

Christianity, and thus compromised the cause which they were bound to defend; like a feeble and timid assaulant, who, incited by the eye of the monster which he should destroy, opposes but a weak resistance, till he is at last drawn within his fatal coil. X.

HUSENBETH'S DEFENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Continued.

Having "thrown off all allegiance to the Christian religion, though I tried," he says, "to enjoy myself and indulge my desires, I could find neither happiness nor comfort. I lived ten years in the most wretched and distressed state of mind; nothing was wanting to me, being happy but the liberty of declaring my opinions." Whatever, then, had been his previous conduct, it is avowed here that he abandoned himself to licentiousness when he had forsaken his faith. This is all in character; but how comes Mr. White to say now, —now that he professes to be a Christian and a Church of England minister—that in that deplorable abyss of infidelity and vicious indulgence, nothing was wanting to his being happy but the liberty of declaring his opinions? Does this tell well for his sincerity and rectitude at present, to declare thus to the wavering Christian that he may plunge into infidelity and immorality, and yet nothing will hinder him from being happy, provided he can declare his opinions freely? Oh, we do not envy the Church of England such a patch-up proselyte! These are only stronger evidences against his boasted purity of morals before his infidelity. He never learned in the bosom of the Catholic Church, that infidelity and vice could give any real happiness to their deluded victims; or that liberty of declaring their opinions is all that is required to make such men happy.

Ten years Mr. White spent, acting daily as a minister and promoter of a religion in which he did not believe; and when the various duties of a Catholic priest are considered, a more complete instance of hypocrisy and deception can scarce be imagined than that to which Mr. White pleads guilty. During those ten years, he must have often recited and sung the Divine office in public at least—in private, of course, he did not wear out many breviaries,—he must have pretended many hundred times to say Mass, deceiving thousands of sincere Catholics, who little thought they were assisting at a diabolical imposture, for most probably he omitted or nullified the most sacred parts of the sacrifice, and could have had no serious intention at any time. He must have preached and pretended to enforce what his heart affected to deny—he must have received the most sacred confidence of many souls in the tribunal of confession and how cruel was the imposition he practised upon their confiding candour! He probably was called to prepare the sick and dying for the most awful passage to eternity; and the mind shudders at the thought of poor souls in the straits of death being at the mercy of a wolf in sheep's clothing. Does Mr. W. think he can find a palliation for his impostures in pretending that he was

compelled to be a hypocrite? Would any mind, with a single principle of natural rectitude left, with any sense of honour and sincerity remaining, have consented to pursue a lengthened course of deception like this? No: better a thousand times, and more honourable, to expose himself to peril, than to become the base deceiver of thousands of unsuspecting Christians. He pretends to have been afraid of the Inquisition, and is very loud about the tyranny of the Church of Rome; but it comes out that another reason weighed heavier—the fear of afflicting his parents; for he tells us, what any one could readily see—that he could have gone to North America, but the love of his parents withheld him; so that rather than grieve his parents, he remained a hypocrite. It is not unlikely that his clerical emoluments had a stronger hold upon an infidel than filial affection; and when the French came at last, and put his revenues in jeopardy, and all things in confusion, he probably moved off, for the best of all reasons—because he was obliged.

Mr. White, in his book for the lower classes, paints in fearful colours the Inquisition and the tyranny of the Church of Rome. He always puts religious tyranny in italics, and illustrates it by such strokes as the following:—"The Popes of Rome believe that they have a right to oblige all men who have been baptised by their priests, to continue Roman Catholic to their lives end. A Roman Catholic who is not protected by Protestant laws, is all over the world a slave. The Roman Catholic religion in itself, and such as the Pope would make it all over the world, if there were no Protestant laws to resist it, is the most horrible system of tyranny that ever opposed the welfare of man."—Could not Mr. White content himself at least with the truth; and not thus outrageously vilify and misrepresent the religion of his fathers? He knew very well when he wrote, that the Popes of Rome believe no such thing as that they have a right to oblige people to continue Roman Catholics. The Popes have no separate articles of faith from those of the Catholic Church throughout the world; and Mr. W. well knows that he can produce no shadow of proof that such an absurd tenet was ever believed by the Catholic Church. That Church has ever believed it obligatory upon her to use every means which the Gospel puts into her hands to keep her children from being seduced by false teachers; namely, the means of exhortation, reproof, and all such correction as is consistent with personal liberty; but it is no part of Catholic Faith, that people are to be any other way obliged to continue in her communion. Mr. White knew, too, that a Catholic is not a slave all over the world, where there are no Protestant laws to protect him. He knew that English Catholics were truly free before the very name of Protestants was heard of; and, alas! he was not ignorant that Protestant laws, so far from protecting them, have made them slaves in their own land. There are no Protestant laws in France, nor in many other countries of the globe, where Catholics are very far from being slaves. To say that the Roman Catholic religion in itself, is the

most horrible system of tyranny, is saying a great deal more than Mr. W. would be able to prove—and he does not attempt to support it by any proof, except a vehement declamation against the Inquisition. This is leading his readers falsely to imagine that the Inquisition is an essential companion of Catholicity, that we cannot be true Catholics, without approving its alleged cruelties. These are monstrous misrepresentations, as a few plain statements will abundantly shew.

That the Inquisition is no part of our Religion, is manifest from the plain facts, that the Catholic Religion existed 1,200 years in every part of the globe, without any tribunal of the kind; that there are very many countries in which it was never established, though the Catholic Faith flourished in them; and that the Popes, with all the religious tyranny with which Mr. W. reproaches them, never refused to acknowledge the Catholics of those countries equally with those who had an Inquisition. Few, if any Catholics in France or in this kingdom, will praise the Inquisition or its proceedings, but so many falsehoods and exaggerations have been propagated against that tribunal, that it is but just to distinguish truth from falsehood in its regard.

The Inquisition, as all history testifies was never established in any kingdom, but by the consent, and sometimes even at the requests of its sovereign. It is essential to keep this point steadily in view, for declaimers against the Inquisition always conceal it; and Mr. White, like the rest, tries to make it believed that it is solely the Pope's Tribunal; "established" he says "kept up, and managed by and under the Pope's authority." But if this were the case, it would be natural that in Rome, where the Pope is absolute sovereign, spiritual and temporal, the Inquisition would be the most cruel and sanguinary, whereas the contrary is a well known fact. The Roman Inquisition is the mildest of all, no example is recorded of its punishing any one with death; and if Mr. White had been sincere, he would not have written a charge so triumphantly contradicted by this striking fact. The many English that have visited Rome will testify that Protestants can enjoy perfect liberty and security there, and even assemble for their own worship without fear of the Inquisition. After all, when a Spaniard is reproached with the rigour of the Inquisition, he may reply, that far less blood has been shed by all the Inquisitions ever established, than has flowed in France and Germany, from wars in the cause of religion; and that the Inquisition has, at least, secured Spain from the poison of infidelity, which has infected almost every other nation of Europe. There is little doubt, but that if once those who profess to be Atheists and Deists became our masters, they would establish an Inquisition more rigorous than that of Spain, against those who retained any respect for religion; witness the horrors of the French Revolution; witness the sentence of Rousseau, in his *Contrat Social*, upon any one who would not act conformably with his *Civic Religion*: *Let him be punished with death!*

To be continued