

"The Christian Church an Imperial Power"
Sermons Bearing on the Subjects of the Day sermon 16
St. John Henry Newman
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"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Isa.. ii. 2.

1 WHEN Christ came and took possession of His own House, it could not be but that
2 some great changes would take place in its economy, and its condition. And such there
3 were; it was exalted and established above all earthly power, and became a refuge and
4 home for all nations. It remained what it had been before, a Church, in its inward and
5 characteristic structure the same; but it became what it had never been before, or only
6 in a partial measure in the time of David and some other princes, and that in type of
7 what was to come, it became an imperial Church. It was the head of an empire.

8 And hence so much stress is laid upon its being a kingdom, and Christ a King. It was a
9 prophecy even among the heathen at the time of His coming, that they who were to rule
10 the world were to issue from Judæa. Much more had Micah, with the voice of
11 inspiration, said of Bethlehem, "Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet
12 out of thee shall He come forth unto Me, that is to be ruler in Israel." [Micah v. 2.] And
13 Daniel saw "one like the Son of man," "brought near before" the Ancient of days, "and
14 there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and
15 languages, should serve Him." [Dan. vii. 13, 14.] And the patriarch Jacob, long before
16 them, had said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between
17 his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." [Gen.
18 xlix. 10.] Well, then, might His own brethren rejoice and shout for joy, and sing
19 Hosanna, when their King came unto them, "just and having salvation, lowly, and riding
20 upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." [Zech. ix. 9.] And for Him, His first and
21 last words were about His kingdom, or empire, as we now speak. For He began His
22 ministry with the words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [Matt. iv. 17.]
23 And before He ascended, He committed the work to His disciples, "being seen of them
24 forty days," says St. Luke, "and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of
25 God." [Acts i. 3.]

26 1. When He was ascending, He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven, and *in*
27 *earth*." We believe in His power in heaven, but, strange to say, it is usual with us to
28 grudge Him His power upon earth. We believe that He exercises His powerful
29 intercession with the Father in heaven; but we seem to think that the Mediator has no
30 earthly kingdom. As God indeed, of course, we accord Him a rule upon earth; but that
31 rule He had from the time He created land and sea, and all things therein. But on His
32 resurrection as Mediator, a kingdom was given unto Him; do we believe that He has a
33 kingdom? We know what is meant by a kingdom. It means a body politic, bound
34 together by common laws, ruled by one head, holding intercourse part with part, acting
35 together. We know what is meant by the kingdom of Chaldea, or of Persia, or of Rome,

36 which the Prophet Daniel mentions; do we believe that Christ now has a kingdom, as
37 those earthly powers once had? "Yes;" we reply, "He has a kingdom; it is an invisible
38 kingdom." An *invisible* kingdom on *earth*? what is meant by an invisible kingdom? A
39 kingdom is an organized body: do we mean then a secret society? no; what we really
40 mean by the words is, that He has no earthly kingdom at all. We admit a truth and
41 explain it away. We explain away His words into a mere metaphor, as when we speak
42 of the animal kingdom, or the vegetable kingdom. When we say that Christ has an
43 invisible kingdom, we mean, I suppose, that He has servants on earth, and gives them
44 laws; that He interposes in the world's history, and punishes the guilty; but all this surely
45 He did before He came in the flesh; and all this surely does not come up to the idea,
46 does not answer to the name, of kingdom. It is as unmeaning to speak of an invisible
47 kingdom on earth, as of invisible chariots and horsemen, invisible swords and spears,
48 invisible palaces: to be a kingdom at all it must be visible, if the word has any true
49 meaning.

50 But it may be said, that Christ Himself, the King, is invisible, and therefore His kingdom
51 may well be invisible also. It is true, He is the *invisible* King of a *visible* kingdom; for it
52 does not at all follow, because a monarch is withdrawn from view, that therefore His
53 kingdom must cease to be a fact in the face of day also. It is seldom that the monarch of
54 any kingdom is seen, and then not by many, except on certain occasions. Kings are
55 within their palaces, yet their power is in the public world. It is seldom they rule by
56 themselves; they rule by instruments. Such is Christ's mode of governing; He is away;
57 He has not resigned His rule; He does not simply abandon it to His servants: but still He
58 rules *through* His appointed servants, and has committed His subjects to *them*. He
59 resembles earthly sovereigns, not only in having a kingdom, but in His mode of
60 governing it.

61 Now this description of Christ's kingdom is what He gives us of it Himself. "*The kingdom*
62 *of heaven*," He says, "is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own
63 servants, and *delivered unto them his goods*. And unto one he gave five talents, to
64 another two, and to another one." [Matt. xxv. 14, 15.] Another parable, spoken in
65 warning, represents the officers of the kingdom under the image of a steward: "Who
66 then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his
67 household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? ... If that servant say in his
68 heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants and
69 maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in a
70 day when he looketh not for Him, and at an hour when he is not aware." [Luke xii. 42,
71 45, 46.]

72 2. So much is spoken in general; but next *who* are spoken of as the rulers in the
73 kingdom, Christ's viceroys? the Twelve Apostles, and first of all Peter. To him our Lord
74 addressed these wonderful words: "I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this
75 rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will
76 give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on
77 earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be
78 loosed in heaven." [Matt. xvi. 18, 19.] By the "Church" must be meant a community or

79 polity of men, and you see that St. Peter had the keys of this Church or kingdom, or the
80 power of admitting into it, and excluding from it: and besides that, an awful power of
81 binding and loosing, about which it does not fall within our present subject to inquire.

82 What is here spoken of St. Peter, is elsewhere spoken of the other Apostles. They too
83 are rulers in Christ's kingdom. Christ said to them all, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on
84 earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed
85 in heaven." [Matt. xviii. 18.]

86 And more distinctly on another occasion: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father
87 hath appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table, in My kingdom, and sit
88 on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [Luke xxii. 29, 30.] It had been
89 prophesied of Christ that He should sit on the throne of David. Accordingly, they too, as
90 His representatives, in His absence, were to sit on twelve thrones.

91 And their authority was equal to that of Him who appointed them. "He that receiveth
92 you," He saith, "receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me."
93 [Matt. x. 40.] And as He had said to the seventy, "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and
94 he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent
95 Me." [Luke x. 16.] Nay, it would seem as if their authority were even greater than that
96 which it pleased our Lord to possess in the days of His flesh; for, whereas He breathed
97 on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," He had formerly said, "Whosoever
98 speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever
99 speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world,
100 neither in the world to come." [Matt. xii. 32.] Thus the Apostles, the ministers of the
101 kingdom, as being the organs of the Spirit, were arrayed in more awful sanctions even
102 than the King Himself during His abode upon earth; and hence St. Paul says, "He that
103 despiseth, despiseth not man, but God; who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit." [1
104 Thess. iv. 8.] And when St. Peter inflicted judgment upon Ananias, he said, "Thou hast
105 not lied unto men, but unto God." [Acts v. 4.]

106 Moreover, this kingdom was to extend all over the earth; "Go ye therefore and teach all
107 nations," [Matt. xxviii. 19.] or rather, "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." And,
108 especially, consider the parable of the mustard seed. "The kingdom of heaven," says
109 our Lord, "is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field;
110 which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among
111 herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches
112 thereof." Now what is especially remarkable here, is the concluding clause, which
113 seems to refer us, by way of parallel, to the Chaldean power, as described by the
114 Prophet Daniel, of which Nebuchadnezzar was the head. "The tree grew and was
115 strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven ... the beasts of the field had
116 shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof." [Dan. iv. 11,
117 12. Vide also Ezek. xvii. 23; xxxi. 6.] The parable then of the mustard seed, not only
118 represents the kingdom of Christ as the greatest of kingdoms, but, like
119 Nebuchadnezzar's, as a kingdom under which things external to it find shelter, or as an
120 empire.

121 And further, let it be observed, that the visible appearance and display of this one
122 kingdom in all lands, seems to have been intended as the means (which no doubt it
123 really was in the event) by which all lands were to be converted. For our Lord prays for
124 His followers, that they may be *one*; *"that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."*
125 Again, *"that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that Thou hast*
126 *sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me."* [John xvii. 21, 23.]

127 3. Now the only question that can here arise is this: whether this imperial power was
128 vested only in the Twelve Apostles, or in others besides and after them.

129 I answer, we must conclude that the power was vested in others also, from the size of
130 the empire; for a few persons, though inspired, cannot be supposed to have been equal
131 to the care of all the Churches. As Moses found his charge too great for him, and was
132 permitted to have associates in his office, so doubtless would it be with the Apostles.

133 But again, it is expressly said, that the Church is to last to the end of time, and the gates
134 of hell are to fail in their warfare against it. But the Apostles were soon cut off; therefore
135 the Church's power was vested in others besides the Apostles.

136 But further, let this be observed, that the promise was neither made nor fulfilled exactly
137 to the Twelve Apostles; one of them fell, and another took his place. Again, St. Paul was
138 "not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles," yet he was added to their original
139 company. Further, when, after his resurrection, He breathed on the Apostles, and gave
140 them power to remit sins, St. Thomas was not present; was he then without the power
141 which the rest had? Surely not; therefore others had it besides them on whom our Lord
142 personally or primarily bestowed it. It appears from all this, that the Twelve to whom our
143 Lord first spake, were but representatives of the full number of His ministers, not
144 commensurate with them.

145 This conclusion is strengthened by considering our Lord's language on another
146 occasion, which certainly seems to show that the Apostles were not regarded by Christ
147 in a personal light, but as representatives of others, or rather, I should say, of Himself.
148 He truly is the only One, properly speaking, who sits on the throne of the kingdom; He is
149 the sole Ruler in His empire, though invisible. They are but regents, or viceroys, in His
150 absence; and whatever be their power, it is not their own, it comes from Him; and as it
151 did not begin in them, so with them it did not terminate. They were but the accidental,
152 though specially favoured, organs of his wonder-working operation. The text I allude to
153 is as follows:—"Be not ye called Rabbi, for One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye
154 are brethren ... Call no man your father upon the earth; for One is your Father, which is
155 in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for One is your Master, even Christ." [Matt.
156 xxiii. 8-10.] What words can be clearer to show, that no honours which were accorded to
157 the Apostles, were accorded to them for their own sake, or were, strictly speaking,
158 vested in *them*? that they were theirs only as being instruments of Him who, being
159 "immortal, invisible," governs His kingdom in every age in His own way, the one Master,
160 the one Lord, the one Teacher, the one Priest, alone glorified in all His saints, while they

161 live and when they die? Whatever honours, then, and powers the Apostles possessed,
162 needed not to die with them, for they never had really belonged to them.

163 It would seem then, that the ecclesiastical power held by the Apostles was intended for
164 others also; but let us suppose the contrary, and see what will follow. This will follow:
165 that we have no warrant in Scripture for any ministry under the Gospel at all; a ministry
166 like the Apostles' being the only ministry for which we have *any* precedent in the New
167 Testament. If we will be scriptural in our view of the Church, we must consider that it is
168 a kingdom, that its officers have great powers and high gifts, that they are charged with
169 the custody of Divine Truth, that they are all united together, and that the nations are
170 subject to them. If we reject this kind of ministry, as inapplicable to the present day, we
171 shall in vain go to Scripture to find another. If we will form to ourselves a ministry and a
172 Church bereft of the august power which I have mentioned, it will be one of our own
173 devising; and let us pretend no more to draw our religion from the Bible. Rather, we are
174 like Jeroboam, who made his own religion. "Jesus I know, and Paul I know," said the
175 evil spirit in the demoniac; "but who are ye?" Men now-a-days consider the Christian
176 minister to be merely one who teaches the unlearned, rouses the sinful, consoles the
177 afflicted, and relieves the poor. Great and Gospel offices these indeed, but who made
178 them the privilege of a particular order of men? Great and Gospel offices, so great, so
179 full of Gospel savour, that they are the prerogatives of all Christians, and may not be
180 confined to a class. If the ministerial office consist in these alone, then all Christians are
181 ministers. Men have a notion, that the mere function of reading prayers in public
182 worship, and preaching sermons, constitutes a minister of Christ: where is this found in
183 Scripture? Let us be honest; we are but deceiving ourselves, if we keep up the name of
184 a Church, and deny its Scripture definition.

185 4. These then being the characteristics of the Christian Church, as we find them stated
186 in the New Testament, let us next turn to the Prophets of the Old, and observe whether
187 the same are not represented to us even more explicitly in their inspired pages. If even
188 from the texts which have been cited from the Gospels we might infer the imperial
189 nature of Christ's kingdom, much more is this peculiarity of it drawn out in the
190 prophetic writings. By an imperial state, or an empire, is meant a power which has
191 wide extent over the earth, and that beyond its own limits. Thus, the kingdom of which
192 we are subjects is small, consisting of two islands; but the empire vested in that
193 kingdom extends all over the earth, consisting of our colonies, dependencies, fortified
194 places, subject and tributary nations, and such allies as are materially under our
195 influence and authority. It is the peculiarity of an imperial state to bear rule over other
196 states; and it is another peculiarity, not indeed essential, but almost necessary, that it
197 should be always in movement, advancing or retiring, never stationary, aggression
198 being the condition of its existence. Conquest is almost of the essence of an empire,
199 and when it ceases to conquer it ceases to be.

200 Such is an empire of this world; and it is not difficult to show from Scripture, that such
201 also in its substance is the kingdom of Christ. "In the days of these kings," says Daniel,
202 speaking of the heathen empires, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which
203 shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall

204 break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." [Dan. ii.
205 44.] Christ's religion was not a mere creed or philosophy. A creed or a philosophy need
206 not have interfered with kingdoms of this world; but might have existed under the
207 Roman empire or under the Persian. No; Christ's kingdom was a counter kingdom. It
208 occupied ground; it claimed to rule over those whom hitherto this world's governments
209 ruled over without rival; and if this world's governments would not themselves
210 acknowledge and submit to its rule, and rule under and according to its laws, it "broke in
211 pieces" those governments—not by carnal weapons, but by Divine Power—"without
212 hands," to use the Prophet Daniel's language. Or, as another Prophet expresses it, "The
213 nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be
214 utterly wasted." [Isa. lx. 12.]

215 The royal Prophet and the other Psalmists give the same account of the promised
216 kingdom, as an enterprising, active, advancing power, or empire, conquering and ruling.
217 "Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou Most Mighty, according to Thy
218 worship and renown ... Thy arrows are very sharp, and the people shall be subdued
219 unto Thee; even in the midst, among the King's enemies." [Ps. xlv. 4, 6.] And while
220 conquest is spoken of, and sharp weapons, in order to conquest, it is also signified that
221 these weapons are of a heavenly nature; "Ride on, because of the word of truth, of
222 meekness, and righteousness." Again, "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy
223 kingdom; Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." [Heb. i. 8, 9.] Parallel to
224 this are the passages in the book of Revelation, where our Lord is represented as on a
225 white horse, the emblem of holiness: "I saw, and behold a white horse; and He that sat
226 on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto Him; and He went forth conquering and
227 to conquer." [Rev. vi. 2.] Again: "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and
228 He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge
229 and make war ... And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses,
230 clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that
231 with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron." [Rev. xix.
232 11, 14, 15.]

233 These last words remind us of another celebrated Psalm, in which the conflict is
234 described between Christ and the world, and the conquest of Christ predicted. "The
235 kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and
236 against His Anointed ... Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in
237 pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be learned, ye that are
238 judges of the earth. Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice unto Him with reverence." [Ps. ii.
239 2, 9-11.] You see that Christ breaks whom He does not bend; and that it is the wisdom
240 of kings of the earth to bow down to Christ.

241 In another Psalm: "They that dwell in the wilderness shall kneel before Him. His
242 enemies shall lick the dust ... All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall do
243 Him service. For He shall deliver the poor when he crieth, the needy also, and him that
244 hath no helper." [Ps. lxxii. 9, 11, 12.] You see that Christ persuades or destroys; and
245 that kings of the earth must fall down before Him, or lick the dust.

246 Again: "Let the saints be joyful with glory; let them rejoice in their beds. Let the praises
247 of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands; to be avenged of the
248 heathen, and to rebuke the people; to bind their kings in chains, and their nobles with
249 links of iron." [Ps. cxlix. 5-9.] Such is the battle of the Saints, such the victory of the
250 Christian army, though their weapons be not carnal.

251 Once more: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate
252 Him flee before Him ... The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of
253 Angels; and the Lord is among them, as in the holy place of Sinai ... God shall wound
254 the head of His enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his
255 wickedness. The Lord hath said, I will bring My people again, as I did from Basan; Mine
256 own will I bring again, as I did sometime from the deep of the sea ... When He hath
257 scattered the people that delight in war, then shall the princes come out of Egypt; the
258 Morian's land shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." [Ps. lxxviii. 1, 17, 21, 22, 30,
259 31.] You see God promised to fight for His people, and His people were to make
260 progress, and to spread while He fought as of old time.

261 If we next take up the book of the Prophet Isaiah, we shall find promises made to the
262 kingdom of Christ so many, and so high and awful, that there is neither time nor
263 necessity to quote them at length. Thus in the text: "It shall come to pass in the last
264 days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the
265 mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it ... And
266 He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat
267 their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks ... The lofty looks of
268 man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord
269 alone shall be exalted in that day." [Isa. ii. 2, 4, 11.] "In that day there shall be a root of
270 Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek: and
271 His rest shall be glorious." [Isa. xi. 10.] Again, "The extortioner is at an end, the spoiler
272 ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. And in mercy shall the throne be
273 established, and He shall sit upon it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, judging and
274 seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness." [Isa. xvi. 4, 5.]

275 But, you will say, such passages in the Prophet speak rather of the victory of the faith
276 than of the Church; and that the faith might spread, even though there were no Church.
277 Let us, then, consider the following passages in addition, and see whether, taken all
278 together, they admit of being thus explained. "Arise, shine," says the Prophet to the
279 Church, "for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ... And the
280 Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising ... The sons of
281 strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee ... The nation
282 and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly
283 wasted ... The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and
284 all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet." [Isa. lx.
285 1, 3, 10, 12, 14.] Again, "Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument,
286 having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the
287 hills as chaff." Again, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the
288 curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.

289 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the
290 Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited ... No weapon that is formed
291 against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment
292 thou shalt condemn." [Isa. liv. 2, 3, 17.] Again, "Strangers shall stand and feed your
293 flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers. But ye
294 shall be named the priests of the Lord, men shall call you the ministers of our God; for
295 ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." And
296 again, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they
297 shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet."
298 [Isa. xlix. 23.]

299 What is wanting in such passages to the picture of a great empire, comprising all that a
300 great empire ordinarily exhibits? Extended dominion, and that not only over its
301 immediate subjects, but over the kings of other kingdoms; aggression and advance; a
302 warfare against enemies; acts of judgment upon the proud; acts of triumph over the
303 defeated; high imperial majesty towards the suppliant; clemency towards the repentant;
304 parental care of the dutiful. Again, these passages imply, in the subjects of the kingdom,
305 a multitude of various conditions and dispositions; some of them loyal, some restrained
306 by fear, some by interest, some partly subjected, some indirectly influenced. They
307 involve, in consequence, though they do not mention, a complex organization, and a
308 combination of movements, and a variety and opposition of interests, and other similar
309 results of extended sway. Of course, too, they involve vicissitudes of fortune, and all
310 those other characteristics of the history of a temporal power which ever will attend it,
311 while men are men, whether, as in the case of the Jews, they are under a supernatural
312 Providence or no.

313 5. After this view of the Gospel Church, as set before us in our Lord's announcements,
314 and in the prophecies which preceded His coming, let us turn, in conclusion, to its
315 history, and see whether they have not been most exactly and marvellously fulfilled.

316 Even in the Apostles' lifetime the Gospel had spread east, west, and south, far and
317 wide, and the Church with it. Multitudes had been converted in all nations, and the
318 Apostles were the acknowledged rulers of those multitudes. So wide and well-
319 connected a polity there was not on the earth, even before their martyrdom, except the
320 Roman Empire itself, which was the seat of it.

321 And much more have the prophecies been fulfilled in later times. Many persons among
322 us think that the history of the Church has been the fulfilment of those dark and fearful
323 predictions, which speak of the city of confusion, and the man of sin. Now here I put the
324 matter to a simple issue. Here are two sets of prophecies: one about the Gospel
325 Dispensation, in the Prophet Isaiah and his brethren; the other in Daniel, St. Paul, and
326 St. John, about the great enemy of the Gospel. I ask, then, *which* of the two sets of
327 prophecy is the more *literally* fulfilled in the history of the Church? In which have we the
328 less need to betake ourselves to allegories, and explanations, and forced statements?
329 which of the two has the fewer difficulties? Has there not, in fact, been a great
330 corporation, or continuous body politic, all over the world, from the Apostles' days to our

331 own, bearing the name of Church—one, and one only? Has it not spread in spite of all
332 opposition, and maintained itself marvellously against the power of the world? Has it not
333 ever taken the cause of the poor and friendless against the great and proud? Has it not
334 succeeded by the use of weapons, not earthly and carnal, but by righteousness and
335 mercy, as was foretold? Has it not broken in pieces numberless kingdoms and
336 conquerors which opposed it, and risen again, and flourished more than before, after
337 the most hopeless reverses? Has it not ever been at war with the spirit of the world, with
338 pride, and luxury, and cruelty, and tyranny, and profaneness? Let us, then, glorify our
339 Lord and Saviour for what He has said, what He has done. Surely we may use, and with
340 fuller reason, if it be possible, the words of Solomon, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath
341 given rest unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised; *there hath not failed*
342 *one word* of all His good promise, which He promised by the hand of Moses His
343 servant. The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers: let Him not leave us,
344 nor forsake us: that He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways, and to
345 keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgments which He commanded
346 our fathers; ... that He maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people
347 Israel, at all times, as the matter shall require; that all the people of the earth may know
348 that the Lord is God, and that there is none else." [1 Kings viii. 56-60.]