

bishop—"That their civil allegiance was limited by higher considerations." But Peter and John answered and said unto them, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Again and again the Church of Christ has opposed itself to the civil ruler, and the record of bloody persecutions, graves solitary among the everlasting hills to which the persecuted fled for refuge, and tombs occupying the malefactor's corners in public burying grounds testify of the heavy penalty the Church paid for limiting her obedience. Before the diet of worms Luther enunciated the great truth of conscience being above the laws of men, and on this ground he stood in the memorable words with which he concluded his address, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, so God help me." It was the doctrine of limited obedience that Knox had in view when he uttered words equally memorable. "I am (when in the pulpit) in the place where conscience demands of me to speak the truth; the truth therefore I will speak impugn it whoso list." And that "learned and judicious divine, Mr. Richard Hooker," expresses none other doctrine in his sermon on "Civil obedience," in which he says that Kings who in the exercise of their power "exact more than they have been authorized to do, cannot in conscience bind any man unto obedience."

So far then Protestants are thoroughly at one with the Popish Church. It is when the question is started,—*What is it that limits obedience to the magistrate?* that the difference between Popery and Protestantism appears. If obedience to the magistrate is and must be limited, where, what, whence is the power that limits it? Such in a nut shell is the question that is now convulsing Germany, which is coming to the front in England, and about which we must hear a good deal in our own Dominion before this century closes.

The Popish answer to this question was wont to be "The Church." It belongs to the Church to decide how far man ought to obey Princes. But the answer given to this question is changed in the recent Vatican Decrees, and the reply of the Romish Church since July, 1870, is "The Pope." It belongs to the Pope, who is lord of the conscience of every member of his Church, to determine the limits of civil duty. There is no possibility of denying this to be the meaning of the decree of Papal Infallibility.

But what is the Protestant, or we should rather say the Christian answer to this same question? What is it that limits civil obedience on the part of every true Christian. It is not the Church, nor the Pope, nor the Bishop, nor the Presbytery, nor the Pastor, nor the Creed. It is Christ. Every Christian is under law to Christ. It is Christ and he alone that can decide how far the Christian ought to submit to the Crown, and in what circumstances it is his duty to resist and rebel. It was Christ that stood above the two Apostles when they confronted the Jewish priestly magistrates, refusing at their be-