

W.H. Jones

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THE
 VATICAN DECREES
 AND
 THE "EXPOSTULATION."

BY

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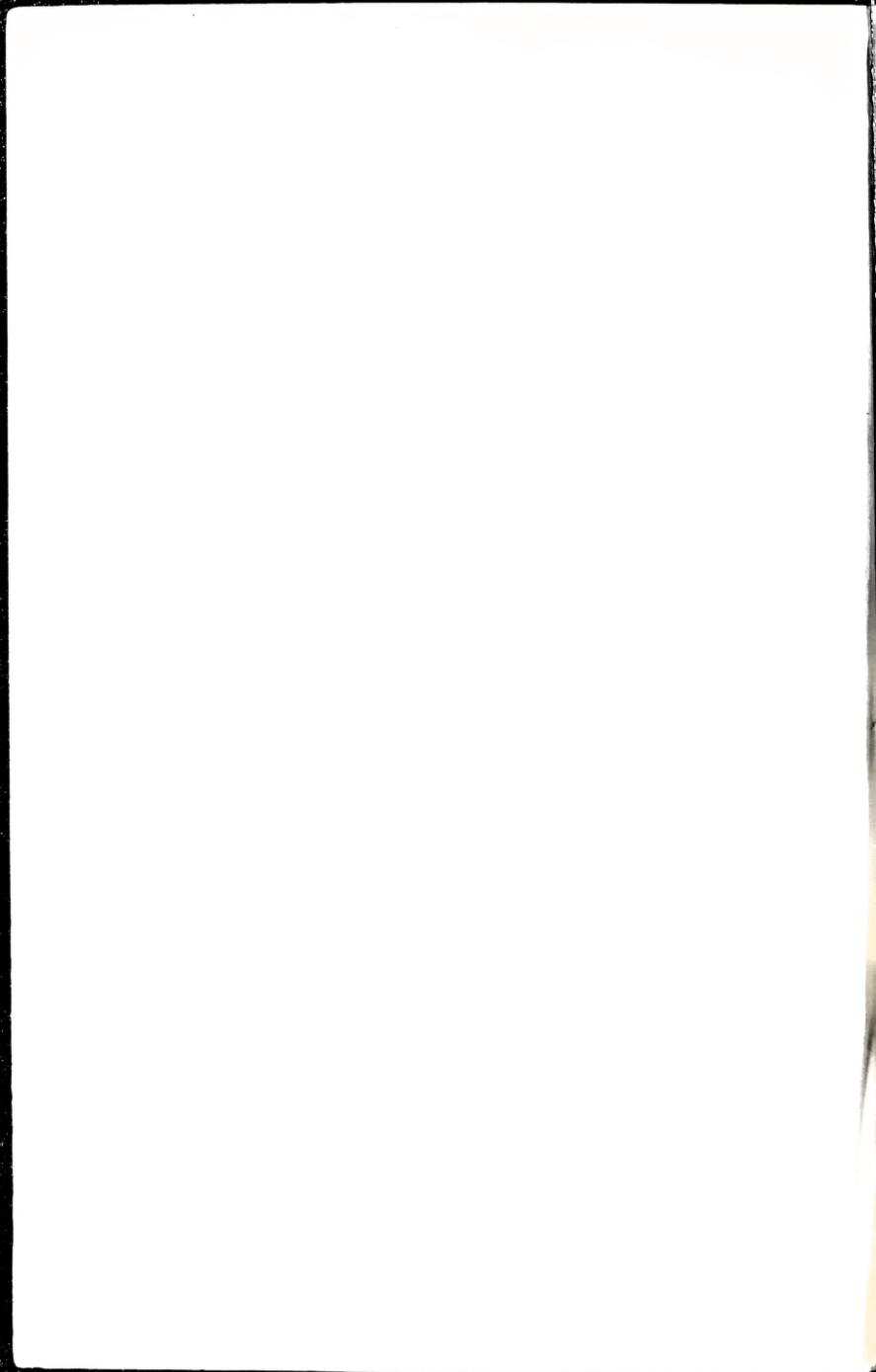


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PREFACE.

SINCE the appearance of Mr. Gladstone's "Exposition," I have been repeatedly asked to express my opinions as to the political bearing of the Vatican decrees. The subject is of an extent and complication beyond the limits of a pamphlet; but as some friends are partial enough to urge me to make known, at least in a general way, something of the result of my thoughts and experience, I can no longer consistently maintain the silence which I should prefer. Though after the thoughtful and accurate statements which have emanated from Mr. Gladstone, Lord Acton, Lord Camoys, the Right Rev. Monsignore Capel, the Very Rev. Monsignore Patterson, and the able comments upon the same in our leading periodicals, I have little to add beyond the expression of my personal experience; the quotations, which at the request of the same parties are appended to this brochure, will explain to strangers my profound personal interest in a question which has so intimately affected my own life.



THE VATICAN DECREES

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PEOPLE cannot be allowed the pleasure of at the same time affirming and denying a conviction. The Neo-Catholics, headed by the Pope, and in England by Archbishop Manning, declare the Vatican decrees to be an undoubted expression of the Divine will. The Old Catholics, represented by such men as Bishop Reinkens, Dr. Döllinger, and Lord Acton, declare them to be merely the utterances of what Dr. Newman designated "an aggressive and insolent faction." The Vatican Council is either ecumenic or schismatic. Skilful men can find reasons on either side, and consistent men may act out either conclusion. The Old Catholics deny the infallibility of the Vatican Council. The Neo-Catholics affirm its infallibility. Learning has ranged itself on the side of the "Old" Catholics; diplomacy on the side of the "New." The Roman Catholic Church has disappeared; the Vatican Church has supplanted it. We have too much appreciation of the learning of the "Old" Catholics, and the diplomatic ambition of the ecclesiastical rulers of the "New," to be able to regard as a nonentity that momentous revolution. When men the wealth of whose virtues and learning had enriched the Papal cause could, in advanced years, sorrowfully permit the Pope and some millions of adherents to leave them, at once warning and anathematized—

warning those who leave, anathematized by those who have left;—when acute diplomatists like Dr. Manning urge on a revolution with all the ardour inspired by ambition, and in presence of the sorrowful laments and pathetic warnings of men who had grown old in the service of a cause then about to die,—surely a nonentity was just the last event contemplated by anyone. The Old Catholics and New Catholics alike beheld in that revolution the inauguration of a new era of individual absolutism, to be established as the embodiment of the Divine will; and in the name of religion, of liberty, of humanity, the Old Catholics raised their protest. In the name of Pius IX. and of possession, the New Catholics raised the war cry, which died off into a perpetual anathema. Those men who contended on the battle-field of thought, of history, of diplomacy, until the fatal victory of July, 1870, were not children contending for baubles: they were *men* who entered the lists. Some contended for truth, others fought for power. The triumphant faction being in possession of the Vatican, in possession of the Episcopal Sees, in the possession of the ecclesiastical edifices, retained easily power over the masses. What they sought, they have obtained. Whenever their chief ruler issues any declaration which he *means* to be infallible, *it is* infallible. Should any voice, retaining a ring of the accents of liberty, dare to say, “The subject on which you have decreed is out of the range of faith and morals, so you only therein decree as a man;” the Ruler replies, “You have accepted as Divine the Vatican decrees; you therein declared that you will be accursed, and forfeit your eternal salvation, unless you inwardly believe and heartily accept, and outwardly in practice conform to that belief, that the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff is over all the Faithful individually and collectively; that his authority compels your entire and unreserved

obedience, not only in matters appertaining to faith and morals, but also in all those that appertain to the discipline and government of the Church. You have declared your internal assent to the Divine decree, whereby you learn that this power is from God, represents God, is full and supreme, and not merely of inspection and direction; that it is superior to all other power, extends everywhere, must never be controlled, must always enjoy free and immediate communication with its subjects wherever they may be; that its judgments may never be reviewed, appealed against, or disregarded; that to it alone it appertains to declare what belongs to its jurisdiction and what domains of thought and of action (if any) are exempt from its infallible utterances."

Obviously the Vatican faction could not regard as meaningless and powerless such expressions, cautiously worded and decreed after mature deliberation. Their promulgation was enjoined. The Vatican party must not be surprised if those who protested against their formation desire their promulgation. What can be done, what was meant to be done, what will be done, *we* want all men to know! Vatican diplomacy, having obtained the weapons, would rather that the Faithful alone, and they but gradually, should realise the weight of the sceptre which they have forged and feebly yielded to an Italian priest. But we would rather know and feel the metal of the weapon prepared for us. A sword sheathed in velvet is still a sword. Chains concealed in the intentions of a prelate, still are chains. They are meant for us, and we should like to handle them. We have been recently somewhat naively told that they will be "convenient." Doubtless; therefore the more that is known about them the better. In a docile school the boys collect the birch rods, and with wondering fear feel their substance, and speculate on their effects. If the scholars become too frightened, should panic threaten an in-

convenient outbreak, the master and ushers will prudently explain that the rods will be hardly ever used; that they are merely symbols of authority, quite harmless, almost pleasant; that obviously it can make no difference whether the rods are in the school-room or on the trees; they were only gathered at the urgent request of the boys. All very good; but still a boy might like to know that they are there, are meant to be used, and will be used.

In former times we English people knew what the Popes could effect amongst those who revered in him a Divine primacy, but not a Divine individual, irresponsible infallibility. What is prepared for us now, when the Papal authority is declared to be absolute, immediate, personal—when his utterances must be believed as well as obeyed? Now that a circle of hell-fire is drawn around the Papal subject, he must either, like the Salamander, kill his mental liberty, or live for ever in the flames. People have said, Why in this country, at a time of profound peace, when all the Vatican Catholics are living in undoubted loyalty—why call attention to the Vatican decrees when they are consoling Roman prelates and harming no one? We reply, It is just the time when we should examine the weapons forged for emergencies. If the English people were in times of excitement to realise the magnitude of the triumphant revolution, we cannot tell to what excesses some amongst them might be driven. Those principles of religious equality which we have been slowly conquering by the patient energy of men whose passion is for justice might have been pushed back for generations into the dregs of a cowardly and insane persecution. All men, of whatever creed, Roman or the opposite, ought to rejoice that this subject should have been brought to the front and canvassed at a moment when it appeals to no triumphant bigotries. I am convinced that nothing can better secure our Roman countrymen in England than what

is now taking place. Let all men realise what must and ought to be the line of action of a consistent supporter of the Vatican Church, as contrasted with the position of the Old Catholics; let all men, having realised it, know what to expect; let all then renew within their minds the intense conviction that under no circumstances whatsoever must opinions be punished; that the State has only to deal with actions, and amongst actions only with those which obviously affect the commonwealth; then we shall be strong to resist and to suppress that hurricane of anti-Roman indignation which will sooner or later arise, and which might carry away many of our great principles of liberty, if we were not prepared to meet it by a recognition of the causes exciting it.

No controversialist could have caught the public ear and instructed the public mind. The foremost man in England alone could do it; the statesman, rich in scholarship and in thought, representing in his own person whatever is the highest in culture, the most illustrious in our national traditions, the most reverent, religious, and tolerant in character; he, the near relative of one Roman Catholic, the intimate friend of many, was, above all others, the man to speak. Judging by the standard of expediency, his words may politically injure him; judging by the standard of rectitude, his "Expostulation" will be recorded amongst the most honourable deeds of an honourable career. Many will have cause to rejoice at it; but, above all, must we, the disciples of Religious Equality, rejoice that the people of England should have been instructed in the words and bearing of the Vatican Decrees when that instruction could be received quietly, take its place in the public mind harmlessly and prepare us against contingencies wisely.

As to explanations, there are none to give. Some Roman Catholics, like Sir George Bowyer,

may not as yet understand the Decrees, and may, in consequence of their known spirit of submission, be allowed to write condemned propositions publicly, trusting to their private repentance in the Confessional. But the common sense of the people of England will easily perceive that the question is not whether *now* the Pope may be enforcing loyalty or not, but what all consistent subjects of the Vatican Church *must* do when the Pope may enforce another course. Regarding that, there can be no question. Catholics will divide between those who accept the Vatican Decrees and those who reject them; the latter will practically be in the same position as all the Episcopal Churches, independent of Rome, *e.g.*, the Greek, Russian, English, American, and German.

In saying that, we can easily surmise the future action of Neo-Catholics as to Papal Decrees hostile to our national interests. I do not mean to state that their constant obedience to the Pope can be always depended upon by him. Men do not always act in accordance with their convictions, even under pain of certain eternal damnation. But we must not forget that no Neo-Catholic can approach the Sacraments if he be engaged in any line of action forbidden by the Pope; and all Catholics deem the Sacraments essential to salvation; moreover, disobedience to the Pope in a grave matter would be understood to be invariably a mortal sin. A soldier dying in a forbidden service knows that he perishes for ever in Hell. It may be said, practically, the Pope will probably not frequently interfere—that will depend—one fact let us remember, the Pope does not show much interest in matters of merely personal or public virtue—he seldom thinks it worth his while to issue a Decree against drunkenness and such like faults. When dignified ecclesiastics in this country have taken up such merely moral questions, it has been well known that it has been chiefly to prevent the cause falling into the

exclusive hands of Protestants. But the questions connected with Papal power have never been allowed to sleep. During the last years, Roman Catholics have felt as if all religion and morality depended upon the success of Papal political schemes. All the action of the Pope has been to concentrate power in himself, and to make it daily felt. His chief representatives in England and Ireland have been appointed by the Pope, in defiance of the wishes of the Faithful and their clergy, and without the concurrence of one single national vote. Regulations of a most arbitrary character as to marriage and education have been instituted and enforced, in opposition to the wishes, interests and customs of the Faithful concerned.

It rends one's memories to think of the noble-hearted Roman Catholics of England, representatives of ancient traditions of religion and of loyalty, their lives as blameless and as beautiful as the poetic legends of their Faith—they truthfully, through their vicars apostolic, disowned all those Papal claims which though often advanced and often recognised, were not those "Of Faith"—on the strength of their honest disclaimer they were restored to rights which they ought never to have lost, and all the Liberals of England rejoiced on that day when, in the Palace of Westminster, the Roman Catholic nobles re-entered the ancient hall, on each side of which the peers arose to greet, them, the bearers of historic names, the representatives of great traditions,—a principle greater than all traditions arose and bade them welcome—it was the principle of Religious Equality! What have those men done, to use the eloquent plaint of Dr. Newman, that the hearts of the just should be made sad? Rome, ever reckless of honour when power can be grasped! what was it to Rome, that these sons of crusaders and of martyrs had, on the strength of her silence, plighted a word higher than the word of any creed—the word of an English gentleman—and by

that word disowned and denied all the usurped pretensions of Rome. When the convenient time arrived, a power that has never kept its word, compelled English gentlemen to violate theirs, to recant all that they had said—it was the very triumph of the Priest over the Man!—like the tyrant general who seduced the honour of a virgin, and then presented to her dishonoured gaze the corpse of the father she had fondly hoped to have saved. The Roman Catholic gentlemen yielded their honour to save their Church—the Pope has presented to them as a corpse the Church for which they interceded.

It is idle to point to the deeds of English Roman Catholics in the days of old. In July, 1870, Italian Priests and their coadjutors slew the old Church, and intoned over it the Requiem. You find that Requiem in the Vatican Decrees. Formerly, in periods of discord, many Roman Catholics always sided with the Pope, because they revered the primacy of his dignity, the sacredness of his origin, and recognised him as the centre of the Church's unity; other Roman Catholics disobeyed him, resisted him, besieged his capital, and yet, approaching the Sacraments, lived and died in union with the Roman Church and its creed, but resisting as exaggerated, or criminal, or unpatriotic, actions and commands of the Roman Pontiff. All that is past. The Pope was not satisfied with the willing service of the free—some to obey, others to oppose—and yet all to be one with him in Faith and Sacraments. Those mystic rites, tokens of spiritual memories, must wait upon diplomacy, and be subject to his temporal ambitions. Have all, or none. No wonder that in many an English Roman Catholic home—many an old home of chivalry, faith, and honour—a sorrowful choice presented itself; accustomed to regard visible unity with the Pope as essential to salvation, some accepted the Papal Sacraments and slavery, others

sought Free Sacraments and personality, and in so seeking they deemed the "Free" more Christian, more Catholic than the "Papal." The men on each side we honour, but let us not amidst our sentiments of homage to conscientiousness—nay, may I add, to memory and to affection—let us not forget that the Catholics, divided now into the Vatican and the Old, represent different principles, opposing positions. The Vatican faction has triumphed, and has succeeded in establishing all the principles the most fatal to the development of the human mind, of human society, of religion, of morals, of science, of rational liberty. There is no explaining away what has been done—either embrace it or disown it. Mr. Gladstone's "Expostulation" may display to view a few of those on either side. But the side taken is really to be easily discovered by a more obvious test. Who receives Sacraments from a Neo-Catholic priest? Who refuses so to do? The statements in Mr. Gladstone's "Expostulation" are so cautiously accurate, that I need only refer to them; but we must remember that the Vatican Decree is retrospective. The "Encyclical" has become a compendium of articles of faith; and every cause dear to a patriot and a man of justice is cursed by its inhuman decrees. You mock us with Italian irony, when in the presence of the civilised world you first solemnly anathematise science, civilisation, progress, and equal rights, when you refuse your Sacraments and paternal fellowship to those who cannot mentally believe the truth or justice of your anathemas. When you declare that those who cannot worship with you have no right to worship anywhere; have, in fact, no rights outside the walls of a prison or the steps of a scaffold, to which you declare that your Church has divine power to commit them; and then, when we read your decrees and your admonition to civil governors to aid their execution, and we read your own solemn utterances

and tremble for the liberties which may be subjected to your keeping—the liberty of the individual, the liberty of the family, the liberty of the State, the liberty of education, of science, of conscience—and deliberate how we can preserve our liberty and honour without violating yours, you assume the air of injured innocence and wonder that we should call attention to what really meant nothing at all, but that, as we seem annoyed, you will put your heads together, give us a nice explanation—a pill so carefully sugared that even a Cardinal could swallow it. But we say, we have had your explanations, you thought about them well enough, you have promulgated them to the world, we will learn your mind from the words which you say are inspired—the words of your Encyclicals and Vatican Decrees—not from words which you can repudiate as soon as they have succeeded in blinding. The indignant mind of Europe has caught you “in flagrante delicto,” and you turn round with a surprised smile and tell us you meant no harm; you have taken bigotry, and intolerance, and arrogance into your counsels, and combined together in a conspiracy against humanity—we detect you, and you say, “be quiet—what have we done?” You send over your prelates to this England of ours, and they talk glibly about liberty of worship, and liberty of conscience, and liberty of speech, and liberty of the press, and liberty of education, and liberty of investigation, when *they* know—and now *we* know—that they mean liberty for their own worship, conscience, speech, education and press, but anathemas against any one who dares even to think that such liberty ought to belong to others. You forget that our passionate devotion to the liberties you anathematise are alone the cause why the Liberals of England, headed by their great Statesman, declare—“Your equal liberties shall remain inviolate, by virtue of the very principles you declare to be

accursed." Having said that, and meaning to act upon it, and determined not to be driven from it by any foreign or domestic influence, we have surely proclaimed all that the very chivalry of principle can demand. But you can expect no more.

If a body of Puritans had existed in Rome in the days of the Papal sovereignty; if they had in solemn conclave declared that they regarded the Pope as anti-Christ, and all his followers accursed by God and to be repudiated by man, that no Roman Catholic ought to be allowed any religious educational liberty—that the Puritan conclave had a Divine right to extirpate all such liberties—that it was the duty of the civil power to enforce whatever action the aforesaid conclave deemed prudent to enact, with the view of forcibly destroying the existence of the Roman Catholic religion—that Roman Catholics possess no rights, but *may* be tolerated when toleration becomes a regrettable necessity. Suppose these Puritans to have received civil rights because the Pope imagined their principles of hostility to have merged into merely religious and theoretical difference, the Puritans declaring such to be the case, and repudiating the statements attributed to them which had been subversive of civil loyalty; supposing that a few years afterwards these Roman Puritans met together, and declare that all the opinions ever taught by their wildest divines were part of the Gospel message; that they now solemnly proclaim them as absolutely true, and held firmly by all who join them; that they have placed themselves, for the protection of their principles, under the control of the Emperor of Germany; that at present they are perfectly satisfied with their position, and perfectly loyal. What would have been the attitude of the Pope? Prisons and scaffolds would reply. But suppose the Pope to have been a secret heretic, and, therefore, at liberty to follow the nobler inspirations of conscience—suppose him to have an unbounded confidence in the strength of his position

and the final, though often remote, triumph of the Right; but suppose him also to be a man capable of appreciating what is demanded by self-respect and by regard to the feelings of the loyal. What then would have been his policy? Would he have invited to his more secret counsels Puritans known to maintain the entire and universal supremacy of the German Emperor? Would he have recognised the Puritan emissaries appointed by the Emperor for the supervision of his Roman subjects, especially if the Emperor had publicly claimed him as his own subject? Would he invariably have taken the dictation of the German emissary as to the chaplains for the Roman army and Roman prisons? Would the citizens of Rome have felt anxious to show special social consideration to the German emissary, whose chief function it would be to keep the Puritans thoroughly loyal to the Emperor, and ready to obey him whenever occasion might demand? If the Pope had so acted in moments of weakness and romance, he would have retraced his steps as soon as he recovered his self-respect; if a secret heretic, and so able to act nobly, he would not begin to persecute the Puritans; he would permit the Emperor to appoint his own emissaries over the Puritan schools, Puritan institutions, Puritan chapels, Puritan conclaves; but he would not permit the Emperor to appoint his own nominees to public institutions, and then undertake to pay them; such refusal would not necessarily be the result of fear, but of consistency and self-respect, and from a conscientious desire not to encourage by favouritism the further encroachments and pretensions of the German Emperor. He would feel it due to his own subjects, not to go out of his way to place in office of power and of public trust those who continued obviously to treat him as inferior to the Emperor. But if he perceived other Puritans who maintained their independence of the decrees of the conclave, and though

sympathising with the Emperor on account of similarity of creed, yet obviously regretting his claims to supremacy in all causes over the Emperor, the Pope would treat such Puritans like any other of his subjects, without adverting in public action to their difference of creed.

Such, I presume, ought to be our line of action as to the foreign potentate who has recently claimed supremacy over all the baptised amongst our countrymen. We ought to ignore utterly and entirely all the Papal claims, and Papal emissaries, *as such*. A Papal Archbishop should be to us simply an English citizen, or, if a foreigner, a foreign visitor, and nothing more; we ought not, on the ground of his being a Papal prelate, to confer with him, and to arrange appointments, or accept his appointments, and ask the wishes of his foreign sovereign. To do so is contrary to self-respect—to the national honour. If we had been as anxious to consult the feelings and wishes of the Irish people, and of the labouring classes of England, as we have been anxious to defer to the wishes of an Italian prelate, we should have but little discontent in either country. Statesmen of large sympathies have thought that they would be above all things pleasing the English Roman Catholics and the Irish people by finding out what would please the Pope, and doing it. Oh, marvellous simplicity! Do not the Irish remember full well that a Pope gave Ireland to an English conqueror. That a Pope sent over a Cardinal to help the English Government to suppress national aspirations which were regarded with apprehension at Rome? Cardinal Cullen does not enjoy the confidence of the Irish people; the prelate they adore is the one who voted against the Papal infallibility, an Archbishop whom the Pope would depose if he dared. When he dies, he will probably be succeeded by some docile canonist for whom no Irishman has voted. Dr. Cullen was appointed by

Rome without the concurrence of the Irish clergy. His objects are of a very matron-like character, and not at all representative of the wishes of the Irish people. If we want to legislate with a view to the wishes and feelings and real living interests of the Irish people, we must not ask the guidance of any Roman Cardinal. The Irish ask for national equality, and we offer them a "concession" about the normal schools, or invite a Papal prelate to meet a Princess, and give him precedence over whatever might have represented the national aspirations. The Irish people ask for liberty, and you give them chaplains. The Irish ask for extension of the franchise, repeal of penal enactments, a national militia, and a local Parliament, and you say we cannot do those things for you, but we will pay your chaplains, and confer with your venerated Bishops as to any other concession they may deem desirable. I do not venture on this occasion an opinion whether or not the real wishes of the Irish people can be accepted or not; I merely, for my present purpose say, if you want to conciliate the Irish people you will not do so by fawning upon the Pope and the clergy: they have their objects; the Irish people have other objects. When shall we give to nations the equal rights which we more than give to the emissaries of a foreign power? Surely the loyalty of a nation is of more consequence than the purchased conventional loyalty of a priesthood.

But it may be said, anyhow in England, the way to conciliate the gentry is to make much of the Papal prelates. First of all I would say the English Roman Catholic gentlemen needed no conciliation; they were loyal to the backbone; they had everything to lose and nothing to gain by any change — any *possible* change. When the Vatican Decrees were issued, about two dozen men, distinguished by intellect, character, and culture, refused submission, and thus virtually

assumed the position of "Old Catholics," like, for instance, Lord Acton, the best-read Catholic in England. But most of the Catholics adopted the new dogma. Thus the Roman Catholics recognised by Catholic emancipation are now represented by only a few honoured names, but very small in number, probably such as Lord Camoys, Lord Acton, Petre, Trevelyan, Simeon, Riddell, Oxenham, Thynne, Wetherall, Hemans, Blenherhasset, Maskell, Charlton, and some others. The Catholics who have embraced the new Catholicism are numerous and submissive; they deserve our high personal admiration, for their change, along with all their prelates, was most natural to expect, and undoubtedly as conscientious on their part as the action of the more learned of the laity who remained "Old Catholics." But it must not be supposed that the New Catholics are, generally speaking, grateful to Dr. Manning and the Papal faction for the revolution brought, numerically, to so successful an issue by their ecclesiastical tactics. English Catholics have undoubtedly been more interested in ecclesiastical matters than in political or national, and thus they have been easily led over into the Papal camp which their fathers renounced at the emancipation; but they inherit, along with all the old English virtues, the old English contempt for Italian domination. Our Government would have pleased English Catholics better if there had been less courting of ecclesiastics appointed by Rome, less seeking to carry out mere ecclesiastical polity. Any one intimate with the English Roman Catholic tone of thought must be full well aware how bitterly English gentlemen have bent beneath the yoke. It is worthy of note that Dr. Manning was nominated Archbishop by the Pope against the wish of the whole of the Diocesan Chapter. Not one vote was given for him. The English Roman Catholic families, grieved at his appointment, knew what it meant, feared the results,

dreaded the priestly yoke and the papal absolutism ; but, taught to submit, they did submit. It does not follow that we need submit likewise. Truthfulness, dignity, consistency, demand from us that we ignore a Neo-Catholicism which we have never nationally recognised. I am aware that for a time we may be hampered by the grave political difficulty of being bound to show special favour to the Episcopal Church of England, and that the Neo-Catholics may justly say, as you devote large sums of money to promote worship and education, according to the principles of Protestant or Ritualistic Anglicanism, as the case may be, why should you not continue to pay the Vicars Apostolic appointed by the Pope in some of our colonies ? Why not continue the payment of Neo-Catholic chaplains throughout India, in the Army, and elsewhere ?—why not perpetuate for the promulgation of Neo-Catholicism the favour and the funds you devoted for the Roman Catholicism which your Parliament recognised ? Doubtless it is always difficult to rise out of a false position ; but unless these anomalies are rectified, dangers await us far more serious than the transient unpopularity obtained by touching existing abuses.

Protestants have not yet realised the momentous character of the Revolution crowned at the Vatican. No wonder ; how could it be expected when intelligent Roman Catholics of lofty character and integrity, like Lord Herries and Sir George Bowyer, do not understand it ? I understand it, because as a Dominican and theologian I studied the whole question during the period of restless thought preceding the close of the conflict in July, 1870. It was that study which opened my eyes to the fallacy of the entire dogma of infallibility. Heretofore, Roman Catholics were only bound to believe in the infallibility of the Church in union with the Pope and speaking through the Pope. It was quite another question as to what

was needed to constitute an *ex cathedrâ* decree. Some affirmed that no decree was infallible unless issued in presence of a general council and with its concurrence; others affirmed that a decree was proved to be *ex cathedrâ* when accepted by the council dispersed; others affirmed that a decree was *ex cathedrâ* if issued with great solemnity after conferring with, and in union with, all the consultative congregations of the Roman Church. A Roman Catholic vacillated amongst these views according to the exigencies of history, conscience, common sense, or controversy. The most opposing opinions could be and were maintained by Bishops, scholars, and laymen. But now the Vatican Decrees have declared the Pope to be infallible whenever he intends to be so, and on whatever subject he declares to fall within the province of infallibility. Heretofore, the exercise of the Papal power was limited in action as well as in theory. National Churches and their Episcopate disputed his decisions and refused to obey his mandates. Those mandates could be only imposed under peculiar circumstances, but the present Pope has, during his long Pontificate, been concentrating power in himself. He commenced by utilising the prestige of his acknowledged position, and the affection inspired by the kindness of his disposition: but having attained an unprecedented power over all National Churches through such means, he culminated the strategy by first committing Bishops and the Faithful everywhere to bombastic declarations as to his divine and supreme prerogatives, and then taking them at their word, and requiring the exaggerated utterances of affectionate reverence to be formularised into articles of faith. They were caught in the trap they themselves had guilelessly fashioned. The Pope's well-known smile, half artful, half cheery, must have welcomed the accomplishment of his long cherished scheme. During the period of twenty years I was

Apostolic Missioner throughout England and Ireland I saw this power growing; we all dreaded it, for we saw what an agency would be lodged in the hands of a Pope abler than Pio Nono and less good, yet what could we do? The growing power was not generally being used for criminal objects, it was being exercised in England through ecclesiastics for the most part amiable and good. Thus there was nothing suddenly done of a nature to arouse and combine opposition; like the walls of the Temple, the chains were forged amidst a silence only disturbed by the reception of countless adulatory addresses, and blessings, and indulgences prodigally bestowed upon herds of people who listened to the Holy Father as he repeated again and again the story of his wrongs, his sufferings, his prerogatives, and his similarity to Jesus Christ, after a fashion which would have aroused the ludicrous in any minds not sunk too low to be capable of appreciating the ridiculous. But the result is far from being ludicrous. The Pope has established over the millions of adherents of the Vatican Church a two-fold tyranny—over every man, woman, and child, within his Church—the absolutism of a teaching which may never be even interiorly doubted; the absolutism of a rule which may never be with impunity disobeyed. This two-edged weapon hangs like the sword of Damocles over every one who dares to think, to write, to act, to rule, or to serve. At present, the Pope has only one great object of anxiety—the recovery of his former provinces—but hereafter other objects may arise. But more than the political and national consequences I do acutely mourn over the crushing mental and moral effect of such an absolutism over all conscience, all life, all energy, all thought. My intimate acquaintance with the personal excellence of English and Irish Roman Catholics, lay, cleric, and conventual, makes me deplore the more bitterly a despotism,

which must gradually destroy all the higher developments of character, and turn the descendants of the fine old English Catholic families into abject Jesuitical serfs. In the name of God, may such never be. Anyhow, may the people of England not expedite that fall by the imprudence and injustice of a persecution which would speedily unite those who may otherwise partially dissolve; or, on the other hand, by the misleading encouragement of patronage and compromise. We have no right to help minds and consciences into a bondage which, when embraced, separates the bondsman from humanity—the Church with its theocracy on one side: Humanity with the devil on the other side: such is the Papal conception. And, alas! the separation between the Papal subject and Humanity is complete: the outward tokens of courtesy or affection may be observed; but what love worth anything can exist between the blessed and the accursed; what even are the ministrations of mercy, if they are so designed, as out of men's affections and afflictions to forge the rivets of their servitude?

When we cease the legislation of religious favouritism, and commence the legislation of religious equality—when we treat all sects and institutions with justice, and the members of all sects and institutions with courtesy as well as justice—then shall we be in a position to apply the principles of common sense to conventual institutions. If the friends of conventual institutions realised the wide-spread dislike engendered by the multiplication of institutions where a two-fold absolutism is veiled in entire secrecy, they would be the first to seek a safeguard. The odious system of direction which during the last few years has been pervading the Roman Catholic laity, we are powerless to touch. But the friends of religious equality should warn any persons if they are carrying on a secrecy which could be remedied, but which if

continued will ere long lead to an outburst of indignation, a panic, and a persecution. Why should not gentlemen who have relations in convents and communities of men—why should not the superiors of such institutions propose a plan calculated to meet real and known inconveniences, and thus, moreover, to calm the just susceptibilities of the public mind? There ought to be a register preserved in the guest-room of every religious house, in which the real names of all inmates should be entered; inaccuracy of entry should be punishable by a fine; any person who could assign a rational reason should, under suitable restrictions, be enabled to examine such register. All this might be arranged so as not to cause any inconvenience to a conventual institution, but, above all, so as not to affix any stigma of dishonour or apparent suspicion.

Nearly all the unpleasant rumours against convents would have been suppressed at once had a precaution so simple and inoffensive been adopted; and, without dragging into print allusions to excellent communities of innocent and good people, I may be allowed to remark that occasionally there have been incidents, such as imbecile inmates kept in durance and also sometimes persons secreting themselves in conventual houses, and so evading the law, which easily give countenance to those countless suspicions which keep aggregating till they descend like an avalanche. The true friends of lasting religious equality must combine, along with the maintenance of these great principles, to abolish favouritism, and to adopt in a spirit of fairness and consideration, remedies demanded, not by bigotry, but by good sense.

Let me remark, in conclusion, that all my statements as to the Papal doctrines imposed on Neo-Catholics are founded, as may be easily verified, on direct quotations from the Decrees and the Encyclical. Much more remains behind—unsaid.

NOTE.

The book formerly deemed the best for the diffusion of Roman Catholic doctrines was Keenan's 'Controversial Catechism.' It was based on a French Catechism, and very widely circulated in Great Britain, bearing the imprimatur of all the Vicars Apostolic of Scotland. In it appeared the following, until withdrawn in the year 1869 :—

Q.—Must not Catholics believe the Pope himself to be infallible ?

A.—This is a Protestant invention : it is no Article of the Catholic Faith ; no decision of his can oblige, under pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching body—that is by the Bishops of the Church.

ADDRESS.

The following is a quotation from an address delivered by the Rev. James Martineau at Liverpool, September 25th, 1871, fourteen months after my secession from the Roman Catholic Church. In gratefully mentioning that ever-honoured and beloved name, may I be permitted to record that, trained as I had been to lean on the authority of others, my knowledge of the existence of such a spiritual character as his, developed in the ranks of Christian Theism, presented to my hopes an encouragement and a stimulus which the gentle diffidence of his genius would neither have desired or imagined :—

“ Another event has taken place recently with which I have had in some degree the privilege of a personal connection. A very eminent and remarkable man has given up his adherence to the Catholic religion, and has thrown himself among us as a preacher of pure and spiritual religion. I allude to the Rev. Robert Rodolph Suffield. Now, before Mr. Suffield’s name was heard amongst us, at his own request I early paid him a visit at his retreat in the country. I had intimate intercourse with him, and learned precisely his state of thought before he had made up his mind to the step he has now taken, and I was equally struck with the problem which was presented to his religious sense—what is the real essence and nature of Catholicism? Now, I found that the view Mr. Suffield took of Catholicism was this. He said, ‘ I see in the Catholic religion the only example in the world’s history in which the great and fundamental principles of all natural piety and of all natural conscience are made the actuating principles of the life of multitudes and of nations. The great doctrine of the moral government of God, the great truth of the absolute supremacy of conscience, the great hope of a future and better life—these things have imbued the Catholic mind, the mind even of the youngest children of the Catholic Church that have any intelligence at all. They are realities to the Catholic people. They speak of them with the same simplicity and openness with which they would speak of the work of their plough, of their spade, of their shuttle; with which they would speak of the concerns of their houses and their homes. There is no shyness concerning them. They are absolute realities to them, and rule their lives. We know that they control the passions of young people, and, if they go astray, by appealing to these images in their hearts we can recover them again. They are truly a power in life. And now,’ said Mr. Suffield, ‘ what I want to know is, whether outside the Catholic

Church those truths have the same power and reality, whether they take their places among the facts of life with the same certainty and with the same efficacy.' He looked upon the Catholic religion simply as an instrumentality for bringing home to men the simple natural convictions of the human heart, and making them live in their consciences and lives. Catholicism thus was to him nothing but a great system of natural religion supported by the most artificial and unnatural of authorities and supports. That is the view he took of it, and he said, 'What I want to know is, if I dare to throw away these artificial supports, shall I find it possible to administer this spiritual theism to mankind, and get hold of the hearts of men? Or am I to believe that it is impossible for the weak mind of humanity to grapple those truths, unless you have a false mythology, and all sorts of pictures and images connected with them? Does the religion enter by means of the false imagination, or may we fling away the false imagination and trust to the spiritual power of religion?' That was the problem he had to solve for himself, and he said, 'I fear if I were to profess myself a Protestant I should be propping up these eternal truths with just as false and entangled a machinery as if I were to remain in the Catholic Church. For, if there is no infallibility in the Catholic Church, neither is there in the Protestant Scriptures, and whether I take the one or the other, I throw away natural truths, and fling myself instead on an artificial and unnatural support.' Well, I believe myself that Mr. Suffield here expressed a great truth; and I think the changes which are now taking place in the Protestant Churches are all of this kind. The tendency is to fling away the false dependence upon artificial authority, and to go back to the primitive rights of religion in human nature and in human life. I said to him I should feel it an impiety and infidelity—the only thing I should venture to call infidelity at all—

to doubt that what God had made true could vindicate and justify itself to the human heart without any human lies to back it up and support it. If we once found that a thing was a lie, and was false, or even if it was precarious, it was at the peril of all veracity and of all fidelity that we dared to place that as a means of underpinning, as it were, and supporting an eternal and all-important truth."

RESULTS OF INFALLIBILITY.

Meanwhile there are already signs of a coming conflict in quarters where they might hardly have been looked for. There is probably no section of the Church, beyond the walls of Rome itself, where the dominant spirit is so fiercely and fervently Ultramontane as among the Roman Catholics of England. Nor is the phenomenon difficult to account for. They form a small body in the midst of an unfriendly population, and the old Catholic families are at once united together and inspired with zeal by the long tradition of privations and persecutions patiently endured for their faith. And then, at the moment when legal disabilities and social ostracism were beginning to be relaxed, came the irruption of converts who had sacrificed most of them all the associations, interests, and affections of half a lifetime for their adopted creed, and whose leaders, as one of themselves has observed, were with one illustrious exception, "Ultramontanes before they were Catholics." The late Cardinal Wiseman, whose earlier policy was of a very different kind, was completely carried away by the current; his successor has been throughout the guiding spirit of the infallibilist bishops at the Council, and all the younger generation of priests have been trained on the convert model. One of them insisted not long ago, from the pulpit of a well-known Roman Catholic church in the metropolis, that it is not to believe the infallibility of the Pope's official judgments; every opinion on whatever subject he expresses in conversation is infallible. Yet a resolute opposition is beginning to manifest itself among both the clergy and laity of the Roman Catholic Church in England. We have given several examples of this before now, and we mentioned the other day that the infallibilist address presented under strong pressure for the adoption of the English clergy had been by no means unanimously signed. Dr.

Rymer, President of the diocesan Seminary of St. Edmund's, Ware, scandalised the *Tablet* by writing to express his emphatic disapproval of it. But the tone and language of the letter of refusal addressed to its promoters by Father Suffield, and published apparently by his request in the *Westminster Gazette*, is so remarkable that it deserves record here. The writer is the best known and one of the ablest and most active of the English Dominicans—a Cambridge man, though not, we believe, a convert; and it is hardly likely, considering the stringent discipline of religious communities, that he would venture on so bold a protest unless he felt assured of the moral support of his Order; and such an inference is strongly confirmed by the attitude of the Dominican Cardinal Guidi. Father Suffield says:—

"Knowing with what earnest desire the enemies of our religion, with taunting speech, at once urge us and defy us to proclaim, after 1,800 years, the foundation of our Christianity; knowing the deep repugnance with which, under the pressure of ecclesiastical opinion and ecclesiastical prospects, canons, priests, and bishops, have signed declarations pleasing to ecclesiastical superiors, and repugnant to their private opinions; knowing with an intimate and sad knowledge that the moot-ing of this question has led to investigations, and then to inquiries, which have paralysed the faith in the minds of numbers of the clergy and of the intellectual laity, and with not a few destroyed it, I must respectfully decline to sign a document in which petitioners ask for a definition, the animus and consequence of which few can be so thoughtless as not to perceive.

"If we get a Pope vain, obstinate, and in his dotage, shall we ask him to be confirmed in his powers of mischief?"

"Do we wish, by exalting the lessons of the encyclical, to render political life impossible to every honest and consistent Catholic, and to render the possession of political and religious equality impracticable to any except those sort of Catholics who would use the language of liberty when they beg, and the precepts of the Pope when they refuse?"

It is scarcely possible to misapprehend the pointed allusion to the case of "a Pope vain, obstinate, and in his dotage," and the majority of the Vatican Council has certainly done what it can to "confirm him in his powers of mischief." Father Suffield must be presumed to speak from his own knowledge when he refers to the numbers of clergy and educated laity whose faith has been already paralysed or destroyed by inquiries into Papal infallibility, and his testimony is borne out by others; it is hardly wonderful that he should look with serious alarm at the further consequences

that may ensue. The wonder is that those who wish faith to be maintained and strengthened should be so "thoughtless" as to exult over the "mischief" they have helped to perpetrate. It is rather late to remind them now of the homely proverb that the last straw will break the camel's back, and this straw is a tolerably weighty one.—*Saturday Review*, of July 30th, 1870.

FATHER SUFFIELD AND THE NEW DOGMA.

The newspapers inform us that Father Suffield, late of the Dominican Order, has joined the Unitarian community; he has not only renounced his obedience to the Church of Rome, but has apparently renounced also his obedience to the Catholic Faith. This is very sad, yet not unexpected after reading his last published letters. The case is one that arrests our attention, not only on account of the learning and abilities of Father Suffield, but because it will form, we fear, only a type of many such cases; nor is this difficult to understand. Brought up with the principle, instilled from earliest childhood, that the Church of Rome is alone the Catholic Church, excluding the Orthodox and the Anglican; that the supremacy of the Pope over the whole Catholic world is the normal idea of the Church, so completely that those who do not acknowledge that supremacy are cut off from the promises and privileges of the Church, even though, like Greeks and Anglicans, they retain all else necessary to their continuing portions of the Body of Christ; with these opinions so strongly impressed on the mind, it is inevitable that there must be a most violent reaction when the dogma of Infallibility is made an article of Faith by what claims to be a General Council. For this dogma is not only a new article of Faith, but it is one which contradicts much that had been previously held as true; it virtually rejects the authority of General Councils as the voice of the Church, and thus places the Church herself in a new position. By removing the supreme authority from the Body, and placing it in one man, who is supposed to be the head, the original Charter as granted by her Divine Head is abrogated, and a new one substituted for it. It is no longer, "Tell it to the Church," it is "Tell it to the Pope;" it is no longer, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican;" but, "If he neglect to hear the Pope"—very naturally the Faith of those who have been educated, as Father Suffield has been, by Dominicans, will be violently shaken, and their minds thrown off their balance, when they are called upon by the authority

of the Church to accept the decree of the personal Infallibility of the Pope. And this reaction is very liable to go to further lengths than we at first anticipate ; we are apt to expect that those who, like Father Suffield, repudiate the dogma, and consequently find their position as Priests in the Roman Church untenable, will turn to the Anglican. We should rejoice to think that the Anglican would form a safe home for those who reject the dogma, but we fear it will not be so ; we are far more afraid that Father Suffield's example will be followed by larger numbers than those who seek refuge with us. We do not sufficiently consider the habits of thought and mind which are formed by Roman teaching. In that community the whole Catholic Faith is wrapped up in, and becomes a part of, the belief in the Papal Supremacy ; the very rudiments of the Faith, the Incarnation, the Holy Trinity, the Sacraments, are all tied up in the idea of the sole supremacy of the Church of Rome, and the Pope at the head of it ; the idea of the Catholic Church or any part existing, except under the Roman obedience, is entirely excluded as impossible. When, therefore, a rude shock comes like this, which destroys all faith in the Pope and the Roman Church, it destroys all faith in other dogmas too.—*Church Herald.*

The dogma of Infallibility is producing its necessary fruit. Not even Rome can altogether stop inquiry or fetter thought, and spiritual absolutism finds its own subjects ready to question its decrees. Already there is a movement in Germany which bears striking resemblance to that of the fifteenth century. A meeting of Roman Catholic professors at Nuremberg has already agreed upon a protest against the spiritual despotism of the Pope, and the *Cologne Gazette* states that the Bishop of Rothenberg, Dr. Hefele, has resolved not to accept the Infallibility Dogma, and that his Chapter and the theological faculty of the city of Tübingen support him in it. Even in this country, where Roman Catholicism is more Roman than Rome, the dogma is producing confusion and distress in the minds of the faithful.

As the immediate result of the Council's work, the secession of Father Suffield from the Church of Rome is worthy of more notice than is due to merely individual change of opinion. Father Suffield is a man to whom the Roman Catholics of England are willing to confess large obligations. He is said to have revived the establishment of Peter's Pence in this country, to have done much in recruiting the regiment of Papal Zouaves, and to have held the first public meeting of sympathy for the Pope ever held in modern England. A

correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* says, "it has been impossible to have been much under Father Suffield's influence without becoming intensely devoted to everything Catholic," and that "the Prayer-book connected with his name has probably been more instrumental than any other popular manual in spreading faith wherever English-speaking Catholics are to be found." The Prior of the Dominican House in London, of which order Father Suffield is a prominent member, speaks of him as "a brother of the same order, whose personal friendship I enjoyed before either of us became Dominicans, and whose zeal and apostolic spirit I have ever held in the greatest admiration."

But Father Suffield seems to have felt somewhat as Father Newman felt, that though the Infallibility was a dogma to be received as an act of devotion, it was not to be defended as an article of the faith. "It becomes essential," he says, "that unless failure of reason be impossible to an aged Pope, there should be some means at least of recognising when his decrees are to be regarded as the acts of man, when as those of God." The shock of disagreement and difference which has been caused by the proclamation of the Infallibility dogma has, however, shaken the whole fabric of the eloquent Dominican's creed. "An incident, not regretted by me," he says, "has revealed, almost by accident, the hidden struggle of years." Of this struggle he says, "it has been the agony of years." His doubts have not risen from within, but have been forced upon him from without. He "sought solitude first in the cloister, then solitude greater in a country village amidst simple people and the children of his flock, that he might dispel difficulties and doubts. If those difficulties and doubts have been wrong, none but the highest rulers of the Church have been responsible for them; they have not been a pleasure, but an agony; not a pride, but a humiliation." Father Suffield has, therefore, been driven out of the Church by the declaration of the Papal Infallibility. His case is simply one of thousands, and is only rendered remarkable by his own previous services to the Church. The Pope and his Council have raised more doubts than they will solve, and in grasping at the shadow of Infallibility they will miss the substance of authority.—*Daily News*.

Father Suffield, the eloquent Dominican, whose protest against the most memorable act of the Vatican Council has excited some attention in this country, has gone a step beyond the rejection of the dogma of Papal Infallibility. He has quitted the Roman Communion. It would seem that as soon

as the fact became known overtures were made to him with the view of his joining the Anglican Church. He has declined to do so. The Articles and the Athanasian Creed block the way; indeed he "questions alike the Infallibility of the Pope and of the Scriptures." He throws in his lot with "those who are commonly called Unitarians, Free Christians or Christian Theists," and states, in effect, that he intends to accept the office of a minister in a Free Christian Congregation.—*Manchester Guardian*.

A due following out of opinions curiously led Dr. Newman to the Roman Church, and his brother, Professor Newman, to pure Theism. In like manner the two Herberts—the one the free-thinking Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the other the sainted poet of the English Church: these men felt the philosophical impossibility of a middle position. We shall watch Mr. Suffield's career with high interest. He will not go in with the company of Exeter Hall, but sets forth alone in his quest of truth. There is something very touching, and very manly too, in his statement of the sufferings of mind and heart, "which his secession has involved." Father Suffield has taken the great leap from authority to freedom.—*Dispatch*.

FATHER SUFFIELD AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

August 22, 1870.

MY DEAR SIR,—Private communications are so very numerous at present, that I cannot conveniently add to my occupations by contributing the literary help you do me the favour of offering. Moreover that able periodical partakes somewhat of a controversial character, and is regarded as anti-Catholic in its position. I am peculiarly circumstanced, have resigned all offices in the Catholic Church, and ceased the exercise of priestly and Catholic rites: from the intimate manner in which I have been interwoven in the Catholic body in England, this act causes great pain to those whom the least I should like to wound; and I am anxious to do nothing but what is demanded by the exigencies of circumstances or the requirements of conscience, which could in the slightest degree grieve those who have so many claims upon my affection, gratitude, and reverence.

After long and deep thought, study, prayer, and counsel, I decided that it would be impossible for me honestly to continue to act as a priest. The infallibility of the Pope, and,

of the Scriptures, alike, I question, and the dogmas resting solely on either of those authorities, I am not able on that account to admit.

It is my desire to unite with others, and to assist them in the worship of God, and in the practice of the two-fold precepts of charity, unfettered by adhesion on either side, to anything, beyond those great fundamental principles as presented to us by Jesus Christ.

Though relieved from all the obligations of my order, I do not wish to consider myself as alienated from the Catholic Church or from other Christian communities, by any personal hostile act. I assume a position hostile to none—if one man hurls an anathema, another man is not compelled either to accept it, or to retaliate it.

Having understood that those who are commonly called Unitarians, Free Christians, or Christian Theists, thus agree in the liberty inspired by self-diffidence, humility, and charity, to carry on the worship of God, without sectarian requirements or sectarian opposition; that they possess a simple but not vulgar worship, a high standard of virtue, intelligence, and integrity; and these after the Christian type, moulded by the Christian traditions, and edified by the sacred Scriptures; holding the spirit taught by Jesus Christ, and the great thoughts by virtue of which he built up the ruins of the moral world; and yet not enforcing the reception of complicated dogmas as a necessity, or accounting their rejection a crime: a communion of Christian worshippers, bound loosely together, and yet by the force of great principles enabled quietly to maintain their position, to exercise an influence elevating and not unimportant, and to present religion under an aspect which thoughtful men can accept without latent scepticism, and earnest men without the aberrations of superstition, or the abjectness of mental servitude to another—such approved itself to my judgment, and commended itself to my sympathy.

I intend adhering to the pursuits of the clergyman and of the Christian teacher, and communications are in progress in another part of England which may terminate in my accepting thus a duty conformable to the habits of my life, and which will not throw me into a position of hostility, or embarrassment as to those honoured and loved Catholic friends with whom so greatly I should prize, if it were possible to maintain kindly intercourse, inasmuch as I am only externally severed from them by my being unable to believe certain dogmas which a Catholic is bound to regard as essential. Thus I hope I have not only thanked you for your obliging offer, but adequately explained my position, and showed that the future you were commissioned to hold out to me in the Established Church

would not be deemed possible by the authorities who have done me the honour and kindness to communicate in my regard, as soon as they are made aware that the Articles and the Athanasian creed would be amongst the insuperable barriers to my entertaining such a proposal.

Many write to me evidently under a grievous misapprehension. They anticipate from me reckless denunciations of that vision of beauty which I have left, simply because, like a vision, it had everything but reality. Allied as I am by relationship with some of our ancient Catholic families, allied by the ties of friendship with many more of them, I feel it is a shame to myself that any stranger could suppose one word of my lips, one thought of my mind, could cast moral reproach on those beautiful and honoured homes where old traditions received a lustre greater even than antiquity and suffering can bestow—crowned with the aureola of charity, nobleness, purity, and devotedness. Such memories print on my heart their everlasting record. To cease to believe and to worship with them was a martyrdom, which none but the Catholic can understand.

I have ascended now to another stage of my life ; to rise to it needed sufferings of the mind and of the heart, the sacrifice of everything in the world I cared for ;—but I perceive a work to do, and, by the blessing of God, I shall strive to perform it. Youth, strength, vigour, and hope return to me with the expectation. Truth obtained by suffering is doubly dear to the possessor.—Very sincerely yours,

ROBERT RODOLPH SUFFIELD.

To the Rev. — &c., &c.

N.B.—All the above paragraphs, from different periodicals, are extracted from *Church Opinion*.

ALSO,

BY THE REV. R. R. SUFFIELD,

FIVE LETTERS ON CONVERSION TO ROMAN

CATHOLICISM - - - - - 3d.

IS JESUS GOD? - - - - - 3d.

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