

Council. But if they decline this, they ought in no case to be heard, and are to be dealt with as condemned schismatics and heretics." These are certainly hard lines. We do not see how those who have left the Church of Rome, from the sincere and conscientious conviction that she was teaching error, can ever return to her, till they have either changed their own views to conformity with hers or *vice versa*. This, however, is the demand here made. Believing as they do that their Church is infallible, they consider that it is their duty to proclaim the truth as she holds it, and the duty of all others to embrace it. We do not see the ground on which the Roman Catholics maintain the infallibility of the Church. They must admit that all the individuals of which the Council is composed are not infallible, for, at the Reformation, many of those who were members of it held and advocated opinions which were declared by a majority to be heretical. If this is possible, what guarantee have they that the Council may not be composed of a majority of such men, and the Council thus declare in favor of heretical opinions. In what, then, does the infallibility of Councils lie? Should one Council not have the power to reconsider the decrees, determinations, and deliberations of another? It is a fact which no sincere and intelligent and unprejudiced Christian will deny, that in reading the history of the Church of Rome, he will come on decrees embodying doctrines which will not bear to be critically scanned in the light of Scripture and Reason. Every Roman Catholic must either not read ecclesiastical history at all, or make up his mind to subdue all religious rebellious qualms—to silence the suggestions of his own judgment, and to accept with implicit faith the present dogmas of the Church. All men cannot be bound in such trammels. They cannot strifle the convictions of conscience, and the claims of judgment and reason. It was this which led to the Reformation. Men were bound by the decrees of the church—bound to believe in doctrines which were not a fair and clear expression of Scripture, and which they could not reconcile with reason. With this, some of the leading spirits of the age were dissatisfied, and fully expressed their views. Others felt and believed that the ground they took up was reasonable, and followed them,—and in this way the Church of the Reformation had its rise.

The last part of the Pope's letter is worthy of notice. In it he is very accommodating and courteous. He assures those who are not members of his church that he will not refuse them admission if they desired it. "If, by the inspiration of Divine Grace," he says, "they shall perceive their own danger, and shall seek God with their whole heart, they will easily cast away all preconceived and adverse opinions, and, laying aside all desire of disputation, they will return to the Father from whom they have unhappily gone astray—we, on our part, will joyfully arise to meet them, and embrace them with a Father's charity. We shall rejoice, and the Church will rejoice with us, that our children, who were dead, have come to life again, and that they who were lost have been found." He would almost seem here to be making a joke. We can scarcely realise such *condescension* on the part of the "Holy Father" and his church. In whatever light we may look at it, nothing is surer than that those in the Episcopal Church who have been for sometime currying favour with the idea of presenting themselves at the Conference, must have been greatly disappointed with the tone and spirit of this part of his letter. They would have had no objection to it if it had only been applied to Dr. Cumming and other Presbyterians of his caste. The hard point is, that they should have coquetted with the church of Rome, and should have acknowledged her to be the head and centre of the true Church, and yet, at the moment they expected some recognition, be classed among common heretics, as aliens and outcasts.

We understand that many members of the Roman Catholic Church on the continent are very dissatisfied with the general aspect of affairs. They are alarmed lest a powerful effort be made to crush all their liberal aspirations. Addresses by some Roman Catholic communities, with the object of checking