

but Jesus Christ is no longer visibly in our midst; His representative is the Supreme Pontiff, the successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles. "Peter," says the Rev. J. Dickson, "was a very frail piece of humanity indeed; he had no pre-eminence over the other Apostles except what was given him by courtesy." There was no such thing as pre-eminence among the disciples of Christ, and Peter never had any successor. Let us refute those false and unwarrantable assertions. In the first place "Peter had a place of pre-eminence over the other Apostles." This pre-eminence was not given him by courtesy but by Christ Himself. From the New Testament we see that when Christ formed His Apostolic College He assigned to one of them a pre-eminent position, and conferred on him special privileges. This privileged Apostle was St. Peter. When Jesus first met him, He said to him: "Simon, son of Jonas, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shall bind on earth it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xvi, 18-19). The Rev. J. Dickson tells us that the word "Peter," translated here "rock," is neuter and cannot refer to a person. No doubt my friend is not much better informed about grammar than he is about the Bible or ecclesiastical history. Let him look at his dictionary and he will see that "Petra" is not neuter but feminine. What he meant to establish is that the promise of our Blessed Lord was not made to Peter personally, but to his faith. This is inadmissible. In the text the person is manifestly addressed. "Thou art Peter (the name given before by our Saviour), and then comes the explanation of that name: "and on this rock (Petra)" Peter and rock are set closely and clearly one against the other. The copulative particle "and," and the demonstrative pronoun "this"—upon this rock—establish the connection with the preceding subject "Peter." That is, Christ, Who is the solid rock, promises to found His Church on St. Peter, as on a secondary rock resting on Himself, in order to impart to him strength and stability, so that the gates of hell shall never prevail against this Church which, through him, He will establish. Tertullian declares that Peter is the rock on which Christ promised to build His Church. Origen says that Christ built His Church on St. Peter (Orig. in Matt. xii. 10-14). "It was on Peter the Lord built His Church," cries out St. Cyprian" (St. Cyp. De. Unl. Eccles. c. iv) When some of the Fathers say that the Faith or Confession of St. Peter was the rock, they mean thereby that it was the original and meritorious cause for which Christ made choice of him to be the founder of His Church. This explanation disposes of the objection of my rev. friend; for, unless Christ meant that Peter was to be the Church what a foundation is to a building, the words of our Saviour would be senseless. All the Fathers agree that the Church was founded on Peter, and that it will last till the end of time. The Apostles participated in the power of authority which Peter received from Christ, short, however, of the Primacy. Peter alone, according to our Lord's words, was the Supreme Ruler and visible Head of the Christian Church on earth. To Peter Jesus committed the lambs and the sheep, the pastors and the faithful "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep" (John, xxi. 15-17). That is the whole flock of Christ was confided to the custody of Peter. The Fathers are unanimous about this interpretation; how then can my friend say: "he had no pre-eminence over the other Apostles except what was given him by courtesy?" The Primacy of St. Peter was not only a Primacy of honour but a Primacy of jurisdiction. He presided at the meeting of the Apostolic College to elect a substitute to the treacherous Judas. He determined the mode of election and the qualities required in the elect (Acts, 1-15). He preached the first sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts, ii. 14-37). He was the spokesman before the Council (Acts, iv, 8 and v 29). He passed judgment on Ananias and Saphira (Acts v). He confounded Simon Magus. He received the Centurion Cornelius into the Church (Acts, x). When in prison he was delivered by an angel through the prayers of the faithful (Acts. xii). He presided and passed sentence at the first Council of Jerusalem. St. Paul came to see him and gave him an account of his apostolic labours (Gall. 1-18). In the enumeration of the apostles, his name always stands first. Does the Rev. J. Dickson know all this? If he does how can he say "that St. Peter had no pre-eminence over the other Apostles except what was given him by courtesy?" St. Peter, according to my rev. friend, "never had a successor."

Perpetuity of the Primacy.

The Primacy of St. Peter is the principal element of the constitution of the Church. If Christ promised to be with His Church till the end of the world it is necessary that the privileges of its chief pastor, of the shepherd of the lambs and sheep be also perpetuated for ever, because there will always be lambs and sheep to feed, brethren to confirm and faithful to govern. The very nature of the Primacy entails perpetuity. Without the Primacy, there is no Apostolical succession possible, and without Apostolical succession the Church would collapse. The jurisdiction of the early Christian bishops

appointed by the Apostles was limited to a town, country or province. Titus was Bishop of Crete, Timothy of Ephesus, Evodius of Antioch, St. Polycarp of Smyrna, etc. Their jurisdiction was limited to their particular see. After the death of the Apostles, who could create new sees? Who could give Apostolic mission? If there had not been one having jurisdiction over all no one would have had authority to do it. No particular bishop and no number of them can have universal jurisdiction. Christ provided for this. He instituted the Head of the Apostolic College with perpetual authority, and through that perpetual primacy of honour and of jurisdiction the Apostolate subsist in all ages. Peter is ever living in his legitimate successors, and all the bishops ordained by him or with his sanction, mediately or immediately, are truly Apostolic men. The Church is one because it is built on Peter. History testifies that St. Peter lived and died in Rome; his legitimate successors inherit his double primacy of honour and jurisdiction. We have the list of all the Roman Pontiffs from St. Peter to Leo XIII., who now occupies his chair. The early Fathers universally recognised in the Roman Pontiffs the successors of St. Peter. St. Ignatius styles the Roman Pontiff the "President of the Brotherhood," that is, Head of the Faithful (Ign. Ep. ad Cor., c. lvi). St. Iræneus says: "With this Church (the Roman Church) on account of her higher rank and power every Church must agree" (Iræneus, iii, 3). "The Roman chair," says St. Cyprian, "is the chair of Peter, the principle of unity in the whole Church" (St. Cyprian Ep., lix, 14). St. Ambrose says: "Where Peter is, there is the Church" "*Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*" (St. Ambrose Ps., xl, 30). St. Augustine is no less explicit: "When Rome has spoken the matter is ended" "*Roma locuta est causa finita est*" (St. Aug. Ep., 186). All great causes of dispute in the world in the early ages, both in the East and in the West, were referred to the Apostolic See. The Council of Chalcedon calls Rome the "*Mistress of all the Churches from the beginning.*" The Council of Constantinople, 381, recognised the supremacy of the Supreme Pontiff. In 519 the Formulary of Hormisdas, affirming the supremacy of the Holy See and the necessity of communion with it, was signed by 2,500 bishops. These historical facts, and many more I omit for the sake of brevity, cannot be denied, and amply show that the supremacy both of honour and jurisdiction was from the commencement, for ages and ages, universally acknowledged both in the East and in the West, that is, by the whole Christian world. In the face of such crushing evidence, will my friend still maintain that "Peter never had any successor and that for several centuries afterwards none presumed to exercise Peter's Apostolic functions?"

Infallibility.

"It is not at all necessary," says my reverend friend, "for the Church to be infallible, to be able with the Bible for a text book, to teach men religion, any more than it is necessary for a schoolmaster to be infallible to teach grammar, and arithmetic, and spelling. God, as we might expect he would do, has made the plan of salvation easy to be understood." The fallible Mr. Dickson speaks as if he were infallible. Certainly an *ex cathedra* definition could not be more emphatic than his flippant assertions; he expresses himself as if every word of his were Gospel truth, and not even a doubt could be entertained about their accuracy. Let us, once more, remind him to be a little more modest and reserved, and show him, if he be amenable to conviction by logical arguments, that "it is necessary for the Church to be infallible to teach men religion." An error about grammar, arithmetic, or spelling will not compromise salvation, an error about faith or morals will, except in the rare case of invincible ignorance. There is no parity in the two cases. Infallibility is wanted. (1) To keep in its integrity Divine revelation; (2) to settle disputes about controverted points; (3) to unite together the members of the Christian Church; (4) to apply to them the merits of our Lord by the administration of the Sacraments; (5) to train them in the practice of perfection, and safely lead them to their destiny. Infallibility must be permanent in the Church, because the reasons of its existence never change. Infallibility cannot remain in the Church in a vain, undetermined manner: it must be vested in a particular subject. The indefectibility of the Church is a kind of infallibility, because, although every Christian is fallible, it is impossible that all should fall into error; if this were to happen the Church would, *ipso facto*, collapse. If, as was maintained by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, and is affirmed in the Book of Homilies of the Church of England, "not only the unlearned and simple, but the learned and wise, not the people only but the bishops, not the sheep but also the shepherds (who should have been guides in the right way and light to shine in the darkness) being blinded, fell both in the pit of damnable idoltry, in which all the world, as it were drowned, continued until our age, by the space of eight hundred years." Or, as the Rev. J. Dickson put it: "If heathenism came in like a flood when the Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity, and attempted to amalgamate Church and State, paganism and Christianity in one." If, unfortunately, such had been the case, then there would be no Christianity at all, and it would be a folly to try to patch up a Church which Jesus Christ was not able to preserve from