

recognizable adult identity. That neither was quite achieved does not lessen the nobility of the desires. Percival's death had led his friends to see themselves as making between them but a dead body, and each came to know himself and herself unfulfilled. From the eucharist Paul can go on to speak of the Christians as one body enlivened by the Spirit, and of the individual as coming to maturity. They are 'the body of Christ', operative in the world, the community of love. And in this community each realizes that he has put away the things of a child and become his adult self.

Just as the reading of *Mrs Dalloway* makes it possible to appreciate more fully the tradition preserved in 1 Corinthians, so that tradition offers critical instruments for the reading of *The Waves*. The confidence with which the elements of surprise, communion, and death are spoken of in the Pauline account of the eucharist persuades the reader that he take another look at the suggestion made in the novel that our every enterprise towards harmony must come to nothing. The interpretation Paul offers of the cross of Jesus makes an impressive alternative to talk of hope leading only to frustration. Both Paul and Virginia Woolf are honest enough about the facts around them. They do not attempt to disguise either the reality of death or the strength of our desire for communion. They simply interpret things differently. Paul's preaching does not render Virginia Woolf's account of our experience any the less intelligent or sensitive. Rather it demands that we recognize the complexity of our situation, and the variousness of ways of talking about it, and consider these designations of what is ultimately convincing. We have to make some decision in our coming to faith or disbelief. The cross, while appearing to confirm Virginia Woolf's discernment, becomes in Paul's account an assurance that not every ride against death need end in a ridiculous accident. From an acknowledgement of that honest designation of the true oppressiveness of the ordinary made in *The Waves*, Paul would lead us to a larger gratitude for the wonder that has broken in upon us.

Catholics and Politics at the time of Emancipation

by J. Derek Holmes

It has almost become platitudinous to state that the controversial literature at the time of Catholic Emancipation illustrates the fact that the expression of radical political opinion had been muted as a result of the events of the French Revolution. On the whole, it is argued, the controversy tended to be theological or apologetic rather

than political and the usual arguments in favour of Catholic emancipation were those of expediency rather than principle.¹ The Roman Catholics themselves, it is argued, would not wish to associate their claims with more radical political demands, while their social and political isolation during the previous century would be reflected in their reluctance to seize the opportunities which became possible after emancipation. As the future Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman himself wrote, the 'shackles were removed, but not the numbness and cramp which they had produced'.²

However, the point of this article is simply to show that the most cursory reading of Catholics periodicals at the time would demonstrate that none of these historical claims are necessarily supported by the evidence. In fact, it would be more surprising if the political awareness of the Cisalpines at the end of the eighteenth century had so quickly disappeared; after all, the political tradition of English radicalism did not completely disappear after 1789. Furthermore, Bernard Ward made the interesting point that there were eight English Catholic M.P.s in the Parliament of 1831—a number which was only exceeded in the twentieth century.³ Of course, not all English Catholics wished to be associated with political radicals and most of them were not prepared to 'seize their political opportunities' after the grant of emancipation, but there were significant exceptions.

In spite of the fact that Daniel O'Connell and the members of the Catholic Association were careful to respect constitutional or even conservative political principles, other Catholics were prepared to go much further. In Preston, for example, the local Catholic Association received little support from the 'respectable' classes and became more 'popular'. As a result,

'the proceedings became most irregular, in entertaining political and other objectionable questions . . . [and] . . . it was deemed most prudent to dissolve the Association.'

Nevertheless, it was still proposed,

'That this Committee, viewing with the deepest concern the present perilous state of the kindgom, do most earnestly exhort the Catholics of every class, to come forward, as Englishmen, and join their fellow-countrymen, of all denominations, in calling for a Constitutional Reform of the Commons' House of Parliament, embracing a restoration of civil rights to every Briton without distinction of creed.'

Such a proposal was, almost inevitably, unsuccessful and an Irish member significantly pointed out that it would have been 'hissed

¹See, e.g. U. Henriques, *Religious Toleration in England, 1787-1833* (London, 1961), p. 138.

²N. Wiseman, *Recollections of the last four Popes* (London, n.d.), p. 251.

³B. Ward, *The Eve of Catholic Emancipation* (London, 1912), Vol. III, p. 276.

down' at a meeting of the Irish Association. However, the proposal was made. Furthermore, those Catholics who supported a closer identification of religious and political reform seem to have joined the Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty.¹

In short, Catholics were divided on the political implications as well as the best means of securing their religious demands. Some of them considered it necessary to make fervent protestations of loyalty:

'God is our witness with what sincerity and fervour we pray that the British Constitution and the reign of the illustrious House of Brunswick over us may last for ever, and that our august and beloved Prince Regent's sway may daily increase in happiness and glory'.

In the following year, the same magazine reported the 'atrocious' attempt made on the 'sacred person' of the Prince Regent which was seen as a manifestation of the effects being made to inflame public opinion especially among 'the labouring classes' and which 'would inevitably plunge the country into the horrors of a French Revolution!!'² Some Catholics had earlier associated the penal legislation against them with the repressive legislation adopted as a result of the French Revolution, but later demands for reform were carefully distinguished from the events which occurred in France.³

The political divisions among Catholics were reflected in their periodicals and inevitably gave rise to protests.

'I feel more anxious that the Catholic press should remain untainted with revolutionary principles, than that it should have a wide circulation. . . . As a Briton, though excluded from my franchises, and as the descendant of those who contributed to establish the constitution to which I aspire, I feel indignant, that while the voice of all Europe hails my country as her deliverer, there should be *among us* some who are so indiscreet as to abuse her as an oppressor, rather than consider her as entangled in prejudices, for which her present rulers are not principally answerable, and for which she is rather to be pitied than blamed.'⁴

In spite of such appeals, some correspondents continued to identify the Catholic claims with civil and religious liberty, while others raised the questions of political reform; Catholics were encouraged, on more than one occasion, to make a calculated appeal to public opinion and to demand 'a rational reform in the commons house of parliament'.⁵

¹*Catholic Miscellany*, Vol. VII (1827), pp. 60, 64-5; Vol. VIII (1827), pp. 271-5.

²*Catholicon*, Vol. III (1816), p. 38; Vol. IV (1817), p. 40.

³*Orthodox Journal*, Vol. I (1813), p. 81; Vol. VIII (1820), pp. 239-311.

⁴*Catholicon*, Vol. III (1816), p. 231.

⁵*Orthodox Journal*, Vol. VII (1819), p. 421. See also, Vol. VIII (1820), pp. 49-53, 89-107, 129-41; *Catholic Spectator or Catholicon*, 3rd series, Vol. III (1825), pp. 120-1, 283-5.

The supporters of Catholic Relief in Parliament believed that popular misconceptions or misrepresentations of Catholic belief and practice impeded the grant of civil and religious liberty. Consequently, they requested a formal statement of Catholic beliefs on those subjects which were supposed to conflict with allegiance to a Protestant sovereign. The Catholic bishops issued a *Declaration* that Catholics held no principles or opinions incompatible

‘with all the civil duties which, as subjects, they owe to their sovereign and the constituted civil government of their country; and with all the social duties which, as citizens, they owe to their fellow-subjects, whatever may be their religious creed.’

The *Declaration* included sections on faith and revelation, idolatry, superstition and confession, oaths and indulgences, and most important of all in the present context, ‘On allegiance to our Sovereign and obedience to the Pope’. Here the bishops distinguished between civil and spiritual authority; neither the pope nor any official in the Church could directly or indirectly interfere with civil duties nor try to enforce spiritual obligations by secular means; Catholics could not be dispensed from their obligations in conscience to obey ‘the civil government of this realm.’

‘Hence we declare, that by rendering obedience in *spiritual* matters to the Pope, Catholics do not withhold any portion of their allegiance to their king and that their allegiance is entire and undivided; the *civil* power of the state, and the *spiritual* authority of the Catholic church, being absolutely distinct, and being never intended by their Divine Author to interfere or clash with each other’.¹

The Irish bishops made a similar *Declaration* and the Catholic laity added *An Address to their Protestant Fellow Countrymen* which was adopted at the Annual General Meeting of the British Catholic Association. The authors of this *Address* consciously appealed to the ‘liberal’ and the ‘enlightened’ in deploring the use of force or persecution by members of any religion and in recommending the adoption of the principles of religious liberty, particularly the right of free discussion, in Catholic as well as Protestant countries. The penal legislation and public prejudices of the British people were regarded as an unparalleled example for the enemies of liberty throughout the world. The *Address* concluded:

‘Bearing equally with you our fellow subjects, the burthens of the country, and upholding equally its institutions, and its glory, we claim to be admitted to a full participation in all the rights of British subjects.—Every principle or practice hostile, in the

¹*Declaration of the Catholic Bishops, the Vicars Apostolic and their Coadjutors in Great Britain* (London, 1826), pp. 4, 14.

remotest degree, to those institutions, we most explicitly disclaim. Year after year we repeat the humiliating task of disavowal; still we suffer the penalties of guilt. We ask you is this to endure for ever? Are we always to remain the victims of misplaced suspicion? The doors of the Constitution are shut against us, as long as we continue true to the dictates of our consciences; but if we abandon the Faith of our fathers, resign every honourable feeling, and become perjured men and apostates, then are all our disqualifications removed; the sanctuary of the British Constitution is thrown open to us; we become senators, privy-counsellors, nay, guardians of the morals of the people, and dispensers of public justice! God forbid we should purchase such distinctions, however valuable, at the price of dishonour. In the hour of danger, when our country needs it, we mingle our blood with yours. We desire no ascendancy, religious or political. If our country falls, we ask to fall with her; if she prospers, we claim to share her prosperity.¹

The Declaration of the Vicars Apostolic immediately gave rise to further controversy and occasioned the usual counter-attacks. One of the most famous of these was by the Reverend George Townsend, Prebendary of Durham and Vicar of Northallerton, which in turn occasioned a court case and provoked the inevitable replies.² But the *Declaration* also provided the inspiration or the basis for a somewhat surprising political development amongst Catholics themselves and which clearly illustrates that not all Catholics were reluctant to seize their political opportunities after the grant of emancipation.

Between 1833 and 1837, there appeared four issues of a periodical entitled *The British Catholic Colonial Quarterly Intelligencer*. As the title indicates, it was originally intended as a non-profit making quarterly which would complement the existing Catholic periodicals. In the first issue, the editors declared,

‘that the object which the *British Catholic Colonial Quarterly Intelligencer* has in view is a *specific* one, necessarily limited in its *range*, perhaps it should be added necessarily also limited in its proposed *duration*. It is principally during a *transition* from slavery to CHRISTIANITY or to ANARCHY in our West-Indian Colonies—from a commercial to a political existence in the scale of nations in the East-Indies—that the Editors wish to submit to the consideration of the Roman Catholics of Great Britain, the immense importance of the Roman Catholics in the Colonies, having every facility of instruction in the principles of the Declaration of 1826; and every reason to believe that the British Government at home is not indifferent to their having such instruction, and will be satisfied of their claim to protection as long as it is satisfied that they are steady to those principles.’ (No. 1, p. 6.)

¹An *Address from the British Roman Catholics to their Protestant Fellow Countrymen*, pp. 3-4.

²See especially, G. Corless, *Reply to the Review of the Declaration by the Rev. George Townsend* (London, 1827).

The editors therefore largely restricted themselves to providing information about the colonies for Catholics back home and informing Catholics in the colonies of the principles of the *Declaration* issued by the vicars apostolic in 1826 and the *Address* of the laity in support of that *Declaration*.

Lord Clifford seems to have given his patronage and support to the venture since he was convinced that unless Christianity was immediately established in the colonies, the abolition of slavery would be followed by anarchy. He also believed that there was sufficient evidence that the British Government would give all reasonable support

‘to the exertions of those whose peculiar office it is to teach the doctrines of Christianity, even though, in addition to those doctrines which are recognized as such by the established church of these kingdoms, they should feel it their duty to inculcate others, not considered by that Church as forming part of the Christian code, yet, as experience has proved, nowise incompatible with those doctrines, and nowise injurious to social order’ (No. 1, p. 60).

Clifford seems to have been the driving force behind a proposal to establish ‘The British Catholic Society for the Promotion of the Knowledge of Christianity’ whose object was to instruct Catholic colonists ‘under the superintendence’ of the local Catholic clergy in the moral and social teaching of Christianity by providing schools and publications, especially copies of the *Declaration* of 1826, so that they might justify and enjoy the protection of Great Britain.¹ Clifford himself described the occasion and his reasons for acting as he did:

‘In consequence of the facility afforded by the 86th and 101st clauses of the East-India Bill, and of the 61st clause of the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery in the West-Indies, to the instruction of poor Indians in the moral and social principles of Christianity, and of the repeated opinions delivered in evidence before both Houses of Parliament, as to the impracticability of obtaining a remunerating price for labour in the Colonies, unless by the moral and intellectual improvement of the emancipated population, a system of exertion from a sense of duty be substituted to a system of coercion, which experience has proved to have operated not only cruelly, but to the effect of brutalizing and demoralizing fellow creatures; it appears incumbent on all Christians to take the most active exertions for the propagation of such instruction’. (No. 1, p. 77.)²

Evidence presented to the House of Lords in 1832 indicated that foreigners were more lenient to their slaves than were Englishmen,

¹But see also, No. 2, p. 87.

²At the same time, Clifford himself repudiated the notion ‘of valuing religion *merely* or *principally* as a political bond of union, still less as a means of obtaining a remunerating price for labour’. (No. 1, p. 61.)

that Roman Catholic slaves were 'all easily managed by their priests' and that religion was neglected in English colonies or 'has fallen into the hands of sectarians, and instead of being a benefit is hurtful, by making distrust between master and slave'. (No. 1, p. 77.) In the same year, the Secretary of State for the Colonies was asked,

'whether His Majesty's government ought not to encourage and assist a proprietor, the *first* to commence to cultivate his lands in the heart of this fertile and extensive colony [Demerara, British Guiana] by the labour of Indians (free), and to domicile on his own estate a priest for the purposes of Christianity and civilization, and for magisterial order and discipline.'

The writer explicitly stated that he wished,

'To domicile a priest on my lands at a salary from government, but with lands from my estate, to superintend and form in them [Spanish Indians from Columbia] religious and industrious habits, to the end of their own comforts and saving to the colony . . . the mission to be formed into a kind of guerilla force, for the protection of estates from incendiarism, and as a check to insubordination.' (No. 1, p. 47).

In the event, the matter was referred to the local colonial authorities.

The second issue of the *Intelligencer* was delayed until April 1834 when the editors reported on the success of their efforts to instruct Catholic colonists 'in those principles which have acquired for the Roman Catholic population of Great Britain the support as well as the esteem of their fellow-countrymen, and the restoration of the free exercise of many of their political birth-rights'. Their attempt had apparently 'succeeded beyond our most sanguine expectation . . . in our humble efforts in the cause of *Christianity, Humanity, and British interests* we entertain a grateful persuasion, to continue your patronage to our weak but sincere endeavours, to promote the united cause of *all British Christians*'. (No. 2, pp. 81-2.)

This second issue also reprinted the texts of Gregory XVI's encyclical *Mirari vos* as well as Lamennais' original submission. This was done in case the encyclical was regarded as incompatible with the principles of 1826. The editors distinguished 'the mistake that erroneous notions on social principles may be propagated as *of right and lawfully in conscience*' from the condemnation of civil and religious liberty, and the 'right of every British subject to publish *his opinion*, or the opinions of others, of what was for the public good, subject always to the responsibility of bearing the consequences of his want of judgment or of his want of honesty, if by so doing he disturbed the public peace or outraged public decency'.

' . . . the office of the *Christian religion* is not to *reform* politically, still less to aid in *revolutionising any* established government whether

monarchical, regal, aristocratical, democratical, or mixed . . . but to *sanctify* all, to *correct and neutralise* under all, the bad passions of corrupt *human nature*, which it cannot eradicate under any; and to point out to all men who are placed by the dispensations of Divine Providence under any of the above-mentioned forms, how, under that dispensation, all may attain the end of their creation and the greatest degree of happiness, which is expedient for that end, that they should enjoy in this life'.

At the same time, it was the duty of a statesman 'to engage in the temperate reform of abuses' according to the particular situation in which he found himself and the neglect of such reforms might lead to popular violence or tyranny. Such a destruction of social order left the statesman 'without any rule of action, except the necessity of the moment', and in such a situation Christians could only recall the words of Christ, 'My kingdom is not of this world'. (No. 2, pp. 88-90.)

Unfortunately for the editors, the delay in publishing this number forced them into an embarrassing admission; the subsequent history of Lamennais was one which they bitterly deplored and found too painful to dwell on; 'we must refer those who have an interest in knowing all the melancholy truth, to other sources of information'. (No. 2, p. 107.) The editors consoled their readers by reporting that Lamennais was now supported by a party which hated not only the See of Rome, but the government of England and all the established governments in Europe.

The editors of the *Intelligencer* clearly attempted to associate if not identify the interests of British Catholics with those of the British nation in an effort to win the support of the British government and public opinion in favour of Roman Catholic Missionaries. Was it in the interest of British Christians that Christianity or idolatry should prevail in their colonies? The temporal and spiritual interests of the British people surely demanded that their colonies should also be Christian. Consequently,

'It is with the Act of 1829, usually termed the Emancipation of Ireland, and with the Act of 1833, which in its 86th and 101st clauses especially, we look upon as the emancipation of India, in one hand that we present ourselves before YOU ["fellow-Christians"], holding in the other hand the Declaration of the British Catholics in 1826, . . . [and] . . . the sentiments of a distinguished member of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Ireland [Bishop John MacHale]' (No. 3, pp. 166-7).

Convinced that the principles of Irish Catholics were essentially the same as their English co-religionists', the editors urged on their non-Catholic readers the absolute necessity of allowing Irish missionaries to propagate the principles of British Catholics.

The final issue of the magazine appeared in August 1837. This delay was due to the political changes of 1834 and 1837 at home and the greater stability which became evident in the colonies after the

initial period of transition. The Peel administration of 1834 did not reverse the liberal colonial policy of its predecessors and the government of Lord Melbourne continued the liberal policies towards Catholics traditionally associated with his party. As a result, the editors felt that it might be indiscreet and might embarrass the government to publish further material in support of policies already adopted. The cry of NO POPERY might endanger public order in the colonies as well as at home and prejudice the political interests of the country. Further delay and the eventual closure of the magazine was occasioned by the death 'of an eminent personage who patronized our labours'—not apparently Lord Clifford. But the editors appealed to their readers to continue to work 'for the advancement of the interests of Christianity and of Great Britain, interests which, in our opinion, are indivisible . . . (and) the probability, of *both* interests . . . being essentially promoted by BRITISH AND IRISH CATHOLIC PRIESTS'. (No. 4, pp. 310-11.)

Of course, a great deal more research must be done before it is possible to appreciate all the implications or discuss the significance of the political attitudes of English Catholics at this time. It would also be necessary to offer some explanation of their increasing sense of isolation from the political life and interests of Great Britain—the development of Ultramontanism and the defence of the Papal States, the impact of Irish immigration and the rise of the Irish Question would be two obvious factors. But it is clear that, like most historical generalizations, the usual remarks about the political activities of English Catholics—or the lack of them, either before or after Catholic Emancipation, are at least misleading if not actually false.