

## “FOR GOD AND IRELAND.”

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To the Most Reverend Dr. Nulty, Bishop of Meath.

My Lord,

I have just published another pamphlet, entitled “For God and Ireland,” and although I know your Lordship cannot agree with my views on polemics, I know also that you are not averse to fair and friendly discussion on any subject interesting to Irishmen; so, lest I might be considered discourteous or unfriendly, I send with this a copy of my latest publication, with my most respectful regards.

Your Lordship may possibly feel curious to know why I published that pamphlet – a very reasonable curiosity, no doubt. Then, to satisfy you, my Lord, permit me to say that in your famous Pastoral, published immediately after I had put in circulation my other paper, “Ireland’s Greatest Evil, and its Antidote,” your Lordship, in speaking of those who, like me, had seceded from Rome, attributed motives neither sufficient in one sense nor honourable in the other, leaving the inference that sound reasons could not be given for leaving Rome and joining Ireland; and to shew that I had good reasons for my change, I have explained them in “For God and Ireland.” You will find, my Lord, that I had two very important ones. First, as an Irishman, I could no longer remain a subject of the Court of Rome, as my reading of history convinced me that, ever since the Englishman Pope Adrian IV. and the English King Henry II. conspired with John of Sailsbury and others to deprive Ireland of her ancient faith under the plea of teaching the truths of Christianity to “a rude and barbarous people,” and “reforming them from their filthy life and abominable conversation,” for the sake of Peter’s Pence and other emoluments, the Court of Rome has been the persistent although well-disguised enemy of Ireland; and the best and most straightforward way to test that thesis is, in my humble opinion, to put the historical facts before the public, and give to the people of Ireland an opportunity of giving their verdict; this I do with perfect confidence, in the interest of God and Ireland. The second reason is like unto this.

I feel satisfied that His Eminence Cardinal Newman was correct in stating that the Church of Rome does not now teach the doctrines taught by our Divine Redeemer and His Apostles; and with your permission I shall add a little tilly for Old Ireland's sake: it is this – nor by St. Patrick. Indeed I can supply a corollary, as I may say the Roman Church does not teach what it taught sixty years ago; for if your Lordship refer to the eleventh section of the declaration of faith sworn to by the Irish Bishops in 1826, you will read – “That it is not an article of the Catholic faith; neither are they thereby required to believe that the Pope is infallible.” That is not taught now. Compare it with the following extract from the Vatican Decree on infallibility: – “We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed. That the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra* – that is, when in discharge of the office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal church – is, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith and morals; and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves and not from the consent of the Church irreformable. But if anyone (which may God avert) presume to contradict this our definition, *let him be anathema*. Given at Rome in public session solemnly held in the Vatican Basilica, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy, on the eighteenth day of July, in the twenty-fifth year of our Pontificate. “In conformity with the original, JOSEPH, BISHOP of St. POLTEN, Secretary to the Vatican Council.”

According to that decree those who cannot bring their consciences to believe the Pope endowed with one of God's attributes – infallibility, – are placed in a very strange position. They are at the best under the censure of the Church, if not completely outside the Pale; for Cardinal Wiseman writes – For no one *is*, or can be, a Catholic, but by his entire submission to the authority of his Church – (*Lectures on the Catholic Church*, vol. i., p. 37.) According to the decree of Intention, explained in “For God and Ireland,” unless the priest have proper intention, he neither makes nor administers a sacrament; so when he knows a parishioner to be an unbeliever or doubter regarding infallibility, he cannot, even though he be willing, administer a valid sacrament to one who is anathematised, in health, out of health, or dead. It is all very fine to say he is absolved, but how long does the penitent remain before the sin against infallibility is again committed?

My Lord, I never could believe Pius the Ninth to be infallible. If my memory serve me, you and several other Irish Bishops protested strongly in the Council against that decree, so did the American Bishops, and it was only after the dissentients left, that the Italian Bishops managed their point. Now, you and all Roman Catholics must believe, whether you like or not, what the Irish Bishops in 1826 swore they did not believe as an article of faith; yet you ask people to believe your doctrine unchanged and unchangeable; they are nothing of the sort, my Lord.

I have a pretty clear recollection of some events that occurred in 1848. It was an eventful year, my Lord; and I remember when the down-trodden people of the Papal States revolted against the despotic Government of Pope Pius the Ninth, the first legally infallible Pope. He deserted his post and fled to Gaeta, disguised as a coachman, after his confidential Minister, Cardinal Rossi, was assassinated, when the people took possession of the city. Pope Pius did not then aspire to a martyr's crown – distinguished ecclesiastics don't appear to attach much value to such a prize now. Evidently he forgot to say "Non possumus"; or perhaps in the hurry of the moment the first words to his mind were those used by our drawing-room professors of magic – "presto fly!"

The Pope remained in Gaeta until the French army took Rome for him, after butchering thousands of his unfortunate subjects; then he returned; protected by French soldiers, and remained in the "Chair of Peter," protected by 20,000 bayonets, red with the blood of Roman citizens, until, like another Moses, the chosen of God, who released the Israelites from the bondage of the Priests of Isis, Victor *Emanuel* (which, translated, means "God with us") released the Italians from the tyranny of the priests of Rome, then filling all the civil as well as ecclesiastical offices of the kingdom. I am asked to believe that Pius the Ninth an Infallible Being. Now, my Lord, I shall give you very plainly my opinion on the matter, and then you will see that I could not honestly remain a Roman Catholic, or unless as an intruder.

A true believer in Christ must not be a coward. The man who deserts his post in the moment of danger is a coward: consequently, Pius the Ninth could not have been a true Christian; and it follows that is it absurd to say he, the tyrannical oppressor of the Roman people, could have been Christ's Vicar on earth, or in a position to transmit, or bequeath, hand over, or in any way give apostolic authority to "the prisoner in the Vatican" who to-day, if the truth dared be told in Ireland, is among the citizens of Rome who remember the tyranny and intolerance of the late Papal Government, as unpopular as were sometimes back in Ireland, Foxy Jack and Buckshot. Why not let the people of Ireland know the real state of affairs in Rome? If your Lordship cannot in your official capacity do it, then why should not your humble servant?

Pius the Ninth was a coward, a most unmitigated coward and tyrant. Surely it is time Ireland knew the truth. Can you disprove this statement, my Lord? If so, I shall be happy to retract it. It was, no doubt, very painful for your Lordship to be obliged to denounce me as “basely apostatising.” However, your oath of allegiance to the Court of Rome left you no alternative, and I do not blame you any more than I blame Tommy Murray, the sub-sheriff, for evicting me; both of you had ugly duty to perform, and you did it, and would do it again – honourably, of course ; and, with the blessing of God, I shall do mine to God and Ireland quite as honourably and quite as firmly. Now, allow me to remind your Lordship of the evil effect of clerical denunciation and such unchristian methods of filling the treasury of the Court of Rome and another place I shall not name. We see the results of altar denunciations frequently in the annoyance men of independent mind are obliged to endure, from corner-boys, termagants, and gutterbully fanatics, who fancy they glorify God by profaning everything sacred in their fiery zeal for the Court of Rome, which, owing to lamentable ignorance, they mistake for “the old faith.”

Who are to blame? Their instructors, of course, and not the unfortunate dupes themselves. As your Lordship is aware, it was my duty to report for the Press in your diocese; but your Lordship may not be aware that it was my very painful duty to report the evidence given on several inquests held on the bodies of murdered men, who had been denounced by the clergy. Should you wish for further particulars, I shall feel it my duty to satisfy your Lordship. On such occasions there is generally great difficulty in discovering a plausible excuse to put before the public, and various reasons are assigned; but it is nevertheless pretty well known among the initiated what the motives for the outrage were. I do not blame the ignorant Thug who pulls the trigger, comparatively speaking; but I think too much censure could not be hurled on the head of any man professing to teach Christianity who lends himself to the carrying out of the third canon of the fourth Council of Lateran and other infamous Papal coercive acts, of which I, when a Catholic, knew nothing, and, if known to Roman Catholics in Ireland, they would not more lend themselves to, than they would to Lucifer. It is all very well to say those Italian laws are not in force now. I say they are! I have seen the spirit at work, and its lamentable effects; and I mean to let my countrymen know more about them, if “the Inquisitor of heretical depravity” does not make short work of me. However, if he do, then God’s will be done; others will take my place, until the world knows the “abomination of desolation” from whence such laws originate, and the miseries they brought on Ireland, and will do, until the laity know the truth which shall make them free. I should be one of the last in the world to open old sores, unless in the hope of healing. Painful operations must, however, be endured for health’s sake; and if medical men were afraid to operate, or patients too nervous to undergo treatment, more valuable lives would be lost than succumb to operations.

Taking this view, I think your Lordship will permit me to proceed with my operation, in the hope of improving the health of Ireland. Now, my Lord, I have some knowledge of the doctrines of the two churches, perhaps about as much as a moderately-intelligent layman might be expected to pick up; and I now know what I did not comprehend when I was a Roman Catholic, namely, that both the Church of Rome and the Church of Ireland hold the fundamental and essential truths of the Christian doctrine. It is in the doctrinal superstructures raised by the ingenuity of man we find those crotchety points of divergence which destroy harmony. Why not re-arrange the superstructures, and so meet the requirements of the laity of all sects of Christians, and give us unity?

What the ingenuity of man invented, the ingenuity of other men may improve. In my humble opinion, the Irish Divines of to-day are as intelligent and as pious as those of Italy or other countries, and quite as competent to hold a general or Ecumenical Council of the Irish Christian Church in one of our old council towns as their predecessors before the Anglo-Roman invasion in 1172. Possibly the laity of Ireland would pray quite as devoutly if they knew that they were all joined in a new National Church, regulated by Irish ecclesiastics independent of Italians, who have as much sympathy for Ireland as a cat for a canary. What is to prevent Irishman of all sects joining hands to re-establish the ancient Church of St. Patrick? If the laity determine on doing so, the clergy must fall into their views, or starve! Then by all means remodel the superstructures to suit the requirements of the nineteenth century, and let us have an Irish National Church with an Irish National Parliament.

This is not so visionary as at first sight it may appear, my Lord. Since I published my pamphlet, "Ireland's Greatest Evil, and its Antidote," in which I hinted at such a projection, I have had numbers of letters from various parts of Ireland instructing me that among intelligent Roman Catholics there is a growing desire for some man of position and worth to lead a movement having for its inspiration, "Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Such a man would have every good man in Ireland at his back. People are sick of sectarian strife. It beggars the poor man and enriches ecclesiastics. Seldom has its evil influence been so apparent as of late. We saw its working in the rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. While the Roman Catholic Clergy of Ireland were doing their utmost to promote the Bill, the Roman Catholic Clergy of England, with Cardinal Manning, were working tooth and nail against it, fearing that if the Irish members left London there would be no party in Parliament to fight the battle of the Court of Rome and the English Roman Catholics, who were seldom, if ever, the friends of Ireland; thus again Roman intrigue has brought disappointment to Ireland, and, strange to say, Irishmen pay Peter's Pence for it.

Strange as it may appear, the priests of Ireland did unwittingly more harm than good to the Home Rule cause. Of course they were excellent organisers, and worked wonders in collecting funds and getting up demonstrations, &c.; but they not alone kept a number of influential Irishman with wealth out of the movement, but made them appear hostile, owing to its undoubtedly sectarian character, and not truly National one. You will possibly recollect, my Lord, that six years ago I publicly expressed my opinion in Mullingar that “a single moment of the life consecrated to the service of God should not be wasted in the service of Mammon.” That is my opinion still, and I firmly believe that much of the disappointment which arises to the Irish people is due to that lax morality which fails to distinguish the things that belong to Caesar from the things that belong to God.

What an anomaly Irish politics now presents, my Lord! While the people of England, Scotland, and Wales are holding out the hand of friendship to Ireland, and expressing in the fullest and most satisfactory language, and by their acts shewing their deep and sincere desire to do the most complete justice to Ireland, in atonement for and honestly acknowledging the wrongs perpetrated in the past, Rome whispers, No, you must not give Home Rule to Ireland! I want the Irish members in London; they were always useful and willing instruments in my hands to protect my interests in Great Britain and her colonies, and I cannot afford to lose them. So, the Court of Rome, at the present date, plays the same game with Ireland as she did when Pope John XXII. excommunicated King Edward Bruce and his Irish army to please Edward II., or when, in 1799, it ordered petitions in favour of the Act of Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland to be signed at every Roman Catholic chapel door in Ireland. Now, my Lord, do you begin to discover why I seceded from your anti-Irish Roman Church, and take my stand with God and Ireland? Hoping that your Lordship will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Pamphlet I send you, and praying God Almighty, the Divine Dispenser of all good gifts, to grant you the grace of wisdom to distinguish between your duty as an ecclesiastic, to Rome and England, and your duty as an Irishman to God and Ireland,

I remain, with becoming respect,  
Faithful to Ireland and a rebel to Rome,  
“THE EVICTED TENANT.”  
“RIGHTS AND WRONGS.”

*Mullingar, 10th July, 1886.*

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*Just Published – “For God And Ireland,” price 6d., by post 6 1/2 d.; also “Ireland’s Greatest Evil and its Antidote,” price 6d., by post 6 1/2d.*  
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