

And, indeed, reasonable men may well inquire what good purpose is served by this declaration. It is insulting, and at variance with the first principles of common politeness, and is therefore scarcely a fitting expression to fall from the lips of the sovereign. Besides condemning Catholic belief, it perpetuates the ancient and exceedingly offensive falsehood, that the Pope can dispense with the truth and permit evasion, equivocation or mental reservation, and it makes the entirely gratuitous assumption that English Protestants have a monopoly of the use of words according to their plain and evident meaning :

"And I," says the sovereign, "do solemnly in the presence of God profess, testify and declare that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope or any other authority or person whatsoever."

Now, is there anything unreasonable in Catholics moving to have this Declaration abolished? Why should this continual and groundless suspicion be kept alive against us? When we ask for absolute religious equality with all other citizens of the empire, are we making an exorbitant demand? We are not seeking special favors. Our request is that Catholic doctrines, held sacred by us, should not be made the object of royal condemnation and shameful insult. The sovereign of the British empire rules a mixed people, and no offensive word should pass the royal lips regarding even the humblest and most insignificant object. We ask Protestants to deal with us in this matter as they should wish us to deal with them in similar circumstances. And in referring to Protestants, it may be of importance to point out to them that the Declaration to which we object is not the coronation oath itself, but something quite independent of, and much subject to, the coronation oath. We are in no sense asking for the abolition of the oath by which the sovereign swears to maintain the Protestant religion by law established, nor are we attempting to interfere with the provision of the Bill of Rights which enacts that the sovereign must be a Protestant. Our concern is solely with that Declaration which attaches to our religious beliefs epithets so offensive and so unjust that we can scarcely be expected to remain