

# A Reply to Mr. Gladstone's Vaticanism

by Rev. James Kavanagh D.D., 1875

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## Chapter V

Independently of the decree, the Council of Constance, when it became Œcumenical, had the power to set aside the three pretenders to the Papacy, and to elect a legitimate Pope. In case of schism, when there are several aspirants to the papal chair, a General Council has power immediately from God to set aside the claimants, and to elect a successor to the See of Peter.

It is clear the decree of Constance could derive no force from Pope Martin's confirmation; for if it was not valid independently of his confirmation, Martin V. was not a legitimate Pope, for the decree deposing the rival claimants must

Mr. Gladstone need not be at all alarmed about the papal succession. Independently of all previous proceedings, the acceptance of Martin V. by the Universal Church as lawful Pope proves that his election was canonical and legitimate; for the recognition of the true Pope is a dogmatic fact in which the Universal Church cannot err. But, says Mr. Gladstone, the decree of Constance was confirmed by Basle, which was also a General Council. We cannot be expected to repeat here the dreary history of the Council of Basle. A few facts will dispose of Mr. Gladstone's objection.