

RECOLLECTIONS OF DR. DÖLLINGER.

II. ROMAN DIFFICULTIES.

ON June 6th, 1871, the University of Oxford conferred the degree of D.C.L. by diploma on Dr. Döllinger, and on June 13th I had the honour and delight of presenting the diploma to him. The degree had been opposed by a Master of Arts, who had left the Church of England and become a strong ultramontane; and the printed paper stating the reasons for this opposition had been forwarded to Dr. Döllinger. He spoke with characteristic generosity of it, saying that the grounds stated were very intelligible and reasonable. I told him that some who voted for the degree thought the opposition a good thing, as it showed that the significance of it was understood in ultramontane quarters.

Dr. Döllinger had been publicly excommunicated April 23rd, a punishment, as he himself had said, usually reserved for priests guilty of the grossest immorality, but only very rarely inflicted upon them; yet visited on him, because he continued to reject what he knew to be false, and what the very man who pronounced the sentence had himself rejected in like manner only a few months previously. The Oxford degree, and many other similar expressions of esteem and sympathy, were the answer of the intelligence of Europe to this most iniquitous sentence. On purely technical grounds, the sentence was unjustifiable; for the Council had never been formally dissolved, and therefore its decrees were not yet absolute.

Dr. Döllinger took me into his inner room, placed me on the sofa, and sat down beside me. We were soon discussing the existing state of things in the Roman Church. He said that the situation was grave in the extreme, but that he was fully persuaded that good would come of all the evil.

The pressure of the intolerable abuses inside the Church, and of infidelity outside it, would compel all parties to reconsider their position, and especially their reasons for separation. Thus parties and sects and Churches would be gradually drawn more and more together. In some cases perhaps reconsideration of the position might tend for a while to deepen and widen differences; but in the main the tendency would be the other way. For instance, he did not think it possible that the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit could continue to be an insuperable barrier between the East and the West. The Greek clergy were becoming better instructed, and an increased knowledge of theology and history would lead them to take a less rigid and narrow view respecting the disputed points. The grievous item on the other side of the account was the Infallibility dogma. An irreconcilable split in the Roman Church was inevitable;¹ for the dogma was a rock of offence which it was not possible to get over. There were many who simply could not accept it.

“But when men of Bishop Hefe’s learning and ability submit, what is one to expect?”

“Hefe’s submission,” said Dr. Döllinger, “is the result of great debility of character. He is, I know, at the present moment very unhappy in his mind. He has not the courage to state the plain truth and take the consequences.”

Dr. Döllinger seemed to think Bishop Hefe’s letter to his clergy a quibble. He had refused to join with the seventeen bishops who had issued a pastoral from Fulda in September, 1870, in which they declared that it was incompatible with the Catholic religion to say that the doctrine of papal infallibility is not contained in Scripture

¹ It will be remembered that the Old Catholics were not yet organized as a party, still less as a Church. The attitude of those who rejected the Vatican decrees was simply one of protest.

and tradition. In Rome he had spoken of resigning his diocese rather than publish the Infallibility dogma. And yet the refusal to renew his quinquennial faculties forthwith brought him to his knees. Dr. Döllinger said that the submission of Haneberg, the Abbot of S. Boniface, in Munich, was a similar case: he was a well-read scholar, who, like Hefele, preferred unity to truth. Yes, it was true that some were deprived of the sacraments for rejecting the dogma; but as yet there was a great deal of difference in the practice of bishops towards their clergy and of clergy towards their flocks. There was no unity of action. Some bishops, like Cardinal Schwarzenberg, published the dogma as an official document for which they were not responsible, and left their clergy free. Others forced their clergy to accept it on pain of suspension. Even in the same diocese differences in the treatment of clergy occurred. Those who were under him as Provost of the Royal Churches had not been questioned as to their acceptance of the dogma. The same was true of the clergy themselves. Some made the dogma a test; others left their congregations to settle the matter with their own consciences. In the towns there was seldom any difficulty. There were always some clergy who had submitted outwardly, but yet did not believe the dogma, and they were willing to give the sacraments to those who were known to have rejected it, without asking questions. What a strange contrast the whole of the situation was to that in the Scotch Kirk! In Scotland Christians who were entirely agreed as to matters of doctrine thought it worth while to make a schism on the question of patronage. In the Roman Church Christians were professing to accept what they believed to be false rather than risk a schism.

He said that there had never before been such a meagre attendance at the procession on Corpus Christi Day as there had been this year in Munich. Neither the king nor

the court was there. Excepting two ministers, the government was not there. Excepting two or three professors of theology and one of law, the university was not there. This of course meant indignation against the archbishop and sympathy with Dr. Döllinger, although the latter did not say so. He said however, that the king's constitutional power was very great, and that, if he liked to take a decided line, he might have enormous influence in the existing crisis; but he abhorred State business, and disliked coming to the front. I mentioned that the papers stated that the king had written to congratulate him on a recently published essay on prophecies in Christian times, and he did not deny that this was the case. It was well understood that the king was entirely with his provost, and would certainly have stood by him if he had defied the archbishop and continued to celebrate in the royal churches. But Döllinger always lived and died a loyal member of the Church. Rome's cruel treatment of him never drove him into rebellion against lawful authority. When Rome said to him, "Believe the new dogma," he said, "I cannot, for it is not true; and I will not submit, because you have no authority to impose it." When she said, "Cease to celebrate mass," he obeyed at once: it was possible to do so; and, although he believed the command to be unjust, he submitted to it as coming from one who had authority to give it.

I was with him thrice that day, in the forenoon, at dinner, and in the evening. An hour or two after leaving him I was on my way to Rome bearing a letter from him to Père Hyacinthe, from whom I heard a good deal that corroborated Dr. Döllinger's utterances and attitude. We were neighbours in Rome, and I saw a good deal of him during June and July. Then he returned to France. But I was with him again in Paris at the end of August, and also the following June, before returning to attend Dr.

Döllinger's lectures once more in Munich. Through him I became acquainted with three cases of submission to the dogma, which are so typical that no excuse is needed for introducing them here.

1. Archbishop Darboy, of Paris, had been one of the most strenuous opponents of the dogma. He was one of the eighty-eight who voted *non placet* at the final division, June 13th, 1870, and he was the inspirer and almost the author of *La Dernière Heure du Concile*, in which it was shown that the Council had been coerced, and that its decrees were *forced* upon its members.¹ Yet he submitted to them. A few days before his tragic death in 1871 Père Hyacinthe was with him, and the archbishop said to him: *Ce dogme n'a pas l'importance que vous lui attribuez, et au fond il ne décide rien. Je n'y étais pas opposé comme théologien, car il n'est pas faux, mais comme homme, parce qu'il est inepte. On nous a fait jouer à Rome le rôle de sacristains, et pourtant nous étions au moins deux cents qui valions mieux que cela.*—This then was one method of submitting: The dogma means nothing. It is silly, but not false. Therefore it may be accepted.

2. While I was in Paris in August, 1871, I visited Père Gratry, the author of the four famous letters against the definition. He had not yet publicly submitted; but it was certain that the ultramontane Guibert, the new Archbishop of Paris, would call upon him to submit, and his friends knew that he would comply. Père Gratry deplored the active line taken by Hyacinthe, an activity "*nuisible et stérile*"; he was now quite in the wrong.

"But what Père Hyacinthe has written is not more strong than what you have written."

"You mean in my letters to the Archbishop of Malines? They were written before the Council."

¹ "*Les évêques ont été appelés à sanctionner ce que les Jésuites avaient écrit; voilà toute l'histoire du concile*" (p. 4).

“But are they true?”

“Yes, in the main. Some errors of detail there may well be; but the position maintained in them is correct, and I maintain it still. I still hold that the infallibility of the Pope is neither independent (*séparée*), nor personal, nor absolute.”

“That is the very negation of the dogma.”

“Not necessarily. There is a sense in which both may be true; and I find in my conscience that I can accept the dogma and still hold to what I wrote in my letters to the Archbishop of Malines. I have heard the archbishop himself say that the personal and absolute infallibility of the Pope was a blasphemy.”

This therefore was a second method of submitting: Assert that the dogma means the very opposite of what it plainly states, and then say that you accept it.

3. The third instance was that of a priest who visited Hyacinthe at Passy, and told him that he had two convictions, an external and an internal. “With the external I accept the dogma; with the internal I reject it.” And this was said quite calmly, as if there were nothing strange or scandalous in such an avowal.—Third method of submission: Profess to accept the dogma, although you believe it to be false.

Well might Döllinger say that the dogma had produced a general *bankruptcy* in morality.

I was the bearer to him of some kind messages from Dr. Newman, whom I had seen before leaving England, and who of course thought that those who were openly contending against a defined dogma were entirely in the wrong. “I do not think,” said Dr. Döllinger, “that Dr. Newman can be very satisfied with his position. He cannot like the state of things in which he finds himself. It must be difficult for him to reconcile himself to accepting the dogma.”

“I believe he is able to accept it by making it mean as

little as possible, and he thinks that you are making a great mistake in contending that it means so much; that it is playing into the hands of the extreme party to maintain that their interpretation is the true one. The true course is to consider that the dogma means very little."

"But the world will never believe that. Future generations will never believe that a dogma of the Church means next to nothing. It will not be right to allow the dogma to pass unchallenged, in the hope that people will understand nothing by it. Things have gone too far for that. But that is the way in which many people in Germany have brought themselves to accept the dogma; and they are not very comfortable in consequence. Bishop Hefele is one of these; and, what is more, he does not believe his own interpretation of the dogma.¹ What will come of it all, it is impossible to say. There is a great disease in the Church; and if you ask a physician what will come of a disease, he will not always be able to tell you. I hope that in this case the malady will be the means of clearing the body of the Church of many evil humours. But I do not look for any great results at present: the struggle will last far beyond my day."

"Dr. Newman thinks that you have been cruelly treated,² and that a nemesis will probably come. Those who did it perhaps had the right to do it; but still cruelty is cruelty. It did not, I believe, come direct from Rome."

"That," said Dr. Döllinger, "was never known with certainty. How far Archbishop Scherr acted on his own responsibility, how far under directions, either definitely

¹ Haneberg was another example. To his discomfiture a private letter of his was published, written since the Council, in which he says: "The doctrine, it must be owned, is a new one. It was not taught in the first eight centuries. On the contrary, the opposite was taught."

This is stated to be the view of the present Pope. It is said that more than once he has informally sent kind messages to Döllinger. "Tell him to come back to us: there is a new Pope." "Yes," said Döllinger; "but the old Papacy."

expressed or otherwise conveyed to him, from Rome, I cannot tell. They succeeded in keeping that point quite secret."

"Dr. Newman says that he does not understand how you can accept the Third Council and yet reject the Council of the Vatican: which means, I suppose, that at Ephesus there was plenty of intrigue and violence, and yet the council is universally accepted as œcumenical."¹

"The cases are not parallel," replied Dr. Döllinger. "It is quite true that Cyril and others behaved badly, and that the proceedings were irregular; but the Council of Ephesus imposed nothing on the Church. It merely condemned the doctrine of Nestorius, which had already been rejected by the majority of Christians. It did not alter the existing state of things one iota; it simply confirmed what already was established. The result would have been the same, if the proceedings had been quite regular: Nestorius would have been condemned. But the Vatican Council has altogether changed things, and has imposed a great deal upon the Church. And had the proceedings been regular, the result would have been altogether different. The numerous bishops who were opposed to the dogma would have been able to make their voices heard, and the dogma would never have been passed."

On another occasion Dr. Döllinger said: "If Newman knew the history of the fifth and sixth centuries, and also modern Church history, better, he would not think it possible that those men whom I am opposing 'can have the right on their side.' I suppose he has not been in the way of studying all the falsifications and frauds of

¹ In connexion with this argument the following passage in Dr. Newman's essay on the "Trials of Theodoret" is of interest. It looks as if it were written with an eye to the Vatican Council. "Cyril had on his side the Pope, the monks, the faithful everywhere, tradition, and the truth; and he had not much tenderness for the *scruples of literary men*, for the *rights of councils*, or for *episcopal minorities*" (*Historical Sketches*, iii., p. 349. Pickering, 1873).

those times. The matter has scarcely been sufficiently investigated and exposed yet, and cannot be studied in books as conveniently as it deserves to be." And again: "It is very strange that a man who has written a history of the Arians should believe in the Pope's infallibility. No one asked a Pope to give an infallible judgment on *that* great question. And it is all very well to say that we must wait until theologians have debated on the dogma and settled exactly what it means and does not mean. The world has quite made up its mind what the dogma means, and acts accordingly. The Pope has condemned certain points in the Austrian constitution: toleration of other religions, free schools, etc.—principles admitted by all governments. The Tyrolese believe this condemnation to be an infallible decision, and consequently that the laws under which they live are in these respects iniquitous. Will it help the Austrian government, or convince the Tyrolese, if a handful of theologians at last decide that this is not an infallible judgment? Fifty Newmans all living at once, and all working to explain and pare down the dogma, would not have any appreciable effect on the practical working of the dogma. I suspect that Dr. Newman would have been a very different man if he had been well read in mediæval history." ¹

Dr. Döllinger handed me a cutting from an English newspaper, and asked me whether I could explain the meaning of it, adding, "There is some friend (or enemy) of mine in England,—and I have no idea who or what he is,—who, whenever there is anything against me in the *Tablet* or the *Weekly Register* or elsewhere, cuts it out and sends it to me." The cutting in question was a review of a pamphlet called *The Westminster Synod*, which seemed to have given a fancy sketch of some future synod, in which one of the

¹ Dean Stanley used to speculate how different things would have been if Newman had read German.

speakers reports that the Old Catholic movement has ended in materialism and atheism ; and this was the cause for which "the unfortunate Döllinger" had suffered so much.

I said that the cutting reminded me of another remark made by Dr. Newman, that Döllinger might end in finding himself united with those who would be far more distasteful to him than ultramontanes.

"Not *united* with them," replied Dr. Döllinger ; "say '*working for the same ends,*' and then what Dr. Newman says will be correct. We and the distasteful people whom he indicates have common objects, but for very different reasons. The same thing happens in England. Roman Catholics find themselves working with ultra-radicals and atheists to overthrow the English Church. Dr. Newman attacks the Church of England ; so do the atheists. The one wishes to clear the ground for his own religion ; the others wish to clear away religion altogether. Just so in Germany : the Old Catholics have some common aims with people who are otherwise distasteful to them."

He went on to say that he did not expect that the Vatican Council, never formally closed, would ever assemble again : nor did he expect that any council could do much at present towards healing the divisions in the Church. He has never looked to a council as the means of uniting Christendom. Very much must first be done in quite other ways. *Theology must become conciliatory instead of polemical ; a means of making peace, not an arsenal from which to draw weapons of war. Christians must learn to make more of the points on which they are agreed, and less of the points on which they differ.* As the education of the clergy and the people progresses, it will become less and less possible for Churches to be divided because of differences about subjects which are so mysterious that no one *can know* anything about them. Much may be done by individuals ignoring differences and joining with members of another communion, so far as that

is possible without sacrifice of principle; and perhaps that is the way in which reunion may come about at last. When we have learnt to think less of our differences, a council may possibly do something; but we are not ready for it yet.

He did not think that the Council of Trent could ever be made a basis of reunion. Some of its decrees were excellent, and many Protestants would readily accept them; but others were of such a character that, either they had to be explained in a sense which was certainly not that of the framers, or else the council as a whole had to be abandoned, because some of its decrees are heterodox. In the decree about transubstantiation, for instance, no definition of "substance" can be given which will not entangle you in a contradiction when you come to contrast it with "species."

"Père Hyacinthe will not be able to do much in Paris. Not only is the ground occupied by politics, but in all the Latin races the population is divided into two great sections: those who go all lengths in one direction and accept everything, however absurd and superstitious; and those who go all lengths in the other, and are practically infidels. Between these two sections there is a deep abyss, which you cannot bridge. Such is the case in France and in Italy; perhaps also in Spain, but we know so little of the real state of religious feeling in Spain. There however, more than in any other country, we find an enormous difference between the town population and the rural. In the villages they are attached very strongly to the old religion, and to the old Spanish monarchy; in the towns they care little about religion, and in them what republicans there may be are to be found."

One evening, as we started for our usual walk, Dr. Döllinger said: "I have had one of the ex-ministers of the Italian government, Minghetti, calling on me this

morning, and he says that neither in Florence nor in Rome is it known whether there is any such bull as is reported to exist respecting the mode of electing the next Pope, dispensing with the usual interval between the death and the election, and directing that the election take place *præsente cadavere* of Pius IX. I told Minghetti that even if such a bull exists, it must rest entirely with the cardinals whether they choose to be bound by it or not. A Pope cannot enforce enactments of that kind after his death, for the cardinals can always fall back on the old regulations. But among the present cardinals it would be impossible to find a man who would be desirable as Pope. They are all such nonentities ; men of no force of character.

“When Lamennais was in Munich after his visit to Rome, I used to walk with him. He told me that one of the cardinals had deplored to him the lamentable state of the Sacred College. ‘In most societies,’ said this cardinal, ‘you will find one or two, or perhaps even three, able men ; but in our college we are *every one of us blockheads!*’ When I was in Rome myself, I was there for five weeks. I said to Theiner, who introduced me to the Pope, ‘People here seem to be very well acquainted with German affairs : no one asks me any question.’ He laughed and said : ‘Just the reverse ; they know absolutely nothing.’ And they did not want to know.

“They are not likely to go out of Italy for a Pope. Manning is not yet made cardinal. When he was with the late Archbishop of Paris (Darboy), some time before the Vatican Council, he urged him to preach the doctrine of papal infallibility and do all that he could to promote it, hinting that there might be a cardinal’s hat for each of them ; ‘for it would be a beautiful thing for the two great cities of the West (London and Paris) to have cardinals as archbishops.’ He really gave that as a reason. Archbishop Darboy told X., who told it to me.

“I have seen Manning twice—in 1851 and 1858, I think. The first time was soon after he came over to the Church of Rome, and I was favourably impressed by him. He told me that indirectly I had contributed to his conversion. At one time he had thought that it was impossible for a Roman Catholic to treat history fairly and openly, and that a Roman Catholic historian could not be honest. My work on ecclesiastical history had proved to him the contrary, and had removed a great stumblingblock out of his way. The second time X. took me to see him. We both came away with the same impression: that he had utterly changed, and for the worse. He was cold and formal, speaking with evident reserve and weighing his words. Perhaps he had already begun to look upon me with suspicion.

“I read a volume of his sermons once, written while he was still a member of your Church, and I liked them: there was warmth and depth of true religious feeling in them. All that is gone now. There is nothing of it in the things which he has written since he became a Roman Catholic: all his later writings are inferior. I know of only one writer who is quite equal to what he was before his conversion.” And both of us together said—
“Newman.”

“Dr. Newman was once asked by the Pope to edit an English Bible for the use of Roman Catholics. The idea was believed to have been suggested by Cardinal Wiseman, and the object of the proposal was supposed to be this: to give Dr. Newman harmless occupation for the rest of his life, so as to keep his mind, or at any rate his pen, from working in a way that people in high quarters might not like. Apparently Newman saw through it; at any rate the flattering request was declined.

“It originated thus: Cardinal Wiseman once wrote to me (I believe that I have the letter still), claiming the

credit of Newman's conversion : an article in the *Dublin Review* was supposed to have convinced Newman that his position in the English Church was untenable. When the two men came into contact, the enormous intellectual superiority of the convert became manifest to the man who had claimed to have convinced him of his errors. Wiseman never quite got over this ; and the attempt to silence Newman by giving him a lifelong literary task was the result.

“ As to the next Pope, not even the cardinals know who he is likely to be. There is no instance on record, ever since the election has been confined to the College of Cardinals, of the next Pope being known as such during the existing Pope's lifetime. The conclave meets without any one knowing what the result will be. Mistrust and suspicion are natural to the Italian character, and are intensified in the case of ecclesiastics in high places. This is fatal to a coalition before the time. The intrigue begins in the conclave. Each cardinal is accompanied by a priest, a *conclavista*, and he is commonly the go-between. A book has been written, but never published, on the duties of a *conclavista*, by one who acted in that capacity several times (Liotti ?). For centuries none but an Italian has had even a chance of being elected, and there is no chance for a foreigner now.”

One day, in 1872, Dr. Döllinger had a visit from an ambassador in Rome, and during our evening walk he told me some of the news which the ambassador had given him, among other things, that there were signs that the Pope's mind was giving way. I asked him whether there was any instance of a Pope going out of his mind. He replied :

“ None whatever. It is reported that Boniface VIII. died in a state of frenzy, tearing the flesh off his own arms with his teeth, at the treatment which he received from Nogaret and Sciarra Colonna at Agnani and from the Orsini

in Rome ; but those who would be most likely to know say nothing about it.

“By the way, Cardinal Wiseman once wrote an apology for Boniface VIII. in the *Dublin Review*, and I have several times been told that he wrote it by *my* advice ; that he had asked me what I thought would be a good point to elucidate in the history of the Papacy, and that I had recommended a defence of Boniface VIII. I cannot remember ever having said anything of the kind. Anyhow the apology was a complete failure. He defended the Pope by the simple expedient of ignoring all that tells against him. And the case against Boniface has become much stronger since the publication of documents which place much of the wickedness with which he is charged quite beyond a doubt. You might defend Alexander VI. by Wiseman’s method ; and, in fact, a Frenchman has done it—quite a worthless book.

“Clement XIV. is also sometimes said to have gone mad. Pius VII., after being tormented into signing what he believed he ought never to have signed by Napoleon, was much stricken in conscience afterwards, and is reported to have exclaimed, ‘I shall go mad, like Clement XIV.’ But Clement never went mad. What *is* true of him is, that he lived in perpetual dread of being poisoned by the Jesuits for suppressing their society, and killed himself at last with antidotes.”¹

ALFRED PLUMMER.

¹ Once or twice in this paper I have combined in one conversation what was said on the same subject on more than one occasion ; but nearly all is from notes taken in 1871 and 1872.