

A FREE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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A Free Catholic Church by J. M. Lloyd Thomas

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J. M. LLOYD THOMAS

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CHURCH**

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" A mightier Church shall rise whose covenant word
Shall be the deeds of love. Not *Credo* then—
Ame shall be the password through its gates,
Man shall not ask his brother any more,
'Believest thou?' but, 'Lovest thou?' and all
Shall answer at God's altar, 'Lord, I love.'
For Hope may anchor, Faith may steer, but Love,
Great Love alone, is captain of the soul."

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INTRODUCTION

IT is clear that in our own day Religious Thought is undergoing swift and momentous changes. If these changes are to be firmly seized to the enduring gain of religion and to be prevented from working that moral waste which we are taught is the essence of tragedy, ecclesiastical bodies must abandon the treacherous dogmatic principle on which they are now organised and seek another and firmer foundation. Dr Harald Höffding, in his *Philosophy of Religion*,¹ has said that "There is no doubt that we live in an age which must be described as 'critical,' not

¹ English trans., p. 314.

organising. But this is not an admission that the only forces in operation are disintegrating forces. There is nothing to prevent smaller groups of persons forming round a common tendency of thought and spirit or a common symbol. And such a union is often deeper and freer than one in which traditional authority is the uniting bond." The following pages have been written out of a deep conviction of this truth. An attempt is here made to state a position rather than to defend it by very closely reasoned argument, although some argument is also forthcoming. In the course of this effort there will arise indications of a way out of sectarian controversy. From partisans thoroughly committed to particular denominationalisms the writer can hardly expect to receive sympathetic consideration ; but he hopes that his motives will be respected, at any rate by those who are seekers with him after a more gracious and truthful fellowship than any provided by the dogmatic Churches.

His aim, if he understands his own heart, is