

these circumstances he had only one course to take. He could not abandon principles he sincerely held. He could not reject the judgment of the Holy See without committing the sin of apostasy. "The principles had not ceased to be true, nor the authority to be legitimate, because the two were in contradiction." He could only sacrifice the *Home and Foreign Review*. He regretted its discontinuance, because, while there were plenty of magazines to represent science apart from religion, and religion apart from science, it had been his special object to exhibit the two in union. But he had no alternative, if he were to preserve his intellectual honesty and also his loyalty to the Church.

It would have been difficult to emerge with more credit from a peculiarly painful and delicate position. The article, and with it the last number of the *Review*, appeared in April 1864, when Sir John Acton was thirty years of age. The surpassing prudence which accompanied him from boyhood through life had no connection with weakness nor timidity. It resulted from a very rare faculty of apprehending all aspects of a question at once, and of keeping them separate in his mind. In this same year 1864 Acton told one of his parliamentary friends, the late Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, that he had never felt the slightest doubt about any dogma of the Catholic, meaning the Roman Catholic, Church. A time was to come when his faith would be more severely tried. But, independent as he had always been, Acton was not formed by nature to be a leader of revolts. Moral or intellectual anarchy was the last thing he desired. If he had been brought up a Protestant, he would probably have remained one. In that case, however, he would have seen the danger of private interpretation even more clearly than the perils of dogmatic despotism. He would have asked, if, as Bishop Butler says, we must judge of revelation itself by reason, whose reason it was to be.

At the close of the year 1864, the tenth anniversary of the date on which he had himself proclaimed the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin as a dogma, the