

**THE SEE OF ST. PETER, THE
ROCK OF THE CHURCH, THE
SOURCE OF JURISDICTION,
AND THE CENTRE OF UNITY**

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The see of St. Peter, the rock of the church, the source of jurisdiction, and the centre of unity by
Thomas William Allies

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BY
THOMAS WILLIAM ALLIES, K.C.S.G.

FOURTH EDITION.

Numerate Sacerdotes vel ab Ipsa Petri Sede,
Et in ordine illo patrum quis cui successit videte;
Ipsa est PETRA, quam non vincunt superbiae inferorum porta.
S. AUGUST. *Psalm. cont. part Douzi.*



LONDON
CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY
21 WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD, S.E.
1896

TO
POPE LEO XIII.

THIS LITTLE WORK, ONCE HONOURED
BY THE APPROVAL OF HIS PREDECESSOR PIUS IX.

AT ITS FIRST APPEARANCE IN 1850,
NOW REPUBLISHED AT HIS DESIRE,

IS MOST HUMBLY OFFERED

IN REVERENCE BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

SOME years ago the writer, already in great distress of mind at the historical and actual position of the Anglican Church, at the statements of her formularies, at the want of shape and principle in her practice, and, above all, at her general character and temperament as a communion which seemed to him thoroughly alien from the spirit of the ancient Fathers, betook himself to the special consideration of one point,—the Primacy of the Roman See,—which he thought more calculated than any other to lead him to a sure conclusion. He was then, as he is now, “convinced that the whole question between the Roman Church and ourselves, as well as the Eastern Church, turns upon the Papal Supremacy, as at present claimed, being of divine right, or not. *If it be*, then have we nothing else to do but submit ourselves to the authority of Rome; and better it were to do so before we meet the attack, which is close at hand, of an enemy who bears equal hatred to ourselves and Rome;—the predicted Lawless One, the Logos, reason, or private judgment of apostate humanity rising up against the Divine Logos, incarnate in His Church.”

The writer, moreover, then professed, that "he took up this inquiry for the purpose of satisfying his own mind;" that "had he found the Councils and Fathers of the Church, before the division of the East and West, bearing witness to the Roman Supremacy, as at present claimed, instead of *against it, he should have felt bound to obey them;*" and that "as a Priest of the Church Catholic in England he desires to hold, and to the best of his ability will teach, all doctrine which the undivided Church always held."¹

He made these professions in the simplicity, it is true, but likewise in the sincerity of his heart; and he made them publicly before God and man. Now, the conclusion to which he was at that time led by the study of antiquity was, that a Primacy² of divine institution had indeed been given to the See of Peter, but that the degree to which it had been pressed in later times formed an excuse for those communions which, *while they maintained*

¹ *The Church of England cleared from the Charge of Schism, Advertisement.*

² This is admitted in p. 313, p. 315, and pp. 490, 491 of the second edition of the above-mentioned work. The author ought to have seen what it involved; for no *abuse*, even could such be proved to exist, would warrant men in rejecting what is of *divine* institution. This was once put to him in a very forcible way by a much-valued friend: "If God has instituted Baptism, men would not be justified in rejecting it, even if the Church were to administer it with spittle."

the Catholic faith whole and entire, were de facto severed from it.

Thus he made these professions when he thought that they led him to one conclusion; but he is equally bound to redeem them now that in the course of years they have led him to another.

For though his study of the question terminated for the moment at this point, yet the Supremacy claimed by S. Peter's See over the whole Church was a subject never out of his thoughts. And in the meantime what he saw of the actual state of the Roman Communion in other lands, of the principles on which it was based, and of the fruits which it produced, deeply moved and affected him. That Communion seemed in full possession of the great sacerdotal and sacramental system for which earnest Anglicans were vainly struggling, as well as of that religious unity the name of which in an Anglican mouth sounded like a mockery, amid the deep contradictions, both as to principles and as to practice, which are equally tolerated and supported by the Establishment; when just at this moment that one only doctrine of all those mooted at the Reformation, which had appeared to him to be as unquestionably taught, at least by the formularies of the Anglican Church, as by the ancient Church—the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration—was brought before the tribunal of the Court of Arches, and thence carried, by appeal, to the Queen in Council.

This fact first brought home to the writer the real nature of the Royal Supremacy. Up to that time, without having accurately looked into that power, he had supposed it to be *practically* indeed a great tyranny over the Church subject to it, but *in principle* only "a supreme civil power over all persons and causes in temporal things, and over the temporal accidents of spiritual things."¹ But the more he considered it in its origin, and with reference to the power which it supplanted and succeeded, and in its exercise during three hundred years, and in its whole tone and demeanour to the communion over which it was "supreme governor," the more painfully he became convinced that such a limitation, desirable as it might be to quiet the consciences of churchmen, was *as a fact* quite untenable. He felt that at his Anglican ordination as Deacon and as Priest, and subsequently, he had taken an oath of obedience to a power the nature and bearing of which he did not then at all comprehend—a power which, the moment he came to comprehend it, seemed to be utterly opposed to every principle which he held dear as a Churchman, and to contradict as much the relation of the Church to the State which is set forth in the Holy Scriptures as the teaching of the Fathers and the acts of General Councils,—a power which had

¹ So stated in the circular put forth by Archdeacons Manning and Wilberforce, and Dr. Mill.