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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

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covering. The latter is the Hebrew rendering of the former, which we have shown to be an Egyptian word; or, if this be thought pressing the point too much, it must be conceded, at all events, that it was an application of the lesson contained in the word. The blood of the atoning sacrifice sprinkled on the penitent offerer was a shield that sheltered him from the demands of justice, and a token that cancelled the claim that condemnation had against him. Moreover, this parentage of the passover is not restricted to Jewish rites and ceremonies; it forms also the foundation of the highest of the Christian sacraments—the Lord's Supper. In Exod. xii. 47 we read: "All the congregation of Israel shall *keep* it"; literally it is "shall *do* it"; and when our blessed Lord presided at the passover feast, which "with desire He had desired to eat" with His disciples, He quoted or applied this very phrase in the ever memorable "*Do this* in remembrance of Me"—"Do this as My memorial. No longer celebrate the deliverance from Egypt, but the *exodus* I am now accomplishing—the sacrifice I am about to offer to God as the 'one all-sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.'"

Looking back through the vista of the ages illuminated, as they are, with miracles of Divine interposition and ordinances apocalyptic of the love and purposes of God, we see how far-reaching the passover was from the day of its institution alike in type, doctrine, and ritual. It was the first-sown seed of sacramental mystery, the first picture drawn of the central sacrifice upon the Cross, and the first spark of dawn that unfolded from "the womb of the morning" the rays of that light that shines brighter and brighter to the perfect day of His presence, when the Son of righteousness shall "pass over" His elect, and enfold them in the bosom of salvation for ever and ever.

F. TILNEY BASSETT.



### ART. III.—THE JESUITS AND CASUISTICAL MORALITY—PROBABILISM.

*Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten in der römisch-katholischen Kirche seit dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert mit Beiträgen zur Geschichte und Charakteristic des Jesuitenordens. Aux Grund ungedruckter Aktenstücke bearbeitet und herausgegeben von IGNAZ VON DÖLLINGER und Fr. HEINRICH REUSCH. Nördlingen, 1889.*

THE Company or Society of the Jesuits has been figuratively described as "a naked sword, whose hilt is at Rome, and whose point is everywhere." This sword is rightly described as naked. It is never sheathed, and has never

ceased to fight. It has won some notable victories both in the past and in the present. But a strange fatality seems to be attached to its triumphs. They are Cadmean victories; equivalent to, or worse than, defeats. They have been disastrous to the cause in which the triumph has been won; and not unfrequently have been disastrous to the Society itself. The Jesuits have obtained, if not supremacy, at any rate immense influence, in various governments all over the world. And their success has generally led to political catastrophes, which have recoiled upon the schemers whose policy prepared the way for them. This has markedly been the case in *Spain*, now reduced to a fifth-rate Power, after having once been near to obtaining the supremacy in Europe; in *England*, where Roman Catholics are specially excluded from succession to the throne; and in the *States of the Church*, which have been lost, and probably lost for ever, to the Papacy. In education and in society the result has been similar. In *France*, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits were dominant as the religious trainers of the educated classes, and also as the confessors of the King. And long before the century was over France was in the hands of Deistical and Atheistical revolutionists, from whose influence she has never recovered. If one were asked to single out the main cause of the appalling irreligion which at the present moment desolates French society in its lower, middle and upper classes, one could hardly come nearer to the truth than by naming Jesuit influence upon the home policy of Louis XIV.<sup>1</sup> In missionary work the same result has been obtained: abundance of converts won over, but no Christian Church established. What has become of the once flourishing missions of the Jesuits in Japan, in China, and in Paraguay? And the wrecks of Jesuit missions, where anything has survived, as in India, have not been helpful to other Christian missions which have followed them.

But perhaps the most signal instance of this tragic characteristic, of winning successes which are the sure forerunners of disaster, is found in the estimate of themselves which they have everywhere produced. Wherever they have been most influential, they have been able to guide statesmen and kings, to instruct the young, to fill churches, to make recruits; but they have not been able to win confidence or affection. They have invariably provoked mistrust and dislike, and that pretty nearly in proportion to their success. Unknown men or societies are often distrusted and disliked because of people's

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<sup>1</sup> Döllinger's *Akademische Vorträge*, vol. i., pp. 394, 396, 411. Nördlingen, 1888.

ignorance respecting their characters and aims. Yet, as these become known, the suspicion and opposition die out. But, in the case of this strange Society, increased knowledge of it does not dissipate popular prejudice. On the contrary, it is where people have had most experience of the character, aims, and methods of the Society, that the distrust and dislike are most profound; and this is true quite as much of Roman Catholic countries as of Protestant states.

There is a remarkable passage at the opening of Plutarch's life of Pericles, in which he points out that it does not follow, because a man produces things which we greatly admire, that, therefore, the man himself is entitled to our respect. We take pleasure in his products, but we do not wish to produce them ourselves. Whereas, in the case of virtue, we not only admire the products, but desire to imitate the producers of them. His illustrations under the first head are startling, especially as coming from a Greek. "No generous-minded young man," he says, "at the sight of the statue of Zeus at Pisa, ever wished to become a Phidias, or on seeing that of Juno at Argos, to become a Polycletus." But we may discard his illustrations, without disputing his principles, which may help us to understand the feelings with which the Jesuits have been commonly regarded. They have often inspired wonder and admiration; but they have seldom won trust or love. Many individual Jesuits have been nobly self-sacrificing and devoted, but the Society as a whole has been self-seeking and arrogant. Experience has proved to the world that while the Company has been professing to work for the extension of Christendom and for the defence of the Roman Catholic Church, what it has had chiefly at heart has been the extension of the influence of the Jesuits. Their machinery for accomplishing their ends will always excite wonder as one of the most marvellous systems ever elaborated and carried out into practice by man. But it is by its results that it is judged; and its results, however brilliant here and there, have always lacked that great test of good and solid work—stability. It is too soon to estimate the results of their last great successes—the proclamation of the dogma of the Infallibility and the promotion of Liguori to be a Doctor of the Church. But it does not need the gift of prophecy to foretell that *these* triumphs also will bring their own proper disasters, both to the Society which so unscrupulously schemed for them, and to the Papacy which became its tool and the receiver of its stolen goods.

Two causes have contributed to this notable want of solid and stable success.

First, the Society of the Jesuits, with all its greatness, has been singularly lacking in great men. This is not really

surprising. The system is specially adapted for crushing out all individual independence. Men of strong originality were either broken by the system or broke away from it. Either the subtle discipline, with its "sacrifice of the intellect," reduced them to the ordinary level, or, if their independence proved invincible, as in the case of Descartes and Pascal, they withdrew from the discipline, and took their own, and even a hostile line. Such a system may make a Bellarmine, but it cannot retain a Voltaire.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, their moral teaching has almost from the first been blown upon as doubtful, dangerous, and destructive of moral principle. Like the unjust steward in the parable, they have been perpetually lowering the accounts. They have expended infinite pains upon tampering with the standard of duty, in order to make it easier and still easier for men of weak will and self-indulgent habits to approximate to the low standard prescribed. And while many formal Christians, who are too timid to break entirely with religion, and too cold-hearted to wish to do more than the absolute minimum of duty, have eagerly accepted the moral teaching of the Jesuits, men of stronger minds and wills, whether believers or not, have been scandalized by teachers, who seemed to aim at bringing down morality to the level of the vicious, instead of trying to raise weak and corrupt human nature to desire and seek after the more excellent way.

This general condemnation of the teaching of the Jesuits has been both reasonable and unreasonable. It has been reasonable where it has condemned ethical methods, which resulted in making all doubtful practices allowable, and at the same time made many things, which are plainly forbidden, doubtful. It has been unreasonable when it has urged this plain abuse of casuistry as a ground for condemning casuistry altogether; and this latter position is still exceedingly common. "Casuistry" is one of those question-begging words like "innovation" and "coercion," which suggest a sinister meaning directly they are named. You have only to show that a man's proposal is an innovation, or that his policy involves coercion, or that his argument is casuistical, in order to create a prejudice in the minds of the audience. And yet, if we are to have any improvements made, we must have innovations; and if laws are to be enforced, there must be coercion; and if cases of conscience are to be treated on any kind of principle, we must have casuistry. Whether we know it or not, we are all of us at times called upon to be casuists. Either for ourselves or for others we have to decide between two courses of action,

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<sup>1</sup> "Encyclopædia Britannica," 9th ed., vol. xiii., p. 651.

both of which seem to be obligatory, but which are absolutely incompatible. Unless we are to toss up, we must have some principle on which to decide, which is the higher duty, which *ipso facto* cancels the other. And directly we try to determine this we have become casuists, and are self-condemned if we blame the Jesuits for doing the like. It is for the principles which they have laid down in deciding cases of conscience, and not for attempting to find principles upon which to decide such things, that the Jesuits have often deserved reprobation.

But even in the condemnation which has justly been pronounced upon the casuistical principles adopted by the Jesuits, some injustice has been done. The Jesuits have sometimes been blamed, when the fault lay rather with the Roman Catholic system. In maintaining a low standard of morality, the Jesuits are only following out to its logical consequences the system which they have been told to administer. Given the Roman premises, then the Jesuit policy follows as a matter of common sense. Grant that every Christian must go to Confession and there obtain absolution, or else he will lose his salvation, and then it becomes imperative to fix a *minimum* of duty, and to fix it as low as possible. Every effort must be made to prove that practices of which ordinary Christians are frequently guilty are not mortal sins. In the case of a mortal sin, a priest cannot grant absolution, unless the penitent promises never to commit it again. And when a penitent finds that he cannot obtain absolution for sins, which he is willing to confess, but not willing to promise to abandon, he ceases to go to Confession: and his salvation (according to Roman doctrine) is forfeited. Yet even when we have put the blame on the right shoulders, and have admitted that the Roman system is responsible for the principle that the *minimum* standard of duty must be fixed as low as possible, we may still justly condemn the Jesuits for having fixed that standard at a point which is not only intolerably low, but has a tendency to subvert morality altogether.

This disastrous result has come about in two ways, to both of which blame must be attached, but one of which is much more culpable than the other.

First, *casuistry has not been studied with sufficient reference to first principles of morality.* Casuistry, as indicated above, is a *necessary* science. We may not like it; but, unless cases in which duties appear to clash are to be decided haphazard, we must have principles to guide our decisions; and, as the general principles of morality are inadequate, we must seek for something more special, and this we can get only by having resort to casuistry. But casuistry, although a necessary science, is a dangerous one; and against its dangers we must

be perpetually on our guard. It treats of *exceptional* cases. It supplies us with rules to guide us in exceptional cases : and constant study and application of such rules is apt to lead to the fatal position of looking upon the exceptions as the rule. Unless we are constantly taking into account the established general principles of morality, we shall easily fall into the error of considering that what is allowable as the best solution of an exceptional difficulty is allowable generally. Into this error their casuistical methods have frequently led the Jesuits.

Secondly, *casuistry has not been studied with a pure motive*, viz., with a disinterested desire to save responsible beings from committing serious mistakes of conduct in difficult cases. No one acquainted with their history could affirm that this had been the guiding principle of the Jesuits. Starting from the assumption that it is best for the human race that it should be under the influence of their Society, they have made everything, their casuistry included, subservient to that end. One enormous source of influence is the confessional ; and no pains have been spared to make Jesuits popular as confessors. Everything which would frighten ordinary penitents away must be avoided ; everything that would attract them must be studied. In plain language, confession must be made as easy, and absolution be granted on as easy terms, as possible. Not the moral interests of mankind, nor the salvation of souls, has been the end of Jesuistical casuistry, but the maintenance and extension of the influence of the Society of the Jesuits. And a low motive has produced a low morality.

In connection with this second point it is worth noting that the Jesuits, although frequently spoken of as an "Order," are never so called in their official documents. They are a "Company" or a "Society." The distinction is, perhaps, worth preserving. It points to the radical difference between the Jesuits and other religious Orders. Other Orders cut themselves off from the world ; they withdraw, either entirely, or to a considerable extent, from society : whereas it is of the essence of the Company of the Jesuits that its members should remain in the world and mix freely with society. In no other way can the influence over men of the world and the affairs of the world, which is the end and aim of this unique Society, be maintained.

The general lowering of moral principles which has prevailed in the casuistry of the Jesuits was not absolutely confined to them, and it did not take place all at once. At first the lax principles were taught by individual theologians only, and some of these were not Jesuits. Not a few Jesuits dissented from them and wrote against them ; and the final triumph of the more lax doctrines did not take place without severe and

protracted controversy, both inside the Society itself, and also between representatives of the Society and other authorities in the Roman Church. But what decided the issue of the conflict inside the Society was the conviction of the majority of members that the adoption of a more severe standard of morals would be prejudicial to the influence of the Company. And the triumph of the more lax principles among the Jesuits has carried with it a similar triumph throughout the Roman Church: for the promotion of Liguori to be the unassailable Doctor of the Church constrains every Roman Catholic to believe that in all his voluminous writings, which abound in lax teaching, there is nothing whatever contrary either to faith or morals. The conflict in the Society itself has been at times acute, and for some years it was a struggle of the General of the Jesuits (whose constitutional powers are immense), backed by a minority, against the remainder. But, although the General had for a considerable time the approval and assistance of the Pope, he was defeated; and the cause which was felt by the large majority to represent the *interests and influence* of the whole body, triumphed. The details of this momentous and protracted struggle have now for the first time been made known to the public in the book which is named at the head of this article. The industry of Dr. Döllinger and Dr. Reusch has collected from the archives and public library at Munich a large quantity of hitherto unprinted documents, which they have just published, together with a very full explanation of their contents; and the world will henceforth be able to judge, not merely the charges brought against the Society by Pascal in the famous "Provincial Letters," but the whole controversy as written by those who took part in it. It remains to be seen how the Jesuits will deal with this less brilliant but far more complete exposure. Answers to attacks sometimes advertise the attacks without refuting them. And this has largely been the case with the attempts to answer Pascal. It is said that the Court of James II. at St. Germain were so charmed with the extracts from the "Provincial Letters" given in Père Daniel's reply to Pascal, that they at once sent off to Paris for the "Provinciales," and read no more of Père Daniel; and it may be safely said that every attempt to refute Pascal, from those of Pères Annat, Daniel, and Nouet, to that of the Abbé Maynard in our own time, has passed into oblivion, either without producing any effect whatever, or with the sole result of making the famous letters still more widely known. Pascal's book still holds the field. It is to be found in almost every book-shop; while the answers to it are known only to the curious, and are possessed by very few. Possibly the present generation of Jesuits may think it the wisest



policy to ignore this revelation of the dissensions in their Society.

The subject-matter of the controversy was the doctrine of *Probabilism* with the kindred question of *Attrition*.

Probabilism can hardly be explained without an explanation of several other terms which relate to the same question; and, therefore, following the example of Dr. Reusch, we may clear the way by a short statement. With regard to a great deal of conduct, it is doubtful beforehand whether it is permissible or not, and therefore doubtful afterwards, whether the agent has acted sinfully or not. What principles are to guide us in such cases, and especially those of us who have to direct consciences and receive confessions? Moral theology distinguishes five or six different views.

1. *Tutiorism*. The safer course must always be adopted, however probable it may be that any other course is lawful. If I am not quite sure whether it is fair to do a certain action, I must abstain from doing it, although I may have excellent grounds for believing that it *is* fair. This view is sometimes called *rigorism*.

2. *Probabiliorism*. The safer course may always be followed; but the less safe course may be adopted when it is decidedly more probable that it is allowable than that it is not.

3. *Æquiprobabilism*. The less safe course may be followed when it is as probable that it is allowable as that it is not.

4. *Probabilism*. The less safe course may be followed, even when the balance of probability is against its being allowable, if only there are grounds for believing that it *is* allowable. Of Probabilism there are several varieties, two of which need to be carefully distinguished: (1) The amount of probability in favour of the less safe and less probable course must be a genuine and solid probability, based upon good and tenable grounds; (2) The amount of probability need not be very great. So long as there are *some* reasons for thinking that the action is allowable, or indeed so long as it is not certain that it is forbidden, it may be permitted. This latter is the *lax Probabilism* which has worked such untold mischief by producing a *partie de la morale relâchée* in the Church.

The defence is sometimes made that the whole purpose of this casuistical teaching has been misunderstood. It is not meant to teach the laity how to act, but to help the clergy to deal with persons who confess that they *have* thus acted. "They are not receipts given to penitents, to sweeten for them the remedy of confession, but rules of judgment and conduct for priests." They were never intended for general use by untrained persons; and it is Pascal and others who are to blame if the general knowledge of them has caused abuses.

But the answer to this lies on the surface. If large numbers of persons find themselves systematically treated with great indulgence by their confessors, they will draw their own conclusions as to the principles on which the confessors give absolution and *advice*. Again, it is impossible to keep books written for the clergy out of the hands of the laity; and if the laity are told that very questionable conduct is permissible, it does not much matter whether they obtain this information from books or from confessors. And, lastly, assuming that the laity never read such books, that is no healthy condition of things in which there are so many cases of conscience to be dealt with in the confessional—*i.e.*, in many cases *after* the sin has been already committed. The history of both Judaism and Christianity has shown that the minute exposition of the law on scientific principles is attended by dangers which can be avoided only by constant reference to the spirit of the law as distinct from the letter of it. And this safeguard both the Pharisees and the Jesuits neglected. Protestant casuists have kept more free from these evils. For the most part they do not go so much into detail; do not draw the distinction between mortal and venial sins in so mechanical and external a manner; are much less under the influence of Probabilism; and do not recognise *Probabilitas extrinseca* at all.<sup>1</sup>

Pascal's attack (1656), followed up by his friends Arnauld and Nicole, gave a decided check to Probabilism. Spain was the special home of this doctrine, and the defence of Jesuit teaching on the subject by the Spanish Jesuit Moya (Amadæus Guimenius), was severely censured by the Sorbonne, 1665, and a little later was condemned also at Rome. Bishop Antoine Godeau, of Venice, opposed Pirot's answer to Pascal, and called Probabilism an invention of the father of lies. Alexander VII. proposed to issue a Bull against Probabilism, but was dissuaded from so doing by the Jesuit Cardinal Pallavicini, and contented himself with condemning, in 1665 and 1666, forty-five lax opinions of casuists. In 1679 Innocent XI. condemned sixty-five more. Whereupon the casuists raised the question whether these condemnations had been delivered *ex cathedra*; and Caramuel, one of the worst of them, declared that no power on earth had authority to condemn a probable opinion, and that these condemned opinions, although now *pro foro externo* untenable, yet *quoad forum internum* remained intact and probable.<sup>2</sup> The lengths to

<sup>1</sup> Döllinger and Reusch, pp. 26, 27. *Probabilitas extrinseca* is based simply upon the authority of theologians. If a single theologian of repute can be quoted as saying that a certain act is allowable, that creates an extrinsic probability that it is allowable.

<sup>2</sup> In 1871 the present writer was in Paris with Père Hyacinthe, and one

which they went opened the eyes of Pallavicini, and towards the close of his life (1667) he rejected the Probabilism which he had taught in 1649; and he commissioned the Spanish Jesuit Elizade, who, like himself, had revolted from Probabilism, to write against the doctrine, and include a retraction from Pallavicini himself. Elizade did so, but his superiors would not give him leave to print the work. Nor is this surprising; it contains some plain speaking: "The Gospel is simple, and condemns all duplicity; it knows only Yea, yea, Nay, nay. Modern morality is not simple, but uses the duplicity of Probabilism, and says Yea and Nay together, for its principle is the probability of contradictory opinions." Some of the opponents of Probabilism contented themselves with advocating Probabiliorism; but Elizade went much further, and contended for a very rigorous form of Tutorism. Others asked how the toleration of such lax moral teaching in the Church was to be brought into harmony with the doctrine that the Church is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as a pillar and ground of the truth, while Protestant controversialists roundly declared that the prevalence of so huge an error in the Roman Church was a proof that it was not the true Church at all.

That the Roman See should have shirked giving a formal decision on the main question looks as if it either had not much trust in its own infallibility, or else did not believe that Roman Catholics in general put much trust in it—*i.e.*, it was afraid that its decisions would not be obeyed, and, moreover, would give dire offence to the Jesuits, who were a great deal too useful to Roman interests to be lightly crossed in their leading policy. Just as Paul V. was afraid to publish his Bull against Molina, so Alexander VII. was afraid to publish his against Probabilism; and, so far from checking, he actually encouraged the doctrine of Attrition. And all this while the Jesuits were trying to take both sides in the controversy. Thus, when outrageously immoral teaching was pointed out in Bauny's writings, they condemned it as the "mark of an abandoned conscience" and of satanic influence, but declared that Bauny had never written this—the passage was a forgery. When this line could be taken no longer, they defended the teaching as harmless. It was not the formal decisions of Popes, but the activity of those who were commonly stigmatized as Jansenists and heretics, which fought—and for a time with considerable success—the battle of Christian

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day the Père stated that a priest had been to visit him who had declared that he had two consciences, an external and an internal: "With my external conscience I accept the dogma of the Infallibility; with my internal conscience I reject it."

morality against immoral casuistry. But the condemnation of the sixty-five Jesuit propositions by Innocent XI. was their last signal victory; and the answer to it was the destruction of Port Royal (1710) and the downfall of Jansenism in France.

But from Spain, the headquarters of Probabilism, and from a Spanish Jesuit far more eminent than Elizade, came the most determined opposition to the lax moral teaching of the Jesuits. This was Gonzalez, who from 1687 to 1705 was General of the Society. Tirso Gonzalez de Santalla was for ten years (1655-1665) Professor of Scholastic Theology at Salamanca, and then for eleven years (1665-1676) mission-preacher. As professor he had taught Probabilism; but his work as a missionary showed him the disastrous consequences of such teaching, and for several years he employed his summer holiday in working out the question, and in writing a thorough criticism of the system which concerned itself much more with the probability of everything than the truth of anything. In 1678 he sent his book to Oliva, the General of the Society, at Rome; but the General, by the advice of the five revisers to whom the work was submitted, refused permission to print it. Among the things objected to in it as opposed to received doctrine was the proposition that the right rule of conduct is not probability, but truth or firm moral conviction. Besides which, it was considered outrageous that a member of the Society should bestow praise upon writers who opposed its teaching, and who, if the book appeared, would say that the eyes of the Jesuits had at last been opened to the errors of their ways.

When Innocent XI., in 1679, condemned the sixty-five propositions, he was told that some of them had been combated several years before by Gonzalez. The Pope sent for a copy of the treatise, and had the MS. examined by two theologians, one of whom expressed entire approval, the other slightly qualified approval. The report was laid before the Inquisition. Formal approval of Gonzalez's work was then sent to the Nuncio at Madrid to convey to the author, and the General of the Jesuits was instructed that he was not to allow members of the Society to advocate Probabilism nor to attack its opponents. In this matter entire submission to the Pope was expected.

Oliva died November 26, 1681, and his successor, Charles de Noyelle, followed him to the grave December, 1686. Innocent XI. wished Gonzalez to be the next General, and by a narrow majority he was elected July 6, 1687. Both he and the Pope regarded this success as providential—to save the Society from the abyss of Probabilism; but differences with Lewis XIV. and other matters caused serious distractions, and it was not until 1691 that the new General took a decisive step

and sent a treatise on the subject, in the care of two theologians, who were not Jesuits, to Dilligen to be printed. This work has disappeared, but the description of it by friends and foes shows that it was a sort of introduction to a new edition of the work shown to Innocent XI., but never printed. In printing it abroad without the leave of the Magister Sacri Palatii and of the Cardinal Vicar, he had violated decrees of Urban VIII. and Alexander VII., and of this fact his enemies were not slow to remind him. The new Pope, Innocent XII., ordered that the whole of the edition should be brought from Dilligen to Rome; but this order was cancelled. The printed copies were detained at Dilligen, and were no doubt afterwards destroyed.

Discussions respecting the publication of Gonzalez's main treatise against Probabilism still continued, and among other persons the King of Spain interfered to protect the General from the attacks of his subordinates; but it was not until 1694 that Gonzalez, even with the powerful assistance of the Pope and the Inquisition, was able to get a work which had been approved by them fourteen years before published. The baffled leaders of the Jesuits were furious, and began to talk about deposing the General. In a Congregation it was resolved by seventeen to sixteen votes to call a General Convocation of the Society; but Gonzalez's friends were able to induce the Pope to prevent this decision from being followed, on the pettifogging plea that  $17 + 16 = 33$ , and that half of 33 is  $16\frac{1}{2}$ , so that the statutable majority of "more votes than the half" had not been obtained; seventeen votes being only *half* a vote more than the half! But Innocent XII. was under pressure from Madrid and Vienna, and welcomed any plea.

The much-discussed work of Gonzalez—which at last appeared, and with his name and title, in the spring of 1694—had been so revised and corrected and toned down, that not a few readers were disappointed by its contents. Père la Chaise, the confessor of Lewis XIV., wrote to Gonzalez that he had expected something much more stringent, and that the teaching in the book was more lax than they would tolerate in France. However, it had at first an enormous circulation, and within twelve months was reprinted twelve times. And it would seem as if it had considerable influence in the Society itself. When a General Congregation met in 1696 his friends were in the majority. It was much attacked, but it was also powerfully supported. A French theologian named Antoine Charles wrote in praise of it, but advocated a still stricter morality (1695). He said that the supporters of Probabilism did not aim at condoning sin: but, seeing how hard it is to induce men to tread the narrow way, they *tried to make it broader*, so as not to frighten the weak from the path of virtue. A still

more important work on the same side was published by a Spanish Jesuit, named Camargo (1702), and dedicated to Clement XI. He stated that in Spain persons of his views were frequently, though without success, denounced to the Inquisition as Jansenist heretics. Other Jesuits took the line of trying to prove that there was no essential difference between the teaching of Gonzalez and the Probabilism in vogue among the Jesuits. But when the least has been made of the difference between the two there remains this fundamental distinction, that, whereas the ordinary doctrine was that it was sufficient to know that an opinion was regarded as *probable* by competent theologians, Gonzalez maintained that, before venturing to act on the opinion, you must *yourself* be convinced that it is *more probable* than the opposite opinion. Thus the judgment of others will not warrant your practising vivisection unless you conscientiously believe that it is more probably right than wrong to practise it.

During the last years of his life Gonzalez seems to have been affected in his mind, and Tamburini was appointed General-Vicar. When Gonzalez died, October 27, 1705, Tamburini was elected his successor. The treatment which he received from some members of the Society was such that the Jesuit Bonucci wrote from Rome, September 9, 1719: "He will be the second General that in our days we shall have driven out of his mind." But the General of the Jesuits, and the Pope, and the Inquisition, were not the only authorities who exerted themselves to check the immoral teaching which prevailed (and nowhere more completely than in the Society of the Jesuits) under the name of Probabilism. Neither in time nor in energy had Bossuet been much behind Pascal in denouncing these errors, and many other French bishops took a similar course. It was in 1663 that he spoke out in strong terms, and on the very occasion when he was pronouncing a funeral eulogy on Nicolas Cornet, the Grand Master of the College of Navarre, who had been the first to discover the famous Five Propositions in the writings of Jansenius. Cornet, like Bossuet himself, was no friend to the rigorism of the Jansenists; but, like Bossuet, he knew what to think and say about those "worthlessly subtle spirits, who reduce the whole Gospel to problems, weary casuists by their endless consultations, and in truth labour for no purpose but to obscure the moral law." And the casuists themselves, who gratify such people, Bossuet calls "wandering stars, who confound heaven and earth, and mingle Jesus Christ with Belial; a monstrous union, which dishonours the truth, the simplicity, and the incorruptible purity of Christianity." In the famous Assembly of the Clergy in 1682, it had been proposed that

measures should be taken against lax principles of morality, but the pressure of the great questions of the relations between Church and State and between Pope and Church prevented anything from being done. In the *Assemblée du Clergé* at St. Germain-en-Laye in 1700, Bossuet took care that the subject should not again be squeezed out. Before a special committee he laid 153 lax propositions, and during two months of sittings conducted the discussion of them. The committee laid 127 of these propositions before the General Assembly as worthy of censure; and the condemnation of them was unanimous. In order to estimate this condemnation aright, one must remember that not only Bossuet, but men like Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, La Tellier, Bishop of Rheims, and Godet des Marais, Bishop of Chartres and director of Mme. de Maintenon, took a prominent part in it. And the effect of it for the moment was enormous. No French writer for some time to come ventured to defend Probabilism. And in the second half of the eighteenth century French treatises which took the opposite view were frequently translated into Italian, and helped to increase the discredit into which Probabilism had fallen in Italy as well as in France. In 1762 the Parliament of Paris ordered 163 Jesuit treatises on moral theology to be burned, primarily because of their teaching in reference to Church and State, but also because of their lax morality; and it published *Extraits des assertions pernicieuses et dangereuses en tout genre que les soi-disants Jésuites ont dans tous les temps soutenues*, in order that all the world might judge of the kind of teaching which they condemned. In 1767 the Jesuits were driven out of France and Spain; and in July, 1773, Clement XIV., by the famous brief *Dominus ac Redemptor*, declared that it was necessary for the peace of the Church that the Society of the Jesuits should be suppressed, extinguished, and abrogated for ever. The greatest care was taken in wording the brief to set forth how disastrous to the Church and how ruinous to individual souls the work of the Society had been, and also to prevent any legal quibbling as to its validity and authority.

But the Jesuits were quite equal to the occasion, as they were when Innocent XI. condemned their immoral teaching in 1679. On that occasion they made subtle distinctions in order to show that what had been condemned was not precisely what they taught, and that what was condemned externally might be internally tenable. Now they contended that for them no Papal decree was binding in a country in which the sovereign had not sanctioned its publication. Consequently in Russia, under Catherine II., and in Prussia, under Frederick the Great (two sovereigns to whom Christianity

itself was an open question), they waited until the storm should pass over. Submission was not thought of for a moment.

The Company of the Jesuits, like the See of Rome itself, understands well the policy of patience. All things come in time to those who wait. After partial steps in that direction in 1801 and 1804, Pius VII. in 1814, by the brief *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*, cancelled the brief of Clement XIV., and restored to the Society the legal right to exist, but without declaring that the evils which Clement had condemned were imaginary then or had since been reformed. And it was a significant comment on their policy during the interval that Russia, which had been their headquarters since their suppression, expelled them from Moscow and Petersburg in 1813, and from the whole empire in 1820. In Rome their recovery went on steadily until the crisis in 1849, after which they acquired full control over the policy of Pius IX. down to the day of his death; and the decrees of the Vatican Council are the expression of their will.

But, as regards their moral teaching, the triumph which has surpassed all their previous victories has been their success with regard to the treatment of Alfonso Maria de' Liguori and his writings. It is the rule of the Roman Church that no one can be canonized until fifty years after his death; but the Jesuits succeeded in getting this rule set aside, and, with a view to having his teaching made authoritative, began at once to work for his canonization. Liguori died in 1787. In 1803 it was officially declared that his works contained nothing worthy of censure; in 1816 he was beatified by Pius VII.; and in 1839 he was canonized by Gregory XVI. All this implied a great deal;—that his writings had been most carefully examined again and again by the Sacred Congregation; that nothing "savouring of heresy or error, suspected of error, rash, scandalous, offensive to pious ears, misleading to the simple, schismatical, injurious, impious or blasphemous," had been found in them; and that his life and conduct also had been rigidly scrutinized, and pronounced worthy of a saint. In short, it implied, as the Fathers of the Oratory, with the approbation of Cardinal Wiseman, declared in their "Life of Liguori," that "the morals of this saintly Bishop cannot be censured without setting up as a censor of authority itself; without, in fine, censuring the decision of the Holy See."<sup>1</sup> Still more definitely the Jesuit De Montézon points out that "in the examination of doctrine which precedes beatification it was proved respecting Liguori that he has based his 'Moral

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Remembrancer*, October, 1854, pp. 403, 404.



*Theology' upon Probabilism.* . . Moreover, he had taken Jesuits, especially Busenbaum, as his guides, and in most cases had made the decisions of these theologians his own, even those on which Pascal and his followers had placed the blackest stigma. . . *Nihil censuræ dignum* are the words of the decree; and later on another Roman tribunal declared that every confessor may, without further examination, act in accordance with all decisions of Liguori."<sup>1</sup>

But all this did not satisfy the Jesuits. That Liguori's teaching, and therefore their own, was blameless, and might safely be followed, was not enough; it must be pronounced to be authoritative as a formal standard of orthodoxy. Accordingly, they did not rest until they induced Pius IX. to bestow upon him the highest ecclesiastical honour of all, and to place him among the Doctors of the Church, equal in rank with St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bernard, and St. Hilary. In the text of the decree, which is dated July 7, 1871, is the following passage: "Moreover, we will and decree that the books, commentaries, pamphlets—in a word, all the works of this Doctor, like those of other Doctors of the Church—be cited, quoted, and, when necessary, employed not only in private, but in public—in seminaries, universities, schools, lectures, controversies, interpretations, discussions, sermons, and in all other ecclesiastical studies and Christian exercises."<sup>2</sup>

This amazing decree is the most signal victory which the Society of the Jesuits has ever achieved, and they are quite right in saying that in the enjoyment of it they can afford to forget all the toils and sacrifices which it has cost them. That Jesuits who had heard their Society suppressed, extinguished, and abrogated *for ever*, in 1773, should have lived to see it fully re-established by the same authority in 1814 was a considerable triumph. But, with regard to that, the question of De Maistre is quite in point: "*Has it been re-established? In order to answer this question, it would be an indispensable preliminary to know whether it has been destroyed.*" In any case, the Society merely recovered what it had previously possessed. But by the promotion of Liguori to be a *Doctor ecclesiæ* they acquired what they had never possessed before. Hitherto their favourite doctrine of Probabilism had never been more than tolerated, and sometimes with manifest disapproval, by the Roman See. But now it is not only tolerated and approved, but recommended as *the* orthodox doctrine;

<sup>1</sup> Sainte-Beuve, "Port-Royal," i. 526, quoted by Döllinger and Reusch, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich, *Geschichte des Vatikanischen Konzils*, i., p. 568; Bonn, 1877. Herzog, Plitt, und Hauck, *Real-Encyclopädie*, viii., p. 678.

while the opposite doctrine, hitherto permitted and sometimes encouraged and commended, is implicitly condemned. As Dr. Döllinger remarks, "For a parallel to an event such as this, one would search ecclesiastical history in vain."

Even before the decree was passed, it was being acted upon wherever the Jesuits had sufficient influence. Other textbooks were banished from seminaries and schools, in order to make room for Liguori. Bailly's works were not only expelled from Maynooth, but placed on the Index, and Liguori, with his adapter Scavini, was recommended in his place.<sup>1</sup> The Bishop of Beauvais, in preaching the funeral sermon of Cardinal Gousset, spoke of it as one of his greatest services that he had laboured to modify the too strict moral teaching which had prevailed in certain seminaries. "*To make smooth the way of salvation without burdening it beyond bounds, to make easy the reception of the Sacraments so necessary to the life of the soul, and to attract the faithful to them, was one of the tasks which he imposed on himself. His end was gained; and to-day, thanks to his efforts, the 'Moral Theology' of St. Alfonso de' Liguori, favoured and approved at Rome, prevails in the instruction given in our seminaries in France.*" In Germany the Redemptorists, an Order founded by Liguori, flooded the book-market with copies of his works in Latin and German. These German editions were adapted to the German taste. False quotations in favour of Roman doctrine were allowed to remain to take their chance of discovery; but some of the most outrageous passages and silliest narratives, which were likely to shock German taste, were quietly left out.<sup>2</sup> It was thought that not even the solemn assurance *nihil censuræ dignum* would save such things from the condemnation and the ridicule of German Romanists. The same discretion has been exercised in editing the translations for English readers. But in one way or another, both before and since the promotion of Liguori to be a Doctor of the Church, untold pains have been taken to make not only his writings accessible to everyone, but also his teaching part of the ordinary instruction of priests, penitents, and people in general. Indeed, there can be little doubt that the remark of a French theologian exactly hits the mark when he says that in the canonization of Liguori it was the writings rather than the man that were canonized. It was not his life, but his books, that were specially considered. The Jesuits desired to have their moral theology made ecclesiastically unassailable, and therefore they laboured to get the highest official sanction for moral teaching which

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<sup>1</sup> Scavini, "Theologia moralis universalis ad mentem S. Alfonsi."

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich, p. 540; Döllinger and Reusch, p. 475.

was identical with theirs; and they led the Pope on to give this sanction by pointing out how full Liguori's works are of doctrines which the Pope had specially at heart—viz., those of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary and the personal Infallibility of the Pope. Thus, in conferring on Liguori the authority of an Augustine, both parties to the transaction obtained for their own favourite doctrines the ecclesiastical sanction which they required. If Augustine had unfortunately omitted to teach Probabilism and the Immaculate Conception and the Infallibility of the Pope, then one who had taught all these things must be made equal to Augustine.

But *was* Liguori a Probabilist? That question cannot be answered with either a simple affirmative or a simple negative. His views on the subject were not always the same, and he seems to have wavered almost to the end of his life. And, as we might expect in so extraordinarily voluminous a writer, whose works are to a very large extent compilations, there are plenty of inconsistencies on this as on other points. His later writings are more lax than his earlier ones; and it was the ninth and last edition—which is almost a reprint of the eighth—which was examined and approved at his canonization. He himself used to say that his view was, that only when two opposite opinions are almost equally probable, is it lawful to adopt the less safe course; *i.e.*, that he was an *Æquiprobabilist*. But his *Æquiprobabilism* was so easy and elastic as to be indistinguishable from ordinary Probabilism. His favourite authors are Probabilists, and many of the decisions which he gives are avowedly based on principles which lead directly to Probabilism, or else cannot be defended without resort to Probabilism. This is the view of leading Redemptorists, such as Haringer and Scavini, respecting their founder; and his enthusiastic admirer and apostle, the Cardinal Archbishop Gousset, says of him that he condemns neither Alphonsus de Sarasa nor the 159 theologians whom Sarasa quotes in support of his opinions; and how could he condemn them, when he himself maintains absolutely the same system? <sup>1</sup> How easy his principles allowed him to be as a confessor is shown by the fact that towards the end of his life he stated that he did not remember ever having refused absolution to anyone who confessed to him. In short, as Dilkskron, the author of the best biography of Liguori, says of him, he stood about half-way between the Probabiliorists and Probabilists, and might fairly assume either name.

<sup>1</sup> Sarasa was a Flemish theologian of Spanish extraction, and author of the frequently reprinted and translated *Ars semper gaudendi* (1741), which contains a defence in detail of the principles of Probabilism.

That Liguori is no rigorist needs no proof for those who are at all acquainted with his teaching; and that there are theologians whose moral principles are still more lax than Liguori's is not likely to be denied by anyone. But the mischief done by setting up such a teacher as an authoritative Doctor of the Church is not in any way compensated by the fact that among lax moralists he is not extreme, but moderate. Every lax opinion which he *adopts* is now not only free from condemnation, but sanctioned and commended. But every lax opinion which he does *not* adopt is *not* thereby condemned, unless he has in express terms condemned it; it remains as an open question, until a formal decision has been given. In short, by promoting Liguori to be the standard in morals—as Aquinas is in dogmatics—the Roman Church has brought down the standard of its moral teaching to the level of Liguori's laxity, without thereby gaining any security that this low level will be accepted as a *minimum* below which no one may sink. All experience tends to show that the result of fixing an authoritative *minimum* is that a large number of persons forthwith come to regard it as their *maximum*. Is it altogether fanciful to believe that much of England's present trouble in the government of Ireland is the natural consequence of the introduction of Liguori's teaching into Maynooth? Priests and congregations who have been brought up under Liguorian principles of truthfulness are not likely to find much difficulty in denying facts which they have witnessed, or in acquitting prisoners whom they know to have been proved guilty; and persons who have accepted Liguorian principles of justice are not likely to see much harm in boycotting or the Plan of Campaign.

It remains to be seen whether this last great victory of the Jesuits will prove to the Society—what so many of its triumphs have proved to be—a success which brings far more loss than gain to the victors.

This article has already exceeded its limits, and yet the casuistical controversies respecting Attrition and the love of God have not been touched, nor have any specimens of the moral teaching of Liguori been given. It may be possible on some future occasion to remedy these deficiencies. Meanwhile, those who can read German will do well to consult the work whose title stands at the head of this article, and from which so much of the material for it has been derived. From documents hitherto unpublished, (many of them letters from the principal actors in these struggles), Dr. Döllinger and Dr. Reusch have given the history of the controversies with an accuracy and a completeness which were neither attained nor attainable before.

ALFRED PLUMMER.