the officers, and the faithful are the soldiers. The Church, although a Spiritual Society, since its ultimate end is the sanctification and salvation of men, has also its visible elements; the men it has to sanctify and to save are visible beings; the acts of worship which Jesus demands from them are both internal and visible, such as the refraining from serviceable works on the Lord's day, attending Divine Service, hearing Mass, assisting at Vespers or the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, performing works of mercy, fasting, abstinence, etc. In order to preserve the unity of faith and government among the followers of Christ, an organisation was needed and a Supreme authority to establish it and preserve it, so that all should form one family, one united army under the leadership of Christ Himself and His Plenipotentiary Representative, first legate or ambassador, General-in-Chief of his army, the Pope or Supreme Pontiff. This Supreme authority was necessary to preserve in its integrity Divine Revelation, to explain it with accuracy to regulate Public Worship. If each nation, each family, each individual man were to be guided by private judgment, there would remain nothing of Christianity but the name; it would be impossible to enforce any dogma, to exact the observance of any positive law or ordinance; people would believe what they liked and do what they pleased, and no power on earth could constrain them; in a certain sense, every one would be to himself his own pope, his own church, and his own master. Private judgment is the defecation of human reason and the proclamation of the absolute freedom and independence of man, for if man is to be the judge of what he is to do to save his soul and serve God, little by little he will do less and less, and finish by giving up religion altogether. Men will not know what to believe or what to do; the most contradictory things will be upheld and preached as the pure word of God, and religion will be a mockery and a cause of ceaseless divisions, enmities, and hatreds.

## Refutation of the Theory of Presbyterianism.

As the Church of Christ was to endure for ever, it wanted an immutable and permanent government. According to my friend, in the beginning the Church was a pure democracy; Episcopal authority, or, as he calls it, "Prelacy," is a thing of later date. Hear what he says: "Elders and Bishops in those days meant the same thing," and a little further on he adds: "Government by Presbyters or Elders is the oldest Ecclesiastical office in Christendom." Is it so, indeed? And how can it be proved? Jesus chose His twelve Apostles, "that they should be with Him, and that He might send them to preach" (Mark iii., 12). He did not tell them to write or have His doctrine printed, put into book form, and distributed to the faithful, that they might read and interpret it by private judgment. "He chose them that He might send them to preach." Our Saviour sent His Apostles as He had been sent by His Eternal Father. "As Thou hast sent Me unto the world, I also have sent them" (John xvii., 11). Jesus was sent to us to preach the Gospel of Salvation—that is, to be *Our Teacher*, and so were His Apostles. Again, just before His ascension He said to them: "All power is given me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach all nations. . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matth. xxviii., 18, 20). The Apostles are the *appointed Teachers of the Whole Christian Doctrine*; they are the Prelates of the Christian Church established by Christ, whom people were obliged to hear and to obey. The Rev. Dickson, who pretends to be such a lover of the Bible, should know this; if he does, how can he be honest and truthful when

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