

## Döllinger's Letters.

*Declarations and Letters on the Vatican Decrees 1869-1887.* By IGNAZ VON DÖLLINGER. Authorised Translation. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street. 1891. 178 pp. 3s. 6d.

THE original of this intensely interesting little volume did not appear in Germany until June 1890, some five months after the venerable author's death. It is a collection of papers and letters, some of which had been already published at intervals in a more or less fugitive manner, while others had never seen the light, although the writer had told certain friends that he intended "some day" to publish one or more of them. Those who had the happiness of knowing him, know what a snare that "some day" was to him. He lived so long, and to the last was so capable of thought and work, that there always seemed to be time for carrying out his numerous literary projects. Procrastination with him was never an excuse for idleness; for idleness to him was misery. But it *was* an excuse for refusing to put into shape what he believed could be put into still better shape after even more material had been amassed. As his great pupil and friend has so well said of him, "He knew too much to write";<sup>1</sup> and he has died leaving a number of unfinished treatises, and a library of note-books, of which probably no one will be able to make very much use. Only Ulysses can draw the bow of Ulysses, and one must have something of Döllinger's prodigious knowledge and memory to be able to work with Döllinger's tools.

Professor Reusch, who has long been Döllinger's friend and literary colleague, lost no time in getting this important series of documents printed and published; and we owe it to the enterprise of Messrs. Clark that an English translation has followed so soon after the publication of the original volume. For those who cannot afford the money to buy, or the time to read, such books as *Janus*, or *Quirinus*, or Dr. Salmon's *Infallibility of the Church*, the present volume will be invaluable: and indeed those who already possess and have read these and other books on the controversy which came to a climax in 1870, will need this little work to complete their grasp of the situation. For thirty or forty years Dr. Döllinger might be said to be the centre round which the chief currents of the agitation moved; and in this collection of papers we have his own clear statements, given at intervals during one-and-twenty years, of what has been at stake in the prolonged controversy about

<sup>1</sup> Lord Acton in the *English Historical Review*, October 1890.

Papal Infallibility and Supremacy: this has been nothing more or less than the preservation of the Church's Creed and the Church's freedom. It was for this that he suffered, and continued to suffer till his death. As he wrote to Pastor Widmann in 1874: "It is the general indifference, and the indolent attitude of the clergy, which has only their own comfort in view, that have brought down this evil of the Vatican Council upon our heads. The greater the number of those who confess the truth and free themselves from false doctrine and implicit obedience, the greater becomes the hope of recovery" (p. 120).

The translator does not give his name; but he has done his work well. In one respect he has made an addition to the original. He has been able to discover that the very characteristic reply written by Döllinger to some clerical correspondent in February 1868 is addressed to Dr. Westermayer, Rector of S. Peter's, Munich. When Professor Reusch published the reply last year, the letter to which it was the answer could not be found.

ALFRED PLUMMER.

## Requests and Replies.

1. Is it possible for me to get a sufficient knowledge of Greek to read the New Testament without a teacher? If so, what book would you recommend to a beginner as being simple and easy for self-teaching?
2. Whose system of "Christian Ethics" do you think the best?
3. What work on "Inspiration" is there published—cheap, yet reliable?—J. B.

1. I doubt the possibility of gaining effective knowledge of Greek without teaching of some kind. Mere ability to read and construe would give little advantage over the reader of English only. There are correspondence classes which give instruction. If the attempt is made without teaching, good books to begin with are Morris's *Greek Lessons*, Part I., 2s. 6d.; Part II., 1s. (Longmans).

2. Martensen's is the best. The difficulty about it is its high price. I know no satisfactory book of moderate size. A small book is promised in Clark's *Handbook Series*.

3. Given, *The Truth of Scripture* (Clark, 6s.) gives the old view succinctly. There is no book, so far as I know, which presents the whole subject in the light of recent study. W. D. Thomson, *Revelation and the Bible* (Macniven & Wallace), Fisher, *Nature and Method of Revelation* (Unwin), are brief, suggestive discussions. Sanday, *The Oracles of God* (Longmans), also shows the direction which thought on the subject is taking.

J. S. BANKS.