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Johannes Ronge**

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Title: John Ronge; The Holy Coat of Treves; New German-Catholic Church

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Release date: October 10, 2011 [EBook #37706]

Most recently updated: March 19, 2013

Language: English

Credits: Produced by David Widger

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JOHN RONGE; THE HOLY COAT OF TREVES; NEW  
GERMAN-CATHOLIC CHURCH \*\*\*

**JOHN RONGE**

**THE HOLY COAT OF TREVES**

**New German-Catholic Church**

**By John Ronge and Anonymous**

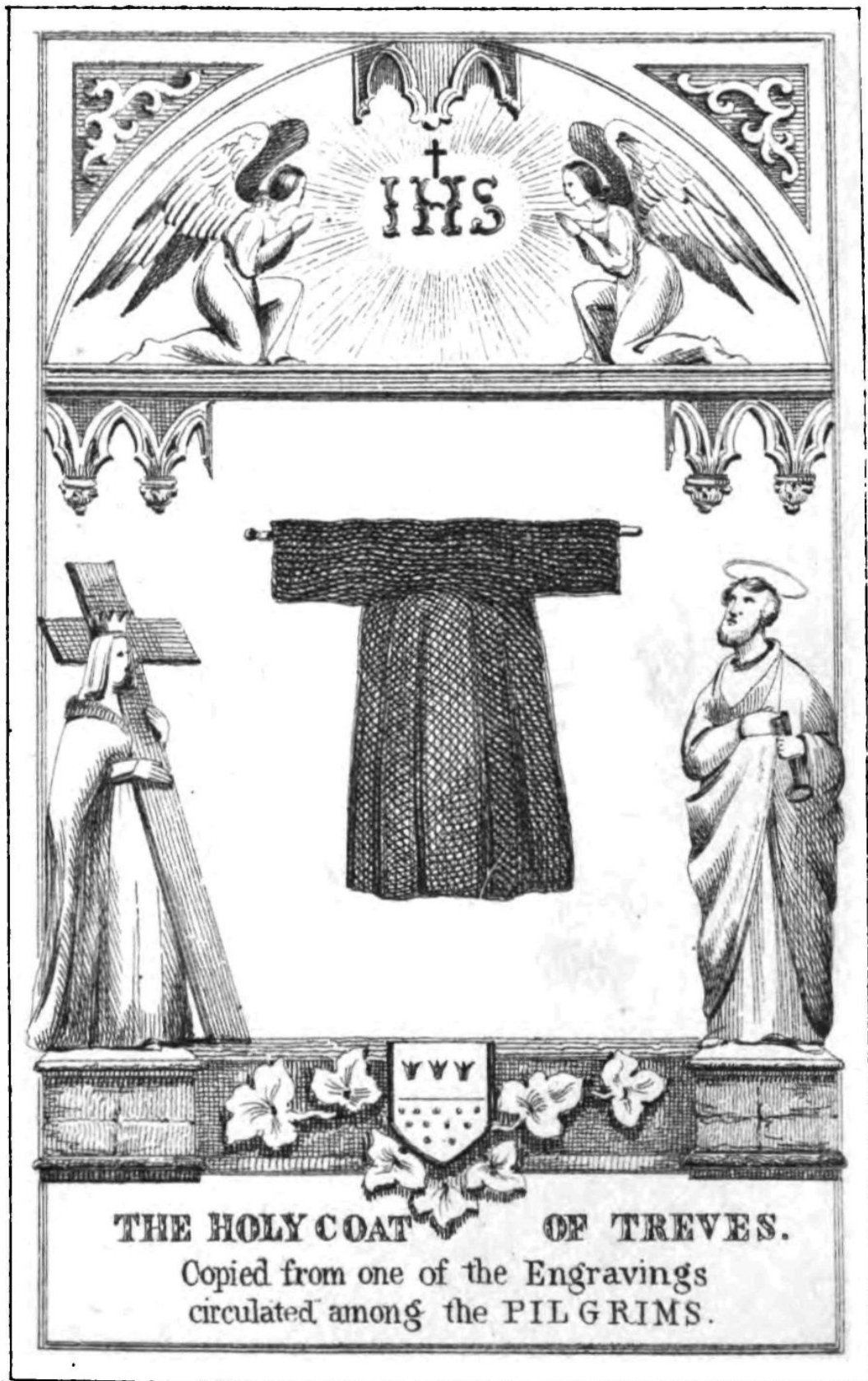
**THOMAS NELSON EDINBURGH:**

**AND PATERNOSTER ROW,**

**LONDON.**

**SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS. MDCCCXLV.**

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*W. Miller, Engr.*

*"How has the Devil dressed up dead bones, garments, and vessels, into the holy bones, garments, and vessels! How confidently have people believed all impudent liars! how have they crowded on the pilgrimages! All this the Pope, the Bishops, the Priests, and the Monks, have confirmed—or, at all events, they have been silent,—and quietly receive the money and the offerings, whilst the people go astray 'What results have been brought about by this parading at Treves of the Coat of Christ.'"*

*Luther's Warning, in reference to this very Coat of 1814.*

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## JOHN RONGE AND THE HOLY COAT OF TREVES

# THE HOLY COAT.

We believe that the best way to introduce our subject is to quote some few passages from the authorized document published at Treves, with special reference to the ceremonial which took place in that Cathedral, giving an account of the history of the Holy Goat, and explaining and defending the step which the Church was about to take in the matter. The following are a few extracts:—

"Thirty-four years have now elapsed since our city found within its walls 200,000 strangers, all actuated by a pious longing after this holy relic, before which they might present their adoration, and, in lively feelings of devotion, strengthen themselves in the faith and the love of the Lord. The order which prevailed during the whole ceremony, though nightly between twenty and thirty thousand persons were quartered in the city—the universal devotion and edification manifested by the pilgrims—still live in the recollection of all those who witnessed the ceremony from its beginning to its close. \* \* \* Meanwhile, since this period, the youth of our city have grown to ripe manhood; and, accordingly, they have expressed the wish that the venerable relic should be once more exhibited. These pious wishes could not remain unknown to our worthy Bishop, who, indeed, had previously resolved to meet them. Before his consecration in 1842, when he met Prince Metternich in Coblenz—who is, from reasons known only to few, in possession of one of the holy nails, and who then promised to restore that which was the rightful property of the Cathedral of Treves—the Bishop had determined to signalize the event of the restoration of the Holy Nail, by exhibiting both the Nail and the Coat to the religious worship of the people. But the promised return of the nail has not yet taken place, although the confidence placed on the promise of the Prince still allows us to cherish this hope. Notwithstanding, as this could not be the case, in the present year, the Bishop resolved to satisfy the general desire expressed for the exhibition of the holy coat."

From the historical inquiry it appears, according to the author, that this said relic was brought by Helena, the mother of Constantine, from the Holy Land, in the fourth century, and deposited in the Cathedral of Treves, which was then the residence of the emperors, and the most famous city in the empire, after Rome itself. It lay in concealment till the 9th century. To Frederick I. is attributed the honour of reviving the attention of the Church and people to the great treasure of their cathedral and city. After being again 300 years concealed, Maximilian I., to give pomp and distinction to a *diet* held in the city, caused it to be exposed to the adoration of the inhabitants. In the three following centuries, (16th, 17th, and 18th,) the occasion of its exhibition was the holding of the German Diet, when the city was filled with princes and princesses, as well as crowds of devout pilgrims. In the period of the French Revolution, it fared ill with the holy coat. It was, according as danger threatened, carried to the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein. On the new political organization of the Rhine provinces, it was made the subject of earnest diplomatic transactions between Nassau, France, and Bavaria—the last Elector of Treves, and the Bishop, Carl Maunay; and the Church of Treves has to thank its Bishop—whose requests Napoleon did not generally refuse—for the recovery of much of their possessions, and for the restoration of this relic, the most valuable of them all.

After being concealed for centuries, the first public representation took place in 1196. In 1514, Leo X. issued a bull, proclaiming *complete absolution of sin to all who, in the proper spirit, made a pilgrimage to Treves, and contributed to the expenses of the spectacle.*

After a great deal about the history of the coat with its various exhibitions, and a defence of the worship of relics, the Address closes as follows:—

"The believing sight of this pre-eminently sacred relic, with which stand connected, in a manner so immediate and impressive, the associations with the whole life and sufferings of the Saviour, must at once cause many overpowering thoughts and feelings to be awakened in the soul, so that one must feel himself involuntarily torn asunder by them, and believe that he is placed in the immediate presence of the body of our Lord. \* \* \* In all these lively associations, the Christian believes that he hears the voice of Him who wore this raiment, proclaiming the words of eternal truth, and exhorting sinners to repentance; he believes the holy garment encompassed with that brilliancy of light which on Mount Tabor made Peter exclaim, 'It is good to be here;' he believes that it is covered with that sweat which bedewed his face on the Mount of Olives. Hence the phenomenon that often hardhearted men were led, by the sight of the holy coat, and the feelings of devotion thereby awakened, to turn into themselves; their heart has melted like ice before the heat of the sun, and thus have they been brought back to God and his means of grace in the Church. O! may many such miracles take place in these days, which are now approaching. May God bless the resolutions of the faithful, who come on a pilgrimage to our venerable cathedral, guide their steps on the road to the august sanctuary, and infuse devotion and love into their souls!"

Such is the spirit of the authorized document, issued under the auspices of the ecclesiastical authorities at Treves; and it may well be questioned, whether, in the most gloomy periods of Catholic superstition, anything has appeared which savoured more of all that is degrading and blasphemous in the system. On the 6th of July 1844, the general announcement of what was to take place was made, with the regulations to be observed by the different processions of pilgrims. After stating their joy at the proposed spectacle, the chief announcement is made as follows:—"This holy relic will accordingly be exhibited for a period of six weeks, beginning with the 18th August, in order to satisfy the desires of those who may have the pious intention of proceeding to Treves, to worship the holy garment of our divine Saviour by immediate view, each of whom will, according to the bull of Pope Leo X., dated 26th January 1514, receive *complete absolution.* \* \* \* Accordingly, we intimate to all within the bishopric, what we believe to be called for, that there should not be a too numerous streaming together of the faithful on the same day, causing disorder and confusion; and also that no neighbourhood may be deprived to too great an extent of its inhabitants. Accordingly, it is required that two separate days be allocated for each part of the bishopric, so as to divide the number of those who intend to come to Treves; and also that the localities for particular days be so arranged as to prevent the crowding together of too many pilgrims on the same line of road." Then follow fourteen regulations to carry out these views, the whole signed by the Vicar-General.

The long-looked for day at length arrived. The whole country was in commotion, and from many hundred places at once the pilgrimages began. Every possible arrangement had been made by the authorities of



Treves for the reception of, and maintenance of order among the vast and motley assemblage that streamed hither and thither, to take part in the ceremonial. It was a period when devotion was worked up into a wild enthusiasm, and all for the time, whatever their age, or sex, or land, or character might be, were hurried along by the same frenzied zeal, and felt the ordinary differences of life and society to vanish before the august ceremony that for the time had assimilated all classes of the faithful. On the morning of the 18th August, all the bells in the churches were made to announce that the ceremony had actually begun. The steamers on the Moselle were crowded with passengers, who disembarked amid the discharge of cannon. All kinds of vehicles, in addition to the regular post-conveyances, were called into requisition, and the romantic appearance and interest of the whole was enlivened and enhanced by the motley groups of pilgrims, in all varieties of costume, who had made the journey on foot. Pontifical High Mass was performed by Dr. William Arnoldi. An oration by Dr. Braun followed, bearing upon the great event of the day. Then came the elevation and exhibition of the holy relic; and at ten o'clock the procession of the pilgrims commenced. Gens-d'armes were stationed without, the clergy of the cathedral within,—whilst, in the immediate neighbourhood of the relic, was a guard of honour, composed of the most respectable of the citizens, and recognised by their silk sashes over the shoulder, in the yellow and red colours of the city. Benches were placed from the portal on the right side of the cathedral, to the choir, and between these the procession moved. Each of the pilgrims was allowed to stand a short time before the relic, yet so vast was the concourse, that between one and two thousand are reported to have passed in the short space of an hour.

The relic itself was placed near the altar in a gold frame, with a glass front at a considerable distance from it; its shape resembling a French blouse,—the colour somewhat brown—though the poor peasantry were taught to believe that to every eye it presented a combination of colours entirely distinct. An opening was made on each side of the frame, to allow the hand to come in contact with the relic; and whatever did touch it, was believed to acquire a peculiar sanctity. A deep basin was placed in front, to receive the offerings of the pilgrims, which were to be given to the Cathedrals at Treves and Cologne, and to a Catholic seminary in the former city.

No certificate of creed was required, so that the crowds of Protestants, who were drawn from mere curiosity, had the fullest opportunity of seeing what was to be seen. The ceremony continued daily, during the whole six weeks, for twelve hours, and was opened and closed by the chime of the cathedral bells. At the commencement the weather was fine, but in a few days it became quite unsettled and stormy; yet nothing could damp the long-cherished ardour of the pilgrims. Band after band advanced, and, like the crusaders of old, all the sufferings and hardships of the journey were forgotten as they approached the Holy City. The fatigues of long travelling were so far relieved by addresses from the clergy who marched with their parishioners, and still more by the sacred music which, ever and anon, filled the air. Vast bodies of clergy, from distant parts, arrived to take part in the ceremonial with the general body of the faithful, and, afterwards, share in the heavy duties of the Mass and the Confessional, as required for such an extraordinary occasion. At last, to complete the arrangements, on the evening of the 23d, an immense banner, with a red cross on a white ground, was elevated to the top of the cathedral, to direct the weary steps of the pilgrims, and to cheer their hearts as they approached the august city. So vast occasionally was the concourse, that on some days not fewer than about 20,000 were quartered within the walls. Fortunately such arrangements had been made with regard to the supplies of provisions, that but a small rise of price in the necessaries of life was perceptible, which is certainly remarkable, when it is stated that in one week, at least 150,000 strangers visited the city, and in the whole time about 1,200,000. Truth also requires the remark—that, taken as a whole, matters were conducted with general decorum and regularity, though it requires but little knowledge of human nature to see that where there was such a miscellaneous concourse of people, often ill fed and ill lodged, the ordinary regulations and observances of society would be disregarded, and a strong encouragement and temptation be given to immorality and crime. Although it was officially stated that there was accommodation in the city and neighbourhood for 20,000 persons, still all the powers of military police, and clergy combined, could not prevent many mournful scenes of misery and vice. It is, by the way, a most significant fact that, along with the announcement now mentioned there was added, under equally official authority, the urgent request that "*all citizens and strangers should avoid all criticism on religious matters or opinions.*" If anything were required to convince one that the high authorities of Treves were afraid of the effects of free discussion, or even doubtful allusion to what might well make the most bigoted inquisitive, this significant sentence is sufficient. Such were the scenes which, with every variety of incident, were being enacted at Treves—a melancholy exhibition of priestly power to give currency and strength to superstition and blind idolatry, as well as of the state of passive submission on the part of the people, to all that the Church, in the arrogance of its blasphemies, may command. The voice of politics was, for a time, hushed—the busy commerce of the city, and even the harvest labours of the field were silent—everything like this world's occupations and concerns were all alike neglected, to give pomp and emphasis to the sad spectacle of men's faith deceived and led astray by a piece of an old garment. Not merely from the poor villages in the vicinity, but from the enlightened towns on the Rhine, from Coblenz, and Bonn, and Cologne, the processions of pilgrims came. Take one specimen:—On the evening of the 22d September, a most numerous procession, which had left Cologne nine days before for Treves, returned. This procession was composed chiefly of the lowest classes, with a vast proportion of women of every age. A body of white-dressed girls had advanced a long way to meet the procession, bearing all kinds of church emblems in their hands—crucifixes, flowers, anchors, hearts, &c. The pilgrims were all supplied with medals and engravings of the Holy Coat, as well as with small books containing an account of its history and miracles. These were people who looked poor and miserable, and who evidently had not the means to undertake such a journey, and yet, such was the passion for visiting Treves, that the pawnbrokers reaped a rich harvest from the desperate attempts made to collect money enough to supply their bare wants during their absence from home, and to give their votive offerings to be applied as before mentioned. Cases the most heart-rending have been published of poor people parting with their last possessions to obtain means for the journey, from which they looked for such marvellous results. The sick even were carried thither, with the firm belief that they would be healed; and the debased devotion of the pilgrims broke out in such expressions—"Holy Coat, we pray to thee. Holy Coat, pray for us," and the like. The higher classes, of course, consulted their own convenience in their modes of travelling,

employing the Rhine and Moselle steamers or their private conveyances; but it is melancholy to think, that such vast bodies of the respectable classes did lend their influence to these unholy exhibitions.

But without entering into farther details let us hasten to the closing scene on the 7th October. At 2 p.m. the doors of the Cathedral were closed, and the ceremony of removing the holy relic from public view proceeded with in presence of the whole body of the clergy. At four the doors were re-opened, and Bishop Arnoldi delivered a discourse, to a vast audience, on the "*Unity of the Church*." At its close, began the procession of the civil officials, of teachers of all grades, of merchants and artisans, and of the guard of honour, dressed in black, with wax torches, through the transept into the choir, to join in the *Te Deum*. After the hymn of St. Ambrose had been sung, accompanied by the thunder of the cannon and the pealing of all the bells in the city and neighbourhood, the general procession advanced through the chief streets of the city. The committee were in front, followed by the guard of honour; they were succeeded by the different fraternities, all with wax candles—a strong choir of singers, then vast crowds of the people, with the various trades, each with their peculiar flags and emblems. They proceeded through the chief parts of the city to the palace of the Bishop, which was brilliantly illuminated. He, accompanied by the head Bishop of Verdun and the dignitaries of the Cathedral, dispensed the benediction. Then advanced from the arch-diocese of Cologne a torch-procession, accompanied by instrumental music. The whole proceedings were closed by the chorus,—“Lord God! we praise thee,” in the Cathedral. The chief streets of the city were illuminated in the evening, and the grand organ continued pealing. In the middle window of the Cathedral where, in former times, the exhibition of the relic had taken place, was a transparency of the Cross, with splendid emblematic devices.

While all this was going on within the Cathedral, outside there was everything to call the mind of the devotee from the scene in which he had taken part; for, in addition to the jostling and bustle of the crowded city, there was everything in the way of the ordinary and extraordinary sights of a fair, to make him forget the feelings and object of his pilgrimage. Menageries, panoramas, plays, &c, all solicited the attention and money of those assembled, equally with the music and services of the Cathedral.

The bishops who had officiated during the ceremonial from first to last, were those of Metz, Nancy, Verdun, Luxembourg, Spires, Limburg, Osnabrück, Münster, Cologne, with several from Holland. Each bishop entered the city amid the ringing of the church bells. The pilgrims from France did not enter the city in processional order, but their clergy were numerously represented. During the whole period, processions to the city were not uncommon. Controversies between several of the journals, as to many occurrences connected with the proceedings, have taken place. Charges have been advanced, and as flatly contradicted, so that we do not feel called on to detail either the nature of the charges or the defence. It is easy enough admitting exaggeration on both sides.

It only remains to notice the inseparable adjuncts of such proceedings—the *miracles* which are said to have been effected. To a Protestant, who has not spent some time in a Catholic country, it must seem in the highest degree strange to hear of solemn statements, by opposite newspapers in support of, or in opposition to, certain pretended miracles; nay, not only so, but to have counter-medical certificates pitted against each other on the issue. Yet all this has lately been done. It would be worse than useless to recite the floating stories which one hears in the neighbourhood, about Protestant clergymen dying suddenly in the full possession of health, for having denounced the whole thing as a piece of imposture to a body of passing pilgrims, or of the many miraculous cures of sight, lameness, and the like. Yet, that all this is fact, any intelligent and inquiring tourist of the Rhine can testify. One case, in particular, created great interest, that of the Countess Droste-Vischering, a relation of the Archbishop of Cologne, who has been for many years unable to walk without the use of crutches, but who, after beholding the Holy Coat, was enabled, to the wonderment of all, to walk home unassisted. The plain truth comes out from her medical adviser,—that she had been long suffering from a diseased knee-joint, that she resolved at all hazards to go to Treves, and that, while in a fit of ecstasy before the relic, she had excited a degree of energy, in stretching or bending the diseased limb, which had given the temporary relief, by relaxing the long rigid muscles. Since this period she has had relapses, and is, we believe, now using the crutches, which had been too hastily hung up in the Cathedral as a thank-offering for her marvellous restoration. Yet this simple story is paraded about and magnified into a miracle, to give still greater *éclat* to the Holy Coat and the church ceremonies connected with it. It would be useless to enter into other details, when all are equally barefaced. The above case may be selected as a rather better than average specimen of the popish miracles of the continent.

And now, in finishing this part of the subject, we may be allowed to quote the opinion of one of the great organs of German Catholicism:—"Who can deny that this exhibition of the Holy Coat has been an event for the Rhine provinces and the West of Europe, which, in its consequences, must be of the greatest moment, whilst, for its grandeur, in church history it is unprecedented? Proceeding from a small circle, it has already embraced a wide circumference in its influence." After enumerating the quarters from which the crowds of pilgrims flocked, he proceeds:—"Who shall name those, principally from the higher classes, who came as single pilgrims from distant cities and lands, and what language do all these bands speak? They proclaim the triumph of faith over a system of false enlightenment; the victory of the newly-awakened elements of the day over all overthrowing tendencies—in a word, they proclaim the power of the Church, which has brought together such vast bodies of men, separated among so many princes by language and habits, yet made to act as the members of one and the same body."

We now turn to the more pleasing part of the subject, the statement of the more striking particulars connected with the late re-action against this God-dishonouring spectacle. It was impossible that a movement so singular and extensive should escape being made the subject of general newspaper remark and criticism. And, as the fact has proved, it has been argued and re-argued in a hundred ways by Catholic and Protestant journals, so that the whole bearings of the case, and the positions of all the different political and religious parties in the country in relation to it, have been brought and kept steadily before the public mind. This, it is clear, can be but seldom realized where the State puts its *imprimatur* upon the full freedom of the press, and where, in consequence, *public opinion* is but struggling for existence and definite expression, instead of being, as in Britain, the one element which overrules and directs the movements of the whole social system. We can appreciate the effects of *free inquiry*;—and when we know that this is now being unsparingly applied

to the workings of that system, which "loves the darkness rather than the light," we may, under God's guidance and blessing, be allowed to look for new and large results, in the way of the exposure of errors, which have the sanction of long centuries of ignorance, and of great preparatory movements at least, for the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus. This is one great point gained; and if the spirit of inquiry, which has now been excited, could be but well directed, we might already rejoice in the Protestant prospects of Germany. That men feel unsatisfied with *what is*, is manifest—that feelings long kept under, are now obtaining clear and full expression—that men are being undeceived in having so long believed a lie, and often in agony of spirit are seeking for the simple truth to bring peace to their souls—all this, and much more is evident, and calls loudly for our active sympathies and prayers.

A few points call for especial notice:—

Very many of the *Catholic* journals have taken their stand against the late scenes at Treves. It is true, that several of those Journals may have been actuated by secondary motives in so doing, or what is the notorious fact, that some, at least of such Journals, want almost entirely a religious character; and though Catholic in name, are infidel in fact. Still it is equally notorious, that several of the Catholic Journals, whose orthodoxy is above suspicion, have lifted up their voice against what has taken place, as scandalous to Christianity, and eminently perilous to the Church.

In addition to the discussions which have appeared in the public prints, a vast mass of pamphlets has been issued on both sides. The most remarkable of these is, one issued by two professors in Bonn, *Gildermeister and Sybel* (the latter a Catholic,) entering into a grave and learned historical inquiry as to the genuineness of the relic, exposing in the most triumphant manner the various defences which have appeared on the Catholic side,—and all characterized by the most severe sarcasm, in holding up the trumpery of the system of relic-worship to contempt. The title of the book is "*The Holy Coat of Treves, and the twenty other Holy Coats.*" A second edition was soon called for, in which four other such relics were stated as discovered. It is generally known, that among these numerous claimants for genuineness, the great body of the French clergy have bid hard to prove that the Coat of Argenteuil is the genuine one; and this view has been warmly defended by one of the Catholic clergy of Einsiedeln in Switzerland—notoriously one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in the world. More than this, writings have appeared stating the events connected with the other relics of the same name, and treasured with equal sanctity in numerous Cathedrals; also giving an account of the separate and independent series of miracles wrought by each as the true Coat of the Lord. It would be tedious to detain the reader with more of such details. We desire merely to notice the various workings of the movement in and out of the Catholic Church. It may accordingly suffice to state in addition, that poetry as well as prose has been called into requisition, and that satirical ballads and lyrics have been numerously circulated, and eagerly read by all parties. Many of them are filled with the most stinging remarks on the general position and moral character of the clergy.

But by far the most important element in the movement, and, in fact, that which has determined its subsequent direction, has been the following letter of John Ronge, priest in Silesia, dated Laurahütte, 1st October 1844, and entitled, "Opinion of the Catholic Priest John Ronge, on the Holy Coat of Treves:"

Laurahütte, October 1st.

Opinion of a Catholic Priest in regard to the Holy Tunic at Treves.

"Christians of the nineteenth century,—you have heard—you know it—men of Germany—you know it—spiritual and temporal teachers of the German people, that what would once upon a time have sounded in our ears as a fable or a fiction—is neither a fiction nor a fable, but real truth and verity. Bishop Arnoldi of Treves has exhibited for the adoration and reverence of Christians, a garment called the Tunic of our Lord!

"According to the last account, five hundred thousand persons have already made a pilgrimage to see this relic, and every day fresh thousands flock to it, especially since the garment in question is found capable of curing diseases and working miracles.

"The news has spread among the people of all lands, while certain priests in France maintain that they alone possess the real tunic of Christ, and that the one at Treves is an imposture. Truly the saying here applies,—'He who can occupy his mind about such things without losing his reason, has none to lose.' Five hundred thousand men—five hundred thousand intelligent Germans have—already hastened to see or to adore a piece of dress at Treves! The greater number of these thousands are from the lower orders of the people, and, besides, in deepest poverty,—oppressed, uneducated, stupid, superstitious, and in part demoralized. They leave the cultivation of their fields, the labour of their workshops, the care of their households, the education of their children, to take part in a Heathen festival at Treves—a disgraceful spectacle, which the Romish Church displays before their eyes. Yes, it is a Heathen festival, for many thousands of the credulous multitude to render to a piece of dress,—the work of human hands,—that regard and adoration which are due to God alone. And what pernicious consequences must follow from these pilgrimages! Thousands of the pilgrims deprive themselves of the necessities of life to raise the money for their journey, and the offering which they make to the Holy Tunic—that is, to the clergy. They purchase it by sacrifices of their comfort, or by begging—only to starve on their return; to suffer want, or to fall sick in consequence of the fatigues of the journey. If these external results are sufficiently melancholy, the moral consequences are far more so. Will not many of them, reduced to want by the expenses of their journey, endeavour to relieve themselves by unlawful means?

"Many wives and virgins sacrifice their purity of heart, their reputation, and their chastity, destroying thus the peace, the happiness, and comfort of their families.

"In fine, this most unchristian exhibition but creates an inlet for superstition, hypocrisy, and fanaticism, with all the vice that follows in their train. Such is the blessing spread abroad by the exhibition of the Holy Tunic, and it is a matter but of small moment whether it be genuine or false.

"And the man who publicly displays this piece of dress—the work of human hands—for reverent regard—who leads astray the religious feelings of the credulous, ignorant, or suffering people—giving thereby an impulse to vice and superstition—who wrings their substance from the poor and starving multitude—who entails on Germany the ridicule of other lands, and who draws more close together the heavy clouds which



float already dark and dismally above our heads—this man is a bishop, a German bishop. It is Arnoldi, Bishop of Treves!

"Arnoldi, Bishop of Treves, I therefore turn to you, and demand, by authority of my office and calling as a priest and teacher of the German people—in the name of Christendom, in the name of the German nation, and in the name of its instructors—that you put an end to the unchristian spectacle of the exhibition of the Holy Tunic—and withdraw this garment, that the offence which it has given may not be still increased! For, do you not know—as bishop you ought to know—that the Founder of the Christian religion left to his disciples and his followers not his coat but his spirit?—his coat, Bishop Arnoldi of Treves, belongs to his *executioners!* Do you not know—as bishop you ought to know—that Jesus taught—'God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth?' and He may be worshipped everywhere, not only in the temple at Jerusalem, on the Mount Gerizim, or at Treves, in presence of the holy tunic; do you not know—as bishop you ought to know—that the Gospel expressly forbids the adoration of every image and of every relic? that Christians in the Apostolic age, and in the three first centuries, suffered neither images nor relics in their churches (and *they* might have had plenty of them)? that the worship of images and relics is a Heathen custom, and that the Fathers in the first three centuries abused the Heathens on account of it? We read, for instance, (Div. inst. 11., c. 2,) 'Neither do these besotted men understand that if the images possessed life and motion, they would rather worship the man by whom they had been formed.' Lastly, do you not know—as bishop you ought to know this also—that the vigorous and healthy mind of the German people was first degraded to the worship of relics by the Crusades in the 13th and 14th centuries? when the exalted conception of the Godhead which Christianity inculcates, had been obscured by all the lying marvels brought from eastern lands? Hark ye! Bishop Arnoldi of Treves, you know all this, and better probably than I can tell it to you. You also know the effects which superstition and the idolatrous adoration of relics have worked among us, namely, the religious and political bondage of Germany; and yet, you can display your relics to the admiration of the multitude. And were it even possible you should be ignorant of all that I have told you,—that the salvation of souls was your sole aim in the exhibition of this Holy Tunic,—you would, notwithstanding, have two sins upon your conscience. In the first place, it is unpardonable, if the garment in question actually possess saving power, that you have withhold its benefits from suffering men until the present time. And, secondly, it is unpardonable that you accept the offerings of these countless multitudes. And is it not unpardonable that you, as bishop, should accept of money from our poor and starving people, especially when you have seen, not many weeks ago, that hundreds have been driven by necessity to mutiny, despair, and death? Do not allow yourself to be deceived by the influx of thousands upon thousands, but, believe me, that while hundreds of thousands of the German people hasten with holy fervour (?) to Treves, *millions*, like myself, are filled with horror and the deepest indignation by the disgraceful spectacle. And this indignation prevails not in individual ranks and parties, but among all classes—even in the Catholic priesthood. Judgment will overtake you, therefore, sooner than you think. Arnoldi! the historian is already seizing his pen, to submit your name to the contempt of your contemporaries and of posterity, and stigmatizes you as the Tetzels of the nineteenth century!

"And you, fellow-citizens of Germany, whether near or at a distance from Treves, unite your efforts to prevent the continuance of such an insult to the German name. You have various means of working, take courage and employ them; endeavour each and all, with resolute determination, to encounter and restrain the tyrannous despotism of the Romish Church. For it is not in Treves alone that the modern traffic in indulgences is carried on; you are aware that in the east and west, the north and south, rosary, mass, indulgence, burial moneys, and the like, are still increasing, and with them spiritual darkness. Forward, then! Catholics and Protestants, together to the work! Our happiness, our honour, our freedom are at stake. Do not the manes of your fathers, who stormed the Capitol, frown to see you suffer patiently the Castle of St. Angelo to lord it over Germany. Dishonour not the laurels of a Huss, a Hütten, and a Luther. Give words to their ideas, and convert their will into deed.

"Finally, my colleagues, whose sole endeavours and desires are centred in the welfare of your congregations, the honour, the freedom, and the happiness of your German countrymen, keep no longer silence! You sin against your reputation, your religion, and your fatherland, if you longer hesitate to follow out your improved convictions. I have already, elsewhere, briefly addressed you, and shall therefore now conclude. Prove yourselves the true disciples of Him who gave up all for truth, and light, and liberty. Show that you have inherited, not his garment, but his spirit.

"Johannes Ronge, *Catholic Priest.*"

It may be at once seen that this letter is the production of no ordinary man; and, at a glance, it cannot but remind us of him "whose words were half battles." Few living Germans have such mastery over their language in all its native strength. It was just such a production,—short, nervous, and earnest,—that was required to give utterance to the slumbering thoughts and sympathies of thousands. Appearing in a distant and comparatively unknown part of Germany, it soon found its way wherever the German language was spoken, and, wherever it has found its way, there it has called forth a deep and hearty response. It has now been translated into various languages, and, despite all the preventive measures of police and clergy, it may now be found by the thousand all over Germany. It is not our present purpose to state in what points the views of the author seem defective. Our immediate object is simply to lay before the reader some facts illustrative of the anti-Catholic movement which has taken place, and is now advancing steadily. But first a word about the course pursued with regard to the author. From events which had previously taken place in the Cathedral of Breslau, to which diocese he was attached, the suspicions of the ecclesiastical authorities were not long in fixing upon Ronge as the author of the above letter, which appeared anonymously in the *Sächsische Vaterlands-blätter*. His manly love of truth disdained equivocation or subterfuge, and, as the result of all, he was deposed and excommunicated. A complete host of pamphlets were called suddenly into existence by the daring letter of one who, calling himself a Catholic priest, had still the hardihood to asperse the character and cause of the one all-holy Church, by attacking one of its most imposing rites, and treating with scorn and shame one of its consecrated bishops. Every possible charge, affecting his character as a student, as a clergyman, as a teacher, and as a man, was raked up against him. Those who had not a tithe of his power of fierce and indignant invective, when truth called for the vindication of its claims, made up for



the defect by personal scurrility and the most vulgar abuse. His former associates in the priesthood openly denounced him, to exculpate themselves from any supposed sympathy with the sentiments or with the man. A friend generously undertook his defence—who declares, that at the Catholic seminary he was distinguished by great diligence in his studies, as well as by the purity of his moral life; so much so, that the superintendents stated that they had seldom under their care a young man who sought to become acquainted with the truths of the Catholic faith with such a deep and holy earnestness. After a slight sketch of his doings in Breslau and Grottkau, he states, "that every friend of his must feel persuaded that the above letter proceeded from his inmost convictions. He is utterly incapable of falsehood, in word or deed; and, as regards moral character, that he is, perhaps, too stringent towards himself, but mild and considerate to others. It was only the public wild proceedings of the ultra-Montanists and Jesuits that filled him with holy indignation."

Ronge himself soon felt and saw the importance of the step which he had taken. He was now beyond the pale of the Catholic Church, obliged to relinquish all in defence of the truth, and exposed, from all quarters, to attacks which his conscience told him to be groundless. The cause of truth, for which he had already suffered, again demanded that his voice should be upraised; and this he does in the following *Justification*, which cannot but interest the reader as the autobiography of a remarkable man, but especially from the fearful disclosures which it makes of the present state and actual workings of Romanism. All the facts adduced with regard to his anguish of mind—his deep sense of the spiritual bondage under which he lay—his inward and outward struggles—his determined opposition to what he believed to be wrong and unjust—his plain but triumphant vindication of his conduct throughout—all give a character of *truthfulness* to the document, which is its best guarantee, and makes it emphatically *speak for itself*. It may enhance the interest of the following document to know that it was soon prohibited by the censor of the press, notwithstanding that the press of Leipsic is one of the freest in Germany:—

## PREFACE.

In the following pages are submitted to the unbiassed judgment and consideration of my fellow-citizens and the Christian public, the various documents connected with my deposition and excommunication. It is not therein my aim to vindicate my conduct in the eyes of the *so-called* national teachers, or priests, or of the *so-called* Catholic Christians who are notoriously hypocrites, and who only follow religion for a livelihood, or as a means of attaining power and eminence: to attempt my vindication before such as these would be degrading to myself and to the nation. I desire a verdict of acquittal from those alone, who either have, or long to have, religion dwelling in their souls, and who are earnestly striving after light and truth, Christian love, and moral freedom. All such will acknowledge that I have fought a good fight, and not for myself alone; they will grant me their confidence, that we may devote our united strength to the accomplishment of that great and desirable end, to the achievement of which we are called, as well by our holy profession, and our sense of duty, as by our care for the moral and temporal well-being of existing and of future generations. The Author.

## CHILDHOOD, SCHOOL DAYS, AND COLLEGE LIFE.

I was born on the 16th October 1813, in Bischofswald, a village in the circle of Neisse, and near the Giant Mountains. I was the third child of my parents, who had ten others, of whom two died young. We were set to work at an early age, and while my elder brother was employed in the cultivation of the farm, my father's little flock of sheep was placed under my care and keeping, as the second surviving member of the family. Such was my chief occupation between the ages of six and twelve, during spring, summer, and autumn, the winter being spent in the performance of other species of rural labour. My father was serious, fearless, of sound judgment, and devoid of superstition. He died in March 1842. My mother was entirely devoted to the care of her family. She died in October 1831. My earliest instruction was obtained in the village school of Bischofswald, where the only branches taught, even in the highest class, were reading, writing, arithmetic, and the learning by rote of the Catechism and Bible history. It was only during my last year at school that I was instructed in geography and the history of Silesia. In my lonely shepherd life my mind dwelt often on religious subjects (I studied my Catechism and Bible history for the most part when in the field with my flock) on the future life, on time and the eternity beyond; and from such thoughts it acquired at times a melancholy tone. One of my teachers persuaded my father to send me to the High School, which, owing to his numerous family, he would not otherwise have done.

In 1827, I entered the High School at Neisse, and left it in 1836. I had but little taste for foreign languages, and could not form a friendship for Horace or the other Romans; but, on the other hand, I delighted in history and German literature. Rotteck enchanted me. It was with inexpressible joy that I entered the University of Breslau. I felt and knew that I was free, and would indeed have been ashamed to waste my time and freedom in idleness and sloth. Associated with a company of noble-minded youths, it was our earnest endeavour to cultivate our minds,\* and strengthen our bodies.

\* After a somewhat different fashion, perchance, than that prescribed by Rome.

I chose theology as my profession, because I felt a strong leaning towards teaching, for the gratification of

which the holy calling appeared to me peculiarly suited. I somewhat feared its formalism, but was not then acquainted, as I now am, with the compulsory and hypocritical system of the Romish hierarchy. Although several of my friends endeavoured to dissuade me from the choice, I fancied myself possessed of such strength of character as would enable me not only to meet the danger, but to turn it to account. My father, who made me so ample an allowance, that beyond a small bursary, I needed no further assistance, left me free to choose. As I perceived, however, that his means of providing for my brothers and sisters were straitened by his liberality to me, and feeling desirous, also, not to diminish their fortune, I deemed it my duty to relieve my father, as soon as possible, from the sacrifice which I knew he made on my account. This was an external reason, and one, I do not blush to own, for determining to enter the Roman Catholic priesthood. And how many of the clergy are there who can say, that in their choice of a profession, they have not been influenced by similar motives? While I was at the University I also fulfilled my period of military service at Breslau, in the corps of sharpshooters, under Major von Firk.

## THE SEMINARY.

In the month of December 1839, I was received into the Seminary, and entered on a period of mournful and painful conflict. The confidence I had hitherto reposed in our spiritual teachers was soon expelled from my breast by a nearer survey of their mode of life, and replaced by the deepest horror and loathing, which seized me when I became aware how shamefully they abused religion, for the purpose of degrading and subjecting the people to their will; when I saw by what a fearful veil of hypocrisy deceitful Rome surrounds us from our cradles to our graves; when I saw how the holiest ordinances are insultingly misused, to crush the dignity of human nature. The disgraceful fetters galled me, which, till now, I had not felt, and I perceived what many of my fellow sufferers endured, and all the more severely, the less they dared *avow* the causes of their suffering. For the policy of Rome knows how to entwine in bonds from which there is no escape, all Christians who profess its creed, and more skilfully than Moses, who once drew water from the barren rock, can conjure money from the impoverished people; but their principal care and most consummate skill are constantly directed towards their servants, that is to say, to the inferior clergy and *their* education. The inferior clergy are so securely bound in spiritual and external fetters, that for the greater number it is almost impossible to escape. The peculiar and appropriate armoury for these degrading bonds is the College or Seminary for priests. It is there that the youth, who wishes to devote himself to the teaching of the people, has the brand of slavery stamped deep and painfully upon him; it is there that he is condemned to holy idleness; it is there that his spirit is fettered, and bowed to blind obedience by superstitious dread and sacred statutes; it is there that he is inoculated in heart and soul with hypocrisy and selfish egotism; it is there that man is degraded to the condition of a slave, and becomes a passive tool. The pain, the torment of this sacrifice is fearful, and nature instinctively revolts when she is robbed of her holiest rights, of the most valued gifts of the Creator. And yet the slave is silent, and all the more so, as the grave is deeper where his freedom and his dignity lie buried. It is but seldom that a despairing cry escapes from his inmost soul, and dies away in utterance, amid the empty sounds of simulated prayer.

I cannot think, without a trembling in my every nerve, on all the ignominy which was heaped upon us, and on the disgraceful treatment which we *must* endure; and I could wish the pen I write with were a blazing torch, to illuminate the deep abyss wherein hearts are stifled, and spirits overwhelmed amid hymns of praise! I need, however, only to depict in quiet, softer colours, what I have seen and felt, to rouse with certainty the wrathful horror, and the deepest sympathy of the greater part of my fellow citizens, who may still be unacquainted with the fearful strategy of the Church of Rome.

## THE EARLIER PERIOD OF MY STAY IN THE SEMINARY.

During the first few days after entering the seminary, I saw depicted in the countenances of my companions in misfortune, consternation, or timidity, the deepest grief, or a sort of desperate resignation, according to their several dispositions; the first evening, for example, of six acquaintances and friends, who were consigned to the same cell, none uttered a single word—all the six were so amazed, that they strove to forget their speechless misery in sleep. Forty young men, in the bloom and strength of manhood, glided silently about like mummies. We looked on one another in gloomy, speechless sorrow, and each one sought in the countenance of his friend, to ascertain the state of feeling in his heart. We all endeavoured to attain that heroism, which can resolve at once to sacrifice the heavenly dreams of youth, its hopes, its wishes, and its freedom,—in order, as they told us, that we might the more successfully promote the temporal and eternal well-being of our fellow-men;—as if it were possible for *him* to raise men to independence and to self-respect, who cannot boast of their existence in his own bosom. That, however, which most excited my indignation and horror, was the ghastly stagnation, which seen from one side exhibited depression,—from the other, levity, discontent, or cowardice. The young man of four and twenty had closed accounts with himself and all mankind, the dearest ties were broken which bound him to his fellow-men. The glowing and joyful fire of youth, which seeks to achieve for itself a bright futurity, was extinguished; and egotism poured the freezing poison of suspicion, envy, and self-interest, into the warm and youthful veins. We felt as if we were all enveloped for eternity in one impenetrable shroud, and as if doleful spirits were singing to us burial songs

throughout the gloomy night. The despotism of the Roman hierarchy glared at me like an awful monster—a monster which digs graves for the burial of living youth—graves which engulf the freedom and the happiness of nations. The young man who wishes to become a teacher of the people, must witness his open and upright manliness ruined; he must blindly obey, and submit himself to the most degrading oppression, for the *first* injunction laid on him is *unconditional obedience*. He sees that the arrangements and decrees of the hierarchy are contrived for the degradation, not the improvement of his country, and that he himself, as the servant of a foreign power, is expected to assist in the oppression of the land which gave him birth. He is also doomed to bear the weight of infamy which accompanies every state of slavery, and the disgrace which now attaches to the entire priesthood, from the immorality of many among them, whose celibacy is a false profession.

Can glittering coin, wrung from starving poverty and pious fanaticism, or wines and dainty viands, make amends? Yes, if he prefer the life of a gluttonous animal to that of a man. What *can* sustain him? The hope alone that he may one day aid in breaking the chains which bind his native country! That thought it was which animated *me*, and kept me upright under the pressure of my fearful servitude. But must not the nature and the disposition suffer from the depression, and will the moral vigour take no scathe? Ah! What if one were to give way to the pressure—to settle down into a hypocrite—to become an object of contempt to one's self and the rest of mankind. All these doubts and apprehensions forced themselves *even at the first* before my mind, and filled my spirit with ineffable sadness,—and they were and are justified—but too well justified.

Then the time was skilfully divided between attendance at ceremonies, and the repetition of lip-prayers, for from five to six hours daily (including the breviary prayers.\*) Five hours of prayer daily, and such prayer! for young men of twenty-four years, designed to be the salt of the earth! Rome uses devotion as a means of enslaving men. I tried by every means to escape from the debasing feeling, from the reproach of conscience *that I had done nothing*.\*\* After the breviary prayers were concluded, there were only about three hours left daily for private study; and the spiritual work was to be performed in the midst of twenty youths who had no farther examination for office to undergo, and who besides were otherwise *finished!* It was with horror that I contemplated the possibility that my moral strength might be weakened by the influence of idleness and dissimulation. My case was therefore often desperate, and many a time in fever heat have I outwatched the night, and prayed in spirit "If it be possible, let the bitter cup pass from me." I was forced to drink it; but a gleam of prophetic brightness lighted me through the night, and showed me in my dreams the day of my emancipation. Miserably diseased in mind and disposition, I left the seminary in 1840.

*\* The time was divided in the following manner:—Morning,—From 5 1/2 to 6, matins; from 6 to 7, breviary; 7 to 7 1/2, mass; from 7 1/2 to 8, breakfast; from 8 to 10, lectures; from 10 to 10 3/4, free; from 10 3/4 to 11 1/2, study; from 11 1/2 to 12, breviary. Afternoon,—Before and after dinner, prayers in the chapel—altogether about 3/4 of an hour; then 1/4 or 1/2 an hour breviary; from 2 to 4, lectures; from 4 to 4 3/4, free; from 4 3/4 to 7, study. After supper, about 1/2 an hour of prayer in the chapel and an hour breviary. The prayers are Latin, and always the same; a larger number on Sundays and feast days. It is the duty of every ecclesiastic to pray through the breviary once each day; the vicars go through these prayers for the canons as a sort of feudal service. The pupils are allowed, twice a week, to cross the threshold of the institution for a few hours only. No speaking is allowed during meals. The treatment is degrading. Two rooms for study are allotted to each twenty individuals. The sleeping places, without stoves, are arranged for three, six, eight, and fifteen. The largest was called The Menagerie.*

*\*\* One of the Prebendaries themselves, at the time of our departure, called the Seminary "a little hell."*

## THE WARNING.

I entreat you, German parents, permit not one of your sons to enter this grave of moral freedom and independence; you draw upon yourselves a heavier weight of blame than if you took their lives—for the moral death is worse and more painful than that of the body! German mothers preferred in former times to put their children to death, rather than that they should be Roman slaves; while now-a-days it is esteemed the highest honour which can be conferred upon a German youth, that he should become the slave—the consecrated slave, forsooth—of the Roman bishop! But the yoke is not acknowledged, for it is imposed under the holy name of religion.

And you, my youthful friends, who choose for yourselves the profession of teachers, let me conjure you to retire from this grave of moral strength, and independence—from the seminary! You will be losers there in mind and body, were you even giants in both! You will become slaves! You will become hypocrites! Attractive though the office of a teacher be, and enlarged his sphere of working, it is rendered a dangerous one for manly dignity—for truth and freedom, by the disgraceful ignominious fetters imposed on it by Rome. Choose, therefore, rather a hard couch and a laborious life than the degrading indolence of a polluted existence.

## MY DEPARTURE FROM THE SEMINARY.

The gates of the Institution, which we were only permitted twice in the week to pass, to visit our fellow-men, at length were opened—the gates of that martyr-seminary for soul and body, that grave of independence—the proscribed threshold was crossed, and I beheld once more before me the free and lovely world; I inhaled long draughts of the fresh air, as I gazed on the free blue sky in all the brightness of the glorious sun. But the sun and the heavens were changed to me—the world itself seemed narrow and contracted, for my soul and spirit were in bonds, disgraceful bonds! I hastened to my native place—there, I fondly hoped, to lose my burden—there, where I dreamed the dreams of youth—there, in my mountain home! The kindly eyes of my brethren, said I to myself, will revive and warm this heart, which has been frozen by the hypocritical and piety-feigning glances of the domineering creatures of Rome.

And the kindly eyes of my brethren *did* revive me, and the joy of meeting again *did* scare away the inworn pain of servitude; but before long the feeling returned with redoubled force. Dishonouring marks of reverence awoke me from my short-lived dream. An aged man approached, well-known to me, and dear from boyish years. I extended my hand to him—he fain would kiss it, the aged man! Is it not sufficient, I exclaimed within myself, that *I* should be a slave? Must I also be a tool to work the degradation of my fellow-men! O Rome, thou hast mixed poison in thy consecrated oil, to kill the dignity of man. I was regarded by all with timidity and reserve, as if I had all at once become a higher, a superhuman being! And how? By the fiat of the Pope? Oh, not a more exalted being; but a slave, who, by the practice of holy hypocritical pretence, was intended to deceive his fellow-citizens! So passed the first period, in dead stupefaction of soul, while I, adorned like a victim, was installed in the ceremonial service of the Romish Church. The thought of my father and my family, the prejudices of the Catholic world, which must believe, and for the most part *does* believe, in the eternal duration of the Roman bondage (called a Church,) paralyzed my spirit and my character. And yet, amid my fetters, there survived still *somewhat* to uphold me; a presentiment that my chains would break; a feeble ray of light illumining the dreary, and seemingly eternal darkness of my prison. But *when and how* should they be broken? I was now to be occupied in the cure of souls, the pulpit and the school attracted me—through them will I labour, thought I, my position may perhaps improve. So I went to Grottkau, whither I was called in March 1841.

## MY OFFICE.

Firmly resolved to be a teacher of the people, in the true sense of the expression, not in that assigned to it by the Church—resolved to speak the truth, without respect of persons, and to become no hypocrite, I entered on my office at Grottkau. Being unacquainted in my sphere of labour, some time elapsed before I came to know my field of action, or was enabled efficiently to discharge the practical duties of my station. I found my school to be the field best adapted to the measure of my capacity. Independently of the natural love I have for children. I was always happiest in this holy garden of the Lord, where youthful minds expand, which is brightened by thoughts as swift and radiant as the lightning, and where the lovely innocence of childhood exhales its sweetest fragrance. In school I was free from the espionage by which I knew my pulpit to be surrounded—which oppressed my heart, and nearly stopped my utterance; free from the humiliating feeling which the Confessional aroused within me, where I seemed to be an idol, or a judge set over the thoughts and consciences of my fellow-men. When the pressure of the priestly yoke at times became too much for me, I have fled for refuge to the youth and innocence of the school, and have never failed to leave it with my strength renewed. These children little knew the infinite service which they rendered me! Notwithstanding that I laboured with all my might, as well in the school and the confessional, as in the pulpit, most resolutely to oppose and counteract the superstition, the hypocrisy, and all the consequences of priestly oppression and dissembling, the result could be but small, on account of the mighty barriers interposed by the hierarchy to every step in the direction of spirituality.

Within these fearful barriers, and under such restraint, and fettered thus in mind and body, with watchful care to sow and plant, what, after all, might be doomed to suffocation in the choke-damp of superstition, became from week to week less bearable; and all the less so, the more clearly I perceived the terrible effects of Popish despotism on the people, and the depth of moral degradation to which many of my brethren had sunk, bringing the danger all the nearer to myself. I saw it now to be my duty, openly to declare against the abuses and the soul-killing tenets of the Church of Rome,—rather to die a bodily than a spiritual death.

## MOTIVES FOR STANDING FORTH

### AGAINST THE CONSTRAINT EXERCISED BY THE POPE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

The inducements which gradually brought my determination to maturity, and imposed the carrying out of it upon me as a duty, I here submit to the consideration of all men:

*I stand forth against the Romish hierarchy, because it is the means of crushing my dignity as a man, and reducing me to a state of disgraceful servitude.* The dignity of man is acknowledged to consist in his reason and his will, and in the unrestrained use of both, for the attainment of moral freedom,—“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” As Romish priest I dare not freely exercise my reason and my will. As such I only dare to think, and speak, and write, what the Church decrees, or what my



superiors may allow. If I think, or speak, or write, more or otherwise, I am declared to be a *heretic*, i.e. a most grievous criminal. God himself must only be conceived of and adored, according to dictation of the Romish Church; and even He dares to accept no other adoration at my hands, than that prescribed by the Romish Church, in which, forsooth, salvation only can be found. As Romish priest I have no freedom, either of thought or conscience. Neither can I boast, as such, of any of the other rights of man, in opposition to my superior,—him I must blindly obey. The Romish priest is not regarded as a being personally free, but as an automaton, employed to spread abroad the mist of superstition. To cast off this bondage, and become a free moral agent, is a holy duty and injunction of the Christian religion, which demands freedom in the exercise of virtue. In order, however, to convince all men more clearly of the urgent nature of this duty, I shall attempt a feeble portraiture of the paralyzing influence exerted on myself, by priestly oppression, while I held an office in the Church—a portraiture in which the chief features in the case of hundreds among my colleagues may, at the same time, be recognized.

I felt a morbid irritability in contemplating the consecrated barriers which cut me off from my fellow-men; my spirit, sympathy, and active impulse died away, and in their place, in spite of my endeavours, cold indifference, and emotions even of hatred crept upon me. I likewise felt a suspicion of my colleagues, inexplicable in its earlier stages, and, in particular, I shunned those friends in whose society I had passed the unfettered years of college life, in order that I might not unnecessarily open the wounds which the loss of my freedom had inflicted on my heart.\*

*\* I have often heard the complaint made, that the younger members of the Catholic priesthood keep aloof from former friends; a moving cause is given above, which may lead us rather to compassionate than to condemn them.*

But most crushing of all was, the performance of certain ceremonies at the altar, by which, as I knew and could perceive, many of the community were misguided into superstition and hypocrisy. Was I not forced to be a party to dissimulation, in the performance of such ceremonies? Could I help feeling myself lowered in my own opinion? When I knelt at the altar, with the credulous people behind me, and cast a look within, I shuddered in my inmost soul, an unspeakable woe tormented me, and I uttered the despairing cry, "And hast thou so long suffered this humiliation?" Each morning I was awakened, as with a piercing shriek, by the thought that I was a slave, and that my life was not only useless but fraught with degradation to my fellow-men—that I had been robbed of a bright career of useful labour, and that not even time itself might put an end to all my ignominy! My fetters were indeed consecrated, and, according to the prejudices of the world, they seemed to be unremovable. The world appeared determined to bear patiently the hideous yoke—its course was still the same!

I saw before me the abyss of falsehood or an early grave! Should I succumb? Unworthy cowardice! My courage gradually rose; courage for the contest of life and death within me. I determined to burst my fetters, and to leave the enchanted circle,—a circle drawn amid the incantations and the curses of Romish tyranny in the middle ages; I resolved to assist in tearing off the mask of holiness from the hypocrisy of a thousand years. This my resolve was only strengthened by contemplating the fate of my colleagues, some of whom were greater sufferers than even I. A few were snatched away by early death; they sank mute, and cheated of their lives, into the grave. He cannot surely have a drop of blood within his veins, who would not feel it boil with indignation to witness such a sight. And yet their fate was envied by the others, who glided through the world like mummies, in the springtime of their days, and hourly, slowly faded into death. Some rush, to deaden feeling, into drunkenness and other vices, or sink into insensibility, and passively vegetate from one day to the next. Others still, of livelier character, seek to lose themselves in the hierarchical spirit of the middle ages, and because ours are other days, and they, although they know it not, belong to *them*, have originated that modern species of bigotry which rises oftentimes into madness. Such heroes then surround themselves with halos borrowed from the early Fathers, and affect the startling voice of the preacher of repentance.

At last I sought, in order quite to fix my resolution, the countenance of those among the priests esteemed of noblest character; but found little real manliness, good and amiable (?) as several of them might be,—or from a certain vacuity of mind, effeminate inertness, or well-concealed ambition, might *appear* to be.

*I stand forth against the tyrannical dominion of the Romish Hierarchy, because it prevents me from faithfully pursuing my avocation as teacher of the people.*

I am bound, as teacher of the people, and as teacher of religion, at all hazards to guard, not only my own freedom and independence, but those also of my fellow-men. In accordance with the language of the New Testament,—"*we are all the children of one father, we are brethren,*" it is my duty, as teacher of the people and of religion, not only to proclaim freedom to *all mankind*, but to endeavour to realize the lesson, because it is the freeman who alone is virtuous. It is, in fact, my duty as a teacher, not only to strive after intellectual perfection for myself, and to keep pace with the gradual development of mind, but to carry before my parishioners, the banner of civilization and humanity. I am not only impeded by the tyrannical oppression of the Romish Hierarchy in the discharge of all these duties, but am even commanded to proclaim bondage for freedom, darkness for light, and for progress—intellectual stagnation! I must thereby call down upon myself the deserved hatred of the present age, and the curses of posterity.

*I stand forth against the tyrannical dominion of the Romish Hierarchy, because I am convinced that what the Hierarchs call the Catholic religion is not the true Catholic doctrine,—is not a doctrine calculated to promote the happiness of nations; that the Romish, Hierarchy does not teach and act in accordance with the leading and fundamental doctrines of the religion of which Christ was the author,—but that it has introduced abuses, and framed ordinances which are calculated to undermine the intellectual and physical welfare of nations, and only to increase the power and riches of a privileged priesthood, of whom the Roman Bishop is the head.*

It were superfluous here to attempt the proof of this position by a long-winded, learned treatise. The fruits of the Romish Hierarchy have been proving it for centuries, and it is in the power of every man to convince himself, who wishes to be convinced. Or is it perhaps in consequence of the *blessings* emanating from Rome,

that a portion, and not a small one, of our people, languish in the most abject poverty?! while another portion, and within it many preachers of religion, especially the higher prelates, are rolling in superfluous wealth? Are these the fruits of a Church in which alone is salvation, that some should be kept by spiritual oppression and ignorance in superstition and insensibility, and even degraded to a level with the brutes, in order that others, and among them many consecrated servants of the Pope, may be the lords and drivers of the dishonoured horde! How then can the injunction of love to our neighbour find a place in such a Christian Church, in such a society of Christians? Where then is the succour of alone-saving Rome, amid so deep spiritual degradation, amid so great bodily want among our people? Where is the practical working of brotherly-love! where does she labour for the elevation and improvement of the people! Where is the right understanding of the Lord's Supper, the feet-washing! and where the living exemplification of so many others of the essential doctrines of the New Testament? Has it not all degenerated into form and pretence! Has not religion been degraded to a system of usury and hypocrisy, which aims alone at the enriching and aggrandizement of the Church of Rome! The Church, as the Romish Hierarchy exhibits and teaches, is but a phantom of falsehood and dissimulation, which floats unseen above the nations, keeping them in constant dread and blind obedience. Hence comes the alienation from the priests, the horror and bitterness of feeling unanimously entertained by the considerate and right-thinking portion of mankind, towards the so-called Romish Church! And the animosity is well deserved; for what efforts do the priesthood make for the temporal and spiritual amelioration of the suffering people? The greater number of them pass coldly by, as the priests and Levites passed by the poor Samaritan of old. We grant that hundreds of the priests are not aware, or are careful to avoid the knowledge of the game they play, and the Power they serve as blinded instruments. They speak, His true, of the spirit of *reconciliation* and the *Church*, but they halt by the dead letter. They know not, and they do not desire to know, that *the Church means all mankind, and mankind here on earth!* That the need of reconciliation is indeed most pressing, for mankind in its present condition—I mean a reconciliation and approximation of the educated and uneducated, the moral and immoral, portions of mankind. Yea, more, I mean a reconciliation between the rich and the needy portions of humanity. This reconciliation and approximation must be brought about preeminently by the teachers of the people; it must result, not in empty words—with them we have been surfeited—but in actual deeds. This is a vineyard of the Lord, where the ears are ripe for harvest, and where labourers are required. These labourers need no authority from Rome, no outward consecration—it must be in their spirits—they must have consecrated hearts! When they appear, the people will acknowledge them, although they bear no Roman symbols. But seeing that the Romish Hierarchy love no such labourers—the people's truest friends and guides,—seeing that she resolutely opposes the moral elevation of mankind, it is a duty to contend against her and her false system—and such is the duty I shall now endeavour to fulfil.

*Lastly, I stand forth against the tyrannical dominion of the Romish Hierarchy| because its statutes tend directly to the sundering and oppression of my native land.*

The Roman Catholic priest is debarred by celibacy from the family tie, bound by his vow of blind obedience, by the tenets of his faith, as well as by external interest, to the Bishop of Rome, and thus withdrawn and estranged from the interests of his fatherland. Instead of awakening and strengthening patriotism and community of feeling, the Catholic priest, as teacher of the people, is engaged, by the statutes of his Church, *to stifle both*. History abounds with proofs of the truth of this assertion, with instances in which their fatherland, and the most sacred interests of their country have been betrayed, by bishops and priests, to the Roman Pontiff. But we dare not stop to consider the past; every day bears striking testimony that the priesthood strives with might and main, again to bring the German nation under the tyranny of the Pope and of the Jesuits. Hundreds, truly, of the priests are not aware of this; but what a load of guilt should *I* incur, were I to lend myself to the work of degrading and subjecting my fellow-countrymen,—of delivering my fatherland over to the Jesuits and the Pope! On the contrary, it is my bounden duty to contend against the despotism of Rome, and to lend a hand in working out the emancipation of my native country. These are the arguments which render it incumbent upon me—on all of us—to fight against the Hierarchy, and strive to bring about such an improvement and a reformation in the Church, as shall satisfy the requirement of the times.

A thorough reformation of the Church, it appeared to me, could only be brought about by General Councils,\* in which laymen should bear their legitimate part; and I determined to lay down my views in writing on this subject, together with a sketch of the Romish abuses, which I expected to have ready by the autumn of 1843. The necessity for such a step was the more impressed upon my mind, the more I saw increasing the violence and lordliness of the High-Church and Jesuitical party throughout Germany, and particularly in Silesia, under Dr. Bitter, who was at that time Vicar of the Bishopric. Dr. Bitter disposed and managed all things to his own heart's content. Such curates and chaplains as did not please him were most unceremoniously deposed, translated, imprisoned, admonished in letters couched in Russian terms, and dealt with as suited his humour. Thus was Mr. Beer, the curate of Brieg, translated in defiance of his people's wish to retain him; Mr. Schotte was degraded to the lower office of chaplain, and Mr. Weiser, the chaplain, on a mere calumnious charge, without examination or opportunity of defence, ordered to the Seminary for punishment. These were men of unblemished reputation, their only fault being that they were not sufficiently abject and Romish. But Dr. Bitter rained and hailed on right and wrong, and enacted the part of Providence in the diocese of Breslau.

*\* Even in the Seminary I spoke to several of my quondam friends, of the necessity of General Councils. Some of them have probably forgotten now, what then they acknowledged to be needed.*

The inferior clergy, who besides had few or no privileges in comparison with their superiors, were really most arbitrarily dealt with. A feeling came over us at that time, as if the days of club-law were at hand. In some places, as in Brieg and Ziegenhals, it really came to violence. But Ritter's creatures *rose*, and managed in the spirit of their master. He, in the fulness of his power, issued an interdict against mixed marriages, at once dishonouring to us, and injurious to chastity; he commanded that the old Silesian ritual, which probably dates from the time of trials for witchcraft,\* (it contains at least much of the same stuff,) should again be

brought into universal use, because he learned that some curates no longer employed it.\*\* Neither did the Seminary escape him; he ordered the pupils never to mix with their fellow-men except in clerical costume, (probably for the sake of exemplifying neighbourly and brotherly love,) and enjoined it with suitable earnestness. Bigotry and fanaticism increased still more and more among the young and newly-appointed chaplains, and the old experienced ministers saw themselves all at once outdone in piety.

*\* This expression is not too severe; for according to the Silesian ritual, in baptism, for instance, the Devil is three times driven out of the innocent little child. At the consecrating of Holy Water, and at other consecrations, in like manner, a number of exorcisms are employed.*

*\*\* At the same time, indeed, he promised a new one, which, however, after a lapse of three years, has not yet appeared.*

Numerous rosary associations and prayer-meetings were established. Schneeweiss, the professor of divinity, instituted such meetings in Neisse, and introduced rosary-books from Bavaria, which, pandering to the grossest materialism and sensuous worship, manifest the most horrible Jesuitism. The members paid weekly two silver groschen, which money, with that realized by the books, was reported to find its way into the coffers of the Jesuits in Bavaria. Herr Schneeweiss is generally considered in Neisse to be a Jesuit. The pupils at the High School were compelled to join these associations.

Similar reunions were established in other places, among which that under pastor Schaffraneck, at Beuthen, in Upper Silesia, was distinguished. Thus were we placed by Dr. Hitter, the *quondam* Hermesian,\* quite on the ecclesiastical war establishment of the middle ages. Nothing now was wanting to Dr. Ritter, except monasteries and convents, for which pious mites were already beginning to be collected, and the bishop's mitre of Breslau. He lost his point, however; for Mr. Knauer, a mild and humane priest, was chosen. Now commenced a general intrigue among the High Church party. Mr. Knauer was complained of at Rome as incapable; Rome, therefore, hesitated for a year to confirm the appointment, during which time the agitation and disturbance in the diocese increased. Citizens and honest Churchmen in the province complained loudly of this bad state of matters; but neither the incorporation of burgesses, (who, to be sure, have no voice in matters affecting the good of their souls, or regarding their clergy,) nor a single pastor, deemed it incumbent on them to oppose the tide of disorder and of bigotry. Aroused by the disgrace of our increasingly gloomy prospects, and excited by the shamelessness of the creatures of Rome, as well as by the intrigues in regard to the bishopric of Breslau, which were daily coming to our ears, I resolved, although I had never yet written for publication, to attack the scandals which issued from the chapter of Breslau, and wrote the paper entitled, 'Rome and the Chapter of Breslau signed 'A Chaplain.'

*\* Disciples of Professor Hermes, formerly of Bonn.*

[This article appeared in No; 135 of the "Vaterlands-blatter," of the year 1842, and runs thus:—

#### "ROME AND THE CHAPTER OF BresLAU.

"Although a year has already elapsed since Prebend Knauer was chosen Bishop by the Chapter of Breslau, the appointment has not yet been confirmed at Rome, notwithstanding that the diocese has been two years without a bishop, and that other bishops, much more lately chosen, have been confirmed long ago. The circumstance excites, however, no surprise; for Knauer is a moderate, and humane, perhaps even a liberal-minded man. And yet it is somewhat strange that the Chapter of Breslau should submit so patiently to see its own and Knauer's honour so abused by Rome, and the rights of the diocese so disregarded! To object to this, that the Pope considers Knauer unfit for his office, were absurd. How should the Pope know aught about it, unless from informers, (his divine qualifications being now no longer admitted,) since the Chapter, by its choice, has declared him to be fit, and since it cannot be supposed that a college of venerable men would elect as bishop an unsuitable person, merely for the sake of appearances—not to advert to the influence of the Holy Spirit, whose efficacy would thus have been unrecognized in the election! But how can the Pope have more faith and confidence in a few pitiful informers, than in a whole college of men upon oath? How can he place these men in such an equivocal light before the eyes of the world, and so impede their usefulness in the diocese! Should this, however, happen, will not the Chapter incur a moral obligation, to vindicate its own and Knauer's honour, as well as to preserve the rights of the diocese? Hitherto the Chapter of Breslau has been silent. Is this from meekness? No one recognises in this silence an act of Christian forbearance, but somewhat very different! Of course, the people have learnt in the catechism, 'The Church is the community of all Christians, not the Pope.' People have strange notions in our day, especially about Church and State, freedom and the rights of man! All would fain have freedom and their rights, and, as they say, their warrant is in the Bible!

"It will here be objected, however, that the Pope, having the right of confirming, has, consequently, also the right to refuse confirmation. Let us cast all else aside, even reason and honour, and consider the matter from the point of view of historical right, acquired by force. The Pope, then, has the right to confirm the bishop, consequently also to refuse confirmation; but the Chapter, in like manner, has the right of choosing, and, consequently, of not choosing—perhaps even the right of refusing admission to a bishop not elected by themselves. It is not difficult to determine whether Rome or the Chapter of Breslau would fare the worst in such a contest.

"Or may not the informers, who throw suspicion on the sentiments and fitness of Knauer, perhaps be members of the Chapter; and the Italians, presuming on their want of unity, venture to enact in Germany a part they have not dared for long? The silence of the Chapter and the impudence of Rome are scarcely capable of any other explanation. Should it indeed be so, and should individual members of the Chapter have sacrificed the welfare, the rights and privileges of the diocese, to their private ambition, their jealousy, or to other interests, and thus have made a level road for the Italians again to enter Germany, then would we call upon these men, who bear rule in the diocese, and whose part it is to promote our welfare, and to protect our rights and liberties, to vindicate their trust, if they do not wish to incur the reproach of want of principle, and dereliction of their duty.



"Are those days to return, in which it was necessary to send gold-laden cavalcades to Rome, in order to become a bishop? If so, the Canons of Breslau would have but faint chance of a mitre. It is very remarkable what the Italians have of late demanded of us Germans. We are commanded to pray that the Spaniards may return to their old ecclesiastical bondage! Who have been the leaders of this bloody drama? Perhaps the disobedient people? Espartero, and such like! We know in Germany, and almost every school-boy knows it, that, next to the tyranny of royalty, the bloody slaughtering of this fine people has been for the most part occasioned by the licentious, lazy, Rome-subjected priesthood! We also know that the French Revolution was not occasioned by Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and others of their stamp; but by the tyranny of Louis XIV., the profligacy of Louis XV., aided by the shameless excesses of the court nobility, lay and clerical. No less are we aware that the Thirty Years' War was not caused by Luther and Melancthon, but had been hatching for centuries by Rome and the lay and clerical nobility of Germany. It is, indeed, most necessary that we pray for ourselves and for the Spaniards, but it shall be for the freedom and independence of ourselves and them—in union with which alone can true religion and morality exist—and not for slavery and dependence, which can at best engender dissimulation and hypocrisy.

"A Chaplain."]

Well did I know that I was subscribing my own sentence; and yet, on closer consideration, I could not believe that the Hierarchy, or Church as it is called, would treat both truth and justice with such open scorn as I found that it could, through Dr. Ritter and the vicar-ship of Breslau.

About six weeks after the appearance of the article, I received a note from Dr. Ritter,\* in which he called upon me to tell him, on my priestly word of honour, whether I were the author of the article, "Rome and the Chapter of Breslau," or had taken any part in the drawing up or despatching of it. Dr. Ritter, the vicar of the bishopric, a priest, nearly sixty years of age, with grey hair, dared to call me to account for speaking the truth!—me, who, as a priest and proclaimer of the truth, had lately been sent into the world with the commission, "to speak the truth without fear of man,"—Dr. Ritter, who himself had sent me forth, ventured to call me to account for doing so! And is religion thus to be turned to mockery and reproach! Should I not speak the truth? or had I not spoken the truth? I had written down that the Romish priesthood were preeminently the cause of the German Thirty Years' War, and of the Revolutions in France and Spain. Are these not facts of historical notoriety, contained in every manual, and should I not dare to write them? I had also asserted that the calumnies and want of unanimity among the candidates for the bishopric, were probably the reasons for the Pope daring so long to delay the confirmation of Bishop Knauer, and keeping the diocese in confusion. The divisions and quarrels of the candidates for the bishop's mitre were known to all the diocese, and also *who* had principally contributed to the retiring of the humane Bishop Sedlinitzky—much indignation was felt at the discord occasioned by clerical ambition; and I, forsooth, should not give utterance to the opinions of my fellow-citizens and colleagues! Dr. Ritter, then, placed falsehood and hypocrisy on the altar, and desired that I should honour them, in calling me to a reckoning for my truthfulness.

\* DR. RITTER'S DECREE.

*"Public opinion points to you as the author of the article entitled "Rome and the Chapter of Breslau," and signed "A Chaplain," in No. 135 of the Saxon Vaterlands-blatter. I hereby require you, on your word of honour as a priest, distinctly to declare, by return of post, whether you are the author of the above-named article, or the sender of it, or, in fact, whether you had any share in the drawing up or despatching of the same.*

*"Ritter,*

*"Canonical Vicar and General Administrator of the Diocese,*

*"Breslau, December 20, 1842."*

Had I given vent in words to my first angry feelings,—had I not allowed some weight to the existing relations between the higher and inferior clergy,—had I not, in short, considered the situation of my orphan sisters—Dr. Ritter would indeed have received a very different reply from that, which, after the exercise of much self-control, I sent him. After calm reflection and consultation with a man of experience, I came to the resolution, that as I had written in the name of my fellow-citizens and colleagues, I ought not to make any concession prejudicial to their rights, and must rely for protection on the laws.

According to the laws of Prussia, the name of an author can only be required, and that by the courts of law, when his writings contain matter of a libellous or seditious nature. If this law be not applicable to one of the inferior clergy, it follows that he dares not give utterance to any assertion or opinion which may be distasteful to his superiors (were it the most undeniable truth,) without being deprived of his situation. But who would willingly at once give up his place? Were governments to proceed after the fashion of Dr. Ritter, or the Church, no commissioned-officer would dare to notice an abuse, without running the risk of being examined and cashiered by his superiors.

Dr. Ritter had no right to take me to task, since by so doing, he interfered with the privileges and the duties of the whole body of inferior clergy, in calling me to account, by his inquisitorial questions, for a simple expression of opinion. I dared not accede to his demands without injuring religion and my colleagues. Or has the so-called inferior priest, perhaps, no right to tell the truth? or to tell it without placing his situation in jeopardy! Is the so-called inferior priest not under the protection of the laws of his native country? and are the superior clergy perhaps the only, and the infallible pillars of the truth? With a due regard to my good cause, and my defenceless condition, compared with that of an unfettered opponent, I gave the short reply—"that my conscience forbade me to satisfy such queries." The Papists and priestlike blockheads always turn the darkest side, and so they did in my case. Dr. Ritter and his Popish allies would gladly have attributed to me falsehood and cowardice, and pointed triumphantly to these words, as well as to other disconnected passages, in order thereby to lower me in the eyes of my fellow-citizens, but in vain. That I desired to save my



place, as was asserted, by cowardice and falsehood, I have practically refuted, by demitting my office, braving poverty and want, although it would have been very easy for me, by falsehood or retractation, to have escaped from the suspension.\*

*\* See the Vicarial document of February 1843. The letters of Mr. Schneeweiss, and the conference with the Prebend F. at the Episcopal audience.*

## OBJECTIONS.

On the other hand, I have heard the objection made, that though I only wrote the truth, it was still unbecoming in me to write it as I did (?) Those good folks who so degrade the truth, and whose knees tremble before every tribunal, are informed, that it was not only my privilege, but my sacred duty so to write. The paper in question was written with the feeling of a *German*, who was ashamed and irritated, by seeing the despotic sway of Rome ever extending, wider and more boldly, and constantly employing for its extension (an extension which brings all vices in its train,) Germans—men whose paramount duty it is, as teachers of the people, to lead them to freedom and independence—since without *these* no virtue is conceivable. I wrote that article as a teacher of the people, and as a teacher of religion, who holds it as his most sacred duty to oppose all injustice, and to call it by its proper name, should it even be perpetrated under the shelter of the altar, and the hypocrisy of the more than millennial supremacy of Rome. There was besides somewhat peculiarly novel in Dr. Ritter's distinctive characterizing of the peculiar word of honour. He puts questions to me which I am called upon to answer on my *priestly* word of honour. Does Dr. Ritter always rate the quality of honour by the office of the individual? If so, are those who have no office also without honour! My honour is one and indivisible—that which God has implanted within me—the honour of being a man. This honour I esteem more highly than that priestly conceit with which, instead of love, Rome seeks by consecration to inoculate her slaves, and which generally sinks them far below the level of their fellow-men, though they may dream that they are high above them. My honour and my manly dignity are of greater value in my eyes than all your livings, prelacies, and mitres; and I am ready to defend my honour against every one, even against Dr. Ritter. Dr. Ritter will perceive from this that I was not lying bound, as he supposed, by that hierarchic spell which extinguishes reason, and degrades man's will to the condition of a limping slave. No, I had seen the Church beneath the screen of her hypocrisy—I had seen her in all her deformity, and I felt myself called on, at once by my manly dignity, and my love to my neighbour, to assist in tearing off her curse-laden mask.

## FARTHER EXPEDIENTS OF DR. RITTER.

As his Jesuitical plan of terrifying had not the effect which he probably desired, he tried other means to entrap me; and behold! a denunciation appeared to him likely to achieve his purpose. About a year before, it had been observed by a burgess nearly related to the priesthood, that I wore a shorter coat, and longer whiskers, than accorded with his orthodoxy, and he denounced me in consequence. Dr. Ritter had not delayed, from his giddy height of holiness, to set me right, in the genuine style of ecclesiastical dictation. I had replied to his communication in something like the following terms:—It would grieve me, by my external appearance, to give offence to any pious Christians, and I should gladly (though my present dress is exactly what I wore while in the Seminary) avoid it. I would indeed even relinquish my vocation were I considered unfit for it. I added at the close, that I might be able to exonerate myself in some particulars, but that I would not occupy, with such insignificant matters, his valuable time, which was doubtless demanded for the consideration of things of more importance.\*

Proceeding upon this, Dr. Ritter applied to Kaspar Hoffmann, clerical superintendent at Grottkau, and called upon him to report concerning me.\*\*

I had never interfered with this Kaspar Hoffmann. In money matters, usually an apple of discord between vicars and curates, I had allowed him to do as he pleased. He paid me only 32 dollars annually (16 were added by the town,) and derived handsome profits from offices, which I, perhaps, discharged for him,\*\*\* Still he would gladly have seen me removed, because we held opposite opinions, and I enjoyed the good-will of the community, which he seemed to grudge me. He truly reported the *crimina*, which he had perceived in me, and added, that he spoke the sentiments of *all* the citizens, although, as it afterwards appeared, he had *two* only on his side.

*\* Dr. Ritter says in his lecture, when alluding to this occurrence, that he does not know whether I have vindicated myself. Very satisfactory!*

*\*\* Kaspar Hoffmann showed me this application before my departure.*

*\*\*\* Curate Pech, a learned, accomplished, and distinguished man, wearied with the long-protracted contest, had taken a curate and retired.*

*\*\*\*\* From one dollar, which I received for reading the burial service, he deducted 10 silver groschen. May I ask whether an usurer takes so large a percentage, as such a*

These said crimes, as contained in the Decree of Deposition, are as follow:—1st, That I wore too short a coat, and unsuitably long hair. I could only treat this silliness with derision, gave therefore no reply to it, and direct my readers to the answer of my honoured defender, and to the testimony of the citizens and magistrates of Grottkau. I must, however, observe, that this accusation was only made as a pretence, the real ground of complaint being my conduct in the school and the church, as the following occurrence will disclose.\* In the schools of which I was the director, I ordered the teaching of German history, caused the pupils to write exercises for the improvement of their style, commenced the formation of a juvenile library, and conducted the religious instruction not altogether according to the authorized Catechism, because I perceived that *it* tended rather to prejudice the minds of the pupils against religion than to implant it in their hearts. I visited, besides, the Sabbath-schools, and strove to rid them of superstition and hypocrisy. Kaspar Hoffmann, like many other suchlike *faithful* ministers, had instituted a regular system of espionage, and watched my doings. In his priestly zeal he slipped privately into one of my schools, put several bullying questions to the children, and when they, in terror, could not answer him a word, he beat the religion of love into them with a birch-rod. When I, enraged at his ill-treatment of the pupils, called him to account, he replied, that well-grounded doubts were entertained of my orthodoxy, that I did not proceed according to the accredited Catechism, *taught German history, &c.!* This betrayed the quarter whence his inspiration had descended. My answer had, however, this effect, that Mr. Hoffmann discontinued his visits to my schools.

*\* My dress was quite black, and was far outshone in elegance by that of the clergy of Breslau. Besides, I know full well, that Catholic priests may deck themselves most gaily, and yet retain their offices.*

In the second place, Kaspar Hoffmann had reported that I conducted the ordinances of worship in an indecorous and undignified manner. This, in the sense in which he meant it, is a shameless lie; for, although I held, and still hold, many Church forms to be contrary to the exalted conception revealed to us of the Godhead in the Christian religion, (can it, for instance, be supposed, that God is honoured or the community edified, by unintelligible mumbling of Latin and hypocritical up-turning of the eyes?) I have still too great respect for all religious conviction, in whatever form it may be manifested, to insult it, or endeavour to bring about a change, in such a manner as I am represented to have done. I submitted to the forms prescribed, without, indeed, hypocritical up-turning of the eyes, whining, or the like, by which it is easy to acquire extravagant metage,\* and a character for sanctity (I saw this shameless game played almost daily.)

*\* The fee paid for the performance of masses.—Trans.*

It was, besides, a moral impossibility that I should have given offence by my remarkable behaviour, being so constantly galled and worn down by my bondage, and by my grief at being compelled to assist in disseminating superstition and hypocrisy, that I stood generally quite exhausted by the altar. Yes, the mental agony which I have endured on that spot, and which was manifested in my exterior, must have produced an exactly opposite impression than that for which he blamed me—and it did produce it. If Kaspar Hoffmann's piety took offence at this, then must it be equivalent to none, since he considered hypocrisy alone to be true decency and dignity. (What remains to be said on this subject will be found in my Defence before the Council.)

Lastly, It had been reported that no one would take me for a Catholic Clergyman who did not know me to be one. This, I must confess, sounded to me very like the language of praise, as I have endeavoured never to make any distinction between myself and my fellow-citizens, seeing that I desired to be neither more nor less than a man and a citizen. Does the narrow blue stripe constitute the pastor and teacher? We know that lying and feigned words are uttered in spite of the clerical stripe, and that the glittering vestments of the priest cannot shut out dissimulation, but, on the contrary, that they promote it.

## LETTERS OF PERSUASION.

### DESIRES OF MY OFFICIAL COLLEAGUES.

In addition to this charge to Kaspar Hoffmann, Dr. Ritter had commissioned a zealous divine of the younger school,\* to persuade me to retract. On the 1st and 15th of January 1843, I received letters from him, and from a narrow-minded priest in the College at Neisse, in which, under cover of the most high-flown expressions of Christian brotherly-love, I am required to become a contemptible liar. As these letters are written in ecclesiastical style, and reveal the character of Dr. Ritter—his artifices, and those of the men who permit themselves to be made his tools, I consider myself called upon to publish them: besides, the writer is no friend of mine, as the Decree of Suspension falsely intimates, but merely an acquaintance.

I had at first almost believed that the assurances of friendship contained in the letters of Schneeweiss were true, in spite of their suspicious highflying; and although I had already, in like manner, been deceived by others of my colleagues, I was almost tempted to believe in their honesty. But after the epistle of the narrow-minded priest had betrayed to me that Dr. Ritter was in the game, I was forced to despise the letter-writer as a hypocrite. Schneeweiss feigned friendship, but he could have no respect, and therefore no friendship, for me, when he recommended me to commit an act of baseness, namely, the denial of well-known facts—the shameful recall of that which I had lately asserted—and a cowardly and degrading submission to the despotism of Dr. Ritter. I suppose, also, that Schneeweiss had imagined that I was quite imbued with hierarchic views. He might in that case represent the blind and cowardly submission as an act of virtue on my part; but he could not expect that I should retract the blame I attributed to the quarrels and *informings*\* of the candidates for the episcopate, and even my censure of the long delay on the part of the Pope—for they

were injurious to the Church. Had he considered my station as a Catholic priest, as a teacher of the people, and of religion in the sense of Christ's teaching, and desired to be accounted such himself, he could not have advised me to a disgraceful retractation and denial of a truth which I had dared to avow. No; he would have encouraged me to bear unflinching testimony to the truth, and in the face of greater danger than the loss of office.

*\* Compare the Decree of Suspension of January 30th, 1843.*

For that *is* true, which I have written; the quarrels and intrigues of the candidates for the bishop's mitre, I repeat it, have been proved, and they were (I myself have heard it,) the theme of scandal and censure at once to priests and laymen. It was disgrace enough to the clergy, that no one of the elder ministers dared openly avow his censure—that they loved their livings more than truth and their fair name. But Schneeweiss does not seem to have thought of these things. It may be gathered from the mixture of assertions and contradictions in his letters, that he was not quite clear of the propriety of what he required of me, at the same time that he does not seem very well to know what he would be at. However, so it also happens with many others of my colleagues. They become inconsistent in their opinions; for, being called to fight in the front rank for truth and freedom, they, on the contrary, act in opposition to them, as the conscious or unconscious slaves and servants of the hierarchy. I fancied, when I knew Schneeweiss in earlier days, that he had a more enlightened zeal, but Gibbon's words, alas! are true—"The spirit of bigotry, at once so credulous and insinuating, when it has once taken root in a noble mind, overturns by degrees the living principles of virtue and of truth."

*\* I have received the most precise information in regard to them from trustworthy men, well acquainted with the episcopal candidates.*

## LETTERS OF SCHNEEWEISS AND GLÖCKNER.

"My Dearly Beloved Brother,—You will be surprised to receive a letter from me, but do not let your surprise induce you to forget that it is sincere affection which prompts me to address you.

"I have just learned in Neisse that a heavy storm is gathering over you. You are said to be the author of an article in the Saxon Vaterlands-blatter, in which language is employed very unlike what one would expect from any Catholic, not to speak of a Catholic priest. It is also said, as I am assured by an otherwise trustworthy and respectable man, that you have been questioned in regard to it by the right reverend Administrator of the Bishopric, and that you have returned a very evasive, answer. If it be really so, Oh, let me entreat that you will not neglect to say at once Pater, *peccavi!* (Father, I have sinned!) Write immediately to the right reverend Vicar, and assure him, with a self-denial which would be highly honourable (?) to you, that you wrote in well-meant (?) precipitation. If you do not follow my brotherly counsel, you may expect, from the determined character of the right reverend Vicar, soon to be suspended (deposed), as I have also learned from respectable authority. And to what would this suspension lead! Oh, believe me, my dear brother, it would then be no longer in the power of your former friends to help you. So long as we are Catholics, Rome must always be to us the centre point of the visible Church; and so long as we wish to be Catholic Christians, and particularly priests—servants of the Catholic Church, we dare not speak and write of Rome in such a slighting manner,—I might say, with the hatred and contempt exhibited in the article, which I have also read. I assure you, that not even Protestants would take you under their protection, if you are really the author of that article. I will not speak of Catholics. In so far as I am concerned, I marvelled at the author's deficiency in historical and theological knowledge, who had subscribed himself 'A Chaplain.'

"Be not offended at my openness. A well-meaning brother must not hesitate to speak the truth even at the risk of the momentary loss of a brother's affection. I entreat you once again to do immediately what I advise. I know you to be an otherwise well-disposed person (*what honour!*); it would grieve me to see you brought into a position which cannot, now-a-days, be honourable (*do I not understand?*). It is great-minded to make amends for faults and for offence which one may have given! and little-minded to have the courage only to impugn time-honoured truths, without acknowledging the fact as soon as questioned by those who, in virtue of their station, have a right to demand the acknowledgment;\* and so, dear friend, behave wisely and well, and turn away all evil from yourself. Make my respects to your Vicar.

*\* Great is the absurdity of this sentence; small the man and priest who can desire to see truth degraded to the condition of a venal slave.*

"Now, dear friend, seek counsel of your God, and I know you will take decided steps in consequence. May peace be with us throughout the new year. With this invocation I conclude these hasty lines, which sincere brotherly love has dictated. Your true Brother,

"Schneeweiss."

The letter of the narrow-minded priest referred to above is as follows:—

"Neisse, January 12th 1843.

"Honoured Brother,—You will not surely take it ill that I speak my mind to you in regard to a matter which must be causing you embarrassment at present—I mean the article in the Vaterlands-blatter. The paper had lain here unnoticed for several weeks, when it accidentally fell into my hands at the house of Baumgarten the merchant; and on account of its bitter, passionate tone, not only in regard to the Pope himself, but the extent of his authority—on account of certain hints in regard to the narrowing of the power of the bishops and the

want of the proper conduct of the cure of souls, which the people have a right to expect, as the grace of the Church, from the apostolic vicars and curates—in short, on account of all these circumstances, I hastened to submit it to Schneeweiss for inspection. But besides the Number which contained this article, there was another, and indeed the preceding one, which at the end gave a list of the contents of the letter box, and also mentioned a contribution from Grottkau. This it was which led to the suspicion that you were the author. Full scope was now given for violent discussion at the parsonage, and they wished at once to inform you of the suspicion under which you lay. An opportunity was found in candidate N., who, at the suggestion of Schneeweiss, was enjoined to call upon you on his homeward journey to Breslau, and disclose all to you,—but nothing farther. No application to Ritter was made from hence, and, according to the declaration of Schneeweiss, N., who is at present in the Seminary, must have blabbed there. Since your embarrassment is now known, that is to say, Ritter's threat in case you should not confess—Schneeweiss has written to you at once, Ritter having expressed a wish that your friends and brethren in this quarter should come to an understanding with you, and try to move you to a retractation of the article. Schneeweiss, much puzzled at not hearing from you, has again applied to Ritter, through Peschke in Breslau, to endeavour to stave off the execution of the threat, and successfully, as we yesterday learned. Peschke advises him strongly to persuade you to confess, in which case nothing more would be demanded of you than that you should insert a modified article in the same paper, without signature, and adds, 'If you had not entreated for him, Ronge would already have been proceeded against—he would have been suspended.' I have already told a long tale, but not yet come plainly to the point which so much annoys me. It is this,—through *me* it was that the article first became known to the clergy, and I should bitterly reproach myself were you to be brought into trouble on account of it. You may judge from this what comfort it would afford me were you to relieve me from my unpleasant situation by a settlement of the affair. Do it for my sake, (?) regard my peace of mind, should it cost ever so great a sacrifice! It involves no sacrifice of conscience—such a sacrifice no one has a right, *ex abrupto*, to demand. The Catholic Creed is not involved—otherwise, I apprehend, from your straightforward character, you would no longer be holding office in the Church. I beseech you, therefore, to relieve me from my painful situation, where I am tortured now, and may be incurably tortured at a future day, should you be overpowered. S. would gladly talk over with you this unpleasant affair, if it were agreeable to you to come here; and, if that be inconvenient, he will employ his acquaintance with Ritter to facilitate an adjustment. Ask N. also, who knows me,—and I think you will entertain no suspicion of my sincerity. Perhaps he may even accompany you, which would delight me. He also is among the shipwrecked ones. With all brotherly love, your friend,

"GLOCKNER."

On the 15th of January I received a second letter from Schneeweiss, which differs essentially from the former one. If the tone of the first is lordly and dictatorial, that of the second is gentle, more prudent, is addressed to me as an individual, and calls in my nationality to his assistance:—

"My Dear Brother,—Once more I write you a short letter, although I feel nearly persuaded that you will not thank me for it. My former hasty lines have remained quite unnoticed. Were I actuated by any other motive than affection, I might feel myself somewhat slighted, but love bears all, hopes all, and does all, that can promote the welfare of a brother (?!). Once more I beg of you to bring this unhappy affair in Breslau to a conclusion. I assure you that your character, supposing you to be the author of the article in question, shall not be compromised (*how forbearing is our mother Church!*), as I know from an authentic source. Believe me, you have injured yourself by your evasive answer,—it will not bring you out of your scrape.

"Act resolutely! If you be the author of the article, answer, like a man, 'Yes I am,' and submit to reproof (*indeed!*). If you be not the author, answer also in that case like a German man (*even this chord the Church does not disdain to strike!*)—'No, I am not.' If your time permits, pray visit me for a few hours. Things are more easily explained when face to face. You have no time to lose, as I learn from a sincere and honest friend in Breslau.

"Only believe that I love you sincerely while giving you this advice. Should you consider me mistaken or shortsighted, I cannot help it. You may, in time, be convinced that these lines are dictated by the purest and most anxious affection. God be with you, and with your sincere friend.

"SCHNEEWEISS.

"Neisse, January 12th, 1843."

## THE SEVENTY CURATES

About the same time seventy Silesian curates inserted a most pathetic article in "The Sion," and, in an address to Dr. Ritter, implored him to call me to account, and, if I made any difficulty, to depose me. As I afterwards learned, this address was not peculiarly well received at the Chapter, but Dr. Ritter issued a letter of thanks.\*

\* "I thank you for the Declaration you have sent to me from seventy clergymen, in regard to the affair of Ronge, and request you hereby to express to them my acknowledgments and thanks. The diocese of Breslau may rejoice (if Ritter compose the diocese) that it possesses such a company (why not flock!) of worthy young men in the vineyard of the Lord. Chaplain Ronge is already suspended, and has been summoned to the Seminary at Breslau. Should he offer any resistance, I shall commission the Right Reverend Vicarial Board to dismiss him, without further delay, from the service of the Church.—Ritter.



"Breslau, Feb. 8, 1843.

"It is requested that the foregoing be forwarded to the dear colleagues and subscribers of the Declaration against Ronge.—Strzynby.

"Ratibor, Feb. 16, 1843."

I have not replied to these seventy brethren, because I heard that the greater number had signed it from fear of Ritter; but I consider that I have atoned for the neglect, seeing that whilst they, according to promise, were probably praying for me, I worked industriously for them.

## THE DEPOSITION.

After Dr. Ritter had also asked my friends in vain, whether I had hinted to them anything about their article, the Decree of Suspension was sent to me. Dr. Ritter had, at the same time, issued an order to a portion of the Silesian curates, to refuse me the administration of all religious ordinances. They, on their part, had issued the like order to their bell-ringers and sacristans, so that, owing to the zeal of many of those individuals, I could visit no church, without running the risk of causing a disturbance, or being turned out.

## DECREE OF SUSPENSION.

The right reverend Board of Administration made known to us, on the 11th of this month, that, as public opinion had pointed you out as the author of the well-known article, "Rome and the Chapter of Breslau," you had been asked, on the 20th December last, whether you really were so. You replied to this question, on the 24th of the same month, that you could not reconcile it to your conscience to answer the question put to you by the right reverend Board. Time was allowed to you after this, and a vicar, a private friend \* of your own, was commissioned to encourage you to make a distinct declaration and acknowledgment, in which case you would still have been treated with indulgence.\*\* Up to this time, however, you have sent no reply to the right reverend Board, wherefore we have been charged by the same to bring you to an investigation, \*\*\* eventually, however, to suspend you, and to summon you, *ad exercitia*, to the Seminary in this place. It has been further shewn to us, by Mr. Rector Hoffmann of Grottkau,\*\*\*\* that so early as the 29th of October 1841 you had been seriously rebuked by the right reverend Board, on account of your peculiar dress and unsuitably long hair; and although Hoffmann, and several others of your colleagues, kindly warned you of the impropriety of your dress, all has produced no effect, so that they who did not personally know you, would never take you for a clergyman. In addition to this, it has been said that you performed the priestly functions without decorum or dignity, (*in plain German, without hypocrisy and grimaces*;) whereby you have occasioned manifold offence, (*unfortunately, the community has accused the right reverend Board of falsehood*;) and impeded the efficacy of your ministry.(v) Since, under these circumstances you cannot be appointed to the cure of souls, as you yourself, on calm reflection, (*how liberal!*) on your sentiments and your efficacy, (*why were not these two important items earlier introduced?*) must perceive.

\* I leave the reader to frame his own opinion of this procedure, and of the friend who allows himself to perform the office of a spy.

\*\* Why did Dr. Ritter make so great a work about the matter, if he wished to appear indulgent?

\*\*\* What the right reverend Board understand by an investigation, is shown at the end of this Decree. I shall also give my idea on the subject.

\*\*\*\* Why does the right reverend Board conceal the fact, that Kaspar Hoffmann was required to report! He himself showed me the requisition; and we know full well that my Lords are accustomed to have even the slightest indications of a wish on their part most carefully attended to by their obedient servants. Hoffmann naturally strove to please Dr. Ritter, and prepared his information accordingly.

(v) It is scarcely credible that an entire Chapter should wander so wide of the truth. The town of Grottkau professes to have found in me "zealous energy in the improvement of youth."

Since we forbid you the exercise of priestly functions, you are hereby-charged to leave your present situation immediately on receipt of this—to resort to the Seminary in this place, there to undergo *exercitia spiritualia*, to submit yourself entirely to the orders of the master of the Seminary, i. e., the Pro-Rector, Dr. Sawyer, to whom you are required to announce your arrival in this place, and await our further commands.\*

\* "What of the investigation? The right reverend Board must entertain an odd idea of the meaning of the word; it imposes a twofold punishment upon me, and I am left to picture to myself an investigation behind it!

## DECLARATION ON THE PART OF THE TOWN OF GROTTKAU.

On the very day on which my deposition was made known, (without any prompting on my part,) I received a Declaration, to be forwarded to the right reverend Council, from the undersigned individuals (all Catholics.)\*

*\*\* DECLARATION BY THE TOWN OF GROTTKAU.*

*"It affords the undersigned individuals the greatest pleasure to be enabled, in all truth and duty, to assure their vicar, Mr. Ronge, that he has never given occasion of offence to the public, either by his dress, his behaviour, or otherwise; nor has there been anything unbecoming in his everyday life and conversation; or in the manner of his performing the functions of his priestly office.*

*"On the contrary, Mr. Ronge has justly acquired the universal love and esteem which he so richly enjoys, by his modest and highly decorous conduct, by the exemplary morality of his life—which even the foulest calumny has never ventured to assail—and, further, by his zealous energy in the improvement of youth, as well as by his friendly and winning carriage towards all men."*

This Declaration, and my own Defence, I forwarded without delay to the Reverend Council, with the observation, that I should also send a testimonial from the magistracy of Grottkau, so soon as I should receive it. After the Declaration had been despatched, several other citizens desired to sign it, and complained that it had not been sent to them. It will not be a difficult matter for my fellow-believers and townsmen to make comparisons of the Decree of Suspension and the Declaration of the town of Grottkau, and to draw their own conclusions as to which party were in the right. Without further remark, therefore, I shall merely put the following questions:—

I. Why was I suspended, and condemned to degrading imprisonment? and

II. How was I treated?

I was suspended, and condemned to degrading imprisonment—

I. Because, in fulfilment of my vocation as pastor and teacher, I had reminded the episcopal candidates of their duty. Had I, perhaps, no right to do so? Yes, it was my privilege and duty,—because I was, and *still am*, a teacher of religion, and dare not as such betray the truth, even to obtain thereby a rich living for my treachery. Or, are the prebends of Breslau infallible? They are as little so as I or any other man. If Dr. Ritter, and the other members of the Chapter, desire to represent the Christian religion—that religion of which truth and love are essential conditions—they must take courage to hear the truth itself. If I spoke the truth, why was I smitten on the face? Was I, perhaps, as chaplain, considered too insignificant an individual to deserve such notice? I dare not suppose this of those whose duty it is to teach and exemplify the doctrine—"We are all the children of one father, we are all equal in the sight of God,"—and with whom, in respect of ordination, I was on an equality. If, however, they have not understood these words of the gospel, I shall shew that I at least have comprehended them—for I shall not intermit my endeavours to arouse the inferior clergy, oppressed and trampled on as they are, from their moral wretchedness, ignominy, and bondage—because I know what they suffer and how their hearts bleed, having bled and suffered with them.

I was besides deposed, because I had offended by my dress and the cutting of ray hair, and because I had set dignity and decorum at defiance in my performance of the priestly functions.

These accusations have been sufficiently exposed as untrue by the Declaration of the town of Grottkau. Were they, however, in fact, not altogether unfounded, (which they have been shown to be,) let them for a moment be compared with the vicious practices of a no small portion of the right reverend servants of the Pope, who, notwithstanding the unanimous condemnation of public opinion, are left in quiet possession of their offices!— However painful it may be for me, and presuming though it may seem to others, I cannot refrain from opposing my moral character to the high station of those men, who are accustomed to refer everything to mere sensuality, and to drag down all things into the mire; and I demand, why was I not accused of drinking, gambling, or of some particular crime!! Why am I not accused by the right reverend Council of some negligence in the discharge of my duty? Did they ever hear even one equivocal report in regard to my moral character!

II. How was I proceeded against!

I was suspended, and condemned to dishonouring imprisonment, without a hearing—without an opportunity of defence, or proof adduced of my culpability.

It is unlawful that any German or Prussian citizen should be imprisoned for a crime, by any other than the civil executive power. It is only the Catholic priest that is liable to be coerced without appeal to his civil rights, or the ceremony of a trial. The Apostle Paul laid claim to the privileges of a Roman citizen; while the Roman Church herself denies to her followers the exercise of the most ordinary civil rights. I did not, therefore, submit to the sentence!

## REASONS FOR NOT SUBMITTING TO THE ORDERS OF THE RIGHT REVEREND BOARD.

To this finding of the Vicarial Council, dictated by ecclesiastical caprice, without regard to the law of the land, or even to the statutes of the Church, it was impossible for me to submit—and I did not submit to it; because I should have thereby degraded, *first*, my moral dignity; *secondly*, the honour of the nation; and, *thirdly*, the rights of the whole body of inferior clergy, by a cowardly submission to the unjust and disgraceful punishment.

In the first place, my moral dignity was slighted. If I am bound *as a man* to resist all violent infringement of my freedom and individual privileges, and rather to hide a free and virtuous heart beneath the poorest clothing, than to strut about as a slave in rich attire,—I am still more solemnly engaged to such a course, as *teacher of the people*. As such also, in order to bear vigorous and successful testimony to the truth, I must maintain an unblemished reputation among my fellow-citizens. The right reverend Board, however, have at once assailed my freedom and my honour.

As the citizen of a civilized state, and belonging to a civilized nation, where the law and not caprice is paramount, I should have compromised the national honour, had I, the subject of such privileges, submitted in a cowardly and passive manner to the despotical dictation of a foreign power.

*Lastly*, seeing that it is at once the duty and the privilege of every teacher of the people (as also of each vicar,) to speak the truth without respect of persons, I should have incurred the guilt of sacrificing the privilege and duty of the whole body of inferior clergy, by tame submission to the power of those who thus dispute the one, and hinder us in the performance of the other.

As regards the latter, the inferior clergy have certainly renounced their duty, when, in opposition to their superiors, they have submitted to be robbed of this—and many other of their rights as men—and to see themselves reduced to the condition of blind slaves; but the cowardice of many in the past and present time, cannot relieve me or any other man, from the duty of guarding intact the possession of our civil rights. I am only the more solemnly bound most vigorously to contend for all our rights,—as men and citizens, and to free myself from slavery,—the more clearly I perceive, that by the slavery of the popular teachers, the moral and physical suffering of the people is ensured. Does a man cease to be a citizen when he becomes a priest?

## MY DEFENCE.

On receipt of the Decree of Suspension, I took the *legitimate* course (if such a term applies,) and sent in a Defence to the right reverend Board, along with the Declaration of the town of Grottkau, and testimonials from the authorities. But I was so excited by the calumnies which I found in the Decree of Suspension, that I was but ill fitted to write a calm defence. I felt myself therefore laid under great obligations, which I embrace this opportunity of again and publicly acknowledging, to a Catholic lawyer, who offered, in the noblest and most friendly manner, to take the necessary steps. I did not, indeed, conceal from this my honoured defender, my determination at once to demit my office, should they proceed to execute the threatened and dishonouring sentence,—but left him otherwise at liberty,—in order to shew to my fellow-citizens, that even the most modest proposals and requests on my part, and the sufficiently distinct expression of feeling on the part of the town of Grottkau, as well as of the rector and the principal inhabitants, were alike unavailing to effect the rescinding of the unjust sentence.

Right Reverend Canons,

I have been deeply moved by hearing the sentence of your right reverend Council, held on the 30th of last month, which orders my suspension from office; in the *first* place, because I am convinced that worthless men have shamefully traduced my character; and, farther, because I have been publicly branded, and deprived of honour and office, on the strength of a current report, and on the credit of a private informer, without communication of the charge, or awaiting my vindication. The cause of my answering, as I did, the question whether I were the author of the article entitled, "Rome and the Chapter of Breslau," was this: that I felt exceedingly annoyed at being asked,—and vexed, that I, who live here in the most perfect retirement,—serving all men as I have opportunity,—should be called on to defend myself from empty rumours, and be subjected to the necessity of allowing persons, with whom I am not on a friendly footing, to use the most impertinent language towards me, under the guise of brotherly affection, as my colleague Schneeweiss has done. If the right reverend Board believe that I am the author of the article, and consider it offensive, I expect that, agreeably to the laws of Prussia, the authorship shall be-brought home to me by proof; until then, I do not consider myself called upon to render account regarding it to any one. I might otherwise, with equal propriety, be held to be the author of any anonymous production, and should have time for nothing else than constantly assuring and bringing proof, that I lead a retired life, and trouble myself neither about worldly nor clerical affairs.

The denunciation by Hoffmann, I here declare to be a contemptible falsehood. My hair is not an inch longer than that of Hoffmann. That it curls naturally, while his is smooth, is no fault of mine. Besides, I may observe, that on account of headache, I never allow my hair to be cut quite short. My dress is of a dark colour, like that of other respectable citizens; and the reason that my coat is some inches shorter than that of Hoffmann, is, that it is of newer fashion. I am young, healthy, vigorous, and, it is said; spirited; hypocritical bigotry is foreign to my nature, and hateful to me. I assume no other manner in the performance of my priestly

functions than that of ordinary life. It may be that Mr. Hoffmann makes lower bows, beats his breast with deeper groans; it may be that this imposes upon uneducated people, but, to my thinking, it bears no proof of piety, nor does it elevate the feelings of educated men. I would even say that my unvarying behaviour must tend to convince the congregation that I am sincere,—that that which I preach is my own conviction,—that my words proceed not merely from my lips, but from my inmost heart.

Dignity and decorum are relative ideas, and the answer to the question—who possesses them? depends upon the view entertained by the individual who is appealed to. It is well if Hoffmann and my other secret accusers can comfort themselves with the consciousness of possessing dignity and decorum. I hope the contrary may never be proved of them.

If I am devoid of these two fancied qualities, they have been denied to me by nature, and I am therefore not to blame; I do not repress decorum and dignity; I do not purposely neglect them, and I expect a proof to the contrary—for it is only when the intentions are evil that our actions can be blamed. That I had given great cause of offence to the congregation was unknown to me until now.

For the clergyman of this place, where a portion of the congregation is highly educated, another portion tolerably, while a third is altogether uneducated, it is peculiarly difficult to satisfy all parties. I thought, therefore, that the most prudent course for me to pursue, would be to vary my sermons, and address myself by turns to either class. If my point has not been gained, and all parties have not been equally satisfied, it has arisen from a fallacy in the plan, not from premeditated carelessness on my part, which alone would be culpable.

Without egotism, I may say that the annexed testimonial\* from the Catholic gentry, the most respectable citizens, and regular church-goers of this town, appears to me to prove that my labours have not been fruitless, and that at least I have given no public cause of offence.

*\* I have printed this testimonial with its signatures, for the sake of contrast, immediately after the Decree of Suspension, and give here the testimony of the authorities.*

Although I consider that, by this testimonial, the secret and shameful accusations against me have been sufficiently refuted, still, for my more perfect exculpation, I shall also produce the testimony of the magistrates and sheriffs of this place, which will not, certainly, be found less favourable. I cannot possibly believe that your right reverend Council, after I have proved a portion of the accusation to be untrue, will carry out in full severity the sentence of the 30th January.

I beg, therefore, humbly to request, should the sentence be so far modified as to leave me in possession of my office, that I may be translated as soon as possible, seeing that even in the exercise of all Christian forbearance, it must still be disagreeable for me to live so near my false accuser, and to eat at his table.

In the lively hope that your right reverend Board will not publicly condemn me on false accusation, marring my earthly prospects, and robbing me of my credit as a citizen; but, on the contrary, that it will remove my Suspension, I shall await here the arrival of a very different decision, especially as the production of the necessary witnesses, and the arrangement of my affairs, require my presence here for some days longer.

As for the rest, I have announced my suspension to Mr. Hoffmann, and shall not venture on the performance of any priestly functions until the arrival of the longed-for reversal, which must most clearly show, that my non-appearance in the Seminary does not proceed from contumacy.\*

Besides my own Defence, and the voluntary Declaration by which the town of Grottkau nobly and honourably annihilated the accusations heaped upon me, I sent to the right reverend Council (about six days later) the testimonials from the authorities of Grottkau, which I applied for to assist in my vindication. They run thus:—

*\* THE TESTIMONIALS OF THE AUTHORITIES OF GROTTKAU.*

*"Of the Rev. Vicar Ronge, it is hereby certified, at his own special request, that during his stay here he has always conducted himself in a moral manner, that he has not worn unsuitably long hair, nor dressed in an improper, or remarkable manner.—von Ohlen, Member of Administration,*

*"Grottkau, February 6th, 1843."*

*"Testimonial.—That the Rev. Vicar Ronge, during the period of his appointment in this place, has at all times conducted himself with decorum and propriety, and in all respects irreproachably; and that his dress has never been unsuitable, nor indeed at all remarkable, is hereby truly certified, at the request of Mr. Ronge.—Adam, Muller, Sahn, Reisewitz, Magistrates.*

*"Grottkau, February 9th, 1843."*

*"At the request of the Rev. Mr. Ronge, the undersigned delegates of the city hereby truly attest,—That during the period of his stay here as vicar, he has always led a morally correct life, and, in so far as we know, has always conducted himself towards the inhabitants in an affectionate and friendly manner. In regard to his dress, it was not at all indecorous nor unsuitable.*

*"The delegates of the city have granted this certificate from individual conviction, and with a good conscience.—Ebel, President.. von Donat, Stephan, Fleischer, Ratschbr, Kahlert, Stadler, Zibold, Anders, Olbrich, Friedrich, Fleischer, Schmidt, Thaum, Tannkr, Registrar.*

*"Grottkau, February 9, 1843."*



*"In justification of my signature, in favour of the Rev. Mr. Ronge, of this place,—I certify, as an upright and conscientious man, that since the 24th March 1841, on which day Mr. Ronge presented to me the notice of his appointment as vicar, I have perceived nothing in him that could compromise him as a Catholic clergyman. Neither have I heard that he has performed his spiritual functions without reverence or dignity, or that there has been anything offensive in his dress, or the cutting of his hair. Every individual has his failings and peculiarities, of which even accusers are not free, and it is generally easy enough to injure a man, and bring him under suspicion\* although no charge can be preferred against him in a moral point of view.*

*"Grottkau, February 5, 1843.*

*"Pech, Rector."*

## **DEPARTURE FROM GROTTKAU.**

Soon after receipt of the Decree of Suspension, I discontinued my official duties, but remained a few days longer in Grottkau, to take the necessary steps for clearing my character from the calumnies of Kaspar Hoffmann, and Ebel the apothecary and president of the body of delegates,\* who had brought their silly accusations against me under cover of the Church. By the other inhabitants of the town I was most kindly treated, and the partially evasive testimonies which were afterwards given in by a *soi-disant* Church community of Grottkau, are only to be accounted for by the employment of Chapter influence. Various reports were, of course, in circulation, for but few were aware of the actual cause of my suspension, or of the manner in which I had been treated; and I was obliged to keep silence—to allow every report to circulate unchecked—deeply though I felt the altered looks of those I had accounted friends. But it would have been unreasonable in me to have expected of them a more thorough appreciation of the circumstances of my case, for no one knew how the slave-yoke of Rome had galled me, nor how my indignation was aroused to see my native land distracted and enthralled by a set of knavish Roman priests and their German assistants. I felt it as a joy and pride to suffer undeserved reproaches for my fellow-citizens, even for those who persecuted me, as they fancied, to the credit and in the name of the Church. I felt an assured confidence that the day of light would come, the day of emancipation from the tyranny of Rome, when my conduct should be made public, and my exculpation be complete; and I gave expression to these feelings in a few farewell words to the inhabitants of Grottkau, which I caused to be inserted in the weekly newspaper.

*\* Mr. Witke, the former superior of the Seminary, named Ebel (the brother-in-law of a canon, and a converted proselyte,) as my calumniator, and I can prove him to have been so. Such persons, who can consciously assume religion as a cloak for their false-heartedness, should be denounced by name to all the world. Our Saviour tells us that hypocrisy is the most heinous crime, and that murderers and adulterers may be saved, but not hypocrites!*

From Grottkau I travelled to Valtorf, near Neisse, where my friend the Count von Reichenbach offered me the shelter of his roof. Although I had relinquished certain competence, which the office of a Catholic clergyman secures, and knew not how long I might be a wanderer, yet the feeling that at length I had escaped from the cursed and ignominious yoke of Rome, under which I had groaned for three years, was indescribably delightful, and confiding in my righteous cause, and in my youthful strength, it seemed as if I had but just emerged from some dark, dismal prison, into the lovely light of heaven. New energy glowed in my veins; a new and beautiful world bloomed before me, in which I was to labour and to live as the free teacher, and the pastor of my own, the German people!

## **MY SISTERS.**

My joy was damped, however, and turned to sadness, when I thought upon the annoyances which my family, especially my four sisters, (our parents were dead) endured, owing to the numerous and often ill-natured reports that were spread regarding me. Homely country people, reared in the Catholic religion, young and inexperienced, they did not think the motives were sufficient, which led me to throw up my office. Although they placed unbounded confidence in me, it was doubtless somewhat shaken, when they found themselves disappointed in the prospect they had very properly indulged of future aid from me. They endeavoured, time after time, to prevail on me to resume my office, in consideration of the calumnies they had to bear. This has caused me hours of bitter sorrow.

## THE ANSWER OF THE COUNCIL.

About three weeks after the despatch of my Defence, and the testimonials from the magistrates, I received a negative reply from the right reverend Board.\* In this reply no farther weight is given to the testimony of the magistrates of Grottkau, and the declaration of the inhabitants, than that they silenced the false accusations of Kaspar Hoffmann; and the representatives of Christian love and justice in the diocese of Breslau do not condescend to offer satisfaction for the annoyances to which I and mine had thereby been subjected. Although they might not consider themselves called upon to pay me a just debt, yet surely the united voice of an entire town was worthy of some little deference. But here we touch upon the second curse by which the hierarchy overlays the people. Even as the thralldom of the inferior clergy, in regard to their superiors, annihilates their manliness of character and self-respect, so the thralldom of the congregation in their relation to the clergy, keeps the great mass of the Catholic people in darkness and insensibility. That neither the congregations nor the inferior clergy have always been in this state of thralldom, is well known. It has been induced by their torpidity and ignorance. But had they never before enjoyed a state of greater freedom, the present times imperiously demand it.

*\* "In reply to your remonstrances of the 5th and 10th of the month, you are hereby informed, that as you do not distinctly deny the authorship of the the article 'Rome and the Chapter of Breslau,' our judgment of the 30th of January remains unaltered.—Latussek, v. Ploto, Elsler, Freis, Canons.*

*"Breslau, February 18th, 1843."*

With my convictions, to have remained one moment longer in my office, after receiving the answer of the right reverend Board, would have dishonoured me. How could I have met my fellow-citizens, and spoken to them of the unfettered moral dignity of man, while I myself had sacrificed religious conviction in a pitiful and cowardly manner, for a bit of bread, secured to me by my condition as a Romish priest? This was my fixed determination:—rather the grave than dishonouring punishment—rather starvation than self-degradation, and injury of the rights of my fellow-citizens and colleagues! In order, however, that I might leave no method untried of obtaining justice, I wrote to the Council, stating that I should appeal to the still unappointed bishop.

## AUDIENCE OF THE BISHOP.

The confirmation of Bishop Knauer's appointment did at last take place; he was to enter Breslau in April 1843. I had gone to that town, partly to attend to my affairs, and partly to seek the means of future subsistence. After the the arrival of Bishop Knauer, I went to a Canon, whose name is appended to my Decree of Deposition, to ascertain at what time I might speak with the Bishop. This right reverend gentleman told me quite naively that I should have answered—"No, I am not the author of the article—bring it home to me!" with this addition, if I "desired to remain at my *clerical trade*." He further informed me, that although *he had not read the article in question*, it was said to contain terrible things.

What say the younger clergy to the expression, *clerical trade!* and what shall one think of the justice and independence of a spiritual tribunal, whose members are not even aware of the nature of the crime for which they condemn their fellow-men! Justice! how, indeed, could I expect it at the hands of those who were at once my judges and accusers!

I found the Bishop himself, when I preferred my complaint to him, essentially different from the greater number of the Catholic clergy. He received me in that winning manner, with which youth is easily fascinated by age. There was no trace in him of that *quasi* lowly spiritual pride, and vulgar affectation of pious condescension, so common in prelates. When I had made my request to him in few words, he replied, that the affair was not unknown to him, and that I only needed to apply to Dr. Ritter for a removal of the Suspension, to have the matter satisfactorily arranged. On my objecting, that I was of excitable temper, and that, under existing circumstances, I feared myself incapable of dealing calmly with that individual—he offered to hold a previous conference with Dr. Ritter. He then asked if I were the author of the article. I answered in the affirmative. "But why," continued he, "did you *invite* all this persecution?"—"Because," I answered, "it was my duty to give utterance to the unanimous feeling of the citizens and the clergy, seeing that no other priest considered himself called upon to do so." He said no more on this subject, but, speaking of the situation as tutor which I had accepted, he said that he needed my assistance in the diocese, and appointed that I should return to him in the afternoon. When I returned to the Bishop, he was embarrassed and reserved, in consequence of the conference with Dr. Ritter, who had inveighed against me in coarse language,\* and asserted that I had been invited to appear before him and had not come (a falsehood! for surely condemnation is not invitation!). I proved, indeed, that Dr. Ritter had asserted an untruth; but Bishop Knauer, already eighty years of age, found it very inconvenient to quarrel with his canons, and excused himself by saying, that he had not so fully entered on the duties of his office as to qualify him as a competent judge. (This was on the day before his Inauguration.) Replying only by my looks, I took my leave, and set out for my new destination, Laurahütte, to engage in the teaching of the children of the functionaries of the place.

*\* Among other things, Dr. Ritter asserted, as I was informed by Bishop Knauer, that I had been idling about for some time in Breslau without making my appearance at the Cathedral. A speaking instance of the noble nature of the right reverend gentleman! I had been staying all the time in the house of*

*Mr. Wittig, a highly respected citizen, who had hospitably received me, and I had scarcely quitted it for an hour.*

## LAURAHÜTTE

Lies near Beuthen in Upper Silesia, about half a mile from the Russian frontier. It is the most extensive foundry in Upper Silesia, and was only erected in 1839. It may easily be imagined that my spirits were not a little affected by the difficult circumstances in which I had been placed; for, besides seeing all my past labours brought to a fruitless termination, I had been compelled to submit in silence to all the attacks which had been made upon my character. Several of my Catholic friends had slighted me, or treated me unkindly; and the greater number of my Catholic fellow-citizens did not appear sufficiently to feel the oppressive yoke of Romish superstition.—The time had not yet come! My confidence had been severely tried by all these causes. I only clung the more closely, however, to my pupils at Laurahütte, and I often felt inclined to beg of them that they would not treat me so unkindly as other friends had done. I trembled if they left me for even half a day. I tried to find a resting place within their hearts, by building on their love. And truly, the brightest hours of my life have been passed in the school-room, cheered by their innocent and youthful hearts. My mind was gradually strengthened and refreshed, to which result the tender kindness of my friends at Laurahütte mightily conduced.

I employed my hours of leisure in work connected with my avocation, and several performances were already completed, when the day of my release arrived, which I had been long expecting, and with increased impatience and assurance the nearer it approached. Our feelings oftentimes outrun all reason, and my confidence of ultimate release had been rising ever since I left the Seminary. The day at length arrived!—the 1st day of October 1844. From the moment when I saw my article in print (I trembled lest it should be interdicted) I felt as if the month of May were come, and spring were budding in my Fatherland.

## THE LETTER TO THE BISHOP OP TREVES, AND THE CHAPTER OF Breslau.

The hope of ultimate emancipation from the yoke of Rome, to which I now look forward with confident assurance, was excited by the slaves and blinded servants of the Roman Hierarchy and of the Jesuits, on seeing the extremes to which they carried their mockery of religion and trial of the patience of the German people.

A Tunic, of which they cannot even prove that it really was the tunic of Jesus Christ, is exhibited by these Baal-priests of avarice and greed, for public adoration; and the credulous multitude are not only allowed to offer homage to this garment, but are taught to hail it in these words:—"Holy garment, pray for us!" "Holy garment, I bow down before thee," &c. For such mockery of religion, such frenzy, assumed as piety, at the bidding of the Church, language is inadequate to the expression of our indignation; and my letter to Bishop Arnoldi, condemned as all too strong, is childlike in comparison of the sacrilegious offence committed by the Church upon religion and the human understanding.

It was, therefore, with unfeigned surprise that, in the beginning of November, after leaving Laurahütte (where a public school had been erected, and furnished, in the month of August, with two teachers) I received two written communications from the Chapter at Breslau, calling on me to retract what I had written, as offensive to that reverend body. I was less surprised when, after my refusal, I received the Decree of Excommunication.

I wondered less that Dr. Ritter should demand a recantation of my article—"Rome and the Chapter of Breslau," it being far less dangerous to him to place a lie upon the altar, in regard to circumstances which *immediately after* Silesia alone, as the carrying out of his designs were likely, therefore, to attract but limited observation. But that an entire Chapter should venture, in the face of Europe, and even of the world, to countenance such undisguised abuse as that of the *adorable relic* at Treves—such an unheard-of money-trafficking in the most sacred matters—such an insane mockery of reason and the Gospel, was not only ecclesiastically impolitic, but revolting to all Christendom.\*

\* DECREE OF EXCOMMUNICATION, &c.

"Breslau, Oct. 29th 1844.

*"On the 30th of January of last year, the sentence of the Canonical Council was forwarded to you, whereby, in consequence of your failing satisfactorily to disprove the authorship of the Article 'Rome and the Chapter of Breslau,' and conducting yourself otherwise in a manner unbecoming a Catholic clergyman, you were deposed from the Curacy of Grottkau, and, having been interdicted from the performance of spiritual functions, were charged to submit yourself ad exercitia spiritualia in the Seminary here, under the orders of the Superior, and await the farther pleasure of the Council. You have hitherto paid no attention to this judgment, especially in regard to its later requirements, but have obstinately persisted in disobedience to your*

superiors.

*"There has lately appeared in No. 164 of the Vaterlands-blätter, another Article, dated Laurahütte, Oct. 1st, and bearing your signature, in regard to the exhibition of the Holy Tunic of Jesus Christ at Treves—an Article most offensive to all orthodox Catholics, and calculated seriously to injure the character of one of the most worthy bishops of the Catholic Church, and which, besides, contains an invitation to rebellion against all existing and universally recognized principles in the government of the said Church.*

*"This calls for the strictest investigation, and excites well-deserved suspicion,—I therefore require of you, seeing that you subscribe yourself 'A Catholic Priest,' and call yourself a member of the Catholic Church in this diocese, to declare within fourteen days,*

*"1st, Whether you acknowledge yourself the author of the above named Article;*

*"2d, Whether, in case you do, you are inclined to atone for your offence, and the grief occasioned to the most reverend Bishop Arnoldi of Treves, by a solemn retractation in the same paper, and in other much-read Journals, to be named by me;*

*"3d, Should you have had no part in the drawing out or despatching of said Article, and should your signature and address have been used without authority,—are you willing and able to prove it, and to free yourself from the suspicion which rests upon you, and in consequence of which you are hereby enjoined to present yourself without delay!*

*"If the required explanation be not furnished within the time specified, and should you not show yourself ready to satisfy the questions put, I am reluctantly compelled, in addition to the Decree of Suspension, which has already been put in force, hereby to suspend over you the ecclesiastical punishment of degradation and excommunication."*

*"—Latussrk, Suffragan Bishop and Vicar-General of the Diocese."*

"To the late Curate Ronge, at Laurahütte."

"To the Right Reverend the Suffragan Bishop and-Vicar-General of the Diocese.

"On the 18th and 19th of this month I received two letters of identical import; one addressed to me as a 'Catholic Priest,' the other as 'the late Curate,' in which I am required, before the lapse of fourteen days, to answer questions upon various points. To this requisition I reply in the following terms:—

"As to the Article 'Rome and the Chapter of Breslau,' your Lordship observes, that I did not satisfactorily vindicate my conduct in regard to it. My reply to the inquisitorial queries of Dr. Ritter, must have been misunderstood, if it was considered in the light of a vindication. I have never endeavoured to vindicate myself in regard to that Article, nor have I ever denied its authorship;—but, on the other hand, I have never recognized the authority of Dr. Ritter, and the members of the right reverend Board, as at once my judges and my accusers in the matter. The inquisitorial questions which were then put to me, and the decision of the right reverend Board, by which, without citation, hearing, or defence, (accorded to the lowest criminal,) I was deposed, and condemned to dishonouring punishment in the Seminary, are, besides, an insult to the rights of the whole body of the inferior clergy. Shall not the lower clergy (like their fellow-citizens,) have the right to express an opinion opposed to that of their superiors, without perilling their existence? Are the truths of our religion so powerless, as to render necessary compulsion and coercion? Did Jesus found our Church upon such principles! Or, are the higher clergy the sole and infallible pillars of the truth?

"The assertion, that I endeavoured to save my living by a falsehood,—by which it was attempted to bring upon me the contempt of my fellow-believers and fellow-citizens, I have practically disproved—having relinquished my office in the face of beggary and want—although I might easily have escaped Suspension by submission. Honour, truth, and justice, are of higher value in my eyes than the crumb of bread that nourishes my body.

"I acknowledged to Bishop Knauer, my lawful superior, that I am the author of the Article alluded to; upon which his Grace asked me,—< But why did you thus court persecution?—< Because,' I said,' I considered it a duty to give public expression to the universal discontent prevailing in the diocese, on account of the delay of Rome.' Besides, I shall not hesitate to vindicate my conduct in the eyes of my fellow-believers and my fellow-citizens.

"It is farther asserted by your Lordship, that I conducted myself in Grottkau in an unbecoming manner. The offences included in this charge have been sufficiently refuted, as calumnious and false, by the magistrates and citizens of Grottkau; and I shall claim the protection of the State and of the public against such accusations. Or have our spiritual rulers, perhaps, the arbitrary privilege to blast my reputation at discretion?

"As to the Article in regard to the exhibition of the so-called Holy Tunic at Treves, my name was plainly and distinctly affixed to it, and there has been no misuse in the matter. I only spoke the truth, and shall continue to do so without fear of men. I shall not hesitate to denounce abuses? even when they seek to hide themselves behind the altars of a thousand years. I have but done my duty in lending words to the almost universal indignation of my countrymen at the adoration of a piece of dress. It is truly marvellous that a high ecclesiastical authority should endeavour to defend so shameless an abuse. Is the abuse less blameable, because consecrated by a Bishop? What would have been said, had inferior members of the priesthood, or



other Christians, sought to win fifty thousand dollars by the exhibition of that Holy Tunic 1 Did Christ, or the Apostles, do such things? Christ fed those who came to him—but did not rob them of their money; and He indignantly exclaimed in the Temple—'My father's house is a house of prayer—ye have made it a den of thieves.'

"I have spoken the truth, and shall never retract it, as is required of me. If, on this account, your Lordship should consider it your duty to degrade and excommunicate me—let it be so. I, for my part, am firmly convinced that the exalted Head of our religion numbers me among his disciples, notwithstanding; and I feel assured that my fellow-believers and my fellow-citizens will not exclude me from communion with them. For millions of men have heard my simple word, and they have gladly received it because convinced that it proceeded from an honest heart. Millions have loved me on account of it, and their love has not allowed itself to be deceived by the disgusting calumnies of embittered opponents. Their love will still support me. I can give no other reply.—I am, my Lord Bishop,

"Johannes Ronge, Catholic Priest.

"Breslau, November 30, 1844."

"Breslau, 4th Dec. 1844.

"In consequence of your reply, dated November 30, and received on the first day of this month, wherein you admit that you subscribed the Article 'On the Holy Tunic at Treves,' acknowledge it as your own composition, and refuse to recall it,—I find myself reduced to the highly painful necessity, in pursuance of my Decree of the 29th October, and on account of the gross offence against the Church, contained in the said Article, to issue the sentence of your degradation and excommunication, in accordance with, and by authority of, the canonical statutes and decrees.

"I therefore charge you to return to me, without delay, your letters of holy ordination. As you have not complied with my injunction to appear before me in person,\* and have thereby deprived me of the wished-for opportunity of convincing you, by fatherly admonition and friendly conference, of your false and heterodox views generally, and, in particular, regarding the worship of relics—as the adoration of the Holy Tunic,—I can only add to the sentence, which I most reluctantly pronounce, my fervent prayer, that by God's grace you may be led to a right understanding of the Catholic faith, and to a discrimination of that worship of relics, which is permitted and approved by the Church, from the abuse of it, of which alone you seem to think.—

"D. Latussek, Suffragan Bishop, and Vicar-General of the Diocese.

"To the late Curate, Rev. Johannes Ronge."

*\* My Lord Bishop only called me before him in case I should be inclined to retract, or, if I were not the author of the letter alluded to; otherwise, as is shewn by the document of the 29th of October, I was only called upon for an explanation. Why this perversion of the truth?'*

## THE CONCLUSION.

The history of my life is now before my countrymen, and they may judge between me and my opponents and traducers. I have given documentary proof, that, on account of the Article entitled "Rome and the Chapter of Breslau," I have been deposed, and sentenced to disgraceful punishment, by the Board of Canons, without citation, hearing, or defence, which are accorded to the most ordinary criminal. I have further proved, that, on account of the well-known letter to the Bishop of Treves, I have been excommunicated by the same right reverend Board—that is to say, I have been placed without the pale of the Church, as an irreclaimable sinner.

As, however, I have conducted myself, in speech and action, in accordance with my calling and my duty as a teacher, as also in agreement with the Gospel; and have, in defiance of law and justice, by unrighteous and despotic fiats of the Romish Church, been deposed and excommunicated—I appeal to the justice of my countrymen against the Hierarchy and its slaves, and demand that the members of the Canonical Board at Breslau be forced to rescind their sentence. I do not prefer this accusation in my own behalf alone, but stand forth in vindication of the rights of the whole body of inferior clergy, which are trampled upon by their superiors—in vindication of the rights of congregations, which are trampled upon by the entire priesthood! Lastly, I stand forth for Christendom, and, in the name of all Christendom, arraign the Romish Hierarchy, which falsely calls itself the "Universal Church," *because it does not fulfil, but directly opposes the Gospel call—the call to promote the perfect reconciliation of the family of man.*

The Romish Hierarchy has reduced the Gospel teaching to a system of usury, compulsion, and oppression, profanely—prostituted religion to a revolting Jesuitism,—and, instead of promoting the improvement and the reconciliation of mankind, maintains in all their bitterness the antipathies of nations, and, kindling civil war, (look to Switzerland and other countries!) debases human nature by hypocrisy and vice.

It is the Roman Church which has to rend so wide asunder the yawning gulf which separates the higher from the lower classes, the ignorant from the educated, the poorer from the richer portions of all European nations; and it is she who is daily making that gulf still wider, by dint of Jesuitism and priestcraft. In order to escape from utter ruin, the overwhelming evil must be vigorously, resolutely met,—in compact phalanx. The nations—and above all the German nation—ought to call a free ecclesiastical convention, composed of laymen freely chosen, and of honest priests, to sweep away for ever all Jesuitism and priestcraft—to establish freedom of conscience on the ruins of hypocrisy—to purify religion, and to show the Church her actual calling, imposed upon her by the spirit of the times, and the exigencies of our people—namely, the reconciliation of the higher and the lower classes of humanity—the reconciliation of the nations and the peoples of the earth, by improving and ennobling them—by universal love and freedom. By our regard to our

neighbour, we shew forth our love to God; for we are told by John, that "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

Arise, then, men of Germany and of France; men of Great Britain, Italy, and Spain, arise! Men of Europe and America! let us unite with our governments in the noble enterprise! To the work, like men—the work of peace and freedom! The hour is come! let us break the yoke of faith and conscience—drag down lying priesthood and the Hierarchy—annihilate disdainful Jesuitism, insulting God and man—and usher in the glorious reign of truth, and light, and righteousness—of virtue, of freedom, and of love! Let us usher in the true reign of Christ upon the earth!

[This closes Ronge's Self-defence, which, in all probability, would never have seen the light, had it not been for the subsequent excitement caused by the affair of the Holy Coat. For however triumphant has been his exposure of the authorities with whom he has had to do, still such cases of arbitrary tyranny are far too common to excite more than a mere passing, or, at best, local interest. It required such a fact as that of Treves first to awaken a general interest, and thereby to secure a proportionate degree of attention to the details of such a personal narrative as we have now given. People desired to know about the history of the man who had brought home to their hearts and experience the abuses of the system which had hitherto ruled them as with a rod of iron. But especially as charges the most base and unfounded had been directed against Ronge, with regard to the real cause of his suspension, it became his duty to lay the whole facts before the public, and manfully to appeal to their sentence against that of the Church authorities of Breslau. We have inserted this Justification before noticing the movements which have taken place in consequence of the first letter, which, instead of appearing as a documentary part of the Justification, was inserted at a previous part of the narrative, and which gave its real personal and historical interest to his Self-defence.]

## OPINIONS, ADDRESSES, &c. &c.

We must now return to the first letter, and notice the excitement created by it over the whole of Germany, Protestant and Catholic. The following appeared in the *Mannheim* Journal:—"The greatest attention has been lately directed to the admirable and pithy statement of a Catholic priest concerning the Holy Coat. It is peculiarly the citizen-class who have been electrified thereby. Not to have read it, (and it is impossible to escape the question)—is declared to be as bad as never having read anything. It is published in all the papers; and truly the spreading of truth and light in religious matters—and both it contains in rich measure—is not merely a matter of honour but of the heart!"

*Weimar*.—"There prevails here a complete frenzy to read the production of Ronge. A number of the citizens have caused it to be circulated *gratis* among the poorer inhabitants. For a very long period no production has created more sensation in the world,—and it is beyond doubt that Ronge's name will ever be distinguished in the history of the world and of the Church."

*Westphalia*.—"The excitement which Ronge's letter has made among friend and foe becomes daily more conspicuous from the public press. In Magdeburg the whole middle class is against the ultra-montanist movement, and even the majority of the clergy,—as this movement throws all power into the hands of the bishops."

*West Prussia*.—"While the Jesuits are interdicting, by Church censures and prohibitions, the 'wandering Jew' of Eugene Sue, Ronge's letter is being circulated by the thousand."

*Kazbach*.—"John Ronge—a true German man—a true Christian minister, has openly shewn that the spirit of Christ is not yet dead in the Catholic Church of Silesia. His letter is quite invaluable. Each community has treasured it as a true legacy to posterity, to preserve Christianity from being perverted by the Hierarchy, and to shew that a Silesian priest had courage thus openly to proclaim the truth. And has not the whole of Germany welcomed the earnest words of the worthy man with hearty joy! In a short space, they have travelled through every German province, from the Oder to the Rhine. Thousands of Germans feel inspired by his name, and declare him one of the most valiant combatants against the dark powers of hierarchical tyranny."

*Ulm*.—"The Germans of the south are determined not to be behind their brethren in other parts of Germany."

Such are ordinary specimens of the extracts with which the German journals are filled, up to the present date. It is in truth impossible to take up any journal, Catholic or Protestant, which does not contain some announcement on the subject. Ronge's name is in every one's lips—his portrait is to be found in every print-shop, along with engravings, in all styles of art, of the Holy Coat. Addresses have been poured upon him from all quarters, expressive of gratitude, and sympathy, and admiration. Take the following specimen from the city of

*Dantzic*.—"Highly Honoured Sir,—when more than 300 years ago the monk Luther declared war upon the Hierarchy, and introduced a new epoch into the history of the world, it could not but be that the man who declared 'I cannot do otherwise,' should be opposed, declared heretic, and persecuted. So shall it also be with you for your exposure of the Spectacle of the Holy Coat; in that letter which, through the press, has now been made the property of all. The enemies of the light shall not cease to calumniate and persecute you. As, moreover, the hearts of all lovers of the truth attached themselves to the monk Luther, and, as to-day, millions thank him for the light which surrounds them, so does the present generation with joy congratulate you, and future generations will preserve your memory in their thankful hearts, as of a man who, without human fear, declared the holy truth of God. Permit us, though we live far from you, to express to you, in name of all friends of the light, their most hearty thanks for the service which you have done by your open and noble opposition to the hierarchical spectacle of Treves. May the Almighty take you into his protection, and

may his hand rest on you and bless you.

"Dantzic, 16th November, 1844."

This Address, and many of a similar nature, have been signed by Protestants and Catholics alike. Individual addresses also have been sent, signed exclusively by Catholics, and others signed exclusively by Protestants, as those from Leipsic and Berlin. Accounts from all parts of Germany are of a similar nature; even Bohemia, where the voice of Huss has long been silent, has come under the influence of the excitement,—Ronge's letter having crossed the frontier, and been circulated, no one could tell well how, by the thousand. It has now been translated into several of the languages of Europe, and it cannot admit of doubt, that on all hands the eyes of many are being opened by it, to see the awful bondage in which they and their fathers have so long been held.

While all this was going on, it was not to be expected that the Catholic party should remain silent. Accordingly, they have been striving *per fas et nefas*, to arrest the movement, by calumniations of the author—by defences of their conduct—by appeals to the evils of the Reformation, and occasional significant references to the "powers that be" in the Vatican. It ought to be stated, that several of the Catholic clergy, before the appearance of Ronge's letter, had denounced the intended pilgrimage, manfully declaring, in opposition to all the sayings and doings of Arnoldi, and even the Bull of Leo X., that this was no matter of Catholic doctrine, and that it remained open for each individual Catholic to treat the evidence for or against the genuineness of the relic, as his private judgment and free inquiry might lead him. From such quarters, the movement of Ronge could not well be opposed; and it is striking, that wherever a priest has so expressed his opinion, but few, indeed, of his people went to Treves. Whether many of this class may join the movement remains to be seen, but it certainly seems highly probable.

The ultra-Catholic party have expressed their opinions in two remarkable documents,—the one, An Address from the Clergy of Treves, and the other, from the Clergy of Breslau, with whom Ronge was connected, to Bishop Arnoldi. A few sentences will show the spirit of each. In the former it is stated, "that such scandalous Articles (as the publication of Ronge) must produce among all Catholics in Germany the greatest indignation, and shake to its foundation the peaceful relation of the two confessions; and this all the more, as before the ceremony alluded to, nothing had taken place to calumniate or asperse Protestant Christians. When, however, such a publication, by its tone and contents, alike unworthy of refutation, and calculated only to bring Catholics into contempt, is allowed to appear, by permission of the German Union or Prussia individually—this is a matter of deep sorrow to Catholics." After noticing the Constitution of Germany, in reference to religious matters, it proceeds,—"In so far as such calumnies are unattended to, is the rightfully guaranteed position of the German Catholics overthrown, and they are all the more called on to demand a guarantee, as many late events have shown but too clearly, that a section of the Protestants is disposed to maintain a hostile and intolerant position towards the Catholic Church, We, the Chapter of the Cathedral, accordingly pray that communications may be sent to his Majesty the King, and the German confederate States, to support the existing laws in opposition to what has taken place, to maintain the guaranteed rights of the Catholic Church, and to request the interference of the law against such abuses of the German press."

(Signed) "The Clergy of the City of Treves."

Nothing could be more artful or cowardly than this document, as if the great settlement at the Reformation had been infringed by the open expression of opinion on what has excited the disgust and ridicule of all intelligent Catholics. It is not difficult to trace in the above letter the very spirit which, in a former age, would have found no obstruction in executing, after its own fashion, that law, to which now they are obliged to make a respectful and almost degrading appeal. Most fortunate is it that Ronge is the subject of a Protestant Government, which has it now in its power so materially to advance the cause of the Reformation.

Let us now quote a portion of the address of the clergy of the Cathedral of Breslau. "Most worthy Lord Bishop! 'Troubles must come.' This saying of our Lord and Master has been confirmed so often in all ages, and especially in our times, that we need scarcely question that an Article in the *Sächsische Vaterlandsblätter*, from a Catholic priest, on the Holy Coat of Treves, should appear unexpected, amid the manifold experiences of your Grace. Nor do we believe that this scandal in Germany will at all affect the veneration in which your Grace is held, or cast the slightest shadow on your high and holy office. Taught and accustomed to suffer shame for the cause of the Lord, and comforted by the promise, 'Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake,' we would have passed by this calumny in silence, as a drop of the teeming ocean of blasphemies with which the Lord honours his Church, to see them dashed on its Eternal Rock,—if it had not come from the midst of us—from one who calls himself a Catholic priest. \* \* \* The name of the blasphemer is *Ronge*, who was consecrated to the priesthood in Breslau. The spirit by which he has lately been actuated was not long in manifesting itself in him. An Article of similar stamp, calumniating his ecclesiastical superiors, and the supremacy of the Church, subjected him to an examination. Not being in a position to defend himself, and too haughty and hardened to seek forgiveness, by repentance and penance, he was obliged to give up his office, after the suspension of the Church had been pronounced against him. Since this period, Ronge has had nothing to do with the care of souls. What could be more welcome for the enemies of the Church, who looked with indignation on the crowds of pious pilgrims proceeding to the Cathedral of Treves, than that a pretended member of the Church—aye, a priest—should take the Holy Coat into his unclean hands, and tear it with logical power into pieces, while even his executioners left it from pious awe undivided. The holy ceremony is now at an end—the sacred shrine is closed—the holy relic, by the contemplation of which hundreds of thousands have been encouraged, and strengthened, and elevated, lies treasured up for future ages. The calumnies will be silenced—the blessings will remain, and when the holy treasure is again exposed to the worship of the believing multitudes, another race shall live and think in the pious prayers of those pilgrims who have completed their pilgrimage, and have attained from faith to sight. May this new race see better days—days of outward and inward peace—days of peace, which the world cannot give! May the pious bands who may then go on pilgrimage to Treves, attain the end of their undertaking, not amid the sneers of the scoffer, but amid the friendly congratulations of all, even of those who are connected with it! May the German people be then truly a people of brothers—one in that one thing which is needful—one in will, and deed, and faith, and struggles; and may the German

fatherland, like the holy garment itself, be undivided! God grant you grace and strength for this great end!

"(Signed) "The Cathedral Clergy of Breslau.

"31st October 1844."

This document, like the preceding, is its own commentary. We leave our readers to weigh it along with the exposure made in Ronge's "Justification." It is not difficult now to see what influences have been at work in procuring its suppression, and it is deeply to be lamented, that a government so liberal as the Saxon, should have interfered in keeping back a statement so important, in the defence of truth and justice.

We do not deem it necessary to make long quotations from the ordinary Catholic journals on this part of the subject. They breathe the same spirit. Many of them are filled with appeals, of which a single sentence may suffice as a specimen:—"Laity and priesthood! have you already forgotten whither such proceedings lead? Know you not the causes and consequences of the Reformation? Will you lead the way to a second breach in the Church, as if the first had not been deplorable enough, both for the Church and country?" &c. All of such extracts are proofs strong enough, how sensible all parties of Catholics are of the danger to be apprehended from Ronge's movement.

## THE NEW CHURCH.

It is now our duty to turn shortly to the positive results of this movement, *in the formation of a New Church, independent of all Papal connexion, and as such, calling itself not the Roman but German Catholic Church.* We have seen how Ronge had been excommunicated, and in what terms his former ecclesiastical superiors now spoke of him. Having been discarded by the Church, and no longer admitted to its ordinances, he set himself, without reserve, to the formation of a new Christian community. The first step towards this end was the publication of his second letter, addressed.

## TO THE INFERIOR CLERGY.

"Friends and former Colleagues.—Before writing these words to you, I asked myself—shall I be listened to by those to whom I am about to speak? or will my invitations strike in vain upon their ears? No, they will not strike in vain upon your ears—I feel it and I know it, friends and former colleagues! You, the so-called inferior clergy, have been hitherto but little, if at all addressed, because, although you constitute the real groundwork and the strength of the ecclesiastical body, you have been, and you still are held, to be a mass inaccessible to moral freedom—in fact, morally dead. But I have been compelled, by sense of duty and by love of my country, to address you; and besides, I speak to you at a time when the laity themselves—the congregations—think and act, not according to the dead letter, but in agreement with the spirit of religion. Can it then be, that you, the priests—the teachers of the people, unlike them, can choose supinely to remain in circumstances of blind surrender of your judgment? Can you alone, and without exception, be so deeply sunk in slavery to Rome and the deadness of the letter, that it is no longer possible for you to arise and shake your spirits free! This I neither can nor will believe, for this were to believe you had forgotten to be men—it were to doubt the triumph of the kingdom of Christ—the triumph of righteousness,—it were to doubt the improvement and the advancement of society, which you are imperatively called on to promote. Oh, I have better thoughts of you, for I have suffered, and still suffer with you; I know the giant-yoke you wear, and to wear which is accounted (to you?) as the fulfilment of a most sacred duty—as a merit—as *religion*. Many a one of you has lamented to me, that the pain of blinded, passive slavery to Rome burned incurably in his bosom, and I know how many among you writhe in desperation, and await with longing the hour that is to set you free. It is, therefore, upon you, and the triumphant strength of a righteous cause, that I ground my confidence of an assured result. I know full well that you will not all, of one accord, and at my earliest word, strike off the shameful fetters of the Roman despotism, and stand forth as independent German priests—although each one must feel that there is inspiration in the very thought—but I entertain the hope that many a one may be aroused from stupefaction at my call—that many a timid one may be encouraged, and many a dazzled eye restored to clearer vision—that many among you, moved by my example, will dare to cast a bold and fearless glance within, and having done so, with a cry of grief—a cry of horror, at your condition, to stride forward to the contest, which is to make you once more men! It is to that that I invite you; you must become men—*independent men*, for the sake of our holy religion, for your own sakes, and for the happiness of our common Fatherland,—I invoke your manhood! You must become men, filled with a sense of your great dignity as such, as well as with the importance of your mission—glowing with active zeal for the spiritual and moral elevation of the nations of the earth! you must become men full of love to your calling—burning to secure the happiness of your fellow-mortals!—men full of holy ardour to establish the rights of all your fellow-citizens without distinction—full of holy ardour for the bringing in of the reign of righteousness and brotherly-love among all the children of men; men full of ardour to exhibit your convictions in your actions—to turn your words to truth and actual realization, that all men may become brothers—as the children of one Father. In obedience to your calling, you must become such men. But you are not so at present—you are the hirelings of the Pope! Yes, you are hirelings, without a feeling of your dignity as men, or of the importance of your mission, although you call yourselves the chosen, honoured, and consecrated servants of the Lord! You do not glow with zeal for the honour, the moral freedom, the welfare of your fellow-citizens; you even grind down the bourgeoisie and peasantry, who number in their ranks your parents and their families—by whose sweat



you are supported,—and anathematize them when they raise their heads, impatient of Romish interference with their consciences. You feast, while they are hungry; you riot, while they pine! Is this falsehood? See here a bishop with 40,000 annual dollars (£6000)—religious institutions with incalculable wealth, and not far from them a poor weaver, who can barely earn five silver groschens (6d.) weekly for himself and for his family! You are not filled with holy ardour to spread abroad righteousness, truth, and light—although from desk and pulpit you deceitfully proclaim, 'with us alone are truth, peace, civilization, education, and moral freedom; we are the trusty friends and guides of the nations; it is to us men must commit their faith, in order after earthly toil to become blessed!' Far rather do many of you labour, some consciously, others unconsciously, to promulgate superstition, darkness, and spiritual bondage! You will say to me,—'Bring proof, bring proof,' and proof you shall have, an hundred-thousand fold:—*the fruits of your words and of your actions!* Look to your own consecrated class—what *corruption!* Look to the nations—what *misery!* 'A good tree cannot bear evil fruit.' The corruption of your consecrated order is the fruit of your soul-killing servitude to your superiors; the misery of the nations is, for the most part, the result of your oppression. The pressure under which you yourselves languish, is fearful and unspeakable, for you have been robbed of freedom in the exercise of reason, will, and affection. You are slaves—and therefore wish your fellow-citizens to share your bondage. Your spirit lies enchained by despotic bulls and edicts—the unfettered flight of thought is restrained by curses. Your reason is the venal slave of selfishness and terror. The so-called Romish Church—more properly Rome's *despotism*, has placed your faith within such narrow bounds that you are forced to tremble at each rising thought, and ask if it be 'orthodox?'—for these bounds of faith are beset by fiends who threaten your salvation when your spirit thinks to over-step them. Is it not so? Does not the fear of devils and of hell exert a widely greater influence than the love of God and of your fellow-men? And what absurdities are you not commanded to believe and teach!

"You have, further, been deprived of your *free agency*. You must yield blind obedience to your superiors, and this requirement of passive, blind obedience is the prime injunction of the Roman Church! Without this blind obedience, all your virtues are of no avail—without it you are criminals. The Roman Church, that kindly mother, has seized your rights as men; you have not, as my example may convince you, even such privileges as are accorded to the worst of criminals in your fatherland. And of whom is this Church composed? You tremble before her and her edicts? Do you know that it is before yourselves you tremble? for you no less belong to the Church than those among your colleagues who sit in the chapter-houses or in the episcopal seats—no less than that Italian Bishop who is called the Pope! Have you forgotten that your colleagues, to whom you are now required to offer almost idolatrous regard, neither were, nor wished to be, above yourselves in the early centuries of Christianity? Have you forgotten that the bishops and priests of those days were chosen from among the congregations,—that is, the people; and that the people sat in council with them both! The inferior clergy had their synods even in the gloomy centuries of the middle ages, and, when they acted in concert, could give due weight to their desires. And what have you now, in the nineteenth century? Lordly Presbyterial Assemblies?! Each one among you fears to utter an honest word in presence of a right reverend brother. You are mere automata. You have no will in opposition to your superiors. *Demand your rights as men!*

"Your *freedom of affection* also has been destroyed; your heart is stifled and perverted. And how! Shall I hesitate freely to speak out, because I may subject myself to suspicion—because I expose myself to the attacks of vulgar-minded men? Ah, no! the principle at stake is too important, too elevated, and too holy,—it involves nature's highest ordinance, the holiest concerns of man; from it depends the happiness, the welfare of many millions—the virtue, honour, and freedom of the nations; so that I would gladly expose myself on its account to suspicion and attack! It is *love, marriage, and the family-tie*; you have been robbed of these—robbed of them by the Rule of Celibacy! It is by this Rule that your affections are stifled and perverted. Yes, your hearts are corrupted by the ordinance of celibacy, which has no warrant in the Gospel, but has been introduced with blood and murder by an imperious Pope. This ordinance deprives you of your claim to the possession of a virtuous wife, whose love would render you far happier and more honourable; it robs you of the joys, the hopes, the love, which bless the family-tie; it impoverishes and desolates your breast. This ordinance demoralizes your natural instinct, hands you over to those outcasts of womankind, through whom so many fall into the deepest mire of immorality, and become an offence and mockery to their congregations. This ordinance deprives you of the stamp of open manliness, and makes you *hypocrites!*

"If the free exercise of reason, will, and affection, has been taken from you, what have you left worth living for? Can your luxurious tables compensate for the loss of life's best blessings? Compensate! when your feast is interrupted by the needy, wretched cries of thousands of your starving fellow-creatures! or are your revels only seasoned by the groans of your necessitous brethren? You call yourselves the fathers, the teachers of the people; arise, then! conduct yourselves as such, and help to extricate them from their depth of spiritual and physical misery! Such is your duty, before all others!—'But how can we help them,' do you ask? Not by the bit of silver, thrown to the poor man with an ostentatious air, which, in most instances, but tends to lower or extinguish self-respect; and is besides, but as a drop in the great furnace. Stand forth against the despotism of Rome! abolish superstition, that barrier to free agency, and the free practice of virtue! break down the dishonouring restrictions upon conscience and religion! contend for the spiritual and physical wellbeing of your fellow-citizens, and you will aid the people and yourselves! Yes, arise and burst the chains of cowardice and shame; tear asunder the web of dissimulation which Rome has woven round you, and become unfettered, honest priests—true teachers of the German people! You will become everything! for at present you are *nothing*; become *men!* attain at last to the conviction, that the priests exist for the people, and not the people for the priests; that Christ established his religion, and enjoined brotherly love, that mankind might be rendered holy and happy even while on earth; and that it is not his wish that they should pine in soul and body here, in order to be saved at last, as Romish despotism teaches;—dare to achieve this conviction, and act upon it, as in duty bound! Cast off the silly bigotry with which Rome knows how to inoculate you, and live and labour, not for Rome's Bishop and her ambitious prelates, but with and for your fellow-citizens!

"Seek rather to attain an honourable place among your fellow-citizens, and their respect and love—by activity, unblemished character, and a virtuous—life, than to way-lay or supplicate an indolent and hateful benefice. Scorn at length that slave-like prejudice, which would rather follow in the worshipful footprint of its

right reverend master, than listen to the unbiassed judgment and opinion of a freeman! Venture to contend for your own and the peopled independence and moral freedom—you will be cordially supported by your fellow-citizens! Employ the pulpit, the confessional,\* and the teacher's desk, which long have been abused for the darkening and degrading of your countrymen—for their improvement and emancipation! With and by the people you may become independent! Assist, therefore, first of all, in emancipating the national schools, and in securing for the community the free choice of pastors, and keep abreast of the spirit of the people and of the times. Yes, yes! go hand in hand with your people, and you will be invincible—you will work wonders!

*\* It must be borne in mind, that this letter is of prior date to Ronge's Justification, in which he unhesitatingly condemns the use of the Confessional.—Trans.*

"Am I dreaming? Look into the world, and mark the results of temperance societies! Here, to a certain extent, you have aided in the moral improvement of the people, although many of you have employed means by which your congregations have been more injured than they could have been by the most intoxicating drink.

"Do you fear the Chapters, the Bishops, the Pope? All these are powerless without you—in you alone their strength consists; their despotism has been erected on your cowardice and ignorance. Demand general councils, and hold them, as they once were held, in union with your congregations. Demand of your spiritual superiors that they rule according to law and privilege, and not after their own caprice; be no longer their tame and passive slaves.

"Do not allow yourselves to be deceived by the apparent growth of the Hierarchy; it will, it must fall, for its watchwords are retrogression and degradation, while providence has ordained improvement for the world—'Be ye therefore perfect, as my father is perfect.'

"Do not allow yourselves to be persuaded that the ecclesiastical power is increasing, because you hear of numerous conversions to the Romish creed in individual German States! The nation must and shall learn that these conversions are, for the most part, brought about by the intrigues and money of the Jesuits—by money which these spiritual and consecrated bands of freebooters of the Romish Hierarchy, wring from the poor by means of Rosary and Prayer-associations, and of which they rob the rich by mortmain. When our people shall have learned this—when they shall have discovered how fearfully all that they hold most sacred—their religion—is abused by the Romish Church, they will cast off Rome and her hypocrites with inexorable indignation. Still you may object,—'A great portion of our people is more attached than ever to the formal mummeries of Rome—to the doctrine of works; they hasten more than ever to places of Pilgrimage and Indulgence, and these processions are not confined to the ignorant populace, but are joined by educated wives and maidens, while the younger clergy are full of fanaticism! Does not this indicate the increase and the triumph of the Romish Creed?' Such phenomena there are indeed—phenomena belonging to the sixteenth, not the nineteenth century—but these phenomena are the curse upon your cowardice, the consequences of a want of moral courage to contend against the hirelings of the Pope. You have not dared encounter these Roman wolves in German fleeces; you have not dared to honour God and his truth; you have not dared to sacrifice your benefices to your heart's convictions, to the welfare of your congregations—of the nation! The slaves of Rome have therefore been enabled to rule at pleasure in the Catholic States of Germany, speaking big words—shamelessly insulting and intriguing—disseminating darkness and superstition. They have been free to rage in their congregations, to mislead, unpunished and unchecked, the credulous multitude, and to excite them and the younger clergy to fanaticism; they have been at liberty to proclaim the grossest abuses as the actual substance of Christianity, announcing follies and absurdities as Christian truths—for it is but seldom that any one, now and then, has ventured to raise his voice against them, or at least it has been speedily reduced to silence when once raised.

"Hence the insolence of these creatures of Rome, who dare, with unblushing front, here in the midst of Germany, to call the greater part of the nation, which refuses to do them homage—*a vulgar mob!* But, woe to them! the day has dawned at length,—the mask of their hypocrisy will be torn aside,—the confidence betrayed of our people and the younger clergy will burst forth in flames of merited indignation,—truth will shed a purer and a purer light, until at last the lying fabric shall fall down, and the rotten timbers of the Hierarchy shall crumble into dust! For it cannot be, that the spirit of truth, and justice, and brotherly love, is to be crushed for ever,—the spirit which Christ promised to *His Church*, and not to *Romish ambition*: 'The spirit remains with you till the end, and the spirit will make you free.' But you must seek for and follow after this spirit; then you shall have nought to fear—you shall triumph. This spirit will not greet you on your silken couches of indolence, He will not visit your licentious pillows—the Spirit discovers Himself now and ever as formerly, working in and through human agents. Strive earnestly and zealously for intellectual advancement and moral freedom, in union with your fellow-men,—lend a ready ear to the cries of the needy, enter heartily into the wishes of your fellow-citizens,—and you shall find the Holy Spirit, who shall declare Himself to you—you shall hear Him in the voice, in the call of your people, of your native country! The nation calls you now to a great and holy work. 'You must,' such is its call, 'cast off the degrading and unchristian despotism of the Roman Bishop; you must, in union with your fellow-citizens, the laity, restore, without fear of men, the Christian-Catholic religion, in all its purity and simple elevation; you must establish a German-Catholic (i. e. universal) Christian Church; you must be no longer Romish, but honest German priests and teachers. Such is the voice of your people,—the call of your country! Will you obey the call? Will you begin the work without fear of men? Oh, I entreat you, I conjure you to obey the call; go promptly to the work, now, while there yet is time! I beg of you to set to the work, and I am not ashamed to beg,—the boon is so elevated and important! I implore you in the name of our religion, for the sake of honour, independence, and the peace of Germany,—I implore you, for your own sakes, by your dignity, honour, virtue,—by your happiness as men!

"Some of you will object—'But then we must cast off the Pope, and that were contrary to the Gospel; for Christ says to Peter,—"Thou art a rock, and upon thee will I build my Church;" Peter was Bishop of Rome, and the Pope is his successor!' What, brethren? Do you interpret the saying of the elevated founder of our religion according to the deadness of the letter? Are you not aware that Christ based His Church upon the faith and love of Peter, and of his other disciples and followers, but not upon his person? Do you not know that Rome

has spared, and spares, no fraud to aggrandize herself, and that as history informs us, her prelates and her slaves have availed themselves of any means, however inadmissible, for the attainment of the self-same end? Do you not know that power and riches are the chief objects of the Court of Rome! and, therefore, must no Catholic either think or speak freely on religious matters, but blindly, like an animal, embrace and act upon the opinions of his priest! Ah! you know all this and more;—you know that you even act in direct opposition to the religion of Christ in bringing mankind under the unworthy dominion of the Pope, and in the degrading of your fellow-citizens; but you want the moral courage to shake yourselves free, you fear to lose your livelihood, you shrink from want and labour! Such fear is unworthy of the disciples of Christ and of the Truth. As such, you ought to fear nothing so much as the degradation of yourselves and of your fellow-men, to which the Papal yoke constrains you; and it is, therefore, your most sacred duty to renounce the Pope, and to become the true priests of your people. Or are you, perhaps, not in a condition to promote the welfare and prosperity of your fellow-citizens? Do you require the aid of a distant Italian Bishop,—of a foreign power? You are better able to promote it than a distant Italian Bishop can be! Do you fear that the renunciation of Rome would lead to discord! Certainly not; for we are men, and we will act like men! With manly energy and discretion, in union with our fellow-citizens, will we call together the communities, freely to deliberate and determine what steps are needful for us all. In such a work there is no room for discord, for all violence is done away. Discord and violence are occasioned only by the Romish despotism, which knows no other law than its own advantage and aggrandizement. The Romish Hierarchy repels that German maiden from the altar, who gives her heart to one who owns a different creed,—profanes the virgin modesty of our sisters by wanton questions under the cloak of religion,—takes upon itself, here in the midst of Germany, to refuse the sacraments to mothers, if their children be not nurtured in the faith of Rome,—rages against all attempts at reconciliation between German Catholics and Protestants,—it is the Romish Church that will not hear of peace, however longed for by the people!

"The Romish Government has likewise brought us under an unchristian constraint, and introduced abuses into our religion, which lead to superstition and to vice, and which deprive us of the blessings of the Christian doctrine. We must first of all sweep away these abuses, we must dismiss, as unintelligible to our people, from all the houses of God in Germany, the Latin language,—that monument of our subserviency and spiritual bondage, that unholy constraint which outrages the clearest injunctions of the Gospel; for Paul says, (1st Cor. 14, 19,) 'I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue,' and in the 23d verse he justly and directly denounces as madness the use of a foreign and unknown language. We must besides abolish the confessional, that moral torture-chamber, that degrading tribunal of Inquisition,—which stamps men hypocrites and blinded slaves to priestcraft,—which expels from the Supper of the Lord so many thousand Catholics who nevertheless feel themselves invited,—and which without a warrant in the Gospel, was first introduced by one of the most power-loving Popes, twelve hundred years after Jesus Christ. We must abolish all those mischievous contrivances of Rome, which are only intended for the extortion of money,—which undermine true piety, and degrade the priest to a farmer and a trafficker in salvation! The pure and true and Catholic Christian religion, shall alone remain, and its fundamental law—the law of love,—shall not only be expressed in words, but practically evidenced in our dealings with all our fellow-men of every faith and creed.

"I have been constrained, my friends, to address you in these few words, to which I have felt myself called by a sense of the duty imposed on me as preacher of religion, as a disciple of the truth,—these words, dictated by love to my fellow-citizens, and anxiety for their salvation, honor, and welfare,—and love to yourselves who languish under the yoke of Rome! It depends now upon yourselves whether you will obey the call of your religion, and of your fellow-citizens, and your improved convictions. Woe! woe! to you, who hear not this appeal! and rest in error and hypocrisy!—the righteous indignation of your countrymen, who are now awaking to consciousness, will condemn you in a voice of thunder, and the sentence will be indelibly engraved upon the page of history! The work, besides, will be achieved without you.

"To you, who obey this call, eternal joy and blessing! You, who armed with the moral courage of your calling, shun no labour and no sacrifice! Yes, eternal joy and blessing to you! Your own consciences will reward you, the love of your countrymen, the enduring gratitude of history, shall secure you a millennial fame!"

In this letter, as in the former, it is easy to trace the same spirit which so evidently characterizes the author as an honest and fearless assertor of what he believes to be the truth. The event soon shewed that he had not to fight single-handed. Previously, he had received assurances of the sympathies of thousands; and now, when the period for action came, there were not wanting many to cast in their lot with him, as fellow-workers in overturning the great system of idolatrous worship. When first suspended, his whole flock petitioned that his services might still be continued to them—the best practical reply to the charges advanced against him. Several secessions speedily took place; congregations were formed at *Schneidemühl*, under pastor *Czerski*, and at Breslau, where Ronge now is occupied with the constitution and settlement of the new community. In most cases, the ultra-Catholic party have done what they could to create disturbance in the meetings, and generally to obstruct the progress of business; but such attempts have proved ineffectual. Of course, much in the constitution of the Church must for a long time remain incomplete, but great unity, as well as zeal, has hitherto characterized their proceedings.

The principal places where congregations are being formed are Breslau, Schneidemühl, Leipsic, Dresden, Berlin, Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Offenbach, Brunswick, Coblenz, Worms, and even Cologne, where priestly influence is at its *maximum*. Other places it would be useless to name; in fact, accounts have been received from a vast number of quarters; but definite and final steps have not yet been taken, and, on all hands, it is found to be the ease, that great numbers, including clergy as well as laity, desire the formal recognition of the Church by the State, before they openly avow their separation from the Roman See. The documents connected with the origin, constitution, and principles of the Church have now been laid before the Prussian Government; but, while we write, no final answer has been returned.

The following remarks will so far explain the relation of this Government to the new movement:—Hitherto they have maintained the position of strict neutrality. The law of the land guarantees full freedom of



conscience to every Prussian citizen; and as the new doctrines involve no principles of danger to the common safety, their defenders are entitled to demand that no police restrictions be put in the way of their progress. The law draws a distinction between religious societies merely *tolerated*, and those formally *acknowledged* by the State; the latter only having corporate rights and privileges. The two Protestant Churches—the Reformed and Lutheran—have been united into one Church, generally called the Evangelical, which, with the Catholic, have alike the full sanctions of State protection. It is manifest, that where such strenuous efforts have been made to bring about this singular union, and where *unity of creed* is the avowed object of the Government, the sanctioning a new class of separatists, whether from the Catholic or Protestant Church, might lead to serious political consequences. The party of the *Old Lutherans*, who refused to co-operate in the scheme of union, have, strictly speaking, no legal standing in the constitution of Prussia. They are tolerated, but not acknowledged by the State. It seems exceedingly probable that such will be the position of the new German Catholic Church, which would at once secure the legally guaranteed rights of conscience, and, at the same time, form no exception to the determination of the Government, as such, to have only the two great antagonist Churches and Confessions.

Meanwhile, the King of Saxony, though a Catholic, has more openly avowed his principles in connection with the movement. He was waited on by the Bishop and Catholic Clergy of Leipsic, for the purpose of impressing on him the duty of putting down the new sect by law. His reply was as follows:—"I wonder much at the demand you have made; and all the more, as you know that nineteen-twentieths of my subjects are Protestants, whose conduct of late to my Catholic fellow-citizens has greatly rejoiced my heart. You know, moreover, that I am King of a *constitutional State*, and, as such, have promised and sworn to secure full religious freedom to my subjects, of whatever faith. I shall, then, place no obstruction in the way of what has taken place, but give events their free course, because *I will not, and dare not*, make any one swerve from that faith and worship from which alone he expects salvation. This is my firmly-settled resolution." And with these memorable words, the Bishop and Clergy were most graciously dismissed. The joy in Leipsic at the answer of the King was unbounded. As an off-set to this state of matters in Prussia and Saxony, we have to state, that the papal influence has been brought to bear upon the Governments of Austria and Bavaria—we believe with success—to prevent *by law* the formation of any Church in connection with the new sect, throughout both kingdoms.

It is, of course, not to be expected that these congregations can as yet have had time or opportunity to draw up a full and duly authorized Confession of Faith. As matters stand, one congregation has adhered to the Apostolical Creed—another to the Nicene Creed (a.d. 325). The following is the Confession drawn up, and which has been generally adhered to by the congregation of Schneidemühl:—

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

Art. 1. The foundation of the Christian faith should be solely and exclusively the Holy Scriptures and Reason, pervaded and actuated by true Christian principles in their interpretation—Art. 2. The community accepts the Apostolic Creed as its own. It is the problem of the Church, as of the individual, to reduce its contents to a living recognition, corresponding with the principles of the age.—Art. 3. In the difference of statement and interpretation with regard to the given contents of this Confession of Faith, the community finds no ground for excommunication or anathematizing.—Art. 4. With reference to the objective principles of belief, it, is held that there ought to be no impediment to free inquiry, and that no one should be anathematized on account of the exercise of the right conceded to him of free inquiry—because it is impossible to fix a completely definite rule of faith for the human mind.—Art. 5. The community consider the chief problem of Christianity to be, not merely the bringing of its principles to living recognition among the members of the community, by public worship, teaching, and instruction, but also the promoting, according to their ability, the spiritual, moral, and physical good of their fellow-men, without distinction.—Art. 6. The community acknowledges only two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; because only these have unquestionably been instituted by Christ, according to the testimony of the Scriptures.—Art. 7. Baptism is the sign of reception into the Christian Society; it is administered to children under the reservation of their confirming the Confession of Faith at the years of maturity.—Art. 8. The Lord's Supper serves as a remembrance of Christ, and as a sign of a covenant of brotherhood for all men.—Art. 9. The Sacrament to be received by the community in both kinds, as it was appointed by Christ.—Art. 10. Transubstantiation is not acknowledged, because it cannot be justified from the Gospel.—Art. 11. Marriage is declared as a holy institution, and the blessing of the Church on the same regarded as necessary.—Art. 12. There are no other restrictions on marriage recognized than those appointed by the laws of the State.—Art. 13. Celibacy is rejected by the community as an institution not found in the Holy Scriptures, as not to be justified before reason, and as devised by the Roman Popes for the advancement of their Hierarchy.—Art. 14. The community rejects the supremacy of the Roman Pope.—Art. 15. It abolishes auricular confession.—Art. 16. It uses the language of the people in public worship.—Art. 17. It rejects the invocation and worshipping of saints, (admitted into the ritual of the Romish Church), relics, and images, which are regarded as unchristian, and as leading to gross abuse.—Art. 18. All the previously existing customs of the Church, such as indulgences, fastings, pilgrimages, which could only lead to a useless work-holiness, are abolished by the community.—Art. 19. The outward form of public worship should ever adapt itself to the wants of time and place.—Art. 20. The outward demeanour in the Church cannot be prescribed, and is left to the religious sense of each individual; that which leads to superstition is forbidden.—Art. 21. Only those festivals are to be celebrated which are sanctioned according to the laws of the land.—Art. 22. The community makes use of its old right freely to elect for itself its pastors and office-bearers.—Art. 23. The community is to be represented by its pastors and the chosen elders; the election of the elders to take place yearly at Whitsunday.—Art. 24. Each pastor to be introduced to the congregation and to his office by a church service, yet herewith avoiding everything which



could be held as sanctioning the sacramental value of the Roman consecration of the priesthood, and serve as the foundation of the Hierarchy.—Art. 25. The stipend of the pastor to be regulated according to the means of the members of the congregation.—Art. 26. All church transactions, such as baptisms, marriages, burials, to be gone about by the pastor, without (surplice) fees, for all members of the community alike.—Art. 27. All these findings are not settled for all times, but can be altered according to the belief (lit. consciousness) of a particular period, by the community in agreement therewith.—Art. 28. To make a Christian Church a truly universal (Catholic) one, and not to exclude the admission of congregations constituting themselves in different places—all these, in every view, merely provisional findings, to be submitted to a universal (German) council,—Art. 29. The reception into the Church, after its complete constitution, takes place after the declaration of desire for admission, and the acceptance of the Confession of Faith adopted by the community, before the office-bearers, by public deed in the congregation.

Another short document has appeared, which runs as follows:—"I believe in God the Father, who by his Almighty Word created the world, and governs it in wisdom, justice, and love. I believe in Jesus Christ, one Saviour, who by his teaching, his life, and his death, has redeemed us from the bondage of sin. I believe in the work of the Holy Spirit upon earth—a holy universal Christian Church—the forgiveness of sins, and the life everlasting. Amen."

The following is the order of Church-service for the Church in Breslau.—1. Introductory Hymn. 2. Confession of sins (Confiteor). Lord pity us, &c. Glory be to God, &c. 4. The prayers of the Collect. 5. The Epistle. 6. The Gospel. 7. The Sermon, with the usual prayers, with a verse of a hymn before and after. 8. Instead of the Canon of the Mass, a passage from the Passion and the Sacrament. 9. Holy, holy, holy, &c. O, Lamb of God, &c. 10. Lord's Prayer. 11. Concluding Hymn. 12. Benediction. It has also been resolved that part of the Sabbath afternoon be devoted to catechizing, as is now common in many Protestant churches in Germany and Switzerland. The only point of difference, so far as we are aware, among the different communities, is on the doctrine of tradition; some proposing to abolish it altogether, while others wish to retain it so far as in accordance with the Bible—though to maintain a subordinate place. An intimation has been published, stating that representatives from all the churches—now about 18 in number—are to meet in Leipsic at Easter, to make arrangements for the authorized constitution of the new Church. Meanwhile Ronge has prepared the draft of a new liturgy.

The community at *Elberfeld*, in separating from the Church of Rome, expresses itself as follows:—

"In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen! We, the undersigned citizens of Elberfeld, belonged, up to this period, to the Roman Catholic Church, and had, for a long period, been aware with increasing force, of the errors and abuses which cling to it in its most inward principles, and have assumed the ascendancy in its latest phases. The more we have striven to become acquainted with the true doctrine of Jesus in the Gospel, which is the alone source of revealed truth, the more deeply have we been penetrated with the conviction, that Christ is the only mediator between God and man, and that the doctrine with regard to the Pope and the one infallible Church, has no foundation in the word of God, and weakens the merits of Christ; that the doctrines of the Romish Church of the Holy Sacrament—of the priesthood and its relation to the people, is false, and deprives believers of their choicest privileges. The more clear this conviction has gradually grown upon us, the more oppressive do we feel the chains by which we are bound, and the more are we in our consciences hindered from belonging to a Church whose most important doctrines we can no longer reconcile with the Gospel, from adhering to a faith which we cannot openly avow as becomes the disciples of the Lord. Herewith was connected the pain of having no worship of God corresponding with our altered religious views. Then came forth from the darkness, whose shadows settled more and more thickly over us, a light which, in our extremity, we view as the morning-dawn of hope, and as announcing to us the good favour of God. Events, to which we do not require more specially to refer, have given us the joyful assurance, that the day is at hand, which brings deliverance and freedom to those in bondage! That which was struggling unconsciously within ourselves has now been brought to full consciousness, and we thank God that we now know what we should do, and that he has given us courage openly to bear testimony to the faith which we acknowledge. In the sight of God we separate ourselves from the Pope, and the Hierarchy, and from the whole anti-evangelical system therewith connected, whatever struggles or shame we may have to encounter. We thus separate ourselves—not for the sake of carrying on a war against those who hold a different confession—not even that confession which we abandon—but for the purpose of finding rest for our souls, and of serving and thanking our God and Lord in peace. We separate ourselves—not in a spirit of vain glory, or from a false desire of freedom, we acknowledge, along with our brethren in Schneidemühl, Jesus the crucified, whose pure doctrines alone, whose kingdom alone, whose glory and worship alone, we seek and desire, Amen!

"Accordingly, we hereby constitute ourselves into a Christian, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. We solemnly declare that we adhere to the Confession of Faith, in the sister Church, in all its essential points, as follows,—(here follows a verbal copy of the Schneidemühl Confession.) This true, universal faith, revealed by Christ Jesus, we now acknowledge, freely and truly, and promise, by God's help, to maintain and avow the same with unbroken steadfastness, uncorrupted and unperverted; as also to give all possible care that this faith be held, taught, and avowed, by those under us, or by those who have confidence in our intention, until our Confession of Faith has received the requisite alterations or enlargements in a future general (German) council of the chief members of the entire Christian-Catholic Church. May then God and his divine Gospel assist us! Amen!

"In this Confession of Faith we have declared our inmost convictions. Although we are still few in number, yet we feel ourselves strong enough in our Christian faith to oppose' all difficulties, obstacles, and oppositions, and by God's grace, not to wander or waver in the way which has been marked out, but to remain firm in our present intentions and desires unto the end of our days—even though the outward means for carrying these out should be wanting—even though our present limited number should be still more limited—yet even though only one of us should in this life stand alone in these his convictions. At a later period we shall hold our public consulting assemblies, and allow, even to those who are most undetermined in the matter, free right of admission, and liberty of stating their views, that all may be convinced of our upright intentions.

"The members of the German Christian Catholic Apostolic community in Elberfeld. In their name. (Signed)  
C. T. von Knapp, R. Hockelmann, T. Korner.

"Elberfeld, 15th February 1845."

It were of course quite premature to criticize the doctrines, or system of government of the new Church, as they themselves have declared that their findings are not to be held as final, until they have been examined and approved of by a general synod or council. Meanwhile we hasten to complete this hurried sketch. Since the events that have taken place, Bishop Arnoldi has been honoured with torch-processions in Cologne and Bonn and Coblenz, and has been burned in effigy by the students in Jena. So far from wishing to undo what has been done, he has instituted an annual Church festival, to be called the Festival of the Holy Coat, the Nails, and the Lance, and to be held on the Wednesday in the third week after Easter. Nay, not only so, but it has been actually reported that he has resolved to establish another Pilgrimage in honour of the Holy Nail, which Prince Metternich has, after solemn conference and negotiation, promised to restore to the Cathedral of Treves. The Bishop has lately given a proof of his tyranny as well as his superstition, in suspending one of the clergy of his diocese, by name Licht, who had dared to doubt—and to express his doubts to his people. He had been promised to be reinstated on retracting his obnoxious opinions about the Coat—but has preferred degradation to dishonour. Our clergy, says one account, appear to lose in prudence exactly as the Separatists increase. Thus, so far from the more extreme section of them expressing themselves with greater caution than formerly, some of them are declared to have taught openly since the event, that not only was this the *bonâ fide* Coat of our Lord, but that it was the *only Coat which he ever wore*—and that it grew with the growth of his body from the cradle to the Cross. To counteract the influence of the movement now in progress, Bishop Arnoldi, in conjunction with the Bishop of Cologne, has instituted a new Catholic Society for the Rhine provinces, the object of which is,—by a Monthly Journal, by the circulation of sermons and tracts, by the publication of standard Catholic works at a cheap rate, by the founding of a new Catholic library and the like, to diffuse a spirit of stronger Catholicity through this section of the Church. A member of the Theological Seminary is already named as its president, and collections are ordered to be made on a general scale in all the parishes, and specially by calls made at each individual house. In addition, five new journals of the same stamp have been established.

Meanwhile the Protestant evangelical societies have not been asleep. The Gustavus-Adolphus Society (a Society founded for the support of poor Protestant congregations in Catholic countries, and one of the best proofs of the reviving spirit in the German Church,) have expressed their opinion that by the constitution of the Society, they are precluded from assisting the new movement by specific grants of money, but at the same time stating their desire to urge on the spirit that was abroad by all means in their power. Collections accordingly have been made in the various large towns, to defray the necessary expenses incurred by the support of clergy, the performance of public worship and the like. Places of meeting have been granted in most cases by the authorities of the town. So far as we are aware, only one member of the new community has openly gone over to the Protestant Lutheran Church.

In Breslau the long-vacant and much-disputed episcopal chair still remains unoccupied,—von Diepenbrock having expressly refused the offer, on the alleged ground of the unsettled state of the Church. During the late sittings of the Diet at Breslau, the excitement was altogether of a religious and not of a political kind. Ronge and the anti-Popish movement were the great subjects of conversation. "The Separation," says an account, "is widening daily, and quarters are now full of agitation which before were peaceful as the grave. Our ears are once more deafened by the No Popery cry. The congregation here now numbers above 600 families." Ronge is busily occupied with the affairs of the Church—delivering the most stirring addresses—and everywhere receiving fresh proofs of sympathy and support.

Czerski, the pastor of Schneidemühl, has followed Luther's example in the matter of marriage, the Protestant clergyman officiating. He has since been formally degraded and excommunicated, previous to which, we believe that in many places seven masses were offered up daily for his return to the communion of the Church. In addition, all who adhere to his opinions have been excommunicated *en masse*. A small pamphlet has lately come out in Berlin, which states, that he had been always distinguished by great laboriousness in his parish, and that he had previously excited great attention by a stirring Address which he had delivered in the open air, on the matter of some Indulgence, pointing out the true method of repentance and pardon, and advising the people to have nothing farther to do with Indulgences, as the greatest of them could not make a man a Christian. He is represented as a person of great simplicity of character, and of deep feeling. He is firm in expressing his determination to adhere to the Bible and not to the Church. He and Ronge have been both, by letter from high quarters, admonished to be on their guard, as attempts on their life from some fanatics were dreaded. Several threatening letters had been also sent to some of the more active lay members in the new Church. At Breslau, on Sabbath, 9th March, the first public service was celebrated. Dr. Steiner delivered an Address on the momentous step which had been taken, and then requested the community to use the right of *free election of their pastor*, now restored to them. John Ronge was unanimously chosen. Czerski was present from Schneidemühl, to take part in the services of the day. Intimation was made that Kerbler, hitherto vicar in Lindenau, was present, and had joined the New Church. Then followed the induction of the new pastor into his charge. Twelve girls dressed in white, with garlands of flowers, formed a procession,\* which was followed by John Ronge, Czerski, Kerbler, and the chief members of the congregation. Dr. Steiner then delivered a powerful Address to the new pastor on the duties of his office. Ronge replied to his people, and promised not to forsake them in joy or sorrow, after which the ordinary services of public worship began. After a hymn, he ascended the pulpit, and delivered a discourse *on the true character of the Church*, which he said was founded on the two maxims of Christ,—*"Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect;"* and *"Love God, and your neighbour as yourself,"* and not on exclusive confessions, forms, and ceremonies. The great matter was to make Christianity inward and spiritual, and then to act accordingly. The man who did this was a true Christian, and herein lay the possibility of having a universal Christian Church, which should be one in knowledge, in love, and in deed. After leaving the pulpit, he read the New Confession of Faith from the altar, to which those present responded with a hearty "Amen." A selected piece from the Passion was then read, with the words of the institution of the Supper, which was followed by the choral, "Holy, holy, holy." The whole was closed with the Lord's prayer, the Hymn "Great God

we praise thee," and the Benediction. The service seems to be pretty nearly the same as in the Protestant German Church, at least as it is now celebrated in the Cathedral of Berlin.

\* *This must be regarded as a German rather than Popish custom.*

But the matter of controversy is not confined to the humble parish-priests of Silesia. While the two Bishops of Treves and Cologne, Arnoldi and von Geissel, have been issuing their annual pastoral letters in Lent, filled with the most extravagant declarations of ultramontane opinions, the Bishop of Mayence, von Kaiser, has issued a document breathing a very different spirit. In the former, each of the faithful is admonished in opposition to the movements which are at present taking place in the Catholic Church, to hold firmly by Rome and the Pope, as the central-point of the Church—is warned against apostacy and false doctrine, whilst the faith in relics, and what belongs thereto, is expressly inculcated. Bishop Kaiser, again, in a mild and tolerant spirit, dwells largely upon the fundamental principle of brotherly love and reconciliation, and although he attaches great weight to positive belief, yet, above all things, he gives prominence to the principle of the Apostle Paul:—"If I had all faith, and had not charity, I am nothing." Without this, he adds, all our works have no value before God. This pastoral letter has, in its whole contents, reference to the Church relations of the present times, and must be regarded as a determined protest against the wild proceedings of the Jesuits. He proves that it is neither Catholic nor Christian to make a tool of fanaticism, intolerance, and proselytism,—that the principle of toleration is also a Catholic one, and that both Churches can subsist together in peace, if the authors of disturbance were only powerfully restrained. He moreover *acknowledges the claims of Protestantism*,—a fact which, in reference to the recent course of events, is of vast importance:—"It is possible," says he, "for men of different creeds, if they have good moral principles, to live together in the same country, and to meet in civil life peacefully, friendly, and lovingly, and yet for each to remain unchangeably true to his individual belief. This experience has taught; already 300 years have past since in Germany a section of our brethren in the faith separated themselves from us. The division has taken place. Divine Providence has permitted it, and permits it still. What God permits, man should permit too; or should man not will it so—still he *must*. If the mixture of men of different creeds has once become realized as a fact, then has their living together become a matter of necessity. It were, accordingly, foolish and unreasonable, if they did not wish, as much as in them lay, honestly and truly, by reciprocal toleration and indulgence, to make these differences lighter and less felt. It were foolish, hypocritical, and supercilious, at the same time, if they passed judgment upon each other's faith and believing life harshly and uncharitably, rather than to be reserved in their judgment, and to consider that each man for himself, and among his own fellow-believers, has faults enough to rectify. \* \* \* God is love, and we prove our love of God by our love of man. In faith we are not at one, but in love we can and ought to be so—in love, we can and ought to strive with one another, and by love can we best show the truth and purity of our belief, and place ourselves in the best position for recommending it to others, until it shall please God that we all together should attain to the unity of the faith."

We believe it difficult to exaggerate the importance of this document. Here is a man holding a high office in the Catholic Church—living in the very midst of the scenes lately enacted, with two bishops on either side of his diocese, who seem equally ready personally to take part in, or with all the power of their office, to defend the most extravagant superstitions, or the most insidious policy of Jesuitism, with a people who showed how thoroughly they were given up to idolatry, and with a clergy equally capable of misleading or being misled,—still calmly lifting up his voice for a purer faith, and for the manifestation of the true spirit of Christian liberty and love. It seems most probable that this defence of *toleration* may, ere long, make its author personally feel what *intolerance* is. He is already denounced by the ultra-Catholic party in the Rhine provinces, and report says, in the Vatican itself. If so, we may expect to hear more of Bishop Kaiser of Mayence. Meanwhile, it is gratifying to state that Addresses have been sent to him by his clergy and fellow-citizens, fully participating in his spirit, and expressive of their joy that he has all along so strongly discountenanced the doings in the neighbouring diocese of Treves; while a Special Address has been presented to him from Offenbach, praying that he, as their spiritual guide, would lead the way in making them discard the leading errors of Popery. To show that this spirit of dissatisfaction is not confined to an individual case, we may state, that at least one other Bishop has, in his annual Address, passed over what has taken place without a single allusion or remark; nay, that even in Treves itself, which seems destined to become the *Mecca* of continental Popery, there were priests whom nothing but the fear of consequences compelled to take part in the degrading scenes referred to.

And now, in drawing this hasty sketch to a close, we have left ourselves room for but one or two general remarks.

1. From what has been said, it must be as a matter of fact, plain, that Germany is now the scene of a most remarkable awakening. Catholic Germany is again, after a lapse of more than three centuries, the scene of an open secession from the Church of Rome; and at the head of the movement stands one, who writes with Luther-like power—who has gone through many of Luther's experiences, and who has already shown that he has imbibed a vast deal of Luther's spirit, in deed as well as word. The occasion too, of the movements, was not unlike—Indulgences in the one case, and relics, accompanied with Indulgences, in the other, have awakened men's minds to see the evils of the whole system, and to shake off their connection with it. Congregations have been formed—a new Church is being established, and men on all sides say and show that they identify themselves with the movement. The Pope is busied now with giving new directions for the German Church; and is earnestly setting himself to narrow, as far as policy, or concession, or remonstrance can do, the evils of the schism which has already taken place. The new Church, it is true, still adheres to the name Catholic, and Ronge has said, that to pure Catholicism he remains true; but we quarrel not with names, if the faith and doings of the men be Protestant in fact. And moreover, it is at once evident, that as regards the immediate progress of the movement, it is perhaps well that Ronge should still, if he so pleases, call himself Catholic, as by so doing, he is not to be viewed with the same jealousy or distrust by his Catholic brethren, which would be the case, if he at once openly avowed that he had become Protestant. In this event he would be treated as a heretic by hundreds, whose eyes, like Luther's, may not at once be opened to see



that the Church of Rome is not the true and only Church of Christ.

2. As to the *real character* of the present movement, in a religious point of view, it becomes us, *as yet*, to speak with caution. The period has not arrived for our forming a proper estimate of it, as we have not yet all the materials for so doing; and still more as great allowance must be made for two circumstances—1st, The half-formed condition of the new community in its present transition state; and 2d, That progress in their views of divine truth, which may take place with them as it did with Luther. Meanwhile, taking both circumstances into view, it cannot be questioned that much of the present movement may be traced to causes other than those connected with the deeply Evangelical principles, which characterized the Reformation. It is true, the Reformation began also with a mere outward abuse; but this was rather the first occasion for the manifestation of the Christian principle, that was the soul of the movement in the sixteenth century, and determined its whole spiritual character. The great Evangelical doctrine of *Justification by Faith* was, *in principle*, opposed to all such practices, of which *Indulgences* was only one specimen; but this doctrine went a great deal further, namely, in supplying the positive and constructive principle of the Reformation throughout. The trade in Indulgences might have been opposed upon grounds of mere worldly politics—from an infidel hatred of all systems of religion—from a mere moral dislike at hypocrisy or superstition; but it required a true spiritual principle, connected with man's relation to God as a sinner, to give it its full value as regards the cause of Evangelical truth. The Reformation proceeded from a living principle within, which was at war with outward practices and systems,—instead of merely opposing these from principles drawn from a different circle of motives and actions apart from religion. Popery was overthrown by the French Revolution, as well as the Reformation; but no one would think of comparing as analagous the moral causes at work in both cases. And now as to Ronge's movement, we desiderate the statement of the great evangelical principles on which he falls back, and which would prove his struggle to be freed from priestly thralldom to be the desire of reaching the true liberty of the sons of God in Christ. It cannot be concealed that much of the spirit of Ronge's letters is explicable from the mere desire of independence of priestly tyranny, or from principles of a general enlightenment—or of warm patriotism, not necessarily of a religious character. Certain it is, that in all his productions there is much to desiderate; nay, we may go farther, and declare that there is much in them which seems to savour of the modern German Liberalism, with all its parade of words about the dignity of human nature, and the demands of the spirit of the age, and the shadowy future of an ideal perfectibility. It is not to be denied, moreover, that many of the Addresses sent to Ronge breathe a good deal the same spirit, and are sadly wanting in the strong statements of men who have been really made to feel that this is a matter affecting the salvation of the soul, and man's highest interests as an immortal being. This we are far from stating from feelings of suspicion or hypercritical jealousy. Quite the reverse. We are merely pointing out a source of danger in passing too hurried a decision on a movement which may not yet have had time or opportunities enough to bring out or establish its real spiritual character.

But on this point we have said enough, and desire that what we have said be not construed into an avowed opinion as to the character of this movement as a whole; but rather as indicating the possible direction which may be given to it, if the principles hinted at be really at the bottom of it. We earnestly hope that such is not the fact.

3. What we have now said leads us, in conclusion, to state the obligation which lies on the Protestants of this country to give, if possible, a proper direction to this movement, and to encourage it, in so far as it has this direction, by all means in their power. A voice from Protestant Britain might do much to strengthen the hands, and encourage the hearts, of those who are now occupied in opposing error, and, we hope, testifying for the truth, from a true knowledge of it as it is in Jeans. Most desirable it is that this movement be guarded against the influences of Rationalism, of whatever kind, and thus of becoming a scandal to Protestantism, and a new cause for the enemy to triumph. The awakened and evangelical Protestantism of Germany will be ready to co-operate with us and with them, in proportion to their increased purity of creed, and their daily increasing activity and efficiency as a branch of the Church of Christ. A noble opportunity seems now, in the providence of God, presented, for drawing together different parts of the Christian Church, as well as of aiding in a great effort to overthrow the system which has so long kept the nations in the very darkness of the shadow of death. We have means of knowing that many of the best and wisest men in Germany believe that we are now standing on the threshold of great events; and meanwhile, when on both sides of the Alps, Popery is reorganizing itself for a new and fierce attack on Christendom and Heathenism alike, it is most gratifying to know that in the very country of the Reformation—aye, and in the bosom of the Catholic Church itself, there should still be found slumbering the spirit of Luther and his times. Let us hope that the presence of Him who led the spirit of Luther to larger conceptions of Divine Truth, and gave him courage equal to his mighty work, may now be vouchsafed to many who, like him, may still be groping in a kind of twilight knowledge and faith, and be led, as all around and within them brightens, to have no longer any fellowship with the works of darkness! May God grant the Churches of Christendom light to act as becomes the emergency; and may all that has taken place, or that may yet take place, in connection therewith, tend to advance the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We conclude with the well known words of Luther:—"If this is God's work it will advance; if it be man's it will come to nought."

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JOHN RONGE; THE HOLY COAT OF TREVES; NEW  
GERMAN-CATHOLIC CHURCH \*\*\*

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