

ment, which have made the ears of men to tingle. In 1820 Polynesia and Australia were without a priest. Now there are three vicariates apostolical in Polynesia, with fifty priests and an archbishopric, and two bishoprics in Australia, with fifty-six priests and thirty-one schools, so mightily, in about twenty years, has Romanism spread and prevailed.

I am yours,

A PROTESTANT.

### INFIDELITY.

In Catholic countries infidelity assumes a very different aspect, and is forced to pursue a very different policy, than among Protestant nations. In the former countries, unbelief, reprobated by the Church, driven from her communion, finding her on every point a vigilant, unassailable, unrelaxing, unrelenting adversary, is compelled to hide its head in secret societies; or if it brave the daylight, it then wages fierce, immitigable warfare with Catholicity. But in Protestant states, such a mode of warfare, on the part of infidelity, is neither necessary nor expedient for its purpose. As it springs out of the very root of Protestantism; as it is but a natural and necessary developement of its doctrines; as it differs from the latter not in essence, but in degree only, it is its policy, (and we see it practise it invariably,) to flatter the Protestant Church, to court its alliance, to mingle with its teaching, to soften down its own principles, in order the better to diffuse them, and when threatened with exclusion, to appeal to Protestant principles, and defy condemnation.

It is objected, that infidelity abounds as much in Catholic as in Protestant countries, and that therefore it cannot be said that Protestantism is more favourable to its growth than the rival Church. But a few remarks will suffice to show the futility of such an objection. In the first place it is true that Voltaire, like Luther, went out of the Catholic Church; but while the Coryphæus of French infidelity extolled the Reformation, eulogized the Reformers and boasted that he himself came to consummate the work they had left incomplete, he waged the fiercest hostility against the Catholic Church and her ministers. And the Deists of England and Protestant Germany, though they came into less immediate collision with that Church, than Voltaire and his disciples, well shew where their most powerful and formidable antagonist was to be found. Secondly, if Protestantism were not more favourable than Catholicity to the growth of unbelief, how doth it happen, I say, that in those ages, infidelity was a thing so rare, so obscure, so insignificant? How doth it happen, that it followed so closely in the wake of the Reformation; that history makes mention of a sect of Deists in

Switzerland at the close of the sixteenth century; that in Protestant England, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Deism assumed an attitude of such boldness, and attained to such fearful vigor and expansion, that at the commencement of the eighteenth century, the Protestant Bayle first introduced it into Catholic France; that Voltaire and the Encyclopædists confessed they borrowed the weapons for their anti-Christian warfare from the armory of the English Deists; and that Rousseau, the most dangerous of the French infidels, was a Protestant by birth, and only developed the principles of Protestantism, and more than once declared, that if the divinity of the Christian religion could be demonstrated to him, he would not hesitate to embrace the Catholic faith?

Thirdly, it will not be denied that Socinianism leads by easy gradations to unbelief; that some classes of Unitarians are distinguished from Deists only by their belief in the general credibility of the Bible;\* and that therefore any Church, which will shew itself indulgent towards Socinianism—any Church which openly or covertly, in a greater or less degree, will foster its tenets, proves itself favorable to the propagation of Deism. Now Socinianism, like a poisonous plant, cast off from the Catholic soil of Italy, took root and flourished in the Protestant communities of Poland, attained during the eighteenth century to a most rank luxuriance in the Church of Geneva,† and at the same time cast a blighting shade over the Episcopal Establishment of England.

Fourthly, if any doubt remained as to the intimate connexion between Protestantism and infidelity, it would be dispelled by the history of the German Protestant Churches during the last hundred years. There we see men holding important offices in the Church—pastors of congregations, superintendents of consistories, professors of theology—not only reject the authority of the symbolical books, and disavow almost all those Catholic dogmas which the Lutherans and Calvinists had hitherto retained, but openly assail the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, deny the integrity and authenticity of large portions of the Old and the New Testament, allegorize the prophecies, and disbelieve, and sometimes even ridicule, the miracles recorded in the Bible. These opinions, pro

\* A learned prelate of the Established Church, the late Bishop Heber, characterized Unitarianism as 'a system which leans on the utmost verge of Christianity, and which has been in so many instances a stepping-stone to simple Deism.' See *Travels of an Irish Gentleman*, c. xlv.

† Rousseau, in his *Lettres de Montaigne*, says of the Genevese of his time, 'When asked if Jesus Christ is God, they do not dare to answer. When asked if Jesus Christ is God, they do not dare to answer. A philosopher casts a rapid glance at them, and penetrates them at once; he sees they are Arians or Socinians.'