

ARTICLE III.

THE QUESTION OF A REFORM OF ROMANISM.

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OCCASIONALLY a Protestant writer is moved to give expression to the optimistic expectation that the Roman Catholic Church is about to experience a salutary transformation through an interior reformation. In some instances the inference is drawn that strenuous opposition to the exorbitant claims of Rome is no longer in demand, inasmuch as the coming reformation will dispose of those claims from the inside. Whether the inference is formally drawn or not, it is likely to be implicitly operative in those who cherish the given expectation. It becomes, therefore, a matter of practical importance to determine whether the record of the Roman Catholic Church in recent times affords grounds for believing that a substantial reformation is imminent. In providing a suitable basis for a verdict on this question, we propose to examine the recent record of the papal communion in four different lines: (1) sentimental devotion; (2) sacramental theory; (3) papal absolutism in the ecclesiastical domain; (4) teaching and practice bearing on the subject of the relation between Church and State.

1. As respects the first of these topics, we shall content ourselves with a very brief discussion. The most significant fact to be emphasized here is the extraordinary industry which was manifested at Roman Catholic headquarters during the latter half of the nineteenth century in promoting the

cult of the Virgin Mary. We make bold to affirm that in no other fifty years, in the whole history of the Church, have papal initiative and practice been so emphatically engaged in promoting that cult. Not only did Pius IX. solemnly decree, as a dogma of the faith, the immaculate conception of the Virgin (1854), but he rivaled, not to say transcended, the most extravagant tributes rendered to her by the idolatrous fancy of the Middle Ages. In the encyclical addressed to the bishops in 1849 relative to the proposed dogma, he indulged in this strain: "You know very well, venerable brethren, that the whole of our confidence is placed in the most holy Virgin, since God has placed in Mary the fulness of all good, that accordingly we may know that if there is any hope in us, if any grace, if any salvation, it redounds to us from her, because such is His will who has willed that we should have everything through Mary." In the decree imposing the dogma, the Pope describes Mary as "the most powerful mediatrix, who ever slew all heresies"; furthermore, as the one "who, bearing a motherly mind toward us, and having in hand the affairs of our salvation, is anxious about the whole human race, and having been made by the Lord queen of heaven and earth and exalted above all the orders of angels and saints, standing at the right hand of her only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, does by her mother's prayers most potently impetrate, and finds what she seeks, and cannot be frustrated." Naturally when the Pope expressed himself in such strains his subordinates took little account of the demands of sober speech. Various bishops referred to Mary as "Co-Redeemer" or "Co-Redemptress"; and one of them, Malou of Bruges, went on to emphasize the essential equality with the eternal Son, implied in such terms, by identifying the Virgin with the "wisdom" which the Lord pos-

sessed in the beginning of his ways. "Mary is presented here," he says, "as the first of creatures. . . . This primogeniture supposes in Mary a superiority in some sort eternal and wholly celestial, which assimilates her to the Son of God. . . . Between Mary and God there is no middle course."¹

Leo XIII. did not fall below the standard sanctioned by Pius IX. in his estimate of the practical reign of Mary as queen of heaven and earth, and surpassed him in the number of the messages which he addressed to Christendom for the express purpose of promoting the Virgin's cult. Encyclical after encyclical was devoted to this end, and occasion was often taken in other messages to fulfil a like purpose. He speaks of Mary as "depository of our peace with God and dispenser of celestial graces, who has been placed at the highest summit of heavenly power and glory that she might aid mankind on its way of toil and peril toward the eternal city." "We should take refuge," he urges, "in Mary, in her whom the Church rightly and deservedly calls salvation-bringer, helper, and deliverer." "We wish that, constantly and without interruption, recourse should be had to God and to the great Virgin of the Rosary, the strongest aid of Christians, at whose power tremble even the magnates of the abyss." "The most holy Virgin, as she was the bearer of Jesus Christ, is the mother of all Christians whom she bore indeed at Mount Calvary amid the supreme pains of the Redeemer." "As no one can come to the supreme Father except through the Son, so it might almost be said, no one can come to Christ except through the Mother." "All grace [so reads an approved citation] which is communicated to this age has a triple process. For in completest order it is dispensed from

¹ Cited by Stap, *L'immaculée conception*, pp. 210-213.

God to Christ, from Christ to the Virgin, from the Virgin unto us.”¹

Along with this energetic promotion of the cult of the Virgin a special effort was made to exalt her spouse in the sight of the Church. No preceding period has witnessed an equal endeavor to foster devotion to Joseph. Nor have the offices of the saints in general, or of their relics, been subjected in the given period to a depreciatory estimate. Reproducing the language of John of Damascus, Leo XIII. has assured us: “The bodies of the saints are perennial fountains in the Church, from which, like streams of salvation, celestial gifts and all those things of which we stand in special need are poured forth to the Christian peoples.”²

From this stream of papal indoctrination an uplift in the level of Mariolatry throughout Roman Catholic Christendom might very naturally have resulted. Very conspicuous developments in this direction did occur in France, where the religious imagination supplied visions of the immaculate Virgin, and turned Lourdes into a veritable Mecca for the thoughts and hopes of the faithful. To what degree the new impetus to Mariolatry wrought in the less congenial territory of Germany and the English-speaking countries is not easy to determine. Suppose its working not to have been very pronounced in that domain, we still are confronted by the fact that the central authority of the Roman Catholic Church, its “infallible” oracles in the last half of the nineteenth century, transcended the record of any equal period in all Christian history in the measure of encouragement given to the cult of

¹ Ency., Sept. 1, 1883, Aug. 30, 1884; Epist. ad Card. Vicarium Parocchii, Oct. 31, 1886; Encyc., Aug. 15, 1889, Sept. 22, 1891, Sept. 8, 1894.

² Litteræ Apostol. de Inventione Corporis S. Jacobi M., etc., Kal. Nov. 1884.

the Virgin. So far, then, as a true reform would involve demands to banish excesses of Mariolatry — not to speak of extravagances of sentimental devotion in general — signs of the imminence of reform would seem to be emphatically wanting.

2. Our next topic for examination, namely, that of recent phases of Romish teaching on the sacraments, is one quite distinctively demanded by the subject of this essay. Both rational religion in general and the evangelical consciousness in particular are under compulsion to challenge cardinal points in the traditional teaching of Rome on the sacraments. Any substantial reform, therefore, must include amendment of the characteristic sacramental theories. Has any amendment, any real improvement, occurred for the last two or three generations? Has any tendency to amendment appeared which has been permitted to take the least root in Roman soil? Suppose we direct our attention, in the first place, to current estimates of sacramental efficacy. Do these, as put forth by orthodox Roman Catholic theologians, fall in any wise below those of their mediæval predecessors? We have not been able to discover that they do. Dogmatists whose writings are in high repute in official circles declare with united voice that the Christian sacraments, in radical contrast with the sacraments of the Old Testament, confer or effect the grace which they signify. "The sacraments of the old law," says Monsabré, "invited men to ask for the righteousness, the holiness, the life of God; the sacraments of the new law confer directly these gifts. The sacraments of the old law were only directive signs, the sacraments of the new law are efficacious signs."¹ Equivalent statements could be cited from Hurter, Heinrich, Billot, and other eminent

¹ *Exposition du dogme catholique*, vol. xl. pp. 88, 89.

authorities. Indeed, the thoroughly dominant view of sacramental efficacy in the accredited teaching of the Roman Catholic Church of to-day is not a whit below the level of that which at any time has held a representative position in that Church. It is, in fact, more ultra than was that of a number of mediæval scholastics, including Peter Lombard and Duns Scotus.

Proceeding with the review of sacramental teaching, consider, next, the doctrine of the necessity of baptism. As is well known, it has been a long-standing maxim in the papal communion that baptism is in such sense essential that no one can be saved without it unless a compensation in desire, or purpose, or the suffering of martyrdom, is offered for the lack; and the inference has been drawn that, inasmuch as those dying in infancy cannot be regarded as capable of offering any of the given compensations (aside at least from the exceptional event of being slain for cause of religion), they are to be numbered with the lost, — not indeed as being condemned to acute tortures, but as being everlastingly excluded from the Kingdom of heaven. In other words, they are eternally damned, though not in the worst sense. Now what signs has the Roman Catholic Church exhibited, in recent times, of a disposition to abandon this monstrous dogma, this creed of gratuitous damnation, which blots the ethical nature of God in representing him as casting away a vast section of the race just for the lack of the ceremonial application of a physical element? No sign whatever. On the contrary, the development has been rather in the direction of rigorous insistence upon the abhorrent dogma. Formerly an eminent theologian might occasionally be found who was bold enough to suggest that in some way a compensation might be provided for lack of baptism on the part of those dying in

infancy. So argued Cajetan in the sixteenth century, Amort in the eighteenth, and Klee in the first half of the nineteenth century. As late as the concluding part of the nineteenth century, the like position was advocated by Herman Schell. But he died under a cloud as respects his relation to official Romanism, and the connection of his name with the more liberal view of baptism could serve only as the reverse of a recommendation of that view among those covetous of a reputation for orthodoxy. With perfect warrant it can be said that it has become more difficult than ever to break away from the overwhelming consensus against the possibility of the salvation of unbaptized infants. The standard dictionaries of the Roman Catholic faith—German, French, and English—unite in sustaining the rigorous tenet, and the theologians of unquestioned standing, from Perrone to the latest author of a doctrinal treatise, are unequivocally committed to the same tenet. Let us scan the words of a few of the most recent. "Theologians," says Billot, "are unanimously agreed in this: the actual sacrament has been in any time whatsoever an altogether necessary means of salvation to all those who never had the use of reason." "Infants," writes Palmieri, "if they fail of baptism, though they are without fault, nevertheless do not obtain salvation." "The Church," Sasse maintains, "does not pray nor teach the faithful to pray God that he will save infants dying without baptism; since indeed there is no hope or probability of their salvation." "It is of the faith," asserts Russo, "that children dying unbaptized are excluded from eternal life; they will never enjoy the supernatural happiness which the blood of Christ purchased for all; never contemplate face to face the infinite beauty of God; never become citizens of the kingdom

their more fortunate brethren are called to possess.”¹ Such is the heartless strain running through the latest expressions of Roman dogmatism on this theme.

Again, take that feature of the eucharistic dogma which goes under the name of “transubstantiation.” What ameliorations of this capital article of Roman faith have recent developments afforded? This question is already answered for any one who has noticed how minutely the Council of Trent, which is credited of course with infallible authority, has defined the transubstantiation dogma. In the face of its detailed decrees, the most that theologians have been able to accomplish is to furnish by their vain defenses a more complete exposure of the untenable character of the dogma. It is plain to a demonstration that it crucifies reason, as implying that one thing can be turned into another already existing thing, and that a particular substance can be severed from its attributes; in other words, be made to subsist in no particular mode. It runs, furthermore, into plain self-contradiction. Under compulsion of the infallible authority of the Council of Trent, theologians are obliged to join in the anathema against those who maintain that in the sacrament Christ is eaten spiritually only, and not also sacramentally and really. At the same time, in order to provide against a desecration of Christ’s body, and to meet the demands of admitted facts, they are compelled to deny that it is subject to division, and to affirm that it may be simultaneously in its entirety in any number of places, and simultaneously change its location in any number of different directions. In other words, they are compelled to turn it into a purely notional subject divested of

¹ Billot, *De Ecclesiæ Sacramentis*, vol. 1. p. 255; Palmieri, *Tractatus de Romano Pontifice* (2d ed.), p. 19; Sasse, *Inst. Theol. de Sacramentis*, vol. 1. p. 229; Russo, *The True Religion and its Dogmas*, p. 149.

every characteristic of a concrete body. Now what can be meant by the *real eating* of such a subject? Let him tell who is able to see how a mere idea, or, at most, that which exists in the mode of pure spirit, can be a subject for veritable mastication. So Rome's eucharistic dogma stands in its hard irrationality and essential self-contradiction. Any attempt to modify it is quite certain to be visited with the official malediction. This was illustrated in the case of Antonio Rosmini. Unable, apparently, to construe the possibility that one thing should be changed into another already existing thing, in other words, that one plus one should equal just one, he suggested that it might be better to suppose that the substance of the bread is changed, not literally into the body of Christ, but rather into a kind of heavenly nutriment to that body.¹ His modest suggestion, however, found no favor with ecclesiastical authority, and was formally condemned in the pontificate of Leo XIII.

Once more, in our review of recent sacramental teaching, let us glance at the doctrine of the sacrament of penance, wherein the penitent on certain conditions is absolved by the priest, the absolution as pronounced by him having the form and the character of a judicial sentence. In relation to this doctrine has there been any recent development, which, from the standpoint of evangelical religion, can be counted an improvement? The reply to this question may properly lead us to notice three facts.

In the first place, it is to be observed that the latest Roman Catholic interpretations of the sacrament of penance do not detract in the least from the prerogative of the priest in the forgiveness of sin. They assert uniformly that the absolving

¹ Billia, *Quaranta Proposizione Attribuite ad Antonio Rosmini*, pp. 376 ff.

sentence of the priest is indispensable to the given sacrament, and that apart from this sacrament, received in fact or in desire, there is no possible remission of post-baptismal sins. To be sure, Roman Catholic theologians admit theoretically that perfect contrition may secure remission outside of the sacrament; but what one of them would care to grant that this perfect contrition ever has place in one who knows of the sacrament of penance and yet entertains no purpose to apply for its administration to himself? Taken with its proper adjuncts, the admitted limitation to the necessity of the sacrament is reduced to perfectly insignificant proportions. Russo expresses with substantial correctness the position of present-day Romanism when he says: "Forgiveness cannot be obtained except through the ministerial office of the Church."¹

In the second place, it is to be noticed that as extravagant representations of the office of the priest in the forgiveness of sins as were ever uttered have had place in our own age. Thus Gaume in a widely circulated writing introduces this description: "Suppose that the Redeemer comes down personally and visibly into a church, and takes up His place in a confessional to administer the sacrament of penance, while there is a priest in another at hand. The Son of God says, 'I absolve you,' and the priest on his part says, 'I absolve you'; in both cases alike the penitents are absolved. Thus the priest, as powerful as God, can in a moment snatch a sinner from hell, render him worthy of paradise, and from a slave of the devil make him a child of Abraham. God Himself is bound to hold to the judgment of the priest, to refuse or to grant pardon, according as the priest refuses or grants absolution, provided the penitent is worthy of it [that is, exercises the required penitence]. The sentence of the priest

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 237.

precedes: God only subscribes to it.”¹ Very likely the majority of Roman Catholic theologians would prefer not to effervesce in this style. But it is somewhat significant that the language cited came not from a mediæval zealot, but from the pen of a recent theologian. Nor is it to be overlooked that it is more in its rhetorical gloss than in its substance that it differs from the ordinary deliverances of Roman dogmatists. These carry in common the inference that in the forgiveness of sins God Almighty is obliged to wait on the volition and the act of the priest.

In the third place, it is to be observed that, as respects the conditions imposed upon the penitent in the sacrament of penance, the later development has been in the direction of exalting the efficacy of ecclesiastical mechanism. In the earlier part of the modern era it was treated as an open question whether the inferior form of penitence denominated attrition, and described as springing mainly, if not exclusively, from the fear of hell, was sufficient for remission. Not infrequently denial was entered that it was sufficient, and the deeper form of penitence named contrition was insisted upon as the only safe basis of confidence. But the energetic advocacy of the laxer view among the Jesuits tended to give it a superior momentum, and after its espousal by Liguori in the latter part of the eighteenth century it advanced toward a decided supremacy. Billot, who is understood to occupy a foremost place among the theological advisers of Pius X., asserts the sufficiency of attrition, as being commonly taught with the favor of the Church,² and in the Catholic Dictionary of Addis and Arnold we have the broad statement: “At present the opinion that attrition with the sacrament of penance suffices is uni-

¹ Catechism of Perseverance, vol. ii. pp. 546, 547.

² De Ecclesiæ Sacramentis, vol. ii. p. 158.

versally held." As Liguori was at pains to affirm, attrition with the sacrament makes one as good as contrite.¹ In other words, a degree of penitence which cannot avail apart from the sacrament, and did not avail for forgiveness under the Old Testament economy, is entirely adequate with the sacrament. So ecclesiastical mechanism within the bounds of holy Church takes the place, in large part, of interior spiritual conditions.²

The conclusion follows inevitably that a reform in the sacramental teaching of Romanism does not seem to be imminent. In no case have the traditional theories been improved, and in some points the ultra-ceremonial aspect attached to sacramental transactions has gained increased ascendancy.

3. In dealing with the next of the selected topics, or papal absolutism in the ecclesiastical domain, our attention is naturally directed, in the first instance, to the decisions of the Vatican Council of 1869-70. Among these decisions that which proclaims the pope infallible in his own right when he speaks *ex cathedra* on matters of faith and morals has attracted the principal attention. The infallibility decree was indeed of momentous consequence in laying the foundations of papal absolutism. But another decree passed by the Vatican Council, namely, that on the administrative supremacy of the pope, was no less significant. By the terms of the former, the pope cannot be contradicted when he speaks *ex cathedra* on questions of faith and morals. By the terms of the latter the pope cannot be practically withstood when he renders his decisions and issues his commands on any matter whatsoever, since it guarantees to him indivisible and universal sovereignty in the Church, leaving not one shred of

¹Theologia Moralis, lib. vi. tract. iv. n. 440-442.

²For a fuller criticism of the sacramental teaching of Romanism, see the present writer's *Sacerdotalism in the Nineteenth Century*.

coördinate authority to any company of officials or to the whole company of believers. This is asserted as explicitly as possible in the following sentences: "Since by divine right of apostolic primacy the Roman pontiff is placed over the universal Church, we teach and declare that he is the supreme judge of the faithful, and that, in all causes, the decision of which belongs to the Church, recourse may be had to his tribunal, and that none may reopen the judgment of the apostolic see, than whose authority there is no greater, nor can any lawfully review its judgment. Wherefore they err from the right course who assert that it is lawful to appeal from the judgments of Roman pontiffs to an ecumenical council, as to an authority higher than that of the Roman pontiff. If, then, any shall say that the Roman pontiff has the office merely of inspection or direction, and not full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal Church, not only in things which belong to faith and morals, but also in those which relate to the discipline and government spread throughout the world; or assert that he possesses merely the principal part, and not all the fullness of this supreme power; or that the power which he enjoys is not ordinary and immediate, both over each and all the churches, and over each and all the pastors and the faithful: let him be anathema."¹

Who can imagine a clearer declaration that papal authority is superior to every sort of restriction or co-partnership? In the light of the pope's declared prerogatives his little finger must be pronounced thicker in respect of authority than the whole body of the episcopate. The bishops rank as his creatures, and have just about as much of an independent teaching function as belongs to a phonograph. In short, the Vatican constitution legitimates the extremest type of private

¹ Fourth Session, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

judgment conceivable, only it is the private judgment of the pope which is given the whole field.

In interpreting their prerogatives the popes who followed the Vatican Council have not failed to recall the picture of unrestricted monarchy which was put on exhibition by the Council. Thus Leo XIII. spoke of the Roman pontiff as "by divine right set over the Church and subject to the authority and judgment of God alone."¹ "In forming opinions," he asserted, "it is necessary to hold whatever things the Roman pontiffs have delivered or shall deliver, and to profess them openly as often as the case may demand."² Again, he gave his lesson to Christendom in these terms: "As a union of minds requires perfect agreement in one faith, so it requires that wills be entirely subject and obedient to the Church and to the Roman pontiff as to God. . . . Both that which ought to be believed and that which ought to be done the Church by divine right teaches, and in the Church the supreme pontiff. Wherefore the pontiff ought to be able to judge, in accordance with his authority, what the divine oracles contain, what doctrines accord and what disagree with them; and in like manner to show what things are honorable, what are base."³ The unmistakable import of these declarations is that the pope is the sole arbiter of faith and conduct alike, the one oracle that is able to speak with an absolutely decisive voice.

The autocratic régime which reduced the clergy to an instrumental position naturally could not concede to the laity any real part in the government of the Church. Accordingly the plea of the Modernists for an enlargement of the sphere of lay influence and control in the ecclesiastical domain has earned the stern reprobation of the pope. Pius X. in the en-

¹ *Allocutio ad Cardinales*, June 1, 1888.

² *Encyc. Immortale Dei*, Nov. 1, 1885.

³ *Encyc. de Præcipuis Civium Christianorum Officialis*, Jan. 10, 1890.

cyclical "Pascendi" (Sept. 8, 1907) enumerated among the offenses of the Modernists their claim that a share in the government of the Church should be given to the lower clergy and even to the laity. In the same encyclical he directed that, in any conventions of priests which might be permitted to assemble, no liberty should be granted to broach anything savoring of laicism or presbyterianism. How absolutely foreign to his thought is the notion of granting any share in governing functions to the laity was made manifest in the encyclical "Vehementer Nos" (Feb. 11, 1906). "The Church," he says in this communication, "is essentially an unequal society, that is, a society comprising two categories of persons, the pastors and the flocks, those who occupy a rank in the different degrees of the hierarchy and the multitude of the faithful. So distinct are these categories that, with the pastoral body only rests the necessary right and authority for promoting the end of that society and directing all its members towards its ends; the one duty of the multitude is to allow themselves to be led, and, like a docile flock, to follow the pastors."

A concentrated all-dominating authority at Rome could hardly fail to be jealous for the sole right of the Roman model. Papal autocracy, therefore, was true to its instincts and demands in smiting the principle of accommodation to national diversities, which was advocated for a period by Archbishop Ireland, and has been christened "Americanism." Leo XIII., in an apostolical letter bearing date of January 22, 1899, passed judgment against it in these terms: "We cannot approve the opinions which some comprise under the head of Americanism. . . . It raises the suspicion that there are some among you who can conceive of and desire a Church in America different from that which is in the rest of the world. One

in the unity of doctrine as in the unity of government, such is the Catholic Church, and, since God has established its centre and foundation in the chair of Peter, one which is rightly called Roman, for where Peter is there is the Church."

The intrinsic tendency of the absolutist theories of the papacy to ultimate in an unsparing intellectual despotism, intolerant of all diversity and free movement, has been signally illustrated in the pontificate of Pius X. Being personally a man of kindly and upright intention, he exhibits all the more unequivocally the logic of the papal autocracy in the drastic measures which have marked his administration. In rating these measures it is not necessary to assume that the Pope had no occasion to criticize and to oppose the Modernist movement. It may be granted that in its more ultra phases it incorporated dubious tendencies. But observe how the pontiff, with the scantiest regard for distinctions among Modernists, sought to destroy them root and branch by deploying against them the most formidable enginery at his command. In the encyclical "Pascendi" he ordered that those in any wise infected with Modernism, or taking an apologetic attitude toward it, or showing a zest for novelty, whether in historical, archæological, or biblical matters, should be kept out of all offices of rule and instruction, or, if already installed in such, should be removed. In the same encyclical the bishops were enjoined to ban all books savoring of Modernism, and to appoint in their several dioceses a council or vigilance committee which should be under obligation to meet their episcopal head each alternate month and to serve as a board of inquisition against the intrusion of Modernist teachings. Not satisfied with these measures, the Pope at a later date issued the demand that the professors in the seminaries should submit in advance the text to be used by them in teaching, and be sub-

ject also during the school year to examination as respects the soundness of their instruction. Furthermore, they were required, together with all candidates for major orders, parish priests, and other specified classes, to take the following oath: "I firmly hold and accept each and every definition of the unerring teaching of the Church, with all she has declared, but especially those points of doctrine which expressly combat the errors of our time. I further with all due reverence submit and with my whole mind adhere to all the condemnations, declarations and directions contained in the encyclical letter *Pascendi* and in the decree *Lamentabili*, particularly regarding what is called the history of dogma."¹ In order to measure properly the breadth of despotic requisition contained in this oath, it should be noted that the decree "*Lamentabili*" condemns sixty-five propositions, and that more than one of its censures smites judicial scholarship in the face.

Quite akin to the pontifical measures just enumerated, in its bearing on intellectual freedom, is the order issued by Pius X. for enforcing acceptance to the decisions of the Biblical Commission, which from time to time publishes a deliverance on some problem of biblical criticism. The Pope's order runs as follows: "We do declare and decree that all are bound in conscience to submit to the decisions of the Biblical Commission relating to doctrine, which have been given in the past and which shall be given in the future, in the same way as to the decisions of the Roman Congregations approved by the pontiff, nor can those escape the note of temerity, and consequently of grave sin, who in speech and writing contradict such decisions."² When it is remembered that the Biblical Commission is a little coterie of theologians in Rome

¹ *Motu Proprio*, Sept. 1, 1910.

² *Ibid.*, Nov. 18, 1907.

who have given no particular demonstration of their right to silence the scholarship of the world, the above requisition affords a glimpse of despotic arbitrariness that it is difficult to characterize in sober terms. Nor does it modify one's estimate of the demand to follow the decisions of the Biblical Commission, under pain of being counted guilty of grave sin, to note that the addition of the Pope's name to a decision rendered by the Commission only gives it the sanction of a man whose biblical learning was such as to permit him to utter this strange sentence: "The Hebrew Patriarchs were acquainted with the doctrine of the immaculate conception, and found consolation in thinking of Mary in the critical moments of their lives."¹

That the representatives of papal absolution should feel deep indignation against any and all who have wrought to abridge the field of their sovereignty is quite explicable. It is no matter for surprise, therefore, that Pius X. should have been inclined to pass severe judgment upon the Reformers of the sixteenth century. The only ground for astonishment is the full license which he gave himself to employ the language of wholesale vituperation in a public document. In the Borromeo encyclical (May 26, 1910) he denounces the Reformers as "proud and rebellious men, enemies of the cross of Christ, men of earthly sentiments, whose god is their belly, panderers to the passions of corrupt princes, a crowd of seducers"—language which goes to show that a twentieth-century pope can vie with any of his predecessors in the vocabulary of pontifical fury.

One further manifestation of the temper of papal absolutism calls for mention. We refer to the fact that not one of

¹ Cited, with the original text, in *Letters to Pius X.* by a *Modernist*, p. 165.

the modern popes has expressed himself in favor of religious freedom, as commonly understood by Protestants and exemplified by most modern States, while the majority of them have explicitly denounced it as illegitimate. Pius IX. claimed for the Church a power of external coercion, and formally condemned the opinion that "in the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other modes of worship"¹; and instructions rendered by Leo XIII. in more diplomatic style have an equivalent sense.²

Such has been the development along the line of papal absolutism. Who is sharp-sighted enough to see in it all any promise of reform? Surely there is no promise of that sort here, save in the sense in which extra burdens laid on bondmen by the taskmaster are a promise of coming emancipation. A thoroughly Jesuitized platform of absolutist assumptions and irresponsible rule has been in evidence for the last sixty years. That the results have not been fully on a level with those wrought by the papal theocracy in the Middle Ages has been due simply to the fact that the temper of peoples and governments in our age has not been of the mediæval type.

4. An authority boastful of infallible sovereignty over the universal Church would need a well-nigh miraculous gift of humility not to be inclined to arrogate a wide range of control, direct or indirect, over the State. Has the Roman hierarchy, especially as represented in the papacy, given evidence in recent times of possessing this marvelous grace? In answering this question we shall be developing the fourth topic which we proposed to investigate, namely, recent teaching

¹ *Syllabus of Errors*, nos. 24, 77, 78.

² See, among other documents, the encyclical on the Christian Constitution of States, Nov. 1, 1885.

and practice bearing on the relation between Church and State.

That the Roman hierarchy is disinclined to sanction the theory of the mutual independence of Church and State has had abundant demonstration within the bounds of the last generation. Leo XIII. was as explicit as possible on this subject. In a communication where the motive to temporize would certainly have wrought, if temporizing on this matter were regarded as compatible with Roman standards, he took pains to emphasize the necessary union of Church and State. We refer to the encyclical "*Longinque Oceani*," which he addressed to his flock in the United States, January 6, 1895. In this letter, after speaking of the prosperity of the Catholic Church in America, the Pope adds: "Yet though all this is true, it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dis-severed and divorced. The fact that Catholicity with you is in good condition, nay, is even enjoying a prosperous growth, is by all means to be attributed to the fecundity with which God has endowed His Church, in virtue of which, unless men or circumstances interfere, she spontaneously expands and propagates herself; but she would bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor and patronage of the public authority." Under conditions less suggestive of the need of restraint, Leo XIII. was ready to use stronger language in reprobating the principle of the separation of Church and State, as appears in the admonition which he addressed to the Emperor of Brazil (July 19, 1889), and in the encyclical "*Immortale Dei*" (Nov. 1, 1885). Pius X. expressed himself with equal clarity and emphasis in the

encyclical "Vehementer Nos." In writing this document, the Pope, it is true, had specially in mind the "law of separation" as put in force by the French government. But the encyclical most obviously transcends the local situation and condemns in principle the separation of Church and State. No other meaning can be attached to these sentences: "The Roman pontiffs have never ceased, as circumstances required, to refute and condemn the doctrine of the separation of the Church and State. . . . If it be true that any Christian State does something which is eminently disastrous and reprehensible in separating itself from the Church, how much more deplorable is that in France."

In a normal carrying out of the close alliance between Church and State, which is thus set forward as an obligatory ideal, the understanding of the Roman hierarchy is that the Church shall be treated as the party possessed of superior right and authority. Writers on canon law, from Phillips at the middle of the last century to Hergenröther at the beginning of the present century, take this position. The former characterizes the clergy as "the ruling Church," the laity as "the Church to be ruled." "A glance," he says, "at the difference between spiritual and worldly sovereignty shows the impossibility of coördination."¹ The latter declares: "In case of conflict between ecclesiastical and civil law the preference is intrinsically due to the ecclesiastical; for the aim of the Church is the higher."² Like maxims have frequently been repeated by recent interpreters of the relation between Church and State. Liberatore, for example, squarely approves the teaching of Boniface VIII. in the bull "Unam Sanctam." "The tribunal of the Church," he affirms, "is higher than

¹ Kirchenrecht, vol. i. p. 283; vol. ii. pp. 530 ff.

² Lehrbuch des katholischen Kirchenrechts (2d ed.), p. 68.

that of the civil power. Now, the superior is able to revise the causes of the inferior; but the inferior is in no wise able to revise the causes of the superior."¹ In pregnant sayings of the popes about their own prerogatives the same conception of the preëminence of ecclesiastical authority and of its right to reach over into the civil domain comes to the front. Nothing less is implied in this declaration of Leo XIII.: "It belongs to the pontiff not only to rule the Church, but in general so to order the action of Christian citizens that they may be in suitable accord with the hope of obtaining eternal salvation."² An equivalent lesson is given by Pius X. in presenting as true models "those who obey Christ in His vicar in all that concerns the guidance of souls, or the government of the Church, or that in any way is connected with these objects."³ In the implicit significance of his act in condemning the proposition that "the Roman pontiffs have exceeded the limits of their power and usurped the rights of princes," Pius IX. went at least as far as either of the other two popes in asserting the rights of papal authority in the civil domain.⁴

In practice recent popes have felt debarred from using the full complement of expedients by which mediæval pontiffs enforced their mandates against opposing powers. However, the issuing of sentences of nullification against laws and constitutions of States has been no unheard-of thing in these latter days. Pius IX. resorted to this expression of pontifical sovereignty in a number of instances. A notable example appears in his fulmination against Austrian laws (June 22, 1868), wherein, using the approved theocratic style, he pronounced this sentence: "In virtue of our apostolic authority

¹ *La Chiesa e lo Stato*, pp. 21-25.

² *Encyc. Sapientiæ Christianæ*, Jan. 10, 1890.

³ *Encyc. Communium Rerum*, April 21, 1909.

⁴ *Syllabus of Errors*, No. 23.

we reject and condemn the aforesaid laws, and everything which in them and other matters touching upon the rights of the Church has been enacted, done, or attempted by the Austrian government or by any subordinate officials; we declare in virtue of our authority that these decrees have been and will remain null and empty of all force.”¹ More recently papal sovereignty in the person of Pius X. issued a decree of nullification against prominent features in the new republican constitution of Portugal. “We of our apostolic authority,” writes the Pope, “reprobate, condemn and reject the law separating Church and State in Portugal. . . . We proclaim and announce that whatsoever it contains contrary to the inviolable rights of the Church is null and void and is to be so held.”² In using the words “null and void” in this instance the pontiff went a step beyond the form of censure employed by him against the Law of Separation in France, which he also reprobated and condemned in virtue of the supreme authority confined to him by God.³

In two other instances Pius X. has taken action which trenches quite distinctly upon the civil domain. In the “*Ne temere*” decree (Aug. 2, 1907), which revives the decision passed by the Council of Trent on the requirements of valid marriage, Roman Catholics throughout the world were notified that only marriages solemnized by the parish priest or other specified member of the clergy, in cases where the contracting parties — one or both of them — belong to the Catholic Church, are to be regarded as having any validity, and that this law holds in all regions not specifically exempted from its application by the Holy See. Evidently on the basis

¹ Cited by Von Schulte, *Die Macht der römischen Päpste über Fürsten*, etc. (3d ed. 1896).

² *Encyc. Jandudum*, May 24, 1911.

³ *Encyc. Vehementer*, Nos, Feb. 11, 1906.

of this decree a husband or wife whose marriage has not been solemnized in the prescribed manner can be ecclesiastically justified in repudiating the obligations of the nuptial bond where the civil law pronounces that the given obligations abide intact. Thus a conflict of jurisdictions is invited; and it becomes a matter of some interest to determine how Roman Catholic judges will clear their consciences in upholding the law of the State in face of the consensus of popes and canonists on the superior claims of ecclesiastical law.

The other decree reaching over into the civil domain is the one on clerical immunities (Oct. 9, 1911). This forbids, under pain of excommunication, that Catholics, apart from ecclesiastical permit, should bring suit against members of the clergy and compel them to appear before lay judges. Now such a decree may be a congenial deduction from hierarchical premises. It is utterly foreign, however, to equality in citizenship, and may be emphatically contradictory to the discharge of the solemn duties of citizenship, as providing a cover for iniquity in the very circle where it is least entitled to be condoned, and is likely to be fruitful of the greatest mischief. In any case it abridges the prerogative of the citizen in favor of an exclusive privilege of the ecclesiastic, and in that sense contradicts a principle characteristic of the modern State.

The evidence makes plain that the Roman hierarchy, while restrained by the conditions of the times from giving full force to its claims on the preëminence of ecclesiastical authority and its right to enter the domain of the State, has not to any conspicuous degree abandoned those claims. Probably close investigation would show that, since the settlement effected through the peace of Westphalia in 1648, no popes have more resolutely asserted the superior rights of ecclesi-

astical sovereignty than the last three in the list. On this topic, then, as on other lines of our inquiry, the signs of coming reform would seem to be exceedingly scanty.

It is incumbent upon us to notice such offset to the foregoing exposition as may be supposed to be furnished in the rise and progress of the Modernist movement in the Roman Catholic Church. That movement, gaining admission, as it did, in the face of the mighty bulwarks interposed by the Vatican Council and designed to bar out everything of the sort, furnishes in truth a rather startling suggestion on the practical limitations of ecclesiastical authority. It has a weighty import as indicating that the attempt to isolate the thinking of the Roman Catholic constituency is likely to miscarry in spite of the most formidable expedients that can be devised. But still, so far as any *near prospect* of reformation is concerned, the Modernist movement affords a very unsubstantial ground of anticipation. Fundamental weaknesses attach to the movement. The extremes to which leading representatives have pushed the notion of dogmatic development or continuous doctrinal flux, together with their espousal of very radical conclusions in the field of biblical criticism, have naturally served to intensify reactionary tendencies and to justify a reactionary policy in the sight of a vast majority of zealous adherents to the Roman communion. Then, too, Modernism suffers in point of intellectual prestige by its manifest inconsistency in supposing that the function of normal progress in doctrine must needs be fulfilled within the exclusive domain of the Roman Catholic Church, though its general premises on doctrinal evolution and its specific verdicts in historical criticism are utterly remote from justifying any such supposition. Whatever sympathy one may entertain toward it, on the score of the large amount of reason and

truth to which it gives hospitality, its reformatory vocation must be regarded as subject to most serious limitations. Slight, indeed, is the occasion to imagine that it can cope successfully with a hierarchy which has taken oath to exterminate it to the last fiber, and is armed with full control over official patronage in the entire ecclesiastical domain. It may be urged, it is true, that the anti-Modernist oath was not taken *ex animo* by all the bishops and priests who humbled themselves to the form of acceptance. Undoubtedly this is to be granted. But it is well to be on guard against magnifying its import overmuch. Protestants often make hasty inductions from instances of liberality which have only a very qualified local significance. Because this or that priest, influenced by a special environment, gives expression to rather broad and generous sentiments, and exhibits a degree of fraternity toward non-Catholics, it by no means follows that the Roman Catholic Church is about to surrender its historic claims to sole legitimacy. Were a representative assembly of that Church to be convened to-morrow, the modification of the characteristic Romish assumptions would be the last thing which it would think of accomplishing or even of considering. One can hardly conceive of the scorn with which the Roman episcopate, as a whole, when gathered in solemn council, would repudiate a proposition to admit any other communion to anything like a parity with the Roman. The claim to pre-eminence and exclusive right is held with desperate tenacity, and will not be relinquished so long as the prestige of great numbers conserves to it any respectability.

An aspect of tragedy pertains to the exigency which is upon the Roman Catholic Church. Having staked all upon the infallibility of its dogmatic authority, it cannot revise the approved system without destroying the cornerstone of the

structure. On the other hand, if it refuses all modification, and keeps on asserting its arrogant pretensions, it will be certain to repulse great numbers, with the likelihood that a large proportion of them will be driven into radical infidelity. A program of despotic enchainment of the human mind cannot be carried through in the coming age without most serious drawbacks. The retribution which in the divine order is appointed to truth-defying pretentious authority will arrive in its own time and manner.