

order and distribution of the subject as treated by Kirwan. In fact I will use his letters, not as the cause, but as an occasion which I will take advantage of, for the purpose of giving those among our Protestant friends, who may desire to be informed on the subject, an opportunity of making up their minds on the relative strength of the arguments for and against the Catholic religion. The widely extended circulation of your paper will bring what I shall write immediately under the eyes of both your Catholic and Protestant subscribers in different parts of the country. Neither is it unseasonable, that such a series of letters should be published at the present time; however much I may regret that the work is not to be undertaken by some one having less occupation, and more capacity to do it justice than myself. The relative position of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, at the present time, is one of deep interest to earnest and reflecting minds among all parties. Since the event commonly called the *Reformation*, there has perhaps been no period when the Catholic religion was looked upon with so little disfavour by those unhappily separated from her communion, as the present. Much ignorance, and much prejudice, no doubt still prevail among them—and if we see an uneasiness of mind—an almost general condition of unsettled convictions in reference to matters of belief—if we witness a yearning after something fixed and stable in doctrine—a desire for such a course of events as might lead to general unity among Christians; every good man should labour to encourage these dispositions, and point out the only means by which the object aimed at can ever be attained. It is admitted by many of themselves that Protestantism, whatever it may be as a theory, has not come up in practice to the anticipation of its founders. In Germany it has allowed millions to glide through its feeble restraints and pass into Rationalism and Infidelity—and this, too, not by opposing its principles but by applying a bolder logic to their consequences. In England it has perverted the ancient resources of the poor, and permitted them to sink into a lamentable condition of ignorance on the subject of religion, and of moral depravity. Working within itself it has given rise to doubts and divisions until the name of its sects have almost become *legion*. And it is only in contemplating these its results, that many sincere men desire earnestly that in the providence of the Almighty, some remedy might be found, which would arrest and repair the present disorder. From all this, it is but reasonable to suppose that a treatise which should set forth almost in any form, the relative grounds of the two systems of religion, without any of the acerbity of mere controversy, would be hailed by a large portion of the public. This is what I shall aim at accomplishing.

For a week or two I shall be absent from the city, and as soon after my return as possible I shall commence, in the form of letters, a statement and review of what may be deemed most important on this great question.

✠ JOHN, Bishop of New-York.

MEETING IN FAVOR OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS IX. AND THE ITALIAN PEOPLE AT THE TABERNACLE.

This was one of the most numerous and most respectable assemblages that we have ever witnessed in New-York, as may be seen in reference to another column. Much credit is due to the several committees of arrangement for the foresight and

good taste manifested in the order of proceedings, and in the general details of the meeting. The Tabernacle, which is so contrived as to furnish as much standing or sitting room as it is possible to secure within the same space, was crowded densely both on the floor, and in the various galleries, and the good order and decorum of the vast assemblage during the whole of the proceedings were worthy of all praise. The meeting was emphatically American, and yet mingling in that crowd there were representatives of all the nations of Europe as well of Southern America. There were also representatives of almost every creed and persuasion in this community, and it was certainly a cheering spectacle to behold all these differences of creed and country merged into one feeling of real interest and affectionate admiration for the noble attitude which has been assumed and sustained with so much dignity by his present Holiness Pius IX.

It was not a little remarkable that the speakers, without a single exception, gave evidence of their emancipation from, or at least their power of controlling the prejudices of early training in reference to the Pope of Rome—and the enthusiasm manifested owed perhaps as much to those prejudices as to the noble character of our present illustrious Pontiff. It seemed to be tacitly assumed that his predecessors without exception have been opponents not friends of civil liberty, and that he has suddenly and unexpectedly gone forth from the line of their example. It did not occur perhaps to one of them that most of the struggles in which the Popes have been engaged with temporal governments have been caused by their zeal for social rights and for the protection of the otherwise defenceless people against the tyranny of their sovereigns. Had it not been for the Popes, western Europe would at this day, in all probability, be as ignorant of constitutional freedom as Turkey or Russia.— It was by the early struggle of the Popes that nations became imbued with a knowledge of their civil and political rights, and it was by the sanction and support of the Church that those rights became recognised and established. The childhood of many of those who attended the meeting of the other night, must have been frightened by reading in the little story books how Popes used to make kings and emperors stand bare-headed in their presence, and hold their stirrups as they mounted on horseback. Such scenes as that witnessed last Monday night may suggest to them that it was a great blessing for the subjects of kings and emperors, as well as others, to have had Popes to teach emperors, even by such rude lessons, that they could not trample the rights of justice, and of the people with impunity.

A more extended investigation of the history and circumstances of the Bishops of Rome coming down to our times, will satisfy them that the Popes were always friends of liberty, except in so far as its enemies the sovereign tyrants of Europe, Catholic and Protestant, deprived them of the power of doing what they would. It is not too much to assume that one of the reasons why in the sixteenth century several of the Princes of Europe rejected the supremacy of the Holy See, was to enjoy the privilege of a more despotic and irresponsible sway in their own states. The Catholic powers on the other hand not only took measures to prevent the Popes from meddling with their internal civil policy, but to some extent took the Supreme Pontiff into their special guardianship and keeping, so that he might not have power even in his own states to grant or execute those ameliorations which would be beneficial to his people, but might be productive of discontent among them.

The glory of Pius IX. therefore is not merely that he is a friend of popular liberty, but it is that he has pronounced for the