

MY LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

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My Last Will and Testament by Hyacinthe Loyson (Père Hyacinthe) & Frederic W. Ferrar & Fabian Ware

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**HYACINTHE LOYSON (PÈRE HYACINTHE)
& FREDERIC W. FERRAR & FABIAN WARE**

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

MY thanks are due to the Very Rev. DEAN FARRAR for his Introduction to my translation of this little book. I must also acknowledge my obligation to several friends for the kind aid they have given me in my work; amongst these I must mention especially the Rev. BRUCE CORNFORD, M.A. It will interest all readers to hear that "Mon Testament" is being translated into several other European languages.

F. W.

Bradford, April, 1895.

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To
MY REVERED AND WELL-BELOVED
MASTER,
CHARLES - THÉODORE BAUDRY,
PRINCIPAL OF THE SEMINARY OF ST. SULPICE,
WHO AT HIS DEATH WAS BISHOP OF FÉRIQUEUX.
HE NOW LIVES IN GOD.

*In memory of his teaching, which he himself summed up in
these terms:*

"NOTHING MUST BE DESTROYED, ALL MUST
BE TRANSFORMED."

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INTRODUCTION.



I HAVE been asked to say a few words by way of preface to the English translation of "Mon Testament," by Père Hyacinthe. Alike from personal friendship and admiration for him, and from the warmest approval of and sympathy with him in the two great steps which have marked his public life, I feel it a pleasure and a privilege to accede to the request.

The three statements which form the bulk of Père Hyacinthe's farewell address to the generation which he has adorned are followed by other letters and *pièces justificatives* bearing on these subjects. They will furnish all readers with some insight into the life of this brave and blameless man.

Charles Loyson was born at Orleans in 1827. His father was rector of the University of Pau, and he was there educated. His mother was of the noble family of Burnier-Fontanel, of the Château de Reignier, Savoy. The poet Charles Loyson, who died in 1820, was his uncle. In 1845 he became a student at

St. Sulpice; and, after five years of varied theological study, was ordained priest in 1851, and became a professor, first of philosophy at Avignon, then of theology at Nantes. After working for a time at Paris, he entered the convent of Carmelites at Lyons.

In due time his splendid eloquence attracted notice, and he attained the highest honour which can be conferred on a French preacher, by being appointed, before he was forty years old, to deliver the *conférences* at Notre Dame. These *conférences* attracted great attention between the years 1865 and 1869, and no preacher anything like so eloquent had spoken in the great cathedral since the days of Lacordaire. Indeed, Lacordaire himself was struck by the power and dignity of Père Hyacinthe's oratory, and used to say, "It is Loyson who will take my place."

But his views were marked by a breadth of thought and a tolerance of charity which naturally excited anger and suspicion at Rome, and led to open attacks against him and secret delations. This was partly due to the fact that he dealt more fully and more frequently with social questions than with theological dogmas. He was attacked in *L'Univers*; and it has been said that the true Ultramontane school of authority, of blind intolerance and doctrinal bigotry, could not pardon a priest who had tried to reconcile Christianity with modern thought. "Priests

and Jesuits unceasingly pursued him with the tenacity of clerical hatreds." In 1869 he delivered an oration before the Peace Congress, in which he spoke with moderation of Jews and Protestants. This gave still deeper offence, and he was summoned to Rome, where he received a warning. Shocked in his inmost conscience by the impending formal adoption of the false and monstrous dogma of Papal Infallibility, and feeling that his position as a Romish priest was incompatible with the rights of his conscience and his dignity as a man, on September 20th, 1869, he resigned for ever the pulpit of Notre Dame. He addressed to the General of his order the strong and dignified letter which will be found in the following pages. In that letter he formally protested against "doctrines which call themselves Roman and are not Christian, but which, in their ever more and more bold and disastrous encroachments, tend to change the constitution of the Church, the basis and the form of her teaching, and even the spirit of her piety." After the publication of this manifesto, Monseigneur Dupanloup, the eminent and eloquent Bishop of Orleans, wrote a letter to him, calling him his "*cher confrère*," and entreating him to go and throw himself at the feet of the Holy Father. In his reply, Père Hyacinthe told the Bishop that, so far from regarding the step which he had taken as the commission of a grave fault, he regarded it as the fulfilment of a great duty.

But his breach with the Romish Church was very different from that of De Lamennais; he has always avowed himself as still being a Catholic, but a Gallican rather than a Roman Catholic. Nevertheless, on October 10th, 1869, the greater excommunication was fulminated against him. He sailed to America, and was received in the United States with the utmost enthusiasm.

On his return to France he lived for a time in retirement, but on July 30th, 1870, he made another public protest against the new and historically preposterous dogma of Papal Infallibility. During the German invasion of France he withdrew to London, and in January, 1871, published his appeal to the Catholic Bishops. He subsequently joined the Old Catholic movement, and had much intercourse with the learned and illustrious Döllinger. While remaining a Catholic, he could not, like Père Gratry and so many others, pretend to accept a dogma which he, like them, had ardently opposed, and which he regarded as a flagrant falsity. He expressed his indignation against the system of dishonesty prevalent in the Romish Church, and the deceitful hypocrisy which was consequently practised by men whose natural instincts of rectitude had become radically perverted by an insidious ecclesiasticism.

The next great step of his life showed a courage still more heroic. On August 25th, 1872, he publicly renounced the doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy,