

may urge that this opinion can be cogently defended, but an opinion it is; for say, O ye who hold it, how many of you would die rather than doubt it? Do you now hold it sinful to doubt it? or rather, as I have already said, do you not think it allowable, natural, necessary, becoming, humble-minded and sober-minded to doubt it? do you not almost think better of a man for doubting it, provided he does not follow his doubts and end in disbelieving it?

Hence these very same persons, who speak so severely of any one who leaves the communion in which he was born, doubting of it themselves, are in consequence led to view his act as an affront done to their body, rather than as an evil to him. They consider it as a personal affront to a party and an injury to a cause, and the affront is greater or less according to the mischief which it does them in the particular case. It is not his loss but their inconvenience, which is the real measure of his sin. If a person is in any way important or useful to them, they will protest against his act; if he is troublesome to them, if he goes (as they say) too far, if he is a scandal, or a centre of perverse influence, or in any way disturbs the order and welfare of their body, they are easily reconciled to his proceeding; the more courteous of them congratulate him on his honesty, and the more bitter congratulate themselves on being rid of him. Is such the feeling of a mother and of kinsmen towards a son and a brother? "Can a mother forget her babe, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Did a man leave the Catholic Church, our first feeling, my brethren, as you know so well, would be one of awe and fear; we should consider that, though we were even losing a scandal to us, still that our gain would be nothing in comparison to his loss. We know that none can desert the Church without quenching an inestimable gift of grace; that he has already received a definite influence and effect upon his soul such as he cannot dispossess himself of it without the gravest sin; that though he may have had many temptations to disbelieve, they are only like temptations to sensuality, harmless without his willing co-operation. This is why the Church does not allow him to reconsider the question of her own divine mission; because such inquiries, though the appointed means of entering her pale, are superseded on his entrance by the gift of a spiritual sight, a gift which consumes doubt so utterly; that henceforth it is not that he must not, but that he cannot entertain it except by his own great culpability; and therefore must not, because he cannot. This is what we hold, and are conscious of, my brethren; and, as holding it, we never could feel satisfaction and relief, on first hearing of the defection of a brother, be he ever so unworthy, ever so scandalous; our first feeling would be sorrow. We are in fact often obliged to bear with scandalous members against our will, from charity to them; but those, whose highest belief is but an inference, who are obliged to go over in their minds from time to time the reasons and the grounds of their creed, lest they should happen to be left without their conclusion, these persons not having faith, have no opportunity for charity, and think that when a man leaves them who has given them any trouble, it is a double gain, to him that he is where he is better fitted to be, to themselves that they are at peace.

What I have been saying will account for another thing, which otherwise will surprise us. The world cannot believe that Catholics really hold what they profess to hold; and supposes that, if they are educated men, they are kept up to their professions by external influence, by superstitious fear, by pride, by interest, or other bad or unworthy motive. Men of the world have never believed in their whole life, never had simple faith in things unseen, never have had more than opinion about them, that they might be true and might be false, but probably were true, or doubtless were true; and in consequence they think an absolute, unhesitating faith in any thing unseen simply an extravagance, and especially when it is exercised on objects which they do not believe themselves, or even reject with scorn or abhorrence. And hence they prophesy that the Catholic Church must fall, in proportion as men are directed to the sober examination of their own thoughts and feelings, and to the separation of what is real and true from what is a matter of words and pretence. They cannot understand how our faith in the Blessed Sacrament is a genuine living portion of our minds; they think it a mere profession which we embrace with no inward assent but because we are told that we shall be lost unless we profess it; or because the Catholic Church has in dark ages committed herself to it, and we cannot help ourselves, though we would, if we could, and therefore receive it by constraint, from a sense of duty towards our cause, or in a spirit of party. They will not believe but what we would gladly get rid of the doctrine of transubstantiation, as a large stone about our necks, if we could. What shocking words to use! It would be wrong to use them, were they not necessary to make you understand, my brethren, the privilege which you have, and the world has not. Shocking indeed and most profane! a relief to rid ourselves of the doctrine that Jesus is on our Altars! as well say a relief to rid ourselves of the belief that Jesus is God; to rid ourselves of the belief that there is a God. Yes, that I suppose is the true relief, to believe nothing at all, or not to be bound to believe any thing; to believe first one thing, then another, to believe what we please for as long as we please; that is, not to believe, but to have an opinion about every thing, and let nothing sit close upon us, to commit ourselves to nothing; to keep the unseen world altogether at a distance. But if we are to believe any thing at all; if we are to take some propositions or dogmas as true, why it should be a burden to believe what is so gracious; and what so concerns us, rather than what is less intimate and less winning, why we must not believe that God is among us, if God there is, why we may not believe that God dwells on our Altars as well as that He dwells in the sky, certainly is not so self-evident, but what we have a claim to ask the

reasons of it of those, who profess to be so rational and so natural in all their determinations. O, my brethren, how narrow-minded is this world at bottom after all, in spite of its pretences and in spite of appearances! Here you see, it cannot by a stretch of imagination conceive that any thing exists, of which it has not cognizance in its own heart; it will not admit into its imagination the very idea that we have faith, because it does not know what faith is from experience, and it will not admit that there is any thing in the mind of man, which it does not experience itself, for that would be all one with admitting after all that there is such a thing as a mystery. It must know, it must be the measure of all things, and so in self-defence it considers us hypocritical, who teach what we cannot believe, lest it should be forced to confess itself blind. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God; the world doth therefore know not us, because it knoweth not Him!"

It is for the same reason that inquirers, who are approaching the Church, find it so difficult to persuade themselves that their doubts will not continue after they have entered it. This is the reason they assign for not becoming Catholics; for what is to become of them, they ask, if their present doubts continue after their conversion? they will have nothing to fall back upon. They do not reflect that their present difficulties are moral ones, not intellectual;—I mean, that it is not that they really doubt whether the conclusion at which they have arrived, that the Catholic Church comes from God is true; this they do not doubt in their reason at all, but their mind is too feeble and dull to grasp and keep hold of this truth. They recognize it dimly, though certainly, as the sun through mists and clouds, and they forget that it is the office of grace to clear up gloom and haziness, to steady that fitful vision, to perfect reason by faith, and to convert a logical conclusion into an object of intellectual sight. And thus they will not credit it as possible, when we assure them, of what we have seen in so many instances, that all their trouble will go, when once they have entered the communion of Saints, and the atmosphere of grace and light, and that they will be so full of peace and joy as not to know how to thank God enough, and from the very force of their feelings and the necessity of relieving them, they will set about converting others with a sudden zeal which contrasts strangely with their late vacillation.

Two remarks I must add in conclusion, in explanation of what I have been saying.

First, do not suppose I have been speaking disparagement of human reason: it is the way to faith; its conclusions are often the very objects of faith. It precedes faith, when souls are converted to the Catholic Church; and it is the instrument which the Church herself is guided to make use of, when she is called upon to put forth those definitions of doctrine, which, according to the promise and power of her Lord and Saviour, are infallible; but still reason is one thing and faith is another, and reason can as little be made a substitute for faith, as faith for reason.

Again, I have been speaking as if a state of nature were utterly destitute of the influences of grace, and as if those who are external to the Church acted simply from nature. I have so spoken for the sake of distinctness, that grace and nature might clearly be contrasted with each other; but it is not the case in fact. God gives His grace to all men, and to those who profit by it, He gives more grace, and even those who quench it still have the offer. Hence some men act simply from nature; some act from nature in some respects, not in others; others are yielding themselves to the guidance of the assistances given them; others may even be in a state of justification. Hence it is impossible to apply what has been said above to individuals, whose hearts are a secret with God. Many are under the influence partly of reason and partly of faith, believe some things firmly, and have put an opinion on others. Many are in conflict with themselves, and are advancing to a crisis, after which they embrace or recede from the truth. Many are using the assistances of graces so well, that they are in the way to receive its permanent indwelling in their hearts. Many, we may trust, are enjoying that permanent light, and are being securely brought forward into the Church; some, alas! may have received it, and not advancing towards the Holy House in which it is stored, are losing it, and, though they know it not, living only by the recollections of what was once present within them. These are secret things with God; but the great and general truths remain, that nature cannot see God, and that grace is the sole means of seeing Him; and that, while it enables us to do so, it also brings us into His Church, and is never given us for our illumination, but it is also given to make us Catholics.

O, my dear brethren, what joy and what thankfulness should be ours, that God has brought us into the Church of His Son! What gift is equal to it in the whole world in its preciousness and in its rarity? In this country in particular, where heresy ranges far and wide, where uncultivated nature has so undisputed a field all her own, where grace is given to such numbers only to be profaned and quenched, where baptisms only remain in their impress and character, and faith is ridiculed for its very firmness, to find ourselves here in the region of light, in the home of peace, in the presence of Saints, to find ourselves where we can use every faculty of the mind and affection of the heart in its perfection because in its appointed place and office, to find ourselves in the possession of certainty, consistency, stability, in the highest and holiest subjects of human thought, to have hope here, and heaven hereafter, to be on the Mount with Christ, while the poor world is guessing and quarrelling at its foot who among us shall not wonder at His blessedness, who shall not be awe-struck at the inscrutable grace of God, which has brought him; not others, where he stands! "Being justified by faith, have we peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by

whom we have through faith access into this grace wherein we stand, and glory in hope of the glory of the sons of God. And hope maketh not ashamed, for the charity of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." And as St. John says, still more exactly to our purpose, "Ye have the unction from the Holy One." Your eyes are anointed by Him who put clay on the eyes of the blind man, "from Him have you an unction, and ye know," not conjecture, or suppose, or opine, but "know," see, "all things." "So let the unction which you have received of Him, abide in you. Nor need ye that any one teach you, but as His unction teaches you of all things, and is true and no lie, and hath taught you, so abide in Him." You can abide in nothing else; opinions change; conclusions are feeble; inquiries run their course; reason stops short; but faith alone reaches, faith only endures. Faith and prayer alone will endure in that last dark hour, when Satan urges all his powers and resources against the sinking soul. What will it avail us then to have devised some subtle argument, or to have led some brilliant attack, or to have mapped out the field of history, or to have numbered and sorted the weapons of controversy, and to have the homage of friends and the respect of the world, for our successes,—what will it avail to have had a position, to have followed out a work, to have reanimated an idea, to have made a cause to triumph, if after all we have not the light of faith to guide us on from this world to the next? O how faint shall we be in that day to exchange our place with the humblest, and dullest, and most ignorant of the sons of men, rather than to stand before the judgment-seat in the lot of him who has received great gifts from God, and used them for self and for man, who has shut his eyes, who has trifled with truth, who has repressed his misgivings, who has been led on by God's grace, but stopped short of its scope, who has neared the land of promise, yet not gone forward to take possession of it!

"Te maris et terræ, numeroque carentis arenæ
Mensorem cohibent, Archyta,
Pulvis exiguè prope litus parva Matinum
Munera; nec quicquam tibi prodest
Aerios tentasse domos, animoque rotundum
Percurrisse polum, morituro!"

CATHOLIC INTELLIGENCE.

ITALY.

THE CHURCH IN SARDINIA AND PIEDMONT.

"The mission of M. Pinelli to Rome," says the Turin correspondent of the *Times*, "is considered now to have been a complete failure, and I presume the Government only waits the personal explanations he will give on his return to determine on its line of action. The position has been rendered more difficult by the conduct of the Archbishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, who has frankly and unhesitatingly excommunicated the makers and executors of a law passed last session for suppressing tithes, and making other Church reforms in the islands. His words are these:

"In consequence of an act of sequestration being made, and seals affixed, after the keys were withdrawn, on the door of the *Contadoria*—of the church kept in an apartment of our episcopal residence, being a sacred and religious domicile—the Canonical laws are violated, especially those of the Council of Trent, and of the Pontifical Constitution. Seeing that such things were not done in ignorance, as we published full notice of the illegality of the first proceeding in the official gazette of this island on November 13, 1849, We, by virtue of our ordinary authority, do now declare, subject to great excommunications, by the very fact, all the authors, co-operators, assistants, and supporters of the said affixing seals and sequestration, and removal of the keys, and we prohibit all the clergy of the diocese to administer the sacraments to them, without our special permission in every separate case.

"Given at our violated episcopal residence,
"EMANUEL, Archbishop."

"This is rather bold language, and from it, and the conduct of the Archbishop here, we may judge of what stuff Roman Catholic Prelates are made, and how vain it is to quarrel with them, and acknowledge the authority of the Church at the same time. I do not hear, however, that the Sardinian dignitary has been arrested, and committed to prison—though, in the eye of the law, his conduct is much graver than that of our ecclesiastical martyr here. I rather think he defies the authority of the Crown, as the island is something like our native district of Connemara, where the Royal writ never did run, and probably does not run to this day. The fact is, that the Cabinet of M. d'Azeglio has walked with eyes open into a labyrinth of difficulties; so much so, that I again suspect the thing has been done designedly, for the purpose of forcing from the See of Rome various privileges which never would have been granted on negotiation. No doubt, the Church never refuses a repentant sinner; and M. d'Azeglio and his colleagues will receive absolution if they confess, and cry, '*Pecavi*,' after the whole *panter* of sin is filled; as they would now for a first offence. For that reason, probably, the present course has been determined on, and that reason only can excuse its perilous and irregular features. I have been spoken to on this subject by a great number of private friends, as well as by those attached to the Government, and I have invariably told them, Piedmont must give way or become Protestant; and, unless the Ministry are convinced that the people will support them in the latter determination, if they are prepared themselves to make it, they must—talk and bluster as they may—they must succumb. In my opinion, though nearly all the population of Piedmont are discontented with the conduct of the Pope and of his Cabinet, there is no

Protestant party among them; and I find I give offence when I propose that change as the sole alternative."

THE PIEDMONTSE QUESTION.—A letter from Rome of 14th inst., in the *Univers*, says:—"The following details on the audience of M. Pinelli are given: When this diplomatist was announced, Monsignor Barnabo, Secretary of the Propaganda, was with the Pope. He was about to collect his papers and retire, but the Holy Father told him to leave them and remain. The cause of M. Pinelli was detestable, but it appears that he found means of verifying the truth of the proverb, *Quasa patrocinio non bona peior erit*. Whether from incapacity, or whether the presence of the Holy Father intimidated him, he spoke with embarrassment, and as if he were aware of the poverty of his arguments. He is said to have insisted on the point, that the political changes in the Sardinian States rendered certain changes necessary in points of discipline, in which the State has some interest. His Holiness is said to have observed that the Holy See does not refuse dispensations in matters of discipline when the necessity of them is demonstrated, but that before granting them they ought at least to be demanded. On the question of the Concordat, his Holiness is represented to have observed that it was difficult to understand how a new Concordat could be concluded at a moment at which existing Concordats are trampled under foot. Piedmont, in fact, he said, had proved by its acts that it did not consider itself bound by Concordats, and so long as it should maintain that pretension, it was clear that any new Concordat could have no other result than to tie down the Holy See without binding the Cabinet of Turin. To execute a serious contract, both parties should consider themselves equally bound to respect their engagements. To-morrow there might be new political changes in Piedmont, and, in view of the principle laid down by the Cabinet of Turin, the contract concluded on the eve might be arbitrarily set aside. The Sardinian envoy having replied, with a certain vivacity, that such was the public law received in Piedmont, his Holiness is said to have interrupted him by saying, '*Piano, piano*, Commander; take care you do not calumniate your country by ascribing to it opinions which are perhaps only those of some private individuals.' On the whole M. Pinelli was not brilliant, and retired but little satisfied."

DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES AT PROPAGANDA.—From a letter, dated Rome, Sept. 13, 1850:—"The students of the three nations have not fallen short this year of their ancient reputation for academical success in the Eternal City. At the distribution of prizes in the Schools of Propaganda, some of the highest honors were taken by the students of the Irish College. The Rev. Mr. Dunne was specially mentioned, on account of the spirited and learned defense sustained by him a few weeks previously, before the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation. Mr. Moran, also of the Irish College, received four medals, to which a fifth magnificent one of gold was added to his other honors, allotted for the student who most distinguished himself in the higher schools. Mr. Murray, an Irish student at Propaganda, received three medals. Amongst those who received distinctions in the Schools of the Roman College, Mr. Downie, of the Scotch College, obtained three gold medals in the Higher School of Theology. On the 12th instant, at the premiation in the Schools of the Roman Seminary, the Rev. Louis English, of the English College, received the degree of Doctor of Divinity, thus closing his theological course, in which he has received so much distinction. Messrs. Whitty and Brown, of the same College, received the degree of Bachelor in Divinity; and amongst those who received medals in the classes of theology, three were taken by Mr. Whitty, three by Mr. Brown, one by Mr. Virtue, and one by Mr. Burke."—*Correspondent of Tablet*.

IRELAND.

FATHER IGNATIUS IN CARRICK-ON-SUIR.—Father Ignatius (the Honorable and Rev. Dr. George Spencer) arrived in Carrick-on-Suir on 18th Sept. He at once visited the Very Rev. Dr. Conolly, P.P., V.G., who, it need scarcely be said, received him most kindly and warmly, and rejoiced in the opportunity of welcoming to Carrick so bright an ornament of the Faith. Father Ignatius soon afterwards proceeded to the beautiful parish chapel, where he celebrated Mass, which was attended by large crowds, attracted to see so distinguished and self-sacrificing a missionary. Soon afterwards he went through the town on his mission of charity, accompanied by the Very Rev. Doctor Conolly, and solicited and obtained aid towards the erection of new churches in England. Notwithstanding the depression of the times, the contributions were characteristically generous on the part of the good people of Carrick. He remained during his sojourn in Carrick at the hospitable residence of Doctor Conolly. On Thursday morning (19th Sept.) he also celebrated Mass at the parish chapel, and exhorted the congregation likewise. After Mass he proceeded to the Convent of the Presentation Nuns, where he was received with the utmost joy by the Religious of that excellent establishment. He breakfasted at the Convent, and in the course of the morning set out for Beshborough, the residence of his relative the Earl of Beshborough, with whom he remained during the day, and afterwards proceeded to Waterford. Crowds of persons flocked around him at Carrick and Piltown to beg his blessings and his prayers, and several young children were presented to him. In Piltown he also made a collection in aid of his mission. The reception of the honorable and reverend gentleman by the Right Rev. Dr. Foran, and the Clergy and citizens of Waterford, promises to be all that it ought to be at the hands of a Prelate so noble-hearted, and a Clergy and people so devoted. Father Ignatius, we under-